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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ROGER WILLOUGHBY: A STORY OF THE TIMES OF BENBOW ***

William H G Kingston

"Roger Willoughby"

Chapter One.

"Hillo, Roger! glad to find you at last. I have been hunting up and down along the cliffs for the last hour or more, till I began to fear that you must have been carried off by a Barbary corsair, or spirited away on the end of Mother Shipton's broomstick."

The speaker was a fine-looking lad of sixteen, dressed in the costume worn by Puritans in the time of the second Charles—a long cloth coat of unobtrusive hue, knee-breeches, high-heeled shoes with large buckles, a thick neckcloth tied in a bow, and a high-crowned, broad-brimmed hat; but the brim of the lad's hat was looped up on one side by a rosette of silver lace, his shoe-buckles were of massive silver, his neckcloth was of silk, and his coat of fine cloth, betokening that he was of the rank of a gentleman, and that, if a Puritan, he had taken no small pains to set his person off to the best advantage.

"Faith! I had no idea that I had been so long hidden away in my cosy nook, and if you had not ferreted me out, Stephen, I should likely enough have lain *perdu* for another hour or more," answered Roger, a sturdy blue-eyed boy, apparently a year or two younger than Stephen Battiscombe, and of the same station in life; but his dress, though of gayer colours and less precise cut than that of his friend, was somewhat threadbare, and put on as if he had not troubled himself much about the matter. "See, I have been studying the art of navigation, and begin to hope that I shall be able to sail a ship through distant seas as well as Drake or Cavendish, or Sir Martin Frobisher, or Sir Richard Grenville, or the great Christopher Columbus himself,—ay, and maybe to imitate their gallant deeds," he continued, holding up a small well-thumbed volume. "I have not made as much progress this morning as I expected to do, for I have ever and anon been watching yonder fine ship, which has long been in sight, striving to beat down Channel against this light westerly breeze, but for some time past she has made no progress, or rather has been drifting back to the eastward."

"It seems to me that she is standing in this way," observed Stephen, shading his eyes with his hand from the noonday sun. "Certes, she is a goodly craft, and light as is the wind slips swiftly through the water."

"Would that I were on board of her!" exclaimed Roger. "She is doubtless bound out to some of those strange lands of which I have read in Master Purchas *Pilgrims*, and many another book of voyages. How I long to visit those regions, and to behold with mine own eyes the wonderful sights they present!"

"Many, you should understand, are mere travellers' tales—lying fables—such as Sir John de Mandeville would make us believe about monsters, half man and half beast, and people walking about with their heads under their arms, and cities of marble, the windows of precious stones, and the streets paved with gold, and such like extravagances," observed Stephen. "I much doubt also whether your father will readily accede to your wishes. Think how he would grieve should any of the many mishaps befall you which so often overtake those who voyage on the treacherous ocean."

"My father knows that I must seek my fortune in some calling or other, and he would be well pleased were I to come back with a goodly store of the gold of Golconda to restore the impoverished fortunes of our house," answered Roger, still looking eagerly towards the approaching ship.

"Day-dreams, my friend, day-dreams,—natural enough, but very unlikely to come true," said Stephen in a somewhat sententious tone, such as he considered became one of his mature years. If the truth were to have been known, however, Master Stephen Battiscombe was apt to indulge in day-dreams himself, though of a different character—a judge's wig and robes, or even a seat on the Woolsack, were not beyond his aspirations. He now added, "But we must stop talking here longer. See, the sun is already at his height in the heavens; an we delay the Colonel and Madam Pauline will be justly chiding us for being late to dinner."

"I am ready," answered Roger, still, however, lingering and watching the ship in the offing. "But tell me, what cause brought you to Eversden this morning?"

"I came over to ask you to return with me to Langton, that you might join us in making war on the young rooks, which have increased too greatly in our woods of late. Not finding you, I would fain, I own, have remained in the house to enjoy the society of sweet Mistress Alice, but Madame Pauline, cruelly insisting that she required her aid in the manufacture of some conserves, sent me out to search for you."

"I am bound to be grateful to you for coming, whether willingly or not, to look for me, or I might have remained in my nest mayhap till the sun had sunk behind Beer Head out yonder," said Roger, beginning to climb up the cliff. "I would gladly, however, remain till the ship comes near enough to let us get a better sight of her."

To this, however, Stephen would not consent, for the reason he had already given, and Roger also well knew that his uncle, Colonel Tregellen, would be displeased should they not appear at the regular dinner-hour.

Roger Willoughby's cosy nook, as he called it, was a small hollow in the cliff a few feet from the summit, surrounded by a thick growth of purple bramble, scented clematis, pink thorn, and other shrubs, which formed a complete shelter from all but southerly winds, and likewise concealed it from any one passing along the downs above. It was on a part of the Dorsetshire coast between Lyme and Bridport, almost in the centre of the extensive bay which has Portland Bill on its eastern side and the Start Point on the west. To the right could be seen Lowesdon Hill and Pillesdon Pen rising above the surrounding country, while to the left a line of precipitous cliffs extended in a bold sweep for several miles to the conical height of the Gilten Cap, visible to the mariner far away out at sea, while inland, beyond a range of smooth undulating downs, were fields of grass and corn, orchards and woods, amid which appeared here and there a church steeple, the roof of a farm-house or labourer's cottage, or the tower or gable-end of some more pretentious residence.

Still, Roger accompanied Stephen Batiscombe with evident reluctance, and turned more than once to take another look at the approaching ship which had so attracted his attention.

"She must be purposing to come to an anchor close to the shore, and we may be able to go on board her," he exclaimed.

"Very possibly her captain intends to bring up to wait till the tide turns," said Stephen in a tone of indifference. "If you have a fancy for visiting her, the sooner we get back to Eversden the more time you will have to accomplish your object, should your father not object to your going; but as we do not know the character of the vessel, he may doubt whether the trip is a safe one—she may be a pirate, or a trader in want of hands, and may kidnap you and your boatmen to fill up the complement of her crew."

Roger laughed heartily as Stephen ceased speaking. "We need not fear any danger of that sort," he said. "My father is not so over-careful of me as you suppose. Neither he nor the Colonel will say me nay, and if you are unwilling to accompany me, I will go alone."

"No! no!—if you go I will go with you," answered Stephen. "I merely wished to warn you, that you might not be disappointed."

"I know well that I can always trust you, and that you are ever ready to please me when you can," said Roger. "But, as you say, it were a pity to lose time—so we will hasten on to the manor-house, and as soon as we have satisfied our hunger, we will return to the shore and get Ben Rullock and his boy Toby to put us aboard the stranger. See, she is still standing in for the land, and she would certainly not come so close except for the purpose of anchoring."

The boys had now reached the highest part of the downs. After this, having to descend to the cultivated ground, they lost sight of the ship. Making a short cut across some fields enclosed by stone walls, they reached a lane with hedges on either side, along which they proceeded for a mile or more, as snake-like it twisted and turned in various directions, till, crossing what from its width looked like a high-road, though as full of ruts and holes as the lane, they passed through a gateway, the entrance to an avenue of fine beech-trees. The once stout gate shook and creaked on its rusty hinges as they pushed it open; the keeper's lodge was in ruins, burnt down many years ago, for the marks of fire were still visible on the portions of the walls seen between the ivy and other creepers partially covering them. The lads, hurrying up the avenue, soon reached a substantial house of some size, surrounded by a broad moat with a roughly constructed wooden bridge, where once a drawbridge had existed across the narrowest part, directly in front of the chief entrance. The most prominent feature of the building was a porch of stone, handsomely carved; on the right side of it was a breadth of wall with several windows, and at the end what appeared from its architecture to be a chapel, though the large window at the gable-end had been bricked up, a few loopholes only being left in it. On the other side of the porch was a still more extensive range of windows, giving light to a large hall, and beyond that again was a square stone tower, serving in the eyes of the architect as a balance to the chapel. The moat was a sufficient distance from the house to allow of a roadway round it to the back, where, guarded by a high wall, the offices and stables, the cow-house, the piggeries and poultry-yard, were situated.

The boys hurried through the open doorway, the savoury odours proceeding from the hall on the left exciting their appetites. The family were already seated at table, and Master Holden, the parson of the parish, was in the act of saying grace. As soon as he had concluded, they took the places left vacant for them, Stephen managing to place himself next to Mistress Alice Tufnell, while Roger, who cared not where he sat, went to one on the opposite side of the table between his father and the parson, who had at first humbly taken a lower position. At the head of the table sat Colonel Tregellen, the owner of Eversden Manor, with his sprightly French wife, Madam Pauline, on his right, and his brother-in-law, Master Ralph Willoughby, Roger's father, on his left.

"You are late, lads," said the Colonel, looking first at one, then at the other, in a somewhat stern manner. "You know the rules of the house—how comes it?"

"Please, sir, I was looking for Roger, and only lately discovered him," answered Stephen, who was the elder, and thought it incumbent on him to speak first. "He was not aware how the hours had gone by."

"And why were you not aware how time passed, Master Roger?" asked the Colonel, turning to his nephew. "The sun is shining in the heavens, and you should have known when noon arrived."

"I was sitting in the shade and reading, good uncle," answered Roger in a brisk tone, which showed that he had little fear of the Colonel's displeasure; "besides, to say the truth, I was watching a fine ship standing in for the coast, which ship I have a notion has come to anchor not far from this, and as soon as Stephen and I have stowed away some food, with yours and my father's leave and good pleasure we propose going on board her to learn what cargo she carries, whither she is bound, and all about her."

"You are of an inquisitive disposition regarding all things nautical, Roger," observed the Colonel. "I have no objection, if your father has not, but take care you are not carried off to sea. We must make Stephen Battiscombe answerable for that; and if the vessel has a suspicious look, remember that you are not to venture on board."

"Ah, yes; do take care that the strange ship you speak of is not a pirate. It would be dreadful to have you spirited away, as I have heard has sometimes happened," observed Madam Pauline.

"There is not much risk of that," observed Mr Willoughby. "Since the noble Blake commanded the fleets of England, such gentry have not dared to venture into the English Channel."

"And are you also going, Master Battiscombe?" asked Alice, turning to Stephen.

"I have no great fancy for the expedition, and would rather spend my time here, Mistress Alice," he answered. "But Roger begs for my companionship, and I must go to look after him, for I suspect that he would not be greatly grieved if he were to be carried off, as his heart is set on visiting foreign lands, and he knows not how to accomplish his wishes."

"If you go I know you will advise him wisely," said Alice, in a tone which showed that she placed confidence in the person she was addressing.

Stephen looked gratified. "I will not betray my trust," he said, "and I hope, Mistress Alice, that I shall act in a way to merit your approval."

The lads did not allow their plates to remain idly before them. Roger sent his for an additional supply of the goodly sirloin which the Colonel was carving, and then, as soon as he had finished eating, without waiting for the pasties or Master Holden's grace, he started up and said: "We have your leave, uncle, my father not objecting, to visit the stranger, and I doubt not we shall bring you before evening a good account of her."

Mr Willoughby nodded his assent. "You may go, Roger, and Stephen is his own master, but remember the caution you have received. Should you find, which is most probable, that the commander is a goodly person, and his ship is going to remain long enough at anchor, you may invite him up to the manor-house, and say we shall gladly receive him. It may be that he has been long at sea, and some fresh provisions will be welcome."

"Thank you," said Roger, leaving his chair.—"Come along, Stephen; we shall find Ben Rullock and Toby at their hut before they leave for their evening fishing, if we make haste."

Stephen, with less eagerness than that exhibited by his friend, rose from his seat, and bowing to Madam Pauline and Mistress Alice, followed Roger out of the hall.

"They are spirited lads," observed the Colonel, "and as they have little enough to fill up their time, I like not to deny them such amusement as they discover for themselves."

"Where it is harmless 'tis right that it should be encouraged," remarked Master Holden, who seldom said anything except it was to agree with the Colonel, his patron, by whose means he had been reinstated in the parish at the Restoration.

Colonel Tregellen, a staunch Cavalier, the owner of Eversden, had during the Civil War been among the most active partisans of King Charles the First, in whose service he had expended large sums of money. On the triumph of Cromwell his property was confiscated, and he had judged it prudent to escape beyond seas. The manor, however, had been purchased by his brother-in-law, Roger Willoughby, who had married his sister, and who had held it during the period of the Commonwealth. Mr Willoughby was a rigid Puritan, and had been as active in supporting Cromwell as his brother-in-law had been in the cause of the opposite party. At the Restoration the tables were again turned, and Colonel Tregellen, who had some time before ventured back to England, had, by an amicable arrangement with his brother-in-law, again become possessed of the estate, it being settled that Mr Willoughby and his son should reside with him.

While abroad, Colonel Tregellen had married a French Protestant lady, a very charming and lively person, who made herself liked by all who came in contact with her. Having no children of their own, they had adopted the granddaughter of a Cavalier friend killed at Naseby, who had committed his only daughter to the Colonel's care. On his return to England she came to live at Eversden Manor, where she married Mr Harry Tufnell, the younger son of a gentleman of property in the county. He, however, soon afterwards died, leaving his widow and infant daughter slenderly provided for. Two years elapsed from his death, when Mrs Tufnell, who was then staying at the manor-house, followed him to the grave. Madam Pauline had promised to be a mother to her child, and such she had ever since truly proved. Alice, who was too young to feel her loss, had always looked upon the Colonel and his wife as her parents, and loved them as such, though the Colonel had considered it expedient that she should retain her father's

name, and keep up such intercourse with her family as circumstances would permit. She amply rewarded the Colonel and Madam Pauline for the care they bestowed on her by the amiability of her disposition, her sweet and engaging manners, and the affection she exhibited towards them. She was a year or two younger than Roger, but from her intelligence and appearance, and a certain manner she had caught from Madam Pauline, she was generally supposed to be older. She and Roger were fast friends, and regarded each other as brother and sister. Of late she not only looked but felt herself the elder of the two, and treated him as young ladies are sometimes inclined to treat boys, in a slightly dictatorial way, ordering him about, and expecting him to obey her slightest behest; as he was invariably obedient they never quarrelled, and she always appeared to receive his service as her right.

Mr Willoughby, who lost his wife some years after the Restoration, and was in infirm health, had sunk almost heart-broken into the position of a dependant on his brother-in-law. He had paid a heavy price to obtain Eversden, and had also expended large sums in support of the cause he advocated, besides which, certain mercantile speculations into which he had entered had been unsuccessful, so that when deprived of Eversden he had no means remaining for his support. The hope, which he probably entertained, that his son Roger would be Colonel Tregellen's heir, was somewhat damped when Mistress Alice was adopted as his daughter—not that he felt any jealousy of her in consequence,—indeed, he might possibly have entertained the idea that she would marry Roger, and that, should she become the Colonel's heiress, the property would thus be restored to the family. Had the subject, however, been spoken of to him, he would very likely have replied that he did not wish his thoughts to dwell on such sublunary matters, that, all being ordered for the best, he would leave them in the hands of Providence, without attempting to interfere. Still, as Alice grew up into a sweet and engaging girl, he could not help wishing, as he looked at her, that she would some day become his son's wife. It is certain, however, that such thought had never for a moment crossed Roger's mind, nor that of the young lady either. She would have laughed heartily if the subject had been mentioned to her, and declared that she should as soon have thought of marrying old Mr Willoughby himself, whom she always called her uncle. Fortunately no one had ever been silly enough to talk to her about the matter, and she and Roger had never had what might prove a barrier to their friendship placed between them.

Roger's thoughts were generally occupied with his grand idea to go abroad to the Indies, or to America, or to the plantations, to make a fortune, and to restore the family to its former position. He did not consider that his father was dependent on the Colonel, but he saw that the latter himself had but limited means; for the estate, although of considerable extent, yielded but a poor income. Its owner had nothing else to depend on, so that he was unable to repair the house or to make improvements on the land. The King on his Restoration had promised to give him a lucrative post as soon as he could find one suited to his talents, but year after year passed by, and he received no appointment; at length he went up to London—a journey not easily performed in those days,—and after waiting for a considerable time, through the interest of an old friend he obtained an interview with the Merry Monarch.

“Gadzooks, man!” exclaimed the King, when he saw him, “I remember you well,—a loyal, sturdy supporter of our cause. We have had so many loyal gentlemen applying for posts that we fear all have been filled up, but depend on it we will not forget you. Go back to Eversden, and wait with such patience as may be vouchsafed you. In due course of time you will receive notice of the appointment to which we shall have the satisfaction of naming you.”

Colonel Tregellen took his leave and returned to Eversden, but he was too old a soldier to have his hopes raised high, and from that time to the present he had received no further communication on the subject—indeed, he had reason to believe that the King had forgotten all about him. Though he did not in consequence of this waver in his loyalty, it did not increase his affection for the King, and made him criticise the monarch's proceeding with more minuteness than might otherwise have been the case. He had ever been a firm Protestant, and he had become still more attached to the Reformed principles, and more enlightened, from the example set him by his wife, and also from the instruction he received from her. He was sufficiently acquainted with political affairs to know that the King was more than suspected of leaning to Romanism, while the Duke of York—the heir to the throne—was a professed Romanist. His love, therefore, for the family for whom he had fought and expended his fortune had greatly waned of late years, and he therefore agreed more nearly with the opinions of his brother-in-law than formerly. This change of sentiment permitted him willingly to receive young Battiscombe, who was of a Puritan family, at his house, though at one time he would not have admitted him within his doors. He also lived on friendly terms with other neighbours holding the same opinion as the owner of Langton Hall. Still, the Colonel did not altogether abandon his Cavalier habits and notions, which, without intending it perhaps, he instilled into the mind of his young nephew, who, although his father had been a supporter of Cromwell, was ready enough to acknowledge Charles as the rightful king of England. He and Stephen often had discussions on the subject, but as neither held his opinions with much obstinacy, they never fell out on the matter, and generally ended with a laugh, each asserting that he had the beat of the argument. Stephen, if not a bigoted Puritan, was a strong Protestant, and never failed to express his dread of the consequences should James come to the throne.

Stephen Battiscombe was the second son of Mr Battiscombe of Langton Park, who had several other sons and daughters. He had been an officer in General Monk's army, and had consequently retained his paternal estates, although he had been compelled to part with some of his broad acres in order to secure the remainder. Stephen had been for the last year or two a constant visitor at Eversden, he and Roger having formed a friendship; it may be that he came oftener than he otherwise might have done for the sake of enjoying the society of Mistress Alice, whom he greatly admired.

The early dinner being concluded, and the viands removed, the ladies retired to pursue their usual avocations, while the Colonel, with Mr Willoughby and Master Holden, sat still at the table, not so much to indulge in potations, though a flagon of wine and glasses stood before them, as to discuss certain parochial questions in which they were interested.

The first matter to be discussed had scarcely been broached when the Colonel, whose quick ears had detected the sound of horses' hoofs in the court-yard, exclaimed, “Hark! here come visitors. I pray you, Master Holden, go and see who they are, and, should they have travelled far, and require food, bid the cook make ready a sufficiency; whether they be old friends or strangers, we must not show a want of hospitality if they come expecting to find it at

Eversden." The curate, ever accustomed to obey his patron's directions, rose and hastened to the door. Not long after he had gone, Tobias Platt, the Colonel's serving-man, who performed the duties of butler, valet, and general factotum, entered the hall.

"Master Thomas Handscombe, cloth-merchant of London, who has just come down from thence, craves to see Mr Roger Willoughby," he said.

"Do you know him?" asked the Colonel of his brother-in-law.

"Yes, an old and worthy friend," answered Mr Willoughby, rising from his seat.

"Let him be admitted, and assure him of a welcome," said the Colonel, turning to Tobias Platt, who hurried out of the hall, while Mr Willoughby followed him somewhat more leisurely. He found his old friend, a middle-aged man of grave exterior, in travel-stained cloak, broad-brimmed beaver, just dismounting from a strongly-built nag, to whose saddle were attached a pair of huge holsters in front, and a valise behind. He was accompanied by two attendants, each of whose animals carried considerably heavier burdens, apparently merchandise, more or less of cloth and other articles, firmly secured by leathern straps.

"I am glad to see you again, Master Handscombe," exclaimed Mr Willoughby, warmly pressing the hand of his old friend; "although I am no longer master of this mansion, I can bid you welcome, for my good brother-in-law, Colonel Tregellen, desires that all my friends should be his friends; but you will remember that he is an old Cavalier, and that there are certain subjects it were better not to touch on."

"I mix too much with all classes of men not to be on my guard," answered the merchant, as he accompanied Mr Willoughby into the house, when Tobias Platt came forward to take his dusty cloak and beaver, and then followed Mr Willoughby into the hall, where the Colonel received him as his brother-in-law's friend.

"You will be glad to shake off more of the dust of your journey while a repast is preparing," observed the Colonel. "The servant will provide you with water and other necessaries."

The guest gladly accepted the offer. Mr Willoughby himself accompanied him to the room, that they might have an opportunity of conversing in private, which they might not afterwards obtain. Madam Pauline and Alice, on hearing from Master Holden of the arrival of a stranger from London, returned to the hall, where all the party were soon again assembled. Master Handscombe, though a man of grave deportment, had no objection to hear himself speak.

"When did you leave London?" was one of the first questions very naturally put by the Colonel to his guest.

"Just seven days ago, good sir," answered Mr Handscombe. "Having sent all my goods with my two servant-men by the stage-wagon, I took my place by the light coach which now runs from London to the West. There were six of us inside, who, till the moment we met, were not aware of each other's existence, though, before we parted, we had become as intimate as a litter of puppies. Pretty close stowing it was too—yet, considering the jolting, bumping, and rolling, that was an advantage. Oftentimes I feared that the coach would go over altogether into the ditch, when I was thankful that there was not any one outside except the coachman and guard, who are in a manner born to it, to break their necks. Still, notwithstanding all impediments, we accomplished thirty miles a day; that is fast going, you will allow, compared to the stage-wagon or other ancient means of conveyance. Once only we were stopped by highwaymen, but the guard's blunderbuss disposed of one of them, and an old officer, who was fortunately for us one of the passengers, though his legs were of the longest, shot another, and the rest, fearing that the Major's pistols would settle a third of their gang, rode off, leaving us to proceed unmolested. Mine host of the 'Green Dragon,' where we had stopped, seemed greatly surprised at seeing us arrive safely, and pulled a long face at hearing of the highwayman whom the Major had shot, for he owed a long score, he acknowledged, which he had now no chance of getting paid. At Salisbury I found my nag and servants, and, leaving the coach, proceeded on to this place by such roads as I could discover. It was one comfort to believe that we were not likely to encounter highwaymen by paths so little frequented, though we had several streams to cross, where we ran no small risk of our lives, especially near Salisbury, where the waters were out, and for some hours no boat was to be found to ferry us across. However, at length, by God's kind providence, we got over, and as you see, good masters, I have arrived sound in health and limb."

"Truly you have reason to be thankful," observed Mr Willoughby; "for it is a long time since I made a journey to London, and, of my own free will, I will never again undertake it."

"And what news do you bring from the city?" asked the Colonel. "How go matters at Court?"

"About the Court I know but little, except such as appears in the broad-sheet and scraps of information which reach the city. The Dukes of York and Monmouth are still at daggers drawn, the King now favouring one, now the other, though Monmouth by his affable and condescending manners wins the hearts of many of the people, while the Earl of Shaftesbury is ever plotting and contriving how he may keep the power in his own hands, and play one against the other. The Duke of Monmouth, who was, as you may have heard, banished, has returned without the King's permission, and, as he refuses again to quit the kingdom, has been stripped of his various offices; but a short time ago appeared a tract in which the Duke is clearly pointed out as the fittest person, from his courage, quality, and conduct, to become the ruler of these realms. It is remarked that he who has the worst title will make the best King. There is a story current of the existence of a black box in which is deposited the marriage-contract between the King and the Duke's mother, but some doubt, not without reason, whether such a black box exists, much more the contents spoken of. Be that as it may, many persons speak boldly of the Duke of Monmouth some day becoming King of England."

"What is your opinion, Master Handscombe?" asked the Colonel.

"I have merely reported what is said," answered the merchant. "My business is in buying and selling, and I have no wish to enter into political affairs."

"Well answered, sir; but I would have it clearly understood that I hope none of those in whom I have an interest will ever draw sword or aid by tongue or otherwise in supporting any but the rightful and legitimate Sovereign of these realms. Though James has become a Papist, he will not interfere with the rights and privileges of his Protestant subjects."

"On that point there exist adverse and strong opinions," answered Master Handscombe. "A Roman in power and a Roman out of power are two very different species of animals. The one rules it like the lordly lion, and strikes down with his powerful paw all opponents; the other creeps forward gently and noiselessly like the cat,—not the less resolved, however, to destroy his prey."

"You would then rather see the Duke of Monmouth than the Duke of York king of England?" said the Colonel.

"No, good sir, I said not so," answered Mr Handscombe. "I am merely repeating at your desire what people do say in the city, and in the towns also through which I passed."

While they were speaking, Tobias Platt had placed a smoking hot dish before the hungry traveller, on which the Colonel bade him fall-to. Scarcely, however, had he commenced operations, when young Roger hurried into the hall.

"We have brought him, uncle; he was very willing to come, and you will like him as much as we do. I ran on to announce him, and he and Stephen will be here anon."

"But who is your friend?" asked the Colonel. "You have not told us."

"He is the captain of the fine ship we saw entering the bay; his name is Benbow, and his ship is the *Benbow* frigate. He received us in a courteous manner when we went on board, and told him that we had come to invite him on shore. He said as there was no prospect of a breeze for some hours, he would gladly accept your invitation.—Here he comes."

A youngish, broadly-built man, with light blue eyes and somewhat sun-burnt complexion, dressed as a sea-going officer of those days, entered the hall accompanied by Stephen Battiscombe, and advanced, hat in hand, towards the Colonel, who rose to receive him.

"You have come just in time, Captain Benbow, for such I hear is your name, to partake of a dinner prepared for a friend from London; you are heartily welcome."

"Thanks, good sir, but I dined before I came on shore, though I shall be happy to quaff a glass of wine to your health and that of your guests," he answered, as he seated himself in a chair, which the Colonel offered, by his side.

"We have not many visitors in this quiet place, and are always glad to receive those who have sailed, as you have undoubtedly, to many foreign lands," observed the Colonel, as he poured out a glass of sparkling wine for the new-comer, who, before putting it to his lips, bowed to the ladies and then to the Colonel and the other gentlemen.

"Methinks I should know you, Captain Benbow," said Mr Handscombe, looking up at him from the other side of the table. "We have met on 'Change, and I may venture to say it in your presence that no sea-captain stands higher than you do in the estimation of the merchants of London."

"Much obliged to you, Master Handscombe, for the opinion you express of me," said Captain Benbow, at once recognising the worthy merchant. "I have always wished to do my duty towards those whose goods I carry, and to defend my cargo against pirates, privateers, and corsairs of all descriptions, as well as to carry it safely to its destination."

"The name of Benbow sounds familiar to my ears," said the Colonel, looking earnestly at the merchant captain. "I had two old well-loved comrades, Colonel Thomas and Colonel John Benbow, gentlemen of estate in Shropshire, who raised regiments in the service of his late Majesty, of pious memory, and for whom I also had the honour of drawing my sword. I well remember that 20th of September in the year of grace 1642, when they and many more came with their faithful men to Shrewsbury to enrol themselves under the King's standard, and opposed those who had resolved on his destruction. From that day forward we fought side by side in many a bloody battle, sometimes in the open field, sometimes in the defence of towns or fortified manor-houses, till the King's cause was lost and his sacred head struck off, though even then we did not despair that the cause of monarchy would triumph; and as soon as our present King, marching from Scotland, reached Worcester, I, with the two Colonel Benbows, who had mustered their Shropshire men, and a few other noble gentlemen—alack! not so many as we had a right to expect—arrayed ourselves under the King's standard. We had secured, as we hoped, a strong position, and expected that when Cromwell and his Ironsides marched against us we should drive them back and hold our own, with Wales and other loyal counties in our rear, till the nation was aroused. But such was not to be, for without waiting to give himself breathing-time after his march, Cromwell set upon us. Though many fought bravely, others grew faint-hearted, and took to flight, and the day was lost. I fell wounded, and was conveyed to the house of a faithful friend, who concealed me; but unhappily the Colonel Benbows were both made prisoners, and Colonel Thomas Benbow with the Earl of Derby and several other gallant noblemen. To my grief, I heard soon afterwards that Colonel Thomas Benbow was shot with the Earl and several others, for engaging in what the usurper pleased to call rebellion; but of my friend Colonel John Benbow I could for a long time hear nothing, and had myself to escape across seas."

"I am the son of Colonel John Benbow, of whom you speak," said the Captain. "I know that my uncle Thomas was made prisoner in the fight at Worcester, and afterwards cruelly shot. My father escaped with the help of a friend, and remained concealed with my mother and their family, living in the humblest way, till King Charles the Second was

restored to the throne. Through the influence of some friends my father obtained a small office connected with the Ordnance in the Tower, which brought him in sufficient to feed and clothe his family in a simple fashion. I was young, and used to what might be called penury, and I well knew that I must seek my fortune in the world, and work hard. I had an early taste for the sea, for we lived near the Thames, and I often used to make trips with the watermen, among whom I was a favourite. When I was old enough to make myself useful they paid me for the assistance I gave them, looking after boats, sometimes bringing them a fare from the shore, and often taking an oar. I was just ten years old when the present King came to the throne, and I might perchance have joined one of his ships, but from the way I heard my friends the watermen say that men were treated on board them, I had no fancy for joining a man-of-war. Soon after the time I speak of, an old friend of my father's got him an appointment in the Tower, which brought him in indeed but 80 pounds a year; yet as that was more than our family had had to live on for many a long year, it was a cause of much rejoicing and thanksgiving. Still it was not enough to allow any of us who could work to live in idleness, and I determined to try what I could do. I was one day looking out for a fare for an old waterman, John Cox by name, who had engaged my services, I being an especial favourite of his, when a sailor-like man came down and said he wanted to be put on board the *Rainbow* frigate lying in the stream. 'John Cox will put you on board,' says I; 'there's his boat. I'll hail him, and he will be down in a moment.'

"That will do," said the stranger, and he stepped on board the boat.

"Are you the old man's son?" he asked.

"No, sir; I am the son of Colonel Benbow, who has got an office in the Tower."

"What! his son thus employed!" exclaimed the stranger. "Is he going to bring you up as a waterman?"

"An please you, sir, I am bringing myself up to gain an honest livelihood as best I can," I answered.

"Would you like to go to sea and visit foreign countries?" asked the stranger.

"That I would, sir, with all my heart," I answered.

"What will you say if I offer to take you?" he asked, looking at me.

"That I will accept your offer, and serve you faithfully," I said.

"Then, lad, you shall come with me aboard the *Rainbow*. We will go back and see your father. I would not take you without his sanction; but if he approves, we shall have time to get such an outfit as you require, for I do not sail till to-morrow."

John Cox and I put Captain Downing, for such was his name, on board the *Rainbow*. He told us to wait alongside for him. After some time he again stepped into the boat, and ordered John Cox to pull for the Tower Stairs.

On landing, he bade me conduct him to my father's lodgings, which I gladly did. My father, as it happened, had met Captain Downing, and knew him to be a man of probity. Thanking the Captain for his offer, he without hesitation gave me leave to accompany him as cabin-boy. It did not take long to get an outfit, and bidding my old father and my kind mother and brothers and sisters farewell, I went on board the *Rainbow*. We dropped down the Thames the next day, but it was nearly a week before we were fairly at sea. The moment I stepped on board, having determined to become a sailor, I set to work to learn everything I could. The Captain helped me in every way. I observed especially the manner he treated his men. He spoke kindly to them, took care that they had plenty of good provisions, and never demanded more work of them than he knew they could perform. Thus the same crew sailed with him voyage after voyage, and I said to myself, 'Whenever I get command of a ship, I will treat my men in the same way.' We sailed for the Levant, and were more than a year away, and then made several voyages to Lisbon and Cadiz, and other places on the coast of Portugal and Spain, two out to the West Indies. When I got back I found my father holding his old post in the Tower, still cheerful and contented, though, as he said, he thought some of his old friends might have found him one with better pay, considering what he had lost for holding to the Royal cause. The first Dutch war was just over, when the Governor received notice that the King himself was going to visit the Tower to inspect the ordnance. All the officers, from the highest to the lowest, in their best attire, were drawn up to receive his Majesty. Among them stood my father, his white hair streaming over his shoulders, a head taller than any of the bystanders, I well remember the cry which was raised of 'Here comes the King!' Presently his Majesty appeared. As he walked along, nodding to one, exchanging a word with another, his eye fell on my father, whom he knew at once, as he did most people, however long a time had passed since he had seen them. 'Gadzooks! why, there's my old friend Colonel Benbow!' exclaimed the King, going up to him and giving him a warm embrace. 'I have not seen you since we parted at Worcester; if all had acted as bravely as you did, we should have had a very different account to give of that day. What do you here?'

"An please your Majesty, I have a post of 80 pounds a year, in which I do my duty as cheerfully as I would were it 4000 pounds a year," answered my father.

"Alack, alack! that an old and faithful friend should have been so neglected," said the King. "You ought to have had one of the best posts I have it in my power to confer, for you lost not only your own property, but your brave brother lost his life, as I have heard, with many other gallant gentlemen.—Colonel Legge," he said, turning to one of the officers in attendance, 'bring Colonel Benbow to me to-morrow, and we will see what office we can best bestow on him. I will provide for him and his family as becomes me.'

As the King passed on, my honoured father, overcome with joy and gratitude for the King's intended goodness, sank down on a bench, where he sat motionless. Suddenly a pallor was seen to overspread his countenance, and he would have fallen forward had not some of those standing by hurried to support him;—but he was past human help; the sudden revulsion of feeling was more than his weak frame could stand, and before the King had left the Tower he had

breathed his last. It was a sad day to my mother, but we tried to comfort her by reminding her that our father died from excessive joy, that the King would graciously bestow the favour he had intended for him on her and us. From that day forward, however, no message came from his Majesty to inquire why my father had not appeared at Court. Though means were also taken to let the King know of our father's death, and that his wife and family were almost destitute no notice was taken, and my mother had to depend on such support as I and her other children could give her; but do all we could, it was only sufficient to keep her from starving. Well may I say, 'Put not your trust in princes.'

"I need not trouble you, fair ladies and gentlemen, with a further account of my early life. I was in great favour with Captain Downing, with whom I sailed for many years as his chief officer, and on his death, which occurred at sea, he left me his share in the *Rainbow*, and other property. As she was getting old and unfit for long voyages, I sold her and built the *Benbow* frigate, which ship several of my former crew joined as soon as she was ready for sea. Thus, you see, my life has not been a very eventful one, though I have risen to independence by just sticking to my duty. I do not say that I have not met with adventures, but I will occupy no more of your time by attempting to describe them."

Roger and Stephen, especially the former, had been eagerly listening to the account Captain Benbow gave of himself.

"How I should delight to sail with you, if my father would give me leave!" exclaimed Roger.

"If there were time, I should be happy to take you on board my ship and teach you to become a sailor, but I fear there is no time, as I must be away again as soon as the tide changes, for I am bound up to the further end of the Mediterranean, and you require certain suits of clothing and other articles which cannot be procured in a moment."

"If you propose putting into Plymouth, the difficulty might be obviated," said Roger, who looked much disappointed. "I could soon scrape such few things together as I require, for I care not much what I wear."

"But you have not yet obtained your father's sanction to your going, young gentleman, and it was only provided that he should give his permission that I offered to receive you on board my ship," said the Captain.

"Thank you heartily, Captain Benbow," said Mr Willoughby. "From the report I have heard of you through my friend Handscombe here, there is no man to whom I would more willingly confide my son, for he has set his heart on being a sailor; but, as you observe, he requires suitable clothing, and that cannot be procured forthwith; still, if you will give me intimation of your return to England, and are willing to take him on your next voyage, I will send him to the port at which your ship lies without fail."

"I will do that," said the Captain.—"So, Master Roger, you may look upon yourself as my future shipmate."

Still Roger appeared much disappointed, as he had expected to go off at once.

"Cheer up, my lad," said the Captain good-humouredly. "I will not fail to give notice of my arrival to your father." The Captain evidently took compassion on the boy's eagerness, for he added, "To show my readiness to take you, if your friends will undertake to collect such needful articles as you must have, I will agree to wait till a breeze springs up, which may not be for several hours to come."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," cried Roger, looking at his aunt and Mistress Alice, and then at his father and the Colonel, as much as to ask what they would do.

"If your father gives you leave, I will not say you nay," observed the Colonel. "But I know nothing of the required preparations. Madam Pauline and Alice had better say what they and the maidens in the house can do in the course of a few hours."

Roger turned inquiringly towards them.

"As Captain Benbow is good enough to take you, we will do our best to get the things you require ready," said Madam Pauline.

"I am loath to lose Roger, but if he will accept some of my clothing, I will ride back to Langton Park and get it for him," said Stephen. "It is much against the grain, though, I confess."

"Thank you, thank you, Stephen," cried Roger, grasping his friend's hand. "I know that you are sorry to part from me, but then you know how much I long to go to sea, and may never have so good an opportunity."

The matter being thus settled, Madam Pauline and Alice hastened to inspect poor Roger's scanty wardrobe, and to consider how with the materials in the house they could most speedily add to it, while Stephen, mounting his horse, rode away for Langton, and Roger himself, accompanied by Master Holden, hunted through the big lumber-room at the top of the house, with the hopes of finding a chest in which his property might be stowed. He soon found one of oak, clamped with iron, which, though larger and heavier than was desirable, might, he thought, serve the purpose required. Their next business was to collect the treasures, including a few well-thumbed books, which Roger wished to take with him, and which he at once placed in the bottom of the chest. The rest of the party remained at table, the Colonel talking chiefly with Captain Benbow, whom he looked upon as an old friend.

"You will remain at the manor-house to-night, I hope," said the Colonel, "and you may return in the morning with my nephew at as early an hour as you desire. I suspect that the females of the family will take but few hours of rest, as their needles will be busy during the night in preparing the young fellow's wardrobe."

"Thank you for the offer, Colonel, but I have made a rule, from which I never depart, always to sleep on board my ship," answered the Captain. "I know not what may happen during the night, and I am thus in readiness for any emergency."

Mr Willoughby was engaged in earnest conversation with Master Handscombe, the merchant, on matters which, it appeared, they were unwilling should reach the ears of the Colonel. They spoke of the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Shaftesbury, and many other persons. Master Handscombe appeared to be very anxious to ascertain the political opinions of the landowners and other gentlemen residing in that part of Dorsetshire and the neighbouring counties of Wilts and Devon. It might have been suspected that the cloth-merchant had other objects in view besides those connected with his mercantile pursuits.

In spite of the exertions made by the indefatigable Madame Pauline and her assistants during the evening, Roger's wardrobe was not completed; indeed, darkness was approaching before Stephen Battiscombe returned with the bundle of clothing which he had generously devoted to the use of his friend. Captain Benbow had risen from the table, and having wished the Colonel and the rest of the party good-bye, was prepared to set out on his return to his ship. Stephen and Roger insisted on accompanying him, and he was glad of their society, as he confessed that he might have some difficulty in finding his way alone. His boat was waiting for him at the beach.

"You will come down with your traps as soon as possible after daylight, my lad," he said, as he stepped on board, "and I will send a boat on shore for you."

"No fear, sir, about my being punctual," answered Roger, and his heart bounded as he thought that in a few hours more he should be on board the stout ship which rode at anchor out in the bay. He and Stephen stood on the beach watching the boat till she was lost to sight in the fast increasing gloom. Already, as they stood there, they observed that although the calm was as perfect as before, the water had begun to break with considerably more force than it had done since the morning. Smooth undulations came rolling in and burst with a dull splash on the sand, then rushed up in a sheet of snowy foam, which had scarcely disappeared before another took its place.

"I cannot quite make it out," observed Stephen. "It seems to me that the sky is unusually dark away to the south and south-west; to say the truth, it looks to me as if there was a bank of dark clouds out there."

"I do not see any bank. It is simply the coming gloom of evening which darkens the sky in that direction," answered Roger. "I think you are mistaken; however, it is time that we should get back, as I have many things to do, and I don't like to desert my poor father, as it will be the last evening I shall spend with him for many a day."

Stephen acknowledging this, they hastened back to the manor-house.

Chapter Two.

Madam Pauline, aided by Alice and several active-fingered maidens, laboured without cessation for several hours till they had prepared Roger's kit as far as circumstances would allow. The Colonel had retired to his chamber, and Mr Willoughby had seen Master Handscombe to one which had been prepared for him. Roger and Stephen had fallen asleep in spite of their intention of sitting up all night to be ready for the morning, when suddenly a strong blast, which found its way through the window, blew out two of the lamps at which the maidens had been working. Madam Pauline ordered them to run and shut it. Scarcely had this been done, when another blast, sweeping round the house, shook it almost to its foundation, setting all the windows and doors rattling and creaking. Even Stephen and Roger were at length awakened. The wind howled and whistled and shrieked among the surrounding trees, the thunder roared, the lightning flashed, the rain came down in torrents.

"Which way does the wind blow, think you?" asked Roger in an anxious tone.

"From the south-west, I fear," answered Stephen. "And if so, Captain Benbow will have reason to wish that he had got a good offing from the shore before it came on."

"Surely she's a stout craft, and will stand a worse gale than this," answered Roger.

"I do not know what you would call a worse gale than this," said Stephen. "It makes the house rock, and I should not be surprised to find many an old elm torn up by the roots."

"I wish that I had been on board to assist our brave friend and his crew," said Roger.

"You may have reason to be thankful that you are safe on shore," remarked Stephen. "Such a gale as this is sufficient to drive even a stouter ship than the *Benbow* frigate from her anchors; but we must wait patiently till the morning to ascertain the truth."

"Why should that be?" exclaimed Roger. "I am not afraid of the wind, and can find my way if it were twice as dark as it is.—Come along."

Stephen, however, who was not inclined to expose himself to the inclemency of the weather, proposed that they should wait till the morning.

"No, no," said Roger, rising and putting on his clothes; "if we are to be of any use we should go at once."

"Certainly, if such is the case," said Stephen, also rising. "But I am afraid that we can render no assistance to the stout frigate if she is in peril."

"Let us go and see about it, at all events," said Roger, who had finished dressing.

They put on their thick overcoats; fortunately Stephen had left his some days before at the manor-house. They had hitherto awakened no one, and had just reached the side-door when they saw a light coming along the passage.

"Who goes there?" asked a voice, which they recognised as that of Mr Willoughby. "Whither are you going, lads, on such a night as this?" he inquired.

"We are greatly afraid that some misadventure may have befallen the *Benbow* frigate, and are going to see, father. You will not say us no, I hope?"

Mr Willoughby hesitated, but Roger pressed the point, and finally obtained leave, his father assisting them to close the door, to do which required no small amount of exertion. So great was the darkness, in spite of Roger's knowledge of the road and the lantern he carried, the lads could not at times clearly see their way. The wind blew in their faces the branches waved to and fro, the tall trees bent, while ever and anon down came the rain in huge drops battering against them. Still they struggled on. Crossing the downs, they had still to make greater exertions, or further progress would have been impossible, but they were not to be daunted.

"We must take care that we do not go suddenly over the edge of the cliff," said Stephen, who was always cautious. "Even with the light of the lantern it is difficult to distinguish it."

"I shall see it clearly enough when we get there," said Roger. "But I propose that we first visit Ben Rullock's cottage, and get him and his boy to help us; he will know whereabouts the ship lies."

"But you do not think we can go off to the ship in his boat?" remarked Stephen.

"No; my fear is that the ship may be driven in close to the shore, and that her crew may be unable to escape from her," said Roger.

He, knowing the locality well, even in the darkness, managed to hit the path which led down to the old fisherman's cottage; he and his companion, however, had to walk cautiously, for it was narrow and winding, and a false step might have sent them over the cliff.

On reaching the door they knocked loudly.

"Ben Rullock, turn out! turn out! there is a ship in danger!" shouted Roger. But the dashing of the breakers on the shore, and the howling of the wind, produced so wild an uproar that his voice was not heard. Again and again he and Stephen shouted and knocked louder and louder.

"Who's there wanting me at this hour of the morning?" they at length heard a voice from within exclaim. Roger repeated what he had before said, and at length old Ben came to the door with a candle, which was immediately blown out.

"A ship in danger, young master!" he exclaimed. "I have not heard her guns firing, or other signal of distress, and my ears are pretty sharp, even when I am asleep."

"We are anxious about the *Benbow* frigate, as we are afraid that she may have been driven on shore."

"Her captain knows too well what he is about to allow her to do that," answered old Ben. "He had not been aboard yesterday evening two minutes before he got under weigh, and must have gained a good offing before the gale came on."

"I heartily hope that such may be the case," observed Stephen.

"I am afraid that if he got under weigh he will not be coming back," said Roger.

"We shall soon know," observed Ben. "Dawn is just breaking, and it will be daylight ere long.—Come in, young gentlemen, and in the meantime, for you are wet through, I will rouse up young Toby, and we will have a fire lighted to dry your wet duds."

The lads were glad enough to accept old Ben's invitation, for though they had strained their eyes to the utmost no sign could they discover of the *Benbow* frigate, but they fancied that the darkness, which is generally the greatest an hour before dawn, had concealed her from their sight. Toby, who turned out on being called, quickly lighted a fire with the driftwood, of which there was generally an abundant supply on the beach, and they sat before it for some time drying their wet clothes, its bright light preventing them from seeing how rapidly the dawn was advancing. At length Roger starting up exclaimed, "Why, it is nearly broad daylight: we shall be well able to see the ship where she lay at anchor."

"I doubt if you will see her there or anywhere else," said old Ben, as he accompanied Roger and Stephen, who eagerly ran out of the cottage.

Though the rain had ceased, the gale was blowing as hard as ever, while the spray which rose from the breakers dashing on the shore beneath their feet filled the air as they reached a point where, by shading their eyes with their hands, they could obtain a view over the whole bay. They eagerly looked out, but nowhere was the *Benbow* frigate to be seen. Ben's information was correct.

It was evident that Captain Benbow, on perceiving the approach of bad weather, had immediately got under weigh to gain a good offing. In vain the lads gazed along the whole line of the horizon extending from the Bill of Portland to the Start—not a sail was visible.

"Maybe she's run in for shelter on the other side of Portland, or, still more likely, has stood on through the Needle passage to bring up inside the Isle of Wight," observed Ben. "She will not be coming back here, you may depend on?"

As there was nothing more to be done, Roger, greatly disappointed, returned with Stephen to the manor-house. He was very glad to find that the ship had escaped, but he was afraid that it might be long before she would return, and his hopes of going to sea on board her would be realised.

The gale lasted scarcely the usual three days, when the weather became as fine as before, and Roger paid many a visit to the shore in the hopes of seeing the *Benbow* frigate coming once more to an anchorage. Though many ships passed by, they were bound up or down Channel, and none came near the land.

It was the first great disappointment Roger had ever had. Day after day went by, but still the *Benbow* frigate did not make her appearance. Sometimes he hoped that he should receive a letter from her captain, telling him to come to some port farther west; where he might go on board, but no letter was received. The thought occurred to him that the vessel had been wrecked or had gone down during that dreadful night, but old Ben assured him that she had got under weigh while the wind was sufficiently to westward to enable her to weather Portland Bill and its dreaded Race, and that she was well out at sea before the worst of it commenced.

"All a sailor wishes for is a stout ship and plenty of sea-room, you should know, Master Roger, and if he gets that he is content, as I have a notion Captain Benbow was on that night," observed the old man.

Roger often looked at his chest of clothes, and at length he did up those Stephen had brought him, and took them back to Langton Park, but his friend begged him to keep them.

"You may want them still, I hope, and you will not refuse to oblige an old friend by accepting them," he said.

Meantime Mr Handscombe accompanied Mr Willoughby to pay a visit to Squire Battiscombe at Langton Park; his object he did not explain.

"I have a notion that your worthy friend has some other object besides attending to his mercantile affairs in his visit to the west country," observed the Colonel to his brother-in-law, who came back to the manor-house without his companion.

"If you do not insist on knowing, it were as well that I should not tell you," answered Mr Willoughby. "All I can say is that he is much touched by the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Shaftesbury, and others, and that he is a true Protestant and right honest man. He is bound for Bristol, from which place he promises to write to me, though it may be some time before I shall hear from him."

The Colonel was satisfied with this explanation; it did not occur to him that any evil consequences would arise from his receiving so respectable a personage as Mr Handscombe at his house.

Roger was expecting another visit from Stephen, and perhaps Mistress Alice might have been looking forward with some pleasure to his coming, when a note was received from him saying that by his father's express desire he was about to accompany Mr Handscombe to Bristol; that before the note would reach Roger he should already have set out. He regretted not having had time to pay a farewell visit, and begged to send his kind regards to Madam Pauline and Mistress Alice, as also to the Colonel and Mr Willoughby. "Mr Handscombe," he continued, "undertakes to place me in a situation of trust, and my father thinks that it would be folly to decline so fine an opportunity of forwarding my interests in life. I promise you, Roger, that should I hear of any situation which you can fill with advantage, I will not fail to let you know, and I hope that your father and the Colonel will approve of your accepting it; you know that I mean what I say, and therefore do not look upon it as a mere make-believe promise."

This last paragraph somewhat consoled Roger for the regret he felt at the loss of his friend and companion.

"I am sure he will do his best," said Mistress Alice, who was always ready to praise Stephen; she, indeed, thought there were but few people like him in the world.

"Yes, he is honest and truthful, two excellent qualities in a young man," observed Madam Pauline.

"Yes, that he is, and I shall not find any one like him in this part of the country," said Roger.

Stephen often said the same thing of his friend.

Roger Willoughby had now plenty of time to attend to his studies; he continued working away steadily with his book of navigation, as well as with the few other works which he possessed, his uncle and father helping him to the best of their ability, but neither of them had had much time in their youth for study. He obtained rather more assistance from Master Holden, who was very willing to impart such knowledge as he possessed, albeit not of a description which Roger especially prized.

Almost sooner than he expected, Roger received a note from Stephen Battiscombe, saying that his good fortune had been greater than he expected. He had got a situation in one of the principal mercantile houses in Bristol with which Mr Handscombe was connected, and that a post for which he considered Roger very well suited being vacant, he had applied and obtained it for him.

"Lose no time in setting out," he wrote, "for after a few weeks' training we are to sail on board one of the ships belonging to the firm for the Levant."

Mr Willoughby and the Colonel were highly pleased with this. It seemed to open the way to Roger's advancement, while he would be able to gratify his taste for the sea without being bound to it, as he would have been had he sailed with Captain Benbow. The question arose how he was to get to Bristol. The distance was considerable, upwards of sixty miles in a straight line, and much more when the turnings of the roads were calculated, which roads were in many places in a very bad condition. Roger himself, who was eager to set out, proposed performing the journey on a

small horse or cob, with such luggage as could be carried in his valise and saddle-bags, while the remainder was to be sent by the stage-wagon from Lyme.

"But, my dear boy, you might be attacked by highwaymen, and robbed and murdered on the road," said his father.

"I will try to beat off any highwaymen who may attack me, or gallop away from them," answered Roger. "Besides, I doubt whether any gentlemen of the road would think it worth while to attack a boy like me; they generally fly at higher game. I have been talking to Tobias Platt, and he says that old Tony, though he has not done much work of late, will carry me well, and that if I do not push him too hard, I may do the journey in three days, or four at the most."

Old Tony was a cob which Mr Willoughby had ridden several years, but was now allowed to spend most of his days in the meadows. As no better mode of conveyance could be suggested, it was arranged that Roger should set out in a couple of days with his valise and saddle-bags, with a brace of pistols and a sword for his protection, in the use of which he had been well instructed by the Colonel. Old Tony in the meantime was fed on oats to prepare him for the journey. Just as Roger was about to set out, the Colonel received an intimation that his neighbour, Mr Battiscombe, would proceed the following day in the same direction, and he accordingly rode over to Langton to ask whether he would allow Roger to travel in his company.

"With great pleasure," he replied, "although, as I have several places to visit I may be longer about the journey than he would were he to go alone."

This, however, was of little consequence compared to the advantage it would be to Roger to travel with a gentleman who would, of course, have several servants in attendance.

The morning arrived in which Roger Willoughby was to start from the home of his childhood to commence the active business of life. He was to sleep at Langton Park that he might start at daybreak the following morning with Mr Battiscombe.

The Colonel accompanied him part of the way.

"It is as well that you should make your appearance alone," he observed. "It will show that you can take care of yourself, for your father and I have given you plenty of good advice, and all I have now to counsel you is to remember and follow it at the proper time. I have always found you to be honest and upright. Continue to be so. Fear God, and do your duty to man, and you will grow up all your father and I wish to see you. Now, fare thee well," he added, pressing Roger's hand. "If this proposed expedition to sea be carried out, you will witness strange sights and things of which you little dream at present, and you will come back, I hope, well able to amuse us two old men in our solitude with an account of your adventures."

The Colonel turned his horse's head, and Roger rode forward on his nag to Langton Hall. The squire received him in the kindest way possible.

"As I cannot take one of my sons, I am glad of your company, Roger, though it may delay your arrival at Bristol for some days," he observed.

"I thought that the journey could be performed in three days," said Roger.

"So it can under ordinary circumstances," answered Mr Battiscombe, "but there may be interruptions, and we may have to tarry at the houses of friends; but I will talk to you more about that matter when we are on the road."

Roger was always treated as a friend by the family at Langton Hall, who thought of him more as the son of Mr Willoughby, who agreed with them in politics and religion, than as the nephew of the Cavalier Colonel Tregellen, with whom they differed on many points.

At an early hour the following morning the whole family were astir to see the travellers start. Mr Battiscombe took with him a couple of stout serving-men, well mounted on strong horses. Farewells were uttered, and they set out. Leaving Axminster and Chard to the west, they proceeded northward along green lanes, the hedges on either side rich with flowers of varied tints. For some distance they met with few persons, for the labourers were out in the fields, and no travellers were journeying along those by-roads. The first day's journey was but a short one, as Mr Battiscombe was unwilling to run the risk of knocking up his horses. As there was no inn on the road, they stopped at the house of a friend of his, holding the same religious and political opinions. As Roger took but little interest in the subjects they discussed over the decanters of beer which were placed on the table at supper, he was not sorry to be ordered off to bed.

"If we do not make more progress than we have done to-day, it will be a long time before we get to Bristol," he thought. "Had I been by myself, I could have made my nag go twice as far. However, we shall see how much we can accomplish to-morrow."

As on the previous day, they started at early dawn, that, as Mr Battiscombe said, "they might run no risk of having to travel by night." They stopped at noon at a farm-house, with the owner of which Mr Battiscombe was well acquainted. The family were sitting down to dinner, and the travellers were warmly invited to enter and partake of the abundant though somewhat rough fare placed on the board. At one end of the table sat the sturdy farmer with his buxom wife and his sons and daughters; at the other were the farm-servants, with wooden bowls and platters before them, their knives the only implements they possessed to help themselves to food.

"We are about to make holiday this afternoon Mr Battiscombe," said the farmer. "The great Duke of Monmouth, with a party of friends, has ridden down from London to pay us west country folks a visit, and is on his way to stop at

White Lackington House, where Mr George Speke awaits to welcome him. The country people from all quarters are turning out to do him honour, and we wish to show the affection we all feel for the champion of the Protestant faith."

"I had some intimation of this a few days ago, and so timed my journey to Bristol that I might be able to pay my respects to our brave Duke," said Mr Battiscombe.

As soon as dinner was over the farmer and his sons mounted their horses, and the whole party rode forward at a more rapid rate than Mr Battiscombe and Roger had gone on the previous day. As they reached the high-road which was between Ilchester and Ilminster, they saw numbers of people, some on horseback, some on foot, hurrying up from all directions, both men and women, among them several parties of young maidens dressed in white, and carrying baskets of flowers, the men generally in their gayest costumes. Presently the cry arose, "The Duke is coming!" when the young women hurried on and strewed the road with herbs and flowers, and as the Duke appeared, incessant shouts arose, "God bless King Charles and the Protestant Duke!" No one could look on him without admiring his fine figure, his handsome features, and graceful manner, as he bowed with his plumed hat, now to one side, now to the other. It was truly an exciting scene. Banks lined with people in their gayest dresses, trees covered with boys who had climbed up to obtain a better view of the spectacle, banners with various devices waving everywhere, while the people bawled themselves hoarse with shouting their joyous welcomes. Mr Battiscombe was among those who rode forward to salute the Duke and then to fall into his train, which was rapidly increasing. At last two thousand appeared in one body from the direction of Ilminster, more and more continuing to pour in, till their numbers must have swelled to twenty thousand at least. Mr Battiscombe met several friends and acquaintances, with whom he held conversation, and all were unanimous in speaking of the affability and condescension of the Duke. Thus for several miles they rode on, their numbers increasing, till they reached the confines of White Lackington Park. Mr Speke, the owner, who had been prepared for the Duke's coming, rode out with a body of retainers to welcome his Grace; and that there might be no impediment to the entrance of the multitude who had arrived, he forthwith ordered several perches of the park paling to be taken down. In front of the house stood a group of Spanish chestnut-trees, famed for their size and beauty; beneath them were placed tables abundantly spread with all varieties of refreshment, of which the Duke with his immediate attendants were invited to partake.

Mr Speke no sooner observed Mr Battiscombe than, beckoning to him, he introduced him to the Duke, with whom he had much conversation, while Roger was left by himself to watch the proceedings. The horsemen rode round and round that they might obtain a good view of the Duke, while those on foot pressed forward for the same purpose, and it was not without difficulty that they were prevented from approaching too near. No person, indeed, under royal rank had ever been received with the respect and honours now bestowed on the Duke. So well accustomed, however, was he to be thus treated, that he took everything as a matter of course; at the same time he expressed his gratitude to his noble entertainers for the honour they were doing him. He was leaning back talking to Mr Battiscombe, his hand hanging carelessly over the side of the chair, when from among the crowd a woman rushed forward, and eagerly seizing it, placed it on her head and face. The Duke, apparently much astonished, started up.

"Why did you do that, good woman?" he asked.

"That I might be cured of the king's evil, for which I have in vain applied all the remedies the surgeons can prescribe," she answered. "I have also travelled a score of miles that I might be touched by the seventh son of a seventh son, though all with no effect; but now I am assured that I shall recover."

"I pray that you may, good woman," said the Duke, "though I know not how far the power of curing resides in me. What is your name?"

"Elizabeth Parcet."

"Here," said the Duke, producing a coin from his pocket, "this may help to console you should my touch fail to produce the desired effect." The woman on this immediately retired, telling all those present that she felt sure she should ere long recover.

The Duke slept that night at White Lackington House, to which Mr Speke invited Mr Battiscombe and Roger, who had thus a further opportunity of seeing the Duke. The next day the Duke set forth to visit Sir John Sydenham at Brampton House, where he was entertained with a splendid dinner. In the evening he went on to Barrington Court, the seat of Sir William Strode, who had prepared another sumptuous entertainment to do him honour. After dinner, attended by a multitude of people, he rode to Chard, at which town he was met and welcomed by a crowd of men, women, and children, all shouting their welcomes till their voices were hoarse. At night he slept at Ford Abbey, where he was treated to a very splendid supper by the owner, Mr Edmund Prideaux.

Mr Battiscombe would willingly have accompanied His Grace during the rest of his progress, but he was compelled to proceed on his journey. He, however, received due notice of the movements of the Duke, who visited many other gentlemen of rank and influence throughout Somersetshire and other parts in the west. He received, too, notice of the perfect cure of Elizabeth Parcet, the document being signed by Henry Clark, minister of Crewkerne, two captains, a clergyman, and four others, which was forwarded to him before he reached Bristol.

"This is wonderful!" he exclaimed as he showed it to Roger. "It proves one of two things, either that the Duke of Monmouth is the lawful son of Charles the Second, or that imagination must have had a powerful influence on the poor woman, for it is here stated that in two days she was perfectly well."

"Is it not possible that there may not be a third solution to the mystery?" asked Roger, who was clear-sighted and somewhat matter-of-fact. "There being a good many people who desire to have it supposed that the Duke is the rightful heir to the throne of England, it is possible that the paper was a bold forgery, drawn up for the purpose of influencing the populace. Either the woman may have been hired to play her part, and was not really a martyr to the king's evil, or she may not be cured. It might be worth while to inquire whether Mr Clark, the minister of Crewkerne,

ever put his signature to the paper, or if such a person exists; such, I suspect, would be the opinion my uncle would have formed on the subject."

"Thou art a thorough infidel, Roger!" exclaimed Mr Battiscombe in a half angry tone, though he confessed there was some probability in what Roger said.

Be that as it may, the document produced the effect intended on the minds of many of the ignorant, not only in the West of England but in London, where it was circulated, and the Duke and his supporters were not persons generally inclined to contradict what was calculated to forward their objects.

Instead of three or four days, more than a week had passed before Mr Battiscombe and Roger reached Bristol, where Stephen welcomed them at the lodgings he occupied, close to the mansion of the wealthy firm in whose service he was employed. Mr Handscombe was still there, though about to return to London. He was highly pleased at hearing of the reception the Duke had met with.

"He has been sowing the seeds which will, I hope, produce ample fruit in good time," he observed. "While his present Majesty lives, though at heart more Papist than Protestant, it may be well for him to remain quiet; but should James Duke of York come to the throne, it will be time for all who love our Protestant principles to rally round the standard of Monmouth."

Mr Battiscombe having soon transacted the business which had brought him to Bristol, took his departure to return south with Mr Handscombe.

Roger set to work with the zeal which was one of his characteristics to master the details of the work he had undertaken, and soon won the approval and confidence of his employers.

Bristol, though covering a much less extent of ground than at the present time, was then looked upon as a large city, but its beautiful churches were surrounded by a labyrinth of narrow lanes, through which a coach or cart could with difficulty pass along; goods were therefore conveyed about the town almost exclusively in trucks drawn by dogs. As even the chief merchants could not use carriages when they went abroad, they walked on foot, attended by servants in rich liveries. They were renowned also for their luxurious entertainments, when their guests were supplied with a beverage composed of the richest Spanish wines, known as "Bristol milk." The merchants traded chiefly to the West Indies and the American plantations, as also to the coast of Africa and the Levant. It was in one of these princely firms that Stephen Battiscombe and Roger Willoughby were so fortunate as to find employment, and, thanks to the strong recommendation of Mr Handscombe, they were both placed in posts of trust.

Chapter Three.

Several months had passed away, during which Stephen Battiscombe and Roger Willoughby had performed their duties in the counting-house at Bristol much to the satisfaction of their employers. Roger had not abandoned his wish of going to sea, though he was too wise to give up his present situation till a good opportunity should offer. He had, while passing along the quay, observed a house with a large wooden quadrant over the door, and on inquiry he found that a certain master-mariner, Captain Trickett, who gave lessons in astronomy and navigation, resided there. He made bold to enter, and explaining his wish to master the subjects the captain taught, soon entered into an arrangement to attend three evenings a week.

"I promise you, lad, before the winter is over, to turn you out as good a navigator as Sir Francis Drake, Master John Hawkins, or any other sea-captain you may be pleased to name," said the old captain. "Give your mind to it, that is the first requisite; it is of little use for an instructor to put information in one ear which pops out at the other as soon as it is received."

Captain Trickett was an enthusiast in his art, had been pilot in his youth to several expeditions which had gone forth from England to explore foreign regions, and had many strange accounts to give of the buccaneers and logwood cutters in the Caribbean Sea, where he himself had spent some time. Roger made considerable progress in his studies, and at length persuaded Stephen Battiscombe to accompany him.

"It would not be lost time if you also were to take some lessons and were to try to master the subject; it is very interesting, and perchance some day, if you have to sail on business to foreign lands, you may find the knowledge you acquire of use," said Roger. "Captain Trickett tells me that he has known instances where the officers of a ship have died, and no one on board remained capable of taking her into port."

Thus instigated, Stephen, who had a very good head for mathematics, readily attended the instruction of Captain Trickett, and following the Captain's advice by giving his mind to the subject, soon acquired as much knowledge as Roger himself. On holidays, when the sun was up in the sky, the Captain delighted to accompany his pupils to some open space, where, with the aid of a false horizon, he could teach them practically how to take an observation or to "shoot the sun," as he called it. The mode in which the two lads were employing themselves came to the ears of the principals of the firm, who much approved of their diligence and industry.

"Would that we had others like you!" said Mr Kempson. "Our difficulty is to find men who combine knowledge of business with that of seamanship and navigation. After a few voyages, if Captain Trickett does not speak of you in too laudatory terms, you will be able to take charge of a ship to sail either to the West Indies or to the North American plantations, or to the coast of Africa, or to the Levant. We will take care, in the meantime, that you have opportunities of exercising your skill."

Roger and Stephen thanked the worthy merchant for the approval he had bestowed on them, and promised to continue as diligent as heretofore.

Roger often went down to the river to inquire what vessels had arrived, in the hopes of meeting with Captain Benbow, who he felt sure would receive him on board his ship, but the *Benbow* frigate did not make her appearance. He heard, however, that she had been met with bound for the Thames, so that he had the satisfaction of knowing that she had escaped the gale which caught her off the Dorsetshire coast. He was told, indeed, that she always traded between London and foreign ports, and that there was very little probability of her putting into Bristol, unless she should obtain a cargo from any merchants connected with that port, which was not likely, as they always reserved their freights for Bristol vessels.

"I must hope for some other chance of meeting him," said Roger to Stephen as they were walking home. "I do not think he can have forgotten me, and he appeared to be a man who, having made a promise, would certainly keep to it, so that if I could fall in with his ship I should not hesitate to go on board and ask him to take me."

"You are very well off where you are," remarked Stephen, "and I would advise you to stick to the desk till you have gained a thorough knowledge of mercantile affairs. You may then have an opportunity of turning them to good account, whereas at present you scarcely know enough to be of much use to you."

Roger could not but acknowledge that this was the case, and he wisely determined to quell his impatience and to go on as he had begun.

They both occasionally received letters from home, which seldom, however, contained much matter of interest except to themselves. More frequently news came from London of important public matters. They heard of the Rye-house Plot, of the fall of Shaftesbury and of his escape to Holland, the execution of Russell and Sydney, the death of Essex by his own hand in the Tower, to escape the fate awaiting him. Roger took but little interest in politics; Stephen, on the contrary, was always eager to read the *News-Letter* when it arrived from the capital. He mourned over the banishment of the Duke of Monmouth, who, after the discovery of the Rye-house Plot, though forgiven by the King, thought it prudent to retire to Holland; and he was indignant at hearing of the way the Duke of York was ruling Scotland, of the odious laws he had passed, and of the barbarous punishments he caused to be inflicted, often himself being present when prisoners were subjected to torture. It was said that he watched the agony of the sufferers as if it afforded him intense satisfaction.

"His tyrannical proceedings show clearly how he intends to govern England. Should he succeed to the throne of England, he must never be allowed to mount it," exclaimed Stephen. "He will not be content till he has crushed out our civil and religious liberties, which the best blood of our country has been shed to obtain. Would that when the gallant Duke of Monmouth came to the west, the thousands who greeted him had banded together and marched to London to insist on the exclusion of the Duke of York and the nomination of Monmouth as heir to his father."

"Such a proceeding could scarcely have succeeded without bloodshed," observed Roger.

"Better to have shed a few streamlets than the rivers which may have to flow should the tyrant gain the throne," answered Stephen.

The opinions of Stephen Battiscombe were held by a good many others, although, like wise men, when they could not benefit the cause they did not utter them in public. Bristol having had fighting enough in former years, they did not again wish to see war brought to her gates. Stephen might at present safely entertain his opinions, but there seemed no chance just then of his having an opportunity of practically acting on them.

The summer had commenced, when one morning Mr Kempson sent for Stephen.

"You know, Battiscombe, that we have a new vessel, the *Dolphin*, fitting out in the river, and judging from the intelligence you have shown and your aptitude for business that you will be well suited for the office, we propose sending you out as supercargo, and as young Roger Willoughby has given us satisfaction, we think of letting him go as cabin-boy that he may assist you. Are you willing to undertake the office?"

"With all my heart," answered Stephen; "and I can answer for Willoughby, who will, I know, be delighted, for he has long wished to go to sea."

"We will consider that matter settled, then," said Mr Kempson. "Here is a list of the cargo we intend shipping, and you and Willoughby will go on board to-morrow morning, and note each case and bale as it is lowered into the hold. You will also be supplied with samples of all the goods, so that you will be well acquainted with the articles under your charge. I will give you further directions by and by. In the meantime you can see about young Willoughby's outfit and your own, and tell Mr Tape the tailor to send in the account to us."

Stephen was highly pleased with the complimentary way the senior partner spoke to him, and he was about to leave the room eager to tell Roger the good news, when a strongly-built black-bearded man entered.

"Stay, Battiscombe," said the senior partner; "I will take this opportunity of introducing you to Captain Roberts, who commands the *Dolphin*, as you will be shipmates for some months, or longer."

"Happy to make the young gentleman's acquaintance," said the Captain, putting out his hand and giving Stephen a grip which nearly wrung his fingers off; "hope we shall get on well together. I came up here, Mr Kempson, to say that the ship is ready to take in cargo as soon as you are ready to ship it."

"We may say to-morrow, then, and Mr Battiscombe, with young Willoughby to assist him, will go on board and take charge of the cargo."

As the Captain had some further business to transact with Mr Kempson, Stephen took his leave, and hurried out to tell Roger, who was just leaving the counting-house for the day.

"What, are we really to be off soon!" exclaimed the latter. "I can scarcely believe the good news you tell me. I little thought when I got off my high stool, that it was the last time I was to mount it, for I suppose that the *Dolphin* will sail as soon as the cargo is received on board."

"Little doubt about that," said Stephen. "The sooner we see to getting our outfits the better."

"I have brought a good store of things from home," said Roger.

"You have outgrown a good lot of them, I should think," remarked Stephen; "and we will at once pay a visit to Mr Tape, who will know more or less what you require."

"But how are they to be paid for?" asked Roger.

"Mr Kempson will settle that," said Stephen.

"He is very kind and generous, and I am grateful to him," said Roger.

They at once carried out their intentions.

The following morning by daybreak they went on board the *Dolphin*. As none of the cargo had arrived, they had time to look over the ship, and to take a glance round the cabin which was to be their home for some months to come. It was fitted up with several berths, besides a state cabin intended for the Captain's use. There were arms of various sorts, such as musketoons, pistols, pikes, and hangers, fixed against the after-bulkhead, and there was a table in the centre, surrounded by strong wooden chairs. There was not much in the way of ornament, everything seemed intended for use.

While they were there the Captain, who had come on board, entered the cabin. "Glad to see you so soon, young gentlemen," he observed; "it is the early bird that gets the worm," as they say. "I thought that we should very likely have to wait for you, but now when the cargo comes down we may begin stowing away at once."

In a short time a number of trucks arrived on the wharf, bringing bales and packages, which the crew began hoisting on board with the help of a crane and whips. The process was a somewhat long one compared to the rapid way in which vessels are laden at the present day. Stephen and Roger had plenty of time to note each bale, package, and cask before it was lowered into the hold, it being Roger's business to see where each was stowed, so that they might be got at when required. They worked on diligently, knocking off only for a short time to dine, so that in the afternoon, when Mr Kempson came down, they had made good progress. He commended them accordingly. Roger, as he looked at the pile of goods, wondered how room could be found for them on board, yet after all the cases had been stowed away in the capacious hold, there was plenty of room left for more. In three days, however, the cargo was complete, the hatches were put on and fastened down, and Captain Roberts announced that he was ready for sea. Stephen and Roger had but little time to get their things, to run round and bid their friends farewell; their last visit was to Captain Trickett.

"Farewell, my boys, and a prosperous voyage to you!" he said, as he shook their hands warmly. "You may meet with adventures, some not as pleasant as you would desire, but stick to your duty, never say die, and hope for the best."

That evening the *Dolphin* began to drop down the river with the tide. She was a fine vessel, not so large, Roger thought, as the *Benbow* frigate, but she had three masts, with a long mizzen-yard, on which a triangular sail was set. She was deep-waisted, with a high poop, and topgallant fore-castle, from beneath each of which two guns were so placed that should boarders gain the deck, they would be quickly shot down. She had, besides, eight guns pointing out at the sides, and was able to defend herself against any ordinary enemies; indeed, in those days when pirates and buccaneers abounded, it was necessary for merchant vessels which had rich freights to guard to be well-armed, especially when they sailed alone, without convoy of a man-of-war. As the wind was from the northward, as soon as they got clear of the Severn all sail was hoisted, and they stood down the British Channel, and Roger walked the deck with no little satisfaction at finding himself at length on board ship. The following day they were out of sight of land. When Roger saw the Captain and his mates bring up their quadrants on deck just before noon to make an observation, he brought up his, and began in a methodical way to make preparations for taking one also.

"What, youngster, have you been at sea before?" asked the Captain.

"No, sir, but I have studied navigation, and I want to put my knowledge into practice."

"Well, now is the time; let us see how you do it."

Roger "shot the sun" in very good style; not only did that, but rapidly worked out the calculation on a small piece of paper, and it exactly agreed with that taken by the Captain, who looked well pleased, but it differed from that of one of the mates, who had made a mistake.

"You will do, my boy," said Captain Roberts. "I will try you with other observations by and by. Where did you get your knowledge?" Roger told him. "What, from old Trickett? No wonder you are correct; there is not a better navigator in Bristol."

Next day Stephen brought out his quadrant and did justice to his instructor, he also receiving a due amount of praise from the Captain. The mates looked rather jealous at the two youngsters, who had never before been to sea, who took observations as well as they could. Before the *Dolphin* had got half-way across the Bay of Biscay it fell calm, and she lay laving her sides in the smooth water, as the swell, which is seldom wanting there, passed under her keel. For many hours she did not move her position; the big mizzen, which had been flapping with reports like thunder, was furled; the other sails were brailed up. Roger, who was always of a social disposition, took the opportunity of having a

talk with some of the crew. Among them was a black, who, although still very young, being scarcely more than a boy, had met with many strange adventures,—among others, he had been made prisoner by the Moors. He could talk Arabic, he said, as well as English, which was not, by the by, very correctly. He was called Jack Jumbo on board, but he preferred being called Felix, a name, he told Roger, some gentlemen had given him because he was always a merry fellow. He hinted that he had been a prince in his own country, but he had been carried away at an early age; he did not know much about it. Roger took a great liking to him, for from his intelligence and good disposition he was a better companion than the rough seamen who formed the crew of the *Dolphin*. The only other person who need be named was Sam Stokes, an old sailor who had fought under Blake and Admiral Penn, had made half a dozen voyages to Virginia and the West India Islands, besides to many others in different parts of the world. He was rough enough to look at, being the colour of mahogany, his countenance wrinkled and furrowed by strong winds and hot suns. He was quiet in his manners, seemed kind-hearted, with plenty of sense under his bald head and its fringe of grizzled hair. He was an excellent seaman, and took a pleasure in instructing Roger, who always went to him when he wanted information. He would tell him not only how to do a thing, but the why and the wherefore each thing was done, so that Roger made rapid progress under his tuition. Of the mates and boatswain little need be said; they were tolerable seamen, but the first two were but poor navigators, and the boatswain could not take an observation or work a day's work, being unable to read or write, though he was the best seaman of the three. The crew were rough-and-ready fellows, were tolerably obedient when they were well treated and liquor was kept out of their way; but if anything was done to displease them, they were ready to grumble and try to right themselves after their own fashion. The two mates and the boatswain, who constituted the officers of the ship, were somewhat jealous of Stephen and Roger, whom they considered unduly favoured by the owners. Neither of them, however, took any notice of this. Roger's great object had been from the first to master all the details of seamanship. From morning till night he was at work getting the seamen to show him how to knot and splice, to steer and reef; whenever sail was to be made or taken in he was always on the yard, and as active as any one, so that he soon gained the respect of the seamen. It was a great advantage to him and Stephen to have fine weather for so long a period, though they made but slow progress on their voyage, but it enabled them to gain experience far more easily than they would have done had the sea been rough and the ship tumbling about. Owing to light and contrary winds, five weeks had passed before the *Dolphin* got into the latitude of the Straits, nearly a hundred miles to the westward of them.

"When, Captain Roberts, think you, shall we be into the Mediterranean?" asked Stephen, who had been examining the chart.

"That must depend on the way the wind blows," answered the Captain. "It has been out of temper with us for a precious long time, and I cannot say when it is likely to get into a better humour."

The Captain was right not to be too sanguine; before an hour had passed the wind shifted to the east-north-east. The *Dolphin*, close-hauled under larboard tack, stood towards the African coast.

"What about Algerine corsairs, the Sallee rovers?" asked Roger.

"If we fall in with any of the gentry, as our business is to trade not to fight, we must run if we can; but if they come up with us, we must show what British pluck can do, and beat them off," said the Captain.

"As little honour is to be gained, we may hope not to encounter any of the gentlemen," said Stephen.

The *Dolphin* had been standing on to the south-east, a course which would take her some way to the southward of the Straits. Captain Roberts said he hoped that a tack or two would enable him to fetch the Straits, and once through them, that they should get a fair wind up the Mediterranean. Evening was approaching when the look-out from aloft shouted, "A sail on the weather-bow."

"What does she look like?" asked the Captain.

"She's a large craft, standing to the south-west, under all sail."

The stranger's course would bring her directly down upon the *Dolphin*. Captain Roberts was provided with a telescope, an instrument not long introduced at sea, which many merchant vessels did not possess. Taking it with him, for he was not willing to intrust to the hands of any one else, he went aloft, steadying it against the mast; while he stood in the maintop, he took a long gaze at the stranger. Returning on deck, he immediately ordered the ship to be kept away, so as to bring her before the wind. All sail which she could possibly carry was set, some hanging down from the yards, rigged across the bowsprit to the very water, while stud-sails were rigged out on the foremast, and the sheet of the huge mizzen was eased off, and the sail bulged out with the freshening breeze.

"What do you think of the stranger, sir?" asked Stephen of the Captain.

"I deem her to be an Algerine, one of those piratical craft we were but just now speaking of. She's a large ship, more than twice our size, and probably carries heavy guns, and four or five times as many men as we do; we might beat her off, and if she comes up to us, that is what we must try to do, but it will be wiser to keep ahead of her. We shall soon see which is the fastest craft, and what chance we have of running out of her sight. We have the advantage of night coming on, and during the darkness we must alter our course so as to give her the slip." All hands were on deck at their stations, ready to shorten sail should it be necessary. Many an eye was turned towards the stranger to ascertain if she was getting nearer.

"What do you think about it, Sam?" asked Roger of the old sailor.

"Yonder craft is light, and we are heavily laden, though I will allow that the *Dolphin* slips along at a good rate; but there is no doubt that she is gaining on us, though a stern chase is a long one. We may keep ahead of her for some hours to come, always provided we do not carry anything away."

"But if she does come up with us, what shall we have to do?" asked Roger.

"Beat her off, of course, though we have only eight guns, and may be she carries twenty or more; we must work ours twice as fast as she does hers. I know those Algerine cut-throats of yore; and if they are met bravely, they quickly show the white feather. It is only when the Christians cry out 'Peccavi!' and seem inclined to give in, that they become wonderfully brave, and shout and shriek and wave their scimitars. I was with the brave Captain Harman, aboard the twenty-six-gun ship *Guernsey*, with a crew of a hundred and ten men all told, when we fell in up the Straits with an Algerine man-of-war, carrying fifty guns and five hundred men, called the *White Horse*. She stood down upon us, under all sail, having the weather-gauge, and as soon as she got within gunshot began blazing away. Several times she attempted to board, but we drove back her cut-throat crew, though the rest of her people were blazing away at us with musketry from her poop and forecastle. I believe we should have taken her, but our captain received three musket balls in his body, and was nearly knocked over by a gunshot; still he would not go below, and remained on deck till he sank from loss of blood. Our first lieutenant then took the command, and we continued engaging for another hour or more, till we had lost nine killed and three times as many wounded, for no one ever thought of giving in—that meant having our throats cut or being carried off into slavery; but at last the Algerine hauled off. Our rigging was too much cut about to allow us to follow, so she got away with the loss of not far short of a third of her crew, I suspect, from the number we saw hove overboard. Our brave captain died three days afterwards from the effects of his wounds, and the first lieutenant was promoted, as he deserved to be. Now, it is my belief that if we do not capture yonder craft, should she attack us, we may beat her off just as we did the *White Horse*."

Old Sam told this story in a loud voice, so that his shipmates might hear and be encouraged to resist to the last.

Captain Roberts walked the poop, every now and then taking a glance at the stranger through his telescope. Stephen and Roger joined him there. He looked calm and determined.

"If I can, I intend to avoid fighting," he said; "but if we are attacked, I know I can rely on you two, as I have seen what stuff you are made of. You will do your best to keep the crew at their guns; and should anything happen to me, you will fight the ship as long as there is a shot in the locker or a charge of powder remains. I wish I had more confidence in my mates; but I am afraid that they have not the hearts of chickens, though they are good seamen, for I have been trying to make them understand that it is safer to fight than to yield, for if we give in, one and all of us will be knocked on the head or carried into slavery, so that it will be far better to let the ship sink under us than to strike our colours."



"AT LENGTH THE SUN WENT DOWN, HIS LAST RAYS SHINING ON THE LOFTY CANVAS OF THE STRANGER." [See page 82.]

Stephen and Roger fully agreed with the Captain, and promised to do their best to keep their men at the guns. At length the sun went down, his last rays shining on the lofty canvas of the stranger, now about two miles astern; still the *Dolphin* might keep ahead. Darkness came on, but with the darkness the chance of escaping increased. At length the dim outline of their pursuer alone could be seen against the sky. Those on board the *Dolphin* well knew that while she was visible to them, they must also be seen by her, and that it would be useless to attempt altering their course. They therefore kept on as before. The Captain kept his eye upon her, hoping that some change of the atmosphere might occur to hide her from sight, but that dark phantom-like form grew more and more distinct.

"My lads," cried the Captain, "before another half-hour has passed she will be up with us. Have your matches ready, and fire as soon as I give the word; do not wait for further orders, but load as fast as you can, and blaze away at her hull. The Moors, if I mistake not, will soon have had enough of it; they are not fond of attacking vessels when they meet with opposition."

Roger felt his heart beat quick when shortly after this he saw the ship's white-spread sails, towering towards the sky, come ranging up on their quarter.

"Down with the helm," cried the Captain. "Now, lads, fire!" The *Dolphin* sent a raking broadside aboard the Algerine, and the helm being immediately put up again, she stood on her former course. Shrieks and cries and groans came from the deck of the enemy, followed immediately by a broadside intended to rake the *Dolphin*. Though several shot came on board, no one was hurt. Captain Roberts knew, however, that he could not expect to execute the same manoeuvre with the like success. In a short time the Algerine was close abreast of her. All the *Dolphin's* guns had been run over to the same side, and were now fired as rapidly as the crew could load and run them out. The enemy, however, were not idle, and their shot came crashing aboard; first one man was shot down, then another, still the British crew cheered, and kept blazing away. This sort of work had been going on for some time, when the Captain shouted, "Look out, lads! Boarders; repel boarders!" And the Algerine was seen ranging up so as to fall alongside, her rigging crowded with figures, arms and weapons waving, showing their eagerness for the fight. In another minute there came a loud crash, and a number of her crew, led by their captain. Most of them were cut down, others driven overboard, or back into their ship, the grappling-irons were cast loose, while the *Dolphin* rushed forward on her former course. Still her after-guns were plied vigorously, though the enemy, again ranging up abreast, fired her broadsides in return. As far as Roger could perceive, the mates behaved well, assisting the men to work the guns. The Captain continued to cheer them on, and presently Roger, who was standing not far off, blazing away with his musket, saw him stagger, hurried to his assistance barely in time to save him before he fell on the deck.

"Are you hurt, sir?" he asked.

"I am afraid somewhat badly. Do not let the men know it. Help me to the bulwarks, where I can hold on."

He called Stephen, who was also loading and firing as fast as he could, to come and help him. The Captain continued, wounded as he was, to cheer on the men. Several more broadsides were exchanged, the bullets all the time flying about like hail, when the pirate's bows were seen to be turning from them. Presently she hauled her wind, and stood away to the southward. The British crew on this raised a hearty cheer as they sent a few last shot flying after her. Scarcely had the shout died away than the brave Captain sank down on the deck.

"We must carry him below and see to his wounds," said Stephen, and Roger called Sam Stokes and another man to their assistance.

"Tell the mate to stand on till he loses sight of the pirate, and then haul to the northward," whispered the Captain in a faint voice. He could say no more. As soon as he was placed in his berth, Stephen and Roger did their best to doctor him, but they were unaccustomed to surgical operations.

"Let me see what I can do," said Sam. "I have had half-a-dozen bullets in my body during my time, and seen hundreds of men wounded, so I ought to have a little notion." So he set to work in a methodical way to discover what had become of the bullet which had entered the Captain's side. He managed to find it, and, what was of great consequence, the cloth which had been carried in at the same time, and got them out, then stopped the blood and bound up the wound.

"Cannot say how he will do, but I have done my best, and can do no more," observed old Sam as he left the cabin to look after some of his wounded messmates.

Three men had been killed and five wounded out of the crew, which greatly reduced their strength. The first mate, who now took command, hauled up to the northward, as the Captain had directed him. As the *Dolphin* had been running for so many hours out of her course, she was considerably to the southward of the Straits, though the mate asserted that they would be able to fetch the entrance of the Straits if the wind held the following day. Nothing more was seen of the Algerine during the night, and hopes were entertained that she would not again attempt to molest them. The Captain, notwithstanding that the bullet had been extracted, continued in a very weak state, and almost unconscious. Stephen and Roger, not trusting to the mate's navigation, got out the chart, marked down the course they had run to the best of their knowledge, and the next morning took an observation, which placed the *Dolphin* considerably to the southward. Whereon the mate asserted that she was much nearer the coast, in fact she had been sailing almost parallel with it for a considerable distance, and soon after noon he put the ship about and steered due east.

"I think, sir, that to sight the rock of Gibraltar we should be steering north-east," observed Stephen, pointing to the chart.

"Ho, ho, young man, you fancy that you understand navigation better than I do," said the mate. "Just keep your remarks to yourself till I request you to make them."

Stephen could say no more, but he and Roger agreed, when the first mate went below, they would try to get the second to alter the ship's course. The first mate seemed to suspect their intentions, for he remained on deck, and when the wind drew more from the east which it did shortly after noon, kept the ship away to the south-east.

"The fellow will be running us on shore, or we shall be falling in with some Sallee rovers, for we cannot be far off their coast by this time," said Stephen. "I think we had better have a talk with Sam Stokes, and hear his opinion."

Sam, although no navigator, was perfectly inclined to agree with them.

"If the Captain was himself, we might get orders to put you under arrest, for it might be a serious affair if we did so and fell in with a man-of-war; we should be accused of mutiny and intending to turn pirates," observed Sam.

Roger, however, was strongly of opinion that they ought to make the mate again tack to the northward. They again spoke to him on the subject, and warned him of the danger he was running. He laughed scornfully, and again told them to mind their own business, asserting that they had nothing whatever to do with the navigation of the ship. On this they applied to the second mate and boatswain, and did their best to alarm them. They were still speaking on the

subject, and had some hope of success, when the first mate came up and inquired what they were talking about.

"This is mutiny, downright mutiny!" he exclaimed, and without more ado he ordered the second mate and boatswain to lash their arms behind them and carry them into the cabin.

"I do not wish to be hard with you, but I will not have my authority disputed, and you youngsters will remain there till I can prove to you that I am right and you are wrong."

Though they protested loudly at this treatment, the mate would not listen to them; they had therefore to submit. In the evening Jumbo brought supper to them, but he said that he was ordered not to hold any conversation, but to come away again as soon as he had placed the supper before them.

"But how is the ship going; what course is she steering?" asked Stephen.

"Bery well as far as me make out," answered Jumbo. "Sometimes steer east-south-east, sometimes south-east."

"Well, tell the men that that course will carry us on shore before daylight to-morrow morning," said Stephen.

"Me tink dey break dis nigger's head if he stop talking," said Jumbo, hurrying away in a great fright.

As their arms had been released, as soon as they had had their supper, being pretty well tired with the exertions which they had made the previous night, they lay down, and in spite of the danger they considered the ship was in.

After some time Roger woke, and going to the door of the cabin, found to his surprise that Jumbo had not locked it. Anxious to know how the ship was steering, he went up on deck, hoping not to be perceived by either of the mates. Getting a glimpse at the compass, he found that the ship was still steering south-east, and that the wind had become very light; the boatswain had charge of the deck. He knew by examining the sailing directions that strong currents set in towards the coast thereabouts, and should the wind shift to the westward, he even fancied, as he looked over the bulwarks, that he could see the distant land. He accordingly went back to Stephen, and rousing him up, asked him to come on deck. Stephen immediately hurried up with him.

"If the wind shifts to the westward, it will not be long before we are on the shore," said Stephen boldly to the boatswain.

"Who told you?" asked the boatswain in a somewhat anxious tone.

"My own sense," answered Stephen.

Scarcely had he spoken than the wind, which had dropped almost to a calm, shifted suddenly to the westward, and began to blow with considerable force.

"All hands shorten sail," shouted the boatswain, and the crew came tumbling up from below. The mates turned out of their berths, and the first mate looked with much astonishment at the state of affairs. The mate now saw that the ship's head must be put to the northward, and under diminished canvas he endeavoured to haul off shore. The wind blew harder and harder. Not half-an-hour had elapsed when a loud grating sound was heard.

"Down with the helm!" shouted the mate. It was too late; the ship would not come about, but drove on till she stuck hard and fast with her broadside to the sea. Stephen and Roger hurried into the cabin to secure some important papers, also to see what could be done for the poor Captain, should the ship go to pieces. They had fancied him unconscious, but he had been aroused by the sound of the ship striking, the meaning of which he knew too well.

"Battiscombe," he said, "help me on deck. I know what has happened, and that mate of mine has been the cause of it. I must see what can be done."

Though he was very weak they did as he directed them. His appearance tended to restore order.

"Men," he said, in as loud a voice as he could speak, "your lives depend upon obeying my directions. Battiscombe, you and Willoughby lower a boat, and carry a line ashore with you. Take Stokes and Jumbo with you. The rest of us must remain and try to get the ship afloat."

They did as he told them. The boat being lowered, they carried a long rope so as to form a communication with the shore, that should the worst come, those who remained on board might have a chance of gaining it. They had got within fifty fathoms, when a roller came in and capsized the boat, and sent them all struggling into the water. Stephen, who was a good swimmer, struck out, calling to Roger and the rest to follow him, and in a few seconds his feet touched the sand. He scrambled out, but on looking round, what was his horror not to discover Roger! He saw Sam Stokes and Jumbo strike out for the land. He gazed for a moment towards where the boat had been capsized, when he saw a head and arms rise amid the surf. Darting forward, he breasted the waves, and soon caught hold of the person he had seen. It was Roger, who, on being hauled on shore, quickly came to himself. Together they managed to rescue the seamen, but the boat was knocked to pieces, and the end of the rope lost. They could now neither return nor help those on board to reach the shore. The wind was increasing, clouds covered the sky, and they lost sight of the vessel in the thick spray and darkness. Roger proposed lighting a fire as a signal to those on board, but no driftwood could be discovered, and the fierce gale would soon have scattered the ashes had they made the attempt. They shouted at the top of their voices.

"It is no use in exhausting your strength," observed old Sam. "In the teeth of this hurricane our voices cannot travel half the distance to the wreck."

Finding at length that they could do nothing on the beach, they sought for shelter under the lee of a sandhill, where,

being exhausted by their exertions, they soon fell asleep.

Chapter Four.

When they awoke the next morning and looked out, not a vestige of the vessel could they see, but the beach was strewn with the wreck, while here and there lay the dead bodies of their shipmates.

“Sad fate, poor fellows!” said Stephen. “We should be thankful to Heaven for being preserved, to Captain Roberts for sending us on shore; but, alack, what will become of the cargo? It will be a heavy loss to Kempson and Company, and we might try to collect whatever is driven on shore.”

“I am afraid if we did that the natives would soon come down and deprive us of our property. If we can find some food among the things cast on shore it will be more to the purpose.”

They searched about, and at length, to their infinite satisfaction, discovered a cask of pork and a case containing bottles of wine.

“We are in luck,” said Sam. “And I have a notion that the savages of these parts will not drink the wine or eat the pork, so that we may have a chance of its being left to us.”

They broke open the cask of pork. Having no means of cooking it, they were obliged to eat it raw, while the wine did little towards quenching their thirst.

“I would give much for water,” said Stephen, “though not a drop do I see anywhere.”

“There may be some, notwithstanding,” observed Roger. “Many springs exist in the interior which lose themselves in the sand. We must push inland in search of one, and carry as much food as we can on our backs, while we hide the rest, with the wine, in the sand.”

Acting on this suggestion, the party provided themselves with broken spars to support their steps and serve as weapons of defence. Before starting they climbed to the top of a sandhill to take a look-out, but no vessel was in sight. The foam-covered sea came rolling in and dashed sullenly on the beach.

“While the gale lasts no vessel will willingly approach near the shore,” observed Stephen. “Water we want, and water we must have, or we shall perish.”

They accordingly set out, and all that day pushed on eastward, and the next, and the next. Their salt pork had turned bad, and the wine was nearly exhausted, and they were well-nigh starving. At last, getting to the top of a sandhill to look out, Roger fancied he saw some green trees in the distance.

“There may be an oasis out there,” he said; “we must try to gain it.”

In spite of the hot sun beating down on their heads they went on. Still the oasis, if such it was, appeared as far off as ever. Roger, whose strength, though he was the youngest, held out, did his best to cheer them on. At last old Sam declared that he could go no farther, and sank down, begging the others to bring him water if they could find it. In vain they tried to persuade him to move along, and they supported him for some distance till they came to another sandhill, where they placed him under some bushes which might afford some slight protection. Having no fire-arms they could only leave him a pointed stick with which to defend himself. They now hurried on, eager to obtain water not only for themselves, but that they might rescue their shipmate from death. They were almost sinking when their eyes were cheered by a grove of trees, though still far off. Roger acknowledged that they could not have been visible from where he had supposed he had seen them.

“They are date-trees!” he exclaimed. “They will afford us food, and water we may hope to find under them.”

As they reached the oasis their eyes were gladdened by the sight of a small pool formed by a spring bubbling out of the earth. Falling on their knees they eagerly baled the water into their mouths with their hands. Thus revived, Jumbo was able to climb one of the trees and obtain as many bunches of dates as they wanted. They now thought of their old shipmate, but when the sun went down the sky became overcast, and to find him in the dark seemed impossible.

“We cannot let him die,” said Roger. “I am ready to run the risk.”

“And I will go with you,” said Stephen.

“I go too,” said Jumbo.

And much as they would have enjoyed the rest under the trees, they started without delay. Roger thought he knew the direction to take, and in the cool air of night travelling was easier than in the daytime. They did not trouble their heads about lions, or leopards, or beasts of prey; though ready to sink with fatigue, they went on till they fancied that they had reached the spot where they had left old Sam. They shouted his name, but no answer came. They searched about, keeping within hail of each other. At length Jumbo cried out, “Here he is, and he no speak.” They hurried up, but poor Sam was apparently at the last gasp. Having poured some water, however, down his throat, he somewhat revived.

“Thought you would never come back, mates,” he said; “but give me some more water and I will soon be myself again.” After a second draught of water Sam was able to eat a few dates, and now declared that he was ready, if they wished it, to go with them to the oasis; but Stephen and Roger were both too tired to walk so far, and throwing

themselves down under the shelter of the bushes they fell asleep. The sun had already risen high when Roger awoke, and on going to the top of the sandhill to look out for the oasis, he saw between it and where he stood a number of objects. He called Stephen, who joined him.

"There are two parties on camels and horses, it seems to me," said Stephen, "one flying from the other."

Descending the sandhill they concealed themselves behind it lest they should be discovered; but Roger, unable to restrain his curiosity, crept on one side whence he could see what was taking place. The fugitives had turned round to meet their pursuers; a fierce fight was going forward, in which the camels on both sides seemed to be taking part by kicking and leaping at each other, and he could hear their peculiar cries amid the clash of the weapons and the shouts of the combatants. Presently he saw a person, who had apparently been thrown from his camel, come rushing at headlong speed towards the sandhill. Roger drew back, and in another minute the stranger came round to where the party lay. He was a mere boy, dressed in loose trousers, a silk jacket, a shawl round his waist, and a turban on his head. His alarm at seeing them was so great, that he was running on to avoid them, when Jumbo, who, it will be remembered, spoke Arabic, called to him gently, telling him that they were friends. On this he came and crouched down close to them, trembling in every limb.

"Ask him from whom he was flying," said Stephen to Jumbo.

"From the Ouadelins, who carried me off from my father's camp," said the young Arab.

"But were your friends not pursuing?" asked Stephen. Jumbo as before put the question.

"No; those who attacked my captors are equally enemies of my people, and had they taken me I should have fared worse than before," answered the young Arab.

From the sounds which reached their ears Stephen and his companions knew that the fight was still raging, but moving farther and farther from where they lay. The young Arab could not refrain from trying to see what was going on, and had not Roger pulled him back, would very likely have been discovered. At length the sound ceased, and crawling to the brow of the hillock, so as just to look over it, Roger saw the two parties apparently still carrying on a straggling fight in the far distance. They were by this time getting very hungry and thirsty.

"Come, gentlemen, let us be going to the date-grove," cried old Sam; "my throat is like a dust-bin."

"Should the Arabs come back they will carry us off if we do," observed Stephen. "Better bear our hunger and thirst till the coast is clear."

It was somewhat difficult, however, to restrain themselves. Seeing this, Selim, for so the young Arab was called, said Stephen's advice was good, and counselled them to remain concealed for the present. At last old Sam declared that he could stand it no longer, that he had eaten up the dates of the rest of the party and drunk up their water, and that it was his business to go and forage for them. Stephen again warned him, but in spite of this he set off, running for the date-grove. Roger, who had climbed to the top of the hill, watched as far as he could see his figure. At last he appeared to have entered the grove, and had been gone for some time, when Selim, who, accompanied by Jumbo, had been looking out from the top of the hill, said that his enemies were coming back and were making for the date-grove. Roger feared that old Sam would be on his way to rejoin them, and, being seen by the Arabs, would lead them to their hiding-place. The Arabs came nearer and nearer, and Roger fancied that he saw the old sailor just coming out of the grove, but on perceiving the Arabs, he darted back again, probably to conceal himself. His capture seemed certain. The Arabs reached the date-grove, and to the dismay of the shipwrecked party, appeared to be preparing to pass the night there. Their sufferings now became intense; they feared also that the old sailor would be compelled to betray them. The evening was approaching, and Roger and Stephen agreed that they could scarcely hope to live through the night unless they could obtain food. Suddenly Selim, observing their countenances, which showed how much they were suffering, put his hand in his pocket and produced a quantity of dried dates, which he offered to them. Though their thirst was great they were able to eat the dates, and felt much revived.

"The Arabs will go by daylight to-morrow," said Selim, pointing to the grove, "and then we may obtain water."

When night came, they lay down to rest. There was little risk of being discovered by their enemies, but a lion or some other wild beast might scent them. Both Roger and Stephen were, however, too tired to keep awake, but Selim seemed to divine how matters stood, and offered to sit up and watch while they slept. He was faithful to his trust, for when the dawn broke and Roger awoke, he saw him still sitting, with his eyes fixed on them.

"Ouadelins are on the move," he said, "but we must lie close or they will discover us."

Roger, however, went to the top of the hillock, on which a few bushes completely concealed him, and from thence he could see the date-grove. In a short time the Arabs, mounted on their camels, were seen moving to the north-east. Stephen and Roger, with their two dark-skinned companions, waited till the Arabs had disappeared in the distance; they then all four hurried to the grove. On reaching it they lost not a moment in quenching their thirst, and as soon as they had recovered their voices they shouted for old Sam, but no answer was returned. They hunted about in all directions, and at last came to the conclusion that the Arabs had carried him off. They had taken away a large portion of the dates, but a few remained, which Selim and Jumbo, climbing the tree, got for them. They remained in the grove all day eating dates and drinking water.

"I say, Stephen, we cannot live here for ever," said Roger, "for we shall soon have eaten all the provisions the country supplies. We must consult with Selim as to what course to pursue."

Selim, through Jumbo, advised that they should move northward.

"It is a long journey to tents of my people," he said, but he thought that he could conduct them there in safety.

Accordingly, after another night's rest, and having loaded themselves with dates and filled their bottles with water, they set out. Selim advised them to be very careful of the water, as it might be many days before they reached another spring. With their sticks in their hands they trudged over the plain. Though the heat was great, the country as they advanced was less arid and sandy than farther south. After travelling for five or six days they unexpectedly came upon another date-grove shading a pool. Here they replenished their provisions and water, and after a whole day's rest again set forward. Stephen suggested that they should return to the coast, where they might be taken off by some passing vessel.

"You forget that passing vessels are more likely to be enemies than friends," observed Roger. "We cannot be very far off from Sallee and those ports out of which the rovers sail. Having thus unexpectedly met a friend, it will be better to stick by him, and he may, through his relatives, find the means of enabling us to escape from the country."

When they spoke on the subject to Selim, he advised them not to go to the coast, but to continue on till they could meet with his people, who would be sure to show their gratitude for the service they had rendered him. Day after day they trudged on, sometimes almost starved and ready to die of thirst. Occasionally they saw what they supposed to be caravans moving in the distance, but Selim recommended that they should not attempt to join them, as he feared that the Arabs might carry them off to sell as slaves. At length one day they were traversing a wide open plain without either hillocks or bushes, when they saw some objects moving towards them. On they came rapidly, and were soon discovered to be a party of men on the backs of camels.

"The camels are of the Bu Saif breed," cried Selim; "we cannot escape them."

"Let us stand still and not make the attempt," said Stephen.



They accordingly stood, as Stephen advised, close together, he in front, Selim and Jumbo on one side, and Roger on the other. As the camels drew nearer, it was seen that they were ridden by dark-skinned fellows, who were brandishing in their hands long spears and scimitars. Uttering loud shouts, the strangers dashed forward as if about to cut down the shipwrecked party, when suddenly Selim sprang forward, and raising his hands, exclaimed, "I am Selim Ben Hamid, the son of the chief of the Malashlas. Spare these white men, they are my friends."

The Arabs instead of cutting down the party, instantly reined in their animals. One of their leaders took up Selim behind him, the three others—Stephen, Roger, and Jumbo—in their fashion treating the white young men with great respect; then, turning their camels' heads, they again set off at full speed northwards.

"I say, Stephen, how do you like it?" asked Roger.

"Not at all; but it is better than being killed," he answered.

Indeed, in a few minutes, from the rough motions of the camels, the skin was nearly worn off their legs. For the remainder of the day they travelled on till they reached another oasis, where their friends encamped, and very glad Stephen and Roger were to get some rest. Selim told them that they had still many more days' journey before they could reach the town, or rather the camp, where his father was chief. When Roger observed that they did not think they could bear the bumping, he replied that they would soon get accustomed to it; indeed, a night's rest and some black biscuit, in addition to the dates, restored their strength, and next day they proceeded on their journey.

"I am afraid I shall have to give in," cried Stephen, as the enduring camels went jogging on for twelve hours together without stopping. "What they and their masters are made of I cannot conceive, for the Arabs have eaten but a few dates each day since we started; for my part I feel nearly starved."

"We must keep up, notwithstanding," said Roger; "it won't do to give in, or they will look on us with contempt;" for Selim had told them that would be the case.

They got accustomed to that style of travelling, and by drawing their handkerchiefs tight round their waists, they did not suffer much from the pangs of hunger, though they in a short time became merely skin and bone. At length Selim told them that in two or three days' time they would reach his father's camp, and they were looking forward to the rest they so much needed. They were now passing over a hilly country covered with low shrubs of a peculiarly brittle character, between which the camels had to pick their way, winding in and out among them, which greatly increased the length of the road traversed. They observed that the Arabs moved with more caution than heretofore, several men being sent in front to act as scouts. Evening was approaching, and they were looking out for a spot on which to encamp, when, as they were passing the base of a rocky and precipitous hill, a party of horsemen dashed out from a narrow ravine on the left, where they had remained concealed from the scouts. At the same moment, another party of men on foot appeared on the heights above them. The chief of their own party, with whom Selim was riding, immediately turned his camel's head and made off to the eastward, calling on his men to follow. Some did so, but the horsemen dashed in between them and the remainder, whom they furiously attacked, shooting some of the camels and ham-stringing others. Stephen and Roger had in vain endeavoured to follow Selim and the chief, but both of their animals were brought to the ground. They fully expected to be cut down, but Jumbo, who had been riding near them, disdainingly to fly, threw himself from his camel, which was uninjured.

"These are white chiefs!" he shouted out. "They wish to be your friends; do not harm them."

The Arabs as they heard these words paused for a moment. The horsemen, in the meantime, were pursuing Selim's party; but as no animals were faster than the Bu Saif breed of camels, they failed to overtake them. Roger and Stephen believed that their young friend had made his escape. Each of their assailants now inquired who they were, and where they were going.

Turning to Jumbo, they desired him to reply that their ship had been wrecked, and that they wished to make their way to Mogador, or some other place whence they could get aboard an English merchantman or a man-of-war.

The chief laughed. "It will be a long time before they reach their native land. They must understand that when Christians come into this country they have to work for us, their masters."

"This is not pleasant news," observed Stephen, when Jumbo had translated what the chief said. "Cannot we try to move the barbarian's heart?"

"We will see what Jumbo can say, but I am afraid there is no chance of doing that," said Roger.

Jumbo confirmed Roger's opinion.

"We must bear our misfortune as best we can," remarked Stephen. "However, we will lose no opportunity of trying to make our escape."

The chief of the marauders now gathered his prisoners together, and ordered them to move forward, surrounded by his men on foot, while his mounted followers brought up the rear close behind them. They proceeded some distance, when, just at dusk, they encamped at a spot, a stream on one side and a hill on the other. Fires were lighted, sentries placed in the more exposed part, and the remainder of the people began cooking their provisions. Stephen and Roger had some camel's flesh given to them and a handful of dates, and Jumbo brought them water from the river.

"Me stop here and do talkee," he said, as he sat himself down before the fire to assist in cooking the camel's meat.

"Come, we are better off than we might have expected," said Stephen.

They were allowed to lie down, covered up with pieces of camels' hair cloth, which one of the Arabs gave them. They woke before daylight. Jumbo was sitting up by their side.

"Who is this robber chief; have you been able to learn anything about him?" asked Roger.

"He called Sheik Beirouc, great man in his own country; me fear he make us all slavee," answered Jumbo.

"Tell him that we would pay him well if he will liberate us and send us back to England," said Stephen.

"He no trust us till he see de money in his hand," answered Jumbo, "and dat de difficulty."

"So it is, but we must manage to overcome it," said Stephen. "Speak fair, and say that we are grateful to him for having given us food and this cloth to cover us."

Jumbo promised to do as he was directed.

At daybreak the whole camp was astir, when the Arabs went down on their knees looking towards Mecca to say their prayers, an impressive sight, for every man seemed in earnest. Soon afterwards the Sheik approached and inquired whether Stephen and Roger could ride.

"Tell him, since we were children," answered Stephen. "If he will let us have horses we will show him."

Some more dates and water were brought them for breakfast, shortly after which a man appeared leading two active little steeds. The lads, supposing that they were for them, leaped into the saddles, and at once galloped off into the open country.

"If we knew our way to the coast it would be a good opportunity of escaping," said Roger.

"It would be an act of folly to make the attempt," said Stephen. "Let us turn now and go back, and show the Sheik that he may place confidence in us."

They returned at the same pace at which they had gone out. The Sheik smiled grimly at seeing them come back.

"You shall have the horses to ride on for your journey," he said.

"How are you to travel, Jumbo?" asked Roger.

"Me go on camel," he answered. "The Sheik know that you can't run away without me. You can't talkee to the people."

In a short time the order was given to march, and the Sheik led the way, accompanied by the two young Englishmen, and Jumbo rode behind another man on the camel. After proceeding for some miles they began to climb a range of mountains covered with heath, along beaten paths. On the summit there was suddenly a change of scenery. Behind was the monotonous sterility of the desert, and before a cultivated country, in every part of which were considerable camps in circular enclosures of from sixty to eighty tents over the plain. They perceived numerous horses and mules, as well as camels, while travellers continually passed them on the road, some mounted on camels, but the greater number on horses of a small size, all well-armed. About an hour after noon they arrived at a well, surrounded by a vast number of animals, camels, horses, mules, donkeys, goats; and so completely blocked up was the approach that it was with the greatest difficulty that they reached the water to satisfy their burning thirst. In the evening they reached some tents belonging to Beirouc, where they passed the night. He told them that the next day they would arrive at his town, where they were to spend some time. This was agreeable news, as they hoped to obtain some means of communicating with the coast. Towards evening Beirouc pointed out to them his habitation. At first they looked everywhere without perceiving any building, but at length discovered towards the east, at the foot of a mountain, a circle of reddish walls, in the middle of which rose a tower of considerable height. It had the appearance of being what it really was, a shelter for brigands. On their right was a forest of palm-trees, and some cultivated gardens, while a number of Moors were lying carelessly about outside the walls. The news of their arrival was soon circulated among all classes, and from every direction came men, women, and children, running to see the Christians, whom they looked upon as some singular wild beasts. At length Beirouc told one of his attendants to conduct the three prisoners to their habitation. The whole town was composed of houses built with sun-dried bricks of a yellowish tint. They were conducted into a square, out of which opened several chambers, or houses with small doors; one of these they were told to enter. It had a miserable and dirty appearance; at first, coming out of the glare of day, they could see nothing, but as their eyes got accustomed to the gloom they were much dismayed at perceiving the number of chains hung to the walls. Jumbo, however, relieved their anxiety by saying that they were merely to fasten up horses, the place having been used as a stable. Though the chief hitherto treated them with more humanity, still, as might have been expected, they felt that they were slaves, and they asked Jumbo to make inquiries.

"Yes, we all slavee," he said. "Beirouc, he make us work; he sell us."

Jumbo brought them further intelligence that they were not to remain at their present station long. They had little rest, being exposed from morning to night to the gaze of the Moors, who came to look at them from feelings of curiosity alone, without the slightest tinge of compassion. Many amused themselves by mocking at them, inquiring whether they wished to become gardeners, carpenters, bricklayers, or masons. At all hours of the day their unwelcome visitors appeared, regarding them much as if they were wild beasts shut up in a cage. There were really no bars nor any guard placed over them; indeed they might without difficulty have got out into the country. But Beirouc well knew that they would have been unable to find their way, and that they would either have been starved, or made prisoners by the inhabitants, or killed by wild beasts, and he told Jumbo to give them a hint that such would be their fate should they attempt it. They had therefore to submit as best they could to the indignities offered them.

At length one day a new character, who accompanied Beirouc, made his appearance; he was a tall, fine-looking man, with a white beard, and handsome though somewhat stern countenance. Having seated himself on a carpet in the centre of the court, he ordered the two captives, accompanied by Jumbo, to approach him, and inquired who they were, whence they had come, and how they had hitherto been employed. Jumbo evidently took upon himself to give such a report of them as would increase their importance in the eyes of their captors. He declared that they were chiefs in their own country, that they were officers on board the ship, wonderfully expert navigators, and were possessed of great wealth, their object in leaving home having been to see the world. Stephen, who guessed that Jumbo was going on a little too far, stopped him.

"All right, massa," he answered, "me tell the truth presently."

Jumbo's account had certainly the effect of raising their value in the estimation of the new arrival. Jumbo informed them that the chief's name was Ibraim, that he resided in the northern part of the country, towards which they were forthwith to set out. Soon afterwards Jumbo on his return to their cell burst into tears.

"What is the matter?" asked Stephen.

"Beirouc say he no sell me, and that I stay here."

"Tell him that we cannot do without you," said Stephen.

"Me tell Ibraim; that more use," said Jumbo.

Jumbo was evidently looked upon as a very clever fellow by the Arabs, and he so managed the matter that Ibraim

purchased him as well as the two young Englishmen, and they immediately set forward on their journey northward. The whole party rode on horseback. Their steeds were small, active little animals, which managed to scuffle along at a great rate, up and down hill being apparently the same to them. Stephen and Roger agreed that it was far more pleasant riding than on camel-back. They were happier also when travelling than when stopping at night, when they were compelled to sleep in some dirty hut, with Jumbo and a number of Arabs as their companions. They were badly fed, and could seldom get any tolerable water to drink. At first they fancied that they were to be carried to Marocco, but they found Ibraim had no intention of visiting the capital, which he left far away on the right. On and farther on they went northward.

"So much the better," said Roger. "The farther north, the more chance we shall have of escaping."

At length, on passing over a lofty hill, Roger observed the blue ocean glittering brightly to the left, while in the far distance he made out the minarets, towers, and flat roofs of what appeared to him to be a large town. He pointed out the spot to Stephen.

"That is a town, no doubt about it, and probably it is to be our future abode; we must get Jumbo to learn its name."

"Dat Rabatt; they call it also Sallee," said Jumbo.

"Why, that is the place where the Sallee rovers sail from!" exclaimed Roger. "For what we can tell, the one who attacked us came from there."

"I think she was an Algerine; Captain Roberts thought so," remarked Stephen.

Descending from the high ground they had been traversing they crossed a river, the third they had passed since morning. Continuing down its bank on the north side, they found themselves before an extensive and strongly-fortified town, with high walls, towers, and battlements. Ibraim, having passed through a gateway, continued on along narrow streets and alleys crowded with people of all colours, though mostly dressed in Moorish costume. Their arrival did not appear to create much interest; some stared at them, a few abused them as Christian slaves. At last Ibraim led the way into a court-yard, when he ordered them to dismount. He pointed to a cell much like the one they had before occupied, where he told them they might take up their abode. It had the advantage of being more airy and less damp than might have been the case, though they were somewhat exposed to public view.

Ordering them to remain there, and to move out at their peril, Ibraim stalked away. Several persons made inquiries about them of Jumbo. This continued till dark, when they were allowed to rest on the bare ground in quiet. As no one brought them any food, and Ibraim seemed to have forgotten them altogether, they had to go supperless to sleep. Next morning they awoke very hungry, and as there was no other way of getting food, they told Jumbo to entreat their visitors to bring them some, but the hard-hearted Moors refused. At last a white-haired man, habited as a Moor, his dress of nautical cut, his turban set somewhat rakishly on one side, came in. He started as he saw them, and stood gazing at them for some minutes.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed. "Did you really get off with your lives from the robbers?"

"Is it possible that you are Sam Stokes?" exclaimed Roger.

"I was Sam Stokes, but am now Mustapha Mouser."

"Well, Sam, I cannot congratulate you on having turned renegade, but am glad to see you," observed Stephen.

"Could not help myself, Mr Battiscombe; did it to save my life. Now I have found you, I want to see how I can help you. Maybe you are hungry?"

"That indeed we are," exclaimed Roger.

"Then without further palaver I will be off and try and get you some food," said Sam.

"I hope he will be quick about it," observed Roger when Sam moved off, "for I am well-nigh starved."

Old Sam did not disappoint them, for in a short time he returned with a flask of water and dried goat's flesh, bread, and dates.

"Make haste, lest anybody should come by and my feet get a taste of the bastinado." They did ample justice to the repast, helped by Jumbo, who was as hungry as they were. Sam sat down and tried to look as much like a Moor as he could.

"How are you employed?" asked Stephen.

"I have been assisting in fitting out one of their vessels. She is a fine craft for her size, but I cannot say I quite like the work, for I suppose we shall go robbing on the high seas, and if we are caught shall be strung up like the rest."

"Nor do I, Sam, for your sake," observed Stephen, "though you will only be engaged as Prince Rupert and Prince Morris were after the civil war; not that their example is one to be followed, and I would advise you to get clear of the pirates as soon as you can."

"More easily said than done," answered Sam. "The Moors always keep a look-out on those whom they suspect, but I will not forget your advice if I have the opportunity of escaping; but I must not stop talking here, or I may be suspected of favouring you." And old Sam, getting up, rolled away with his hands in his pockets, looking as independent as any of the passing Moors.

"I wonder what is to be our fate," said Roger.

They asked Jumbo to make inquiries. His idea was that they were to be sold, but he said that he would try and find out. Though looked upon as a slave, he was allowed more liberty than they were, it being supposed that he would not desert them. Had they possessed money they would thus have had no difficulty in procuring food, but as they had been deprived of every coin they had had about them, they were entirely dependent on others. The appearance of old Sam Stokes somewhat relieved their minds on that score, as they hoped he would find means to supply their wants. When Jumbo came back late in the evening, he looked very melancholy.

"Me afraid Ibraim sell us. Cruel master. Make workee; little food; plenty stick."

"Patience," said Roger. "We must try to work hard and avoid the stick; and as to the food, we must be content with little if we cannot get much, and hope some day to get away."

A guard was placed at the door of the yard, so that Jumbo could not get out during the night. The next morning Ibraim appeared with several other persons, one of whom, by his dress and the way he swaggered along, appeared to be a person of some consideration. Ibraim summoned the two lads and Jumbo much as he would have called as many dogs, and seemed to be expatiating on their various qualifications. The stranger, whom they heard called Hamet, then put several questions to them through Jumbo, chiefly relating to their previous mode of life. He seemed satisfied, and at once turning to Ibraim counted out the money which he had promised to pay for them. Scarcely looking at them, or uttering a word of farewell, the old Sheik pocketed the coin and walked away, while the new purchaser beckoned to Stephen, Roger, and Jumbo to follow him.

"This is unbearable," exclaimed Stephen; "the old fellow treats us like goods and chattels. He fancies that we are willingly to be turned over to the man to whom he has thought fit to sell us. We must show him that we do not intend to be treated in that way."

"What had we better do?" asked Roger.

"Stay where we are, and refuse to follow him," said Stephen.

"Oh, massa, don't do dat," cried Jumbo. "Dey soon show wid de bastinado dat dey got de power."

Hamet, their new master, by the frown gathering on his brow as he observed their hesitation, soon showed them what they might expect, and they agreed that it would be wiser to submit to circumstances. They accordingly followed him as he led the way through the streets till he reached another court-yard, in which a number of persons were collected, dressed in all sorts of costumes, many in rags, and looking thin and careworn, their countenances being those of Europeans.

"These must be Christian slaves," observed Stephen.

"Yes, and it is very clear that we are to be compelled to labour with them," said Roger.

They were not long in doubt as to this, for a number of persons gathered round them, and two addressed them in English, and inquired where they had come from, and how they had been captured. While they were narrating their adventures, others gathered round to listen. There were French, Portuguese, Spaniards, Italians, and Dutchmen. They all, it appeared, belonged to Hamet, who employed them in building a new house. At a signal from Hamet they formed into order, and were marched off to perform their daily task, under the charge of four guards with loaded fire-arms. Stephen and Roger were obliged to follow, for to refuse would have only brought down blows on their heads and backs. They walked along very unwillingly, though they tried to keep up their spirits. On arriving at the spot they were at once set to work. Though accustomed to manual labour, they found their tasks very severe in hauling up blocks of stone, carrying heavy beams and rafters. They were very thankful when the day's work was over. All the time not a particle of food had been given them, and it was with difficulty, suffering from hunger and thirst, that they could get back to their prison.

"You will soon get accustomed to it," said one of their companions in misfortune.

On reaching the yard the only provisions served to them and the rest of the slaves were some brown bread and some almost putrid water, which they could scarcely drink. Most of the prisoners were too low and broken-spirited to complain, but Stephen and Roger were very indignant; hunger and thirst however compelled them to eat the coarse bread and drink the water, bad as it was. At night they had to lie down in a place which had been used for stables, with a scanty supply of straw, and that not of the cleanest, for beds. Their companions in misfortune moaned and groaned in their different languages till they moaned themselves to sleep.

"I wonder how long this is to last," said Roger.

"Till we are set free," said Stephen.

"But how are we to get free?" asked Roger. "Cannot we devise some means of escaping?"

"We must try and let our friends at home know where we are in the first place, so that they may ransom us," said Stephen.

"The difficulty will be to get a letter home. There is no communication between this place and any European port, as far as I can learn. Our unhappy companions have been here for years," said Roger.

"If we cannot get off ourselves, perhaps Jumbo can make his escape and carry a letter for us," said Stephen.

"A bright idea," exclaimed Roger. "He is asleep now; still we can think it over to-morrow and see how it can be managed."

At length they top, merely with the toil they had gone through, closed their eyes, happily to dream of far distant scenes. They were awakened by their companions moving about, and another dole of brown bread and water was served out to them. Just, however, as they were about to be marched off to their daily toil, they caught sight of Sam Stokes, who was peering about in the court-yard, apparently in search of them. They eagerly beckoned to him.

"I have been hunting for you young gentlemen since daylight," he said. "Here's some meat and sweet biscuits, some oranges, and a bottle of goat's milk; it is better than any water I could get. I should like to have brought you some stronger stuff, but if I was to be found with any I should have my head chopped off in a twinkling. It is against the rules of the Koran. Though I have not had time to learn much about the book, I know that."

They thanked Sam cordially, and shared the provisions he had brought with Jumbo. He sat by to see that their companions did not rob them, which, from the wolfish glances they cast at the food, they seemed much inclined to do.

"Stow away the remainder in your pockets, you will want it for dinner, and I will try to come back in the evening and give you more. I must now be off to my work," said Sam.

The day was passed much as the former one had been, though they had a short time allowed them to eat the food Sam had brought. It was very hard and trying work, and they were well-nigh knocked up by the evening, when they had to return to their dirty prisons. Hunger had compelled them to begin munching their brown bread, when Sam appeared bringing a small quantity of provision.

"It is all I could get," he said. "I am much afraid that I shall not be allowed to bring you much more. Captain Hamet, who bought you from the old Sheik and commands a vessel I have engaged to serve aboard, has found out that I bring the food to you, and does not seem well pleased. Why, I cannot exactly understand, as I should have thought he would rather have you strong and well than weak and sick, as you would be if you had no better food than that brown bread; however, I shall know more about the matter to-morrow. I will bring you word if I can."

The morning came, but Sam did not appear, and, as before, they were marched away with the rest of the slaves to their daily toil. For three days after this they heard nothing of Sam, while they were obliged to subsist on the coarse fare supplied to the slaves. Their condition was now becoming very trying. They talked over all the plans they could possibly think of to effect their escape. Jumbo was willing to try and get off to carry a letter to Tangiers, but he warned them that he might very likely be captured and lose his life in making the attempt, and they were unwilling to expose him to so much danger. The other slaves told them of the dreadful punishment which had been inflicted on several of their number who had attempted to escape, while, so far as they knew, not one had succeeded. It seemed to them that they were doomed to spend the remainder of their lives in bondage, and worse bondage than that of Israel. The Jews, at all events, had plenty to eat, whereas they were almost starved; still, like brave lads as they were, they endeavoured to keep up their spirits. At length one morning, after they had endured for upwards of a fortnight the sort of life which has been described, their eyes were gladdened by the sight of Sam walking into the court-yard just as their morning meal had been served out.

"I am thankful to say that I have been able to bring you some food, young gentlemen, and Captain Hamet has sent me to say that you are to go aboard the *Tiger*, the ship he commands."

"But the vessel is a pirate!" exclaimed Stephen, "and we shall be assisting them in their evil deeds. I would rather remain here and toil as a wretched slave than turn corsair."

"So would I," said Roger. "Tell Captain Hamet that we will not obey his orders."

"Very sorry to hear you say that, Master Willoughby," said Sam. "You see it is not a matter of choice; the Captain has the power to make you do what he wishes, whether you like it or not."

"There is an old saying that you may take a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink," said Stephen; "he may carry us aboard by main force, but he cannot compel us to do any duty when we are there."

"Now, just look at the matter in this way, young gentlemen," said Sam. "The Captain has heard that you understand navigation, and he wants some one to navigate his ship, for, as far as I can learn, these Moorish fellows do not understand much about that thing. He will make officers of you and treat you well, and I do not suppose he expects you to fight."

"How could he know that we understood navigation?" asked Stephen.

"That is more than I can say," answered Sam. "I know that I did not tell him; he heard it by some means, and that was the reason he bought you of the old Sheik, and paid such a high price for you too. So you see he is not likely to be balked, and I'd advise you to come with a good grace. I am very sorry that you should have to do what you do not like, but you see you have no choice in the matter; when he asked me I had to confess that it was right."

"Me tell how it happened," said Jumbo. "Me tell Captain Hamet that Massa Battiscombe and Massa Willoughby were two officers, and that if he buy dem he some day get a good ransom, but neber tink at de time dat he want dem to serve aboard his ship; dat's how it came about."

"That explains the mystery, and we don't blame you, Jumbo," said Stephen. "But we cannot go and serve willingly on board a pirate."

“Still I must obey orders, young gentlemen,” said Sam, “and I came ashore with a boat’s crew to carry you on board, and I will bear witness if we ever fall into the hands of a king’s ship that you did not come willingly.”

As he spoke Sam made a sign to several men who were standing at the entrance to the court-yard, who at once, marching in, surrounded the two young Englishmen and Jumbo, and seizing their arms, began to drag them along into the street. They struggled to free themselves, but the Moors, strong muscular fellows, quickly mastered them, and conducted them along through the narrow lanes towards the port. On reaching it they were shoved somewhat unceremoniously into a boat, which immediately pulled away for a large vessel which lay at the entrance of the harbour.

“Very sorry, gentlemen, that you should be treated in this fashion,” said Sam. “If you had come willingly it would not have happened. It is not my fault, you will understand; but if I did not carry out the orders I receive, I should have my head whipped off in a moment.”

Stephen and Roger were too indignant just then to make any reply, though they saw clearly the position in which poor Sam was placed. Captain Hamet was walking the deck when they arrived alongside. He received them in a somewhat stern fashion, and calling Jumbo, told him to say that their treatment would depend on the way they behaved themselves.

“Tell him that as he has compelled us to come on board, we desire to know what he requires us to do,” said Stephen.

On this Captain Hamet beckoned them to come into the cabin. He then placed several nautical instruments before them, with charts of the Mediterranean, the western shores of Africa and Europe, extending as far as England.

“He wants you to make good use of these to mark down every day the course the ship has run,—her position at noon. He does not require you to fight; indeed, if we meet an enemy, he will allow you to go below and keep out of harm’s way if you wish it.”

“Under those circumstances I do not think we should wisely refuse to obey him,” observed Stephen.

“I would rather not have to do it,” said Roger.

“But I do not see how we can get off, and we shall certainly, by remaining on board, have a better chance of escaping than if we were kept in slavery on shore,” said Stephen. “Tell the Captain, Jumbo, that we will do as he desires, though we would rather have been allowed to pay a ransom for our liberty.”

Hamet, smiling grimly, nodded his approval, and then sent for Sam, who showed them a cabin which he told them they were to occupy.

“I am glad to hear, gentlemen, that you have agreed to do as the Captain wishes. It would have been no earthly use to refuse, as he could have compelled you with a pistol at your heads.”

“I do not think he would have fired it, considering that he had paid a high price for us, though he might have ill-treated us till he could have obtained a price for setting us free.”

“Well, as far as I can see, all you have got to do is to put a good face on the matter, keep up your spirits, and navigate the ship carefully. I warn you that if you do not do that, he will heave you overboard without the slightest ceremony.”

“Then we will do our best to navigate the *Tiger* wherever the Captain wants her to go; it won’t be our fault if he some day catches a Tartar, or runs his nose into a lion’s den.”

Chapter Five.

As the harbour was very shallow, the *Tiger* had to haul out into the outer roads, inside the island of Tedal, off the mouth of the river Gueron, before she could take her guns, powder, or stores on board. A number of boats came out with them, so that she soon had her lading and provisions on board, and was now ready for sea. She mounted twenty guns, and had a crew of a hundred men, sturdy, active, dark-skinned fellows, armed with sharp scimitars, with which they practised daily. They had also fire-arms, spears, and boarding-pikes; indeed were in every way well prepared for fighting. A strong westerly gale kept the *Tiger* in the roads for some days, but at length, the wind shifting to the eastward, the anchor was hove up, and she stood out into the Atlantic. Hamet now intimated to Stephen and Roger that his wish was to get to the northward, so that he might attack vessels in latitudes where Sallee rovers were seldom to be found, and thus take them by surprise, and so be more likely to effect their capture without resistance. They were by this time able to understand much that he said. He told them that he wished each to keep a separate reckoning, so that he might compare the two; that they must take good care that they agreed.

“That would be a puzzler for me,” observed Stephen. “As you, Roger, are a much better navigator, you would probably be correct, whereas I am very likely to make mistakes. I think that I had better tell him at once that I am not much of a navigator, and that he would be wise to rely on you.”

“That may be the safest plan, though I will try to pass my calculations on to you without letting him discover that I do so,” said Roger.

The very next day, when they were out of sight of land, Stephen, who was ordered to stand at the forepart of the ship to take an observation, made some mistake, and placed their position a degree or more out. Of course, her Captain, who understood the use of the charts perfectly, afterwards told Roger to put it down, which he, having carefully taken

his observation, did properly.

"How is this?" exclaimed the Captain. "Which of the two am I to believe?"

"You may trust me," said Roger, firmly. "My friend, though older, has less experience; but if you will allow me, I will teach him, and he in a short time will be as useful to you as I am."

Thus the difficulty was got over, for happily the Captain did not suspect that any trick was being played him. Fortunately at first the weather was fine, and as the Moors were sober men, and not addicted to quarrel among each other, the *Tiger* glided over the calm sea, and everything went smoothly.

"Really, from the appearance of things, I should not have supposed that we were aboard a piratical craft," observed Stephen, "for truly they are a very gentlemanly set of cut-throats, and I doubt if Prince Rupert's men behaved half as well."

"It may be not, but they did not knock all their prisoners on the head, or make them walk the plank, as these fellows are said to do; we as yet have only seen them in their good behaviour," observed Roger.

Hamet insisted on their carrying the *Tiger* northward till they were about in the latitude of the rock of Lisbon. Not a ship had been sighted which they could venture to attack. They had passed in the distance squadrons of three or more large ships, but Hamet deemed it prudent to stand away from them, though he discussed the possibility of cutting off the sternmost during the night-time, but old Sam dissuaded him from making the attempt. The sun had just risen on the top-mast canvas of a ship of some size coming down before a fresh breeze from the northward, the wind about north-east. Hamet possessed a telescope, and pointing the stranger out to Roger, bade him go aloft with the telescope, and on his return report to him what he thought she was. Roger, slinging the telescope over his shoulders, climbed up the rigging, and took a steady look at the stranger. She appeared to him to be a large ship—a man-of-war—carrying probably forty guns or more, with which the *Tiger* would be utterly unable to cope. On coming down he told Hamet his opinion.

"If she is a merchantman, the larger her size the better prize she will prove," he observed.

"But should she be a man-of-war, you may find that instead of taking her you are taken yourself," said Roger.

The Captain, who seldom did anything without consulting his officers, had a talk with them on the subject. Some were inclined to run alongside the stranger and try to capture her, but others thought such a proceeding would be dangerous. The two vessels approached nearer and nearer.

"These are bold fellows to think of attacking a ship of that size," observed Roger. "I am nearly certain that she is an English man-of-war, and if so, the *Tiger* will be taken, and if we are not killed, we may hope to gain our liberty."

"One good thing is, we need not fight," said Stephen. "The most prudent thing we can do is to stow ourselves away as soon as we are within gunshot."

"The agreement from the first was that we might remain in our cabin," remarked Roger.

"Oh no; but I propose that we get into the lowest depths of the ship, where there is less chance of a shot coming," said Stephen.

"Suppose she is sent to the bottom," said Roger, "we shall be drowned with the rest. We shall see the water rising, and if so, we must hurry up on deck."

While Roger and Stephen were holding this conversation, they observed a good deal of excitement among the officers. Presently two or three came aft to the Captain, and, by their gestures, it was very evident that they were insisting that the ship should be put about, and that they should try and make their escape. The Captain yielded; the helm was put up, the yards squared, and away the *Tiger* ran before the wind, every additional stitch of canvas which she could carry being set. The stranger was not near enough to fire, or it might have fared ill with the pirate.

"Our chance of liberty is diminishing by this time," observed Roger. "The *Tiger* before the wind has a remarkably fast pair of heels."

The stranger, however, seeing what the pirate was about, also made all sail, and came bowling away after her, guessing probably her character.

"She will not catch us, gentlemen," said Sam, who came up to them. "Cannot say that I am sorry we are running away. I put the officers up to insisting on it, by telling them that we should be sent to the bottom, or captured and strung up to the yard-arm, and they fortunately believed me."

At first it was doubtful which ship was sailing the fastest; and Roger thought, in spite of what Sam said, that the stranger was coming up with them, but after a time it became evident that the *Tiger* was getting ahead. The Captain told Roger to be careful to mark down their course, as they were standing away from the land to the westward. All day long the chase continued; there was still some chance of their falling in with another large ship, and if so, they might have to fight after all. It was some hours past noon; they had already sunk the courses of the stranger below the horizon, but there she was, in her former position, still following, though a dark bank of clouds was now seen rising to the westward, indicating a change of wind, and probably a heavy gale. The clouds rose fast, and came scouring across the blue sky, while the hitherto calm ocean was covered with foam-crested seas, which rose higher and higher. Hamet ordered sail at once to be taken in—not a moment too soon, for down came the gale, and the stout ship heeled over to it. The *Tiger*, however, still kept to the southward. At last the gale increased to such an extent that the Captain ordered her to be hove-to. Roger looked out for the stranger, but she was nowhere to be

seen. That danger was escaped, but the question was how the slightly-built rover would endure the tempest. They might have run for a port on the Barbary coast, but that was a long way off, and no other would afford them shelter; for as their hands had turned against every nation, so every nation was a foe. Night came on, and as there was no good in their remaining on deck, Roger and Stephen went to their cabin. Poor Jumbo soon made his way there.

"Oh dear, me tink we go to de bottom," he said. "Wish we had stayed on shore; all my doing too, for if I no say you knew how to manage de ship, Hamet not bring you."

"You acted for the best, Jumbo, and I do not blame you. We must hope to escape this danger and make our escape another time. Remember that we do intend to make our escape, if we can, on board the first vessel the pirate gets alongside. It will be somewhat hazardous, but it is our only chance. You must try and escape also, and I hope that Sam will, though it would be more difficult for him, as he has to fight with the rest of the crew."

Jumbo shook his head; he evidently thought Roger's plan impracticable. All night long the tempest howled, the ship was tossed to and fro, the blocks and rigging rattled, the sea dashed over her, the voices of the seamen were heard amid the uproar shouting to one another, while occasionally the clanking sound of pumps was added to the noise. Morning broke dark and gloomy. During the day the wind decreased, and Hamet told Roger to continue his course to the southward. He seemed to fancy that in those northerly regions he was likely to meet with more gales than were pleasant. The following day the weather had moderated greatly, and by degrees the sea went down, and the ship glided on as smoothly as before. A bright look-out was of course kept for strangers; and the *Tiger* was about the latitude of the Straits of Gibraltar when a sail was seen to the eastward, which had apparently come out of the Mediterranean. Chase was at once made, for she appeared to be a merchant vessel, and, though of good size, not much larger than the rover. As they got nearer, she showed English colours. Roger and Stephen watched her anxiously, and they called Jumbo.

"Remember what I told you," said Roger. "Follow our movements whatever happens; you are not expected to fight, so probably will not be missed."

"What do you think of her?" asked Roger, who went in search of the old seaman.

"That she is a stout English craft, likely not to give in without tough fighting; but she probably carries not more than thirty men, if so many, and we muster a hundred, so that she has very little chance if we run her alongside."

"But you don't mean to say that you fight your countrymen, Sam?" said Roger.

"Cannot help myself," he answered. "I would rather not; but should have my head whipped off in a moment if I was to show the white feather, or try to hide away."

"Well, I tell you this much, Sam," said Roger. "I don't believe that craft will be taken, although she may have but thirty men on board; but they are thirty honest Englishmen against these hundred cut-throat Moors; and if you can manage to get on board and let them know that you are an Englishman wishing to escape, you will act wisely."

"Cannot do it, Mr Willoughby," said Sam with a sigh. "I should like to be free. The chances are the Englishmen cut me down before I can open my mouth, and the Moors will whip off my head if they see me making the attempt."

"Still you would have done the right thing, and I hope you will risk it," said Roger. He could not venture to say more, as the Moors always cast frowning glances at the Englishmen when they saw them talking together.

Roger went back to Stephen, who was standing aft, watching the stranger. Suddenly he exclaimed, "She is wonderfully like the *Benbow* frigate. Though so long a time has passed since we saw her, I remember her well. I hope she may be, for Captain Benbow is not a man to yield to a pirate. See, she has no intention of avoiding the fight."

As he spoke, the English ship brailed up her courses and hove-to, preparing for the combat. This seemed somewhat to cool the courage of the Moors, who looked at each other, for they were accustomed to see the merchant vessels they attacked run from them and do their utmost to escape. The English ship remained stationary. The *Sallee* rover stood on, and as she got nearer, shortened sail to be more under command. Presently the former filled, not to escape, but to be ready for manoeuvring, and almost the next instant opened fire from ten long guns, run out from her sides, and the Moors began blazing away in return; but their shot fell short, whereas those of the English ship came rattling on board them.

"I say, Roger, there is no use remaining on deck to be a target for our friends," said Stephen. "Let us slip below before we receive damage; we shall judge when the time arrives for us to act, by the noise they will make should the rovers run their opponents on board. I see Jumbo watching us."

Roger unwillingly slipped down and followed Stephen, for he was anxious to see what was taking place. Their cabin was not altogether safe, for a shot might come through the rover's side and reach them; but, at the same time, they could from thence easily spring upon deck. They waited anxiously. Again and again the rover fired, while they heard the shot of the English ship come crashing on board, tearing up the planks, piercing the bulwarks, striking the masts and spars, occasionally knocking over one of the crew on the deck, while shrieks and cries arose as the Moors fell wounded to the deck. None were brought below, as there were no surgeons to attend to them, and they were left to lie as they fell. Hamet was anxious to put an end to this sort of work as soon as possible, and shouted orders to his men to prepare for boarding. The English ship had gained the weather-gauge, so he could not escape. Now, suddenly putting down his helm, he ran her aboard. A loud crash was heard as the two vessels struck together; grappling-irons were thrown aboard, the Moors swarmed into their rigging to drop down on the deck of the vessel they expected to capture.

"Now is our time," cried Roger. "Come along, Stephen! Come along, Jumbo! We must look out not to be stopped by

the Moors, and make ourselves known to our friends before they cut us down."

They made for the after part of the ship; it was the only spot whence they could hope to escape. The vessels were surging against each other; now their bows almost meeting one instant, their quarters struck together.

"Now is our time," cried Roger, who had been waiting for the opportunity, and together they all three sprang from the quarter-rail of the *Tiger* on to that of the English ship, and throwing themselves over it, were the next moment on her deck, where Jumbo narrowly escaped being crushed before those parts of the vessel.

"Look out, lads; we are being boarded aft," they heard a voice shout, and three or four seamen, with gleaming cutlasses, came springing towards them.

"No, no, we are friends; we are Englishmen," shouted Roger and Stephen in chorus. "Save us! save us! We are escaping from the Moors." They could scarcely get the words out in time to prevent the sailors from making mince-meat of them.

"I do believe they are Englishmen," cried one of the men.

"All right," cried one of the seamen. "Lie quiet, or, if you like, you will find some spare cutlasses in the companion-hatch; go and get them and help us."

"There is another Englishman on board who wants to escape," cried Roger, remembering poor Sam. "Try and save him if you can."

"Ay, ay," answered the sailor, who the next instant sprang back to hack and slash away at the Moors, who were endeavouring to gain a footing on board. As yet, fiercely as they were fighting, the Moors had gained no advantage. Some indeed had reached the deck, but it was only to pay the penalty of temerity with their lives, for not one had succeeded in gaining a footing. Roger, looking up, recognised the Captain of the English ship; there was no doubt about it, he was Captain Benbow. With a huge hanger in his hand he was slashing away furiously at the enemy, driving back some, cutting down others. Roger and Stephen made their way to the companion-hatch, where they procured a couple of hangers and joined the brave Captain. They were seen by the rovers, several of whom, uttering expressions of rage, attempted to get at them, and paid the penalty of their daring with their lives, being cut down by the British seamen the moment they reached the deck. The rovers fought with desperation, believing that they could quickly overcome the small crew opposed to them. Fresh gangs, summoned by their Captain, were attempting to leap on board, when suddenly the grapnels gave way. While some were still clinging to the sides of the *Benbow* frigate, the vessels parted, and the *Tiger* forged ahead. Ere many seconds were over not a boarder remained alive; some were hurled into the sea, others fell inside the bulwarks on to the deck.

"Now, ply them with the great guns," cried Captain Benbow.

His crew, reloading them and running them out, in spite of the bodies which cumbered the deck, sent such showers of shot on board the rover that she did not again attempt to close, Hamet evidently considering her so tough a customer that he might pay too dear a price for victory, even should he gain at last. He was seen to haul his wind and to stand away on a bow-line, though he continued firing at the English vessel as long as he could bring his guns to bear. The shot, though they did no damage on deck, cut up the rigging and prevented the frigate from following, though Captain Benbow ordered his crew to knot and splice the ropes as rapidly as possible, in the hopes that she might be able to do so. The rover was soon out of range, and as she continued standing away the British crew gave her a lusty cheer as a farewell. On and on she stood, making all the sail she could carry. It was soon evident that the *Benbow* frigate had no chance of overtaking her, though the crew worked away with right good-will at the rigging. Strange as it may appear, not one of the British crew had been killed, although about a third of their number had received wounds more or less severe.

"Now, lads, let us count the bodies of these villainous Moors their friends have left behind," said the Captain. Thirteen were found stretched on the deck, presenting a ghastly appearance, and the crew were about to heave them overboard.

"No, no, lads," cried Captain Benbow; "we must carry some trophy on shore to show our friends at Cadiz what we have done, or they may chance not to believe our report. Bring up a cask of salt."

There were several on board that it was intended to fill with Spanish pork. The Moors' heads, as they were chopped off, were put into the cask with layers of salt between them, when, the whole being packed, and more salt added at the top, the head of the cask was then fastened down. The crew then set to work with buckets of water to wash down the blood-stained deck. Roger and Stephen had in the meantime, with Jumbo, been standing aft, waiting to make themselves known to the Captain, but he had hitherto been too much engaged to notice them. They now, seeing that he was for a moment disengaged while considering what was next to be done, advanced to him.

"You probably do not recollect us, Captain Benbow, though we are old acquaintances of yours," said Stephen.

"I am the lad you promised to take to sea when you visited Eversden manor-house on the Dorsetshire coast," said Roger.

"Bless my heart alive, I remember the circumstance perfectly, though you have grown out of my recollection, young gentlemen; but how in the name of wonder did you happen to be aboard the rover, and how did you manage to gain the deck of this ship?" exclaimed the Captain, putting out his hand and shaking theirs warmly. "Very glad to see you, however it happened, and I can congratulate you on making your escape, for it must have been no easy matter."

Stephen and Roger between them briefly explained what had occurred. They were again welcomed by the Captain.

They also mentioned Sam Stokes, and his intention of attempting to escape.

"Poor fellow, I know that he must have lost his life if he tried to do so," said the Captain, but he inquired among his crew whether they had recognised an English face among the rover's crew.

On this two or three came aft and declared that they had observed an old man spring on to their fore-castle, that he had warded off several blows aimed at him without attempting to strike in return, and had suddenly disappeared, they supposing that he had gone overboard, although, as they had been compelled to defend the forepart of the vessel from a party of rovers who were attempting to follow him, they had not time to take any special notice.

"Then perchance he is the very man we were inquiring about, and may have succeeded in getting below. Let search be made for him," cried the Captain.

Several of the crew on this leaped below, and one lighting a lantern, they began to search the fore peak. Before long the light from the lantern fell on an English-looking face in one of the bunks.

"Halloo! how did you come here?" exclaimed the seaman with the lantern.

"Don't cut my head off and I will tell you all about it," said the man in the bunk.

"You need have no fear; come out of that and we will hear what you have got to say for yourself," said the seaman; and drawing off the blanket, he exposed to view a seeming Moor, who was quickly dragged out.

"Why, you are the very man we are looking for," exclaimed the sailor. "Come up, our Captain wants to have a word with you."

And Sam Stokes, willingly obeying, accompanied the men up on deck, where Stephen and Roger and Jumbo welcomed him.

"Glad to see you have escaped, my man," said Captain Benbow, "for if you had been caught you would have had a great chance of losing your head."

"Please you, sir, I do not feel it quite comfortable on my shoulders while I am dressed in this outlandish fashion among Christian men," said Sam; and he whispered to Roger, who was standing near him, "Do not say that I turned Moor, Mr Willoughby, an you love me. I will soon get whitewashed, I hope."

The Captain, taking the hint, ordered a suit of sailor's clothes to be got up, which Sam without delay put on, and then doing up his Moorish dress in a bundle, hove it overboard, exclaiming, "I hope that I may not wear such duds as those again; and now, Captain, just to show that I am turned into a Christian once more, I shall feel greatly obliged if you will give me a glass of honest liquor. To say the truth, I have not dared to touch a drop since I turned Moor."

"With all my heart," said the Captain, and he ordered a glass of strong waters to be handed to Sam, who quaffed it off at once, giving a deep sigh as he reached the bottom.

"Come, that does a fellow good; I feel once more like Sam Stokes instead of the rascally Mustapha Mouser I was turned into."

As soon as the ship had been put to rights a course was shaped for Cadiz, to which port Captain Benbow told his young friends he was bound when attacked by the Sallee rover.

"Now that you have come on board, Master Willoughby, I shall be glad to fulfil my promise and keep you if you desire to remain," he said to Roger. "I was heartily sorry to have to leave you behind, as I knew how much you would be disappointed, but I was many months absent from England, and when I got back there was no time to send down to Dorsetshire and have you up, should you have been still willing to come; however, a promise is not broken as long as there is time to fulfil it, and so you are welcome to remain on board the *Benbow* frigate."

Roger warmly expressed his thanks, and said that he would rather serve with Captain Benbow than go on board any other ship. He made the same offer to Stephen, who, however, having no wish to follow the sea as a profession, declined accepting it, though he begged that he might return home. Sam was at once duly entered as belonging to the ship. Jumbo, when he first came on board, had fixed his big round eyes on the Captain with an inquiring glance, but had been apparently too much awed to speak to him, and now he came aft, and making a profound bow, said, "Me tink you remember Jumbo, Captain Benbow; serve on board dis ship to sweep cabin when little boy."

"Cannot say that I recollect your face; to my eyes, one nigger is much like another; but I have no doubt about the truth of your story, and am pleased to have you aboard again, and will enter you on the ship's books as one of my crew if you wish it."

"Oh yes, massa," said Jumbo, with a broad grin. "Bery glad serve Captain Benbow; hope to sail wid you while you keep de sea."

"Not much chance of my keeping anywhere else," said the Captain.

So the matter was settled, and Jumbo, to his great delight, found himself one of the crew of the *Benbow* frigate. In about three days land was sighted, and that evening the ship entered the magnificent bay of Cadiz.

Next morning after breakfast the Captain ordered his boat to go on shore, and invited Roger and Stephen to accompany him.

"Jumbo, you will go with us," he said. "You will have to carry a sack on your shoulders, but you need not ask what is in it."

"Neber mind, Captain, me ready to do whateber you tell me," answered Jumbo.

Roger and Stephen had taken their seats in the boat with the Captain, when Jumbo appeared with a big canvas sack, which was handed down after him. The men who were looking over the side grinned as they watched it placed in the bows of the boat.

"Give way, my lads," cried the Captain, and they pulled for the shore.

They soon reached the quay, when, the Captain and his young friends stepping out, he ordered Jumbo to take up the sack and follow him. They had not gone far when they met two officers of the revenue, who stopped and inquired what was contained in the sack the negro carried.

"Salt provisions for my own use," answered Captain Benbow. "You know me. I am a frequent trader to this port, and I have never attempted to smuggle."

Still the officers insisted on seeing the contents of the sack.

"No, no," said the Captain, "I have made up my mind not to show them. I tell you, I never ran any goods since I came to sea, and have no intention of doing so now."

"We cannot help ourselves, Señor. What you say may be very true, but it is against our orders to allow you to pass. However, as the magistrates are sitting not far off, if you like to declare before them the contents of your sack, the negro may carry them wherever you order him."

"The very thing I wish," said the Captain. "I will go before the magistrates, and if they desire to see my salt provisions, they shall be welcome to do so."

Accordingly, Captain Benbow leading, with his two young friends, Jumbo following with the sack, and the two officers bringing up the rear, proceeded to the custom-house, where a party of grave and reverend Señors were sitting. The officers at once stated what had occurred, when the president, who knew Captain Benbow, greeted him politely, expressed his regret that he should have to inconvenience him for such a trifle, but observed that he must adhere to the laws; that as soon as he had shown what the sack contained he should be at liberty to proceed wherever he might choose.

"Well, Señor, since you insist on seeing my salt provisions, I will show them to you," said the Captain. "Jumbo, open that sack and throw the contents out on the table."

Jumbo did as he was ordered, the whites of his eyes glancing, and his mouth at a broad grin, for he was certainly not ignorant of what he had been carrying, and, untying the string, out rolled thirteen gory heads. The magistrates started back, some with amazement, others with horror expressed in their countenances.

"There they are," cried the Captain, "and at your service."

"How did you become possessed of them?" asked the president.

"This bright sabre served me to cut the fruit from the branches," he answered, and then gave an account of how he had been attacked by the Sallee rover, and succeeded in driving her off, after she had lost a large number of her men, besides those who had fallen on the deck of his ship, and whose heads he now exhibited.

The magistrates were greatly astonished, and highly delighted at his gallantry, for the Moors had much interfered with their trade of late, and had cut off a number of their ships. For although Admiral Blake, during Cromwell's firm rule, had punished them severely and kept them in order, they had, since Charles the Second came to the throne, resumed their predatory habits with greater vigour than ever, while the Governments of southern Europe had been too much engaged with their own internal affairs to send any of their squadrons to keep them in order. The president highly complimented Captain Benbow on his gallantry, and invited him to a public banquet, to take place the next day in the Town-Hall. What became of the heads history does not narrate. They were probably returned to their sack after due note had been taken of them, and carried out to sea, and sunk with a shot or two in deep water; for it would certainly have been believed that they would not rest quietly on Christian soil, the Spaniards overlooking the fact that the ancestors of these Moors had once possessed the country as lords and masters.

Through Captain Benbow's liberality, Roger and Stephen obtained fitting costumes to attend him at the banquet, where they had the satisfaction of seeing his health drunk and due honour done him, while they also had, through an interpreter, to give some account of their own adventures.

Some time was occupied in unloading the ship and receiving a fresh cargo. Before this was accomplished, Captain Benbow, to his astonishment, received an invitation from Charles the Second, King of Spain, to visit Madrid, and to give him personally an account of his exploit, of which his Majesty had heard through the officials at Cadiz.

"I know nothing of kings and courts, and if I go, shall feel like a fish out of water," said the Captain to his young companions. "But, you see, kings' commands must be obeyed, and perchance I may get a good turn or some benefit to my trade. I should like to have taken you with me, but as the king has not invited you, and I require some one to look after the ship, I must leave you behind."

Roger and Stephen were in hopes that Captain Benbow might have taken them, as they would have wonderfully liked to have seen Madrid, but they were proud of having so much confidence placed in them, and they promised to do

their best to attend to the duties of the ship both when unloading and loading, and their experience at Bristol enabled them to do the task. They had some difficulty from not knowing Spanish, but they got over it with the help of gesticulating, and a word thrown in occasionally by those who knew English. There were several English merchants, even at that time, settled at Cadiz, some of whom were shipping by the *Benbow* frigate. These, finding two young well-educated Englishmen on board, invited them to their houses, and were highly interested at hearing of their adventures during their captivity among the Moors, and their remarkable escape. As they became known they were made a great deal of, and thus greatly enjoyed their stay at Cadiz, though they were anxious to return home to relieve the anxiety of their fathers; but Captain Benbow had told them that the *Dolphin* had long since been reported lost, and they probably had been given up by their friends as dead. They were delighted, therefore, when one evening, the day's work being over, they saw, advancing along the pier, a cavalier mounted on a stout mule, with a couple of attendants on foot. Till he drew near they did not recognise the mud-bespattered, dust-covered traveller as their Captain, but he soon made himself known by his hearty cheer as he saw them.

"How fares it, lads, with you; how fares it?" he shouted out. "All right with the *Benbow*?"

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Roger. "All right with the ship and all right with us. How did you fare with the king and his courtiers?"

"A mighty deal better than I expected. Though they live in a big palace and are dressed in fine clothes, there is nothing after all, as I could see, about them to be afraid of, so I cracked my jokes and smoked my pipe, made myself at home, and his Majesty promised to write to his brother King of England, and tell him what a fine brave fellow he thought me, and it would be shame in him if he did not make me one of his own captains. The King of Spain asked me if I would become one of his, but I shook my head, and told him that I was born an Englishman, and an Englishman I hoped to die; that I had no wish to fight, but that if I did fight it would be for my country and my country alone. I am not exactly like Master William Penn, who thinks we can do without fighting altogether. The king gave me a letter which I am to deliver, and he said that he would write direct through his ambassador in London, so that this little affair of mine will make more stir in the world than I at first expected."

The Captain received a further welcome from the inhabitants of Cadiz, who considered that in some way or other his feat reflected a great lustre on themselves.

The exhibition of Moors' heads was in accordance with the barbarous customs of the times, and the grim humour of the brave Captain greatly took the fancy of people of all classes. As the *Benbow* frigate sailed out of the bay, flags were flying at the mastheads of all the other vessels in the harbour and from the flagstaffs on shore, and guns were firing and trumpets braying to do her gallant Captain honour.

Chapter Six.

The *Benbow* frigate sailed out of the Bay of Cadiz bound for England. The wind was fair, the sea smooth, and she carried every stitch of canvas which could be set, eager to reach her destination, the port of London. Stephen and Roger walked the deck with her commander, who was in high spirits at the success of his voyage, for he had secured not only a good freight out and home, but had received a bag of gold and other presents from the King of Spain as a testimony to his gallantry.

"And are you two young men willing to continue to sail with me?" he asked.

"With all my heart," answered Roger promptly. "It has been the earnest desire of my heart ever since you came into our bay; and long before that I wished to go to sea, though it mattered but little to me with whom I should sail. Now I know you, I shall never wish to serve under another commander."

Captain Benbow smiled at Roger's enthusiasm. "I may hope to keep afloat for many a year to come, and I am always glad to have those with me who serve from affection rather than from interest, so you may depend on having a berth on board whatever ship I may command, and I will never let the grass grow under the keel if I can help it. And, Master Battiscombe, what do you say to following sea life?"

"I have not made up my mind for doing so," answered Stephen. "I had no intention of going afloat till I was appointed supercargo of the *Dolphin*, and the experience I have had does not tempt me to go again, though I thank you, sir, for the offer, and am bound to confess that I would rather serve under you than any other commander."

"Well, well, each man to his taste," said the Captain. "I conclude that as you have been so long absent from home, and your friends must have been in great anxiety for your fate, that you would like to land as soon as possible. Should the weather permit, I will put you on shore either at the Start or the Bill of Portland. I cannot promise to run in to West Bay, lest I should be delayed in my passage up channel; may be, however, we shall fall in with a Torbay fisherman, or some craft bound to Lyme, which will land you still nearer home."

Roger, on hearing this, was strongly tempted to ask leave to accompany Stephen, for he longed once more to see his father and uncle, and sweet Alice and Madam Pauline, but he restrained his feelings; he feared that should he once leave Captain Benbow it might not be again so easy to join him. He therefore said nothing on the subject, but applied himself as diligently as before to improving his knowledge of seamanship and navigation.

Nothing has been said of Jumbo since he was employed in carrying the Moors' heads on shore. He had devoted himself to Captain Benbow, and fully expected to continue in his service. Sam Stokes also had entered as a seaman on board the *Benbow* frigate, but he was greatly changed; he had never been quite himself since they sailed from Cadiz.

"I cannot help thinking of those Moors' heads," he said one day to Roger, who inquired what was the matter.

"Sometimes I see them dangling, and they taunt me for having deserted the ship when I had sworn on their Koran to stick to them to the last."

"I am not very well able to say whether you are right or wrong in what you have done; still I think you were right in escaping from the Moors, for you would have died a Mohammedan if you had remained with them, and I hope you will die a Christian," said Roger, who was greatly puzzled to console poor Sam.

"Cannot say, sir," murmured Sam. "I was a very poor one, or I should not have turned Moor; even to save my life. There were a good many other poor fellows who refused to turn, and got cruelly treated in consequence. It seems to me that I acted like a big coward, when, to save myself, I agreed to become a Moor, and I should have been served right if I had never been able to get away from them."

"At all events, you have great reason to be thankful that you did get away from them," said Roger. "Now, you have to see that you behave yourself like a Christian man in future."

"I will try," said Sam, gravely. "I wish you would speak to the Captain and have those heads thrown overboard."

On this it occurred to Roger that the best thing was to tell Captain Benbow of the hallucination under which Sam was suffering.

"I will soon settle that matter," said the Captain, and he directed one of the mates to go forward and tell the men that if he ordered them to heave overboard the Moorish heads ranged on the forecastle, they were to pretend to do so. Presently he came on deck, and calling Sam aft, asked how he dared to have allowed those heads to remain on the forecastle. He then, keeping Sam by him, ordered the men to heave them into the sea, and not let one remain. They, being prepared, went through the action of heaving heads overboard. Sam looked on with open eyes and mouth agape.

"Now, my man," said the Captain, "we have got rid of those Moorish heads."

"Ay, ay," said Sam, looking over the side to see some of them floating astern. "I hope we have seen the last of them; it's my belief they have all gone to the bottom."

After this the *Benbow* frigate continued her course across the Bay of Biscay without meeting with any adventure. One day the Captain was talking over his plans with Stephen. "When I get to London, as soon as I have discharged my cargo and secured another freight, one of the first things I shall have to do will be to present myself to King James and see what notice he is inclined to take of the King of Spain's recommendation."

"To King James!" exclaimed Stephen. "Why, I was not aware that King Charles the Second was dead."

"Dead he is though, and, as the Spaniards say, died a true Catholic. Cannot say it is much to his credit, as he always pretended to his subjects to be a Protestant, and now that King James, who is more honest in that respect, acknowledges himself to be a Catholic, the French and the Spaniards are rejoicing at the thought that England will be turned back to the old faith, and that the object of the Spanish Armada will be gained."

"Heaven forbid that such should be the case!" exclaimed Stephen.

"I have no wish for it, and do not believe the people of England will consent to such a change," remarked the Captain; "but as I am a tarpaulin, as they call us, I do not trouble myself with affairs on shore, and it is my business to obey the laws, and do my duty to whatever king is on the throne."

"I cannot altogether agree with you there," said Stephen. "Our fathers fought to gain our civil and religious liberty, and it behoves us, their children, to defend those liberties with our lives."

The Captain shrugged his shoulders, remarking that he had not given his thoughts to such matters.

The news he had heard made Stephen meditate a great deal, and become more than ever anxious to return home. At length the Lizard was made, and the eyes of the adventurers were gladdened with the sight once more of their native land. The wind being fair, the *Benbow* frigate soon afterwards passed the Start, when she came up with a small vessel running in for the land. The Captain hailed her.

"Where are you bound for?" he asked.

"Lyme," was the answer.

"Heave-to, then, for I have a passenger for you."

"Now, Battiscombe, here is an opportunity if you wish to take advantage of it."

"Thank you, sir; I will do so," said Stephen.

In another minute his small bag of clothing was got on deck. He thanked Captain Benbow for all his kindness; he and Roger grasped each other's hands; they felt the parting more than their words could express.

"Tell them all about me," said Roger; "how much I should have liked to come home, but that I am bound to the ship and cannot leave Captain Benbow." He sent many more messages, which need not be repeated.

A boat was lowered, and Stephen was speedily carried on board the trader, which stood on towards Lyme, too far off then to be perceived, while the frigate, having hoisted her boat in, continued her course up channel. The Bill of

Portland was soon passed, and the high cliffs of the Isle of Wight sighted. Before the sun rose the next day, the *Benbow* frigate had run through the Straits of Dover, and was about to haul round the North Foreland, when a heavy north-westerly gale sprang up, which compelled her quickly to shorten all sail. In vain an attempt was made to steer for the Downs; the gale increased with such fury that it became evident that she would run a fearful risk of being driven on the Goodwin Sands. The ship was stout and well found, and Captain Benbow still hoped to beat up against the wind; but he was driven farther and farther from the English coast, while under his lee he had the dangerous Flemish bank. Few men, however, knew the shoals of that coast better than he did. Now the ship was put on one tack, now on another, but on each tack she lost ground.

He might, to be sure, have run for Dunkerque, Ostend, or other places along the coast, but night was coming on, and to steer in among the sandbanks was a dangerous undertaking, with the weather so thick and squally as it then was, and without a pilot; still, unless the *Benbow* frigate could beat off the coast,—it was one of two alternatives which remained—she might ride to her anchors, though risk of her dragging them was very great. Still, as long as her masts and sails remained uninjured, Captain Benbow resolved to try and keep to sea; a shift of wind might enable him to gain either the Downs or the Thames. The cool intrepid way in which Captain Benbow managed his ship excited Roger's admiration, while the crew, accustomed to confide in his skill, executed his orders with prompt obedience. When morning at length broke, dark clouds covered the sky, while leaden seas, capped with foam, rolled up around them, but no land was in sight to leeward, which showed that they had not struggled in vain; still the wind was blowing as strong as ever, and, stiff as was the *Benbow* frigate, it would have been dangerous to set more sail; indeed, she was already carrying as much as she could bear.

"If the gale does not increase we shall do well," observed Captain Benbow to Roger. "As soon as it moderates we may stand in for the Thames."

As the Captain had been on deck all night, he now went below to snatch a short sleep, leaving his first officer in command. Roger was also glad to turn in, for he could scarcely keep his eyes open. He might have been asleep for about a couple of hours, when he was awakened by hearing two loud crashes in rapid succession. He sprang up on deck to discover, to his dismay, that both mainmast and foremast were gone by the board. The Captain was already there issuing his orders to clear the wreck, and to prevent the butts of the masts striking the sides of the ship. Never, perhaps, before had the *Benbow* frigate been in greater peril, and it was more difficult than ever to keep her off the shoals. The long dark night was coming on, the masts were pounding away against the sides, having been cut adrift. An effort was made to rig a spar on the stump of the foremast, so as to keep steerage-way on the ship, the Captain having resolved to steer for the Scheldt, in which river he hoped to find safe anchorage. Owing to the way the ship was tumbling about, some hours passed, however, before the jury-mast could be rigged and sail set on it. The ship was then kept as much as possible to the westward, and Captain Benbow expressed a hope that he should be able to reach the mouth of the river. Before the morning came the wind had dropped considerably, and had shifted to the southward, whereon the ship's head was immediately turned in the direction of the Thames. She had gone but a short distance, when a sail, which had been sighted at daylight coming from the northward, approached under Dutch colours.

"Mynheers and I have always been friendly, and if yonder vessel has any spars on board, I doubt not that her Captain will gladly supply us with anything we want."

The stranger soon drew near, and Captain Benbow having explained his wants, which were indeed very evident, the Dutch Captain at once offered not only to furnish him with spars, but, it being almost calm, to send some of his crew on board to assist in getting them set up. The offer was too good to be refused. The stranger was the *Elephant*, Captain Coopman, who, knowing Captain Benbow by reputation, said that he was delighted to be of service to him. While the two ships lay close alongside each other, their crews busily engaged with the work in hand, another ship was approaching, which was not discovered till she was a couple of miles or so off. Captain Coopman, on observing her, expressed his astonishment and annoyance.

"She is French," he exclaimed. "By not keeping a proper look-out, I have allowed myself to be caught."

"But I cannot permit you to be caught by the Frenchman," said Captain Benbow.

"Thanks, friend," answered the Dutch Captain. "I would willingly not expose you to an attack from the Frenchman, but I cannot help myself. See, the wind has fallen completely; it has become a dead calm."

While he was speaking, a boat was seen to put off from the stranger, and as she approached, it was observed that she was full of armed men. Captain Benbow, on this, ordered the guns to be loaded and run out, and directed his men, while the Dutch Captain, going on board his ship, followed his example. In a short time the stranger was alongside. Captain Benbow stood at the gangway.

"You are welcome to come on board if you visit us as a friend," he said, "but I cannot allow you to step on my deck if you approach as an enemy."

"Whither are you bound, and to what nation do you belong?" asked the stranger.

"I am English," answered Benbow, "and am bound from Cadiz to the Thames. You, I see by the colours you carry, are French."

"What is the other vessel alongside you?" asked the French Captain.

"She is Dutch, and has delayed her voyage to render me assistance in getting fresh masts set up, as you will observe, mine having been carried away in the gale."

"I regret to have to interfere with her, but I must, notwithstanding, make her my prize," said the French Captain.

"If you make prize of her you must make prize of me," answered Captain Benbow. "In common gratitude I cannot allow her to be captured while I have the means of defending her."

"Notwithstanding, I must take her, for I am bound to make prizes of all Dutch vessels I fall in with," answered the stranger.

"At present, my friend, I think we are more likely to make you and your boat's crew prisoners," said Captain Benbow. "See, you are under our guns, and I have only to give the word, and we can sink you in a moment; however, what do you say to a compromise? You give me your word that you will let this vessel escape, and I promise not to make prisoners of you and your boat's crew, which I shall otherwise most certainly do."

"Who are you?" asked the French Captain, standing up in his boat. He appeared to be in the prime of manhood, and exhibited a tall yet well-knit figure, and a fine bold handsome countenance.

"John Benbow, at your service," answered the Captain. "May I ask your name?"

"I am Jean Bart, in the service of the King of France. I am pretty well known in these seas."

"That indeed you are; a better seaman does not sail out of Dunkerque," answered Benbow. "I have often heard of you and your doings, and from the number of prizes you have taken, I judge that you can afford to let one go without any loss to your reputation or purse. I tell you frankly that I am glad of having an opportunity of meeting you."

Captain Bart looked pleased at the compliment paid him.

"Come, my friend," said Captain Benbow, "agree to my proposal. Step on board; crack a bottle with Captain Coopman and me. Your men shall be entertained forward, and while the calm lasts you need be in no hurry to take your departure."

Without further hesitation Captain Bart agreed to the proposal.

"I trust to your honour, Captain Benbow," he said.

"You may rest assured that, as you have given your word to allow the *Elephant* to continue her voyage unmolested, you will be able to leave this ship whenever you desire."

The three Captains were soon seated in the comfortable cabin of the *Benbow* frigate. Captain Benbow, having regarded Captain Bart for an instant, put out his hand, exclaiming, "Why, we served together as lads for two years or more under Admiral Ruyter—surely I am not mistaken—and saw a good deal of pretty hard fighting."

"You are perfectly right," answered Captain Bart. "I remained with him till I was twenty-one and a half years of age, when I returned to my native town of Dunkerque, not supposing at the time that I should have to fight against my old friends the Dutch."

"You and I must be about the same age, Captain Bart," observed Benbow, after they had been comparing notes of certain events which had taken place.

"I was born in the year 1650," said Bart.

"Very same year that I first saw the light," observed Benbow. "We both of us have been ploughing the salt water pretty nearly ever since."

"For my part I expect to plough it to the end of my days, as most of my ancestors have done; for we men of Dunkerque are born seamen, and fond of the ocean," said Bart.

"And to my belief I am the first of my race that ever went to sea," said Benbow.

Roger had been an interested listener to the conversation carried on in English, which Bart spoke remarkably well, as did Captain Coopman.

"Will you tell Captain Bart your adventure with the Moors' heads, sir?" he said, thinking it would interest their guests.

The other Captain was eager to hear it, and Benbow gave the account, and told of the wonderful way in which Roger and Stephen had escaped.

"You acted bravely, my young friend," said Captain Bart, turning to Roger. "It required no small amount of nerve and courage to escape from the *Tiger*. Those Sallee rovers have become the pest of the ocean. I hope that my Government will send me in search of them, though for my part I would rather catch them alive than cut off their heads, as each Moor fetches a good price as a slave, and very useful well-behaved servants they make, always provided their tempers are not irritated, and it is prudent not to allow them to carry arms of any description."

After some time Captain Bart rose to take his leave. His men had, he found, been hospitably entertained by the crew of the *Benbow* frigate. Very loath to quit her, the Frenchmen, embracing their hosts in a most demonstrative manner, swore eternal friendship, expressing the hope that England and France would hereafter, as now, remain on friendly terms. The Dutchmen had of late been suffering too much from the privateers of Dunkerque to regard the French with any amicable feeling, but wisely kept on board their own vessel.

"Now, Captain Bart," said Benbow. "I must trust to your honour not to interfere with our friend here."

"Certainly, certainly," answered Captain Bart, and shaking hands with his brother Captains, he stepped into his boat,

which pulled leisurely towards his frigate.

"Now, my friend," said Benbow to Captain Coopman, "yonder Frenchman may be a very honourable person, but it is as well not to trust him more than we can help. I would advise you to make sail directly it becomes dark, so that you may put as wide a distance as possible between your two vessels before to-morrow morning. I will remain here and show my lights for some time longer, so that he will not know in what direction you have gone."

The Dutch Captain, considering Benbow's advice sound, promised to follow it. The calm continued till about half the first watch was over, when a light breeze sprang up from the northward, thus placing the English and Dutch vessels to windward of Jean Bart's frigate. The *Elephant* immediately made all sail, and stood away for the Texel, not allowing a glimmer of light to proceed from her sides, and Captain Benbow trimmed his lanterns brighter than ever, and waited for an hour or more, when, a breeze freshening, he shaped a course for the Thames.

"Come," he said, "we have done a good turn to our Dutch friend; I hope that he will manage to escape from their clutches."

Chapter Seven.

We must now return to Eversden. Months had passed by since Roger and Stephen had sailed from Bristol, and no news had been received of them. At length one day Mr Battiscombe made his appearance, having ridden over from Langton Park, and desired to have a word with the Colonel alone. He looked graver and sadder than usual.

"I bring you news," he said, "and I beg you to break it to my friend Willoughby. Our two sons, as you know, sailed in the *Dolphin*. The owners write me word that so long a time has elapsed since they heard of her without receiving tidings of her, that they are compelled to give her up as lost. She had not been heard of at any of the ports up the Mediterranean. It is within the pale of possibility that the lads may have escaped, yet surely we should have heard."

"God's will be done," said Mr Willoughby when he heard the account. "I will not give up all hope of their return, though what has happened to them it is indeed hard to guess; still there are chances by which they may have effected their escape."

Though he could not at all times hide his grief, yet he bore up remarkably well. The only person in the family who would not consent to believe that Roger and Stephen were lost was Alice Tufnell.

"If it had been known that the *Dolphin* had gone down, and there was one survivor who could report that all the rest had perished, we might then believe that the ship had foundered," she said, talking to Madam Pauline. "Who can tell but that the *Dolphin* may have been driven on the shore of some unknown island, whence the crew have been hitherto unable to escape? I have read of many such adventures. The ocean is very wide, and perhaps Roger and Stephen are even now living the lives of castaways, and engaged, may be, in building a vessel in which they will some day return home. If I were a man I should like to fit out a ship and go in search of them."

"My dear, such undertakings appear very easy to the imagination, but practically the matter is very different," answered Madam Pauline. "It would be like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay. Supposing that the two dear lads are still alive, you would not know in what direction to go. You might sail about the ocean for years and visit every known and unknown island, and yet not find them. We must have patience and simply trust in God's mercy to bring them back if He had thought fit to save their lives."

When, however, not only month after month, but year after year went by, and the young men did not make their appearance, even Alice began to lose hope of seeing them. She spoke of them less frequently than formerly, though a shadow of sadness occasionally crossed her fair brow, but yet little had occurred to draw out the character of Alice Tufnell. She was determined and energetic, zealous in all she undertook; at the same time she was gentle and affectionate to those who had befriended her, with her sweet and loving disposition and sweet temper. Her voice was sweet and musical, and Madam Pauline and the Colonel delighted in hearing her singing. She was now about seventeen, her figure of moderate height, well rounded and graceful, while her countenance exhibited the serene and joyous spirit which dwelt within. She frequently accompanied the Colonel on a small pony, which had been Roger's, on his walks about the country. Sometimes she attended Madam Pauline, who, however, did not often extend her perambulations beyond the grounds or the neighbouring village. Why it was she had scarcely been able to say, but, when not engaged, Alice frequently made her way across the Downs to the top of the cliff, sometimes descending to Ben Rullock's cottage, not that she often found the old man at home, as he was generally out fishing, or gone away to Lyme, or some other place on the coast, to do commissions for the villages. Sometimes she would sit in Roger's favourite nook, at others would pace up and down on the cliffs, gazing out over the ocean, now blue and calm, and sparkling in the sunlight, now of a leaden hue, covered with foaming seas which came roaring up on the beach with a thundering sound. Of course she more frequently came when the wind was light and the water calm, and she could sit and gaze at them with satisfaction.

She had one day gone down to old Ben's cottage. Not finding him at home, she had strolled along the beach till she turned with her face towards Lyme, when she observed a boat slowly rowing along the shore. That must be old Ben's, and he probably has Toby with him, and they appear to have a passenger. It was curiosity perhaps which tempted her to linger for the arrival of the old man, to hear the news from Lyme, as it reached that place generally a day or two sooner than Eversden. She waited, now stooping to pick up a shell, now to mark with a stick she carried in her hand how far the sea had risen on the beach. Looking up as the boat drew near, she observed that the passenger had risen; as he did so he lifted his hat, but he again sat down as old Ben and Toby pulled rapidly in for the beach, up which they ran the bows of the boat. The stranger then stepping out advanced towards her, and once more bowed.

"Miss Alice Tufnell?" he said in a tone of inquiry.

"That is my name," she answered, looking at him with a somewhat doubtful expression. He was a young man, tallish and thin, with a complexion burnt to a dark brown, his countenance showing that he had undergone toil, if not probably also sickness and suffering.

"How do you know my name?" she asked.

"What, Alice! what, Miss Tufnell! don't you remember Stephen Battiscombe!" exclaimed the stranger.

"Is it possible?" she exclaimed, putting out her hand and gazing at his face. "I knew you were not lost; I always said so. And Roger, my dear brother Roger, why has he not come with you? Where is he?" she asked in an anxious tone.

"He is serving with the brave Captain Benbow. Though he longed to come and see you all, yet he would not quit his ship till she arrives in the Thames, and not then unless there is time to come down here and return before the Captain again puts to sea. Roger is wedded to a sailor's life, notwithstanding the dangers he has already run in following it; but he bade me give his best and truest love to you, Miss Alice, and his father and uncle and aunt."

Mistress Alice lingered for some time on the beach, so interested in listening to what Stephen was telling her, that she forgot he might desire to be proceeding homewards to relieve the anxiety of his own family. At length, however, Stephen suggested that they should proceed towards Eversden, when she led the way by the narrow path up the cliff. They then walked on, somewhat slowly it must be confessed, which was but natural, that Stephen might have time to narrate some of his adventures since the loss of the *Dolphin*. Madam Pauline was the first person they met, and she uttered an exclamation of surprise as she saw Mistress Alice approaching with a strange young gentleman, with whom she appeared on terms of intimacy.

"Who do you think he is, aunt?" asked Alice.

"Roger; no, he cannot be Roger; surely he must be Stephen Battiscombe!"

"You are right in your conjecture, my dear Madam Pauline," said Stephen; and the little French lady, seizing both his hands and looking into his face kindly, then hurried him off to see the Colonel and Mr Willoughby, to whom he had to narrate, as briefly as he could, his and Roger's adventures, and give the messages which his friend had sent by him. Mr Willoughby was anxious to see Roger before he again sailed, but his difficulty was to know where to find him.

"I must write to Master Handscombe," he observed; "he will ascertain when the *Benbow* frigate comes into port, and will easily convey a message on board desiring him to come, and requesting the Captain to give him leave."

After partaking of some refreshment served to him by the fair hands of Mistress Alice, Stephen set off to return home. Next morning he came back to Eversden. He omitted in his hurry, he said, to pay old Ben Rullock for bringing him from Lyme. He invited Mistress Alice to accompany him to the beach.

"It is a path I have often trod alone of late," she answered, "and I know not why I should hesitate in accompanying you."

As Madam Pauline did not forbid her, she accompanied Stephen. Their conversation was probably interesting to themselves, but it need not be recorded. Stephen, of course, had a vast deal to tell her of his adventures, which she had not hitherto heard. This made them linger on the way, and sit down on the top of the cliffs, that they might converse more at their ease.

Certain it was that Madam Pauline considered it her duty to chide Mistress Alice for being away so long from home, although Stephen took the blame on himself by saying that he had to wait for some time to see old Ben, who was out in his boat, but he promised to try and keep better time in future. Day after day, on some excuse or other, he returned to Eversden. His father, he said, had written to his friend Mr Kempson at Bristol, who would, he believed, restore him to his position in the counting-house, while he hoped, from the encouragement he had before received, that he should soon make a satisfactory income, which would enable him to set up house for himself. He did not venture to say who would share his fortune with him, or to hint that Mistress Alice might be interested in the matter.

All this time no news had been received of Roger. Mr Willoughby had written to Mr Handscombe, who was still in London. He replied that the *Benbow* frigate had not yet arrived, though she was long overdue, but the merchants to whom her freight was consigned had received notice of her having left Cadiz. Except from the account sent them through Stephen, they had not heard of her being in the channel. They spoke of the heavy gale which had occurred in the North Sea, and fears were entertained that she might have met with some disaster. This made the family at Eversden very anxious. Mr Handscombe wrote other news, however, to Mr Willoughby. He spoke of the extreme unpopularity of the king, especially among the Dissenters. Notwithstanding his promise not to support the Popish system, and to allow the right of free worship to all his subjects, he had already introduced innovations. The man who had governed Scotland with fire and sword, and murdered through his agents numberless persons for adhering to their religious principles, was, it was said, likely to commence a similar system of terrorism in England. Large numbers of Londoners, ever opposed to tyranny, were ready to revolt as soon as a leader should come forward. That leader had already been found, and only waited for an opportunity to carry out the proposed project, and to dethrone the Popish king. It was hoped that numbers in all parts of the country, especially in the western counties, would follow their example as soon as the signal was given, and the man to whom all looked as their leader had made his appearance on the scene. Mr Handscombe mentioned no names, he only spoke of reports, nor did he say whence the expected chief was likely to come; but Mr Willoughby was fully convinced that rebellion on a large scale was in prospect. He did mention the contents of this part of his letter to his brother-in-law. He felt sure that the Colonel would take no part in any proceeding of the sort, and might, from his loyal principles, feel himself called upon to support King James by sending notice of any information he might obtain, if not by taking more active measures. Mr Willoughby, however, rode over the next day to Langton Hall, and had a long consultation with Mr Battiscombe, who would, he knew, cordially support the cause calculated to overthrow the Papal system with which the country was

threatened. They had a long and interesting discussion, at which his elder sons as well as Stephen were allowed to be present.

Stephen had now to set off for Bristol, Mr Kempson having agreed to receive him, but begged that he might pay one more visit to Eversden to bid his friends farewell. He rode over on a good horse that he might have a longer time to spend there. He found Mistress Alice about to set off on her favourite walk to the cliffs. As Madam Pauline was engaged up-stairs, and the Colonel was out in the fields, he did not hesitate to offer to accompany her, and she did not forbid him. They had just reached the Downs when they saw three vessels, one of large size and two others of smaller dimensions, standing in for the land. They watched them with much interest, Alice wondering what they could be, as ships of large burden seldom came near that part of the coast, Stephen observed that he knew something about the matter. "His father had received notice that morning that the Duke of Argyll, with a large force, had landed in Scotland, that the Highlands were in revolt, and that the Duke of Monmouth had sailed from the Texel. There can be little doubt," he added, "therefore, that the ships we see belong to him, although they are fewer in number than I should have expected."

"Then is there to be a rebellion in this part of the country?" asked Alice, in a tone of considerable anxiety. "Will the scenes I have read of in the time of Cromwell be again enacted?"

"I fear it is the only way by which we can get our rights, my sweet Alice," answered Stephen. "I would that war could be averted, but better to have war than to be tyrannically treated, our religious and civil rights trampled on as they have been for many years past; but, for my own part, I am ready to draw the sword in defence of our freedom."

"But can our freedom thus be secured?" asked Alice. "All the blood shed in former years gained nothing, and in the end the king, who has just died, was more securely seated on the throne than his father had been. You belong to a peaceable profession, and whatever is done, I entreat you not to engage personally in warlike undertakings."

"I thought, Mistress Alice, that you were a heroine, and would have been ready to gird on my sword and bid me go forth and fight in a noble cause," said Stephen, in a half playful, half serious tone.

"And so I would if I were convinced the cause was noble, right, and just, with a prospect of success."

"I promise you, Mistress Alice, not to draw sword unless in a righteous cause," said Stephen. "Will that satisfy you?"

"If the cause is righteous; but who is to settle that?" said Alice gravely.

While they were speaking the ships stood off the coast, the wind flowing northerly, and soon again were lost to sight.

"Perhaps after all that may not be the squadron which has been looked for," said Stephen. "Then you have uselessly been made anxious."

"I trust it may be so," said Alice.

And they continued their walk discoursing on subjects far more interesting to themselves than politics. Stephen spoke of his expected career at Bristol, and hoped, he said, to pay occasional visits to Langton and the spot endeared to him more than his paternal home. Though neither wished to return, they remembered that Madam Pauline and the Colonel might naturally complain were they long absent, and they at length bent their steps homeward. As they approached the manor house they were met by a loud shout; presently Roger came rushing out towards them. He greeted Alice as a sister, and shook Stephen warmly by the hand.

"I have just arrived from London town," he exclaimed. "We only got into the Thames a week ago. I scarcely expected to get leave, but Master Handscombe pressed the point with the Captain, and undertook that I should return in ten days, so that my holiday will be a very short one, and I must make the most of it."

Alice and Stephen expressed their delight at seeing him, and inquired the cause of his delay. He then described to them the gale in which the frigate had lost her masts, and their strange encounter with the French Captain Bart. Stephen required very little pressing to stop for the evening meal, which was soon to be placed on the table. He mentioned to Mr Willoughby that he and Alice had seen some strange vessels in the offing. Mr Willoughby seemed deeply interested at the account, and became very thoughtful.

"It agrees with the message which Roger brought me down from London, and which I would have you carry to your father, for he would intrust nothing to him in writing. The future man is on his way, and whether our slavery is to continue or freedom is to be obtained depends on the preparations made for his reception. If the gentlemen and yeomen of the West rise to a man, success would be secured; pray say that I shall be glad to have some conversation with your father without loss of time."

As the days were long, Stephen had broad daylight with which to return. Roger accompanied him, as the two young men had naturally much to talk about. Stephen again spoke of the vessels they had seen off the coast. He was convinced that they portended something of importance, and he proposed to Roger to ride into Lyme the next morning to learn any news the people of that town might have obtained on the subject. Roger gladly consented to accompany him, remarking, however, that he did not feel deeply interested in the matter. "Captain Benbow says that a sailor should stick to his ship and look after his men, and not trouble himself with affairs on shore, and I intend to follow his example."

On getting back to Eversden, Roger had so much to talk about that he kept the family, who were eager to listen to him, up to a later hour than usual. Notwithstanding, he was on foot at an early hour, and mounting his father's horse, he in a short time joined Stephen on the road to Lyme. The road was somewhat circuitous, hilly, and rough, so that it took them nearly two hours to reach the high ground above the town, whereupon they gazed across it over the blue

sea. Stephen exclaimed, "Why, those must be the very three ships I saw yesterday evening; then I was not wrong in my conjecture, they must be the ships; they have, probably, troops and stores on board, and perhaps the Duke is with them. Let us ride on and ascertain."

Riding down into the valley, on the sides and at the bottom of which the town is built, the houses in outskirts being scattered somewhat irregularly about, they proceeded to the "George Inn," where they put up their horses, and to their surprise they found that no one was at all certain as to the object of the vessels in the offing; they were said to be Dutch, but they showed no colours. It was supposed that they were about to proceed along the coast; still there was some excitement. A boat had been seen to land at Seaton, some way to the east, and had put some persons on shore; who they were, and where they had gone, no one knew. Unable to gain any definite information in the town, Roger and Stephen walked down towards the Cob, where they saw a boat pulling out towards the ships.

"If we had been a little sooner we should have been able to go in her and ascertain what those vessels really are," observed Stephen.

"We shall know soon enough when the boat returns," observed Roger.

But the morning went by, and still the boat did not come back to the shore. This seemed to have created some suspicions in the minds of the authorities. They then proceeded to the Church Cliffs, to the west of the town, from which lovely spot, as they walked up and down, they could observe the vessels. Here they found a number of persons, who all offered various surmises as to the character of the strangers. Among the persons present were the Mayor and other authorities of the town. The former suggested that a gun should be fired to recall the boat, when, it was thought, if she had been retained for any particular reason, a friendly signal would be made.

"An excellent idea, Mr Mayor," answered another member of the Corporation. "But to confess the truth, we have not a grain of powder to fire a musket; we must wait patiently till the boat comes back."

The day passed by, till towards evening the post arrived. On this the Mayor and several of the Corporation hurried to the post-house. The post had brought a weekly *News-Letter*, in which it was stated that three ships had lately sailed from a port in Holland, and were supposed by the English ambassador to be bound either for England or Scotland, and that the Duke of Monmouth was aboard.

"What if those three ships out there are those spoken of!" exclaimed the Mayor. "We shall have an invasion, rebellion, and much fighting in these parts. My friends, we must call out the borough militia, we must oppose the landing, we must turn the tide of war from our own town to some other part of the coast."

This speech was highly applauded by the loyal part of the inhabitants. The drum was immediately beat to summon the lieges to defend the town. A very few answered to the call; instead of doing so, their Captain mounted his horse, and galloped off to carry the information to London. The Mayor, finding that he had gone, with several other members of the Corporation quietly slipped out of the town, and in a short time the whole place was in a state of confusion. No one had been able to say what was about to take place. Seven boats were now seen approaching the beach west of the Cob. Roger and Stephen went down to meet them.

"Come," said Stephen, "let us go down and meet them. We shall soon know all about the matter."

"But, surely, you will not join them whether the Duke is there or not, till you understand what are their intentions," said Roger.

"If the Duke comes, as I believe he will, to oppose the Papists and establish civil and religious liberty, I am bound to aid him with my life's blood," answered Stephen, enthusiastically.

In a short time the boats got near the beach, and from the largest a tall graceful man of handsome countenance, dressed in purple, with a star on his breast and a sword by his side, stepped on shore, when about eighty-three other persons, many of them by their dress being gentlemen, landed at the same time. As soon as all were on shore, the Duke, in a loud voice, his countenance beaming with satisfaction, exclaimed, "Silence, my friends. Let us now return thanks to God for having preserved us from the dangers of the sea, and especially from the ships which would have prevented our progress." Kneeling down on the sand, all the rest imitating his example, he lifted up his voice in a prayer of thanksgiving, though some of those who might have joined him were silent. The Duke then rising, with a cheerful countenance, drew his sword, and, ordering his men to fall into their ranks, advanced towards the town. Numbers now rushed forward to welcome him and kiss his hand, so that it was with difficulty at times that he could make his way. Among the most eager was Stephen, who, in spite of what Roger had said, hurried up to the Duke and offered his services. The townsmen now came up shouting, "A Monmouth! A Monmouth! Protestant religion." Amid a considerable concourse the Duke made his way to the Church Cliff, where his blue standard with the motto, "Pro religione et libertate." This done, some temporary tables were formed, at which several writers took their seats with books before them, ready to enter the names of those who were willing to enlist under his standard. The volunteers flocked in rapidly, and the number of the force was soon increased by sixty stout young men, for whom arms were provided, chiefly from those stored in the Town-Hall for the use of the militia. The two principal leaders next to the Duke were Lord Grey of Wark, who had landed with a musket on his shoulder, a pair of pistols in his girdle, and, far more important to the cause, a Scotch gentleman, a soldier of experience, Fletcher of Salton, who, taking command of the men, at once ordered some to take possession of the forts, others to guard the avenues, and the remainder to get the arms and ammunition from on board ship, including four field-pieces—the only heavy guns brought with them.

Roger had stood aloof, for he very well knew that were he to join, it would be, in the first place, in direct opposition to his uncle's wishes, and besides he had also engaged to serve with Captain Benbow on board a Royal ship, to which he expected shortly to be appointed. He was anxious, therefore, to return home as soon as possible, but he was unwilling to go without first ascertaining whether Stephen had made up his mind to remain with the Duke. He had

some little difficulty in finding him among the crowd flocking round the standard, but at length he got up to him and took him by the arm.

"I am loth to leave you," he said, "but go I must. Tell me, will you return to Langton and consult your father before joining the Duke? and if so, we should be on the road, for the day is waning, and little more can be done this evening."

"I would rather ask you, Roger, if you have made up your mind not to join the noble cause. I tell you that I have resolved to throw in my lot with the Duke. You know not what I sacrifice by so doing, should success fail to attend our enterprise; but it must succeed, and ere many days are over, the Duke will be at the head of an army sufficient to drive James of York from his usurped throne."

"I tell you I am sorry that you have so decided," answered Roger. "Am I then to bear any message to your father except to say that you will not return home?"

"Yes, tell him that I have joined the Duke; and I am well assured that my brothers will, as soon as they hear of his landing, hasten to his standard."

"Have you any other message?" asked Roger.

"Yes, one which I know I can confide to you," answered Stephen in a low voice, not free from agitation; "it is to Alice. Tell her that I know I am acting contrary to her advice, and it grieves me deeply to do so, as it may appear that I am regardless of her wishes, but that I consider everything must be sacrificed to the cause of duty, and that no more sacred cause exists than the one in which I am engaged."

"I will carry out your wishes," said Roger with a sigh. "It seems to me as if we two had changed places; you used once to act the part of my Mentor, now I am urging my advice on you, though, alack! you appear but little inclined to follow."

"It is impossible, Roger, for I have already signed my name as one of the Duke's adherents, and I cannot desert him."

Roger, all his expostulations useless, wishing his friend farewell, hurried back to the inn, where he was just in time to prevent his horse from being taken possession of by some of the Duke's zealous adherents, who were eager at once to form a body of cavalry.

"Quick, young gentleman, and mount," whispered the landlord; "they have already secured all the steeds they could find at the 'Pig and Whistle,' and will be here anon."

Roger threw himself into the saddle. As he galloped off he heard shouts calling him back, but using whip and spur he was soon out of the town, nor did he pull rein till he was beyond reach of any pursuers. At the first hamlet through which he passed, several of the people seeing him riding fast, inquired if anything unusual had happened. Without considering that his prudent course would have been to keep silence, he replied, "Yes, the Duke of Monmouth landed this evening at Lyme, and I saw his standard set up in the market-place; what he is going to do, however, is more than I can say."

"Hurrah! At last he has come to free us from our Popish tyrants and taxes," cried one of the villagers; and another raised the shout of "A Monmouth! A Monmouth! We will go to him and fight for him if he wants us."

Roger rode on, and at the next village gave the same information with a like result. No sooner had he told the people that the Duke had landed, than nearly all were eager to join him. Roger had promised Stephen to ride straight for Langton Hall to inform Mr Battiscombe of what had occurred. He was delayed here and there by having to answer numerous interrogations, and at length he reached the Hall, by which time it was nearly dark. He told a servant to hold his horse while he went into the hall where the family were assembled at supper.

"What brings you here, Master Roger, and what has become of Stephen?" asked Mr Battiscombe.

"He has joined the standard of the Duke of Monmouth, who landed this afternoon, and he bade me ride on and tell you, being assured that you would approve of his proceeding."

"Would that I could join him myself!" exclaimed Mr Battiscombe.

"But I can, and I can," cried out two of his other sons, rising from their chairs as they spoke. "We will join him this very night; and you will return with us, Roger, of course."

"I am bound homewards," answered Roger. "I could not take such a step without consulting my uncle and father."

"For so glorious a cause we ought not to hesitate for a moment," exclaimed one of the young Battiscombes; "but if you will not go with us we must set out without you."

"Better wait till to-morrow morning," said Mr Battiscombe. "Employ this evening in preparing your arms, and collecting such articles as you may require."

After Roger's sturdy refusal to join the Duke, the young Battiscombes treated him with unusual coldness, barely indeed with civility; he, therefore, wishing them good-evening, mounted his horse and made his way towards the manor-house.

"Have you heard anything more about the ships Alice saw last night?" asked his father.

"Yes," answered Roger, and he described who had landed from them. "Stephen has joined the Duke, and wanted me much to do the same, but I declined till I had consulted you."

"You acted wisely, Roger," said his uncle. "It may be that he will gain the day, it may be that he will lose it; but certain it is that he who brings civil war into a land brings a heavy curse."

"And has Stephen actually joined the Duke of Monmouth?" exclaimed Alice, turning pale. "I urged him not to join so desperate a cause as that which the Duke's must be when he comes to oppose constituted authority."

"But he does not consider it desperate," said Roger, "but a right noble cause; and judging by the enthusiasm exhibited by the people, if the Duke has brought arms to put into their hands, and officers to drill them, he may speedily have a large army under his command."

"That remains to be seen," observed the Colonel. "I had hoped not to witness another civil war in our country."

Mr Willoughby had all the time kept silence. Although, perhaps, thankful that his son had not joined Monmouth's standard, he rejoiced that the Duke had safely landed and that the people showed enthusiasm in his cause. His belief was that the whole of the west of England would quickly be up in arms, that the army of James would melt away, and that a bloodless victory would be obtained over the tyrant. He made a remark to that effect to the Colonel.

"I wish no ill to the Duke of Monmouth," he answered. "If he succeeds he will be called the deliverer of our country, if he fails he will be branded as a traitor. It all depends on the prudence with which he acts, no less than on the purity of his views. If his cause is so intrinsically just, he is likely to obtain general support. If not, should he fail, he will be guilty of the ruin and destruction of those who engage with him. Undoubtedly the Duke, like you and others, believes that the whole of the west country, including the noblemen and gentlemen, will rise in his favour, that a rising will take place in London, that the Duke of Argyll will be successful in Scotland, and that the rebellion will be organised in Ireland; but all this remains to be proved, and it appears to me that the Duke, before he ventured on English ground, should have thoroughly assured himself that these events would occur."

Such were the opinions of a large number of the upper classes who were not unfavourable to the Duke, but were unwilling to hazard their lives and fortunes by taking an active part in an enterprise which had been commenced, as they considered, without due and sufficient preparation. The older men had witnessed and the younger ones had heard too much of the horrors of civil war to desire again to see it commence, unless they could be satisfied that the cause they advocated would be speedily and entirely triumphant. The large majority of Protestants would gladly have seen the Popish king driven from the throne, but even that event might be purchased at too high a price, and thus they thought it prudent to remain neutral in the coming struggle.

Before retiring to bed the Colonel summoned Roger to speak to him in private. Having commended him for the prudence with which he had acted, he added, "Now, my lad, I wish you to give me your word of honour that you will not be tempted by any persuasions to join the Duke. I know the enthusiastic spirit which animates your friend Stephen, who fully believes that he is engaged in a righteous cause, regardless of all the consequences of failure. He acts with the approval of his father, therefore I do not blame him; but I think it probable that he will endeavour to win you and others over, and I therefore wish to prepare you to resist all his arguments and solicitations."

Roger was somewhat surprised at this address, for he fancied that Stephen, whatever he might say, was not at all likely to win him over. He, however, readily gave his word to his uncle.

"I can now with much more satisfaction enjoy your society during your brief stay with us," said the Colonel, "and feel confident that you will make the best of your way back to London to join your ship when your leave is up."

The next day Mr Battscombe came over from Langton Hall to call on the Colonel and Mr Willoughby. The object of his visit was very evident. He at once entered into the subject of the Duke of Monmouth's enterprise, and used every argument he could think of to induce his friends to support it.

He had given his sons, he said, to the cause, though his age and infirmities must prevent him from joining it personally, but he purposed setting to work to enlist men who would soon raise a body of cavalry, of which he hoped Colonel Tregellen would take command.

"I will do nothing of the sort, my friend," answered the Colonel, laughing. "My fighting days are over, and even if I thought better of the Duke's cause than I do, I would not risk the safety of those dependent on me by engaging in it. As a friend, I would advise you to return home and remain quietly there; you have given your sons to the cause, and I pray that they may be preserved from the dangers to which they must inevitably be exposed."

Madam Pauline and Alice were present; the former was greatly relieved when she heard the Colonel say this. Poor Alice looked pale and anxious. She was more ready than ever to forgive Stephen for having acted contrary to her advice, when she heard that he had done so in obedience to his father's wishes; still she dreaded the dangers to which he would be exposed,—dangers which the Colonel's remarks had conjured up in her imagination. Roger's stay was to be a very short one, he had spent so much time on his journey down; and as he would probably be longer returning, it was settled that he was to start on the following Monday. The family on Saturday night had retired to rest, but Roger, a very unusual thing for him, could not sleep. He had thrown open the window, which looked northward; before it, at some distance, ran the road between Lyme and Bridport. Presently he heard the tramp of feet and the murmur of voices. As he watched a part of the road which could be seen between the trees, he observed it filled with armed men marching eastward. There appeared to him to be a large number on foot pressing forward, then there came a body of horsemen. At length they all passed by. He was doubtful whether he should tell his uncle, but what would be the use, he thought, if they are Monmouth's men?—he would not join them. Or is it likely that the Duke could so soon have got an army together? If they are the king's, he might be called upon to give his assistance. He was very much inclined to let himself out of the house to go and ascertain what they were about. He resisted the

temptation, however. Should he be discovered, his uncle, he felt, might suppose that he was breaking his word. Drowsiness stealing over him, he left his window open and turned into bed. He rose rather later than usual, and on going down to breakfast mentioned what he had heard during the night; but no one had been disturbed, and his father declared that he must have been dreaming. Roger asserted that he had both seen and heard a large body of men passing. The Colonel was somewhat unwell, and Mr Willoughby never left the house at an early hour, so Roger volunteered to go out and ascertain if anything unusual had taken place. He had just got to the edge of the plantations which bordered the high-road, when he heard the tramp of horses, and looking along it, saw a large body of mounted men trotting along at a fast rate coming from the direction of Bridport. Not wishing to encounter them, he crouched down among the underwood. At their head rode one of the officers who had landed with the Duke, who he heard was Lord Grey. His followers seemed to be in a desperate hurry, some pushing on before the others, as the oxen in a large drove are apt to do when the dogs are barking at their heels. They looked neither to the right hand nor to the left. The road was somewhat narrow, only three or four could ride abreast; thus they were some time in passing. Roger fancied they had all gone by, when, looking up, he observed a smaller party riding in better order. In the last among them, and apparently acting as an officer, he recognised Stephen Battiscombe, who kept continually turning round as if he expected some one to be following. Roger was much inclined to shout out and ask what had occurred, but he restrained himself, for he thought it possible that some of the men might look upon him as an enemy or a spy, and make him a prisoner. The appearance of Stephen had left no doubt that the party belonged to the Duke, and that they had been engaged in some expedition which had apparently not been successful. He now went on to the village, expecting there to obtain some certain information. Except the landlord of the little inn, who was too burly and short-winded to move, not a man did he find in the place.

“They are all gone, Master Roger,” said Joe Tippler; “marched away to Lyme to join the Duke of Monmouth. The Duke, they say, will soon have a mighty army, and go and take London town.”

Several women to whom he spoke could give him no further information; no one appeared to have heard the force passing during the night. Being unable to gain any further information, he was about to return home, when, on looking along the road, he saw towards the east another body of men on foot. It struck him that they might be the advanced guard of the king’s forces, and that it would be prudent to keep out of their way.



“HE HURRIED BACK, THEREFORE, TO THE PLANTATION IN WHICH HE HAD BEFORE CONCEALED HIMSELF.”

He hurried back, therefore, to the plantation in which he had before concealed himself. As they came up they appeared to be marching in tolerable order, and he soon saw by their flags that they were the Duke of Monmouth’s men. They had among them several horses and a number of persons, who were evidently prisoners by the way they were guarded. Here and there some of the men appeared to have been wounded. Then there must have been fighting, and Monmouth’s party after all have been victorious, thought Roger. He now returned home to make his report. He had done nothing heroic, but he had acted with prudence in keeping out of the way. The Colonel, with Madam Pauline and Alice, was preparing to go to church when he arrived, and by his uncle’s desire he accompanied them. When they reached the church-door, however, except Master Holden and the clerk, with half a dozen poor women, no one was there. Notwithstanding, Master Holden performed the service, but it was evident that he was puzzled what to preach about, as it would have been useless to such a congregation to warn them against rebellion, as had probably been his intention. He therefore dismissed them without his usual address, observing that at any moment bodies of armed men might be visiting their peaceful village, and that they would be safer in their own houses than abroad. From Roger’s account the Colonel had no doubt that Bridport had been attacked, that the cavalry having been roughly handled had retreated, neither horses nor men being accustomed to stand fire, while the infantry perhaps had held their own, having driven back their enemies, and had retired in good order. Roger wanted to go out again after dinner to obtain some more news, but the Colonel forbade him to leave the grounds, as it was likely that the king’s forces would advance upon Lyme, if they were in sufficient number, and he might uselessly get involved in a skirmish. The remainder of the day, however, passed quietly. The next morning Roger was to start on his journey. He rose at an early hour; the whole family were up to see him off. It had been arranged that John Platt was to accompany him for the first twenty miles on the road towards London. He had a stout cob, which his uncle had given him to be sold in London for his benefit.

"Your father's friend Mr Handscombe will certainly find a purchaser," observed the Colonel. "Now, farewell, my lad, it may be months, it may be years, before you come back; you know not to what part of the world you may be sent. You have acted wisely; continue to do so, and should your life be preserved you will rise in your profession."

Roger's other farewells were made, and he mounted his horse. He carried a brace of pistols in his holsters, a sword by his side, and a valise strapped on behind the saddle. John Platt rode with an arquebuss hanging at his back, a good pistol in one holster, and a broadsword which had done duty in the Civil War. The Colonel ordered them to push forward as fast as possible towards London, that they might get clear of the excitement caused by the Duke's landing, and have less chance of being interrupted. John Platt promised to carry out his master's instructions.

"They shall pay dear, whether king's men or rebels, if they attempt to stop us," he said, as he clutched his big sword, which in his younger days he had used with powerful effect as a trooper under the Colonel, though at present it seemed doubtful whether his arm had still strength enough to wield it. The Colonel gave them his parting charges as they rode out of the court-yard and pushed forward, as they had been directed, towards Salisbury by by-paths with which John Platt was well acquainted. Here and there they met peasants hurrying towards Lyme, who eagerly inquired news of the Duke. Some asked if a battle had already been fought; others said that they understood the Duke had landed with an army of ten thousand men, which by this time had increased to twenty thousand.

"He landed with not ten thousand or not ten hundred either," answered John dryly. "He may have a thousand or two about him by this time. If you take my advice you will go back home and not risk your necks by joining him."

The advice, however, was seldom if ever followed, the men looking upon honest John as a malignant. As they advanced they met bodies of militia marching westward under Tory country gentlemen, who considered it their duty to side with the king though they had no personal affection for him. Roger on each occasion had to give an account of himself, and he found some difficulty in persuading some of these zealous Royalists that his intentions were honest. He was allowed, however, to go on, till at length the time came for his separating from John Platt. They warmly shook hands, as Roger did not consider it derogatory.

"Circumspect Master Roger," said the old man, "do not let strangers get into your confidence; give them the cold shoulder rather; ride straight on; when you arrive at an inn, see to your horse yourself that he gets properly fed; if a stranger enters into conversation, listen to what he may have to say, but give him as little information as you can in return."

Roger promised to follow the old soldier's advice, and found it greatly to his advantage. His horse held out well, and by judicious management he contrived to get to London in five days after leaving Eversden. On entering London he found the city perfectly quiet, not the slightest sign, as far as he could discover, of a proposed outbreak, the fact being that the king had arrested all suspicious persons of influence. He inquired his way to the house of Mr Handscombe, who lived not far from the Thames. The cloth-merchant was at home, and received him kindly. He was looking somewhat pale and anxious, and made many inquiries as to what was going forward in the south. Roger gave him all the information he possessed, but Mr Handscombe made but few remarks in return.

"Now, my lad," he said in a kind tone, "the sooner you get on board your ship the better for you. Captain Benbow is expecting you, and I promised to send you down as soon as you arrived, for I may not remain here long. Before you go you must take some refreshment, and I in the meantime will order a boat to be in waiting."

"Where shall I find the *Benbow* frigate?" asked Roger.

"She is not the ship you are to join," answered Mr Handscombe. "Her Captain has parted with her, and is now in command of a fine king's ship, the *Ruby*, of fifty guns, lying at Deptford."

Mr Handscombe was absent while Roger was taking the food provided for him; he appeared, on his return, in a travelling dress.

"I have made arrangements for the sale of your horse as your father requests me; here is the amount which the animal will probably fetch, put it in your pocket and do not throw it away; and now come along."

"What, are you going with me, sir?" asked Roger.

"Yes, in the character of your father, going to see you on board your ship. Circumstances make it convenient to be away from London just at present, and the idea has struck me that I could not have a better opportunity. Your chest has been transferred to the *Ruby*, and you can carry your valise while I carry mine."

They hastened down to the boat and immediately stepped aboard, when the boatmen began to row lustily down the stream, the tide fortunately favouring them. They safely shot under the arches of London Bridge, and were now among vessels of various sizes and rigs, some moored to the banks, others brought up in the stream. Though the day was long, it was dusk before they reached the *Ruby*. Shaking Roger by the hand, Mr Handscombe bade him answer the hail of the sentry, and then without loss of time stepped up the side with his valise.

"Are you not coming, sir?" asked Roger. "No, my lad," was the answer; "I am going on board a merchant vessel which sails by the next tide. Fare thee well. I hope to meet you again some time when you return home; at present I know not exactly what is to be my destination."

Roger, as desired, answered the sentry's hail, and was allowed to step on board, when the boat glided away immediately, and was lost to sight. Captain Benbow, who was on board, received him cordially, and expressed his satisfaction at seeing him return so punctually. Roger expected to be questioned as to what was taking place in the west, but the Captain showed very little interest in the matter. He merely observed, "The Duke of Monmouth has landed, I understand. He did a foolish thing, but will do a wiser if he gets out of the country as fast as he can. Now,

Willoughby, there is plenty of work for us on board; we have to fresh-rig the ship and get the crew into good discipline. At present except the men I brought from the *Benbow* frigate, for one and all volunteered to follow me, we have not many worth their salt."

Roger was well pleased at being treated in a confidential way by his Captain; it showed that he was looked upon not only as a sailor, but as fit to become an officer. Except one lieutenant, the master, and boatswain, the other officers, strange as it may seem, had not been regularly bred to the sea.

"We must get another tarpaulin or two if the ship is ever to be brought into order," observed Benbow; "these young gentlemen from the shore are very well in their way, but they are more ornamental than useful."

As soon as Roger had parted from the Captain, on going round the ship he encountered old Sam Stokes.

"Glad to see you aboard our new ship, Mr Willoughby, though somewhat bigger than our old craft, but doubt whether she has as fast a pair of heels; however, if there comes a war we shall do something in her, no doubt about that, with such a Captain as ours."

Jumbo, on hearing that Roger had come on board, hurried up, and Roger had a talk with him of old times, and then went round among his old shipmates and spoke to each individually, thus winning their kindly feelings. He often wished that Stephen had been with him instead of having joined the hazardous enterprise in which he had engaged. He wrote twice to his friend. Not knowing where he might be, he addressed the letters to Langton Park, but he received no replies.

At length the ship was ready for sea, and, dropping down the Thames, stood out in the channel for a cruise.

Chapter Eight.

We must now return to Lyme. The cordial reception Stephen Battiscombe met with from the Duke made him more than ever devoted to his cause. Having a good horse, he at once volunteered to ride out and collect horses with men accustomed to riding, who might be willing to join and form the nucleus of a cavalry force. The news of the Duke's landing rapidly spread far and wide. Other friends of the cause galloped off in all directions, running no little risk of being captured by the militia, who had been called out by several loyal noblemen and gentlemen on information being received that the rebellion had commenced. The Duke was indefatigable in his exertions. Rising at an early hour on the morning after his arrival, he was ready to receive the volunteers, who flocked in by hundreds from all directions. When he had caused their names to be taken down, he sent them by a messenger with a list to the Town-Hall, where the arms were stored, and persons ready to give them out. The volunteers were immediately armed and sent to the officers at different posts which had been established round the town, where they, without loss of time, were drilled and exercised. All day long, as well as the following night, people came crowding in, and the next day, which was Saturday the 13th, they appeared in such prodigious numbers that it was no easy matter to take down their names and to supply them with arms. Thus at the close of the day the Duke's army already amounted to a thousand foot and one hundred and fifty horse, which were every hour augmenting. Whatever the Duke and the gentlemen who accompanied him, Lord Grey, Fletcher of Salton, and others, might have thought of this force, their increasing number greatly raised the enthusiasm of his followers. They felt themselves ready to undertake any adventure which might be proposed. Stephen Battiscombe had met his brothers coming to join the camp. Together they proceeded to the houses of such friends and acquaintances as they knew were friendly to the cause. Some allowed their servants and dependants to join, and others sent horses, although they themselves thought it prudent not to appear in arms on the Duke's side. So energetically did Stephen execute his commission that in a few hours he returned with twenty mounted men and several spare horses. The Duke, immediately on his appearance, appointed him lieutenant of the troop, observing that he expected before long to be able to give him the rank of captain.

"We shall probably before long meet the enemy, if they do not rather run away when they see us. Notice has just been brought in that the Duke of Albemarle is approaching with a strong body of militia, and intends to attack this night; but I intend to forestall him, and we are about to march out to form an ambush, so that we may set upon him suddenly should he approach."

This news created considerable excitement among the young recruits, who were eager to strike a blow for the cause they had espoused. As evening approached the force marched out in silence, orders having been given that there should be no shouting, lest they should betray their whereabouts. The force amounted to eight hundred foot and one hundred and fifty horse, and with it three pieces of cannon. They took up their position at a cross road behind hedges, and in the narrow way behind which it was supposed that the Duke of Albemarle would come, the foot lying in the field with their arms in rank and file, the horsemen holding their bridles in their hands. Every moment they expected to be up and doing, but the night drew on and no enemy appeared. At length day dawned; the men rose to their feet. They had taken their first lesson in campaigning, and felt the better prepared for meeting the enemy. Stephen Battiscombe had had more experience than most of his companions during his adventures in Africa, so that the sort of work was not quite so new to him as it was to many others. As he surveyed the rapidly increasing army, he observed that though many of the recruits had no fire-arms, and were compelled to content themselves with scythes lashed to the end of stout poles, still these would prove formidable weapons in the hands of stout men. He rode back at the head of his little troop to join his brothers and other young gentlemen, some acting as officers, some as privates, at breakfast, not in those days a meal of toast, eggs, butter, and tea, but of beef, bread, and beer. They were still seated at table when the trampling of horses outside announced the arrival of another party. On running to the window they saw a grey-haired personage of no very aristocratic appearance, though mounted on a fine steed, at the head of about forty horsemen; but he was old Mr Dare, paymaster to the forces. He was one of the two persons who had landed at Seaton on the morning of the 11th, and had gone inland at no little risk to apprise Mr Speke of the Duke's arrival. He was a bold man with much intelligence, and was one of the moving spirits of the rebellion. As he arrived before the George Inn the Duke went out to meet him, and welcomed him cordially. The levies came in faster

than ever, and it was as much as the Battiscombes, and other young gentlemen who could write, could do to take down their names and send them off to the regiments now forming, called after various colours, as was the custom in those days. Stephen's zeal was remarked by Fletcher of Salton, the principal officer of military experience who had joined the Duke, a man of great talents, but possessed of a hasty and irritable temper. "I see who will be among our future colonels," he observed, as he rode by, mounted on a somewhat sorry hack, to dine with the Duke of Monmouth. Thus encouraged, Stephen continued his labours. His disappointment was very great when he found that the arms and ammunition were already running short, and that no weapons were to be procured to put into the hands of the eager recruits. Numbers had to return home, fortunately for themselves, who would gladly have fought for the cause. In the afternoon information was received that a strong body of Dorset militia had occupied Bridport, and that another regiment, under Sir William Portman, was expected to disperse these forces. In the hopes that a large number would come over to him with their arms, the Duke determined on sending an expedition against the town. It was intended that Fletcher and Lord Grey should command the horse. The former, after dining with the Duke, sallied out to make the necessary preparations. Finding a handsome horse in the stables, he at once appropriated it without sending to ask leave of the owner, who proved to be Mr Dare, the paymaster. Stephen was getting his little troop in readiness, as he expected to be sent on the expedition, when Fletcher rode into the market square mounted on Mr Dare's horse. The owner, without considering Fletcher's military rank and social position, came up to him, and in an insulting manner inquired how Mr Fletcher ventured to take a horse belonging to him without first asking his leave.

"The exigencies of the moment require it, my friend," answered Fletcher; "and as I am to command the cavalry, it is important that I should have a horse capable of performing whatever work I may demand of him. I therefore considered myself justified in taking the first horse suitable for my purpose, irrespective to whom he belongs."

"But I am not thus to be ridden over by a Scotch Laird," exclaimed Dare in an insulting tone; "the horse is mine."

"It may be," said Fletcher, "but you are not about to act as a cavalry officer, and I am. Therefore, for the good of the service, I consider myself justified in retaining the horse."

"Retain it you shall not," cried Dare, flourishing a cane which he held in his hand. "Whether you are a cavalry officer or not, I will make you dismount from that horse," and he advanced with a threatening gesture towards the high-spirited Scotchman. A fatal moment. Fletcher drew a pistol and ordered Dare to stand back. Dare still advanced, when, to the horror of all the bystanders, the pistol exploded, and Dare fell mortally wounded to the ground. Stephen and others ran to lift up the fallen man, but life had fled. Fletcher was instantly seized with remorse at the fatal act he had committed, when he saw Dare was no more. Numbers gathered from all parts, and among them came the son of the slain man, accompanied by a number of the new levies, who demanded punishment of the assassin. The Duke of Monmouth, hurrying up, in vain endeavoured to allay their anger. They threatened that if Fletcher was not arrested, they would take the law into their own hands and tear him to pieces. The poor Duke was almost distracted by this unfortunate event. In Dare he had lost a devoted partisan, while Fletcher was the only man besides himself in his whole army who had seen service, who, by his talents, was capable of acting as a General. As the only way to save him, he told him to consider himself under arrest and, turning to Stephen, directed him to convey Mr Fletcher on board his frigate, which still lay in the outer roads.

"I regret the duty I am called on to perform, Mr Fletcher," said Stephen; "you must at once accompany me to the harbour."

"I am under your command," answered Mr Fletcher.

Upon which Stephen surrounded him with a party of his own men, who with difficulty kept off the followers of Mr Dare, who were thirsting for his blood. They however reached the quay in safety, when Stephen, with his prisoner and four of his men, embarked on board one of the frigate's boats, which had just come to the shore. There was still a risk of their being pursued, so Stephen ordered the boat to pull off immediately for the frigate.

"I hope, sir, when it is known what provocation Mr Dare gave you, that the anger of the people will be appeased, and that you will be able to return and take command of the army."

"Though disappointed with the class of persons who have flocked to the Duke's standard, I will still gladly risk all for the sake of the noble cause in which he has embarked," said Fletcher, "and I may hope that in a few days the tide will turn in my favour, though I confess with the deepest regret the result of my hasty temper."

"Can I, in the meantime, be of any use to you on shore?" asked Stephen.

"Thank you, sir," answered Fletcher. "I shall be obliged to you if you will bring my valise and papers which I left at the George; and as I may not have an opportunity of seeing the Duke for some time, I beg that you will express to him how deeply I regret what has taken place."

Mr Fletcher was silent for the greater part of the way, and Stephen, having seen his prisoner on board, returned with his men to the shore. On landing he was met by frowning looks from many of those who had accompanied Mr Dare. Stephen at once made his way back to report what he had done to the Duke, who replied, "I must send you back once more with orders to the master of the ship to sail immediately, and to proceed along the coast to Bristol. I have given directions to have a mariner, one John Kerridge, impressed, as he is a skilful pilot, and will be able to conduct the ship to Bristol. You will engage a boat from the shore, and put him with Mr Fletcher on board."

With these directions Stephen returned to the quay, where he found John Kerridge, who seemed in no wise desirous of performing the duty imposed upon him. However, being in the hands of armed men, he could not help himself, and was placed with a guard in the boat, in which Stephen conveyed him on board the frigate. Whenever Stephen had left her side, he saw her crew making preparations for getting under weigh. Her anchor was hove up, her sails set, and the wind being off shore, she at once stood out to sea.

"She seems to me to be standing more to the southward than her due course for the Start," he said to one of the boatmen.

"May be the Captain does not know how the wind will come, which is to give the Start a wide berth," was the answer.

As far, however, as Stephen could watch, he observed that she held a south-westerly course. On his arrival on shore he found that notwithstanding the untoward event of the afternoon, the expedition to Bridport was still to be carried out. He found a party of three hundred men under Colonel Wade, with a hundred men under Captain Goodenough, while the cavalry was commanded by Lord Grey, who had charge of the whole expedition. They were to march all night in great secrecy, hoping to fall on the militia early in the morning. They waited till sunset, when, all being prepared, they marched out of Lyme, the infantry leading, the cavalry bringing up the rear. The men were ordered to keep silence, and to make as little noise in any way as possible. It was no easy matter to induce raw recruits, however, to do this. Stephen of course, knew every inch of the way. They were still some three or four miles from Bridport, when the advanced guard met two men coming from the direction of the town. Instead of running away they advanced boldly, declared that they had escaped from the town, and that their wish was to join the Duke of Monmouth.

"You have found them sooner than you expected," said Lieutenant Mitchell, the officer commanding the vanguard.

The men willingly agreed to return with the party, although they said that there were no less than one thousand two hundred foot, and a hundred horse already holding the town. Still, as they had come thus far and were positively ordered to attack, the leaders were unwilling to go back without attempting something, although they were far outnumbered. A thick fog came on towards morning, which completely concealed their approach towards the end of the town, which consists of one long broad street with a stone bridge at either end, and a cross street running north and south. The bridge was quickly won, the outposts retiring with expedition to the main guard, who speedily retreated, standing only to receive one volley from Monmouth's vanguard. The king's horse, with a small body of infantry, alone occupied the town, and as the troopers ran away, they let their horses go, which were at once captured by the successful assailants. Colonel Venner now led on his men to attack the eastern bridge, leaving parties of musketeers and pikes to command the entrances to the other streets, and fighting took place in front of the inn, when two of the king's officers and others lost their lives, and several prisoners were made by Monmouth's men. Colonel Venner, however, was wounded. When Lord Grey was advancing on the bridge, the loyal militia fired a heavy volley, which induced him and his troop to turn their horses' heads and gallop off. On Colonel Venner being wounded, Colonel Wade took command, and led to the western part of the town, where for half-an-hour his men and those of the king's forces were shouting to each other. He then, finding that the rest of the force had retreated, considered it his duty to retire, which he did in pretty good order, with thirty horses and about fourteen prisoners. The whole transaction must have shown the Duke how little reliance he could place upon his new levies, or even upon some of his principal officers. The Duke complimented Stephen on his good conduct in bringing off his men. The party were pretty well knocked up by their march to Bridport and back, and there was little drilling that evening, except among the new levies; but early the next morning the drum beat to arms, the regiments were formed under their respective leaders, and the Duke, putting himself at the head, passed them all in review. As Stephen rode near the Duke, he observed that his countenance wore a melancholy expression, the animation which had at first appeared having quite faded from it. He evidently had taken greatly to heart the death of Dare; still, as he had commenced the enterprise, he seemed resolved to carry it out. His troops were in a very different mood; they saw not the dangers ahead, and were mostly under the belief that the king's forces would melt away before them should they be encountered. Stephen, as he rode among the ranks, observed the awkward movements of some of the men, the jaunty air of others, and the ragged appearance of the cavalry, many of the horses being large untrained colts, and began to feel less confident of success till he recollected that probably the militia regiments on the king's side were much in the same condition, and, moreover, that they were well-affected towards the Duke. The army marched slowly and leisurely along till they reached Axminster, where news was brought to the Duke that Albemarle was advancing with a large body of militia to attack them. Monmouth skilfully drew up his forces; the four field-pieces were planted so as to command the road along which the Royal troops were approaching, while the thick hedges which on each side overhung the narrow lanes were lined with musketeers; the cavalry were held in reserve.

"Here they come, my lads," cried Stephen Battscombe, as Albemarle's men were seen in the distance. "Steady, now; if they venture to attack us, we shall soon send them to the right-about."

At first the enemy came on boldly and rapidly. While still beyond musket range they were seen to halt, then suddenly to retreat. The insurgents on this dashed forward. As they heard the cheers and shouts of Monmouth's men, throwing down their arms they took to flight, and scampered off in all directions across the country. They were pursued for some distance, and coats, muskets, and pikes were picked up by the victorious insurgents.

"Now, surely the Duke of Monmouth will follow up the pursuit, and we shall probably capture Exeter without a blow," observed Stephen.

"No chance of that, I fear," answered his brother Andrew, who was riding by his side. "Hark! there is the recall, and it is a signal our raw fellows will be glad enough to obey."

This last remark was too true. The Duke of Monmouth, probably unwilling to employ his recruits in any hazardous service till they were better trained, thought it wise to be satisfied with the advantage he had already gained, and continued his march towards Taunton, and that evening reached the neighbourhood of Chard, where the troops encamped in a meadow outside the town. The Duke was now near the estates of those friends who had entertained him so sumptuously a few years before, and he naturally looked forward to being joined by a number of those gentlemen and their retainers; but only one, John Speke, the son of Mr George Speke of White Lackington Hall, arrived at the camp, with forty horsemen of no very imposing appearance from Chard. The next morning the Duke's forces marched to Ilminster, about four miles off, and encamped in a field about half a mile beyond the town; still he was looking forward to the arrival of fresh levies headed by men of consequence. None, however, arrived, though

labouring men in vast numbers would have joined his standard if arms could have been found for them. Bad news also arrived from Lyme; the king's frigate had sailed into the harbour and had captured the *Pink* and another vessel which had on board numerous barrels of gunpowder, and several thousand breast and head pieces for cavalry, though, considering that there were no horses or men to wear the defensive armour, it was not of much consequence. Thus far there had been no success. The Duke now resolved to march to Taunton, that celebrated and beautiful little town which had endured so heroic a siege under Blake. It was here that during his progress he had been received with such remarkable honours, and he fully expected now to receive a similar treatment. Taunton was densely populated, and was the seat of the trade in serges, and as most of the manufacturers were Dissenters, they were universally in favour of the Duke of Monmouth. As Monmouth approached Taunton several persons came out from the town, who informed him that it had been occupied till the day before by Royal troops, but they, hearing of the disorder into which the militia had been thrown between Axminster and Chard, about midnight, a drum sounding both officers and men, had marched out, having received orders to appear at Bridgewater. Messengers also promised a cordial reception to the Duke should he come. The Duke, having encamped his forces outside the town, prepared to enter it. He was met by a large body of men on horseback, every person who possessed a steed going out to meet him, while the rest of the inhabitants on foot rent the air with applause and acclamations. The streets through which he passed were strewed with flowers; the windows were thronged with spectators, all eager to gaze on the hero they had been taught to admire. The Duke's spirits rose higher than they had been since he landed. The Duke had taken up his residence at the house of Captain Hucker. The following morning it was announced to him that a procession was approaching to do him honour. He descended the steps in front of the house, when he saw coming towards him a band of young maidens, each carrying banners of different colours, which they had worked with their own hands. At their head appeared a lady of more mature age, carrying a naked sword in one hand and in the other a small curious Bible, which she presented with a short acceptable speech. The Duke, looking greatly pleased, assured her that he had undertaken with a resolution to defend the truth contained in the book, to seal it, should it be required, with his blood. He then saluted each of the young ladies, as did Lord Grey. His Grace then mounted his horse, and the twenty-seven young maidens followed, each bearing a banner, and led by a young man. Among the flags was a golden banner worked with the initials J.R. and a crown. Having paraded through the streets, the Duke returned to his abode, and the young maidens retired to their own homes. The day after, some of his principal advisers recommended the Duke to assume the title of King. The Duke was willing to do this, and there were many reasons in favour of the step, though many also against it. It was argued that a large number of the nobility were unwilling to take up arms in his cause, fearing that unless a king was at the head of the movement, it might result in the establishment of a Commonwealth, to which they were strongly opposed. Several of his Republican officers, on hearing of the proposal, expressed themselves greatly averse to it; and it was not without much difficulty that they were won over to give their consent, in the hopes that they should be immediately joined by the nobility and gentry, who were now hanging back. Stephen Battscombe and his brothers, knowing their father's principles, felt sure that he would disapprove of this step; at the same time, they had become so attached to the Duke that they were ready to agree to anything which it was supposed would forward his interests. The subject was anxiously discussed by many of the best friends of the Duke. The flag carried by Miss Mary Mead, the work of the maids of Taunton, on which were emblazoned the initials J.R. and the crown, had been seen by thousands, and that emblem could not have been mistaken. No one had complained. The fatal step was quickly decided on,—fatal, because should the Duke fail and be captured, it would cut off all hope of pardon from James the Second. On Saturday, 20th June, some of the chief magistrates were compelled to attend in their gowns at the market crossing, where a large concourse of people were assembled. Mr Tyler then read the following proclamation:—"Whereas, upon the decease of our Sovereign, Charles the Second, late King of England, the succession to the Crown of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, with the dominions and territories thereunto belonging, did legally descend and devolve upon the most illustrious and high-born Prince, James, Duke of Monmouth, son and heir-apparent to the said King Charles the Second; but James, Duke of York, taking advantage of the absence of the said James, Duke of Monmouth, beyond the seas, did first cause the said late King to be poisoned, and immediately thereupon did usurp and invade the Crown, and doth continue so to do. We, therefore, the noblemen, gentlemen, and commons at present assembled, in the names of ourselves and all the loyal and Protestant noblemen, gentlemen, and commons of England, in pursuance of our duty and allegiance, and of the delivering of the kingdom from Popery, tyranny, and oppression, do recognise, publish, and proclaim the said high and mighty Prince, James, Duke of Monmouth, our lawful and rightful Sovereign and King, by the name of James the Second, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, defender of the Faith," etcetera.

"God bless the King," the people shouted, and immediately the officers of the army and the principal inhabitants advanced and kissed Monmouth's hand, and addressed him as, "Sire," and, "Your Majesty." The news spread far and wide, and an enthusiastic gentleman, Colonel Dore of Lymington, in Hampshire, proclaimed the Duke of Monmouth, and raised a troop of a hundred men for his service. Volunteers now poured in in even greater numbers than before. Many had to be sent back for want of arms of any description. There was not even a sufficiency of scythes for all Monmouth still waited in vain for news of an insurrection in London. Colonel Danvers, who had promised to head it, hung back, fearing to risk his life in the enterprise. The king's forces were now gathering from all directions to oppose the Duke. The household troops, the only real soldiers who could be depended upon, were marching from London, and were likely to prove formidable antagonists to Monmouth's ill-disciplined volunteers. Stephen had been sent on outpost duty with his small body of horse. He had been directed to proceed in the direction of Chard, when towards evening, as he was about to return, he discovered a party of Royal horse galloping towards him. Though he soon discovered that they were superior in numbers to him, he drew up his men to receive them. They came on, led by a young officer, who showed abundant bravery if not much skill. As the party advanced Stephen gave the word to charge. Shots were rapidly exchanged, and swords were clashing as the combatants met in a doubtful fight. First to fall was the young officer. Two of Stephen's men dropped from their horses, two others directly afterwards were shot. Notwithstanding, the Royal troopers, discouraged by the loss of their officer, wheeled round and took to flight. Several more of his men had been wounded, so that Stephen was unable to pursue the enemy, and he judged it wise to make the best of his way back to Taunton, fearing that he might be shut up in the town. The Duke at once resolved to march on Bridgewater, where he might hope to obtain arms and pecuniary assistance from the wealthy inhabitants devoted to his cause. It had been proposed to fortify Taunton, but since its memorable siege, when defended by Blake, the walls and fortifications had been destroyed, and a considerable number of men would have been required for its defence. The day after Monmouth had assumed the kingly title he marched out of Taunton at

the head of an army, which, in point of numbers, might well have encouraged him with hopes of success, but Stephen Battiscombe observed with regret that he looked dispirited, in spite of the acclamations of the devoted thousands which were raised wherever he appeared. Stephen, as he was passing out of the town, observed Mr Ferguson, the Duke's chaplain, whom he had often met, standing with a drawn sword in his hand, looking more like a lunatic than a sane minister of the Gospel.

"What can have come over the man?" remarked Stephen to his brother. "Hark! hear what he is saying."

"Look at me, you have heard of me," shouted the chaplain. "I am Ferguson, the famous Ferguson, for whose head so many hundred pounds have been offered." Thus he continued uttering the same or similar phrases till the army had passed by.

"I have long ago taken the man's measure, and have heartily wished that the Duke had a better adviser," said Andrew.

The two brothers rode on with their men, keeping a watchful look-out on every side in case the enemy should suddenly appear. Bridgewater was reached without opposition, and in the evening Monmouth's army, now mustering six thousand tolerably armed men, entered Bridgewater. The Duke met with a cordial reception from the Mayor and Corporation of that town, who proclaimed him king at the High Cross. The army was encamped on Castle Field, on the east side of the town, and the Duke himself took up his lodgings in the castle close by. The Duke might have been encouraged when he thought of the siege and gallant defence of Bridgewater by the famous Blake, who was a native of the town. A body-guard of forty young men, well mounted and armed, who paid their own expenses, had been formed for the protection of Monmouth's person, while the whole of his cavalry amounted to a thousand horse. His object was now to push forward, and, if an opportunity offered, to capture Bristol. He therefore made but a short stay at Bridgewater, and proceeded on to Glastonbury, in the famous abbey of which a part of the army took up their quarters, while others occupied the neighbouring churches. His intention of taking Bristol was frustrated by the bridge across the Avon being broken-down, and by the Earl of Feversham having entered the city at the head of two hundred and fifty of the Horse Guards, formidable antagonists for Monmouth's ill-disciplined cavalry to encounter. During the march Monmouth's troops had been greatly harassed by the cavalry under Lord Churchill, afterwards the famous Duke of Marlborough. Monmouth knew that the inhabitants of Bristol were ready to rise the moment he should commence to attack, but the Duke of Beaufort, who commanded there, threatened to burn down the city at the least sign of rebellion, and Monmouth was delayed by the destruction of the bridge, while the king's forces were gathering round him in large numbers. He was compelled to abandon his design and to countermarch to Bridgewater. At Philip's Norton the advanced guard of the two armies met and had a sharp action, that of the Royal army being led by the Duke of Grafton, a half-brother of Monmouth. Grafton, leading on his men, found himself in a deep lane with fences on both sides of him, from which a galling fire of musketry was kept up, but he pushed on boldly till he came to the entrance of Philip's Norton; there his way was crossed by a barricade, from which a third fire met him full in front. His men now lost heart, and made the best of their way out of the lane; but before they got out of it more than a hundred of them had been killed or wounded. Grafton now encountered a party of Monmouth's cavalry, and cutting his way through them, came off safe. Though the two armies were now face to face, neither was anxious to engage in a general action. Feversham was waiting for his artillery, and Monmouth knew that his followers, in spite of their courage and zeal, were no match for regular soldiers. He had hoped that those regiments which he had formerly commanded would pass over to his standard, but that hope he was now compelled to relinquish; his heart filled, and he almost gave way to despair. Even at this time a proclamation was circulated, issued by James the Second, offering an amnesty to all who would lay down their arms and abandon Monmouth, excepting certain leaders who were expressly named. A meeting was accordingly held by some of Monmouth's chief supporters, who proposed that those who were excluded from the amnesty should retreat to the coast and embark for Holland, leaving their followers to make such terms as they could with the Government. Monmouth in the present desponding mood was much disposed to adopt this measure. He did not look upon it as a disgraceful proceeding. Many lives would be saved, and he and his officers would preserve theirs. The step, however, was strongly opposed by Lord Grey, who implored the Duke to face any danger rather than requite with ingratitude and treachery the devoted attachment of the western peasantry. Abandoning this project, Monmouth, hearing that there was a rising of the inhabitants of the districts in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater, determined to return thither, and re-entered that town on the 2nd of July, having passed through Wells on his way. He now thought of fortifying that place, and had commenced the undertaking when the king's forces appeared in sight. They consisted of two thousand five hundred troops, and one thousand five hundred of the Wiltshire militia. Instead of at once attacking the Duke, they encamped on the plain of Sedgemoor, about three miles from Bridgewater. Stephen Battiscombe, by his courage and judgment, had risen high in Monmouth's favour, and now, with several other officers, accompanied the Duke to the top of the parish church steeple, the loftiest in the county. From it a wide view could be obtained, and with their glasses they could distinguish across the moor the villages where the royal army was posted. In one of them, Weston Zoyland, lay the royal cavalry, and here Feversham had fixed his head-quarters. Further off lay Middle Zoy, where the Wiltshire militia were quartered, and upon the moor, not far from Chedzoy, were encamped several battalions of regular infantry. Among them the Duke distinguished Dumbarton's regiment, which he himself had once commanded.

"I know those men," he said, turning to Stephen; "they will fight. If I had but them, all would go well."

Still, formidable as the force appeared, the Duke knew Feversham's incapacity, and even on the eve of battle his spies brought in word to Monmouth that his troops were regaling themselves with cider, and that no regular outposts had been established. On this the idea occurred to him that it might be possible to surprise the king's forces, and to cut them to pieces. Lord Grey and the other principal officers agreed to this, and it was arranged that they should march out that very night. Castlefield, where they were encamped, presented on that Sunday afternoon a spectacle which for many a long year had not been seen in England since the disbanding of Cromwell's soldiers. The greater number of the men were Dissenters. The day was passed in religious exercises according to the Puritan fashion. The preachers who had taken up arms against Popery, some of whom had fought in the great Civil War, appeared in red coats and jack boots, with swords by their sides. Stephen Battiscombe heartily joined in the religious exercises, though he avoided the spot where Ferguson was holding forth, and endeavouring to prove that the war in which they

were engaged was not rebellion, but a righteous enterprise which merited the support of Heaven. Among the soldiers were their wives and daughters, who had come into the town from the surrounding districts to see them on that Sabbath-day; and when the camp-meeting broke up, and the trumpet summoned the men to their ranks, many parted who were never to meet again. Evening of that summer day drew on, and the time to commence the march arrived. As the Duke, with his body-guard, rode out of the castle, many remarked that his look was sad and full of evil augury. The night was well suited for the contemplated enterprise. Though the moon was at the full, and the northern streamers were shining brilliantly, the marsh fog lay so thickly on Sedgemoor that no object could be discerned fifty paces off. The Duke himself led the infantry, while the cavalry, a thousand strong, had been committed to Lord Grey, notwithstanding the remonstrances of many who mistrusted him after his previous ill-success. Stephen would willingly have had a different leader, for though Lord Grey was faithful to the cause he had espoused and courageous in council, yet he was destitute of that nerve which is the great requisite of an officer. He could have had no confidence in the greater number of his men, who, though brave, were quite undisciplined. Many of them had been embodied but a few days, and had not learned the use of their weapons, while their horses were unaccustomed to stand fire, or to act in concert with each other, so that they could be scarcely kept in their ranks. Even on the march most of the infantry also lacked discipline. At the same time, many had served in the militia, and being all animated with the same zeal, knew that they could trust each other. The scythe-men especially were sturdy fellows, drawn from the neighbouring mines, and were ready to fight to the last. Although the distance to Feversham's camp was little more than three miles, in order to avoid two deep ditches, called in those parts plungeons or steanings, the Duke, led by a guide, took a circuitous route of nearly six miles in length. There was a third ditch, called the Rhine, which still lay between him and the king's camp, but of which he knew nothing. There was a ford across this Rhine, by which his troops might have passed over, but which in the darkness was missed. In silence and darkness Monmouth's devoted troops marched on. Some confusion and delay were caused by the first two ditches, but these having been passed, the Duke, believing no obstruction existed between him and the royal camp, fully expected to succeed in his enterprise. He here halted for the horse, consisting of eight squadrons, to advance. The four iron guns followed the horse, at the head of the foot, which consisted of five great battalions, each having one company of one hundred scythe-men, who did the duty of grenadiers. He had got within a mile of the camp, when the advanced sentries of the Royal Horse Guards were discovered. A party of Lord Grey's cavalry charged them, when they galloped off to arouse the camp. Just before this a pistol had been heard to go off, which undoubtedly drew the attention of the king's troops to the advancing force. Monmouth, hearing that the king's camp was alarmed, ordered Lord Grey to advance rapidly with the horse, and to fall among the tents of the foot, so as to take them in flank, being still ignorant of the great ditch which protected them. Lord Grey accordingly marched on, to execute the orders given him, towards the upper plungeon; but he missed the passage over the ditch, and led his men by the outside till they were opposite Dumbarton's regiment. Being challenged, some one answered "Albemarle," and he accordingly, supposing them to be friends, allowed five hundred of them to pass. Lord Grey, then coming to the first battalion of the Guards, Captain Berkley, who commanded the right wing of the musketeers, inquired whom they were for. The answer was, "The king."

"What king?" he asked.

"Monmouth, and God with us," was the reply.

Berkley then cried out, "Take this with you," when his own and several battalions opened a heavy fire, and a considerable number of Grey's horses and men fell. When unable any longer to stand the fire, they rode off as hard as they could pelt. A smaller body of horse, to which Stephen belonged, under the command of Captain Jones, made several desperate charges, and were also compelled to retreat without having crossed the ditch, when they went off towards Sutton Hill, where they took up a position to see the issue of the fight. The flight of Lord Grey's horse threw many of the infantry into confusion. Some refused to advance, and others ran away; but a still greater disaster was in store, for on coming to the end of the moor, where forty-two ammunition wagons had been left, the drivers, alarmed at the arrival of the fugitives, and being told that the Duke's army had been routed, took to flight, and did not stop till they arrived at Ware and Axbridge, twelve miles off. Shortly after the Duke's horse had dispersed themselves over the moor, his infantry advanced at the double, guided through the gloom by the lighted matches of Dumbarton's regiment; but on reaching the edge of the Rhine they halted, and contrary to orders, began firing away, their fire being returned by part of the royal infantry on the opposite side of the bank. For three-quarters of an hour the roar of the musketry was incessant. The guns also opened fire, which was likewise returned by the king's cannon as soon as they could be brought up. For a considerable time the battle raged, the sturdy Somersetshire peasants behaving themselves as though they had been veteran soldiers, though they levelled their pieces too high. Monmouth was seen like a brave man, pike in hand, encouraging his men by voice and example. He by this time saw that all was over; his men had lost the advantage which surprise and darkness had given them. They were deserted by the horse and the ammunition wagons. Lord Churchill had made a new disposition of the royal infantry. The day was about to break. The event of a conflict on an open plain by broad sunlight could not be doubtful; yet, brave as he was, the hope of preserving his life prevailed above all other considerations. In a few minutes the royal cavalry would intercept his retreat. He mounted and rode for his life, till he was joined by Lord Grey and a few other officers; but his brave infantry still made a gallant stand. They were charged right and left by the Life Guards and Blues, but the Somersetshire clowns, with their scythes and butt-ends of their muskets, fought to the last. At length their powder and ball were spent, and cries were heard of "Ammunition; for God's sake give us ammunition!" But no ammunition was at hand. The king's artillery began playing on them, and they could no longer maintain their ranks against the king's cavalry. The infantry came pouring across the ditch, but even then the Mendip miners sold their lives dearly. Three hundred of the royal soldiers had been killed or wounded; of Monmouth's men more than a thousand lay dead on the moor. Their leader, it was found, had disappeared, the cavalry had been dispersed, and the survivors fled across the moor towards Bridgewater. The king's cavalry, meantime, were sweeping over the plain, cutting down those who attempted to make a stand, which some of the brave fellows did, while they captured others, till the whole army which marched out of Bridgewater the previous evening had been completely dispersed. Before evening five hundred prisoners had been crowded in the parish church of Weston Zoyland, many of them badly wounded. The church bells sent out a peal which must have had very different effects upon the ears of the victors and of the vanquished. The battle was over, but not the blood-shedding, for Feversham ordered a number of the prisoners for

execution. Gibbets were erected in all directions, and the fatal Bussex Tree was long known as the place where numbers were put to death without the form of a trial.

Among those captured was a fine young officer, an ensign in the Duke's army, who was celebrated for his extraordinary feats of agility; his powers were described to Feversham, who promised him his life if he would submit to be stripped, have one end of a rope fastened round his neck, and the other round that of a wild young colt, and would race the colt as long as it could run. He agreed to the ordeal; the brutal Generals and no less brutal soldiers collected round the young man to prepare him for the race, close to the Bussex Rhine in Weston. Away they started at a furious rate till the horse fell exhausted by the side of his ill-fated companion, at Brinsfield Bridge, Chedzoy, a distance of three-quarters of a mile. The young man, worn out with fatigue, extricating himself from the halter, claimed his pardon; but the inhuman General, regardless of his promise, ordered him to be hanged with the rest. A young lady to whom he was betrothed, on hearing of his fate, lost her reason, and for many years was to be seen dressed in white, wandering about the grave in which he and his companions were interred. The inhabitants of Zoyland still speak of the white lady. We will not enter into the details of the numerous barbarities which were committed, nor will we give a prolonged account of Monmouth's well-known fate. On leaving the battle-field, he was joined by Buise, who, was a German, Lord Grey, and a few other friends, among whom were Stephen Battscombe and his brother. At Chedzoy he stopped a moment to mount a fresh horse, and then galloped on towards the English Channel. From the rising ground on the north of the fatal field he saw the last volley fired by his hapless followers, and before six o'clock he was twenty miles from Sedgemoor. Here he and his companions pulled rein, many of them advising him to seek refuge in Wales, but he fancied that he could more easily get across to Holland should he reach the New Forest, where, till he could find conveyance, he could hide in the cabins of the wood-cutters and deer-stealers who inhabited that part of the country. He, Lord Grey, and Buise consequently separated from the rest, who took different courses. He and his companions galloped on till they reached Cranbourne Chase, where their horses broke down. Having concealed the bridles and saddles, and disguised themselves in the dresses of countrymen, they proceeded on foot to the New Forest. The direction they had taken had been discovered, and a large body of militia surrounded them on every side. Lord Grey was first captured, and a short time afterwards Buise, who acknowledged that he had parted from the Duke only a few hours before. The pursuers recommenced the search with more zeal than ever, and at length a tall gaunt figure was discovered in a ditch. Some of the men were about to fire at him, but Sir William Portman coming up, forbade them to use violence. He was dressed as a shepherd, his beard, several days' growth, was prematurely grey. He trembled, and was unable to speak. Even those who had often seen the Duke of Monmouth did not recognise him, till, examining his pockets, the insignia of the George was discovered, with a purse of gold and other articles, among them some raw pease, which he had gathered to satisfy his hunger. This left no doubt who he was. He and Lord Grey were kept at Ringwood strictly guarded for two days, and then sent up to London. Broken-down in health and spirits, he wrote abject letters to his uncle entreating for pardon, and begging that the king would see him. The latter petition was agreed to, and he was brought into the presence of James, his arms secured by a silken cord. He had fancied that should the king see him, his life would be spared, and he made the most abject proposals to obtain it. James had resolved that the hated rival should be put out of the way as soon as possible, and refused to listen to his plea. Lord Grey behaved with far more dignity and courage than the Duke. Both were sent to the Tower; the Duke was ordered for execution, Lord Grey was allowed to live, and ultimately, on the payment of a heavy fine, escaped, though hundreds who were certainly less guilty in the eye of the law were mercilessly put to death. The Duke was beheaded a couple of days after being sent to the Tower. As his blood flowed on the scaffold, the crowd rushed forward to dip their handkerchiefs in it, and his memory was long cherished by those who had risen in arms to support his cause, while no inconsiderable number believed that he was still alive, and would appear again to lead them to victory. Two impostors in succession, taking advantage of this belief, represented Monmouth. One was whipped from Newgate to Tyburn; another, who had raised considerable contributions, was thrown into prison, where he was maintained in luxury by his deluded followers. So ends the ill-starred Monmouth's sad history.

We must now return to the more prominent characters of our tale. Stephen and his brother Andrew, on parting from the Duke, consulted what direction they should take. They agreed that it would be madness to attempt returning home. They were proscribed men, and even should they reach Langton Park, search would be made for them, and their father would be exposed to danger for sheltering them. Stephen said that he was sure Mr Willoughby would willingly try to conceal them, but the Colonel might object to his doing so, from the danger to which he would be exposed should they be discovered. They agreed at length that their safest course would be to push to the north coast of Devon or Cornwall, where they might obtain concealment in the cottages of the fishermen or miners, who were generally favourable to the Protestant cause, and thence cross over to the Welsh coast.

"Let us then commence our march," said Stephen, "and pray that we may escape the dangers that surround us." They rode on rapidly without speaking. Both their hearts were sad; they had lost many friends and faithful followers, whom they had led to join the ill-fated expedition. Stephen was full of self-reproaches. He thought of Alice, who had warned and besought him not to engage in the enterprise. He had acted with courage on several occasions, but following the example of his chief, he had fled from the field of battle, and he felt ashamed of himself for not having remained with the brave men who fought to the last, and fallen among them.

"We should have done it," he exclaimed at length, as they had to rein in their steeds while they ascended a steep hill.

"Done what?" asked Andrew.

"Died on the field, as I wish that the Duke and Lord Grey had done rather than run away," replied Stephen.

"As we are doing," remarked Andrew; "for my part, I think it is the wisest course we could have pursued. I hope they will escape to fight in the same cause on a more favourable occasion; we should have gained nothing by remaining on the field of battle, and lost everything if we should have either been killed or captured."

"We should have preserved our honour," said Stephen.

"I do not consider that we have lost that, since every man who had a horse to carry him has done the same; but there is little use discussing the subject. At present we must exert our wits to preserve our lives, and any honour we have lost may be retrieved on a future opportunity." Andrew had generally an answer for his brother's remarks. Having gained the brow of the hill, they again pushed forward, keeping as near the coast as the nature of the ground would allow, and avoiding all villages and hamlets, though they hoped that the news of their defeat would not have preceded them in the direction they were going.

The evening of that fatal day was drawing on when they saw before them a lone cottage by the seaside. Both their horses were knocked up, and they themselves were much fatigued and desperately hungry. Still Stephen was unwilling to approach the cottage without first ascertaining the character of the inmates.

"Ride on a short distance to the south and wait for me there," he said to his brother; "I will then turn back and see if the people are likely to treat us hospitably. I will tell them that we want a place of rest, as we know of none in the neighbourhood, and that if they will find some oats or beans or other provender for our horses, and provide us with some food, we will be thankful and pay them whatever they may demand." Near the cottage was a boat-house, which appeared to be high enough to serve as a stable, and they hoped that their horses might be sheltered in it during the night. Accordingly, after proceeding a little distance beyond the cottage, Stephen turned back and rode up to the door, and gave a couple of knocks with the hilt of his sword. The next instant it was opened, and a grey-headed old man in a fisherman's dress appeared.

"What do you want here, master?" he asked.

Stephen, after surveying the old man, answered as he had intended.

"Food for a horse I don't keep in store, and for a man I have little enough, though I might give you some bread and cheese," said the old fisherman.

"We will pay you for whatever you can supply us with and be thankful," said Stephen.

"Two men and horses; why, you will eat me out of house and home," said the old man, peering forth at Andrew, whom he could see in the distance. "My son, however, will be in anon from fishing; if he has got a good haul there will be food enough, and as for the horses, why, now I come to think on't, I have a couple of sacks of damaged oats, got out of a vessel not far off; if your animals are hungry, as you say, they will manage to eat them."

"By all means, my friend," said Stephen. "And I suppose you can put our horses up in your boat-house?"

"As to that, as the boat's away, and it is summer weather, there is room for them."

"Well, then, I will call my brother, and we will take advantage of your hospitality," said Stephen, and he rode back and called Andrew.

"Bring us the oats without delay, my friend," said Stephen; "our poor beasts want food as much as we do."

The old man went into his hut and reappeared with a good-sized basketful of oats. The young men, taking off their bridles, allowed the poor beasts to commence their meal, fastening them up with some ropes, of which there were several coils in the boat-house.

"You have come far, I suspect," observed the old fisherman, as he watched the horses devour their provender.

"You must give them some water, though," said Stephen, "or they will not get through enough food to sustain them."

The old man got a bucket, and went to a well a little distance from the cottage, among a group of trees, the only ones to be seen in the neighbourhood.

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast," he observed, as he brought the water, which the horses greedily drank. "Travellers have need to look after their steeds for their own sakes. Are you riding northward? It may be if you are, you are going to join the Duke of Monmouth's army. We have heard say that he has gone in that direction."

"No, we have no intention of joining his army," answered Stephen evasively, thankful to find that the news of the Duke's defeat had not as yet reached thus far. They now, closing the door of the boat-house, accompanied the old man to the cottage. They fancied that he was alone, but on entering they discovered an old woman seated by the fire, engaged in preparing the evening meal. She looked up from her task, and asked her husband who the strangers were.

"Travellers, goodwife; they want some food, and you must just put on whatever you have got to give them. Fry some more bacon and some of the salt fish we have in store. They will pay for it, goodwife," he whispered in her ear. "It is some time since your eyes have been gladdened by the sight of silver."

The old lady looked satisfied, and was soon frying a further supply of bacon and fish. The smell made Stephen and Andrew feel so sick with hunger, that they begged leave to fall-to without waiting for the return of Mark, the son of the old couple. It took them some time, however, to appease their appetites. The old man and his wife looked on with astonishment at the amount of food they stowed away.

"One would suppose that you two had not eaten anything since yesterday," observed the old man.

"You are not far wrong, friend," answered Stephen. "We have had good reason for spurring fast. As we are weary, we will beg you to let us stow ourselves away in a corner of your room and go to sleep, asking you to call us should any strangers come near the hut."

"You are welcome to do that, seeing we have no beds to offer you except Mark's, and he might grumble should he find himself turned out of his."

"We would not do that on any account. Do let us lie down without delay," said Stephen. "See, my brother's head is already nodding over the table."

They had brought in their cloaks, unstrapped from their saddles, and rolling themselves up in them, with some lumps of wood for pillows, they were asleep almost as soon as they had stretched themselves on the ground.

The old man and his wife sat talking in low voices for some time, every now and then glancing at their guests, till the door opened, and the son they had spoken of entered the room. He was a big, broad-shouldered, black-bearded man.

"Whom have we here?" he asked, turning his eyes towards the sleeping fugitives.

"That is more than I can tell you, Mark," answered his father. "They say they came from the south, and, as far as I can make out, they are pushing on to Bristol. They seem to have ridden hard, and are dead beat."

"That may or may not be," said Mark. "I heard say yesterday a good many men have been deserting from the Duke of Monmouth's army. That is not to be wondered at, seeing that the king's forces are rapidly gathering around him; wiser if they had never joined. However, that is no business of ours."

"So I say, son Mark," said the old man. "You are a wise fellow not to run your head into danger, let the world wag as it lists; all we have to do is to catch fish and find a market for them. Have you had a good haul?"

"Pretty fair; and I hope the packman will be here ere long to carry them to Bridgewater, where they say the Duke of Monmouth and his men are encamped. I will now turn in, father, to be ready to send off the fish as soon as the packman comes."

Mark accordingly turned into his bunk in a little recess, for it could not be called a room, in the hut, and was soon snoring away, while his father sat up by the fire in a rough arm-chair, ready, apparently, to awaken him as soon as the packman should arrive. Stephen and Andrew were so thoroughly done up that they slept on the whole night through, undisturbed by voices or any other noise; indeed, had a gun been fired over their heads, they would scarcely have heard it. They started up at daybreak.

"We should be off as soon as we have taken some food," whispered Stephen to his brother. "I wish that we had gone a couple of hours ago; the moon is in the sky, and we could have seen our way."

They rose to their feet, and looked about them; they could see no one in the hut. Presently the old man appeared from behind a piece of an old sail, which served to screen off his sleeping-place.

"We must be going, friend," said Stephen, "and we will thank you for some more food, as we know not when we may obtain any."

"You shall be welcome to what we have," and he called out to his wife, "Mollie, Mollie, get up and cook some breakfast for these young gentlemen; they wish to be on their way."

While the meal was preparing they went out to look at their horses. The animals were munching some oats, which it was evident that either the old man or his son had given them; the former followed and got some water, which the poor beasts much required. Both animals looked much better for their food and rest. Stephen and Andrew hoped that they should be able to make a long day's journey, and find some safer place of concealment than the hut of the old fisherman. On their return to it they found breakfast ready, which they discussed with good appetites; and then paying the old man handsomely for the food and lodging he had afforded them, hastened out again, intending to ride off without further delay. Stephen led out his horse, and Andrew followed, when, as he was about to mount, he exclaimed, "Why, the poor animal is lame." He led him on a few paces; there could be no doubt about it.

"This is unfortunate," he said. "But I will not delay you, Stephen; you ride on, and I will run down his leg; perhaps in the course of an hour or two the lameness may go off. I cannot fancy what has caused it."

"No, no," answered Stephen; "I will remain with you whatever happens; the chances are the news of the fight won't reach this place for some days to come. We will share each other's fortunes, whatever they may be." All Andrew could say would not induce Stephen to ride on alone. They examined the horse's leg, but could discover no cause for its lameness; they rubbed down the leg, and did all they could in hopes of taking it off. Presently the old fisherman appeared, and seemed much surprised at hearing that the horse was lame.

"We must trust to your hospitality for a few hours longer," said Stephen. "We should run the risk of having the horse break down altogether were we to proceed in its present condition."

The old man made no objection, so they put their horses back into the boat-house, and re-entered the hut. They inquired if his son had returned on the previous evening.

"Yes," he answered; "and he has now gone out in the boat to catch some more fish, so we shall have enough to feed you. You must rest on the ground as you did last night."

As they had scarcely recovered from their fatigue, they were glad enough to lie down again and get some more sleep. They were aroused for dinner, which was composed chiefly of fish, and as soon as it was over, they went out to look at their horses. Andrew led his from the stable, and walked it up and down; it already appeared better. "I really think we might push forward; it would be safer than staying here. The chances are Feversham's cavalry will be scouring the country in all directions to make prisoners, and before long some of them may be here."

Stephen agreed, and went back to the hut to pay the old man and wish him good-bye. He was standing at the door of the hut, when Andrew cried out, "Quick! quick! I see some horsemen in the distance, and they are coming this way. They may be friends, but they are more likely to be enemies."

The old man heard what was said, but made no remark. Stephen hurried to the boat-house, and quickly bridling and saddling his horse, mounted, without stopping to look behind them.

"Halloo! I thought you were going the other way," the old man shouted after them.

They waved their hands without replying. On they galloped, and soon lost sight of the horsemen; but whether the latter were pursuing them was the question. Andrew's horse went better than they expected. The country was generally level, though the roads were none of the best. They had proceeded for a couple of hours or more when Andrew's horse began to flag; the animal was evidently feeling its lameness; still they had reached no place where they could hope to obtain the concealment they sought for. Their wish was to get among the rocky and wooded part of North Devon, and beyond the district from which any of those who had joined the rebellion would come; there would then be less chance of their being sought for. Yet they felt, if it was suspected that they had been with Monmouth, they would even so run the risk of being betrayed.

"We must obtain disguises of some sort, though it may be difficult to find them," said Stephen, "for it would be dangerous to enter a town."

It was certainly important to get rid of their uniforms, for those alone would betray them, as soon as the fate of the battle was known. At the same time they thought if they could obtain the dresses of gentlemen, they should less likely be suspected while travelling, at all events, than if they disguised themselves as countrymen, as their dialect and appearance would at once show that they were strangers. The long summer's day was well-nigh closing in when they reached a hilly district, where they hoped to find concealment.

"What shall we do with our horses?" asked Andrew. "It will be difficult to hide them and find provender for them at the same time; besides which, should they be discovered, they would betray that we were in the neighbourhood. To turn them loose would be equally dangerous, for they would break into some corn-field or garden, and inquiries would be made to whom they belonged."

"The only way, I fear, will be to kill them and throw them over the cliffs," said Stephen.

"Then we shall have no means of travelling farther on," observed Andrew. "At all events, do not let us kill them to-night, but try to find some place where we can conceal both ourselves and them."

They rode on, the sun descending on their right into the waters of the Bristol Channel, enabling them to steer a tolerably direct course. At last they came to a deep wooded dell, the sides covered with trees, being so steep that it at first appeared that they could not possibly get down them. The sound of falling water assured them that there was a stream at the bottom, which would enable them to give their horses water. They were not likely to find a better place. They accordingly, dismounting, led their horses down, endeavouring as little as possible to disturb the ground, so as to leave no traces behind them. They were not disappointed in the locality. There was water and grass for their horses, and they had some dry bread and fish, with which the old fisherman supplied them, in their knapsacks for themselves, while the trees grew so closely that it was impossible for any one above to discover them. They, therefore, having watered their horses and eaten some of their scanty provision, lay down with a sense of tolerable security to sleep, while their animals cropped the grass close to them. Still they were anxious to get farther southward, where, among the rough Cornish miners, they were likely, they hoped, to be able to effectually conceal themselves till the search for fugitives from the battle-field was likely to be over. Night passed quietly away, the weather continuing fine, and at early dawn, their horses being thoroughly refreshed, they led them up out of the dell. The country was now much more wild and rugged than any they had yet passed over, and their progress was proportionately slow. Under other circumstances they would have enjoyed the scenery, but their hearts were too sad and their anxiety too great to enable them to think of anything but the means of securing their safety. They had proceeded for about a couple of hours, and were looking out for a place where they could stop and eat the scanty remains of food they had brought with them, when they caught sight of two horsemen coming towards them.

"Who can those men be?" asked Andrew.

"King's dragoons," answered Stephen. "It would be no use to fly. Our only chance is to dash forward and cut our way past them if they attempt to stop us."

"Agreed," said Andrew. "You take the fellow on our right, and I will tackle the other."

They rode quietly forward, nerved for the contest; but just as they were about to plunge their spurs into their horses' flanks, three other dragoons appeared coming along the road. There was a deep ravine on the right full of trees and brushwood. Andrew proposed that they should ride down it as far as they could go, and then throwing themselves from their horses, endeavour to make their way through the wood till they could find some place of concealment. The attempt was a desperate one, as the dragoons might follow as fast as they could. At the same time, they would have somewhat of a start, and being more lightly clad than the dragoons, would make quicker way.

"Whatever we do let us keep together," said Stephen; "and, if die we must, die fighting side by side."

"Agreed," said Andrew, who was always ready to follow his younger brother's lead. Just, however as Andrew was about to ride his horse down the steep bank, the dragoons dashed forward at so rapid a rate, that Stephen saw it would be impossible to follow without the risk of being cut down when unable to defend himself.



"THE NEXT MOMENT THE DRAGOONS FIRED."

"Keep on the road," he cried out to Andrew, who had just time to turn his rein, and drawing his sword, galloped forward. The next moment the dragoons fired. The weapons of all four were clashing together. Both were tolerably skilful swordsmen. Stephen wounded his antagonist in the sword-arm. Andrew gave the other a plunge in the side which made him reel in his saddle, and dashed on to encounter the other three, who were now spurring forward to meet them. They had some hope of success, and their courage was high, though their horses were not equal to those of their opponents. They quickly met, when Stephen found his sword whirled from his grasp, and his horse borne to the ground. At the same moment Andrew uttered a cry, and Stephen saw him, to his dismay, fall bleeding from his horse.

"We give in," cried Stephen, anxious to save his brother. Notwithstanding, two of the dragoons, with swords uplifted, were about to cut them down, when the third, who appeared by his uniform to be an officer, cried out, "Do not strike," throwing up his men's weapons at the same time.

"You have acted like gallant fellows, whoever you are," he said, turning to Stephen, and getting off his horse, stepped forward to assist in lifting up Andrew, whom Stephen was endeavouring to help. The two dragoons who had first been encountered now came up swearing vengeance. The officer ordered the other men to look to their hurts, while he attended to Andrew's, which was not so severe as Stephen had at first supposed.

"You have come from the field of Sedgemoor," he said, surveying the two young men. "You will return with us to Lord Feversham's camp, and must take the consequences of your folly. You are gentlemen, and I do not wish to treat you as I should common clowns."

The hurts of the wounded men being bound up, the two prisoners were placed on their own horses, having been deprived of their weapons, while their arms were bound behind them, and their feet secured under their saddles. The officer now led the way along the road they had just come.

"We have had a long search for you," observed the officer. "We heard of your having been harboured at a fisherman's hut, and have been following you ever since, though you managed to elude us yesterday. I do not wish to alarm you, but you must be prepared for the fate which has overtaken all the rebels that have been captured. General Feversham is not very lenient, and Colonel Kirk, who is expected immediately, is inclined to hang every one he can catch. I myself will do what I can for you, for I am pleased with the bold way that you attacked us; I despise a cowardly enemy."

"We are much obliged to you for your courtesy," answered Stephen. "But, sir, does it not occur to you that we should be less inconvenienced if we had at least our arms at liberty, and were able to guide our horses over this rough road. Should they fall, we shall be in an unpleasant predicament, and may chance to break our necks or limbs."

"Will you give your word that you will not attempt to escape, rescue or no rescue?" asked the officer.

Stephen thought for a moment without answering. There might be an opportunity of getting free, and should they give their word of honour not to escape, they would be unable to take advantage of it. There was, however, very little probability that any party of their friends would be found able to attack five well-armed dragoons, for even the wounded men were still able to make a stout defence. The officer appeared to suspect his thoughts.

"Remember, my friends," he observed, "should a rescue be attempted, the first thing we should do would be to shoot each of you through the head."

"Thank you for your frankness, sir," said Stephen. "What do you say, Andrew; shall we give a promise not to escape, with a remote prospect of being rescued, and the tolerable certainty of being shot should we make the attempt to take advantage of it?" said Stephen.

"We will give our word provided we are also to have our legs at liberty, and can ride like gentlemen," answered Andrew. "We must do it provisionally, however. If the number of men who may attempt to rescue us is double that of the dragoons, they will then have a good excuse for letting us go; and that is, I believe, after all, what Cornet Bryce wishes."

"I fear that the Cornet will not agree to our arrangement," said Stephen, "though he may think that there is very little chance of ten or twenty men suddenly appearing in this part of the country to rescue us."

"Still let us try," said Andrew; "it will show him that we entertain some hope of being rescued, that our friends will revenge themselves on him if we are ill-treated. As to shooting us, I do not think he is the man to do that. We must run no small risk either way, and be prepared for it."

"Well, lads, have you made up your minds?" asked the Cornet, who, though holding a subordinate rank, was a man of a certain age.

Andrew, as the eldest, made the proposal he had suggested.

"Not very likely that I should agree to it," he answered. "I have you now in my power, and if your friends attempt to rescue you, I must pistol you as I promised."

"Look here, Cornet," said Andrew, "should you kill us, our friends will to a certainty cut you down in revenge; for supposing that twenty or thirty of them appear, you would have no chance, and as to giving our word not to attempt under such circumstances to escape, we cannot do it."

"Well, then, you must take the consequences," answered the Cornet; "you must ride on with your legs bound under you, but I will allow you the use of your hands, for if your horses were to fall you might break your necks, and I should have only dead men to convey to the camp."

Stephen, who all along had had no wish to give his word, was glad of this arrangement. The Cornet ordering his men to halt, himself unloosed the prisoners' hands, and bade them take the reins and see that they kept their horses on their feet. The cavalcade now moved forward at a more rapid rate than they before ventured to go. Neither Stephen nor Andrew had the slightest hope of being rescued, as few of the cavalry who had fled from Sedgemoor had kept together, each man having gone off in the direction where he hoped safety might most quickly be found. They concluded, with correctness, that many had been already captured, and that the dragoons were scouring the country in all directions in search of others. Their only consolation was, that they had fallen into the hands of a humane man, who was certainly not thirsting for their blood. Where there is life there is hope. They therefore rode on less downcast than under the circumstances might have been expected.

Chapter Nine.

Stephen and Andrew Battiscombe had, without hesitation, given their names and other particulars of their family to Cornet Bryce.

"Well, my friends, I can tell you that I think there is a chance, though a slight one, that you may escape hanging," he observed, as he rode alongside them in a familiar fashion, two of his men going in front and two guarding the rear. "Our General and some of the officers under him are not above taking bribes, and if you can persuade them that your father will pay handsomely, you may possibly get off, provided they do not hang you without asking questions. I give you the hint, as it may be of value to you."

"Thank you," said Andrew. "I am very sure that our father will be ready to pay any sum he can afford to save our lives; should we even now obtain our liberty, the person who enables us to escape would be handsomely rewarded."

"He will probably be shot or lose his commission if caught, besides which, to do so he would neglect his duty as a soldier," answered the Cornet. "No, no, young gentlemen, I gave you advice for your benefit, not for my own. I am not surprised at your making the proposal to me; some might take it. I thirst for no man's blood, and I have no wish to handle blood-money. My father served under Cromwell, and though I am in the service of King James, I have not forgotten the principles of my ancestors. Would that I could free you without dishonour!"

These remarks accounted for the Cornet's kind treatment to his prisoners. They had too much reason to fear that they should not find many like him in the camp. As they could reach no town that night, all the horses being too tired, the Cornet knocked at the door of a farm-house and demanded admittance. The farmer cast an eye of compassion on the two prisoners, but said nothing, and, without a moment's hesitation, admitted the officer and his troopers, while he sent two of his men to lead their horses to the stables. His wife, on observing that two of the troopers were wounded, came forward and offered at once to dress their hurts.

"I have some skill in that way," she said, "and I hope that if any of the Duke of Monmouth's men were to come asking help, I should not be hardly dealt with if I gave it."

"I would advise you, dame, not to try the experiment," said Cornet Bryce. "I fear you and your goodman would run a great risk of being hung up if you were to afford help to the youngest drummer-boy in the rebel army."

"Alack! alack! these are cruel times," cried the good woman. "We hear that the king's General is hanging up the poor people by scores; we do not desire to get our necks into the same noose. You will note, good sir, that we are peaceable people, that we gave you an instant welcome, and will provide the best our house can afford."

"Do as you propose, good dame, and I will report as well of you as I can," said the Cornet, placing himself at the

table, where he directed his two prisoners to sit, close to him. The farmer busied himself in helping his wife. As Stephen examined his countenance, he thought he recognised it as that of a man who had been in Monmouth's army. He made no remark. Once or twice, while the Cornet and his men were engaged in discussing their food, the farmer cast a glance at Stephen and Andrew, which showed, Stephen thought, that he also recognised them, and said very clearly, "Do not take any notice of me."

As soon as supper was over, Stephen, turning to the Cornet, said, "If you will give me leave, sir, I will take this opportunity of writing to my friends in Dorsetshire. I may not have another. Farmer Stubbs here will, I doubt not, be able to despatch a letter; and when he knows that life and death depend on it, he will exert himself to convey it in safety."

The farmer started on hearing himself spoken of by name, which Stephen did inadvertently.

"Ay, that I will, you may depend on it, young gentleman; I would rather be the means of saving a man's life than killing one, even in fair fight. If the Cornet will give me a safe pass that I may not be taken for one of those running away from the fight, I will undertake to convey the letter myself as soon as it is written."

The Cornet did not appear to think that there was anything unusual in this proposal, and without hesitation promised to write a pass if Farmer Stubbs would find the paper.

"Here it is, gentlemen," said the farmer's wife, who had got up and had been searching about in a cupboard, as she produced several sheets of coarse letter-paper, very different from the fine notepaper of the present day, together with a bottle of ink, some quill pens, and a piece of sealing-wax.

Stephen at once commenced to write his proposed letter to his father, stating that he and Andrew had been captured on the supposition that they were escaping from the field of Sedgemoor; that they should probably be executed forthwith unless they were ransomed; and he pointed out to his father the importance of at once sending a person of trust with a sufficient sum, who might endeavour to obtain their liberation. Supposing that Roger Willoughby was still in England, he wrote a short letter to him to be forwarded by post, entreating that he would communicate with Mr Kempson and get him to exert his influence. This was done, it must be understood, under the idea which Stephen entertained, that after the slaughter of the battle-field was over, the prisoners captured would have a fair trial and time for their defence. He little dreamed of the cruel way Colonel Kirk and his lambs would treat those placed in their power, or the bloody assize under Judge Jeffreys. As soon as the letters were finished, he asked the Cornet to give his promised pass to the worthy farmer, as if it were a matter of no great consequence.

"He shall have it, and I shall be very glad if he succeeds in obtaining your release," said the Cornet.

At length the farmer proposed that his guests should retire to rest, observing that his good woman would see them off in the morning, as his journey being a matter of life and death, he intended to start a couple of hours before daylight.

To this Cornet Bryce made no objection. "Very wise, as I suppose you know the road," he observed.

More satisfied than they had been for some hours, Stephen and Andrew placed their heads on the pillow of the rough pallet which had been prepared for them; the soldiers stretched themselves on the floor, except the two wounded men, for whom the good dame made up separate beds, and again looked carefully to their hurts. They were all four soon snoring in concert. Andrew had joined them. Stephen kept awake, considering if there was any possibility of escaping. From what Cornet Bryce had told him, he knew that there was a risk the moment they arrived at Bridgewater of their being hung without examination or trial of any sort, numbers having been so treated by Feversham and Colonel Kirk. It was far safer, therefore, to escape, if it could be done. The Cornet himself, though he sat up talking with the farmer for some time, at length turned into the truckle bed provided for him, and was soon as fast asleep as his men. Farmer Stubbs was making certain preparations apparently for his journey, filling his saddle-bags with provisions, his holsters with a brace of pistols and ammunition. They were thus engaged as noiselessly as possible when the door opened, and two young men entered. The old woman put her finger to her lips as they gazed somewhat astonished at the number of occupants of the common room. Presently another came in; then the old lady, beckoning to them, accompanied them outside. On seeing this Stephen's hopes rose. If they were all staunch men they might overpower their guard without the slightest difficulty, but then serious consequences might ensue to the farmer. Probably his house would be burnt down and his property destroyed, should the troopers suffer any violence. It seems surprising that Cornet Bryce should so far have neglected his duty as to go to sleep without placing a watch over them. After some time one of the young men returned and came up to Stephen's bed. Finding that he was awake, he made a sign to him to get up, and arouse his brother as noiselessly as possible. As soon as they were both on foot he beckoned them out of the room.

"Our father's ale and cider are pretty strong, and if these fellows wake we are more than a match for them. We may either bind them and keep them prisoners somewhere in the neighbourhood, or we may put them to death, or you may escape by yourselves, while you lame their horses to prevent them from following you."

"If we had the power we would choose the latter course," said Stephen. "May they not revenge themselves by imprisoning your father and destroying his farm?"

"He will be far away from this before morning," answered young Stubbs. "They will not catch a sight of any of us if we are in hiding, and they can scarcely injure our poor old mother, who will know nothing of your flight."

"Then by all means let us try the latter course," said Stephen, his spirits rising as he thought of once more obtaining his liberty.

"Come along then," said young Stubbs. "One of us is going with you, the rest remain, for we are safer in hiding close

to the farm than we should be in travelling across the country. We wish to serve you as we know you well. Mother will remain in the house, and be as much surprised as the soldiers when they find you, their prisoners, have gone. She is a wonderful woman, and will not yield an inch, besides which, we shall be at hand; should any violence be offered her by the soldiers, we will be ready to astonish them."

Simon said this while he led the way to the stables. He quickly led out Stephen's and Andrew's horses, with one for himself.

"Mount," he said. "There is no time to lose. My brothers will look after the troopers' animals, and take good care that they are not in a fit condition to follow us. They have had no food all this time, poor brutes. Some they will lame, others they will let loose. Stay, there is one thing we forgot. The uniforms you wear are likely to betray you. It will be better to change them for my brothers' clothing. Wait here, and I will be back in a minute." Simon, who had not yet mounted, hurried into the house. He soon returned, bringing a couple of bundles, with two countrymen's hats. "Now we will mount and away, and change these when we are farther on the road, before daybreak."

At first they walked the horses, till they had got out of hearing of the house, then stuck their spurs into the animals' flanks and galloped on. Simon knew the road, and did not pull rein for a dozen miles or more. He proposed, he said, riding right across Devonshire so as to reach the southern coast, where they might find a vessel going over to France, or still better, to Holland, where they would be among friends. Stephen and Andrew felt their spirits rise at thus finding themselves again at liberty, and they doubted not that this time they should make their escape. Simon was evidently a very intelligent fellow, and up to all sorts of plans and projects for eluding the enemy. As daylight approached he proposed entering a thick wood, in which he said he had no doubt a stream could be found for watering their horses; they could here change their clothes, and hide their uniforms in some place where they were not likely to be found. Stephen was inclined implicitly to follow his advice, and without hesitation did as he suggested; but after refreshing themselves, they changed their dresses, as proposed. Hunting about they found a hollow beneath an old tree; here they put in their uniforms, and covered the hole up again with light earth and leaves; they then remounting their horses, rode on again for a couple of hours more. Even should the Cornet and his men follow them, it was impossible that they could reach thus far for several hours to come; they accordingly dismounted by the side of a stream where there was sufficient grass for their horses; thanks to Simon's forethought, they had food to last them, he calculated, till they could reach the coast. The next two stages were made at night, thus avoiding any dangerous questions being asked by the people they would have met if they had travelled by day. At length they considered that they might venture to travel during part of the day. Accordingly, after breakfasting near a stream, of which they found an abundance on their road, they pushed forward during the morning. As they kept as much as possible on the by-roads, and avoided the villages, they met but few people. Some of them looked at them askance, others addressed them and inquired where they were going, but the greater number took but little notice of them, supposing, probably, that they were farmers from a distance. A few, seeing that they were coming from the north, asked for information regarding the Duke of Monmouth's misadventure. Of course, they could say they knew nothing of the Duke's movements, and as to the battles which had been fought, the less said about them the better; they might be taken for partisans of one side or the other, and all they wanted just now was to attend to their own affairs, important enough to them, whatever they might be to others. This answer satisfied the inquirers, and the travellers got on with less inconvenience than they had expected. They were not generally very acute persons, or they might have suspected that Stephen and his brother, who were fine-looking young men, were not farmers, though Simon, both in his dialect and appearance, showed his real character. At length the coast was reached. It was one of those rocky secluded little bays, or coves as they are called, which abound on the shores of Devonshire; three or four fishermen's cottages were scattered about on the sides of the cliffs; one was considerably larger and better built than the rest. In the centre of the bay floated a boat, or rather a little vessel.

"The probabilities are that that boat belongs to the owner of the cottage. She is large enough to carry us to France or Holland. If the owner will let her to us we can procure sufficient provisions."

"Let us inquire then," said Andrew. "Simon and I will stand by the horses, you will go down to the cottage."

Stephen, agreeing to this, set off, and was soon at the door of the cottage. A superior-looking seafaring man opened it and bade him enter.

"Does the boat brought up in the bay belong to you, friend?" he asked.

"Yes, and as wholesome a one as ever floated on salt water; she will go through any amount of sea, always provided she is properly handled."

"Then I should think she is just the craft to suit my two friends and me. I want to know whether you will let her to us for a couple of weeks or so."

"Where do you want to go to in her?" asked the old man, eyeing his visitor.

"To be honest with you, we desire to be put across either to the coast of France, or should the wind prove favourable, we should prefer running on to Holland."

The old man eyed Stephen narrowly as he was speaking. "You have some particular reason, I conclude, for wishing to get off," he remarked. "It is not merely a pleasure trip you wish to make, and if you go, I need not expect you to bring the boat back again."

"To be frank with you, we have a particular reason," said Stephen. "We are willing to pay accordingly. We will hand over to you a security, and pay a certain sum down, and give you a promissory note for the remainder."

The old man seemed to be turning the matter in his mind. "I cannot send the boat alone, but you shall have the man who usually sails her since I have been laid by, Joe Savin, and my lad Tom Peddler, provided you pay their wages

from the time they sail to the time they return into harbour."

To this Stephen willingly agreed, highly pleased to make the bargain with so little trouble. He accordingly, mounting his horse, rode back to where he had left Andrew and Simon, who at once accompanied him to the house of the old pilot, for such he appeared to be. Here they all three underwent a further scrutiny.

"Here are our horses, which, if I mistake not, are worth a considerable portion of the value of the boat; I will, in addition, pay you five pounds down, and will give you a promissory note for a further 10 pounds, which my father, Mr Stephen Battiscombe of Langton Hall, will pay you."

"That is tolerably good payment, I will allow, for the risk I run of losing my boat," said the pilot; "but that risk is very considerable, and you must understand that if I did not suspect more than you have told me, I would not enter into the venture. I do not ask questions."

From this remark Stephen knew that the old pilot suspected him and his companions to be fugitives from the field of Sedgemoor, and entertained a sympathy which he was unwilling to allow.

"As there is no time to be lost, we will ask you, friend, to give directions to your men to go on board to store the craft with such provisions as we shall require for the voyage. I, of course, shall be ready to pay for them in addition; five mouths to feed, we will require a good store."

"I have a cask of salted herrings, some dried cod, and I will see what my good wife, who is out marketing, can supply when she comes home," said the pilot. "May be we shall find some bread and other things in the village."

Fortunately for the fugitives the goodwife soon returned home. On hearing the account they gave of themselves, she seemed to take as warm an interest in them as did her husband, by her exertions. Joe Savin and his mate being summoned, the little vessel was quickly provisioned. There was still some time of daylight when they finally went on board, having bid farewell to the old pilot and his wife.

"Now, Joe, let us get under weigh," said Stephen. "As I have been to sea I can lend you a hand, and will either take the helm or help you forward."

"You will take the helm, and let the other young men come forward and do as I tell them," said Joe, eyeing Simon's muscular form and Andrew's active figure. "We are stronger-handed than usual, for even when old Mr Headland is aboard, though he has got a head on his shoulders, he has not much bodily strength remaining." The main-sail was soon set, the anchor, with the assistance of Andrew and Simon, quickly hove up and secured, when the little vessel began to glide out of the cove. They had just got off the southern point of the bay when they saw a number of men running along the cliff towards them. As Stephen was steering he did not observe them particularly, but Andrew and Simon, after attentively looking at them, exclaimed, "They are soldiers!"

As they caught sight of the boat, the soldiers were seen to beckon vehemently, as if to call her back.

"Very unlikely that we will do that," said Stephen. "The fellows have somehow or other found out who we are, and old Mr Headland will, I fear, be the sufferer."

"If those soldiers want us, should not we put back?" asked Joe.

"The very reason we should not," said Stephen. "We should do no good, and should certainly have our voyage delayed."

Just as he was speaking the sail gave a flap; the boat was becalmed under the high ground.

"Get out the oars, lads; we must make the best of our way from the shore."

Joe and the lads got out the oars, and Andrew and Simon assisted them to pull. They had not made many strokes before several shot came whistling over their heads.

"Pull away," cried Stephen; "we shall soon be out of range, and in a few minutes will catch the breeze again."

The soldiers once more fired; two bullets struck the boat, but did no damage; the third went through the main-sail. The soldiers shouted and gesticulated more vehemently than before. The party in the boat, at Stephen's suggestion, took not the slightest notice of them, though they pulled on with might and main till the breeze once more filled the sails and rapidly freshened. The boat now stood away to the southward, and was soon out of range of the soldiers' muskets.

"Perhaps after all we shall be followed," remarked Andrew.

"No fear of that," said Joe. "There is not a man left in the harbour to take out a boat; the chances are the soldiers are not able to pull themselves or they would have been after us by this time. See, the breeze is freshening, and by nightfall we shall be well away from the land."

This information greatly relieved the minds of the fugitives; they had now every hope of getting free, and, should the fine weather continue, be able to land in Holland. Stephen's chief anxiety was for the old pilot; the horses would very likely be taken from him, and he might too probably be carried off as a prisoner for having enabled rebels to escape. Though they had not witnessed the cruelties practised by Colonel Kirk and his lambs, Simon had told him of what he had heard, and of the hundreds who had been hung up on the Bussex oak directly after the action. They were justly afraid that Mr Headland might be treated in the same cruel manner; and "if we had gone back we could have done no good," Stephen said to himself over and over again. For some hours the weather continued fine, and the boat made

fair progress, but towards midnight a dark bank of clouds rose to the eastward, threatening a gale.

"What do you think of it, Joe?" asked Stephen.

"We shall catch it, but the boat will float like a cork; we will shorten sail in good time, though we shall not make much of our way towards Holland till it is over, I have a notion."

The boat, it should be understood, was only half-decked; but she had good high sides, and was provided with waterways, so that unless the gale should prove of unusual violence, they had no reason to fear for their safety. Though Andrew had lived near the sea, he had seldom been afloat, and Simon had never even seen the ocean before. At first he had been highly pleased with its appearance, but now that he saw the dark leaden foam-topped waves rising up, he began to look as if he would rather have been safe on shore; but he was a stout-hearted fellow, and was not disposed to give way to idle fears. The boat began to pitch and tumble about, and to take the water over her bows.

"I will go to the helm now," said Joe to Stephen, "for though I see you know how to handle a boat in smooth water, it is a very different matter in a heavy sea."

Stephen gladly gave up the helm, and stood by with the lad to shorten sail, should it be necessary. Two reefs had already been taken down, and the little vessel went bobbing away over the dark foaming seas, making but little progress. She might, as Joe affirmed, be the best sea-boat out of Kenway Cove, but she was certainly not a fast craft, and was inclined to make as much way to leeward as she did ahead. She was now standing over to the French coast, but Stephen and his friends were unwilling to land there except in a case of great necessity. Should they be discovered, the French Government, who were friendly with James, would be very likely to hand them over to him. Their only hope was to get into some retired place on the coast of Normandy, where they might live unnoticed, and engage themselves in fishing or some other employment. The wind increased; now the rain came down in torrents, drenching through those who were but ill-protected, old Joe, in a thick woollen coat, and a pipe in his mouth, and a tarpaulin drawn down over his head, looking as unconcerned as if it were a fine summer day. He advised Andrew and Simon to get into the cuddy.

"You ain't of much use," he observed, "and there is no reason why you should get wet through to do no one good. Mr Stephen here may do as he pleases; we are likely enough to want his help; he has shown that he can give it."

Andrew and Simon, though they did not feel complimented, followed the old sailor's advice, but the tossing and the tremendous thumps which they heard every instant against the bow of the vessel, effectually prevented them from going to sleep, and made them wish to get out again. They felt also very sick and uncomfortable: the cuddy was hot and close. The gale increased, and old Joe deemed it necessary to take down the last reef and lower the fore-sail, keeping only the small storm-jib set. The operation took some time, and while Stephen was assisting in shifting the jibs, a sea struck the bows, and carried him off his legs. Providentially he clung to the forestay, or he would have, the next instant, been overboard; but he saved himself. He got the storm-jib hauled well on board before the next sea struck the vessel. Sail being reduced, everything was made snug, and he came aft. Looking into the cuddy, he inquired how his friends were getting on.

"Very badly," they both answered. "How soon is the gale likely to be over?"

"It is impossible to say," he answered. "It may likely enough come on to blow harder; we shall then have to heave the vessel to, and wait till it decreases."

Andrew and Simon groaned on hearing this, and wished themselves safe on shore. In a few minutes Joe determined to heave the vessel to, which was done under the storm-jib and mizzen, while the main-sail was lowered down and stowed. When morning broke, there the little vessel lay, riding on the leaden seas, and the dark clouds overhead, and masses of spray driving against her. Old Joe said they were pretty nearly about the spot where they were the night before—no nearer the French coast, no farther from that of England. There seemed to be little likelihood of the gale abating. Joe put the lad, who had been sleeping most of the night, to watch the helm while he took a snooze. The rest of the party had slept but little. Stephen had not closed his eyes, but he now felt very weary, and could no longer keep awake, so he lay down in the cuddy, caring less for the thumping sound than Andrew had done. He slept on for some hours in spite of wind whistling in the rigging, the roaring of the seas, which ever and anon broke over the little vessel, half filling her with water. Old Joe got the pump rigged, and bade Andrew and Simon, as they could do nothing else, work away at it. He kept them at it till their arms ached, but it was far better than being idle. At last Stephen got up; he proposed that they should have some food, as neither of his friends had taken anything since the previous evening. At first they declared that they could get nothing down. He persuaded them to try. Following his example, they succeeded better than they had expected, and were able again to turn to the pump. With an easterly gale such as they were now experiencing, there is generally a clear sky, but on this occasion, clouds massed on clouds came rushing along from the North Sea. Though hove-to, as far as old Joe could calculate, about mid-channel, the little vessel was drifting fast to leeward, farther and farther from the direction which those on board desired to go. Old Joe proposed at length that they should run back to some port on the English coast. Against this Stephen protested. They had had a narrow escape as it was, and wherever they might put in, they would be nearly certain to be suspected.

"Then we must bear up for a French port," said Joe.

"That will only be a degree better," observed Stephen.

"Well, then, it is a choice of evils," said Joe. "If we do not get into some port or other, and it should come on to blow harder than it does now, the chances are the craft will go down. Better to be taken by the French."

"We will hope that the gale won't increase," said Stephen, who having thus far succeeded in escaping from his enemies, was not inclined to despair. His brother and Simon were more out of spirits about the matter. Still it seemed probable that the gale would increase; not a break appeared in the clouds. As long as the provisions lasted, and the

boat could keep above water, Stephen determined to remain at sea. The boat, however, was leaking considerably, and the provisions were becoming exhausted, so that even should the gale moderate they could scarcely hope to reach a Dutch port before their food would have come to an end. All day long the little vessel lay tossing about. They spoke little, though they had much to think about. Their thoughts were not such as they could give expression to before others. Joe, who was generally a cheery old fellow, sat looking glum and downcast.

"It is all very well for you to say you won't go back, but if we don't, as I said before, we shall go to the bottom."

Still Stephen was determined to attempt to get on as soon as the gale had abated. He knew that it was as dangerous to run before the seas, when there would be a great probability of being pooped, as to remain hove-to. That they had been drifting down channel he was aware. How far they had got it was difficult to say. To attempt to make the land they might fail to enter any sheltering harbour, and might be cast on some rocky shore, where the vessel would be lost. Stephen argued the point with old Joe.

"Well," replied the latter, "you must be answerable for whatever happens. Remember, if the craft goes down it is your fault, not mine."

Stephen was half inclined to smile at what Joe said, and willingly undertook to be responsible for whatever should occur, and going to the pump, set to work to encourage his companions. Thus they continued tumbling and tossing about as they had been doing for many hours. At length, overcome with fatigue, Stephen lay down in the cuddy, hoping to snatch a short rest. How long he had been asleep he could not tell, when he was awakened by a loud crash. Starting up, he saw to his dismay that the mast had gone by the board. Old Joe was equal to the emergency. "Get out the oars, lads, and we will try and keep the craft's head to wind, while I cut away the wreck. It is our only chance, for if she is brought broadside to the sea, she will fill in an instant and go down."

Tom Peddler, accustomed to obey old Joe, promptly got out one of the oars, while Andrew and Simon got out the other; Stephen, springing aft, went to the helm. Joe soon cleared the mast, the butt end of which had been battering away against the side of the boat, threatening to knock a hole in her. By considerable exertion she was kept head to wind, while in a few minutes old Joe, who had been looking out, shading his eyes with his hands, declared that the gale was breaking. Soon a light was seen to shine forth between the clouds to the eastward, and it became evident that the wind, having played them this cruel trick, was going down. Though they had to pull hard to prevent the boat from being swamped, still, as long as they could do that, they hoped at all events to save their lives for the present. Though, after all, they should be compelled to put into a French port, to do so was not altogether hopeless, as they would have the excuse of coming in for the sake of getting a fresh mast. The wind continued to go down, and the sea to decrease so much, that their exertions were greatly lessened. They were able to enjoy a better meal also than they had taken. They had just finished, when Andrew, who was on the look-out, exclaimed—"I see a white sail away to the east. See, the canvas shines like snow against the clouds."

Joe jumped up at hearing this, and took a look at the stranger, which he pronounced to be a large ship bearing directly down for them. "Whether friend or foe, we cannot escape her; but if she is Dutch we are in no danger. I do not know how a Frenchman would treat us. We have most to dread from one of our own ships; more's the shame it should be so."

As there was no necessity any longer for keeping the oars going, all on board anxiously watched the approaching ship.

"She is a man-of-war, I have little doubt," said Joe. "Carries fifty guns. She is English, too," he added; "she has hoisted her ensign at the peak."

"Remember we have but one simple tale to tell," said Stephen to Andrew and Simon; "we are bound for Holland. We must neither show fear nor surprise if we are taken on board. Merely ask the English Captain to supply us with a mast and the necessary rigging, in place of the one we have lost."

In a short time the frigate was up to the little vessel. A boat was lowered, and a lieutenant and midshipman came in her.

"What has brought you into this condition, friends?" asked the former, looking at Joe.

"Oh," replied Joe, "a sudden squall carried away our mast."

"The Captain's orders were to bring your boat alongside," said the lieutenant. "Get out your oars; we will soon tow you there."

Just then Stephen, who had been looking at the midshipman, exclaimed, "Roger Willoughby!"

Roger started up and cried out, "Stephen Battiscombe! I should not have known you, you look so thin and careworn. What has brought you out here?"

"My brother and I and our friend are going to seek our fortune in Holland," answered Stephen, who would rather not have had his name mentioned.

As the lieutenant was in a hurry to obey his orders, he directed Joe to heave him a tow-rope, and the little vessel was quickly carried alongside the ship. On the deck Stephen saw his old commander Captain Benbow, who, however, did not recognise him, dressed as he was in countryman's clothes.

"What brought you out here, my men, in mid-channel?" asked the Captain. "Come up on deck, and let me have a talk with you."

Stephen at once obeyed; Andrew and Simon followed him more slowly. To Stephen's surprise Roger took no further notice of him, though his old friend, knowing how he had been engaged, had a shrewd suspicion of the truth, and thought that he had probably assumed some fictitious name. It was better to let him answer for himself. Stephen replied, as had been agreed on, that he and his companions were bound for Holland to seek their fortunes, and that in consequence of being unable to find a larger vessel, they had embarked in the *Duck* and had it not been for the gale they encountered, they hoped to have been there by this time.

"Not much chance of getting there unless you are fitted with a new mast," said the Captain. "My wish is always to help fellow-seamen in distress. Though you are dressed as a farmer, I am very sure that by the way you came up the side that you have been at sea before, and while I look at you, it appears to me that we have been shipmates. I will not ask questions. If I did I should want true answers. Come, my friend, the sooner we get your craft fitted out the better for you; the wind may breeze up again, and it may become a difficult job." Without taking further notice of Stephen and his companions, he ordered the carpenter and boatswain to try how fast they could fit and rig a new mast for the little *Duck*. "That won't be looked upon as neglect of duty or aiding and abetting. Remember, we don't know who these men are," he said, turning to Roger. "We found them in distress on the high seas, and we do what every man is bound to do, help them to get into port as best they can."

Roger did not say that he recognised Stephen, although he guessed that the Captain, from what he said, had done so. He was longing himself to ask Stephen to give him an account of his adventures, but he judged that the Captain would object to his doing this. He was very thankful that Stephen had escaped from the battle of Sedgemoor, of which a full account had reached London, as well as of the dreadful slaughter which had been inflicted on the insurgents. Like all those who served under Benbow, the carpenter and gunner of his ship, aided by their crews, exerted themselves to the utmost to get the mast finished. They knew that it need not be very shapely, provided the main-sail, which had been saved, could be set upon it. In the course of a couple of hours the little *Duck* was once more ready to continue her voyage. Stephen heartily thanked the Captain for his kindness.

"Say not a word about it, my lad," answered Captain Benbow; "I am glad to give you a helping hand. I should have advised you to come on board my ship instead of continuing your voyage in that cockle-shell, but I am bound up the Bristol Channel to look out for fugitives from the Duke of Monmouth's unfortunate army, and my directions are to cruise between Bideford Bay and Bridgewater Bay. If I had found a craft coming from that part of the coast, I should have been compelled to detain her and all on board. Now, fare you well. I wish that you had stuck to the sea, and you would have kept out of difficulties into which so many at the present day have fallen. By the by, as you have been out so long, you may be in want of provisions; I have some private stores, and you shall be welcome to them," and he ordered his steward to put a keg of biscuits, a case of Spanish hams, a couple of casks of water, and other minor articles on board. The honest Captain, from the warmth of his heart, could not help shaking his old acquaintance by the hand as he dismissed him to his little vessel. Roger slipped down the side and grasped his hand.

"I am so glad you got off," he exclaimed. "I did not speak to you before, because I waited to take the cue from the Captain. It is all right; remember, let them know at Eversden, through the Colonel, when you arrive safely in Holland. I am glad you are going there instead of to France, for the Captain thinks we shall be at loggerheads with the Mounseers soon."

Saying this, and having wrung Stephen's hand, Roger sprang up the side of his ship, when the little *Duck*, shoving off, made sail to the eastward, while the *Ruby* stood on her course down Channel.

Chapter Ten.

The gale had been blowing for some days on the Dorsetshire coast. The seafaring men along the shore pronounced it the hardest they had known at that season for many a year, harder than one which had blown a few days previously for a short time. A vessel, from stress of weather, had put into Lyme, and reported that she had passed two small craft, tempest-tossed and sorely battered, but they refused assistance, saying that they intended to keep the sea, as they were bound to the eastward. This information being given to the authorities at Lyme, notice was issued to the men stationed along the coast, placed there to prevent the escape of rebels, and they were directed to watch for the two vessels, which it was conjectured had on board fugitives from Sedgemoor, or others who had taken part with Monmouth.

Colonel Tregellen had been deeply stirred with indignation at the cruelties practised by the Earl of Feversham and Colonel Kirk on the hapless Monmouth's defeated army, and he felt far more interest in them than would otherwise have been the case.

"Had they been criminals of the darkest dye, they could not have been more severely dealt with. Instead of that, they were honest men, fighting bravely for what they believed a righteous cause," he observed, as he read the accounts of what had taken place.

It is scarcely necessary to say how Alice Tufnell felt. Though she had warned and entreated Stephen Battiscombe not to take up arms, she knew that he was prompted by the highest and purest of motives. Her heart sank as she thought of the uncertainty that hung over his fate. No news had been received of him and his brother since the day of the battle, and their friends could not conjecture whether they had fallen at Sedgemoor, been killed in the pursuit, or were still in hiding.

The first intimation that his sons were still alive was received from Farmer Stubbs, who had brought Stephen's letter, saying that he and Andrew were in the hands of Cornet Bryce, and that they were to be carried to Bridgewater or Taunton. Mr Battiscombe immediately sent off to Colonel Tregellen to ask his advice. Farmer Stubbs was very unwilling to put himself into the power of Colonel Kirk and his lambs, and declined going with the sum of money necessary to bribe those in authority. Mr Battiscombe had the money ready, which he hoped would be sufficient. He

first thought of Mr Handscombe, but on applying to Mr Willoughby, who had last heard from him, he found that he had left London, no one knew whither. Colonel Tregellen himself would have been a fit person in some respects, for his loyalty would never have been doubted, but his health prevented him from going far from home. He was not suited by his temper and disposition to deal with characters such as Colonel Kirk and those associated with him. Poor Mr Battiscombe, in despair, applied to Mr Willoughby. He had taken no part in the rebellion, and his son, with his sanction, had entered the Royal Navy, and was serving under Captain Benbow. Feeling deeply for his friend, though the undertaking was very contrary to his habits, he agreed to set out without loss of time, and endeavour to carry on the negotiation. He had very little to plead for Stephen and Andrew, except that they were young men carried away with the flattery bestowed on them by the Duke, but their father would undertake for their good behaviour in future, and would send them out of the country. Farmer Stubbs, saying that he had a relative not far off, with whom he intended to stay till the storm had blown over, disappeared the next evening, and Mr Willoughby set out on his mission of mercy, which, as the reader knows, was to prove a bootless one.

The storm had been blowing for some days, when Colonel Tregellen, accompanied by Alice on her pony, started on a ride to the village, where he had some tenants to visit, intending to return along the cliffs, where he hoped that the fresh wind off the sea would raise Alice's depressed spirits. On reaching the Downs the wind was so strong that they could with difficulty make headway against it, still the little pony seemed to enjoy the breeze even more than its mistress. When the Colonel pressed forward, his horse cantered gaily along. Alice at length, just as they reached the higher part, where an extensive view could be obtained over the ocean, begged to stop to regain her breath. The Colonel was looking westward, when he observed two sails in the distance.

"Look out there, Alice," he said, "your eyes are sharper than mine. Tell me what those are."

"Two small vessels or boats," she answered. "They have a very small amount of canvas, and are running to the shore, while they appear to be terribly tossed about. It is surprising that they can remain afloat in such a sea."

"They must be in a desperate strait, or they would not stand in for this coast," remarked the Colonel. "Unless they can manage to reach Lyme they will to a certainty be lost."

"They are not steering for Lyme," said Alice, "but are coming on directly for our bay."

"Can they be the craft reported to have been fallen in with by the Lyme vessel?" observed the Colonel.

"I pray that they may not be, as those too likely contained fugitives from Monmouth's army," said Alice.

"There must be some one on board who knows this bay, or they would not be steering for it," said the Colonel. "As the vessels are small, the crews may hope to run them up on the beach and escape through the surf."

In spite of the wind the Colonel and his adopted daughter were unwilling to leave the Downs till they knew the fate of the boats. The pathway down to the beach was too steep for the horses to descend, or in their eagerness they would have gone down. The Colonel rode as close as he could to the edge of the cliff, to see if he could observe old Ben Rullock, or some other fisherman, in order to desire them to make preparations for rescuing the storm-tossed crews, whosoever they might be. While he was watching he observed several persons coming along the cliff.

"The fellows are on the look-out for those boats," he said to himself. "I wish they had not discovered them, for if the people on board are fugitives, should they escape the waves, they will fall into their scarcely less remorseless clutches." He watched the men as they descended the cliffs, but could not see what had become of them. "I verily believe they have hidden themselves, that they may pounce out on their prey, and give them less chance of escaping."

The guards, who were all armed, seemed to have made signals to others, who came hurrying up till nearly a dozen were collected about the same spot. A reef of rocks ran off on the west side of the bay, which, circling round, formed a sort of breakwater, which, in moderate weather, enabled Ben Rullock and other fishermen to leave their boats at anchor in security, though at present they were all hauled up. It required nice steering to enter the bay so as to avoid the end of the reef; the two boats approached, their shattered appearance showing the urgent necessity which had induced them to steer for the land. Some of the people in them were baling, others pumping, both pressing eagerly on, almost abreast, instead of following each other. At length they drew close to the bay, when one, standing more to the westward than she ought to have done, struck the end of a reef. The next sea scattered her fragments, and she literally melted away from sight, leaving those who had been on board struggling helplessly in the waves. In vain those in the other boat threw out ropes to rescue the drowning people; they succeeded in dragging only one on board. As far as could be seen from the top of the cliff, the remainder perished miserably. Alice uttered a shriek of horror as she saw the catastrophe; no help could apparently be afforded from the shore; the other boat rushed forward up the bay, and disappeared beneath the cliff.

"The poor fellows have escaped a watery grave, but only to find themselves prisoners in the hands of their enemies," cried the Colonel.

Shouts and cries heard above the roaring of the seas came up from below the cliffs; then all was still. After the lapse of a few minutes a number of men appeared coming up the cliff which led down to Ben Rullock's cottage; they were the soldiers guarding six prisoners. The Colonel, followed by Alice, rode forward to inquire where the prisoners were to be conveyed, with a charitable wish to do what he could to alleviate their sufferings. Poor Alice could scarcely restrain the cry which rose from her breast as she saw the first of the prisoners, who was Stephen Battiscombe, followed by his brother Andrew; but she knew the Colonel's generous intentions. The state of the prisoners was sufficient, it might have been thought, to excite the compassion of their captors; they looked utterly broken-down and emaciated, as if they had long been in want of food, while the bitter disappointment they must have felt at finding themselves immediately on landing in the hands of their foes completely overcame them. Stephen lifting his eyes recognised Alice; he bowed his head, and then cast his eyes again to the ground, as if he felt he had so

completely disobeyed her wish that she could have no further interest in him.

"Where are you going to take these persons, my friends?" asked the Colonel of the soldiers. "Judging from their appearance they are scarce able to walk, much less to march any distance, and the sun is nearly setting. Whoever they may be, or whatever they have done, they are our fellow-creatures, and in sore distress. They certainly were not flying from the country, for you all saw that they steered for the shore, and evidently intended to land instead of attempting to go farther. I shall be glad if you will bring them on to Eversden Manor,—it is not far from this,—and I will give you and them quarters and provisions, which they at all events, judging from their looks, sorely want."

The sergeant who had taken charge of the party, after making some remarks to two or three of his comrades, who seemed to like the idea of getting into comfortable quarters, instead of having to march to Lyme or Bridport, replied that he would accept the Colonel's offer.

"Come then, friends," said the Colonel; "I will ride on ahead while you follow with your prisoners; but do not hurry them, for they are but ill able to move at a fast pace." Saying this he rode slowly on, with Alice by his side.

"I thought it wise not to show too much interest in the young Battiscombes, lest it might be supposed that I was inclined to favour them," said the Colonel; "but the poor fellows seem perfectly broken-down for want of food. I fear that if I were to leave them they would be ill-treated or urged on too fast, but I think, were you to ride forward to the house and obtain some refreshment, it might shorten their sufferings. Platt can bring as much more food as he is able to carry."

The idea was no sooner suggested to Alice, than answering, "That I will, thankfully," she started off at a fast pace across the Downs.

"What has happened?" exclaimed Madam Pauline, who had seen her coming up the avenue at a gallop, her hair, which had escaped beneath her hat, streaming in the wind. Alice explained in a few words, and Madam Pauline, saying to herself, "It is sad, very sad; I am sorry, so sorry," set about heartily putting up such food as was ready, together with a bottle of her cordial waters, while Alice directed Platt to prepare to accompany her. No sooner, however, was a basket packed, than, taking it on her arm, she hurried back to meet the Colonel and the prisoners. She found them just as they had crossed the Downs near a tolerably sheltered spot. Here the Colonel requested the sergeant to halt, while she, immediately unpacking her basket, took round the contents to the famishing prisoners. She endeavoured to exhibit no special favour to one more than the other, though this was difficult. As she came up to Stephen a second time, she whispered, "Be on the watch; tell your brother." She then passed on hurriedly. After some time Tobias Platt arrived with more provisions, a portion of which he distributed among the soldiers, thus putting them in good humour, and making them more inclined than they might otherwise have been to treat their prisoners kindly. As it was getting late, the Colonel advised that they should proceed, and they continued their march to the manor-house. Alice again galloped forward to assist Madam Pauline in getting ready for their reception. She did not hesitate to confide to her aunt her intention of trying to enable Stephen and his brother to escape.

"But you do not consider the risk, my dear Alice," said Madame Pauline. "Should these young men escape, the Colonel would be implicated, might suffer all sorts of fines and penalties, that he can ill afford, though I know he would gladly spend any sum to buy them off, if that were possible, and help poor Mr Battiscombe. However, we will see what can be done. What a pity that Mr Willoughby should have gone off on his useless errand! We must let Mr Battiscombe know that his sons have been captured, in order that he may take such steps as he deems necessary."

"I will go," said Alice; "my pony is perfectly fresh, and I shall quickly gallop to Langton Hall and back." Madam Pauline hesitated, but Alice soon over-persuaded her to let her go.

On arriving at home the Colonel was somewhat inclined to find fault with Madam Pauline for allowing Alice to set off by herself, though he acknowledged it was important that Mr Battiscombe should be made aware that his sons had been captured, that he might take such steps as he might deem necessary to preserve their lives. He did not conceal from himself the fearful predicament in which they were placed: hundreds, he heard, had been slaughtered, and the vindictive King was not yet satisfied. That King little thought that his cruelties were preparing the way for his own dethronement.

There were numerous rooms in the lower story of the manor-house, and the Colonel proposed that one should be got ready for the young Battiscombes, and another for the remainder of the prisoners, who were of an inferior rank. There was no end of truckle-beds in the house, which he ordered to be got ready. He proposed allowing the soldiers to occupy the hall, while the sergeant might place his guards as he considered necessary. The sergeant, on his arrival, was well pleased with the arrangements that had been made. Not being without human feeling, he was satisfied that the worn-out prisoners should enjoy the comfort of beds and good food, while he was pleased with the ample fare provided by Madam Pauline for himself and his comrades.

The Colonel looked out anxiously for the return of Alice, for he was afraid lest some accident should happen to her. There were wild characters abroad who pretended to be in search of rebels, and had succeeded in obtaining blood-money by capturing several. While Tobias Platt took care that the soldiers should be well supplied with food and good liquor, he did not forget the prisoners, especially the young Battiscombes, to whom he carried more delicate food, suited to their present condition.

The Colonel was on the point of setting out for Langton Hall in order to meet Alice should she have left it, when she arrived, having ridden hard the whole distance. She had been detained in discussing plans with Mr Battiscombe, as also while a package of clothes, of which she had observed they stood in need, was preparing. She had brought it secured to her saddle.

"We need not let the soldiers see the package delivered," she observed; "Tobias Platt can carry it in as part of their bedding. The clothes will enable them to present an appearance very different from what they do now."

Tobias, with whom Stephen was a favourite, took good care to carry in the clothes as proposed, without being observed by the soldier on guard. The windows were barred with iron, intended rather to prevent ingress than egress, but answering both purposes. The sergeant, on examining them, considered that his prisoners were perfectly secure in the rooms. Both he and his comrades were kept generously supplied with food and good cider, together with somewhat potent beer; as they had been out all the day in the hot sun, they were well inclined to keep up their carouse.

"It is tiring work, Master," said Tobias Platt, bringing a comfortable chair to where the sentry was pacing up and down. "You can watch as well seated as walking, I suppose, and I will get you a pipe of tobacco, if you have a mind for it."

"Ay, that I have, and I say, Master, a glass of something to keep the throat moist won't come amiss."

"You shall have it," said Tobias Platt, and he quickly returned with a small table, a jug of ale, and a pipe with some tobacco.

"Mind you don't go to sleep, though," said Tobias, as the sentry, seating himself in the chair and placing his musket by his side, stretched out his legs, when, taking a pull at the jug, he began to puff away from the pipe which Tobias Platt had lighted for him. Tobias then, having placed a lantern with the dark side turned away from the sentry, quietly retired; he came back, however, before long, to find the beer jug empty, while the man was snoring loudly.

"You will do," said Tobias, nodding as he passed. In a short time he came back accompanied by a light figure in a dark cloak, and turning a key, and noiselessly drawing back some bolts, glided into the room. Both the prisoners were sleeping. She was loth to awake them, yet it must be done. She turned the lantern on Stephen's face and uttered his name. He started up in a moment. "Can you forgive me?" he whispered in a low voice. "And yet you come as an angel of light to console me in my sore trouble."

"I come not to blame you, Stephen, but to comfort you if I can. I would inform you the means for your and your brother's escape have been provided; you have simply to walk out of this room while the sentry is sleeping. Your father is aware that you have been made prisoner, and he has arranged for your concealment, or will endeavour to have you conveyed northward where search is not likely to be made for you."

"Thanks, dearest, thanks a thousandfold," said Stephen. "For your sake I would use every exertion to escape, but I cannot desert my companions. I have already brought too many into trouble in endeavouring to get clear of my foes. I have induced several to join our unhappy cause who have lost their lives. I cannot run the risk of bringing the Colonel and his family into trouble, which I should do were I to escape from his house."

"Indeed, he is anxious to save you, I am sure of it, else he would not have had you placed in this room," said Alice, "though he wisely would not commit himself further. He knew that I brought you your clothing, and he would willingly run any risk for the sake of saving you from the clutches of Judge Jeffreys, who is expected every day at Dorchester to commence the assize, and all who know him say that it will be a fearful one."

"I must endure whatever I am called on to suffer," answered Stephen. "The Colonel and our father will be made responsible were Andrew and I to escape. Were you to be suspected of assisting us, they would not even spare you, Alice."

"But were I betrothed to you I would urge that as my plea," said Alice, in a trembling voice. "I know what were your intentions, and if you will even now ask me to marry you, I will consent, and I shall then have a right to plead that I acted according to the dictates of duty, or should you not after all escape, I should be able to exert myself as I best can to obtain your pardon."

A fearful struggle took place in Stephen's heart. He had long loved the girl who pleaded with him, and that love prompted him to endeavour to save her from dangers to which she might be exposed; but hope triumphed. Without further hesitation he pledged his troth to her; still he could not bring himself to desert his companions and to compromise the Colonel and his family, which he knew he should do were he and his brother to make their escape from the house. Andrew had been sleeping soundly all this time. He awoke him and told him of the arrangements that had been made to enable them once more to get free from the clutches of their foes. Two spare horses, Alice told them, would be in waiting outside the grounds at midnight, with a guide to conduct them northward. They would be many miles away before their flight would be discovered. By remaining concealed during the following day they might, by riding all night, get beyond the counties where the rebellion had existed. Andrew, according to his custom, considered the matter calmly over.

"I agree with you, Stephen," he said; "we must not attempt it." And he used the same arguments which his brother had already done. "Let us remain and brave the consequences; we are deeply grateful to Mrs Tufnell."

Both spoke so lightly that Alice, though she bitterly mourned their decision, was won over to agree that the course to be pursued was the right one. That they would have succeeded was doubtful, and before she left the room the sound of the sergeant's voice as he roused up his men to change the guard reached their ears, and she had barely time to escape from the room when the heavy tread of the soldiers' feet was heard coming along the passage. The guard at the door started up, not so completely overcome as might have been expected. The sergeant looked into the room, to find both his prisoners sleeping apparently in their beds; he then went to the other room, where he found all secure, but his suspicions must have been aroused from some cause or other, for he placed a double guard at the door, and retired highly satisfied with his own vigilance. Poor Alice went back to her room to weep, agitated by various emotions. Though disappointed that Stephen had not escaped at once, she felt that, now she was betrothed to him, she had a right to exert herself in his favour. She determined bravely to do so at all costs. She wished that Roger had been at home, as he would be able to assist her in whatever she might undertake; but there was not the slightest chance, she feared, of his returning for some time to come.

Next morning the family at the manor-house were early on foot. The sergeant was evidently so well satisfied with the way he and his companions had been treated, that he had no wish to move forward. For the sake of the young Battiscombes, the Colonel was not in a great hurry to get rid of them, as he otherwise would have been. In order to have an excuse for remaining longer, the sergeant sent off one of his men to Lyme to learn whether he was to take his prisoners to that place, or to convey them to Dorchester, where, as the assize was soon to commence, they would have a speedy trial. Alice was in hopes that they would be detained another night, and Stephen and Andrew might then be persuaded to make their escape. Having dressed herself as much as possible like a waiting-maid, she took the opportunity of visiting them during the dinner-hour, under the pretence of carrying in their food. Stephen, to her disappointment, was firm as before; the same reasons weighed with him. It grieved him to say so, but he was sure that he was acting rightly. She had not long left the room when Mr Willoughby returned. He looked fatigued and out of spirits as he passed along the passage to the Colonel's private room, for it could not be justly called a study. Some time passed, when Madam Pauline, who was eager to hear what had happened, went in, accompanied by Alice. Mr Willoughby, who in the meantime had had a long conversation with the Colonel, now told Madam Pauline his first visit was to the abode of Farmer Stubbs, which to his dismay he found empty. Mrs Stubbs had gone no one could tell whither, possibly carried off by the soldiers in revenge for the escape of Stephen and Andrew, although he was not aware of that at the time. The farm itself had not been pillaged, except of portable provisions. This was probably owing to its distance from the camp, or it would have fared but ill. Unable to hear what had become of his young friends, Mr Willoughby had gone on to Bridgewater, and had run a great risk of being seized as a suspected adherent of the Duke of Monmouth, and it was only by asserting that he was brother-in-law to Colonel Tregellen, a well-known Royalist, that he had escaped. He had done his most to gain information of his young friends, of course in vain. It would have been folly to try and get access to any of the leaders for the purpose of purchasing their pardon till he could learn where they were. He said that he was sick at heart at the sight of the heads of the hapless rebels which were seen at the entrance of every village, while gibbets in great numbers lined the roads in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater. Mr Willoughby had several narrow escapes, when he encountered an old acquaintance, who was no other than Cornet Bryce. He had to look at him hard, for he little expected to see him in military guise. The Cornet looked much cast down. Mr Willoughby learned from him the cause of his depression, the escape, namely, of two prisoners. He fully expected to be placed under arrest and severely punished, should it be discovered by the General that they had got off. Mr Willoughby was not long in ascertaining that the two missing prisoners were the sons of his friend. He kept his counsel as to his object in coming to Bridgewater, and returned home as soon as he could. Alice was glad to see him arrive, as she thought he might possibly try to induce Stephen and Andrew to escape. He saw clearly the danger to which the Colonel would be exposed, and declined in any way committing himself, though he promised, should they be delivered over to the officers of the law, to use every exertion to obtain their pardon or liberation.

As the sergeant had not ordered the man he sent to Lyme to make any haste, it was late in the day before he returned with orders to carry his prisoners to Dorchester. "I suppose, Colonel, that you do not insist on our setting out this afternoon?" said the sergeant. "It is a long day's march to Dorchester. We should make it better by starting fresh in the morning."

The Colonel assured the sergeant that he was welcome to remain. He knew that in the meantime Mr Battiscombe was exerting himself, through certain friends, with those in authority to obtain the pardon of his sons. Every day he gained was of consequence. He also hoped leave might be obtained to enable them to perform the journey on horseback. In the evening he came over to see his two sons. The parting was an affecting one. Though he had been exerting himself to obtain their pardon, he knew too well that his efforts might prove fruitless. He remained that night at the manor-house, that he might be with them as long as possible. When he asked leave of the sergeant to allow his sons to ride on horseback, the request was refused, on the ground that he could not grant them a favour which was denied to the other prisoners, and that as he and his men would have to march on foot, they must be content to proceed in the same manner.

A sad procession set forth from Eversden Manor on the early dawn of a bright autumn morning. Each prisoner was conducted by two guards with loaded muskets. Farewells had been spoken, and the order to march was given.

Though no mention has been made of the other prisoners, they had been treated at the manor-house with every kindness and consideration, and had been supplied with means for purchasing provisions on the way, as well as on their arrival. Mr Battiscombe rode a short distance beyond the Hall with his sons. Upon his return home, Mr Battiscombe said that he had left the party marching on in tolerably good spirits, not believing, from the numbers already executed, that many more victims would be required to satisfy the demands of the law. Alas! they were to find that they were terribly mistaken.

Chapter Eleven.

The assize at Dorchester was opened on the 3rd of September. Jeffreys had already passed through Hampshire, and succeeded in Winchester in pronouncing sentence on the Lady Lisle for harbouring two fugitives from Sedgemoor. He condemned her to be burnt alive that very afternoon, but, happily, the excessive barbarity moved the feelings of the clergy of the cathedral, who induced him to put off the execution; and though every effort was made to obtain her pardon, the utmost that was gained was that her sentence should be commuted from burning to being beheaded. She was put to death on a scaffold in the market-place of Winchester, and underwent her fate with serene courage. At Dorchester more than three hundred prisoners were to be tried. The court was hung with scarlet, an indication of the bloody purpose of the Chief Justice. It would seem that the work would require a long time to get through. Jeffreys, to make it light, let it be understood that the only chance to obtain a pardon or respite was to plead guilty. On the following morning he attended Divine service at Saint Mary's Church. When the clergyman, in his sermon, spoke of mercy, Jeffreys was observed to laugh,—an omen of coming vengeance. The sermon over, the Judge, attended by many of the principal gentry of Dorset, Somerset, and Devon, entered the Great Hall. Without loss of time he commenced his charge to the Grand Jury in a tone of voice and language which astonished and alarmed all

who heard it. He warned them that their business was to make most strict inquiries not only after principals but after aiders and abettors, the fact being that many of the jury had sheltered refugees, thus making them accessory to high treason after the fact. As not only weeks but months might have been consumed had the ordinary process been proceeded with, to avoid this the Judge adopted a plan to shorten the business, and to procure a confession, without which not a tenth part would have been legally proved guilty. Two officers, such was his plan, were sent into the jail to call over and take the names of the prisoners; they were to promise pardon or execution. If the prisoners confessed, they were told that they might expect mercy, otherwise not; and as many were induced to accept the proffered mercy, these officers were in a condition to appear as witnesses of their confession. The first thirty, however, mistrusting the cruel Judge, preferred the chances of an ordinary trial. This was on Saturday. The same evening Jeffreys signed a warrant to hang thirteen on the following Monday, which was punctually performed. Nearly the whole of the remainder were executed. Witnesses were brow-beaten in a most fearful manner. Jeffreys thundered at them, using the most abusive language; but the scenes which took place are too horrible, too disgraceful, to be dwelt on. No less than two hundred and ninety-two persons received sentence of death at Dorchester alone. Among them were the two Battiscombes; they had nothing to plead, except that they had taken up arms under the firm belief that they were fighting for the defence of the Protestant faith against Popery. Very many others were in the same case. Mr Battiscombe did not venture to plead for his sons, for he might himself have been seized and condemned by the unjust Judge, while he was utterly powerless to assist them openly. The health of the Colonel did not allow him to leave home, or, interested as he was in the fate of his young friends, he would have gone to try and help them. Mr Willoughby, however, who was dauntless in a good cause, offered to attend the assize to be ready to take advantage of any opening which might occur. As he listened, however, to the language of the Judge, who looked more like a drunken madman than a minister of justice, he was in despair; he exerted himself to ascertain the places and time of execution of the different prisoners. He found that Andrew, together with Colonel Holmes, Dr Temple—the Duke's physician—Mr Tyler, who had read the Declaration, were to be executed at Lyme, near the spot where the Duke of Monmouth had landed, about half a mile west of the town. It gave him slight hope that Stephen might escape; but he in vain endeavoured to see him or to ascertain what was to be his fate. He was returning from the Court to his inn, when he saw before him a slight female figure in a riding-dress; it was Alice.

"Oh, uncle Willoughby!" she exclaimed, taking his hand; "do not blame me; while there is life there is hope. I cannot let Stephen perish without endeavouring to save him; I should never forgive myself."

"I cannot blame you, Alice," said Mr Willoughby. "How are you going to proceed? What means have you at your disposal?"

"I know that I can promise any sum that Mr Battiscombe has it in his power to pay, and I propose seeing the Judge himself," said Alice. "I will tell him that the death of one brother is sufficient to appease the demands of justice."

"But I fear, Alice, that he will say both are equally guilty," observed Mr Willoughby. "And you must be prepared for a refusal. Still, I would not hinder you from seeing the Judge, terrible as he is in his manner and appearance."

"I have thought over everything," answered Alice, "and resolved to brave the lion in his den. He condemned the elder brother to death, and he may be induced to suppose that the younger was led to join the Duke by his influence."

"I fear much, Alice, that he will be influenced by no other consideration beyond the amount you can offer him," said Mr Willoughby.

Strong in the justice of her cause, and prompted by her devotion to Stephen, in spite of the savage nature of the Judge, her aim was to see him before he entered the Court; for she heard that once there, inflamed and excited by his drams of spirits, and by his remarks to prisoners, witnesses, counsel, and jury, she was less likely to induce him to listen to her petition, or to understand its object. She had therefore to remain all night in an agony of doubt and fear in a room next to Mr Willoughby's. She awoke at early dawn from hearing a noise in the street, and, looking out of her window, the first figure she recognised was that of Andrew Battiscombe; there were two other gentlemen whom she knew by having seen them in court, and who she heard were condemned to death. Her eye ranged over the others, in dread lest Stephen might be seen; but he was not there. She felt relieved, and yet she knew how he must be grieving for the loss of his brother. She hurriedly dressed, in the hopes of being able to say a few words of comfort to poor Andrew, to hear from him of his parting with his brother, also to tell him of her intention of having an interview with the Judge. Scarcely, however, had she reached the street than the mournful procession, guarded by a strong band of soldiers, was ordered to march on. She would have rushed forward to speak to Andrew, as others were doing to their friends and relatives, but the soldiers closed round them, and kept every one off. She returned to her room to finish her toilet, so that she might be prepared to set out with Mr Willoughby as soon as it was likely that the Judge would have risen. Mr Willoughby was soon ready, and as it was understood the Judge breakfasted early, she was eager to start. She had nerved herself up for the encounter, fully prepared for whatever might be said to her. She had heard of the language Jeffreys was accustomed to use towards people of all classes, and she did not suppose her sex and youth would enable her to escape. She was glad, however, to lean on Mr Willoughby's arm as they approached the house where the Chief Justice had taken up his quarters. Alice had a letter ready, requesting to see him on an important matter. In a short time the servant, to whom she had given the letter, appeared and said that the Chief Justice would see her. Mr Willoughby thought it prudent to remain in the court below. He knew that, should he go in with her, unpleasant questions would be asked, and he would probably be branded as a Puritan, and perhaps sent off to prison to undergo his trial. Alice, without trembling, followed her guide and was ushered into a large room, at the further end of which sat the Chief Justice before a plentifully-spread breakfast-table. His eyes were ferrety, his nose and cheeks fiery red, his countenance even in rest had a savage expression.

"Well, young woman, who are you, and what do you want?" he asked in a gruff tone.

"Please, my lord, I am grand-daughter of a Cavalier who died fighting for his king; my father was a loyal gentleman, and I have been brought up by my guardian, Colonel Tregellen, an old Cavalier. I have had no sympathy with the late Duke of Monmouth, and yet I come to plead for the life of one who has been implicated in his rebellion."

"Some crop-eared knave with whom thou hast fallen in love, wench," growled the Chief Justice. "Out on thee, for an idle baggage!"

"I come to plead for the life of my betrothed husband," said Alice. "And, my lord, there are those who value him for his honesty and other good qualities, and are ready to pay as large a sum of money as they can collect, to obtain his pardon, and I am authorised to hand it over to your Lordship, that you may do with it as you think fit."

Jeffrey's eyes sparkled as he turned them towards Alice. "What is the name of this precious youth, thy betrothed husband, wench? I warrant he thinks thou art worth living for."

"Stephen Battiscombe," answered Alice.

"Why, he is one I yesterday sentenced to death; he should have been hung by this time, so you are too late, wench."

"Please you, my lord, it was his elder brother, Andrew Battiscombe," said Alice. "Were he even more criminal than he is, surely the death of one in the family is sufficient to satisfy the ends of justice."

"I would stamp out the whole brood of vipers, could I catch them," said Jeffreys.

Poor Alice felt her heart sink, but she was not to be defeated.

"Whatever his crime, my lord, the sum I am authorised to place in your Lordship's hands, on receiving his pardon, will, I hope, condone it."

"Ho, ho," said the Chief Justice, eyeing the notes and rolls of gold; then, turning to a list he had by his side: "I see he is condemned to be hung, and should have been strung up with his brother this afternoon. To pardon him is impossible. All I can do is to commute his sentence, and condemn him to be sent as a slave to the West Indies. There, do not be weeping, wench. You have obtained your lover's life, at a cheap rate too. If you care for him you will rejoice. You have saved him for a trumpery thousand pounds."

"But can he not be pardoned, can he not be pardoned, my lord?" exclaimed Alice, clasping her hands. "To be banished to the West Indies as a slave is a terrible punishment."

"We can hang him instead," said Jeffreys.

"Then, will you give me a paper stating that his sentence is commuted?"

"You doubt my word, wench? Well, you shall have it to satisfy your incredulity," and he wrote a few lines. "Stephen Battiscombe, sentenced to death, punishment commuted to ten years' slavery in Jamaica."

Alice could scarcely refrain from giving a cry of dismay as she saw this. "Could he not be sent to Virginia?" she asked.

"Could you not go out and join him there?" exclaimed the Judge, tauntingly. "If you are not content with having saved your crop-eared lover's life, you shall have his dead body by to-morrow morning, wench, and I will order him to be hung forthwith."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Alice, clasping her hands. "Let him live—in your clemency let him live!" and, scarcely waiting to pay a formal farewell to the Judge, she hastened out to rejoin Mr Willoughby. He had in the meantime discovered the prison where Stephen was confined. It was not a place into which Alice could have entered alone, but she was able to accompany him. Together they sought out the officer who had charge of the prisoners, and presented the document which the Judge had given to Alice, to prevent the risk of any mistake being made. The man looked well pleased. "A live prisoner is worth ten dead ones, and you may depend on it we will not hang him if we can help it."

Alice had hoped to have been allowed to see Stephen, to communicate to him the fact that his life had been spared. This the jailer said was impossible, though he promised to do so as soon as he could. Alice remained another day with her kind friend Mr Willoughby, and at length succeeded in obtaining an interview. Stephen had heard the change in his fate. "While there is life there is hope," he said. "I may reach Jamaica; when there, I may succeed in obtaining my liberation, and happier days may be in store for England, and I may be able to return without let or hindrance."

Alice was equally hopeful, and they parted, she having the satisfaction of believing that she had contributed to save Stephen's life.

The Colonel received her with a look of approbation as she arrived. "You have acted like a brave girl," he said. "I trust that we shall welcome Stephen back again some day, though."

The Colonel tried to keep up Alice's spirits, and did not tell her of the cruel execution which had taken place at Lyme a few days before, when twelve gentlemen, all of education and high character, were put to death, including poor Andrew Battiscombe.

The fate of those who were transported was still more cruel. They were indiscriminately sold to West India merchants, planters, and others, who shipped them off crowded together in small vessels to Jamaica. Stephen, with upwards of eight hundred poor wretches, who had been condemned to be sold as slaves by Jeffreys, arrived in London, having been carried there in carts. Here they were awarded to the various noblemen, courtiers, and others who had applied for them, who sold them for the sum of ten pounds each. Few of them were of the rank of gentlemen—nearly all Monmouth's officers having been executed, with the exception of such as could pay heavy fines for their lives. Lord Grey, Ferguson, Wade, and other leading men were allowed to live, the former paying forty thousand pounds to the Lord Treasurer, and smaller sums to other courtiers, for their lives. In London the slaves met many of the followers of Argyll, who had, like them, been condemned to the West Indies. Stephen, with about sixty

others, was shipped on board a small vessel, the *Surge*, Captain Hawkins, which, with seven other vessels freighted in the same way, set sail together from the Thames. Never a sadder fleet left the shores of England. The unhappy passengers knew that they were never likely to see those shores again; they had been torn from their families, their relatives and friends, and were going to a pestiferous climate, to be employed in the open air under a burning sun, like the negroes from Africa,—a climate which, under such circumstances, is sure to prove fatal to Europeans. Stephen, notwithstanding what he had gone through, was in tolerable health, and he did his utmost to keep up his spirits. Scarcely was the fleet free of the Channel than, a heavy gale springing up, the *Surge* was separated from her consorts, and proceeded on her voyage alone. The passengers were secured together below like African slaves, on a deck extending nearly fore and aft, with low benches on which they could sit, a bar running behind it with iron rings to which they were chained. Here they were compelled to sleep and take their meals, a few only being allowed on deck at a time. Stephen contrived to make himself known to the Captain, who listened with interest to the account of his adventures in Africa, and allowed him more liberty than the rest. The *Surge* had not made much progress when she encountered another gale, in which she received much damage. A heavy sea came sweeping over her deck.

“Hold on for your lives,” shouted the Captain. When the sea had passed, the second mate and two other men had disappeared; they were seen for an instant struggling in the waves astern. There was no hope of saving them; indeed, it seemed but too likely that the *Surge* herself would ere long founder. The pumps were manned, but the crew were soon knocked up. Stephen proposed to the Captain to liberate the slaves, in order to get them to work the pumps, and explain to them that unless they did so, the vessel would sink, and they would lose their lives. To this they agreed, Stephen setting them the example. Many of them, who had suffered greatly from the voyage, were unequal to the task, and sank down exhausted. The crew, who had no intention again of working the pumps themselves, endeavoured to stir them up. Several declared their inability to labour, and proved it by dying shortly afterwards on the deck where they lay. Stephen, however, urged the stronger ones to persevere explaining to them that they were working for the common good. The leak continued, and though by keeping the pumps going the water did not gain on the ship, it was found impossible to discover it, and it was evident that only by the greatest exertions they could hope to reach their port. A fever, however, of a malignant character broke out among the unhappy passengers as soon as they got into warm latitudes. No surgeon had been sent on board. First one died, then another, and another. Stephen suggested to Captain Hawkins various means for remedying the malady by fumigating the vessel. Nothing seemed to have the slightest effect on those once stricken. Before long two of the crew were attacked, and died. The weather again became calm, and the leak with considerable exertion was kept under, but the fever did not abate. The death-ship sailed on, losing sometimes three or four of her crew or passengers daily. The Captain had asked Stephen to take charge of a watch, and he now enjoyed perfect liberty, and took possession of the cabin of the second mate, who had been lost overboard. Should the death-rate continue there would be few left on board when the vessel arrived at Jamaica, even should the fair wind and fine weather continue. The first mate did not appear to be much of a navigator, and on the fever attacking the crew as well as the passengers, he lost all heart. Stephen did his best to doctor him, but before long he also succumbed, and the *Surge* was left with a very limited crew.

Captain Hawkins was a stout-hearted man, and kept up his courage. He asked Stephen to select some of the passengers to assist him in working the ship. It was Stephen’s afternoon watch, when he saw heavy clouds gathering in the west. They came on rapidly, while the sea below them was broken up into a mass of foam. He immediately sent and summoned the Captain, and ordered sail to be shortened. Short-handed as the *Surge* was through the loss of so many of her crew, this was done but slowly. The Captain, who had quickly come on deck, and Stephen exerted themselves to the utmost, while they tried to obtain the assistance of some of the passengers; but those not labouring at the pumps were unable to be of much use. Before all the canvas could be reduced the hurricane struck her abeam. Had she been under her usual sail she would have been sent completely over and have foundered. As it was, she heeled before the blast. The next instant two loud crashes came; she rose on an even keel, but her masts were gone. The Captain and Stephen summoned all hands to clear away the wreck before the butt-ends of the masts should stave in the vessel with the tremendous thumps they were giving against the side. Axes were found, shrouds and other ropes which held fast the masts were speedily cut. Still the hapless vessel lay in the trough of the sea, the waves dashing against her sides, and threatening to sweep everything overboard. The great object now was to get a sail rigged on the stump of the foremast and put her before the wind. When the masts fell several people had been injured, the Captain among them. At first he made light of it. Now that he wished to exert himself more than ever, he was unable to do so. He called for a chair, and sat aft, giving his directions. Stephen had to take everything upon himself. The men obeyed him willingly. While he and the party were working forward, the sea came rolling up and struck the vessel amidships. They held on for their lives. The sea washed right aft, carrying everything before it. When it had disappeared, Stephen looked for the Captain, who was nowhere to be seen, nor were any of those who were standing in that part of the deck; the helmsman among them was gone. Another hand was sent to the helm, the sail, which had been got ready, hoisted, and the vessel put before the wind. Stephen now found himself in command of the *Surge*, but from her condition he had very little hope of ever arriving at a port. To go to Jamaica was not to be thought of, as he should be delivering his companions, and possibly himself, into slavery. He resolved, therefore, if he could save the *Surge*, to carry her to one of the New England settlements, where he and his companions would be received as friends; indeed, all those who had escaped from Sedgemoor had probably already arrived there, and would welcome him with open arms. The number of the passengers and crew were, however, sadly reduced. Of the former, scarcely twenty remained alive, while of the crew only six were fit for duty—not a single officer, the boatswain having succumbed to the fever. Stephen picked out two of the best men to act as mates, though neither of them could take an observation. When he informed the passengers of his intention of steering for New England, as soon as the hurricane should be over, they all willingly undertook to aid him to the utmost. Of late the vessel did not leak as much as before; something had apparently got into the opening which prevented the water entering. This tended to keep up the spirits of the storm-tossed party. Still they were in a very desperate condition. They could hope to get up only very imperfect jury-masts, and then, even should they obtain a favourable wind, they would be a long time in reaching a New England port. With their reduced numbers, and their provisions and water, they hoped to hold out, if all hands were at once put on an allowance. Stephen determined to see to this matter as soon as the gale was over. Still the fever continued among them. One of the crew and two more of the passengers died the day after the loss of the Captain. Poor fellows! it seemed a hard thing, in the prospect of liberty, thus to be summoned away

after all they had gone through. Stephen had kept the deck nearly two days without once going below, having his food brought to him. At length, worn out with fatigue, he was compelled to seek an hour or two's rest in the cabin to enable him to continue his work. How long he had closed his eyes he could not tell, when he felt that the ship hove on her beam ends. He rushed up on deck, and shouted to the crew. No voices replied. It was very dark, but he made out that the jury-mast had been carried away, and the vessel lay in the trough of the sea. He went to the helm. The rudder had been injured, if not carried away; scarcely any of the bulwarks remained. The *Surge* lay a complete wreck amid the wild raging waters. Another sea had apparently swept the deck and carried away every one within its power. As he went below to ascertain if any of the crew survived, cries and groans of the terrified passengers met his ears. He had little or no hope to offer them. Going forward, he could not discover one of the crew. He aroused the passengers, and urged them to turn to at the pumps. They might keep the vessel afloat till the morning, and then build a raft, or perchance a sail might heave in sight and rescue them. Few, however, were able to labour efficiently. It seemed a wonder to Stephen that his own strength had been kept up, when he saw stout fellows, accustomed to wield the scythe and flail, reduced to mere skeletons. The morning came, the *Surge* still floated, but to build a raft seemed beyond the power of those on board. They wanted both strength and skill. Stephen urged them to try, however. Collecting all the spars and planks to be found, he commenced to work, showing them as far as he was able what to do. The wind had fallen, the sea was going down, or they could not possibly have made even the attempt. The ship, too, had risen more on an even keel than before. It seemed very doubtful whether she would exist much longer above water. The hours went slowly by. The poor fellows laboured as hard as they could. First one dropped, then another, some from fever, others from fatigue. The *Surge* had been kept afloat during the day. Another night was approaching; nothing could be done during it; even seamen could have scarcely worked in the dark. Stephen, as he went below to kneel in prayer, as was his wont, did not expect to see the sun rise again over the waste of waters.

Chapter Twelve.

We must now return to our hero, Roger Willoughby, who had fortunately, from having joined Captain Benbow, been prevented from being drawn in by Stephen to serve the cause of Monmouth. The *Ruby*, after relieving Stephen and his companions, continued her course down channel. Roger earnestly hoped that his friend would be favoured with fine weather, and would reach a Dutch port in safety. The *Ruby*, on her course down the English Channel, then ran some way up the Irish Channel, according to the orders her Captain had received, but she fell in with no vessels or boats containing persons whom he considered himself bound to look upon as rebels. He boarded several vessels with passengers bound out to the New England States, where they said they were going to settle. Some had their families, and, of course, they could not be considered as rebels, while the greater number, who were of all ranks—gentlemen, well-to-do yeomen, and labourers—were single men; but as there was nothing to prove that they had been supporters of Monmouth, whatever the Captain might have suspected, he resolved to give them the benefit of the doubt, and would not detain them. Thus a good many escaped who would have tended to swell the victims of the Bloody Assize, of which the Captain, to his great indignation, heard when sending occasionally on shore. The *Ruby*, having remained the time she had been directed on the west coast, returned to Portsmouth, where she waited for orders. Seldom in those days could a ship's company be allowed on shore without the risk of losing a number of men, but so completely had Benbow ingratiated himself with his crew, that when their leave was up they all returned on board.

Roger, meantime, was daily gaining nautical skill and knowledge. Liking more and more the profession he had chosen, he had won the regard and esteem of his Captain, who promised as soon as possible to obtain for him a lieutenant's commission. Roger had several messmates, with all of whom he got on very well, though some of them were jealous of the favour he received from the Captain. His chief friend was Charles Ross, a lad somewhat younger than himself, who had come to sea with Captain Benbow for the first time. He was a little fellow, light-hearted, merry, and full of fun, though he had his serious moments, which showed that he was not as thoughtless as many would have supposed. He and Roger were much together. Roger was always ready to impart to him the knowledge which he himself possessed, and especially to teach him navigation. Another messmate, who was generally known as Old Dick Kemp, had been a ship's-boy, but had been placed on the quarter-deck for his good behaviour and gallantry during the last Dutch war, for saving the lives of two shipmates, for behaving with great courage during a heavy gale on a lee shore, when the ship on board which he served narrowly escaped being cast away. Since then, however, Dick Kemp had not risen above the rank of master's mate, having no friends to plead for his promotion. Captain Benbow appreciated him as being a true tarpaulin, on whom he could rely at all times, which was more than he would have said for his lieutenants, who were young gentlemen of family sent to sea for the first time with that rank. Not having gone through the inferior grades of the profession of navigation, they knew nothing, and looked upon it as beneath their notice, while they were only slowly learning the art of seamanship, and could only manage to put a ship about with the aid of Dick Kemp, Roger Willoughby, or one of the other tarpaulins or true sailors. Such was the way ships were manned in those days.

It is true that many of the shore-going young gentlemen who strutted about in silk doublets, feathers in their hats, and jewelled swords by their sides, fought bravely enough. When they found themselves in the presence of an enemy, they could ably superintend the working of the guns, which they looked upon as their principal avocation; or when boarders had to be repelled, or a boarding-party led, they were generally found fighting bravely at the head of their men. Since Charles the Second, however, made peace with the Dutch, the navy of England had seen no fighting except a few engagements with Algerine or Sallee rovers.

Benbow's lieutenants soon learned to respect him. He always treated them as gentlemen, though he did not pretend to say that they were sailors. On the contrary, he drew a marked distinction between the gentlemen officers and the tarpaulins, giving the preference undoubtedly to the latter. The *Ruby* remained so long at Portsmouth that Roger had time to write home, and also to receive a reply. He now heard for the first time of Stephen's capture, and of his narrow escape from death through the exertions of Alice.

"Bless her!" he exclaimed. "She was always a true girl, and I knew that, should occasion require, she would prove a

real heroine. Fancy her bearding that monster Jeffreys, and winning her cause, though I am afraid he will suffer fearfully, and be sent out to the West Indies; but he got accustomed to a hot climate in Africa, and will stand it better than most people; but poor Andrew! sad to think that he should have lost his life, after so nearly escaping. I wish I could have been on shore to help them, though I do not know that I could have done much; but I do know that I would have run every risk. I would have insisted on their making their escape when they were shut up at Eversden. I am sure that my uncle and Madam Pauline would not have found fault with me."

All he could learn of Stephen was that he sailed a short time before with many hundred slaves from the Thames bound out to the West Indies. His father, who wrote, told him of the hapless Maids of Taunton, who had presented the banners to the Duke of Monmouth, being sold to the Queen and the Maids of Honour, who were making what money they could out of their parents and friends; but one poor little girl had died from fright at being so roughly addressed by Jeffreys. Many thousand pounds had been obtained by the courtiers to whom the slaves had been awarded, while the King had managed to get his share of profit out of the rebellion. These details, which were pretty well known on board, did not tend to increase the loyalty of the officers and seamen of the *Ruby*. The Captain himself, as became him, expressed no opinion, but Dick Kemp did not conceal his sentiments on the subject. Though he did not venture to say that he wished Monmouth had succeeded, he expressed his opinion that the King and his courtiers were as vile a set of ragamuffins as ever sat in high places, and that the Queen and Maids of Honour were well worthy of them.

At length the *Ruby* had orders to proceed to the West Indies to look after certain piratical craft, under the leadership of a daring Frenchman, who were infesting those seas.

"It is just the part of the world I want to go to," cried Roger. "I have heard a great deal of the beautiful scenery, of their strange trees, curious productions of all sorts, and if we touch at Jamaica, which we are sure to do, I will make inquiries for my old friend Stephen Battiscombe; if I can hear anything of him, I will do my utmost to redeem him."

"I will help you," said Charlie Ross.

"So will I," said Dick Kemp. "I should not be surprised that the Captain would exert himself, since as you say he sailed with him."

With a fair breeze the *Ruby* sailed down Channel, carrying the fine weather some way into the Atlantic and then encountered a heavy gale; but her hull was tight, and her Captain had seen that she was well fitted, having carefully inspected her masts and spars, and every standing and running rope of her rigging before they were set up and rove. Escaping from the gale without damage, she ran into southern latitudes. She had a fair breeze. One day, with all sail set below and aloft, carrying her along at the rate of seven or eight knots an hour, Dick Kemp, Charlie, and Roger were on deck together, when, as they were looking over the side, they observed a dark triangular object cutting rapidly through the water.

"Hilloa! what is that curious thing?" asked Charlie.

"That is the fin of Jack Shark," said Kemp, "the vilest brute that exists; the hated foe of us sailors. I don't know how many fine fellows he has not grabbed by the leg, and gobbled up."

"I wish that I had a gun, I would shoot him," said Charlie, "and he would do no more mischief; but unfortunately he has plenty of brothers and sisters like him; as soon as he sees the gun he will be off like a shot."

"I will borrow a musket, and see if I cannot hit him," cried Roger. Roger was not long in getting the gun, while Kemp, hurrying forward, obtained a piece of rancid pork, which he fastened to the end of a line.

"Now, Roger, look out," he said, as he threw the pork overboard, and Roger held his gun in readiness. Presently the fin disappeared; a white glistening object rose to the surface; off went Roger's musket.

"I hit him, I am sure," cried Roger, as the shark sank.

"I think you did, and right through the head. I saw a tinge of red, but it went in a moment," said Kemp. "We have settled the brute, and I wish we could settle every other that comes alongside. We will keep the pork, and if we can find a hook, we will have the next on board."

On sailed the ship. The Captain, however, coming on deck, observed indications of a change, and ordered canvas to be reduced. Roger's duty required him to remain on deck; Charlie Ross ran up with the two other midshipmen to the foreyard to superintend the operation of taking in a reef. Roger was looking forward when he observed an object fall from the yard; at the same time a cry burst forth from the throats of several of the crew, "A man overboard!" As Roger ran to the side he had seen Charlie Ross on the yard-arm, but he was not there now, and as the person floated by he felt sure that he was his friend. Without recollecting the shark they had seen in the morning, without thinking of any danger to himself, his ardent desire being to save his friend, he plunged overboard. Charlie had struck the water on his side, and was apparently senseless, for he made no attempt to save himself; but still he floated. The ship running fast at the time, and only part of the sails having been furled, Roger heard the Captain give the order to heave her to, as he struck out towards his friend, whom he reached just as he appeared on the point of sinking. At that moment Charlie's consciousness had returned.

"Never fear, you are all right," cried Roger. "Let me put my arms under you, and do not attempt to swim till you are better. I will tread water, and easily keep you and myself up."

"Where am I?" asked Charlie, in a very faint voice.

"Somewhere out in the middle of the Atlantic," said Roger, in a cheerful tone. "But the ship's not far off, and help will come to us as soon as a boat can be lowered; she's rounding-to, though she had so much way on her that she shot

somewhat far ahead."

Charlie was slowly recovering his senses, and did as he desired; but when Roger looked up, the ship seemed a long long way off; not till then did the thought of sharks occur to him. Though he had fortunately shot the one which had been following the ship, there might be many others. He, however, did not let this idea damp his courage, but kept treading water with might and main, and singing out at the top of his voice, as if he were hailing his shipmates, and urging them to come faster to his assistance. At length he saw a boat lowered, and pulling towards them, but she was still far away; the thought of the abominable sharks would come back. As Charlie was recovering, he told him to sing out, and at the same time to splash with his feet. "Just to keep away the cramps, Charlie," he said; for he did not wish to frighten him with the thought of the sharks. He looked round, and fancied he saw a dark fin in the distance, but he might, he knew, be mistaken. The boat drew nearer, the crew were giving way with all their might. Old Dick Kemp was steering her, standing up to observe the spot where the two lads were floating. Between her and them Roger observed that dark fin. "I hope that Dick will see it too, and if he has a musket in the boat, will try to hit it." Roger forgot, if he did, that the bullet would very likely strike them. He shouted and splashed, and bade Charlie do the same, till he was nearly exhausted. The fin disappeared; perhaps the brute had been frightened away; he hoped so, but it did not make him relax in his efforts. It is our best chance to keep the monster off, he thought; he could scarcely have struck out five minutes longer, when the boat got up.

"Take him on board first," he cried, pushing forward Charlie.

"We will have both of you together," said Kemp. Scarcely was he in the boat when a white glistening object appeared, and its huge mouth gaped wide, half leaping out of the water. It got many a blow from the seamen's oars; this had, however, no other effect than making it plunge down and make the water with its tail flip over them.

"Now, lads, pull back as fast as you can," cried old Kemp. "We must put the boys under the doctor's care as soon as possible. You are a brave fellow, Roger; I always thought so, now I know it; and the Captain will say so too. I only wish that I were in your place."

The Scotch doctor, Macpherson, who knew that his services would be required, was standing ready to order the lads to be carried to the sick bay.

"I do not think there is much the matter with me," said Roger; but his trembling knees and pale face showed that he required care, while Charlie had scarcely yet recovered from the blow he had experienced on falling into the water. The gale seemed to have hung, back till Charlie and his gallant preserver were safe on board,—the ship was under snug canvas, and rode it out well. Roger was a whole day getting round. When he appeared on deck he was warmly praised by the Captain, and he received the compliments of the other officers, even the gentlemen lieutenants.

"Faith," said the honourable Lieutenant Delamere, "it is more than I could have done if I had expected to be made Lord High Admiral forthwith for doing it."

"It seemed to me," said Roger, "that it was just the thing to be done, and so I did it."

"You tarpaulins are accustomed to the water; it is an advantage you have over us," remarked the lieutenant.

The *Ruby* remained hove-to under storm canvas for five days, when, the weather moderating, she once more made sail and stood on her course. She had been running on for several days, the wind had fallen to a light breeze, and the sea was smooth; it was soon after down. Charlie Ross, who was one of the midshipmen of the watch, was stationed on the topgallant forecastle. He had been looking out for some time when he was joined by Roger.

"There is something away there on the starboard bow which puzzles me," he said. "It looks like the body of a huge whale."

"It is either that or the hull of a dismantled vessel," observed Roger. "I think it the latter. You should have reported it to the officer of the watch. I will go and do so."

Dick Kemp had charge of the deck, for the lieutenants in those days, unless they were tarpaulins or brought up in the service, did not perform that duty. Kemp came forward with his spy-glass, and soon pronounced the object seen to be—as Roger supposed—the hull of a dismantled vessel. He at once sent below to obtain permission from the Captain to steer towards it.

"Though she looks in a fearfully battered condition, there may still be people on board, and we must try to rescue them," he observed.

As the *Ruby* drew nearer a man could be seen on the deck holding on to a part of the shattered bulwarks and waving a flag.

"There is one man on board at all events," observed Kemp; "there may be more. Willoughby, do you get a boat ready to lower, and I will let the Captain know that it is time to heave-to."



"THE BOAT WAS QUICKLY ALONGSIDE THE STRANGER, AND ROGER SCRAMBLED ON BOARD."

Captain Benbow just then made his appearance, and at once issued the order to bring the ship to the wind. The boat was quickly alongside the stranger, a rope was thrown over the side by the man who had been seen waving the flag, and Roger scrambled on board. He and two other men were on foot, weak, and pale, and reduced almost to skeletons, while more lay about the deck unable to raise themselves.

"We are dying of hunger and thirst," exclaimed the stranger, who appeared to be an officer. "For two days not a particle of food have we eaten, nor has a drop of water moistened our lips; for mercy's sake bring us some at once."

"The quickest way would be to take you to our ship," said Roger, and he ordered his men to come up to carry the sufferers into the boat. While he was speaking, it struck him, in spite of his pale cadaverous countenance and emaciated appearance, that the officer was his old friend Stephen Battiscombe; yet he did not like to ask him, for, if Stephen Battiscombe, he was a convict, and might desire to remain unknown. He treated him therefore as a stranger when the *Ruby's* men came to assist the officer.

"No, no," he said, "take the remnant of my crew first, and then those poor fellows who are passengers. I have endured hunger this far, and can hold out a little longer, while I do not think the vessel will go to the bottom just yet."

Roger directed that the two seamen should be lifted into the boat, and the two passengers; promising to return immediately for the remainder, he pulled back to the ship as speedily as his crew could urge their oars. On the way, he asked the two seamen who the person was who had waved the flag.

"He was the mate of our vessel," answered one of the men.

"What is his name?" inquired Roger, eagerly.

"Simon Bates, I fancy," replied the other; "but we always called him mate."

As he came alongside he sang out, "Half a beaker of water and some biscuit, or any food to be found."

The water and some food were handed into the boat; and the moment the people he had brought were hoisted up on deck, he made his way back for the remainder.

"Come along now, Mr Bates," he said, addressing the officer; "it is all right. The men say you are mate of this vessel."

Before taking the perishing people into the boat, Roger offered them some water and food. The water was eagerly drunk, but one of the poor sufferers was too far gone to swallow the food. Still, as there was life in him, Roger hoped that the doctor might bring him round.

"There are some more below, though I fear they are past help," said the mate, in a low voice, for he was but just able to speak.

Roger descended into the cabin. There lay two more persons, but on lifting their hands he saw at once they were dead. In a berth on one side was another who seemed to retain some sparks of life, but he was too far gone to speak. Roger immediately sang out for some food and water, which was handed down to him. He administered a little to the sufferer in the hopes that he might be revived sufficiently to be carried on deck. Though he drank the water eagerly, just as he placed the food between his lips a deep sigh escaped him, his jaw dropped, and he was dead. No other persons being found alive below, Roger, with those he had rescued, shoved off from the sinking wreck, and from her appearance he judged she would not keep afloat many hours longer.

When he had given an account of what had occurred on board, Captain Benbow inquired if he knew the name of the

mate.

"The men call him Simon Bates, sir," answered Roger.

"Then let him be entered by that name among those saved from the wreck," said the Captain. "And who are the other people?" he asked.

"They are passengers, sir," said Roger. "The ship's papers show that she was bound out from London to Jamaica."

"There is nothing, I suppose, to show who the passengers are?" said the Captain.

"I could discover no paper, sir," answered Roger.

The people were soon brought on board, and placed under the care of the doctor, who attended to them assiduously. Just as sail was made, Roger, who was on deck, observed the bow of the craft from which the people had been rescued rise slightly in the water, then down she went, stern first, and nothing was seen on the spot where she had floated, her hull being the coffin of the rest of her passengers.

After some time Captain Benbow summoned Roger, to learn what he could make out respecting the passengers. "With regard to the two seamen and the officer, the matter is clear enough," he said. "They say that he belonged to their vessel, and by his coolness and bravery saved their lives, so that if he likes to enter on board the *Ruby* he shall be welcome to do so. I cannot give the seamen their choice when they recover. They will prove to be stout fellows I hope, and will be as well off with us as anywhere else; but with regard to the passengers the matter is doubtful. I fear that they are slaves destined to be sold to the planters of Jamaica, but I cannot bear the thought of handing them over to so cruel a fate. Do you, Willoughby, speak to the men. If any of them have served at sea the matter will be more easy, as I can then enter them among the crew of the *Ruby*. It will be far better for them than labouring in the plantations of Jamaica."

"Ay, ay," answered Roger, clearly understanding the drift of the Captain's remarks. He first visited the mate and the two seamen, and told them that if they chose to volunteer, the Captain would receive them on board the *Ruby*.

"With all my heart," said the mate, in a low voice, taking Roger's hand and pressing it. "Does he suspect who I am, for I am very sure that you know me?"

"What he suspects I don't know, but he asks no questions," answered Roger; "and whoever you are, you will enter under the name the man gave you—Simon Bates."

"Thank you, Roger, thank you," said the mate. "I little expected such good fortune; but the poor passengers! What is to be done with them?"

"If they have served at sea, the Captain will allow them to enter on board the *Ruby*," said Roger.

"Yes, that they have, and very useful they made themselves; indeed, without them the vessel must have gone down," said the mate. "From what I saw of them, I should say they have the making of good seamen in them when they regain their health and strength."

"That is all right," said Roger. "I will speak to the men, and advise them to choose names under which they can enter."

He found them, however, scarcely sufficiently recovered to understand him, much less to say anything, so that there was no hurry. He left them under the care of the doctor and his assistants. The crew of the *Ruby* were chiefly west-country folk, and even had it been known on board that the rescued people were slaves condemned for joining Monmouth's rebellion, they would have gained the sympathy of those on board, with the exception, perhaps, of the gentlemen lieutenants and a few others. Nearly a week passed before the mate was able to leave his hammock. The Captain, on seeing him, beckoned him to approach.

"I understand," he said, "that you have served long at sea, and I shall be glad, as I doubt not you will prove yourself worthy of it, to place you on the quarter-deck. Your men, I understand, have entered as of the people you were carrying out as passengers. We shall, I hope, have opportunities in which you can distinguish yourself and make your name well known."

"Thank you, sir, I am grateful to you," said Simon Bates, of whose identity there could be no doubt, now that he had so much recovered, and was dressed in a becoming costume, obtained for him by Roger. "I will do my best, as you suggest, sir, to make the name of Simon Bates well known."

A couple of weeks after this the *Ruby* entered Port Royal, in Jamaica. As she was not to remain long, none of the crew were allowed to go on shore. A certain portion seemed to have no wish to do so; although Simon Bates might have walked the streets of Kingston with impunity, there was a risk that he might be recognised by some traitor and denounced. He therefore thought it prudent to remain on board.

Chapter Thirteen.

At the time the *Ruby* reached Port Royal harbour the merchants at Kingston were constantly receiving accounts of depredations committed on their vessels by a piratical squadron under the command of a Frenchman. They could obtain no exact information as to the size or number of the pirate ships; they were generally supposed to be small craft. They allowed none of those they captured to escape, and either sent the merchantmen to the bottom, and

made their crews walk the plank, or carried them off to the then little-known islands of the Bahama group. On the merchants making application to Captain Benbow, he willingly undertook to go in search of the pirate fleet, and forthwith got his ship ready for sea. He also purchased a couple of large boats, partly decked over and suited for those seas, fitted with sails and long oars, so that they could move rapidly both in a calm and in a breeze. He would willingly also have obtained a tender, but he could find no vessel suited for the purpose in the harbour. All preparations being made, the *Ruby* sailed at daylight with a land breeze, and soon had run the white forts and batteries surrounding Kingston out of sight, though the Blue Mountains, rising high above them, were visible long afterwards.

"I am thankful that we are clear out of the place," observed Roger to his friend Simon Bates, with whom he seemed to have a great deal to talk about when no one else was near. "I was never quite at my ease, fearing that some of the inquisitive authorities might have come on board."

"I have been so wonderfully preserved that I entertained no fears on the subject," answered Bates. "My great wish now is to fall in with these pirates and to take an active part in their capture."

"We will keep a bright look-out for them at all events," said Roger; "and if we can lay any of them aboard, I am sure you will do your part, and the Captain has every wish to give you an opportunity of distinguishing yourself."

The *Ruby* had, however, been a week at sea without the pirates being seen. Roger and Bates were always on the look-out. They were afraid that they might have got an inkling of the *Ruby's* whereabouts, and were keeping out of her way. She at last stood round the northern side of Jamaica, and the next day fell in with an English merchantman, the master of which reported that he had been chased by several strange sail; but, his vessel being a fast one, by setting all the canvas he could carry, he had made his escape. He reported that they were far from small craft; two or three were good-sized frigates, and the rest were of a considerable burden.

"So much the better," said Captain Benbow. "It will induce them to attack us; we must do our best to send them to the bottom one after the other."

The merchantman having proceeded on her course to the west, the *Ruby* continued standing on to the westward. It was Roger's morning watch; the wind had been light during the latter part of the night. Soon after dawn broke the look-out shouted, "Two sail on the starboard bow." Roger ran aloft to have a look at them. They were frigates, as far as he could judge at the distance they were off, and he hoped might prove to be part of the pirate squadron. Watching the strangers narrowly, he observed a third vessel,—then a fourth, some way farther off. This left him little doubt that they formed part of the piratical squadron of which the *Ruby* was in search. Having satisfied himself on this point, he came below and went to inform the Captain, who was quickly on deck.

"I am in great hopes that you are right, Willoughby," he said, after he had taken a survey of the strangers. "We will make the *Ruby* look as much like a merchantman as possible, and perhaps draw them down upon us."

This was easily done in a light wind; the vessel's course was changed to the northward, the yards were irregularly braced. The strangers, whether they suspected the ruse or not, stood on, expecting, if they were pirates, probably to gain an easy victory over the lumbering merchantman. Captain Benbow now ordered his ship to be got ready for action; and, collecting his crew aft, told them that they were likely to have a pretty sharp encounter, and that much depended on the way they worked their guns and trimmed sails, as he might direct them. Three large vessels were seen approaching, while two more appeared in the distance; they were evidently not aware of the character of the *Ruby*, or they would have come on in very different fashion. It appeared as if the object of each of them was to be the first to get up to pillage her before the arrival of her consorts. When, however, the leading frigate got almost within range, it seemed to strike her captain that the *Ruby* was not altogether like a heavy merchantman. Instead of coming on, she suddenly hauled her tacks aboard and stood back towards her consorts. The *Ruby* on this made all sail in chase; the frigate, however, was a fast craft and kept well ahead. As they saw the *Ruby* coming, the strangers in succession hauled to the wind and steered to the westward, the frigate which had been leading making signals to the rest, till all five were collected together. At first they appeared as if they intended to try and make their escape, and Roger had begun to fear that they would get off altogether.

"Hurrah!" he cried out at length to Bates, "they intend to come up to the scratch after all;" and he pointed to the strangers, which had now formed in two divisions, the two larger frigates in one, the third and two smaller vessels in another. As they carried together more than twice as many guns as the *Ruby*, they might have had a fair hope of gaining the victory. Captain Benbow, on seeing this, steered for the two frigates. As soon as he came within range of the leading one, he opened the whole of his starboard broadside on her; then, standing on, regardless of her shot, which came whizzing on board, he gave the second frigate a similar dose. Meantime the three vessels of the second division, standing towards the *Ruby*, commenced firing at her. The fight now became fast and furious; the pirates, for such there could be no doubt they were, though they had showed no flags, keeping on the *Ruby's* quarters, poured in a galling fire on her. Several of her men were killed, and others wounded; but her crew, labouring actively at her guns, ran them in and out, loading and firing with wonderful rapidity, effecting no small damage on their assailants. At length the pirates gave signs of having had the worst of it; the two smaller vessels once more hauled their tacks on board and stood away to the westward, and one of the frigates soon followed their example.

"Now, lads, we must capture one or two of the remainder," cried Benbow; and steering for the leading vessel, he poured a well-directed broadside into her. The second frigate, trying to support her consort, was severely punished, her deck being strewn with the dead and wounded. She now set all sail, and stood out of the fight, leaving her consort to her fate. Still the pirate fought desperately, frequently firing high, in the hopes of knocking away some of the *Ruby's* spars and reducing her to her own condition; but no great damage was done, and the *Ruby*, now sailing round and round the frigate, reduced her to a complete wreck. At length a man was seen to spring aft with a white flag, which he waved above his head, and then threw down on the deck as a token of surrender. The *Ruby* standing close to her, Captain Benbow ordered her to heave-to, and then, doing the same, lowered three boats with armed

crews, sending Roger in command of one, Kemp of another, and Bates of a third.

"Remember that these pirates are treacherous fellows," he observed. "Secure them as quickly as possible, and look to the magazines."

The decks, as the British seamen clambered up the side, presented a fearful spectacle, covered as they were with dead and wounded, many dying without any attempt having been made to render them assistance. The rigging hung in festoons, the canvas shot through and through, yards and blocks scattered about the deck.

"Where is your captain?" asked Roger.

"We have no captain; he was killed early in the action," answered one of the men.

"And your officers?"

"They are all killed. We fought as long as one remained alive."

As several bodies looked like those of officers, Roger thought that this was probably the case. He and his companions, however, had first to obey the Captain's orders and to secure the crew. They sulkily submitted to have their arms lashed behind them, and were ordered, as soon as this operation was performed, to stand on one side of the deck under charge of four of the seamen with loaded muskets, while Roger and Kemp took one party of their men forward to search for any of the crew who might have concealed themselves. Bates conducted another down below in the afterpart of the ship. He had just reached the Captain's cabin when he detected a smell of brimstone. He rushed towards the spot from whence it proceeded, and discovered a slow match leading towards the principal magazine. Some of his men showed an inclination to rush up on deck.

"Come back, cowards!" he exclaimed. "We must put this out;" and, dashing forward, he cut the match for some way before the part which was burning, upon which setting his foot, he quickly stamped it out, crying to his men at the same time to cut the other end. It evidently had been a long time burning, and was probably ignited by one of the officers since killed. Ordering some buckets of water to be brought below, he searched round in the neighbourhood of the other magazine. An attempt had evidently been made to fire this one also, but the match had providentially gone out. The victors and vanquished would otherwise probably have been blown up together. Several pirates were discovered concealed in the after part of the ship. Roger did his best to ascertain if any of them were officers, but without success. As the pirate's boats were knocked to pieces, Captain Benbow made a signal that one of the *Ruby's* should remain on board, while the other returned with as many prisoners as they could carry. As he was eager to go in chase of the piratical squadron, Kemp was directed also to return, leaving Roger in command of the prize, with Bates as his lieutenant. They forthwith loaded the two boats with the prisoners, but still a considerable number remained.

"We can keep these fellows under, I should hope," said Roger to his messmate; "but it will be necessary to have a watchful eye on them. If they can work us any mischief they are sure to do it."

As soon as the two boats got alongside the *Ruby*, she made sail in the direction that the pirates had taken, while Roger set to work to repair some of the damage the prize had received, so that she might be in a fit state to encounter a strong breeze, should one spring up. He had been directed, having done this, to steer a certain course for Port Royal, Captain Benbow intending to follow and accompany her in with another prize or two. Roger collected all the remaining pirates in the hold, with their arms and legs lashed, three sentries with loaded muskets being placed over them. These were all he could spare, as the rest of his crew were required to get the ship into order. He and Bates exerted themselves to the utmost. Bates was now assisting in knotting and splicing, now hurrying below to see that the sentries were vigilant. He had looked to the priming of the pistols which he carried in his belt, and kept his sword by his side. He had from the first expressed his regret that so many prisoners had been left on board.

"I know the tricks of these fellows," he remarked. "They are capable of freeing themselves from fetters, and they make nothing of slipping out of rope lashings, however apparently secure."

"Well, let us get the yards across, and fresh sails bent, and the rigging set up, and we shall have more hands at liberty to watch them," said Roger.

Working away, they took a frequent look at the *Ruby*, till she had run them out of sight. Short-handed as they were, much remained to be done. When the sun set, and darkness covered the ocean, the sea remained calm, so that the prize floated motionless. No sail had yet been set, as the crew, of course, after their exertions, required rest. Roger therefore divided the men into two watches, he taking charge of one and Bates of the other. Bates begged to take the first watch of serving, that Roger and his men might then, after rest, be more wide-awake to watch the pirates.

The prize had drifted considerably nearer the Cuba coast than when she had been captured. Bates, who was vigilant on every point, kept continually going below, while he turned his eye frequently towards the distant land. The watch was nearly out when, as he listened, he fancied he heard the sound of oars in the water. He well knew the sort of characters who inhabited the quays scattered about on that part of the coast of Cuba, and that if they had discovered the condition of the vessel they might have seen before sunset, they would be very likely to come out and try to capture her. He at once, therefore, sent down to call Roger, who was on deck in a moment.

"We must be prepared, at all events," said Roger; and, the other watch being called, such of the pirate's guns as remained undamaged were loaded and run out. The necessary preparations for the defence were quickly made. In a short time the sound of approaching boats became more clearly audible. Roger was of opinion that there were three of them, each pulling a good number of oars.

"We must not stand on any ceremony," observed Roger. "They are certain not to be coming with any good

intentions, and the sooner we send them to the right-about the better. We will therefore fire at them as soon as we can see them clearly enough to take a steady aim." He gave the orders to his crew. Bates meantime had gone below to have a look at the prisoners; he found them considerably excited; they had overheard the remarks of the seamen, and knew that boats were approaching. They were probably too well aware of the character their crews. Bates had turned his lantern round on all the prisoners, and they appeared to be fast bound as before. He charged the sentries, however, to be very vigilant, suggesting to them that their lives would be the first to be sacrificed should the prisoners break loose. He then returned on deck, just in time to assist in firing the guns, as the strange boats came in sight. The guns must have been well aimed, for they could hear two of the shots strike, shrieks and cries rising from the boats, telling that several had been wounded. The third, however, came on, when Bates, who had carefully trained his gun, fired; almost the instant afterwards she had disappeared; the shot had gone through her. Crowded with men she must have sunk immediately. Whether any were saved it was impossible to say.

"They brought their fate upon themselves," observed Roger. "We have to thank you, Bates, for discovering their approach, and for settling them afterwards."

The other two boats had disappeared in the darkness, evidently finding that they had caught a Tartar, making their way as fast as they could to the shore. The British raised a hearty cheer; before the joyous ring had died away, shouts and cries rose from the hold, from whence a couple of shots were heard.

"Follow me, lads!" cried Bates, and he sprang below, taking care to carry a lantern which he had left in readiness. Nearly all the pirates had by some unaccountable means broken loose. He fired his pistols at two who appeared to be the most active, then drawing his sword rushed among the crowd. One of the sentries had been killed, but the others were defending themselves, after firing, with the butt-ends of their muskets.

"Down, all of you, or not one of you shall be allowed to live," Bates shouted, in a voice which awed the pirates; for almost immediately they ceased struggling, and those who were trying to release their companions gave up the attempt. Several had been unable to free themselves. Had they succeeded in getting on deck, while the crew were engaged with the boats, a number of the British seamen might have been killed, even if the pirates had not ultimately gained their object.

"You have saved us a second time this night, Bates," said Roger. "I must take care that Captain Benbow knows how you have behaved."

In the struggle it was found that no less than five pirates had been killed; but still there were enough remaining to make it necessary to be as vigilant as ever. The moment daylight returned Roger and Bates again set to work with their crew to repair damages. At length they managed to make sufficient sail, a light breeze springing up, to send the vessel through the water at a good rate. As they were so far to the westward, they had been directed, should the wind be suitable, to go round the east end of Jamaica. They therefore hoped with a favourable breeze to get into Port Royal in five or six days. It was an anxious time, however, for both of the young officers. The prize had been sorely battered, and as she heeled over the water rushed in through numerous shot-holes which had only been imperfectly plugged. They did their best to remedy this, but had to keep the crew at the pumps for the best part of both watches. Roger proposed making the prisoners work at the pumps, but Bates thought the risk too great for the advantage they would have gained. Desperate fellows as they were, the pirates might suddenly rise, and with handspikes, or any weapons they could get hold of, attack them.

"We must keep all weapons out of their way, and tell them that we will shoot them through the head without scruple should they make any attempt of the sort," answered Roger.

The crew, to whom the idea of making the prisoners work had occurred, at the same time asked why half a dozen should not be brought on deck and set to at the pumps? Bates, against his better judgment, consented. Six were accordingly brought up in order to turn to. They sulkily obeyed, but the boatswain's mate, who acted as boatswain, stood by with the cat in hand ready to keep them at their work, while the same number of men remained on guard, armed with pistols and muskets, ready to shoot any who should show the slightest sign of mutiny. This kept the first gang in good order. Then, having laboured till they could labour no longer, they were exchanged for another party. By this means the crew were greatly relieved, and leisure was given to them to stop the leaks. At night all were confined below. At length Morant Point, at the east end of Jamaica, was sighted, and, the breeze being favourable, the prize ran along the southern side of the island till she came off the palisades that formed the southern side of Kingston harbour. They had to wait till the sea-breeze set in, then with flying sheets ran through the entrance and brought up off Port Royal. When it was known that the prize was a pirate captured by Captain Benbow, numbers came off to see her, and congratulated Roger and Bates on their success. Roger took care that it should be known what essential service his messmate had rendered in preserving the vessel, declaring that he believed without him they would have been retaken. Among the visitors on board were several merchants and planters, who expressed their thanks to Mr Bates.

"The capture of this vessel will make some amends for the loss of a shipload of slaves, fellows sent out in consequence of having joined Monmouth's rebellion," said one of them. "I had a list forwarded to me. I expected to get a good deal of work out of the fellows before Yellow Jack carried them off."

"I should like to see it," said Mr Bates. "Perhaps she is the vessel, the wreck of which we fell in with, nearly all her crew and passengers having died."

The merchants promised to bring it off, and in the list Mr Bates read the name of Stephen Battiscombe. He returned it, remarking, "I have little doubt that your slaves have all long since gained their liberty by the only means they expected—death. We will do our best to capture the remainder of the pirates to make amends to you for your loss."

Roger was glad to get rid of his prisoners, who were handed over to the authorities; he also obtained hands from Port

Royal to refit the prize with all despatch, knowing that Captain Benbow would certainly employ her as the tender to the *Ruby*, to assist him in his search for the piratical squadron, should he have failed to catch them. Several days passed, and, the *Ruby* not appearing, Roger began to fear that some accident might have happened to her. At length, to his great satisfaction, the canvas of a large ship was seen over the palisades, and the *Ruby* made her signal. The sea-breeze soon afterwards setting in, she entered the harbour, and brought up near the prize. Roger immediately went on board. Captain Benbow had waited, he said, in vain for the pirates; they had run in among the Bahama Islands, and hid themselves away, while it was impossible to follow them without experienced pilots, who were not to be found.

"We must wait therefore another opportunity of discovering them," he observed. "In the meantime we will refit the prize, to the command of which I intend to appoint you, Willoughby, with Bates as your lieutenant. I will send Charlie Ross to assist you, with several fresh hands."

Several weeks passed, for the dockyard people in those days were not very rapid in their movements.

At length a merchant vessel came in, stating that she had been chased off Montego Bay, at the north-west end of the island, by several suspicious-looking craft, but that she had got into that harbour, and remained there till the pirates had disappeared.

"Then the rascals are once more afloat," said Captain Benbow, when he heard of this. "We must go in search of them with the aid of your frigate. I hope we shall capture a few more, if not the whole of them."

No time was lost in getting under way, Captain Benbow's only regret being that he had not a larger number of small craft to ferret the pirates out of their holes. He had, however, the two boats, which were likely to be of use. The prize had been so transmogrified by the dockyard riggers at Port Royal that even her old friends would not have known her.

It should have been said that most of the pirates had been hung at Port Royal, as people in those days thought nothing of stringing up a couple of dozen of human beings at a time without any very strict examination as to their guilt. Two had escaped by turning King's evidence, on condition of their acting as pilots to the squadron in search of their comrades, should they be required to do so.

Captain Benbow considered that he should be most likely to meet with the piratical fleet by sailing to the westward. Accordingly, the *Ruby* and *Pearl* stood in that direction, and, having a fair breeze, in a short time got round the western point, and entered the Channel between Jamaica and Cuba. They had a long cruise, however, without sighting the pirates, or falling in with any vessel which had escaped from them. The Captain began to fear that by some means they had heard of him, and were keeping out of his way. He determined, should he fall in with them, to sink all he could come up with, rather than allow the rest to escape. He had been at sea a month, when not far from the spot where the pirate fleet had before been, he sighted one evening, soon after dark, bright flames ascending from the ocean. Captain Benbow immediately made a signal to Roger to stand on in that direction as fast as sails could carry him, while the *Ruby* followed.

"What do you think those flames come from?" asked Roger of Bates.

"From a burning ship, most probably one set on fire by the pirates," answered Bates. "They little thought we were so near them. We will summon the pilot, Jacques Tronson, and learn what he thinks about the matter. He knows that he is to be shot through the head if he misleads us. Besides which, I think he has seen the error of his ways, and wishes to be honest."

Tronson was summoned, and acknowledged that he considered it the work of his late friends. Probably they were not far off, engaged in stowing away the cargo of the burning ship.

"Then we will try and get up alongside one of them before the *Ruby* appears, and they take to flight," said Roger.

Tronson engaged, so far as he could, to enable them to do this. The *Pearl* stood on. Unfortunately the flames of the burning ship, falling on her white canvas, would betray her approach to the pirates, who at present, however, were not likely to have observed her. Suddenly, as the *Pearl* was about a couple of miles away, the flames were seen to rush upwards, and a loud explosion reached them. She had been blown into the air, and her burning masts and spars were seen coming down like rockets from the sky; then all was total darkness. The *Pearl* passed close to the spot where she had been. Not long after, the look-out, Charlie Ross, who was looking out forward, saw a large ship hove-to on the starboard bow. He hurried aft with the information to Roger. Tronson was summoned to give his opinion. He declared his belief that she was one of the pirate squadron.

"Then we will stand on and hail her. If she does not give a satisfactory answer we will run alongside and compel her to strike. The sound of our guns will soon lead the *Ruby* to the spot," said Roger.

Roger, hoping to take the pirate by surprise, determined to board her, under the expectation that her crew might be either engaged in stowing the cargo of the captured vessel, or carousing after their victory. Bates was to lead the boarders over the quarter, while Charlie Ross was to guard the forecastle to prevent the *Pearl* being boarded in return. He considered it his duty to remain on board to direct operations. The *Pearl* drew nearer and nearer to the stranger. Upon getting close to her, Roger asked what ship she was. An unintelligible answer was returned. Accordingly, firing a double-shotted broadside into the stranger, he ordered the *Pearl* to be run alongside. Grappling-irons were thrown over her bulwarks and into her rigging. At the same moment Bates, leading nearly half the crew, sprang on board. Roger was not out in his calculations. The greater number of the officers and men were below, drinking hard and fast, as Tronson had thought likely. Some sprang to their arms, but many were cut down before they had time to do so. Some cried out for quarter, others fired up the hatchway. The British crew fired down in return. The deck in five minutes was swept clear of every human being. An attempt was made to blow up the ship,

frustrated, happily, by Bates, and in ten minutes he and his handful of men had mastered the whole of the pirate crew. He and they shouted, "Victory! We have got full possession of her."

"Well done, Bates!" cried Roger. "Lash the fellows' arms behind as fast as you can, and send them aboard." Just as he had said this, three sail were seen standing towards them. These were evidently more of the pirates intending to rescue their consort. Roger kept his prize fast, and ordered Bates, as soon as he had secured his prisoners, to work his starboard guns, while he commenced firing from his larboard broadside. There was a great probability of his being overpowered, for they all appeared to be large craft. When the *Ruby* hove in sight the *Pearl's* crew uttered a cheer as they saw her, and she stood on towards their assailants, who, seeing her size, hauled her tacks aboard, and stood away to the north-east. Not to be delayed, the pirates were bundled crop and heel into the boats and conveyed on board the *Ruby*, while Bates, who was told to take command of the new prize, with the *Pearl*, stood in the direction they were supposed to have gone, the *Ruby* steering in the same direction. The pilot was of opinion that they had gone round Cape Maze, at the eastern end of Cuba, and were making for one of the Bahamas, among which they had every prospect of escaping.

"But what do you say, Tronson? Can you pilot us off the harbour where you suppose they have taken refuge?" asked Roger. "You will receive a handsome reward if you bring us in sight of the pirates; whether we take them or not must depend on our own exertions; we do not expect you to enable us to do that, you may be sure."

Tronson did not answer for a minute; at last he said, "Trust me, sir, that I would not assist you to get sight of them, unless I thought you would succeed, as, should I fall into their hands I should be treated in a way I do not like to think about. I know the island well where they have gone to, and I can take you off the mouth of the harbour; but if the big ship accompanies us, we shall have to make a longer course than they have taken, as she cannot cross the Bahama banks. They, however, will not expect us, and if we can manage to reach the island some time after nightfall, we may take them by surprise, if you go in with your boats, and perhaps obtain an easy victory. I will draw you a map of the channel and the harbour, and give you such full directions that I do not think you can miss your way."

Roger was fully satisfied that the plan Tronson proposed was the one to succeed, and was eager for the morning, to lay it before the Commodore. All night long the ship stood on without sighting any vessels ahead. At daylight, the wind having dropped, Roger made a signal to the Commodore that he desired to speak to him, and being ordered in return to come on board the *Ruby*, he lowered his boat and quickly reached her deck. Captain Benbow was well pleased with the plan Roger suggested, which exactly suited his spirit. As soon as they came off the island, the *Ruby's* two large boats were to be lowered, with three other smaller ones, while the *Pearl* and the new prize should each send another. Thus they would have seven boats with well-armed crews, the two larger carrying guns in their bows. As the wind was light, several days were passed before the little squadron got clear of the passage and was able to steer in the direction of the island to which Tronson had agreed to carry them. As so large a number of the crews would be away in the boats, the prisoners were doubly secured, and reminded that they would be instantly shot should they show the slightest sign of insubordination. The weather was fine and sea smooth, though there was sufficient breeze to carry the ships through the water at the rate of five or six knots an hour. Navigation now became very intricate, but Tronson behaved with apparent fidelity, and skilfully piloted them amid the shoals and reefs; without him it was evident that they would have been unable to proceed. Just before darkness came on, he pointed out to Roger an island, or a collection of islands, with a few slight elevations rising blue and indistinct out of the calm water.

"That is the place to which the pirates have gone; if you manage as I advise you, you may trap the whole of them before to-morrow is many hours old."

As the ships could not as yet be seen from the shore, and darkness was fast approaching, the Commodore stood on till, by Tronson's advice, they brought up about a mile from the entrance of the harbour. As all lights were kept concealed, it was hoped that the pirates would not discover them. The crews who had been told off manned the boats, and were eager for the undertaking. Much to their satisfaction, the Commodore had selected only tarpaulins to command them, Kemp having one of the large boats, Roger the other, while Bates had charge of the one belonging to his prize, also of good size; the master, boatswain, and Charlie Ross commanded the other three. Roger and Bates were to lead, the *Ruby's* three smaller boats to follow, and Kemp bring up the rear to assist where most required. An hour before dawn they shoved off. Roger, supposing Tronson had given him correct information, so thoroughly acquainted himself with the passage in the inner lagoon where the pirate vessels were said to lie at anchor, that he expected to have no difficulty in finding his way. The passage was soon gained, and with muffled oars the boats pulled on for a considerable distance; the cliffs formed the side of the channel, and had an enemy been aware of their coming, they would have found it trying work to get through. Not a sound, however, was heard, except when here and there birds rose from among the branches, roused by the appearance of the boats; in other places the shores were covered thickly with trees, the channel now turning in one direction, now in another. At length Roger saw before him a wide lagoon, on the shores of which appeared a few buildings. His attention was occupied chiefly by seeing four vessels anchored almost in the centre; one of them a frigate, the other three of smaller size, but still somewhat formidable craft. Roger determined to attack the frigate, Bates having before agreed to board the same vessel, while the other boats he knew would attack the remainder of the pirate's squadron. That they were the vessels they were in search of there could be no doubt. The pirates, following their usual custom in harbour, had either been carousing on board, or had gone on shore, and, trusting to their secure position, were not even keeping an anchor watch. The British boats were up to them and alongside before the alarm was given; Roger boarded on one quarter, Bates on the bow; but, as they climbed up the side, the pirates came swarming from below. The officers turned out of their cabins, shouting to their men to drive back their assailants. Some ran to the guns, others got hold of their hangers and small-arms. Roger found a strong party collecting to oppose him. Twice he had gained the bulwarks, when he and his men were driven back; the third time, he had gained the bulwarks,



"HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAP DOWN ON DECK WHEN A THRUST OF A PIKE SENT HIM BACK INTO HIS BOAT." [See Page 388.]

and was about to leap down on deck, when a thrust of a pike sent him back wounded into his boat. His men, however, fought their way up the side, and succeeded in gaining a footing, driving back the pirates, who were attempting to defend the after part of the ship. Bates in the meantime had been more successful; he and the whole of his men having got on board, and furiously attacking the pirates had driven them off the forecastle, when with flashing hangers they beat them back aft foot by foot till they were joined by Roger's crew. For some time Bates did not discover Roger's absence; at length he became anxious when he failed to hear his friend's well-known voice. He had no opportunity of asking questions; and shouting to the men of both the boats to keep together, he attacked the pirates, who had rallied on the starboard quarter under their officers, and threatened to make a desperate attack to try and drive back their assailants. Bates, however, shouted to his men to follow, and dashed forward and attacked the officer whom he had discovered to be the leader of the party. Bates was an unusually good swordsman; in a moment the pirate's sword was whirled out of his hand, the second blow stretching him on the deck. Their leader's fall somewhat disconcerted the rest; but they were desperate fellows, and again and again made attempts to break through the British; but several fell, and they had not advanced an inch. In the meantime the great guns from the other vessels were thundering away, and the pistol-shots and the clashing of hangers were heard amidst the cries and shrieks of the combatants. The issue of the contest seemed doubtful even to Bates; for he saw some of the pirates slipping down the after hatchway, and he knew too well that their intention was either to blow up the ship, or to get forward and attack him in the rear. Still, shouting to his men, he made a desperate effort to drive those before him overboard. Just at this juncture he heard a hearty British cheer, and old Kemp's voice shouting: "Come on, come on, my lads; we'll settle the scoundrels in quarter less than no time."

The pirates, seeing this addition to their opponents, began to give way; some cried for quarter, others, panic-stricken, leaped over the sides; several tried to escape below, a few only fighting to the last; but Kemp coming up, they were quickly overpowered, most of them being killed, except those who had asked for quarter.

"Look below!" cried Bates. "They may mean mischief." Kemp, taking the hint, followed those who had disappeared down the hatchway, while Bates and his men secured the prisoners. In a short time old Kemp returned. "Was not a moment too soon to stop these fellows blowing up the ship," he exclaimed. "But the rascals, though they had the mind, wanted the heart to fire the train."

"And where is your captain?" asked Bates of one of the prisoners.

"There he lies," answered the man, pointing to the gaily-dressed person whom Bates had cut down. It was often very difficult to distinguish the officers from the men by their dress; and as far as Bates and Kemp could ascertain, the whole of the former had been killed, they having fought to the last, well knowing, should they be captured, a rope's-end and the yard-arm would be their doom. The moment the last of the prisoners had been secured, Bates anxiously inquired for Roger Willoughby, his mind misgiving him lest he should have been killed. Some of his men answered that the last they had seen of him was falling back into the boat. Bates on this sprang down the side.

"Thank Heaven you won!—hurrah, hurrah!" exclaimed a voice; it was that of Roger, who lay at the bottom, unable to move owing to his wound.

"I am thankful, my dear fellow, that you are alive; we must have you up on deck and look to your hurts," said Bates.

"Let them be looked to here," said Roger. "I do not think they are very bad. Lend me a hand-kerchief to bind up this scratch in my side, and send a hand down here to place me in a more comfortable position than I am in at present."

Bates, having attended to his friend, had to return on board, while he sent a couple of men, who had been accustomed to look after the sick, down to assist him. In the meantime the three other vessels had been captured in succession by the boats of the squadron, Kemp having assisted with his crew in overpowering them. The next question was the possibility of carrying them out, as a proof to the merchants of Jamaica that the pirate horde had

been destroyed. The chief difficulty was to effectually secure the prisoners. Old Kemp suggested that the shortest way would be to hang them up at once, or shoot them, but to this Bates would not agree.

"No, no; they are human beings, and it is our duty to give them time for repentance," he answered. "We must carry them to Jamaica, and leave them to be dealt with according to law."

They were therefore all brought on board the frigate and secured in the hold, with a strong guard placed over them.

"Now," observed Kemp, "at all events we will burn down their storehouses on shore, so that not a trace may be left of the pirates' stronghold."

Three of the boats, under the command of Charlie Ross, were accordingly sent to effect this; and in a few minutes flames were seen bursting up from various points along the shore, the buildings, owing to the combustible materials which they contained, burning furiously: not one remained standing. When Ross returned, he acknowledged that he had fallen in with a number of women and children, but as he had not the heart to injure them,—he had received no orders to do so,—he had allowed them to escape up the country. Roger had by this time recovered sufficiently to be lifted on board, and desired to be carried forward to assist in piloting out the vessels. Sail was immediately made on all the ships, the frigate leading, with the boats keeping ahead in readiness to tow her round should there come a squall of wind. They stood out towards the entrance of the harbour, intricate as was the passage; and though it seemed on two or three occasions that the frigate must drive on shore, yet she escaped clear, and the whole squadron got through in safety and stood towards the *Ruby* and her consorts. She and they were seen preparing for action, Captain Benbow evidently fearing that his boats had been overpowered, and that the pirates were coming out to attack him. The British flag run up at the peak soon pleasantly undeceived him, and the hearty cheers which rose from the decks of the prizes, replied to from the scanty crews of the *Ruby* and *Pearl*, showed him that his gallant fellows had gained the victory. Old Kemp at once returned to the *Ruby* to receive the Captain's orders, and signal was soon afterwards made for Bates to come on board. Captain Benbow, shaking him by the hand in the presence of all the officers and crew, complimented him highly on the gallant way in which he had captured the pirate frigate, and assured him that it would be a great satisfaction to recommend him for immediate promotion. Roger had in the meantime been conveyed on board, to be attended to by the surgeon, with several other men who had been wounded, though, strange to say, desperately as the pirates had fought, not one of the British crew had been killed. Bates took charge of the *Pearl*, and old Kemp of the largest of the prizes, while other officers were appointed to the remainder, Charlie Ross among them. The whole squadron, piloted by Tronson, who had gained high credit for his faithfulness, made sail for Jamaica. Each carried the British ensign, and a certain number of prisoners on board. They arrived in safety, and were greeted by salvos of artillery from the forts, flags flying from all the redoubts on shore, and ships in the harbour. The merchants declared that a most important action had been performed, as at one blow the most powerful collection of pirates in those seas had been annihilated. The officers were received on shore and treated with festivities of all sorts. Next to the Commodore, Captain Simon Bates—as he was now called, being commander of a frigate—received the most honour. Being often on shore, he made inquiries about the unfortunate ship sent out some years before on account of Monmouth's rebellion, and he could hear of very few survivors. Several had succumbed to the climate, and others had been sent to the different estates in the interior, of whom he could gain no further tidings. He was the means, however, of rescuing his old acquaintance, Simon Stubbs, and helping two or three others. Simon's owner was very unwilling to part with him, and Bates had to pay a large amount to obtain his liberty. Although the exploit which has been described was among the most important performed at that period, Captain Benbow and his subordinates employed themselves in putting down piracy for the remainder of their stay in the West Indies.

At length, to the infinite satisfaction of the British crews, the order was received to return home.

Chapter Fourteen.

Commodore Benbow's squadron met with tolerably severe weather on its passage to Old England. Not that the Commodore was much given to think about foul weather or fine; blow high or blow low, it was all the same to him; but as the gales were from the eastward, the squadron was considerably delayed, and at length, being in want of water, the Commodore put into Plymouth. Among the first who went on shore was Simon Bates, who was anxious once more to visit his native land. Roger Willoughby accompanied him.

"I congratulate you, my dear fellow," said Roger, "on being once more a free man, with no one to suspect, except your own immediate relatives, the errant Captain Bates."

They heard a great deal of talking going round, people speaking in an excited manner, and just then arrived at an inn, from the sign-board of which the countenance of the Prince of Orange was portrayed. They instantly made inquiries.

"Have you not heard? On the 5th of November last the Dutch William, sailing from Holland with a fleet of six hundred vessels, landed at Brixham, and marched with an army of cavalry, artillery, and infantry on to Exeter, while he has since been joined by numerous noblemen and gentlemen of influence."

"This is indeed glorious news!" exclaimed Captain Bates, or rather Stephen Battiscombe.

"Yes, it is a very different affair from the landing of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth and his handful of men," answered his friend. "This time we shall gain the victory, and drive James Stuart from his throne."

The Governor of Plymouth had sent word to the Prince that the garrison he commanded, and most of the inhabitants of the city, were ready to join him. The Prince was advancing towards London.

The captains returned to their ships, and Benbow resolved to remain on board his vessel till he could ascertain what side the rest of the fleet were likely to take. On his saying that he would sail eastward to look after the British fleet in the Medway, the men of all the ships came aft to their respective captains.

"We were forced aboard these ships you see, Captain," said the principal speaker, "but we did not come to fight for King James. We came to serve our country, and now we find that there is a good chance of our getting a Protestant King. We have made up our minds to join him, whatever the rest of the fleet may do."

"I am not the man to say you nay," answered Stephen Battiscombe. "I obtained my liberty without having to thank King James for it, and I am bound, therefore, neither by honour nor principle to serve him. Moreover, I am pretty confident that such will be the principles exhibited by the remainder of the fleet."

Captain Benbow replied that his object was the same as that of his men,—to serve his country.

They had not long to wait. On the 11th of December the reign of James ended, when he secretly left Whitehall, throwing his signet-ring into the Thames. That of William and Mary commenced on the 13th February, on which day they accepted the crown of England. Now, neither Benbow nor Roger hesitated to offer his allegiance to William and Mary. Battiscombe had long been anxious to go home and comfort his father, and he easily obtained leave from the Commodore to take his frigate round to Lyme, and Roger obtained leave to go with him. With joyous hearts they made sail. Roger led in the *Pearl*, and Stephen followed. From the fact of his having kept to his adopted name, Mr Battiscombe was not aware of his arrival, though the Colonel and Mr Willoughby were eagerly looking out for Roger. They hired horses at Lyme, and set off, accompanied by Charlie Ross. The day was advancing when they came in sight of the Manor House. As they got near the house, they saw a young lady walking at a brisk pace along the road, for the evening was cold. She first gazed at Roger, and then at Charlie, who was a tall fair youth, very like what Stephen had been. Turning round, she sprang towards him, recognising in a moment her betrothed lover, still loved by her. Throwing himself from his horse, their hands were clasped, and it was some minutes before she thought of greeting her old playmate, Roger Willoughby.

"It is but natural," he answered. "And right glad I am to bring honest Stephen back to you, and I am sure the Colonel will be as glad as my father."

Roger was not mistaken. A hearty greeting was given them by Madam Pauline.

His duty to his father compelled Stephen, however, to set off for Langton Hall sooner than he otherwise would have wished. Roger declared that he must go with him. It was a mournful yet a joyous meeting: mournful, as it recalled the death of poor Andrew; and joyful, not only as he came back a free man, but having gained credit, honour, and a considerable amount of prize-money. Stephen had no wish to continue in the navy, for Captain Benbow had impressed upon him the fact that, if he did, he must make his ship his wife, and he cherished the hope that he might ere long recompense Alice, as far as he had the power, for her long and devoted attachment to him. He had obtained permission from the Commodore to leave his ship under the command of Charlie Ross. He knew that she would be well looked after during his absence.

Among the captains who remained faithful to James was Captain Benbow, although his crew, as well as those of most others, desired at once to join William of Orange; but as soon as William and Mary had been declared Sovereigns of England, he and many others, to the great satisfaction of their crews, sailed up the Thames to offer their allegiance. Shortly after this, Stephen and Roger received a summons from their old captain to come up to London. They had there the honour of being introduced to the King, who complimented them on their gallantry, and confirmed them both in their rank, at he did also with others who had followed Benbow, while he himself was permanently made a Commodore. Stephen, however, thanking His Majesty for his kindness, begged leave to retire from the service, while expressing his desire at the same time to serve him on shore in whatever capacity the King might think fit to employ him.

Roger returned with Stephen to the country, and was best man at his marriage with Mistress Alice.

Roger stuck to his ship, and took an active part afterwards in the relief of Derry. There was soon plenty to do, as the French at once declared war against England, with the intention of replacing James Stuart on the throne,—an event by God's Providence happily prevented. There was one short adventure which took place early in Roger's career that reminded him of his first meeting with an individual who afterwards gained a name and fame in history. He was standing up channel in the *Pearl*, when he fell in with a ship which mounted thirty-six guns. Hoisting the British colours, he soon made out her number as the *Nonsuch*. She had two other ships in tow, apparently her prizes, and both considerably damaged. A signal was made for assistance, and the *Pearl* being hove-to, Roger went on board. He found that she had been commanded by Captain Coyle, who had engaged two French ships off the island of Guernsey, one mounting thirty, the other twenty-two guns, the first being commanded by Captain Jean Bart and the other by Forbin. Captain Coyle and the master, both brave officers, had been killed early in the action, and there being no lieutenants on board, the command devolved on the boatswain, Robert Simcock, who continued the fight. The two French captains, who were very much out of spirits at being made prisoners, were on board, and complained bitterly of the way in which they were treated. Roger, introducing himself, spoke to Mr Simcock, and invited his old acquaintance to come on board his ship, and accompany him to Plymouth, to which port they were bound. Captain Bart willingly agreed, provided his friend Captain Forbin had the same advantage. "For, to tell the truth," he said, "our captor, though a very gallant fellow, does not quite understand how to treat gentlemen."

They were not long in reaching Plymouth, when the Governor and other officials received the two French captains with all courtesy, but, of course, had to watch them carefully, and at night they and the doctor of one of their ships were imprisoned in a strong room with iron-barred windows. Of course Simcock was highly applauded for his gallantry. Directly the news was received at the Admiralty, he was made a captain, and appointed to the command of the ship in which he had so bravely fought. Meantime the two gallant French captains were supposed to be safely

shut up in prison, though treated all the time with every consideration. On the morning they were to have been carried up to London, it was found that the whole of the trapped birds had escaped, with exception of the stout lieutenant, who had a wounded leg, but had been so fast asleep that he had not the slightest conception of what had occurred.

“We shall meet again, my friend, some day,” said Commodore Benbow when he heard of it.

They did meet, for the Commodore was employed for several years afterwards in blockading Dunkerque. The Frenchman frequently, notwithstanding, managed to get out, and commit no small amount of damage on English shipping; in truth, he fully merited the name he obtained among his countrymen.

Benbow, now an Admiral, was frequently sent to the West Indies, when he beat the enemy, and did much for English commerce. He set out on his last expedition in September 1701, accompanied by his old and faithful follower, Roger Willoughby. The manner in which several of his captains cowardly betrayed him when he had the French in his power, is too well known to be repeated. The French Admiral, Du Casse, though fully expecting to be captured, for he was well aware of the cause, wrote to Admiral Benbow a pithy letter, saying that he had indeed thought that night to have supped in the Englishman’s cabin, but as he had escaped through the cowardice of some of his enemy’s captains, he advised him to hang them up forthwith. The Admiral, being badly wounded during the fierce engagement which took place, directed himself to be placed in a cradle while he remained on deck directing the operations till the battle was over, when the fleet returned to Jamaica. Roger Willoughby remained by his beloved chief during the court-martial which sat upon the pusillanimous captains, and for a month afterwards, when the Admiral sank under his wounds. After the Admiral’s death, Roger Willoughby returned to England, and among the first items of news he heard was that the brave French Admiral, who had been born the same day as Benbow, had also paid the debt of Nature. After this he served his country nobly for several years, when at length, returning to Eversden Manor, he took up his abode there, his father and uncle being dead, and Madam Pauline, who had a life-interest in it, being its sole occupant.

Although the times of Benbow present subjects of great interest to those who are fond of historical tales, the author has been unable to do more than introduce a few of those he intended when he designed the work. He hopes, notwithstanding, that his readers will not find it less interesting than its many predecessors.

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