Title: The Rival Crusoes

Author: William Henry Giles Kingston

Release date: October 17, 2007 [eBook #23071]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Nick Hodson of London, England

W.H.G. Kingston

"The Rival Crusoes"

Preface.

The title of the following tale was given to a short story written by the well-known authoress, Agnes Strickland, more than half a century ago, when she was about eighteen years old. I well remember the intense delight with which I read it in my boyhood, and was lately surprised to find that it had been so long out of print. The publishers, however, consider that the work, esteemed as it was in former years, is, from the style and the very natural mistakes of a young lady discernible with regard to matters nautical, scarcely suited to the taste of the present day. They therefore requested me to re-write it, believing that the subject might be worked into a deeply interesting story of much larger proportions than the original. This I have endeavoured to accomplish, and I trust that the new version of "The Rival Crusoes" may become as popular among the present generation as its predecessor was with the last.

W.H.G. Kingston.

Chapter One.

At Keyhaven—In dangerous company—The old smuggler—A frigate after battle—Dislike of Ben for the Royal Navy—An unexpected landing—Overbearing conduct of the midshipmen—Angry words—Lord Reginald Oswald—Toady Voules—At the village inn—Old messmates—Temptation—Susan Rudall's anxious life—An adventure on the way to Elverston—Home at last—Reception at the hall.

"I tell you what, Dick, if I was Farmer Hargrave I would not turn out to please Lord Elverston or any other lord in the land," exclaimed Ben Rudall, as he stood hammering away at the side of his boat, which lay drawn up on the inner end of Hurst beach, near the little harbour of Keyhaven, on the Hampshire coast, at the western entrance of the Solent, opposite the Isle of Wight. His dress and weather-beaten countenance, as well as the work he was engaged on, showed that he was a seafaring man.

"But Mr Gooch the bailiff says there is a flaw, as he calls it, in the lease; but what that means I don't know, except that it's not all right, and that father must turn out, whether he likes it or not," answered Dick Hargrave, who was standing near, and occasionally giving Ben a helping hand. He was a lad about sixteen years of age, strongly built, with a good-looking face, exhibiting a firm and determined expression. His dress was more that of a landsman than of a sailor, though it partook of both.

"Flaw or no flaw, I say again, I would hold on fast to the farm, unless I was turned out by force. Your father, Dick, is worth ten of such lords, or a hundred, for that matter. He has held that farm since his father's time. His father and grandfather and great-grandfather, and I don't know how many before them, have held it. And right honest people they were. They never thought of interfering with us seafaring men, and would as soon turn spies to the French as give notice to the revenue when a cargo was to be run. If they guessed that any kegs of spirits, or packages of silks or ribbons, were stowed away in one of their barns, they took good care not to be prying about too closely until they knew that the goods had been started off for London."

"My father always wished to live at peace with his neighbours, and would not injure a smuggler more than any other man who did not interfere with him, though I believe he has never received a keg of brandy or a piece of silk for any service he may have done the smugglers," said Dick.

"You're right there, my lad," said Ben. "I mind once offering your good mother a few yards of stuff to make her a Sunday gown, and, would you believe it? she would not take them. When I just hinted that I should leave them behind me, she was quite offended, and declared that if I did she would speak to your father and have the outhouses kept closed, and that it would be our own fault if some day all our goods were seized. She shut me up, I can tell you.

Yes, she is a good woman, and as kind and charitable to the poor as any lady in the land. To my fancy she is a lady just as much as Lord Elverston's wife. I mind when he was only Squire Oswald. Because he kept hounds and was in Parliament, and came into a heap of money, he got made a lord, and then a marquis, and now he is setting his face against all us seafaring men hereabouts, and vows that he must uphold the revenue laws, and put a stop to smuggling."

"I have no cause to care for the Marquis of Elverston or his sons either, for often when I have passed them and touched my hat, as in decent manners I was bound to do, they have looked at me as if I was a beggar-boy asking for a ha'penny. The young one especially—Lord Reginald—I had words with him one day, when he swore at me for not picking up his whip which he had let drop out riding; and at another time, when I was fishing in the lake at Elverston, he ordered me to be off, because I was catching more than he was—though father has always had the right of fishing there. He came up, with his fists doubled; but I threatened to knock him into the water if he laid hands on me, and he thought better of it. I was right glad when he went off to sea, where I hope he will have learned better manners."

"He will have learned to become a greater bully than ever," growled Ben. "I have heard enough about king's ships, and catch me setting foot on board one. I'd sooner be sent to Botany Bay, or spend a year in prison, which I did once, when I was taken running a cargo down Portland way with a dozen other fine fellows. Many of them accepted the offer to go on board a man-of-war; and where are they now? Three or four shot or drowned; the rest have never come back, though whether dead or alive I cannot tell. No, no, Dick; don't you ever go on board a man-of-war of your own free will, or you'll repent it; and, I say, keep clear of pressgangs when you get a little older, or you may be having to go, whether you like it or no."

"I'll take your advice," answered the young farmer, for such Dick might properly have been called, though he had besides, being an ingenious fellow, picked up a good knowledge of carpentering and boat-building; "but what I was going to say just now was that, although the marquis and his sons may not be liked, no one can utter a word against my lady and her daughters. They always smile and nod kindly like when one passes. When my sister Janet was ill last year, they came to the farm, and asked after her just as if she had been one of themselves, talking so sweet and gentle. If it wasn't for them, I don't think father would dream of giving in, as he does now."

"Give in? He mustn't do that!" exclaimed Ben. "Their talking and smiling may be all very fine, but I know what that's worth."

"You are wrong there, Ben; I couldn't speak a word against them. But, I say, do you think we can finish the boat in time to get off and catch some fish this evening? I want to take home a couple of bass or whiting pout for Janet. She likes them better than anything else. Poor girl! it's only fish and such light things she can eat. She's very ill, I fear, though she talks as if she was going to be about soon; but the doctor tells mother he has no hope of her ever being well again."

"That will be a sore pity, for, blind though she is, there's not a prettier maiden to be found throughout the forest," answered Ben. "I'll do my best to serve you, Dick; but there's two hours' more work to be done before we can get the craft afloat." Ben surveyed the boat from stem to stern as he spoke, and then continued boring holes and driving nails as diligently as before.

While he was thus employed, Dick, who was looking towards the Isle of Wight, exclaimed, "See, Ben, see, what a fine ship yonder is, just come in at the Needles!"

The fisherman, clenching the nail he had just driven in, turned his eyes in the direction to which Dick pointed. "She's only a frigate, though a good big one," he remarked. "She's not long since been in action, too, with the enemy. Look at her topsails and top-gallant sails; they are pretty well riddled. I can count wellnigh a score of shot-holes in them; and her side, too, shows the hard knocks she has been getting. Just run to the top of the beach, and see if any other ships are following. Maybe the fleet has had a brush with the enemy, and yonder frigate has been sent on ahead with news of the action."

Dick, doing as he was bid, soon reached a point of the shingly bank whence he could obtain a view of the sea to the westward. "Hurrah!" he shouted; "here comes another ship under a fore-jurymast and her bowsprit gone. She seems to me to have not a few shot-holes in her canvas, though it's hard to make out at the distance she is off."

Ben, in his eagerness, forgetting his work, ran up to where Dick was standing. "Yes, there's no doubt about it, yonder craft is a prize to the first. When she gets nearer we shall see that her sails are well riddled and her hull battered, too. Those Frenchmen don't give in till they've been thoroughly drubbed; but I doubt whether we shall know more about the matter to-night than we do now, for the wind is falling, and the tide making out strong against her. See, the frigate can only just stem it, and unless the breeze freshens, she must bring up or drift out through the Needles again."

Such, indeed, was likely to be the case, for though still going ahead, her progress was very slow. She had already got some little distance to the eastward of Hurst Point, when, the wind freshening again, her sails blew out, and, gliding majestically on, she edged over to the Isle of Wight shore.

"She'll not get to Spithead to-night, notwithstanding," remarked Ben, "for there's not a breath of air away to the eastward; see, the sails of that brig out there are hanging flat against the masts."

Ben was right. The wind again dropping, presently the hands were seen flying aloft, the studding-sails were quickly taken in, the courses brailed up; the topsail yards being rapidly lowered, the ready crew sprang on to them, and in another minute the frigate dropped her anchor in Yarmouth Roads.

"All very fine!" growled Ben, as he saw Dick's look of admiration at the smartness with which the manoeuvre had been effected; "but if you'd been on board you would have seen how it was all done. There's the first lieutenant, with

his black list in his hand, and the other lieutenants with their reports, ready to note down anything they may think amiss; then there are the midshipmen, the boatswain and his mates, cursing and swearing, with their switches and rope's ends in their hands, and the cat-o'-nine-tails hung up ready for any who don't move fast enough. Again, I say, don't you ever enter on board a man-of-war if you wish to keep a whole skin in your body."

The old smuggler's picture, though exaggerated, approached too nearly the truth as to the way in which discipline was enforced on board many men-of-war in those days. Happily, some were as free from the reproach as are those of the present time, when the seamen of the navy have good reason to be contented with their lot, as everything is done which can conduce to their comfort and improvement.

Ben's remarks did not fail to have their effect on Dick's mind.

"Don't think I'm a fool!" he answered. "I'll keep out of their clutches, depend upon that, for, as I am not a seaman, a pressgang can't catch hold of me."

"Well, do you be wise, my boy, and don't forget what I say," remarked Ben. "But if we stand talking here we shan't get the boat finished, so come along, and don't let us trouble ourselves about the frigate. We shall hear by-and-by what she has been doing, and how the captain and officers are praised for the victory the seamen have won for them."

Saying this, Ben led the way back to his boat, and went on with his work, though Dick Hargrave could not help every now and then casting a look at the beautiful ship as she lay at anchor a little distance off. Ben was labouring away as assiduously as before, when Dick exclaimed—

"Here comes a boat from the frigate. I thought I saw one lowered; she is steering for this point, and it will not be long before she is here."

"Then they intend to put some one on shore at Keyhaven," observed Ben; "but as the boat can't get up the creek with this low tide, whoever he may be he'll have to trudge along the beach."

"There seem to be several officers in her," remarked Dick, who stood watching the boat as she came rapidly on the blades of the oars, as with measured strokes they were dipped in the water, flashing in the sunlight. "They fancy that they can get up to Keyhaven, but they'll not do that until the tide rises," observed Ben, looking up from his work with a frown on his brow. "Let them try it, and they'll stick fast."

The boat passed the spot where Ben and his companion were at work, and very soon what he had predicted happened. Two of the officers, whom Dick recognised by their uniforms to be midshipmen, were heard abusing the men and ordering them to urge the boat on. But all the efforts of the crew to get her afloat were vain.

They then endeavoured to back her off, and at length four of them, tucking up their trowsers, leaped overboard. The boat thus lightened, the men, by shoving her astern, soon got her again into deep water. When, however, they sprang on board their blackened legs showed the nature of the mud into which they had stepped, and produced a malicious chuckle from Ben, who watched them with half-averted head. By moving their legs about in the water they soon got rid of the black stains, when, having resumed their places, they pulled the boat in close to where Ben and Dick were standing. As she reached the beach the two midshipmen leaped on shore.

"I say, you fellows," shouted one of them, "come along here and carry our portmanteaus to the inn, if there is one in that village there, and tell us if we can find a post-chaise or conveyance of some sort to take us to Elverston Hall."

"Don't you answer," said Ben to Dick, hammering on and pretending not to notice what was said.

"Ahoy, there! don't you hear us? Knock off that work!" cried the younger of the two midshipmen, and he repeated what he had just said.

"Yes, we hear," growled Ben looking up; "but we are not slaves to come and go at your beck, youngster."

"We don't want you to carry our traps for nothing, my man," said the elder midshipman. "We'll give a shilling to each of you for the job, and that's handsome pay."

"To those who want it, it may be," said Ben; "but that youngster there must learn to keep a civil tongue in his head if he expects any one to help him. Hurst beach ain't the deck of a man-of-war, and one chap here is as good as another, so you may just let your own people carry up your traps."

The crew of the boat sat grinning as they heard the smuggler bandying words with their officers, siding probably with the former.

"Do you know to whom you are speaking, my man?" exclaimed the elder midshipman. "This is Lord Reginald Oswald, and his father is the Marquis of Elverston. His lordship will be exceedingly angry when he hears the way you have treated his son."

Ben, turning away his head, muttered loud enough for his companion to hear him, "He might be the marquis himself for what I care; but I'm not his lordship's slave to come and go at his beck any more than I am yours."

Dick looked hard at the young lord, and the recollection of their former intercourse would have made him unwilling to do as he was asked, even had the request been couched in less dictatorial language.

"Come, come, we will pay you a couple of shillings each, if you are extortionate enough to refuse our first offer; but carry up our traps you must, for the boat has to return immediately to the frigate, and we cannot delay her."

“Extortionate or not extortionate, we are not slaves, as some poor fellows are,” said Ben, glancing at the boat’s crew; “if we don’t do what you want for love, we are not going to do it for money, so you may just carry your portmanteaus yourselves.”

“Impertinent scoundrels!” exclaimed Lord Reginald to his companion. “Just see, Voules, if that young fellow is more amenable to reason than that sulky old boatman.”

“I’ll try him,” answered Voules. “Come here, you young chap. If you will carry Lord Reginald’s portmanteau I will shoulder mine; we must not delay the boat any longer.”

“Don’t seem as if you heard him,” said Ben to Dick in a low voice, then looking round he shouted, “Maybe the ‘young chap’ is deaf, and if he wasn’t, he’s not a mule or donkey to carry a load on his back. Let Lord Reginald carry his own portmanteau, and just do you understand that I’m not the man to stand any nonsense from him or from any other lord in the land.”

“There is no use in bandying words with these scoundrels!” exclaimed Voules. “I’ll carry your portmanteau, Oswald, and let my own take its chance. I don’t suppose these fellows will dare to steal it, until we can send somebody to bring it on.”

“No, no,” answered Lord Reginald; “we must get Jennings to allow two of the men to come with us, and he can explain to the captain the cause of the delay.”

Jennings, the master’s assistant in charge of the boat, naturally indignant at the way his messmates were treated, consented to this, although he was infringing orders by so doing. He accordingly directed two of the crew to take up the portmanteaus and accompany the midshipmen, who set off at once along the shingly beach. As they moved on, a peal of laughter, in which Ben indulged himself, saluted their ears, which contributed not a little to increase Lord Reginald’s anger and indignation.

“I have a notion that I remember the countenance of the youngest of those two rascals!” he exclaimed. “He is the son of one of our tenants, and used often, when a mere boy, to be impudent to me. I felt inclined more than once to thrash him, but he happened to be the stronger of the two, so I didn’t try, but I’ll pay him off one of these days. I’ll tell my father how we were treated, and he’ll show him that I am not to be insulted with impunity.”

“Certainly not, Oswald. I’ll bear witness to the impertinent way in which he behaved. I only wish that a pressgang may be sent on shore here some night; I’ll take good care that they do not overlook either the young fellow or that surly old one. They are not very particular in the service just now as to age, and both may be taken.”

“Pray don’t let me hear anything more about the matter, or when I reach home I shall not be in a condition to receive the congratulations of my family,” said Lord Reginald. “I wish that the tide had been in and we had been able to get up to the village instead of having to trudge over these abominable shingles.”

“Certainly,” said Voules; “but the fellows are beneath your notice, though the incident was sufficient to put one out of temper. If I had thought Jennings would have consented, I would have proposed landing the boat’s crew and ducking the fellows; it would have brought them to reason pretty quickly.”

“You don’t know the character of the men hereabout, or you would not say so,” observed Lord Reginald. “That fellow Hargrave is a desperate young villain, and they are all smugglers and poachers, who would not scruple to burn down the hall if they had an opportunity. My father is determined to put a stop to their poaching and smuggling, but he has not as yet had much success, I believe. The smugglers, somehow or other, manage to land their cargoes when the revenue officers are out of the way, and the poachers dodge our gamekeepers, who vow that although they hear their shots, they can never catch them.”

“It will be good fun some night to try what we can do,” observed Voules. “We should soon get hold of them, and if they are sent to prison or shipped off to Botany Bay, it will keep the others in awe.”

The two seamen who carried the portmanteaus were listening to the remarks of the young officers spoken in loud tones. Every now and then they turned to each other, exchanging winks, and smiling contemptuously, though they looked as grave as judges when Voules happened to turn round for a moment to ascertain how far they had got from the boat. On and on they trudged, until at last harder ground was gained, and they soon reached the village inn, or rather beer-shop, for it aspired to no higher dignity. Great was their disgust to find that no conveyance of any sort was to be obtained nearer than Lymington, some three or four miles off, and it was doubtful whether the single post-chaise or yellow fly, which belonged to the place, would be disengaged.

“But Lord Reginald Oswald cannot walk all the way to Elverston Hall, and we must have a carriage of some sort or other, my good woman,” exclaimed Voules to the landlady.

“Then I must send out and find my man, who has been carting coals for old Captain Knockills on the top of the hill there. Our cart ain’t exactly fit for young gentlemen like you, but it’s better than nothing, as it will carry your ‘portmantles,’ and you can get in and ride when you are tired; so, if you will walk in and sit down in the bar, I’ll send the boy off at once. It won’t be long before my man is here, as he must have finished his work by this time.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Voules. “Lord Reginald Oswald to be driven home in a coal-cart!”

The idea, however, seemed to tickle the fancy of the young lord, for he burst into a fit of laughter. “It will be better to reach the hall even in that way, than to wait in this wretched hole until we can obtain a carriage. Only, I say Voules, get them to put some clean hay or straw into the cart, or we and our portmanteaus will be covered with coal-dust.”

In the mean time the two seamen looked with wistful eyes at the cask of beer in the corner of the tap-room, but Voules, without offering them any, ordered them to hasten back to the boat. They grumbled as they went, looking back to ascertain if the midshipmen had left the inn, resolving to return, should they have the chance, to drink as many glasses of ale as they had money in their pockets to pay for.

Voules, however, must have suspected their intentions, for he kept an eye on them as long as they were in sight. Just before reaching the frigate's boat, they met Ben and Dick, who had been on the watch for their return. Ben put out his hand and shook that of one of them.

"Well, Bill Webster, I knew you as soon as you stepped on shore. Glad to see you with a whole skin on your back," he exclaimed. "How do you like serving his Majesty afloat? A pleasant sort of a life, isn't it?"

Bill shrugged his shoulders as he answered, "Well, it's better than rotting in prison, though I'd rather be at the old work again."

"Then why not give them leg-bail at once; you've a chance you'll not find again in a hurry, and we can stow you safe away, where they'll have a hard job to find you."

"No, no, mate," said Bill's companion, Jack Coyne. "I know what running away means. It's being caught, with a sharp taste of the cat on one's back at the end of it."

"Then, mates, you'd rather be slaves than free men?" said the old smuggler.

Jack Coyne, however, was firm; and notwithstanding the arguments Ben used, he finally persuaded his shipmate to return to the boat which, immediately they stepped into her, shoved off and pulled for the frigate.

"Each man to his taste, and some day they'll be sorry they didn't take my advice," muttered Ben. "Now, Dick, let's you and I get the boat into the water, and try to catch some fish for your sister Janet."

As the boat was placed on a steep beach, she was easily launched, and Ben and Dick, each taking an oar, pulled away some distance from the shore, when they let down a big stone which served as an anchor. They had not to wait long before Ben hauled up a fish, and Dick soon afterwards got a bite. In a short time they had caught several bass, a whiting pout, and two grey mullet, with which, well satisfied, as the shades of evening were already creeping over the water, they pulled for the shore. As the tide had now turned, they were able to get up the creek to the spot where Ben generally left his boat moored.

"I'm well pleased that I am to send these to your young sister," said Ben, handing over the mullet and two of the other fish to Dick. "Your mother won't mind receiving them, though they haven't paid duty, seeing as how they are not taxed, though when they will be is more than I can say. Always glad to see you down here, my lad; some day you'll take a trip across the water, aboard the *Nancy*. You'll like the life, I know, especially if we are chased by one of those revenue craft. It is a pleasure, I can tell you, to give them the go-by, though, to be sure, we do sometimes have to heave our kegs and bales overboard, but we generally keep too bright a look-out to have to do that."

"I should like it well enough, Ben; but there are others at home who would object to my going away on board the lugger. However, I won't say no, so good night, Ben, and thank you for the fish;" and Dick Hargrave set off at a brisk pace towards his home, while his evil adviser—for such Ben Rudall undoubtedly was—entered his cottage, where his wife was busy preparing supper for him and their children.

An anxious woman was Susan Rudall. Sometimes there was an over-abundance on the board, and she had more money than she well knew how to spend. At others it was a hard matter to find a few shillings to pay the week's bills for bread and other necessaries, though, to be sure, she could generally obtain credit, as it was hoped that, on the return of the *Nancy*, Ben would again be flush of money. Sometimes, however, she, as well as the tradespeople, were disappointed. Then often and often, while south-westerly gales were blowing, she had the anxious thought that the *Nancy* was at sea and might perchance founder, as other similar craft had done, or be cast on the rocky coast, or be taken by a revenue vessel, when Ben and his companions, if caught with a cargo on board, would be thrown into prison, or sent to serve his Majesty on board a man-of-war for three or four years or more.

Poor Susan's lot was that of many other smugglers' wives, who, notwithstanding the silks and laces with which they could bedeck themselves, and the abundance of spirits and tobacco in which their husbands might indulge, had often a troubled time of it. Not that she, or any other of the wives and daughters of those engaged in the lawless trade, thought that there was any harm in it. Probably their fathers and grandfathers before them, and most of their male relatives, except those sent off to sea, followed the same calling, and when any were caught or killed, they looked on their fate as a misfortune which had to be borne, without considering that it was justly brought upon themselves.

Meantime, the two midshipmen, after waiting till their patience was almost exhausted, having seen their portmanteaus put into Silas Fryer's cart, set off on foot for Elverston Hall.

"I really regret, my dear Oswald, that you should be exposed to this inconvenience. For myself, I confess I do not care; the pleasure of accompanying you and the honour of being received by your family, will make ample amends to me for a far greater annoyance. As a miserable younger son, with little more than my pay to depend upon, I have often had to tramp it. But you, I fear, will be greatly fatigued."

"Not a bit of it," answered Reginald. "I can walk as well as any man, and could get over the distance if it were twice as great. I was only vexed at the impertinence of those fellows."

"Of course, of course," said Voules, soothingly; "but leave them to me, and if I have an opportunity while remaining here, I'll endeavour to pay them off."

Mr Alfred Voules, though an especial friend of Lord Reginald Oswald, was not a favourite on board his ship, where he was known by the name of “Toady Voules,” an appellation he richly merited by the mode in which he paid court to any shipmates possessed of titles or amply stored purses. He had lately won his way into the good graces of Lord Reginald, who had obtained leave to take him on a visit to Elverston Hall, while the frigate was refitting at Portsmouth. When she brought up in Yarmouth Roads, Lord Reginald explained that his home was a short distance off on the opposite coast, and that it would save him and his friend a long journey if they were to land at Keyhaven, as they could easily reach it from thence. Much to their satisfaction, their captain allowed them—certainly an unusual favour—to be put on shore as they desired. Voules himself stood well in the opinion of the captain and lieutenants, as, although he might not have exhibited any especial gallantry, he always appeared attentive to his duty.

As the two midshipmen stepped out briskly, they soon distanced the cart, though darkness overtook them when they were still three or four miles from the hall. Lord Reginald, however, knew the road, and there was light enough from the stars to enable them to see it without difficulty. Elverston was situated some distance from the coast, within the borders of the New Forest. They were laughing and talking merrily together as they made their way along an uncultivated tract, covered with heather and occasional clumps of trees, here and there paths crossing the main road, when Voules exclaimed—

“What are those objects moving beyond the trees there? They seem to me to be like men on horseback; and, surely, that is the sound of cart wheels.”

As they stopped talking, a low murmur, as of human voices in subdued tones, reached their ears, and continuing on, they made out distinctly a train of carts, accompanied by horsemen riding in front and rear.

“What they are is pretty clear,” said Lord Reginald. “Those are smugglers. I have heard they muster at times in great force to convey their contraband goods up to London.”

“I wish that we had some of the frigate’s crew with us,” said Voules; “we’d soon put a stop to their journey.”

“Will you, young masters?” said a voice. “You’ll just come along with us, and spend the night in different company to what you expect!”

Before the midshipmen could turn round, they found their arms seized by half a dozen stout fellows, who had apparently been detached from the main body, and had come up thus suddenly upon them.

“Unhand us!” exclaimed Lord Reginald, indignantly. “What right have you to stop us in this way?”

“The right of might, young master,” answered the man who had before spoken. “Tell us what brings you here at this time of night!”

Voules, seeing that it would be to their advantage to speak the truth, answered, “My good friends, we have only just landed from our ship, and being unable to obtain a carriage, are walking on to Elverston Hall. We have not the slightest wish to interfere with you or any one else we may meet on the road; and it would be a serious inconvenience to us to be detained.”

“You speak fairly, my young master,” said the man; “and if you and this youngster here will give us your word of honour that you will not mention having met us, we will let you go on in a few minutes; but do not interfere in a matter which does not concern you.”

“Oh! certainly, my friend, certainly,” answered Voules. “We will hold our tongues, depend upon that, and we shall be much obliged to you if you will let us go at once, for we are desperately hungry, and want our suppers.”

“That may be,” said the smuggler, laughing; “but you have not given us your word yet that you will hold your tongue, and we want to know what this other lad has to say for himself.”

“Oh, I’ll give you my word to say nothing about you, if on that condition you will let us proceed on our way,” said Lord Reginald; “although I cannot make out what reason you have for asking us.”

“Our reasons do not concern you, so give us your answer without further delay.”

“I promise, then, on the word of an officer and a gentleman, not to mention having met you,” said Voules.

Lord Reginald repeated the same words.

“Well, then, you may go about your business,” said the smuggler; “only don’t in future talk of putting a stop to smuggling; it’s what neither you nor your elders can do. Now, good night, lads. Remember, if you break your words it will be the worse for you.”

Saying this, the smuggler and his men rejoined their companions, who had already crossed the road, and the two midshipmen, glad to escape so easily, proceeded on their way.

“I thought we were in for it!” observed Voules; “it would have been very unpleasant if they had carried us off, or knocked us on the head!”

“Yes, indeed,” answered Lord Reginald; “they are bold fellows to travel through the country so openly, even at night; but, as my father says, ‘Bold as they may be, they must be put down.’”

“Well, we must try to forget the circumstance at present, or we shall be letting something slip out,” remarked Voules. “Are we approaching the hall yet?”

“We cannot be far off, though I should be better able to answer the question in daylight. I am only certain that we are on the right road, and have not reached the lodge gates; we shall see a light shining in the window when we get near.”

Nearly another half-hour passed before the light Lord Reginald spoke of appeared. The park-keeper and his wife, who had their minds filled with the dread of an invasion from the French, or an attack from the smugglers, were at first very unwilling to open the gates. Not until Lord Reginald had explained who he was, and had mentioned several circumstances to prove that he spoke the truth, would they admit him and his companion.

“Beg pardon, my lord; but we hope you won’t take it amiss,” exclaimed the gate-keeper.

“We meant no offence, that we didn’t, my lord,” chimed in his wife. “But you see, your lordship, that there are all sorts of bad characters about—smugglers and highwaymen and gipsies, and we couldn’t tell if it was some of them come to murder us and burn the hall down, as they swear they will; or if it was the French, for it’s said that they will land one of these nights, and turn out the king and Parliament.”

“Hold your tongue, wife, and don’t be keeping Lord Reginald and the other gentleman waiting,” exclaimed the husband. “You see, my lord, how my good woman is afeered, and so I hope your lordship will pardon me, as I mustn’t leave her alone, if I don’t go up with you to the hall, for if any strangers were to come there would be no one to open the gate.”

“Stop and look after your wife; I can dispense with your attendance, for I know my way perfectly,” answered Lord Reginald, laughing. “Come along, Voules, I shall be glad to be at home at last.”

The authoritative pull which the young nobleman gave to the hall bell soon brought the domestics to the door. The marquis and Lady Elverston, with their two fair daughters, and Lord John their eldest son, hurried out to meet Lord Reginald. His mother and sisters embraced him affectionately, gazing into his well-bronzed countenance, while his father and brother warmly wrung his hand, as they expressed their joy at his safe return. He then introduced his messmate Mr Voules, who received a polite welcome to Elverston Hall.

“And now, pray tell us, Reginald, to what circumstances we are indebted for seeing you so unexpectedly,” said the marquis.

“The kindness of Captain Moubray; who, hearing, when our frigate came to an anchor in Yarmouth Roads, that we were within a short distance of this, allowed me and my messmate Voules, at my request, to come on shore and pay you a visit, while the *Wolf* is refitting at Portsmouth.”

“What brings her back?” asked his father. “I understood that she was not expected home for some time.”

“We have had a glorious fight with a French frigate, which we compelled to strike, and have brought home as our prize; though, as we did not get off scot-free, it will take the *Wolf* some time to repair damages.”

“Did you lose many men?” asked the marquis.

“Twenty or more killed or wounded,” answered Lord Reginald, in a careless tone.

“My dear boy, how thankful I am that you escaped!” exclaimed the marchioness, gazing at him with a mother’s love in her eyes.

“Oh, do tell us all about it,” cried Lady Lucy, his eldest sister.

“All in good time,” answered Reginald; “but to say the truth, we are very sharp set after our long walk, and should prefer refreshing the inner man before we exhaust our energies by talking, and I will refer you on the subject to Voules, whose descriptive powers are far superior to mine. All that I can tell is that we saw a ship, which we soon discovered to be French, and, coming up with her, fired away until, in the course of a couple of hours, having had enough of it, she hauled down her colours, and that when we were sent on board to take possession, we found that we had knocked over some forty or fifty stout fellows.”

The marquis rang the bell, while the midshipmen retired to their rooms to prepare for supper.

Voules gazed round the handsome chamber in which he found himself, with a well-satisfied look. “I have fallen on my feet for once in my life, at all events,” he said to himself. “If I play my cards well, who knows what may happen? It is evident that his family think a good deal of this young lordling, and I must take care to keep in his good graces. He is fond of flattery, though it doesn’t do to lay it on too thick, but his sisters and mother will be well pleased to hear his praises sung, and as I have a fair groundwork to go upon, I may praise him to the skies behind his back; he is sure to hear what I say of him, and will be more pleased than if I flattered him to his face. I shall thus get into the good graces of the ladies, who may induce the marquis to use his influence at the Admiralty to obtain my promotion.”

His meditations were interrupted by the entrance of a valet, who came to offer his services. Voules, supposing from his appearance that he was one of the other guests who had mistaken his room, made him a polite bow, and said something to that effect. The valet, uncertain whether the young gentleman was a lord or a commoner, thought it wise to be on the safe side, and addressing him as “My lord,” said that he had been sent by Lord John to brush his clothes and shoes, and as the portmanteaus had not arrived, to put any of his lordship’s wardrobe at his disposal.

“Oh, ah! my good fellow,” said the midshipman, discovering his error; “much obliged to Lord John; but as there is not time to shift my rigging, I’ll just trouble you to give me a brush down and to bring me a pair of slippers, and I shall be all to rights.”

The valet quickly performed the duties required of him, and Voules, perfectly satisfied with himself, followed him downstairs to the drawing-room.

Chapter Two.

Voules makes himself at home—Eager listeners—Fight between the Wolf and a French frigate—Lord Reginald's account—Merit and modesty—A bumper round—Voules makes headway—Dick Hargrave—An encounter in the forest—Smugglers—Good Faithful—The farmer's home—Dick's mother—Sound advice—Contending influences—Bitter feelings—A prudent resolution.

Several guests were staying in the house, and a large party were soon assembled round the supper-table. The two midshipmen were objects of general interest, and they had more questions asked than they could well answer. Voules had the honour of sitting near Lady Elverston. Lord Reginald was at the other end of the table, where his father had placed him, anxious to hear from his own lips an account of what had occurred. Just then, however, being very hungry, the young lord was more interested in discussing the viands placed before him than in narrating the particulars of the engagement. Voules had therefore the field to himself, and although quite as hungry as his brother midshipman, he restrained his appetite, for the sake of giving full play to his tongue.

"I can assure your ladyship that we have had as fine an action as any which has been fought during the war, and though his modesty might induce him to disclaim any peculiar merit, Lord Reginald played no unimportant part in it," began Toady Voules, bowing to the marchioness, and then giving a quick glance towards the other end of the table to ascertain whether his messmate was listening. Finding that he was fully engaged with the viands before him, he went on. "We were about thirty leagues from the coast of Spain, in the latitude of Cadiz, when early one morning, we discovered a sail to the south-west, we having the wind at the time from the north-east. As you may suppose, we immediately bore up in chase, for we had every hope that the stranger would prove an enemy. It was some time, however, before we could settle the point, as the wind was light and we made but little way. At length, to our great joy, we were almost sure that she was a French frigate by the cut of her canvas and the appearance of her hull; at last, when she hoisted her colours and fired a gun to windward, we had no doubt about the matter. She was hove to, with her mizzen-topsail aback and the main-topsail shivering, waiting for us. This showed that her captain was a brave fellow, and would give us some trouble before we were likely to make him strike.

"We were all in high spirits, and I never saw Lord Reginald look cooler or more at his ease than he then did. Our captain, to prevent the French frigate from escaping, made up his mind to engage her to leeward. Our men were at their quarters, with matches in their hands, ready to fire. The word, however, was passed along the decks that not a gun should be discharged until the captain should give the signal, though the enemy had begun to blaze away, and his shot was passing through our sails and cutting up our rigging. The enemy, seeing our intention, wore and foiled the manoeuvre. As she sailed much better than the *Wolf*, our captain at length saw that he must adopt a different plan to that which he had at first intended. The Frenchman several times filled and wore so as on each occasion to bring a fresh broadside to bear on the *Wolf*, which annoyed us greatly. It was trying work to have her shot crashing on board without being able to return the compliment. Fortunately, the Frenchman firing high, few of our men were hurt. We now steered directly down upon the enemy, and having got within pistol-shot of her, the satisfactory words reached us, 'Give it her, my lads, and enough of it.' We did give it her, the men tossing their guns about like playthings, running them in, loading and firing two shots to the Frenchman's one. We were now what we wanted to be, engaging the enemy broadside to broadside, within pistol-shot distance, pouring into each other a fire of round, grape, and musketry. I am afraid you would not understand the various manoeuvres we performed. As we carried a press of sail, we shot past the enemy, who, bearing up, managed to cross our stern and pour in a raking fire. As our captain saw what she was about to do, he ordered all hands to fall flat on the deck, and many who might have had their heads knocked off thus escaped. As the shot flew over us like a shower of hail, the only person I saw on his feet besides the captain and first lieutenant was Lord Reginald. He told me afterwards that he could not bring himself to bend before a Frenchman. 'Better, my dear Oswald, to do that than to be knocked down by a Frenchman's shot,' I observed. 'No, no!' he answered. 'I should have died an honourable death.' I beg to observe that I did not agree with my noble messmate; but I mention the circumstance only to show what stuff he is made of.

"We were quickly on our feet again, and engaged in firing every gun we could bring to bear. After some time, having crossed each other's courses, we being ahead of the French ship, she stood right at us, bringing her larboard bow against our starboard quarter, over which her bowsprit ran, pressing against the mizzen rigging. The captain immediately ordered it to be lashed there, to prevent her escaping. Lord Reginald was, I can assure you, among the first to obey the captain's order. Several men were shot in the attempt, but at last it was successful. Scarcely, however, was it done, and we had the Frenchman fast, than we saw the greater portion of her crew rushing forward, ready to spring down on our decks. It was as much as we could do, I can tell you, to keep them at bay. Our marines, stationed on the quarter-deck, fired away at them as fast as they could load and discharge their muskets, but not until our captain himself, at the head of our own boarders, armed with cutlasses, pikes, and pistols, rushed to our quarter, over which the enemy had begun to pour, was their progress stopped. It was desperate work; those who had gained our deck were cut down, others were hove into the sea, while the remainder beat a rapid retreat. Their foremost guns then began to thunder away at us, and we could not bring one to bear in return, until a couple of pieces were dragged aft on the main-deck and run through the cabin windows, which had been cut down to serve as ports. We had now an advantage of which we made good use. Every shot we fired told with tremendous effect, but the enemy was still unconquered. The lashings which held the bowsprit of the French ship to the mizzen rigging giving way, she began to forge ahead. As she did so, a fortunate shot cut away the gammoning of her bowsprit. We were now exchanging broadsides yardarm to yardarm, but the drubbing they had already received seemed to dishearten the Frenchmen. Still they held out, showing a wonderful amount of pluck. They had sent men into the tops, armed with muskets, who were firing down on our deck, and had already wounded several of our officers. I was standing a short distance from our captain, when I saw Lord Reginald seize the musket of a marine who had just been killed, and at the same time shove the captain aside and fire at the maintop, when down came a man on deck. The

captain was saved. The fellow had been taking aim at him, and there is no doubt that he owes his life to the coolness and resolution of Lord Reginald, although he looked rather astonished at being treated in so unceremonious a manner by a midshipman—"

"Why, you make Lord Reginald a perfect hero," observed a dowager duchess sitting opposite to Voules, who might possibly have suspected that the young gentleman was drawing on his imagination as to the details of the action.

"Pray go on, Mr Voules," said Lady Julia. "I could not listen to you without trembling; and, did I not see my brother sitting safe there, should be thinking all sorts of dreadful things. I wonder any one remained alive on the decks of the ships engaged in so fearful a battle."

"A good many did lose the number of their mess, but fewer were killed than might have been supposed, for round shot and bullets fortunately have a happy knack of making their way between the heads of people without hitting them.

"By this time our gallant frigate, which had lately been under a cloud of canvas, swelling proudly to the breeze, made a deplorable appearance with rope's ends and torn sails hanging down from every mast and yard. The French ship, however, was in a still worse condition. The sails, however, were of sufficient service to force the two ships through the water, and the Frenchman took advantage of this, and hauled up, in a short time getting out of gun-shot, we being unable, in consequence of the loss of our gaff and topsails, to follow. Our captain, however, had no intention, as you may suppose, of letting her escape. All hands set to work to knot and splice our rigging, to refit braces and repair other damages. While thus employed, we saw the Frenchman's foremast fall over the side. Our crew, as you may suppose, raised a loud cheer at the sight, and redoubled their efforts to be ready, should a breeze spring up, for again getting within range of our opponent. Scarcely had the hands reached the deck, when we saw a ripple playing over the ocean; the sails were trimmed, and once more, with eager hearts, we steered towards the French ship. We did not suppose that she would hold out long, but after the pluck her captain had exhibited, we fully expected to be at it again. In a few minutes the crew were at their quarters, ready to fire a broadside, when down came the Frenchman's colours.

"'She has struck! she has struck!' resounded through the ship. We at once hove to. The first lieutenant was sent on board to take possession; I had the honour to accompany him. The sight I had witnessed on board our own ship was bad enough, for we had upwards of twenty men killed and wounded, the former still lying in their blood where they fell; but on stepping on the Frenchman's deck, it seemed literally covered with dead men, for the rest of the crew had been too busy to throw any of them overboard, while the cockpit below was filled with wounded, many of whom were too much hurt to recover.

"The French captain, who came to the gangway to present his sword to the first lieutenant, informed us that the ship was the *Reynard*, when we found that she was not only of larger size and carried four more guns than we had, but had commenced the action with upwards of two hundred men more than we mustered. The French captain, Monsieur Brunet, who had really fought his ship very gallantly, shrugged his shoulders, exclaiming, 'It is the fortune of war!' as he delivered up his sword, and was requested, having packed up his personal effects, to go on board the *Wolf*, in a boat sent for the purpose. The boats of the French frigate were too much knocked about to float, and it took us some time to remove the prisoners and send a prize crew on board. It was night, therefore, before we were ready to make sail, when we steered a course for the north-west, to avoid the French fleet, which was supposed to be off the coast of Spain or Portugal.

"The scene on board the prize made me very glad to get back to my own ship. Though we had gained the battle, we were not allowed to sleep on beds of roses. Our prisoners considerably outnumbered our own crew, and our boatswain, who spoke French, having been taken during the earlier part of the war, overheard some of them discussing a plan for overpowering us and regaining the prize. As we could not put them all in irons, we had to keep a strict watch over their movements.

"The weather remained fine, but there was a thick mist which prevented us from seeing far ahead. It had just gone two bells in the morning watch, when, as I was forward, I heard a tinkling sound. I listened attentively. Again the sound distinctly struck my ear. It came borne along the surface of the water from some distance. I reported the circumstance to the officer of the watch, and he immediately sent to inform the captain. He soon reached the deck, and after listening for a while, announced it to be his belief that the sounds proceeded from the French fleet. He immediately ordered the ship's course to be changed to the westward. In another hour we again hauled up to the northward. When morning broke, the look-out from the mast announced a fleet in sight to the south-east. All the sail we and our prize could make was set. We soon discovered, however, that several large ships were in chase of us, but our captain was not the man to give in while a stick remained standing. We continued our course, hoping that a change of wind or some other chance might enable us to escape our pursuers. It would have been tantalising to have lost our prize and have been taken prisoners ourselves, and some of the least hopeful declared that such would be our fate. 'Well,' exclaimed Lord Reginald, 'we must submit, but nothing can take away the honour we have gained by capturing a French frigate of superior force.' Your ladyship will perceive the courage and spirit of your gallant son; indeed, he has exhibited them on many occasions, and I hope that some day we may see him leading England's fleets to victory."

"What's that you are saying about me?" exclaimed Lord Reginald, from the other end of the table, for during the sudden silence of those around him he had caught the last words uttered by his messmate.

"Mr Voules is only speaking of you as you deserve, my dear Reginald," said the marchioness. "He has been giving us an account of the battle and the gallant way in which you behaved."

"We all behaved gallantly, or we should not have thrashed the enemy," said Reginald, laughing.

“I hope Mr Voules has given you a clearer account than Reginald has himself, for, except that the two ships spent the morning in pounding away at each other, and that at length the Frenchman, being tired of the amusement, and having lost his foremast, hauled down his colours, I have heard no details of the action,” said the marquis.

“Then his modesty prevented him relating how he lashed the bowsprit to the rigging and saved the captain’s life,” observed the marchioness.

“I lash the bowsprit to the rigging? Why, the men did that, and very imperfectly they performed the work, or our antagonist would not have got clear again; and as to saving the captain’s life, I know only that I took up a musket and brought down a Frenchman, or he would have knocked over the captain or me, or somebody else.”

“Whose account is to be relied on?” asked the marquis, looking somewhat puzzled.

“I do not wish to gainsay my noble messmate, but your lordship must make allowance for his modesty, and give me credit for stating facts as they occurred,” answered Voules.

“I see how it is,” observed the marquis, glancing approvingly at his son.

“Merit is always modest, which may account, Mr Voules, for your not having described your own gallant deeds,” said the marchioness, looking hard at him. Being a clear-sighted woman, she may have suspected why the smooth-tongued young gentleman had praised his noble messmate.

“But how did the *Wolf* and her prize manage to escape from the enemy?” asked Lady Julia. “Pray go on and tell us, Mr Voules.”

“For some time I must own that we fully expected to be captured, for wounded as our masts and spars were, we could not venture to make more sail; indeed, it is a wonder those of the prize which remained standing did not fall over the side. Fortunately, we had a good start, and the wind being light, the French ships did not gain on us as fast as they would otherwise have done. To our infinite satisfaction, just about noon, we saw them haul their wind, having been probably recalled by their admiral, who thought it possible that they might run into the jaws of an English squadron, which he must have known was cruising in the neighbourhood. We had still no small anxiety about our prisoners, and, I believe, it was not a little owing to the vigilance of Lord Reginald that they were prevented from rising. His perfect knowledge of French, for which he tells me he is indebted to his sisters, enabled him to speak to the men, warning them of the danger they would run should they make the attempt, and in a short time he brought them into good humour, notwithstanding which, as before, a strict watch was kept on their movements. Having stood well to the westward, we got a fair breeze, which carried us up Channel and safe inside the Isle of Wight, where I hope the prize is by this time, for she was close in with the Needles, and was only prevented following us for want of wind and the ebb still making out against her. It would be a serious matter if she were to run on shore during the night, or be retaken by a French cruiser.”

“No chance of that,” observed Reginald. “No French cruiser would ever venture so close in with our shore, and within two or three hours at most the prize would be able to follow the frigate.”

“I must get you, Mr Voules, to repeat the account you have given of the action for my benefit, as Reginald is wonderfully reticent on the subject,” said the marquis.

“I shall have great pleasure, my lord,” answered Voules, bowing.

“In the mean time, do me the honour of taking wine, and we will afterwards drink a bumper round to the future success of the *Wolf*,” said the marquis.

“The very toast I was going to propose,” said an old general, who had long since been placed on the shelf. “Though my fighting days are over, an account such as we have just heard warms up my stagnant blood, and I beg to second your lordship’s proposal.”

“Charge your glasses, gentlemen, and I hope, ladies, that on this occasion you will join us,” exclaimed the master of the house.

No one declining, the fair sex put out their more moderately sized glasses to be filled as the bottle went round. The toast was drunk, the whole party standing, with the exception of the two midshipmen, who, with assumed modest looks, retained their places.

“And now we will give three cheers for our naval heroes,” cried the old general, making an effort to stand up on his chair, but giving it up, as he reflected on the danger he might run of toppling over among the dishes which still covered the board.

“Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!” and the supper-room rang with the sounds, which were taken up by the servants outside and repeated in the hall below, where the domestics not in waiting were making merry.

When all the guests sat down they looked at the two midshipmen, while Reginald made signs to Voules to speak.

“You are the eldest, old fellow, and having been longest in the service, it is your business to reply.”

Voules, nothing loth, rose to his feet. His only difficulty in commencing being the doubt whether he should address his friends as “My lords and ladies.” His tact, however, prevented him doing so, and he contented himself by neatly expressing his thanks for the honour done to the glorious service of which he was so humble a representative. “Had Lord Reginald been induced to speak,” he added, “he would have said more to the purpose. My belief is, that should the war continue a few years longer, my noble friend will be found in command of as fine a frigate as the *Wolf*, and

will outshine the deeds of his predecessors. Should I be so fortunate as to have reached the rank of lieutenant by that time, I hope that it will be my privilege to serve under him."

Voules's modest remark in reference to himself drew forth, as he intended it should, a reply from his host, who assured him that any interest he possessed should be exerted to obtain for him the promotion he deserved, and that he hoped to see him a post-captain as soon as his son had obtained that rank.

"Thank you, my lord, thank you!" exclaimed Voules, highly delighted. "Your lordship will allow me to remind you of your promise, whenever Lord Reginald obtains a step in rank. I do not aspire to be promoted before him, and shall be glad to serve in any ship to which he is appointed, until we are both eligible for independent commands."

The ladies now withdrew, and when the gentlemen left the supper-table it was found that they had retired to their rooms. Voules was too prudent a man generally to take more wine than his head could stand. So delighted, however, did he feel with his bright prospects, that he found considerable difficulty in restraining his tongue, and excusing himself on the plea of fatigue, was glad to make his way to his room, where he was followed by Lord John.

"I came to thank you, Mr Voules, for the very handsome way in which you spoke of my brother," said the latter. "He is a very fine fellow, somewhat thoughtless and impetuous, and requires guiding, and I rejoice to think that he has found so steady a friend as you are to guide and restrain him."

Voules put on as sedate an air as possible, although just then he did not feel very capable of guiding himself, for he had had considerable difficulty in steering a straight course along the passage which led to his room. "You may depend upon me, my dear Lord John, that I will do my best to keep your lordship's brother out of mischief. I do not profess to be his monitor, but I may exert an unperceived influence over him to his advantage."

"And did he really perform all the gallant acts you describe?" asked Lord John.

"Every one of them, and others besides," answered the midshipman. "There's not a more gallant young officer in the service, and he'll make the world know it some day, if no harm befall him."

In spite of all the efforts he made, Voules could not help yawning, and Lord John, perceiving this, allowed him to go to bed in quiet, while he went to have a further talk with his brother, who, however, by that time, had turned in and had already fast closed his eyes.

In the mean time Dick Hargrave hurried towards his home with the fish he and Ben had caught, anxious to present them to his young sister, whom he dearly loved. He stopped at the village inn, the Admiral Benbow, and found that the two midshipmen had only just left it for Elverston Hall. "I have no fancy to meet the young lord and his friend," observed Dick, "or we may chance to fall out, so I'll take the other road, and shall soon get ahead of them."

Following this wise resolution, he set off at a pace which soon brought him to the borders of the forest. He knew the road too well to be impeded by the darkness. He was running on, his own footsteps not allowing him to hear other sounds, when on passing beneath some overhanging trees, the shadow of which prevented him from seeing objects ahead, he suddenly found himself close upon a body of men, some on horseback and others on foot, escorting a line of carts. Dick at once knew what they were about, and not wishing to be stopped, he sprang on, hoping to remain concealed behind the trunk of a tree until they had passed by; but he had been observed, and two of the men came up to him.

"What business have you here, youngster?" asked one of them, seizing his arm and dragging him forward.

"I am Farmer Hargrave's son, and am on my way home with some fish Ben Rudall and I have been catching for my sister Janet," he answered.

"All right, Master Dick," said the man; "we know you well enough; but don't say that you have seen us, and if Ben has taken care to show himself, the revenue people won't suspect what's in the wind, as they will think that he would be sure to be along with us. Have you any news?"

"Nothing that much concerns you, Master Fryer," answered Dick, who recognised the speaker. "A frigate anchored in Yarmouth Roads this evening, and two of the officers, one of them Lord Elverston's son, have landed and gone on to the hall."

"I should like to pay them off for the trouble the marquis gives us," said Fryer; "though we have put him on a wrong scent, and he is not likely to find out this time what we are about, until the goods are safe in the hands of the London merchants."

"It would not do us much good to interfere with the youngsters," observed the other man. "If the marquis would but let us alone we should have no ill will towards him. All we want is free trade and fair play."

"You are right there, mate," observed Fryer; "and now, Master Dick, you may go your way, and remember to keep a quiet tongue in your head."

Dick, escorted by his captors, who explained who he was, passed unquestioned through the main body of the smugglers, who had halted for some reason for a few minutes, just as he got up to them. Dick again hurried on, while the smugglers proceeded along by-paths across the country, shortly after to fall in, as has been seen, with the midshipmen. Dick was met by his faithful dog, who was always on the watch for him when he was away from home, and having an especial duty to perform, seldom accompanied him. That duty, which he performed with exemplary patience, was to lead about blind Janet, who, under his guidance, when she was well, would venture in all directions without the slightest fear of a mishap. Every one in the neighbourhood knew her and her dog, and even the roughest

characters treated her with courtesy. Of late her walks had been greatly curtailed, for the last few days Faithful's office had become a sinecure, though he still remained at his post, ready to perform his duty if required. He was a handsome spaniel, and had been brought up from a puppy by Dick, who had thoroughly broken him in. Though fond of scampering across the fields and poking his nose into every hole he could find in the hedges and ditches, he became as sedate as a judge the moment Janet called him and fastened the ribbon by which she was led to his collar. Dick was naturally very fond of his dog, but had become still more so since the animal had shown how useful it could make itself to poor Janet.

Faithful, who had long been on the watch, when he heard his master's footsteps, with a bark of welcome leaped over the palings, and came frolicking and leaping round him, licking his hands to show his joy, and together they entered the house.

Mrs Hargrave, a comely, pleasant-looking dame, was seated busily stitching by the side of the table. "What has kept you so late, Dick?" she asked in an anxious tone. "Your father has gone to bed, as he must be up betimes. We thought that you had got into some mischief; but I am thankful to see you back, my son."

Dick explained what he had been about, and exhibited the fish he had brought. "And how is Janet this evening?" he asked. "I thought that I should have been back in time for her to have one for supper, but they'll do for her breakfast or her dinner to-morrow."

"She's asleep, sweet dear! though I'm afraid she's no better. The Lord's will be done, if He thinks fit to take her; and then, Dick, I want you to remember that you will be your father's chief hope and stay in his trouble. Whether or not we shall have to turn out of our home, and seek for another farm, is more than I can say. Your father doesn't wish to displease the marquis, but he thinks that it is his right to remain where he is, and that he would not be acting like an Englishman to give up that right."

"Of course he would not," exclaimed Dick. "Ben Rudall says he would not knock under to the marquis or any other lord, and he would hold on fast with tooth and nail."

"I don't want to say anything against Ben Rudall, my son; but I wish that you were not such friends with him. He is a smuggler, and may draw you into mischief, though maybe you'll think it ungrateful in me to say so, when he has helped you to catch those fish. Remember that you cannot associate with bad characters without getting some harm and being looked upon as one of them."

"Ben is a right honest fellow, and true as steel," answered Dick. "I don't like to hear anything said against him, mother; if he were ever so bad, he would not lead me astray."

"He is a smuggler, Dick, and though he may be true to his companions, he is false to his country, or he would not be trying to cheat the revenue, as the smugglers do."

"I had not thought of that; but don't you trouble yourself about Ben," answered Dick. "Now, mother, I am pretty hungry, and should like some bread and cheese;" and Dick turned round to go to the larder.

"Sit down, my son, and I'll get them for you," said Mrs Hargrave, taking the fish at the same time. "While you are eating, I'll clean these, and they'll be ready in the morning if Janet has a fancy for one of them."

She soon returned, not only with some bread and cheese but some cold meat, and a mug of home-brewed beer, showing that the good housewife did not stint her family.

Dick described the arrival of the young lord and his shipmate. "I'd as leave he had stopped at sea, for, somehow or other, he and I are always getting foul of each other. But there will be rare doings up at the hall to welcome him home, especially if there's been a battle, as Ben thinks, and his ship gained the day."

"Then, Dick, do you keep out of his way, and no harm can come of it," said Mrs Hargrave. "I am glad, however, for her ladyship's sake, and the young ladies, for they will be main pleased to see him. Only this morning they came here to visit Janet, and when I told my lady what Mr Gooch says, she promised to speak to the marquis, and that makes me hope that the matter will be settled better than your father expects."

"Not if that young lord finds out about it. He'll try and set his father against us. You should have heard him and his shipmate this afternoon blackguarding Ben and me, because we wouldn't carry their portmanteaus."

"There would have been no disgrace in so doing. It shows that they thought you stronger men than themselves," observed Mrs Hargrave.

"I should not have minded doing it, if it hadn't been for Ben; but the way they spoke put his back up, and he gave them a piece of his mind."

"Just now, Dick, you said that you would not be influenced by Ben; but surely you were on that occasion," remarked Mrs Hargrave. "However, Dick, I do not want to blame you, but just try to keep clear of those men, and show what a help you can be to your father on the farm. Now, as you have had your supper, you had better go to bed, and I'll close the door. I want to sit by Janet's side, in case she should awake before I lie down. Do not forget to say your prayers, my son, and sing one of the hymns I taught you, though you look so sleepy that I am afraid you will not think much about what you are saying."

Dick had in truth given way to several wide yawns, while his eyelids had begun to droop. He followed his mother's advice, as far as he was able, and especially in the last particular; but he was fast asleep as soon almost as his head touched the pillow.

Chapter Three.

Good intentions—Blind Janet—Poor Faithful shot—A trying moment—Dick's anger—Desire of revenge—A dangerous speech—Threatening to shoot—The consequences—Tempted—Indignation of the farmer's son—A sorrowful duty—Grief of the blind girl—A scheme of Mr Gooch—Dick's fears of arrest—Running away from home—At the smuggler's cottage—On board the Nancy—Safe for the present.

Dick Hargrave kept to his resolution of trying to avoid meeting with Lord Reginald. Should he do so it would not be his fault, and should he fall in with him, he would endeavour to retain his temper, should his lordship speak to him in his former style. He likewise refrained from going to Keyhaven, or any other place where he was likely to meet any of his associates engaged in smuggling, although it was difficult to say who was not, more or less, implicated in the lawless proceedings so general at that time along the south coast. He assisted his father on the farm, and occasionally took Janet out for a short walk, as, notwithstanding the doctor's expectations, she was able to get up again the very day after she had appeared to be so ill.

She declared that it was owing to the nice fish Dick had brought her. Again, however, she was confined to her room. As she could not take out Faithful, she begged that Dick would give him a run. "The poor dog sits so quietly at my feet all day, and if he sees me moving, I hear his tail thumping on the floor, and he begins to scamper about, fancying I am going to take him out. It is very dull for him, poor dog, and he deserves some amusement," she said.

Dick promised to follow her wishes, and the next morning, saying that he would try to shoot a rabbit, and summoning Faithful, who bounded after him, he set off with his gun in his hand. With the assistance of the dog, he soon shot a couple of rabbits, with which he was about to return home. Faithful, however, highly delighted at finding himself abroad, went ranging wildly over the fields. Dick called to him, but the dog was too eager in the chase or too far off to hear his voice, and did not, as usual, return. Some minutes passed, when Dick heard a shot coming from the direction in which Faithful had disappeared. He hurried on, fearing that one of the keepers had caught sight of him; but then they all knew Janet's dog, and the most surly would not have had the heart to fire at the honest brute, even though he might have been infringing the game laws by scampering for amusement after a hare or rabbit. Dick looked out anxiously, hoping to see the dog return; but though he shouted, "Faithful! Faithful!" and whistled shrilly, the animal did not make its appearance. Wondering what could have become of it, he went on calling its name. At last he saw it crawling towards him, dragging its limbs along in evident pain. At length the poor dog, unable to get further, sank to the ground. Dick, darting forward to where it lay, stooped down to ascertain how it was hurt. Its lacerated side, which bled profusely, showed that it had been shot.

"What villain has dared to hurt you, my poor Faithful?" exclaimed Dick.

The dog's only reply, true to its name, was to lick his hand and endeavour to rise, but again it fell back, and after a few convulsive struggles, expired.

"Poor, poor Faithful! Janet will miss you, that she will! She will never find so trusty an animal to lead her about; but I'll be revenged on the fellow, whoever he is. He ought to have known that you never poached, though you did love to run after a hare, for the fun of the thing. If I can meet the savage brute I'll shoot him, as sure as my name is Richard Hargrave."

"What's that you say, you young ruffian?" exclaimed a voice near him.

Dick had not observed three persons who had approached. Looking up, he saw Lord Reginald and his brother midshipman, attended by a keeper.

"I do say that the heartless fellow who shot this dog deserves to be shot himself," exclaimed Dick, looking boldly up.

"I shot the dog; it deserved to be killed for chasing hares on my father's property," answered the young lord. "You yourself must have set him on to drive the hares towards you. You are a poacher; we must have you up before the magistrates and punish you accordingly."

"I did not set him on," answered Dick, rising to his feet, "and I had no intention of killing any hares on the Elverston property. These rabbits I shot on my father's farm, and I had a perfect right to kill them. The dog belongs to my blind sister. As she is ill, I took the poor brute out for a run."

"A very likely story!" exclaimed Lord Reginald. "You have a gun in your hand and rabbits over your shoulder, and you had sent your dog scampering over the fields in search of more. I know your name, and shall report you to my father, so you may expect to take up your quarters in prison before many days are over."

"The lad speaks the truth, my lord, about the dog," observed the keeper, who had stepped forward and examined poor Faithful. "I have seen it many a time leading Farmer Hargrave's blind daughter about, though whether he shot the rabbits on his father's farm or not is another matter. We have never found him poaching before, so that part of the story may be true also."

"I am sorry to have shot the dog, if it was useful to his blind sister," said Lord Reginald; "and, I say, Jackson, I wish you'd look out for another to give the poor girl, instead of this one; she'll not find out the difference."

"I wouldn't let her receive it if you should give her one!" exclaimed Dick, his anger in no way pacified by the young lord's expressions of regret. "No dog could be found to equal Faithful; but I myself will look after a dog to take its place."

“Really, my dear Oswald, I cannot stand by to see you thus insulted by this ungrateful young ruffian,” said Voules. “He has threatened to shoot you, and he looks like a fellow capable of doing what he says. The sooner he is taken up and sent to prison the better.”

“I have not been poaching! If you lay hands on me it will be the worse for you,” said Dick, grasping his gun.

“Come, come, Master Dick, do you go to your home, and do not be so foolish as to threaten mischief. It is dangerous to use such words, and you’ll be sorry for them by-and-by,” said the keeper, wisely interposing between the exasperated young men. “I know where to find you if you are wanted; but I don’t suppose the marquis will be hard upon you, when he hears how it was your sister’s dog was shot. If, my lord, you’ll please to let the lad go, I’ll undertake that he shall not come into the park again. His father is not the man to allow him to do anything against the law.”

Lord Reginald, who really much regretted having shot the dog, willingly listened to the keeper’s advice, and Voules, who had no object to gain in irritating him further against Dick Hargrave, said no more on the subject.

“Well, Hargrave, I will try to forget your threats, and I again assure you that had I known the dog was your sister’s, I would not have shot it,” said Lord Reginald, turning aside; and without waiting for an answer he led the way, followed by Voules and the keeper, in the direction of the hall, leaving Dick still standing by the side of his dog.

“I do not trust his fair words,” said Dick, looking after the party; “but I am obliged to Jackson for speaking a word in my favour, for if it had not been for him, matters would have become worse. Poor Faithful! I don’t know how I shall ever have the heart to tell Janet what has happened,” and stooping down he again examined the dog, to assure himself that it was really dead. Of this he was soon convinced. “I’ll not let you lie here, my poor dog!” he exclaimed, and taking it up in his arms, he walked away with it towards his home. He was crossing the road from Keyhaven, when a voice hailed him, and looking round he saw Ben Rudall approaching.

“What hast thou got there, Dick?” asked Ben. “Your sister’s dog—and killed, too! How did that happen?”

Dick told him, describing what had occurred.

“And thee wouldst trust the chaps, would thee?” said Ben, speaking in the Hampshire dialect. “No, no; don’t be doin’ that. Measter Jackson may have spoken fair enough, but he knows that he’s got his thumb on thee, an’ can come down on thee when he loiks. Now, just listen to what I have got to say. I was going to look for thee. The *Nancy* is expected in before many days are over, an’ she’ll be sailing again the next morning. If thee’ll come down to Keyhaven, there’ll be a good chance of taking a trip, an’ ’twill be safer for thee to be out of the way in case the young lord should change his mind an’ have thee up for poachin’. When the marquis hears of it, it’s my belief that he won’t let thee off, for he’s wonderfully strict about the matter, and if he had his will he’d be sending half the people hereabouts to prison.”

Dick had not forgotten his mother’s advice to keep clear of Ben Rudall, and he knew well enough that even though he should only go as a passenger, he would be committed to whatever was done by her crew.

“You mean kindly, Ben, I know,” he said; “but I cannot leave Janet, she’s so ill; and if she gets better, there’ll be no one except mother and me to walk out with her, now poor Faithful’s gone; but if I hear there’s a chance of my being had up for poaching, maybe it’s the best thing I can do.”

Ben laughed scornfully. “They’ll not let thee know what they intend to do; but thee would find thyself carried off to Winchester jail some fine morning, so just don’t be a fool, Dick, an’ come along with me.”

Dick, however, was firm in his resolution not to go off without seeing his mother and sister, and Ben was obliged to be content with his promise that he would come down to Keyhaven to talk the matter over. He would have been wiser had he not given that promise.

Ben returned the way he had come, and Dick, carrying the body of his dog, continued on towards his home.

On reaching the cottage, he carried the dog to a corner of the garden, while he went in for a spade to dig its grave. While he was searching for one in the outhouse, his mother saw him.

“What has happened, Dick?” she exclaimed, observing the blood on his clothes.

He at once narrated what had occurred, for although he had many faults, he was truthful to her.

“I am very sorry for what has happened. Poor dear Janet will almost break her heart. She said that she should like to take a stroll to-morrow with Faithful, if you were not able to accompany her. However, we must bear with it. From what you say, the young lord would not have shot the dog if he had known whose it was, and if he gives Janet another, she may become as fond of it as she was of Faithful.”

“I should not like her to become fond of Lord Reginald’s dog,” answered Dick. “If he sends one, I shall have a mind to shoot it, or send it back to him with a kettle tied to its tail.”

“That would not be a right thing to do,” observed Mrs Hargrave. “We should not harbour ill feelings towards others, though they have done us wrong. Come in now, and let me wash the blood off your coat. It looks bad, and if your father were to return, it would frighten him, as it did me. We’ll just break the news gently to Janet, and don’t say you won’t receive another dog if the young lord sends one. Remember how kind his mother and sisters are, and I dare say he is not so bad at heart, though he has more than once fallen out with you.”

“He has an abusive tongue in his head, and that shows what sort of heart he has got,” answered Dick, not inclined to

agree with his mother about Lord Reginald. “You tell me the ladies speak so sweetly, but, as Ben Rudall says, that’s all outside show, and I would not trust them.”

“That’s because you have never been at home when they have called, or you would have agreed with me, if you had,” observed Mrs Hargrave. “Stay here while I get a sponge and some hot water; I can’t let you go about as you are; I cannot tell what people would say. If you were seen, there would be all sorts of tales about you.”

“I don’t care what is said, and I should just like them to know that Lord Reginald is a brute. That’s what I call him.”

“Hush! hush, Dick!” said his mother. “Sit you down here, until I have taken off those blood stains, for although poor Janet cannot see them, some one else may come in, and ask what has happened.”

Dick seated himself on a bench to which his mother pointed, and she quickly returned with soap and water. It was no easy operation, however, to get rid of the stains, and Dick declared that before he came in he must bury the dog. To this Mrs Hargrave consented, as she thought it would be a good opportunity to tell Janet of the loss of her favourite.

Dick, taking up the spade, and having selected a spot for Faithful’s grave, began digging away. More than once he stopped and gazed at the animal, feeling unwilling to put it so soon out of sight; then he went on more energetically than before. Having just completed his task, he leaned on his spade, while the tears rolled down his cheeks, as he thought he should never see his dog again. The wind had begun to blow strong, and dark clouds were gathering in the sky. The gloomy aspect of Nature suited his feelings. On looking up, he saw his mother and Janet approaching.

“Mother has told me, Dick, what has happened,” said his sister, as she came up. “I want to stroke Faithful’s head once more before you put him into his grave.” She stooped down by the side of the dog. “Oh! He doesn’t feel my hand now,” she said. “I am very sorry; but, Dick, I want you to promise me not to nourish anger against the young lord. He would not have fired had he known the dog was so useful to me. He told you as much. If I forgive him, you must.”

“I may forgive, but I do not forget,” said Dick. “If he keeps to his word, I’ll believe that he did not intend to do the cruel act. However, we must put poor Faithful in his grave, and if I do not make a vow to be revenged on Lord Reginald, it is because you are here to prevent me, Janet.”

“I would that you had a higher motive than that,” said Mrs Hargrave. “Now, Janet, you must return to the house; I promised you’d stop but one minute; Dick will soon have finished his task, and then he’ll come in to supper. Father will soon be home, Dick, so don’t delay.”

Dick, having at length brought himself to place the dog in its grave, hastily shovelled in the earth, muttering as he did so, “He’d better not cross me again; if he does he’ll have to repent it. Lie there, poor dog!” he added, as he finished the work. “I’ve a mind to put up a tombstone, and write on it, ‘Wantonly killed by Lord Reginald Oswald.’”

On entering the cottage, he found that his father, having come in, had heard what had happened. He was thankful at all events that he had not had to break the news to Janet. Farmer Hargrave said what he thought would pacify his son, and declared his belief that the young lord had not killed the dog with any malicious intent.

Dick pressed his lips together and made no reply. He could not trust himself. They were just finishing supper when a knock was heard at the door, and Dick, opening it, Mr Gooch the bailiff entered.

“Good evening, farmer; good evening, dame; somewhat stormy weather,” he said, throwing back his wet coat, and placing his dripping hat on the floor, as he took the seat offered him. “I didn’t think it was coming on to be so bad, until just before sunset. It blows hard enough now, and the rain is coming down in torrents, but I wanted to talk over that affair between us, so I came out in spite of the weather.”

“What have you got to say, Mr Gooch?” asked the farmer. “You know as well as I do that I have no wish to leave this farm. It will be a heavy loss to me to give it up, and I am determined to abide by my rights.”

“Very good, Mr Hargrave, very good,” said the bailiff, in a bland tone. “His lordship doesn’t want to be hard upon you, and if you have the right to remain, he would be the last man to ask you to turn out, but as I before told you, you have not the right, and if you go to law you’ll be worsted. Now, a little piece of information has come to my knowledge which may make you see that it would not be wise to go to law, even supposing there was a chance of your winning. I have not communicated with my lord on the subject, so I act on my own responsibility. This lad here, your son, has put himself in an awkward position. He has been poaching—not for the first time, either. I have just heard all about it from Jackson, the keeper, and from a young gentleman who is staying at the hall. They can give evidence, not only that he was poaching, but that he threatened the life of Lord Reginald Oswald—a very serious business, let me tell you. Had he fired, as he threatened to do, he would have been hung to a certainty, and as it is, I see every probability that he will be sentenced to seven years’ penal servitude. Now, of course, his lordship has it in his power to overlook the offence, and if I can tell him that you will yield to his wishes and consent to give up the farm, I am pretty sure that you will hear no more about the matter, only you must restrain your son from poaching in future, or from associating with smugglers, as I have evidence that he is in the habit of doing.”

The farmer listened to all the bailiff said, while Dick sat clenching his hands, with his eyes to the ground, every now and then giving a look at his mother.

Ben was right, then, in warning him. Had he accompanied the old smuggler at once, and got out of the way, Mr Gooch would not have been able to obtain the upper hand of his father.

When the bailiff had finished, Mr Hargrave replied, “I have before given you my answer. I believe the marquis to be a just man. If he finds I have the right to continue in the farm, he would not wish to dispossess me. In regard to Dick,

the provocation he received by having his dog killed would excuse any thoughtless words he might have uttered. So I cannot offer to give up my rights for fear of the consequences, and I will never believe that Lord Elverston would act as you suggest."

"Then you dare to say that you doubt my word, Farmer Hargrave?" exclaimed the bailiff, in a tone of indignation, rising from his seat. "I'll give you until to-morrow to think over the matter; but you'll take the consequences if you have the same answer ready for me. And dame, I would advise you to persuade your husband to act as I recommend, or, whether you go out of the farm or not, that lad of yours, before many days are over, will be lodged in Winchester jail, and be sent to Botany Bay, if he doesn't get the chance of entering on board a king's ship. Perhaps they won't give him his choice, for threatening to shoot a lord is a serious matter."

"Oh, Mr Gooch, you would not be so cruel as to wish to send our Dick to prison!" exclaimed Janet, who had been listening to what was said.

"All your father has to do is to agree to what I propose, and he is safe enough," answered the bailiff. "I can stay no longer. I called in to give some friendly advice. If not taken, it is not my fault; so good night to all. I hope that you'll settle the matter between you!"

Mr Gooch got up to go. Dick opened the door, having no wish to detain him. Looking out, he saw that the account given of the weather was not exaggerated.

"Is is plaguey dark, Mr Gooch!" he observed. "You'd better take a lantern, sir."

"No, no; I know my way as well in the dark as in the daylight," was the reply, and Mr Gooch stepping out, was soon lost to sight.

No sooner was the door closed than Dick exclaimed, "Don't give in, father. I'd sooner go to prison, or Botany Bay, or be sent to sea, or be hung, for that matter, rather than that you should yield up your rights and be turned out of this farm."

"I will not give up the farm if I have a right to keep it, but if the law is against me, go I must; still, I would not have you suffer, Dick, unless you deserve it, and if it is proved that you were poaching, and that you threatened to shoot the young lord, you must, as the bailiff says, take the consequences, though it would well-nigh break my heart to see you punished. But I have not much fear on the score either way. It is my belief that the marquis does not know much about the matter of the farm, and from beginning to end it is all the doing of Mr Gooch. What he cares for is to please his master, and as he knows that his lordship has a fancy for extending the park, he wants to get me to turn out, and now that he thinks he has got hold of you, he fancies that he can frighten me to do so. In regard to your affair, Dick, when the marquis hears of the provocation you received, I don't think he will be hard upon you."

The farmer made these remarks to tranquillise as far as he could the mind of his wife. Perhaps he did not feel so confident himself. So Dick at all events thought. The family soon afterwards separated for the night.

Dick went to his room, but could not sleep. The storm itself, though it whistled and howled around the cottage, would not have kept him awake. He thought over all that had happened, what he himself had said, and how Lord Reginald had looked and replied. "Whatever the gamekeeper may say, that other young fellow is against me, and if they take me before the magistrate, Mr Jackson will be upon his oath, and compelled to corroborate the midshipman's statement. It all depends on what they choose to do. There is no doubt I did threaten to shoot Lord Reginald, and I felt wonderfully inclined to do it, too. There's only one way I can see to get out of it and save father, and that is to take advantage of Ben Rudall's offer and to keep out of the way until the affair is blown over; I won't tell father or mother or they may be wishing to stop me; but I'll write a letter just to wish them and Janet good-bye for a short time, without saying where I am going, for that would spoil the whole thing. Ben says I shall like the life on board the lugger; so I shall, though I would not have gone if there had not been this good reason. I cannot fancy that either father or mother will be really sorry when they find that I am safe out of the way." So said Dick to himself, and having come to this resolution, he at length fell asleep.

It was not a wise one, for it was like falling out of the frying-pan into the fire. There was a very remote risk of his being summoned before the magistrates, and if summoned, of his being committed for trial, whereas, in addition to the dangers of the sea, if captured on board the lugger, he would to a certainty be condemned as a smuggler and be sent to jail, if even worse did not come of it. For a lad to be sent to jail in those days was a fearful punishment, for there was no separation of prisoners, and should Dick go there he would be herded with ruffians of every description, and could scarcely fail to come out again without being very much the worse for his incarceration. Just then, however, he only thought how he could best keep out of the way of Mr Gooch, and thus prevent him from inducing his father to yield up his rights, which he might do, notwithstanding his resolutions to the contrary, should he be thus able to save his son from punishment.

Dick awoke just as the light of the early dawn made its way into the room. The storm had ceased, and the clouds were fast disappearing, giving promises of a fine day. He had been a good penman at school, so that he had no difficulty in writing his letter. He had bade an affectionate good night to them all, and he would not run the risk of being hindered in his project by remaining for breakfast. His letter was brief.

"Dear father," it ran, "don't give up the farm. I shall be all safe, though I don't want you or any one else to find me until the matter is settled, but I have made up my mind that they shall not make a cat's paw of me. Love to mother and Janet. So no more from your affectionate son, Dick."

Leaving the letter on the table, with a bundle of clothes and a few other articles in his hand, he slipped silently downstairs, thankful to find that his father was not yet stirring. Filling his pocket with some bread and cheese from the larder, he hurried out by the back door, which was not likely to be opened for some time, and made his way by

by-paths in the direction of Keyhaven. He felt, it must be confessed, somewhat like a culprit escaping from justice. Every now and then he looked back to ascertain if he was followed; then again he ran on. He wished, if possible, to avoid meeting any one who might question him as to where he was bound at that early hour. The labourers would be going to work, but a considerable portion of the country through which he passed was still uncultivated. Twice when he saw people coming, he turned aside and hid himself behind a hedge until the men had passed. He thus reached Ben Rudall's cottage, without, as he supposed, being seen by any one who knew him. Ben was not at home; but Susan asked him to come in and sit down.

"He has been out nearly all night, Master Richard, but I am hoping to see him back safe every minute," she said. "He got notice that the *Nancy* was standing in for the coast, and went out to lend a helping hand. I don't mind telling you, as I know that you are not one of those who side with the revenue people, or would go and give information—"

"Which would injure any of my friends," put in Dick. "No, indeed, I would not. To say the truth, your husband promised me a trip on board the *Nancy*, which I have come to accept."

"He'll be main glad, for he has agreed to go himself the next trip, and he told me that he thought the lugger would be away again to-night or to-morrow at furthest. She's not likely to be long away, though, and I don't mind his going as much as I used to do. Sometimes he has been from home for six weeks or two months at a time, either looking out for a cargo or waiting for a good chance to run across and land one on the English coast." Mrs Rudall did not hesitate to describe the doings of the smugglers to Dick, though she would have been wonderfully reticent to a stranger; yet she showed her anxiety by frequently going to the door and looking round the corner in the direction she expected her husband to appear. "Here he comes! here he comes!" she cried at length, and Ben, with a sou'wester on his head, a thick flushing coat on his back, and his legs encased in high boots, made his appearance.

"All right, Susan!" he said, as he reached the cottage. "We've done the job neatly, and the goods are twenty miles inland by this time. We'd a famous night for it, couldn't have had a better, got the revenue men away on the wrong scent, and had the coast clear long enough to land a dozen cargoes. If we get such another night for the next run, we shall do well."

"I am thankful," said poor Susan, who thought more of her husband's safety than probably of his share of the profits. "Now, come in; here's a visitor you'll be glad to see."

Ben put out his hand and shook Dick's, but before asking questions he kissed his children, who came jumping up round him.

"Now, let's have breakfast, for I am main hungry, and I dare say our friend here is," he exclaimed. "Have you taken my advice, and made up your mind for a trip on board the *Nancy*?" he asked, turning to Dick.

Dick replied in the affirmative, and described the visit Mr Gooch had paid them the previous evening.

"The sooner you get on board and out of his way the better, for they'll not think of looking for you there, and before to-morrow morning the *Nancy* will be away again across the Channel," said Ben. Breakfast was just over, and Ben was smoking his pipe in front of his cottage door, when, looking to the southward, he exclaimed, "There she comes; she is a beauty!" and he pointed to a fine lugger, which, under all sail, having rounded Hurst Point, was standing towards Yarmouth.

Ben having put up a few articles, led the way down to his boat, accompanied by Dick, and followed by his elder children, one carrying a boat-hook, another the oars, while he himself bore the boat's mast and sails on his broad shoulders. The children stood on the beach, watching them as they pulled away. The breeze being favourable, Ben soon stepped the mast and hoisted the sail, when he came aft with the mainsheet, and told Dick to steer.

"You should never lose the chance of learning to be handy in a boat," he observed; "you don't know when it may come in useful. You are very well as it is, but you are not like one born to it. Howsumdever, you'll pick up something on board the *Nancy*, and we shall have you turning out a prime seaman one of these days."

Dick really steered very well, and Ben every now and then gave him an approving nod. Being perfectly familiar with the surrounding scenery, he scarcely noticed it, occupied as his thoughts were just then by the position in which he was placed. Away to the right were the white Needle rocks, their pointed heads standing high up out of the sea, with chalky cliffs rising high above them; wide, smooth downs extending eastward; below which were cliffs of varied colour, with a succession of bays and rocky reefs; while ahead were the picturesque heights of Freshwater, covered by green trees, amid which several villas and cottages peeped out. Further east still, appeared the little seaport town of Yarmouth, with its old grey castle and grey stone houses, their gardens extending down to the water; on the starboard quarter was Hurst beach, with its massive round castle and tall, red lighthouse; while to the northward, extended a wood-covered shore, on which could be distinguished numerous residences, some of considerable size, and the town of Lymington running up the side of a steep hill.

Ben was proud of his boat, though to the outward eye there was nothing to admire, as the paint with which she had once been bedecked had been worn off, her sails were patched, and her rigging knotted in several places.

"I look at what she can do!" he observed; "and a better sea-boat or a faster is not to be found between Hurst and Spithead. It must blow a precious hard gale before I should be afraid to be out in her night or day."

That she was fast was proved by the speed with which she ran across the Channel. In a short time she was alongside the lugger, which had brought up close in shore, her crew evidently fearless of the revenue men, two or three of whom stood watching her.

All on board knew Ben, and gave him a hearty welcome. "I have brought a fresh hand, Jack!" he said, addressing the

skipper in a familiar tone. “I have long promised him a trip, and as it happens, it is as well that he should keep out of the way of the big-wigs over there.” Ben then briefly explained the danger Dick was in for threatening to shoot the son of the Marquis of Elverston.

This announcement gained him a warm reception from the smugglers, who, engaged in lawless pursuits themselves, were naturally inclined to approve of such an act, and would possibly have looked upon him with still greater respect had he fired as he had threatened.

“Glad to see you, my lad,” said John Dore, putting out his hand. “Make yourself at home on board the *Nancy*. We’ll give you work when work has to be done, and now, if you’re tired, you can turn into my berth and go to sleep till the evening, when, unless the wind shifts round to the southward, we shall be at sea again.”

“The best thing you can do,” observed Ben. “I must go to Keyhaven to get a hand to take my boat back and look after her while I am away.”

Dick, wishing to escape the notice of any one who might visit the lugger from the shore, accepted the skipper’s offer. As he had closed his eyes but a very short time during the previous night, he was soon fast asleep.

Chapter Four.

Under way—Life on board the Nancy—Off the French coast—Shipping the contraband goods—Run for England—A strange sail—The chase—Escape of the lugger—Landing the cargo—Revenue officers—Coolness of Dore—“Yield, in the king’s name.”—A little too late—Dick questioned.

When Dick awoke, he knew by the motion of the vessel and the sounds he heard that she was under way. The *Nancy* was a craft of nearly a hundred tons, decked all over, with three short, stout masts, the after one leaning over the taffrail, with a long out-rigger. On each of the masts a large lug was carried, and above them could be set flying topsails, and when before the wind studding-sails could be rigged out. She could also hoist an enormous squaresail. To set these sails, she carried a numerous crew of tried seamen; promptitude and decision being required in the dangerous work in which she was engaged. Her armament consisted of six short guns and a long nine-pounder, which could be trained either fore or aft, to bring to a merchantman endeavouring to escape, or to knock away the spars of an enemy chasing her. Besides these guns, she had an ample supply of cutlasses, pistols, and boarding-pikes, to enable her crew to repel an attack made by boats or from a hostile craft which might run alongside her. She was truly an Arab of the seas, with every man’s hand against her, and her hand against every man. The captain, by means best known to himself, had obtained a privateer’s licence, and in that character he appeared when in English waters, though her real employment was more than suspected by the revenue officers, who were on the look-out to catch her. In this they had invariably failed, owing to the vigilance of her crew, and to the exact information they received from their agents on shore. Dick, turning out of the skipper’s bunk, went on deck.

He was greeted by Ben Rudall. “You are safe enough now, lad, from the constables who may be hunting for you through the country; and glad I am to have you on board the *Nancy*. When we get back you must remain stowed away until we are at sea again, and in a short time they’ll get tired of looking for you.”

“I hope they won’t revenge themselves on my father,” said Dick; “that’s what’s troubling me now!”

“No fear of that, for he is not answerable for what you do, any more than you are for his acts, and as he doesn’t know where you are, he can’t tell them.”

“I wish, however, that I could let mother and Janet know that I am all safe; they may be fretting for me,” said Dick.

“Never you fear, they’ll guess that,” said Ben, trying to set Dick’s mind at ease on the subject. “It doesn’t do to think about home or anything of that sort when we are out on a cruise. Cheer up, lad! cheer up!”

A fresh breeze was blowing from the north-west. The stars were shining brightly out of a clear sky, and the lugger, close hauled, was passing the Needle rocks, which could be dimly seen rising out of the dark water like huge giants on the lee beam, while astern were visible the lights on Hurst point now brought into one. The lugger having rounded the western end of the Isle of Wight, the helm was put up, the yards squared away, the flying topsails and big squaresail set, and she stood across Channel, bounding lightly over the dancing seas. A craft with a fast pair of heels alone could have caught her. Her hardy crew remained on deck, for all hands might at any moment have been required for an emergency, either to shorten sail, or to alter her course, should a suspicious vessel appear in sight. All night long the lugger kept on her course, steering westward of south.

“I say, Ben, how do the Frenchmen treat us if we go on shore, seeing that we and they are fighting each other?” asked Dick.

“Never you fear; we shan’t go on shore, except it may be at night, in company with friends. You will soon see how we manage things,” was the answer.

The lugger made such good way, that when morning dawned, the coast of France was seen close aboard. No vessels of any description were in sight. As she got closer in, the French flag was hoisted, and other flags were got ready for making signals. Dick heard the skipper talking to three men whom he had not before observed, and whom he now discovered to be Frenchmen. He asked Ben who they were.

“One of them is to act as captain, the other two as his mates. They will go on shore and arrange about getting our cargo shipped. They won’t take long, as it will be all ready. If we have another favourable night, we may run it, and it

will be up in London before a week is over."

A bright look-out was kept in every direction. As no suspicious sail appeared, the *Nancy* stood on. The signal which she made was answered from the shore.

"All right," said Ben; "no fear of interruption for the present."

The topsails were lowered, and under the foresail and mizzen she glided on into a small harbour between rocks of sufficient height to hide her short masts from the view of any craft passing outside. The crew of the *Nancy* appeared on deck, dressed as much as possible like French seamen, while they wisely kept their tongues quiet, so that their true character might not be suspected.

The two Frenchmen went on shore, while the third remained on board to answer any questions which might be put to them. Dick observed that the lugger lay in such a position that she could easily slip out again, should danger threaten. The crew seemed perfectly at their ease, laughing and talking when below, as if their situation was one to which they were well accustomed.

The day passed away; still no cargo was forthcoming, nor did the Frenchmen re-appear. This made Dick fear that the authorities might have discovered the true character of the *Nancy*, and in spite of their precautions the smugglers might be taken in a trap. He did not, however, express his apprehensions, and neither Ben nor any of the men appeared troubled on the subject. At night the crew lay down on the deck with their pistols in their belts, and their cutlasses and boarding-pikes by their sides, each man at his station so that the cable might be cut and the sails hoisted at a moment's notice. It showed Dick that his fears were not altogether without some foundation. Nothing, however, occurred during the night, and the following day passed away much as the first had done.

Dore, however, grew impatient, and a boat was sent to watch outside the harbour in case any enemy might be stealing along the coast to prevent the *Nancy's* escape. At length, some time after it grew dark, a boat came off from the shore, bringing the two Frenchmen, who reported that the cargo was ready and would shortly be on board. All hands stood prepared for hoisting it in. Several boats were quickly alongside, and with wonderful rapidity bales of silks, laces, and ribbons, and kegs of spirits and tobacco were transferred to the *Nancy's* hold. As soon as they were stowed away, the anchor was got up, and the boats going ahead towed her out of the harbour, the Frenchmen wishing her "*Bon voyage*," and a speedy return.

Dick breathed more freely when the sails were set, and the *Nancy* gliding swiftly over the smooth water, the dark outline of the French coast grew more and more indistinct. "How soon shall we get back to England?" he asked of Ben, by whose side he naturally kept when on deck.

"That depends on what may happen," answered Ben. "We shall have to wait for a dark night, and to take care that the coast is clear before we run in. It may be to-morrow, or it may be a week hence. We have done very well as yet, but there's many a slip between tin cup and the lip, as I have found to my cost more than once."

Dick had to rest satisfied with this answer. There were plenty of people on board ready to talk to him, but their conversation was not of an improving character. Their chief delight seemed to be to abuse the royal navy as well as the revenue laws, and those engaged in preventing their infringement. Dick was not accustomed to look too deep into matters, and thought that what they said was very right. It did not occur to him that the same men would greatly have objected to free trade, which would completely have deprived them of their present illegal way of gaining a livelihood; and though there might have been some truth in what they said about the navy, they were wrong in the sweeping condemnation they pronounced against the service. There were some abuses still existing, but many had been removed; and there were not a few commanders of king's ships who did their best to advance the welfare of their crews, and were at all times kind and considerate to those placed under them, as had been shown by numerous instances of devotion on the part of the men to their officers. The remarks of his associates, however, gave Dick an unmitigated horror of the navy, while he learned to look upon smugglers as a much-injured body of men, who were unjustly interfered with while engaged in endeavouring to gain their daily bread. At length, growing sleepy, he was glad to go below and lie down on one of the lockers in the little after cabin.

Next morning the lugger lay becalmed. While the breeze lasted, the smugglers had been in good humour, but as the watch below turned out, they swore and grumbled at finding their craft lying idle on the smooth surface of the ocean. No sail was in sight, and as long as the calm continued they could not come to harm; but an enemy might bring down a breeze which would enable her to get close up to them before their sails were filled. This was what they dreaded. All their seamanship and courage would not avail if she was a vessel too powerful for them to cope with.

Hour after hour passed away, and still the *Nancy* lay floating idly, and carried down Channel by the ebb tide, and swept up again by the flood. An anxious look-out was kept for signs of a coming breeze. Evening was approaching. From whatever quarter the wind might come, it might bring up an enemy. English or French were equally to be dreaded. The skipper paced the deck, making short turns, telescope in hand, every now and then sweeping the horizon with it, and casting an eye on the dog-vanes which hung unmoved by a breath of air. At last he kept his glass longer than usual turned to the eastward.

"There's no doubt about it!" he exclaimed. "Those are the royals of a big ship of some sort; she's got a fresh breeze, too, or we shouldn't have risen them so fast above the horizon."

Dick could only see a white spot on which the sun was shining, but it appeared to be increasing in size and growing higher and higher. The gaze of most of those on board were turned towards her. That she was either an English or a French cruiser was the general opinion. Some thought that she was a frigate, others a corvette; for no merchantman, at that period, would have come down Channel alone. One thing was certain, that she was steering directly for the lugger.

“What chance have we of escaping her?” asked Dick of Ben.

“Many a chance, lad,” answered his friend. “If she’s English she may not send a boat on board to examine us, and we shall pass for a privateer, or we may get the breeze in time to slip out of her way to the northward, or to keep ahead of her and give her the go-by during the night. If she’s French, we must put the Frenchman in command, show our French papers, and bamboozle the mounseers, or if the worst comes to the worst, tumble the crew of their boat overboard and try to get away.”

“But suppose they fire into us?” said Dick, who though often thoughtless was alive to the true state of the case.

“We must run the chance of that, my lad,” answered Ben, “though my idea is that yonder craft is an English corvette, and although she may be a pretty fast sailer, when once the *Nancy* gets the breeze, we shall show her a clean pair of heels.”

Dick sincerely hoped that such would be the case. He had not reckoned on the chance of being captured as a smuggler, or made prisoner by the enemy, or shot by either the one or the other. The crew were at their stations, ready to trim sails the moment the slightest breath of air should reach them. The topsails had before been set. The squaresail and studding-sails were got up ready to hoist at an instant’s notice. Still the lugger lay motionless, and the corvette, for such she was pronounced to be, came rapidly on, under every stitch of canvas she could carry. She was soon within a mile of the lugger, when some cat’s paws were seen playing over the water; the dog-vanes blew out and then dropped, the canvas flapped lightly against the masts. The skipper swore, and the crew swore, until once more they saw the sails bulging out slightly.

“Hurrah! here it comes at last! We’ll keep out of that fellow’s way,” cried Captain Dore, eyeing the stranger. The lugger began gathering way. “Port the helm, Tom. We’ll stand to the northward, and shall soon see whether he wishes to speak us. If he does, we’ll take leave to disappoint him.”

The yards were braced up on the starboard tack, and the lugger stood on the course proposed, so that the corvette, should she continue on as she was now steering, would pass astern. Dore kept his eye fixed on her.

“She’s a fancy to know more about us,” he remarked, as he observed the stranger also keeping up to the northward. “Her shot can’t reach us yet, and we shall soon see, now we have got the breeze, which is the faster craft of the two.”

As Dick looked over the starboard quarter, he saw the sails and dark hull of the corvette, lighted up by the rays of the setting sun, making her appear so much nearer than she really was, that he wondered she did not fire a shot to make the lugger heave to. He had no cowardly fears on the subject, but he again thought that he should have acted more wisely had he stowed himself away safely on shore, instead of coming on board the lugger. The corvette looked so powerful, that it seemed to him that a single broadside from her guns, would send the *Nancy* with all on board to the bottom. He observed, however, that Dore walked the deck with as calm an air as usual, all the time, however, narrowly eyeing the king’s ship, ready to take advantage of any change which might occur.

“We shall have darkness down upon us soon, and then we will show yonder fellow a trick or two. He wants to jam us up against the English coast; but we are not to be so caught,” he observed to his mate, Ned Langdon.

The breeze had freshened considerably, and was now blowing so strong, that the lugger could, on a wind, with difficulty carry her topsails, which were still set. The corvette had handed her royals, presently she took in her topgallant sails. She had lately been gaining on the lugger. Dick, with the rest of his companions, seldom had his eyes off her; the darkness was increasing, and her outline was becoming less and less distinct. Presently he saw a bright flash dart from her bows, and the roar of a gun reached his ears. The shot, however, had fallen short. The smugglers laughed.

“You may blaze away, but you won’t do us much harm!” observed Dore.

Another and another shot followed. The commander of the cruiser evidently wished to make the lugger heave to. If he had before had doubts of her character, he must now have been thoroughly satisfied as to what she was, and would become more eager to capture her.

“Stand by, my lads, to make sail!” cried Dore. “Keep up the helm, Tom, and hoist away on the squaresail!”

The lugger was put before the wind, running considerably faster than she had hitherto been doing through the water. The corvette must have observed her change of course, as she also kept away, and once more her topgallant sails were loosed. It was too dark to observe how the masts stood the pressure.

“I only wish that they would set the royals; with this breeze there would be a good chance of the spars being carried away,” said Dore.

It was very doubtful whether the corvette was gaining on the lugger. Though the advancing night gradually shrouded her more and more in gloom, she could still be discerned, her canvas rising up like a dark phantom stalking over the ocean. The crew of the lugger stood at their stations, ready at a moment to obey their captain’s orders. He kept his eye on the topsails, though if blown away the accident would not be of much consequence. The masts were tough, and bent like willow wands.

“They’ll hold on as long as we want them now,” observed Dore. Again and again he looked astern. Presently he shouted, “Lower the topsails! Starboard the helm, Tom! Haul away at the starboard braces!” and the lugger, on the port tack, stood close hauled to the southward.

The sharpest eyes on board were turned in the direction their pursuer was supposed to be. Some time passed away.

“There she is!” cried Ben. “Although we see her, she doesn’t see us, as we are stern on, and much lower in the water than she is.”

Dick looked with all his might. He could just discern some object moving along over the water, but so indistinctly that he could not be certain it was a ship. Still, the commander of the corvette might suspect that the lugger had changed her course, and changed his also.

“All right!” cried Dore, after watching the phantom-like stranger in the distance, until she totally disappeared. “She’ll not catch us this cruise.”

The lugger was put about, on the starboard tack, and once more stood towards the English coast.

“Shall we be in to-morrow morning?” asked Dick.

“No, no,” answered Ben. “Whatever happens, we shall make the coast at night, when the revenue men can’t see us. We have friends on the look-out, who will make signals to show us when and where to run in. The weather is too fine at present, so that we shall have to dodge about and wait for a dark night, with thick rain or fog; but we don’t much trust fogs, they may lift suddenly and show our whereabouts to those we do not want to see us. However, we must run some risks. We want to land our goods in quiet, but if any one interferes with us, we of course must fight to defend our property. All right and square, you will understand, but if there’s bloodshed, it is the fault of those who wish to take it from us.”

Dick did not ask himself whether Ben was right or wrong. He forgot that one party were breaking the laws, the other performing their duty in protecting them.

Next morning, when Dick came on deck, he found the lugger hove to, with the blue line of the English coast to the northward. Though the shore could be seen, the vessel herself was too far off to be discerned from thence. Most of the crew were below, but the watch on deck, vigilant as ever, were turning their eyes in every direction, so that, should a suspicious sail appear, they might at once shape a course which would enable them to avoid her. Dick, who had been accustomed to an active life, began to grow weary at having nothing to do. He walked the deck with his hands in his pockets, talking to the men, or he sat below listening to their yarns, which were generally not of a very edifying character.

The greater number of the crew passed their time, either sleeping or playing at cards or dice. Sometimes, for a change they turned to and cleaned their muskets and pistols, or burnished up their cutlasses. It was a relief when a stranger appeared whom it was thought better to avoid. The lugger making sail stood to the southward. She returned to her former position, however, as soon as the suspicious craft had passed. This occurred twice during the day. At night she stood close in to the coast, to look out for signals, but none were seen, and before the morning she again took up her former position at a sufficient distance to be invisible from the shore.

For several days the same sort of proceeding took place. Two or three times she made all sail, it being supposed that she was chased, and once she had a narrow escape from a French cruiser, who probably took her for an English privateer. The wind continued moderate, and the sky clear, and Dore began to swear and to wish for some real honest Channel weather. At last the wind shifted, first to the southward and afterwards to the south-west, from which direction a thick bank of mist was seen coming up, and the lugger, directly she was shrouded by it, made sail for the English coast. Although there was no fear of her being seen from any distance, she still ran the risk of falling into the lion’s jaws, to avoid which a sharp lookout was kept, and all hands stood ready to trim sails in case it should be necessary.

The night was coming on, and it was soon dark enough to suit their requirements. She now frequently hove to, to sound as well as to watch for any signal from the shore. At length a light was seen, faint and dim through the mist, another was shown a short distance from it, and then a third appeared, when all three in an instant disappeared. The lugger stood on, sail was shortened, and the anchor dropped. Scarcely had she brought up when half a dozen boats dashed alongside.

“Be smart, my lads!” cried Dore. “If we are quick about it, we may run the whole of the cargo before the revenue men are down upon us.”

Not another word was spoken; every one knew exactly what he had to do. The lugger’s crew hoisted out the bales and kegs, and the men who had come off stowed them away in the boats. The lugger’s own boat was not idle. Having loaded her, Ben and Dick, with three other men, jumped in and pushed for the shore. The surf was pretty heavy, but without accident they reached the beach, where a large party of people were collected, with a number of pack horses and carts. The boats were at once surrounded, and their cargoes quickly taken out of them and placed either in the carts or on the backs of the horses. The work was carried on with the greatest rapidity, and by the time Dick and his companions had launched their boat, the whole had begun to move off, and before the lugger was reached, not a single person was to be seen on the beach.

On their return to the *Nancy,* the boat was hoisted in and preparations began for making sail. The operation required care, for should she cast the wrong way, she might drive on shore. The skipper himself took the helm. The hands went to their stations. The instant the anchor was away the sails were sheeted home, and the lugger, casting, as desired, to port, stood off from the dangerous coast, close-hauled. She had not got many cable lengths from the beach when two boats dashed alongside. A number of armed men sprang on board.

“We’ve caught you, my fine fellows,” exclaimed an officer. “Yield, in the king’s name!”

“Happy to see you, gentlemen,” answered Dore, with the greatest coolness. “You are welcome to look over our craft, and if you find anything contraband on board—for that I suppose is what you are after—we’ll yield fast enough.”

The officer was evidently nonplussed, but he was still not inclined to take the smuggler’s word. He allowed the lugger, however, to stand further out, until she could heave to with safety, when he ordered the foresail to be backed. He, with several of his men, then went below, Dore ordering Dick and another lad to carry a couple of lanterns, that the officer might see his way. The search, as Dore well knew would be the case, revealed nothing on which the revenue could lay hands—not a bale nor keg of spirits, nor even a few pounds of tobacco.

“Circumstances certainly were suspicious. You have cleaned her out completely,” said the officer, turning to Dick, and as he did so eyeing him narrowly. “Where was the cargo run?”

Dick was very nearly replying, “Not long ago,” and thus confessing that the cargo had been run, but recollecting in time that the smugglers might object to such an answer, he said—

“I am merely a passenger on board, sir, and it is not my business to answer questions.”

“What’s your name, my lad?” asked the officer.

Dick was on the point of replying, when Ben, who had heard the question, stepped up. “It is your business, Mr Lieutenant, to overhaul this craft and see that there are no smuggled goods on board, and when that business is over you have nothing more to do. That youngster’s name may be Jack Robinson, or it may be Tom Jones, but whatever it may be is no business of yours.”

The officer put several questions to others of the crew, but neither from them nor from the captain could he elicit any of the information he required. They were perfectly civil to him, and offered not the slightest opposition to his going through every part of the vessel, and joked with the boats’ crews, several recognising old shipmates. They shook hands, patted each other on the back, and appeared on the most friendly terms. Yet the case would have been very different had the *Nancy’s* cargo been on board. There would then have been a death struggle, the one to defend, the other to take possession of the craft, and they would have fought until one or the other had been defeated.

“Well, Captain Dore,” said the lieutenant, “you have been too smart for us this time, but we intend to catch you some day or other.”

“Maybe the *Nancy* will be sunk by an enemy’s cruiser before then. You seem to have an idea, lieutenant, that we are smugglers. I didn’t think fit to gainsay you before, but if you’ll step back into my cabin I’ll show you my privateer’s licence, which will prove to you that we are engaged lawfully, making war against the French trade,” answered Dore.

“Well, well, whichever you are, I won’t longer detain you; but before I go I wish to have a word with the youngster I saw on board, the son of a respectable farmer living out Milford way.”

“We detain no one on board against his will, except he has signed articles. If the lad is the person you suppose, and is willing to go, go he may, provided you can promise that no harm can come to him.”

“I wish to prevent him getting into harm,” said the lieutenant, and he sent one of his men to find Dick, who was soon afterwards brought aft.

Dick was in two minds about going. When the lieutenant told him of the anxiety of his father and mother, he was on the point of accepting the offer. Just at that moment Ben stepped up.

“You’d better not,” he whispered, “for the officer may mean you well, but remember there are others who want to get you into their power, and you will repent it.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Dick. “I have come on board this vessel of my own free will, and would rather stay where I am. If you will see father and mother, and tell them I am all right, I will be obliged to you.”

“You see, sir, that the lad doesn’t want to go, and as you have found nothing on board to enable you to detain this vessel, I must beg you to let us make sail, for we are drifting in shore closer than is safe.”

Again the lieutenant appealed to Dick. Dore, however, suspected that if the lieutenant got him into his power he might induce him to come forward to prove that the *Nancy* was engaged in smuggling, and that he should then be deprived of his privateer’s licence, so, giving a hint to his men, they surrounded Dick and carried him forward.

As the lieutenant had performed his duty, he ordered his men into the boats and they pulled away for the shore, while the *Nancy* stood out to sea.

Chapter Five.

At the hall—Refusal of Lord Reginald’s gift—Lady Elverston and her daughters—Troubles of the farmer’s wife—Preparations for rejoining the Wolf—Lieutenant Hilton—Information received of an intended landing—Lord Reginald and Voules join the revenue party—Fight with the smugglers—Success of the king’s party—An encounter between the young lord and Richard Hargrave—Dick’s defence—Lord Reginald hurt—Escape of the farmer’s son—Unfavourable opinion of Dick at the hall—The marquis and Voules—The midshipmen rejoin the Wolf.

Lord Reginald and his messmate greatly enjoyed their stay at Elverston Hall. Parties of all sorts were got up for their

amusement, and guests were invited to meet them—Voules taking good care to sing the praises of his friend.

He employed his time, much to his own satisfaction, in paying court to Lady Elverston, and endeavouring guardedly to win his way into the good graces of the younger ladies. They were always ready to listen to him while he was talking of their brother, whose faults they either had not discovered, or were willing to overlook. To them, at all events, he was always affectionate and courteous, whatever he might be to others.

The rest of the household were not altogether so well satisfied with his dictatorial, overbearing manners, though they acknowledged that he might be a very brave officer, who would some day prove an ornament to his profession; but the wish was general, if not expressed, that he would soon go off again to sea.

Though still feeling angry with Dick for the impertinent and bold way in which he had spoken to him, he did not forget his promise to replace the dog he had shot; and as soon as he could find a suitable animal he despatched it by a groom to Farmer Hargrave's daughter, sending, at the same time, a note expressing his regret at the accident. It arrived just as Mr Gooch had left the cottage, and the interview the farmer had had with the bailiff had not been calculated to soothe his feelings. Mr Gooch had again threatened him with legal proceedings, and had accused him of sending his son out of the way to avoid the consequences of his misdeeds. Farmer Hargrave, of course, denied this, asserting that he did not know where his son was.

He was standing at the door when the groom, leading the dog, arrived, and delivered his message from Lord Reginald.

"Tell my lord that my daughter doesn't require a dog. None can replace the poor brute that was killed, of which she was very fond. So I beg you'll take it back, and say I am much obliged to him for his intentions," he said.

"I don't think my lord will be well pleased to hear this, Farmer Hargrave," answered the man. "He thought he was doing your daughter a great honour in sending her a dog, but he didn't do it on account of your son, I've a fancy."

"The very reason why I refused to receive the animal," answered the farmer. "I have nothing more to say; and the least said the soonest mended."

"Am I to take this message, then?" asked the groom.

"Yes; I have no other to send. Good day to you," said the farmer, turning round as if about to enter his house.

The man led off the dog, observing to himself, "The young lord will be in a pretty way when he hears this; it won't be the better for the farmer or Master Dick. That young fellow will get into more trouble if he doesn't mend his manners."

Lord Reginald, who had just returned with Voules from a ride, was standing in front of the house when the groom appeared, leading the dog.

"I thought I ordered you to take that dog to Farmer Hargrave?" exclaimed the midshipman.

"So I did, my lord, but Farmer Hargrave won't have him, and says he doesn't want any gifts from your lordship."

"Impudent fellow!" observed Voules. "The father must be as great a barbarian as that precious son of his."

"Did you give him my message properly?" asked Lord Reginald.

"Yes, my lord, word for word, and I advised Farmer Hargrave to take the dog, but he would not on any account."

"Then his daughter must go without the animal. I sent it to her, not to him," said Lord Reginald, turning to Voules. "This sort of thing is really provoking; the people about here are next door to savages. I was rather inclined to pity the old Hargraves on account of their blind daughter, but I shall persuade my father to do as Gooch advises. His house and barns are a great eyesore from the dining-room windows, and we shall be able to add several acres to the park if he could be removed."

"Whether he is right or no, he ought, for the sake of pleasing the marquis, to be ready to give up his farm," said Voules, "and if he won't do so of his own accord, he should be compelled. I have no idea of the commonalty venturing to set themselves up against the aristocracy in the way they have done since the French Revolution."

Lord Reginald had been induced by a right motive to send the dog, and the refusal of the farmer to receive it again raised his angry feelings against Dick. "If I come across the young fellow, I'll punish him for his own and his father's impertinence!" he exclaimed.

The incident, slight as it may appear, prevented him for some days enjoying, as he might otherwise have done, the pleasures of home. Lady Elverston had fulfilled her promise of speaking to the marquis.

"I would not, of course, act unjustly towards Hargrave," he answered; "but Gooch, who has consulted the lawyer, tells me that I have a perfect right to turn him out; besides which I have offered him an ample sum to go, but he has refused to receive the compensation, and insists on standing up for what he calls his rights. I, of course, cannot be thwarted by a man at my own gates, and have given authority to Gooch to proceed as he thinks necessary for my interests."

"But we consider the farm-house, the stacks, and the buildings, picturesque objects in the distance, and we could not desire to have near us more respectable, worthy people than the Hargraves," urged Lady Elverston.

“He is an obstinate fellow, and a Republican at heart, and will to a certainty vote against our son, should John stand for the next Parliament,” answered the marquis. “However, I promise you I will act with perfect justice; but you could not wish me to submit to the insolence of a fellow of his description.”

Poor Lady Elverston, though not convinced that her husband was right, was unable to say anything more. She saw that he had been strongly biased against the farmer, and she was naturally displeased with the way his son had behaved to Lord Reginald. Her compassionate feelings for Janet, however, were not altered. In the afternoon, accompanied by Lady Julia, she took a drive in her pony carriage. In passing Farmer Hargrave’s house she stopped to see Janet, wishing also to ascertain the reason for the objection Mr Hargrave had to giving up his farm, and hoping to induce him to yield with a good grace to the wishes of the marquis.

The ladies found Janet and her mother seated in the parlour. A smile played over the countenance of the blind girl when she heard the voice of the marchioness.

“Very kind, my lady, very kind in you to come and see us, and mother wants so much to talk to your ladyship about the matter of the farm,” she said, after the ordinary inquiries had been made and answered.

Lady Elverston was glad of this opportunity of entering on the subject, and she begged to hear what Mrs Hargrave had to say.

“My husband, my lady, doesn’t desire to oppose the wishes of the marquis, but as every Englishman should—as your ladyship will agree—he stands on his rights, and as he has a long lease of this property, which his fathers for many generations held before him, he refuses to be compelled to give it up. You see, my lady, Mr Gooch has been here and threatened that the law will force him if he refuses, and when my good man told him that the law could not compel him, the bailiff said that he would bring up our son Richard before the justices for threatening to shoot Lord Reginald, which I cannot believe he ever did, even though he was vexed at his lordship killing his dog. My husband, my lady, is a determined man, and neither I nor any one else can induce him to change his mind if he thinks he is doing what is right.”

“I certainly would not ask him to do what he thinks is wrong,” said Lady Elverston, “and I am quite sure that the marquis did not give authority to Mr Gooch to use any threats. Lord Elverston told me this morning that he was willing to offer any reasonable compensation to your husband for quitting the farm, and he would probably give him ample time to find another equally suitable.”

“I was sure, my lady, that the marquis would not have allowed the bailiff to make use of the threats he did; and if you will speak again to his lordship and induce him to make a fair offer to my husband, though it would well-nigh break our hearts to move, I will try and get him to accept it.”

Lady Elverston, who suspected that the marquis had been deceived by Mr Gooch, promised again to speak to him; though well aware that he was as obstinate as the farmer, she did not say that she was certain of success. Lady Julia in the mean time was talking in her gentle way to Janet, and promised to call for her the first sunny day to take her out for a drive in the pony-carriage. Her ladyship then inquired for Dick, and expressed a hope that he would harbour no ill feelings towards her son.

“I pray that he won’t, my lady; he has ever been a good and faithful son to us, though somewhat headstrong at times, but he has not a revengeful spirit, and I am sure he would not wish to harm Lord Reginald. We are in sad trouble about him, for Mr Gooch frightened him so by his threats, that he has gone away, we don’t know where.”

“Have you no clue to his hiding-place?” asked Lady Elverston. “I should much like to have some conversation with him, and I trust that I might soften any lingering ill feeling—should such exist in his breast—towards my son.”

“I shall never forget your kindness, whatever happens, my lady,” said Mrs Hargrave.

After some further conversation, the marchioness took her departure, accompanied by Lady Julia, still, however, in considerable doubt whether she had done much to settle the vexed question.

The time of the two midshipmen’s stay at Elverston Hall was drawing to a close. Voules had received a letter from a messmate, saying that the *Wolf* was nearly ready for sea. He flattered himself that he had not let the grass grow under his feet; that he had established himself in the good graces of Lord and Lady Elverston; and he had even the vanity to suppose that he had made some progress in those of Lady Julia. He was gentlemanly in his manners, and Lord Reginald always spoke of him as “a capital fellow,” and seemed to regard him with affection.

Lord Reginald himself, accustomed to an active life, was, however, beginning to grow somewhat tired of his stay on shore; though attached to his family, he was perfectly ready to go back to his ship. He had experienced, indeed, lately some difficulty in finding amusement for himself and companion. He and Voules had made the acquaintance of the lieutenant of the neighbouring coastguard station, who, having seen a great deal of service, and being a merry fellow, with a fund of anecdote, was an amusing companion. Lieutenant Hilton had several times been invited to dine at the hall, an honour he highly appreciated, although it cost him a long trudge there and back, over a somewhat wild region, with the risk of encountering some of the lawless characters of the neighbourhood, who looked upon him as their worst foe. He had one day been dining at the hall; the gentlemen having indulged freely in the bottle, as was too common in those times, were about to join the ladies in the drawing-room, when a servant entered to inform Lieutenant Hilton that a person wished to see him immediately on important business.

“He has probably brought information that a run is to be made to-night, and if so, Hilton, we’ll accompany you to see the fun,” said Lord Reginald. “Don’t go off without us, remember. We’ll mount you, and we will ride together, with any one else who likes to come.”

Lieutenant Hilton hurried out to see the messenger. He returned to say that Lord Reginald was right in his conjectures, and that there was no time to be lost, as a suspicious lugger had been seen off the coast, and that as the night promised to be dark, there was no doubt she would try to run her cargo before the morning.

The other gentlemen declined the proposed expedition, and Voules would gladly have remained behind, but he could not venture to allow Lord Reginald to go without him, especially as he himself had proposed assisting the revenue, should an opportunity occur. Very unwillingly, therefore, he went to his room to prepare for the ride, instead of passing the evening, as he had hoped, in the society of Lady Julia.

The marquis, although he would rather his son had not undertaken what might prove a hazardous expedition, could not object, as he had expressed his resolution by every means in his power to put down the smugglers. The horses were soon ready, and the lieutenant and the two midshipmen, led by the mounted exciseman who had brought the information, set off by a road which would lead them to the westward of Milford. The excise officer informed the lieutenant that a messenger had been despatched to obtain the assistance of a party of dragoons stationed at Lymington, and that a small body of sea-fencibles, belonging to the district, were hurrying on towards the expected scene of action. With the aid of the lieutenant's own men, a sufficient force would thus, it was hoped, be collected to seize the goods should they be landed, while the boats on the station were despatched to try and capture the lugger herself before she had completely discharged her cargo. The exact spot where it was intended the lugger should run her cargo was unknown, but it was supposed that it would be somewhere between Hurst and Christchurch. The cliffs here are of considerable height, rising above a narrow beach, and, continually crumbling away, exhibit numerous fossil remains. In some places they are broken by narrow gullies, which, sloping up gradually from the shore to the downs above, afford easy pathways up which both men and loaded animals can climb without much difficulty.

Since information had first been received of the intended run from a treacherous confederate of the smugglers, preparations for their capture had been carried on with the greatest possible secrecy and rapidity. It was important to prevent the smugglers' associates on shore from discovering that the revenue men were approaching.

Lieutenant Hilton having reached his station, summoned eight of his own men to accompany him. Here the midshipmen were provided with pistols and cutlasses. Their services were likely to be of use, as it was certain the smugglers would muster in large numbers. The horses were left at the station, while the lieutenant and his party proceeded to the spot where the sea-fencibles were posted, waiting for any information they might receive to guide their future proceedings.

It was in a hollow, surrounded by trees and brushwood, and about half a mile or so from the sea-shore. The night, as had been expected, was very dark, the wind a moderate breeze, blowing from the north-west. Not a word was spoken above a whisper, for fear lest their position should be discovered by any passing associates of the smugglers. The latter had given it out that the run was to be made on the other side of Christchurch head, and to induce them to suppose that this was believed, a party of revenue men had started off in that direction, taking care that their movements should be observed. It was hoped by this that the smugglers would be deceived, and would attempt the run at the spot named in the private information which had been received.

"This is dull work!" whispered Voules to Lord Reginald. "I thought we should be up and doing long ago."

"Dull enough! I vote we set off by ourselves, to try and find out what the smugglers are about," answered Lord Reginald.

"I should recommend riding back to the hall, and letting our friends here follow their own devices," said Voules; "but it would not do, now that we have once put ourselves under Hilton's command, to desert him."

Their patience was to be further tried. At last, one of the scouts who had been set to watch the direction taken by those who were sure to assist in the landing, came in with the intelligence that he had traced them midway between the hamlets of Barton and Ash, and that he had seen suspicious lights both on shore and at sea. The latter were, it was guessed, shown on board the lugger, which was exchanging signals with the spotsmen on shore, leaving little doubt as to where the goods would be run. As the distance to the spot was considerable, there was no time to be lost, for not only might the lugger's cargo be landed, but carried far away into the interior before the revenue men could get there. There was a danger, however, should they arrive too soon, of their being discovered by the smugglers, who would in that case put off to sea again and wait for a more favourable opportunity.

The road followed by Lieutenant Hilton and his party led some distance from the shore. They proceeded as fast as they could move, forming a compact body, that they might run the less risk of being seen. The commander of the sea-fencibles arranged the plan of proceeding. He, with his men, would go to the westward, while the lieutenant was to attack the smugglers on the opposite side, and the excisemen were to guard the upper part of the hollow or gully which led down to the water, so as to catch any of the smugglers who might be making their way up it to escape. This plan was arranged as they went along.

On reaching the neighbourhood of the spot, they halted, and scouts were sent out to ascertain if the smugglers had collected where they had been expected. In a short time the scouts returned, stating that a large body of men were on the beach, and one of them added that he had nearly been discovered by a party with pack animals proceeding down the gully which led to the same part of the shore. Lord Reginald was on the point of exhibiting his satisfaction by giving a loud shout, when Voules stopped him.

"On my lads!" said the lieutenant in a low voice; and he led his men by a narrow path which wound down the cliff to the west of the village of Barton, while the rest of the party, by a wide circuit, made their way to the opposite side.

It was agreed that Lieutenant Hilton should fire off a couple of pistols in rapid succession, as the signal for attacking the smugglers, and that both parties were to rush on them simultaneously, while the men at the top of the gully should stop them from making their escape in that direction.

Lord Reginald was eager for the attack, but Voules, as he made out the numbers in which the smugglers mustered, heartily wished that he had remained to enjoy the society of the ladies at the hall.

“We are likely to get more kicks than ha’pence, and little honour, at all events,” he muttered to himself.

From where they lay concealed, they could observe the boats coming on shore with the lugger’s cargo. The lieutenant watched until he considered that the larger portion had been landed. He directed Lord Reginald and Voules, with three men, to guard the foot of a pathway leading up the cliff, by which possibly some of the smugglers might attempt to make their escape. The outlaws had been carrying on their undertaking in perfect silence. Not a sound had been heard, when the report of the two pistols echoed among the cliffs. It was the signal for a general uproar. The revenue men dashed forward from both sides towards the party on the beach, who began shouting and swearing vehemently. Then came the flash of firearms, and the clash of cutlasses. The smugglers fought desperately. Some were hurriedly loading the horses, hoping to escape with a portion of the goods by land, others were engaged in throwing the packages back into the boats, and endeavouring to shove off, and regain the lugger. The revenue officers, knowing that this would be attempted, rushed forward to prevent them. Here some of the hottest fighting took place. As they could not escape through the gully, no attempt was made to stop them from entering it. Before long, however, the smugglers discovered how they had been entrapped, when those who had gone off came running back with the disastrous intelligence. All attempts to save the goods were abandoned. Each man thought only how he could best make his escape. Some endeavoured to climb the cliffs, others rushed beneath them, to the westward. One party made a dash for the pathway guarded by Lord Reginald and Voules. So furious was their onslaught, that Voules was knocked over, and while their men had each an opponent, two other smugglers rushed past Lord Reginald. He fired, but whether his bullet took effect or not, he could not tell; by the flash, however, he thought that he recognised the features of Dick Hargrave, whose companion, wresting the young lord’s sword from his grasp, dashed on up the path, and both were soon lost to sight in the darkness. Lord Reginald made a vain attempt to follow the fugitives, but, unable to see his way, was glad to rejoin his companions.

“I know the young rascal, and have now proof positive that he is a smuggler!” he exclaimed. “Voules, did you see him?”

But Voules, who had been lying on the sand where he had been thrown, some feet below, only just then began to recover. Several seconds elapsed before he was again able to take part in what was going forward. The other smugglers, who had tried to escape up the path, were secured.

The fighting continued, however, for some time longer, till, one after the other, the smugglers were knocked down and captured, four being killed, and a large number wounded, while two of the revenue men lost their lives, and several others were severely hurt. Dore, with the few people still remaining on board the lugger, waited in the hopes of the boats getting off, but when they knew by their not returning that their friends must have been taken, the cable was cut, and the *Nancy* stood out to sea. She had, however, proceeded but a short distance when two revenue boats dashed alongside, and her diminished crew, being unable to make any effectual resistance, she was captured, with the remainder of the contraband goods on board, more than sufficient to condemn her.

Lieutenant Hilton was very well pleased with the result of the enterprise. Seldom had so large a capture been effected. He had, however, still a difficult task to perform, as he had scarcely men sufficient to guard the prisoners, whose desperate character he knew full well, while he had the additional duty of conducting the packhorses.

The smugglers at first appeared to submit quietly enough, but that was no proof that they would continue to do so, should they find an opportunity of escaping.

As there were not more than three lanterns among the whole party, it was difficult to ascertain whether the prisoners were properly secured. At any moment, they might break loose and effect their escape. They had, indeed, every motive for doing so. They had not only been captured smuggling, but had weapons in their hands, opposing the king’s authority, and one and all of them might be tried for the death of the two revenue men who had fallen. All who had been taken were now brought together and placed under the cliffs, watched by a strong guard, while the bales and kegs, which lay scattered about in all directions, were collected and packed on the horses.

The order to march was given. The pack animals went first, followed by the captured smugglers, who uttered curses, deep if not loud, on their hard fate. Then came the men told off to carry the wounded who were too much hurt to walk. Lord Reginald and Voules brought up the rear. The killed were left above high water mark on the beach, until a party could be sent to carry them to Barton churchyard, where the revenue man and smuggler were destined to lie side by side.

The party at length reached the top of the cliff, and directed their course towards the high road running between Christchurch and Lymington. They had proceeded about a mile, when a number of armed men, springing out from behind the hedges on either side, suddenly attacked the conductors of the pack-horses, which they endeavoured to carry off. The prisoners, taking advantage of the confusion, attempted to escape, and there appeared every probability that some would succeed.

“Cut down the fellows, if they try to get off!” cried Voules, and the other officers repeated the order.

At that moment the clattering sound of horses’ hoofs coming along the road was heard. A cry arose, “The dragoons are upon us!” The men who had made the last daring attempt to recover the goods took to flight. Two were captured by the soldiers, who went in pursuit, but the rest effected their escape.

Mr Hilton gladly handed over the prisoners to the charge of the military, while he accompanied Lord Reginald and Voules back to the station where they had left their horses.

“I wish that you would remain here until the morning,” said the lieutenant, when they reached it. “There are a

number of rough characters allied with the smugglers, who, should they fall in with you, may take it into their heads to revenge themselves by shooting you."

"I am not afraid of them," answered the young lord. "Voules and I together are able to tackle a dozen such fellows. Thank you for your invitation, but our friends at the hall will be anxious to know what has happened, and I want to tell my father how admirably you have managed affairs."

The lieutenant, finding that the midshipmen could not be induced to remain, ordered the horses to be brought out, and Lord Reginald, saying that he would the next morning send a groom for the animal the lieutenant had ridden, being well acquainted with the way, set off with Voules for the hall.

"As there is no fear of our losing the road, even in the dark, we may as well take a short cut," he observed, after they had gone some distance. "We shall save a mile or more, and have the advantage of turf. The moon, too, will soon be up, and we shall be able to gallop a good part of the distance."

Voules had nothing to say against this proposal, though he would have preferred the high road.

"This lane will lead us on to the heath, and as the sky is clear, there will be light enough, even before the moon rises, besides which our horses know the way as well as I do," said Lord Reginald.

They rode down the lane at a more steady pace than they had hitherto been going, for it was full of ruts, and somewhat narrow and winding. It conducted them on to a wild heath, beyond which could be discerned the outskirts of the New Forest, the trees in some places projecting over the heath like the advance guard of an army, while in others wild glades opened out extending far into the interior. Towards one of these glades Lord Reginald directed his course.

"By keeping a little to the right it will lead us to the high road again," he observed. "There's the moon just rising above the trees. We shall be able to push along now, without fear of rushing into a hedge."

Crossing the heath by a tolerably well-defined footpath, they entered the forest, and were galloping along a grassy glade, on which their horses' hoofs produced scarcely a sound, when Lord Reginald uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Halloa! I see a fellow ahead. Where can he be going?"

"Probably one of the smugglers, who managed to make his escape," answered Voules.

"Whoever he is, we will stop him and ascertain why he is out at this time of night. Stop, you fellow!" cried Lord Reginald; "we want to speak to you."

The person, who apparently had not before heard them coming, only increased his pace; on seeing which the young lord spurred on his horse.

The stranger, who might possibly have escaped by darting in among the trees, instead of making the attempt, finding that his pursuers were gaining on him, stopped and faced them, holding a thick stick, which might properly have been called a club, in his hand.

"Throw down that bludgeon and come here," said Lord Reginald.

"Not while I am spoken to in that tone," answered the stranger. "I have as much right to be out in this forest as you have."

"You must tell us who you are, and where you are going!" cried Lord Reginald, riding up to him.

The stranger lifted up his club, exclaiming, "Hands off! If you attempt to touch me, you must take the consequences."

Just then a gleam of light from the rising moon shone on the stranger's face.

"I know the rascal!" cried Lord Reginald; "it's that young Hargrave. Not the first time we have met tonight. You are one of the fellows who made their escape from the excisemen; but you are not going to do so from us; so yield at once! Come, help me, Voules!" and the young lord, spurring forward his horse, attempted to seize Dick by the shoulder.

The latter sprang back, and, whirling round his club, struck Lord Reginald a blow on the arm which effectually prevented him from using it, and before Voules could lay hold of him, Dick had rushed off among the trees, which quickly concealed him from view.

In vain Lord Reginald, in spite of the pain he was suffering, urged his horse after him. The stems of the trees, growing thickly together, prevented him from following, and Dick was soon safe beyond the pursuit of the horsemen.

"This is provoking; but we will have him yet!" cried Lord Reginald.

"I am afraid the villain has broken your arm!" exclaimed Voules.

"It seems something like it from the pain I am suffering," answered Lord Reginald; "however, the sooner we can get home to have it looked to the better."

"Yes, indeed," said Voules; "I am deeply grieved. I would have shot the young savage had I thought he would have

had the audacity to strike you."

"No, no; I should have been sorry if the fellow had been killed," said Lord Reginald. "All I wanted was to take him prisoner, and send him off with the rest to sea, for I suppose that will be the lot of all who are fit to serve. However, as we are not likely to see more of him for the present, I shall be glad to get home. This arm of mine hurts me fearfully."

They again put their horses into a gallop, and continued on until they reached the end of the glade, which led out on the high road. Lord Reginald bore the pain manfully; indeed, it was surprising that he did not faint and fall from his horse. The trotting along the road was even worse than the gallop, and at last he had to tell Voules to stop and walk. It was nearly two o'clock in the morning when they reached the hall. They found Lord and Lady Elverston, with Lord John, sitting up for them.

"Most thankful to see you back," said Lord Elverston, who came out to meet them; "we were too anxious to go to bed. One of the grooms had brought word that there had been a desperate fight between the revenue men and the smugglers, and that there had been a number of killed and wounded. Good Heavens! what is the matter? You look very pale. Are you hurt?"

"Yes, but not in the fight," answered Reginald, as he entered the drawing-room and sank into a chair. He then described the encounter with Richard Hargrave.

"The young ruffian must be punished," exclaimed the marquis. "It is evident that he is leagued with the smugglers, and this last outrage shows his desperate character. Do you feel much pain?"

"Very much; indeed, I fear that my arm is broken," answered Lord Reginald.

On hearing this Lady Elverston came to his side. "My dear boy, I trust not," she said; "you must go to bed, and let Mrs Cross and me examine your arm."

"If it is broken we must send off for a surgeon immediately," said the marquis.

"I would rather have some supper first. I dare say so would Voules, for we both of us felt very hungry as we came along, and I hope after all, no bone is broken."

The tray was at once brought up, and though Voules did ample justice to the viands it contained, Lord Reginald, after making several ineffectual attempts to eat, had to confess that the pain overpowered him, and he allowed himself to be led off to his room by his mother and brother.

Mrs Cross, the housekeeper, was soon in attendance, having evidently, by the way her dress was put on, with her night-cap on her head, just risen from her slumbers. The young lord was quickly undressed, when, on his arm being examined, Mrs Cross declared it as her opinion that no bone was broken; and all that was required were fomentations and rest.

"I am sorry to hear so bad a character of young Hargrave. His mother and blind sister are at all events good people, and it will grieve them sorely," observed Lady Elverston to her husband, who answered only with the significant exclamation of—

"Humph! Perhaps so."

The pain was somewhat relieved by the fomentations applied by the housekeeper, who offered to sit up with the young lord; and though he declared that he should do very well without assistance, he was glad at length to accept her offer.

Voules came in just before going to bed, to express his deep concern.

"I shall do very well in a day or two," said Lord Reginald, "and it won't prevent me from joining my ship."

Notwithstanding his assertion, he was very feverish during the night, when he was constantly uttering expressions which showed the animosity he felt against Dick Hargrave, complaining that he was the cause of the pain he was enduring. This was reported the next morning by Mrs Cross to the marchioness.

"It is a shame, my lady, that so bad a lad should be allowed to be at large. I hope my lord will have him taken up and sent off to Botany Bay, or anywhere out of the way, for if he meets Lord Reginald again, I don't know what will come of it."

Next morning the doctor, who had been sent for, arrived, and greatly relieved the minds of Lord and Lady Elverston by assuring them that their son's arm was not broken.

"No thanks to the young ruffian who inflicted the blow," observed the marquis; "we must have him apprehended, for such an outrage must not be allowed to go unpunished."

The doctor directed Lord Reginald's arm to be fomented, and observed that he must carry it for a few days in a sling, assuring him that he need not fear any serious consequences.

"Then it will not prevent him from joining his ship?" observed the marquis, who had his reasons for wishing that the midshipmen should not remain longer at Elverston.

"Not if he can perform his duty without going aloft, or using his arm for the present," replied the doctor.

Lord Elverston said he would write to the captain on the subject.

“In that case his lordship may join his ship immediately,” observed the doctor, who seemed to understand the marquis’s wishes.

Voules, who had been present during the discussion, was far from satisfied with the doctor’s decision. He had hoped that the injury Lord Reginald had received would serve him as an excuse for remaining until the frigate was on the point of sailing, as he himself was in no hurry to leave Elverston Hall.

The marquis, however, had observed his attentions to Lady Julia, and although he gave his daughter credit for discretion, he thought it was as well to send the young gentleman away. Having a pretty good knowledge of the world, he had taken the measure of Toady Voules more accurately than his son had done, and had seen through him. When Lord Reginald, faithful to his promise, had begged his father to use his influence at the Admiralty to get Voules promoted, the marquis replied that he should be happy to serve any friend of his, but for certain reasons he could make no promise, and that he must know more about the young gentleman before he could recommend him to their lordships.

“But he is really a capital fellow,” said Lord Reginald. “He sticks like a leech to me, and I can always depend upon him.”

“Leeches suck blood,” answered the marquis, laughing. “I don’t think you have well considered the simile.”

“I mean that he is always ready at hand when I want him to do anything I require,” answered Lord Reginald. “He is the most convenient fellow I ever met.”

“Well, well, I will remember your wishes,” said the marquis.

Lord Reginald saw that he must not press the point further. Voules looked very melancholy at the thought of leaving Elverston. He was in an especially bad humour too, for though Lady Julia treated him as she had always done, he began to suspect that he had made no great way in her good graces. The utter indifference she showed when he talked of going away, convinced him of this, and although to the last the family treated him, as Lord Reginald’s friend, with the utmost kindness, no one expressed the hope that they might soon again have the pleasure of seeing him.

A couple of days having passed, the midshipmen were ready to obey the order to rejoin their ship. A Yarmouth pilot vessel having been engaged to convey them to Portsmouth, they set sail in her from Keyhaven. Taking a favourable tide, with a fair wind, they might easily get there in six hours, whereas the journey by land would have occupied nearly a couple of days. The crew of the pilot vessel, as they stepped on board, looked at the midshipmen askance, evidently having heard of the part they had taken in the capture of the smugglers, many of whom were their relatives and friends. The captain, however, treated them with the greatest civility, but took good care not to answer any questions they put to him concerning the smugglers, leaving them to suppose that he was ignorant of the existence of such persons, and was not even aware that there was any smuggling on that coast.

Of Dick Hargrave nothing had been heard, but a warrant had been taken out for his apprehension, and people were on the watch to capture him should he make his appearance, or should his place of concealment be discovered. A fresh breeze quickly carrying the cutter up to Portsmouth, Lord Reginald and Voules once more found themselves on board the *Wolf*, which had hauled away from the dockyard, ready to go out to Spithead.

Chapter Six.

The second trip of the Nancy—Particulars of the landing—How it fared with Dick and Ben—Wandering in the forest—In hiding—Nearly caught—Seized by a pressgang—Kindness of the landlady at the Admiral Benbow—Ben Rudall a prisoner—On board the tender—Off Cowes—The Wolf—Mr Bitts, the boatswain—Dick recognises Lord Reginald and Voules—An attempt to make an exchange.

When Dick Hargrave sailed the second time on board the *Nancy*, he forgot the saying that “the pitcher which goes often to the well gets broken at last,” or that few who follow a lawless occupation escape from suffering in the end. Of course, he should have been influenced by a far higher motive, but he had not been taught to look upon smuggling in the same light which an honest man does nowadays. Even his father regarded it with a lenient eye, though he had ever refused to take a share in the proceedings of the smugglers by permitting his horses to be used in transporting the goods when landed on the coast. Dick had a tolerably pleasant life on board the *Nancy*, as Dore and the crew always treated him kindly.

The lugger, as before, ran into the quiet little harbour in which she was wont to take her goods on board, and had a narrow escape from a French cruiser; but had got free by the very common device of lowering all her canvas during the night and allowing her pursuer to pass her. Without further cause for alarm, she made the English coast. Dick, though he liked the life well enough, had no wish to continue in it; he wanted to see his parents and Janet, and to relieve their anxiety about him. He had resolved, therefore, to quit the *Nancy*, and to go on shore with Ben, who did not intend to make the next trip in her. It was settled, therefore, that he and Ben were to pull in one of the boats engaged in landing the cargo, and that afterwards they were to assist in escorting the goods safe into the interior. After they had once got away from the coast, there was but little danger of their being captured.

“All right,” said Ben to Dick, as the lugger stood in to the westward of the Shingles; “the revenue men have been told that there is to be a run made this very night, Portland way, and they will all have gone off there and left the coast clear for us, so that there is no fear as to our getting the goods safe on shore.”

There seemed every probability that Ben's prognostications would prove true. The night was dark, and the wind sufficiently off shore to enable the *Nancy* to stand close in. The expected signals were seen. The anchor was dropped, the boats lowered, and immediately afterwards, others came off from the shore, bringing the satisfactory intelligence that everything was clear for the run. The vessel was rapidly unloaded. The greater part of her cargo had been discharged, and was already on the beach, when the reports of Lieutenant Hilton's pistols were heard, and the smugglers found themselves beset on both sides by their enemies. Dick and Ben were already on shore, and were engaged in loading the packhorses.

"You get out of it, Dick," said Ben, "either climb the cliff or run along the beach; you've nothing to fight for."

Dick hesitated; he felt that it would be cowardly to desert his companions.

Ben, though not thus influenced, suspected his motive. "Come, lad," he said; "there's a path not far from this, and the chances are there is no one to stop us going up it; I'll show thee the way." Saying this, he dashed forward quickly, followed by Dick.

He was disappointed in one respect—the path was guarded, but knocking over the first person who opposed him, who happened to be Mr Voules, and wrenching the cutlass out of Lord Reginald's hand, he dashed on. Dick, who kept close behind him, had a narrow escape of being shot, and felt pretty sure that Lord Reginald, whom he recognised, had seen him.

Continuing on a short time, they were satisfied that they were not pursued, and might proceed homewards with little risk of further interruption. Still, Ben could not resist the temptation of trying to ascertain the fate of his companions. It appeared to him that they had been attacked by a comparatively small party, and that could a number of determined men be collected, they might effect a rescue. He and Dick made their way, therefore, to a farm-house, in which it had been arranged that the heavier part of the goods should be stowed, until they could be conveyed away to a distance. Here he found several persons, to whom he gave the first intelligence of the disaster. They instantly hurried off to collect other men from all directions. As it was well known what road the party with the captured goods would take, they intended to form an ambush to surprise them, but the smugglers, not having time to do this, made their attack in a less favourable position, with the result which has been seen.

Dick again escaped, but what became of Ben he could not tell, though he hoped that he also had got off. Much as he had wished to see his father and mother, he now almost dreaded to meet them. His intention was to reach home by daybreak, and having seen them again to go off and hide himself in a woodman's hut in the forest, or in some other place, where he could remain until the search after him had ceased. It was not likely indeed, that much trouble would be taken, unless Mr Gooch, for the sake of influencing his father, tried to get him into his power.

With this intention he was making his way towards home, his thoughts so occupied that he did not hear the approach of Lord Reginald and Voules until they were close upon him. He would gladly have avoided an encounter, but at the same time he determined not to be taken prisoner when he saw that such was the young lord's intention. What happened has been described. On escaping from Lord Reginald, he soon reached a thick bush, behind which he could conceal himself with little chance of being discovered. He there lay perfectly quiet until he heard the two horsemen ride off.

"I am thankful I had not my gun with me, or I might have been tempted to use it," he said to himself. "Why should that young lord persecute me? He had no business to come and help the revenue men, and it could do him and that other fellow no good to make me a prisoner, except to boast of what they had done. If I go home now they will accuse poor father and mother of harbouring me, and I shall bring them into trouble. I wonder, after all, if Ben got off. If I thought that he did, I'd go to his cottage. He would hide me there until these two fellows have gone back to their ship, and the rest have got tired of looking for me. If poor Janet could see, I'd go home and let her alone know that I had come, and she would hide me away. As she can't help me, poor girl! I don't know what to do."

Such were some of Dick's meditations. Overcome with fatigue, he lay down to rest a little, and, as was very natural, fell fast asleep. When he awoke it was broad daylight. It would not now do to venture down to Keyhaven. He would too probably meet some of the revenue men, who would to a certainty capture him. Home he dared not go; his only alternative was to remain in the forest until the return of night, when he could traverse the country with less risk of encountering any one. He was very hungry, but he was equally afraid of going to any cottage to beg for a crust, lest he should be recognised. Not far off was a pool, of which there were many in the forest, where he quenched his thirst. Hips and haws were now ripe, there were plenty around could, he eat enough to satisfy the cravings of hunger. There were tench, too, in some of the pools—fine, fat fish, which he might catch, as they lay under the bank, with his hands, but he had no means of lighting a fire to cook them. He walked about listening, lest he might be surprised by any one coming; then, growing weary, he again sat down under his bush. He was very hungry and very unhappy. Sometimes he thought he would go home in spite of the risk he would run, and try to see his mother alone. He might easily hide in one of the out-buildings, and steal in when his father had left the house, but then, knowing that he had been recognised by Lord Reginald, who would, he supposed, inform against him, he feared that he might be discovered by those who would be sent to search for him, though his mother, he felt sure, would do her best to conceal him.

"I had better not," he said to himself; "it shall only get father and mother into trouble; if they don't know where I am, they cannot say. I'll go down to Susan Rudall's; she'll stow me away, if I can reach her cottage without being seen. No one will think of looking for me there."

Dick, when on board the lugger, had been rigged out thoroughly as a young sailor. The dress, as he thought, was a sufficient disguise, should he meet any one in the gloom of the evening. His hunger made him very eager to reach Susan's as soon as possible. Soon after the sun had set, therefore, he started for Keyhaven, going along by the by-paths, and keeping himself concealed as much as possible among the trees and brushwood. He calculated that it

would be perfectly dark by the time he got to the village, and that he might enter Susan's cottage without being perceived. For some time, meeting no one, he became bolder, and made his way along the lanes with less caution than he had before used. He had just turned an angle of the road, when he saw in the distance several persons coming towards him. He darted back, hoping that he had not been seen, and, getting through a hedge, he lay down in a dry ditch.

Though perfectly concealed, he was almost afraid to breathe, lest he might be heard by the people passing. They had been too far off when first seen to enable him to ascertain who they were, and he dared not look through the hedge, lest they should perceive him. His heart beat quickly as he heard their footsteps approaching; he felt like a criminal escaping from justice. Though constitutionally brave, the consciousness that he had acted wrongly in many respects made him a coward. The men were only, as far as he could judge, labourers returning home after their day's work. He heard them talking of the attempted run of contraband goods, the capture of the *Nancy* and her crew, as well as of the number of people assisting in the landing who had been taken.

"It will go hard with some of them," observed one of the speakers; "they'll bring it in 'murder,' maybe, as two of the king's officers were killed, if they can prove who fired the shots. Whether of not, Botany Bay is the best they can expect, and many a year before they can see their wives and families again."

"A reward is offered for catching the chaps who escaped," said another.

What more was said Dick could not hear; he was thankful that he had not been seen by the men, or they would probably have detained him for the sake of the reward. He waited until they had got some distance, and then, creeping along the hedge, he again got into the lane, and ran on as before, looking out ahead so that he might not come suddenly on any other persons. Hungry and tired, he at length got close to Keyhaven. To pass through the village without being seen would be difficult. He heard voices, as if people were still about, and lights shone in the windows of the cottages in sight. Had he not been so hungry, he would have again hidden under a hedge until later in the evening; but eager to obtain something to eat, he hurried on, hoping by good chance to reach Susan's cottage without being observed. He was passing the Rodney's Head, when several persons issued from the door.

"Hullo! make that fellow heave to, and see who he is," said a voice; and two men came rushing after him.

The words made Dick start off as fast as his legs would carry him. The men, however, followed. He might still, he hoped, escape, and reach Susan's cottage. It was before him, but should he be seen to enter, it would afford him no shelter. If he could get round it, however, he might double back, making his way along on the other side of the village. He was unusually weak from long fasting, and found his strength failing him. His foot struck against a piece of an anchor fast in the ground, and down he fell. Before he could rise his pursuers were upon him.

"You made a good run for it, my lad, but you are caught notwithstanding," said one of the men. "No use in kicking up a shindy, so come along with us and make the best of it, as many another lad has done."

"Who are you? What are you going to do with me?" asked Dick.

"We are men-of-war's men, and are going to make you serve his Majesty, as we are doing," was the answer, as Dick was led back to the village inn.

"Won't you let me go and see my friends first, or let me send them a message to say where I am gone?"

The men laughed. "You can send a message when you are safe on board the tender. You'll be sent off there presently, with a few other fine fellows we have laid hands on. Don't be cast down, lad, you'll like the service well enough when you get into our ways; and if you don't, like many others, you'll have to grin and bear it."

Dick made no answer; he was in for it, and it was useless to complain. The disappointment, however, did not take away his appetite. He quickly felt his hunger pressing him as at first. "I wish that you'd let me have a crust of bread and a piece of cheese, for I have not put anything into my mouth for many a long hour."

"Mrs Simmons will soon find that for you, and a glass of ale, too, my lad," answered the seaman. "Maybe, if you've no shiners in your pocket, you'll find some friend inside who will treat you."

On reaching the inn door, Dick saw a large party of seamen under an officer who had just mustered them outside, while several remained within, guarding persons with handcuffs on their wrists and seated on the benches. Two or three of them looked very disconsolate, but the rest were endeavouring to keep up their spirits by laughing and joking and talking to each other, or with their captors. Among the former, Dick, to his sorrow, saw his friend Ben Rudall, who, however, did not appear to recognise him. The landlady looked far from pleased at the guests she was compelled to entertain. Dick caught her eye.

"Do give me something to eat, Mrs Simmons!" he exclaimed. "I'm pretty nigh starved."

"Bless me, Richard Hargrave! is that you? You shall have what little I have in the house; but it will be a sad night to those at home when they hear that you are taken."

"I wish that you'd send up and tell them, and get it broken gently to my mother and Janet," said Dick, as Mrs Simmons placed bread and cheese, and a piece of cold bacon before him, with a mug of ale.

"Be smart, my lad, and stow that food away," said the seaman, who stood by with a pair of handcuffs. "You'll get some breakfast on board the tender to-morrow morning."

"Maybe; but I should be starved to death before to-morrow morning, if you don't let me eat this," answered Dick, munching away with all his might. He had never eaten so fast, for he expected every moment that the seaman would

lose patience and clap the handcuffs on him. He was allowed, however, to swallow the contents of the plate as well as the ale.

“I’ll pay you, Mrs Simmons, some day when I come back; and thank you in the mean time,” said Dick, when he had finished his hasty meal.

“You are welcome to it, my boy,” said the landlady, “and who knows but that you’ll one day come back a captain.”

The sailor laughed as he clapped the handcuffs on Dick’s wrists. Directly afterwards the officer ordered the prisoners to be brought out, as the boat had arrived from the tender to carry them on board.

Ben Rudall, who had hitherto been silent, finding that he was at once to be carried off, rose to his feet and lifting up his manacled hands addressed the officer, “It is hard lines for me, sir, to be dragged away from my wife and family, without so much as saying good-bye to them. They live not many doors off, down the lane; won’t you just let me go down and kiss the children? Maybe you are a father yourself, and you wouldn’t like to be carried away from your young ones without saying a few last words to cheer them up.”

“It can’t be done, my man,” answered the officer, turning away. “If I grant you the favour, all the rest will be wanting to go and wish their wives and children farewell, and a fine account I should have to give of them! Bring the prisoners along!” he shouted to the seamen.

“You’ll tell poor Susan what has happened,” said Ben, as he passed the landlady. “Tell her to keep up her spirits. I’ll be back home as soon as I can.”

“Trust me, Ben,” said kind-hearted Mrs Simmons; “I’ll see your wife to-morrow morning, and tell her what you say.”

The officer, losing patience, ordered his party to move on. The men-of-war’s men kept close around their captives, who would, they knew, attempt to escape if there was the slightest chance of their doing so, or they thought it possible that the smugglers’ associates might endeavour to rescue them. The boat, however, was reached without any attempt of the sort being made, and the prisoners were compelled to step on board.

Some of the more daring resisted, hoping that perhaps even then assistance might come to them, but a seaman’s pistol held at the heads of the refractory ones compelled them to obey, and in another minute they were all seated in the boat, which at once pulled away for the tender.

Dick found himself seated next to Ben.

“A bad job this, my boy; I never thought you and I should be hauled away like this,” whispered Ben. “If they hadn’t put our wrists in irons we’d be overboard and soon stowed away where they wouldn’t find us in a hurry.”

Dick did not say he thought that it was owing to Ben he was brought into his present condition. He merely answered, “I wouldn’t try to escape if I could. If a man-of-war is as bad as you say, I shall be dead in a short time, and it won’t much matter to any one.”

“Silence there, men!” shouted the officer, who overheard Ben and Dick talking. “Give way, lads!”

The boat was soon alongside the tender, a large cutter, which lay off the mouth of the creek. The captured men were compelled to mount her side, two stout fellows standing by to lift them up by the collars of their jackets, as they were unable to use their hands, when they were at once sent down into the hold of the vessel, over which a sentry with a loaded musket kept guard.

It was a large, gloomy place, lighted by a single ship’s lantern, which hung from one of the beams. Dick could see that it already contained about twenty people, most of them rough, seafaring men, seated with their backs against the side, or stretched on the deck. Some were talking in low, grave tones, others were endeavouring to forget themselves in sleep. A few looked up and nodded as they recognised acquaintances, but not many words were exchanged between them. Dick saw several persons whom he knew, but the greater number had been captured by the pressgang on other parts of the coast. Dick, though no longer hungry, was very tired, and seeing a vacant spot, threw himself down with his back against the after bulkhead.

“I have found out all about it,” said Ben, who some time afterwards seated himself by his side. “It is all owing to that young lord and his father. The marquis, I hear, wrote over to Portsmouth some time ago to have this pressgang sent down here to make a clean sweep of all the seafaring men they could lay hands on. If they had come a few days sooner, they would have stopped the *Nancy* from attempting the run, and we should have got off again; but as ill luck would have it, they arrived just in time to catch us, and the other poor fellows who had come on shore. I wish that I could lay hands on that Lord Reginald; I’d pay him off.”

“Little chance of that,” observed Dick; “he’ll soon be safe on board the *Wolf*, and we shall be sent off, maybe, in some ship to the other end of the world. I don’t care where I go; but it seems to me what we have now to do is to make the best of it. I have been thinking over the matter since I have been staying here, and of course, as the king wants men to fight his battles, and as it is my luck, good or bad, to become one of them, I’ll do my best and try to keep clear of the cat-o’-nine-tails which you used to tell me about.”

“You’ll be precious lucky if you are able to do that, my lad,” growled Ben. “Howsumdever, as we’re in for it, I don’t want to make you think things are worse than they are. You’ll soon find out what’s what.”

“I suppose I shall,” answered Dick, who was becoming very sleepy, and in spite of the noises going on around him—the loud talking—the tramping of feet overhead—the movement of the vessel, which had got under way, and his uncomfortable position, he was soon in happy forgetfulness of all his troubles.

The cutter, after proceeding some distance, met with a strong head wind, and was soon pitching her bows into the fast rising seas. Dick was awakened by finding himself slipping away to leeward, and presently afterwards the vessel shipped a sea, the heavy spray from which came down through the main hatchway, and gave an unpleasant shower-bath to those below it, and Dick had to scramble as best he could out of the water which collected to leeward. The cutter, under close-reefed mainsail, stood on, heeling over to starboard for some time; then she went about, and directed her course towards the north shore. Once more she tacked in the direction she had before been going. The smugglers grumbled and swore, expressing very little confidence in the seamanship of the dockyard maties. At length, however, they heard the order to take in the jib. The vessel came on an even keel, the anchor was let go; she had brought up in Cowes Roads.

“If this wind holds, we shan’t see Portsmouth harbour to-day,” said Ben. “I suppose they can’t intend to keep the irons on our wrists, now they have got us all safe. If we stop here for the night, I have a great mind to try and get away. I have many friends on shore, and some of them are sure to come off to learn what this craft is about. If I get the chance, I’ll slip overboard and swim to one of their boats. What do you say, Dick; will you come?”

“We haven’t got the chance yet,” answered Dick; “if I get off where should I go? I cannot return home, and I should just have to starve or beg, or take to some worse course. No, no; you may try it if you wish, but I’ll stay here and learn what a man-of-war is like.”

Ben made further vain attempts to induce Dick to join him. Their conversation was interrupted by several men coming from forward with a supply of biscuits and cold salt beef and a grog tub, which, with a number of tin mugs, was placed in the centre of the deck. The latter seemed to afford infinite satisfaction, and the prisoners, in much better humour than before, laughed and talked and joked as if they had no cares in the world. A strict watch was still, however, kept over them, as, from their desperate character, it was suspected that they would not fail to try and take advantage of any opportunity which might offer of getting free.

For upwards of three days the cutter lay at Cowes, the captured men being narrowly watched, though tolerably well fed and not ill treated. The time passed heavily away. Growling and swearing was the order of the day. Dick heard some of the smugglers vow that, if taken on board a man-of-war, they would sooner blow the ship up than remain in her; that all ships were alike—perfect hells afloat; and that it would be better to be shot or hung at once than to endure the existence they would have to lead on board. Of one thing he himself was certain, that he was heartily sick of being kept down in the cutter’s hold. He felt eager to get free, even though he might have to exchange it for one of the much-abused king’s ships.

At length, the weather moderating, the cutter got under way and stood for Spithead, where several men-of-war rode at anchor. While the cutter lay hove to, a boat with a lieutenant from one of them came alongside. The officer, on stepping on board, ordered the men to be mustered. Dick watched him, and thinking from his countenance that he must be a good-natured, kind man, hoped that he himself might be among those he was about to select for his ship. The lieutenant spoke to the men one by one, asking them various questions, and finally chose a dozen of the best hands, who were forthwith ordered to get into his boat.

Dick was greatly disappointed on finding that Ben and he were not taken. The commander of the cutter then received directions to run into Portsmouth harbour, and to take the remainder of the prisoners on board another ship, which lay there ready to receive them. Various surmises were offered as to what ship she might be. Neither Dick nor Ben could gain any information.

“It matters very little; they’re all alike,” growled Ben.

On entering the harbour the question was soon settled. A fine frigate lay at anchor off the dockyard, with her sails bent, and with every appearance of being ready for sea. The cutter brought up close to her, and a signal being made, she at once sent a boat alongside.

“Now, lads, tumble up!” cried the lieutenant. “You have got to serve his Majesty, and I would advise you to put a good face upon the matter, and show that you are honest Englishmen, ever ready to do your duty and fight for your country. You’ll come back with your pockets full of prize money, and be glad you went.”

Dick listened. “That’s what I want to do,” he said to himself; “and I will if I can.”

Some of the old hands—Ben among the rest—were not influenced in the same way.

“All very fine!” he growled out; “but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We shall get more scars on our backs from the cat than guineas in our pockets, I’ve a notion.”

The boat was soon alongside, and Dick with his companions were ordered up on deck, where they stood grouped together until the first lieutenant came to take down their names, and enter them on the ship’s books. It was the first time Dick had ever been on board a man-of-war. He gazed round with astonishment at the extent of the white decks, the size of the highly polished guns, the height of the masts, the ropes neatly flemished down, and the order which everywhere prevailed.

“She’s a fine ship, at all events; and if it wasn’t for father and mother and Janet, I should not be sorry to have come,” he thought.

The first lieutenant, an active, kind-eyed looking officer, spoke to the men much in the same way as the commander of the cutter had done. When he came to Dick, he inquired whether he had been to sea before.

“Only on board a lugger, sir,” answered Dick.

“Well, my lad, I do not inquire what you were doing on board her; but I tell you, as you look a smart lad, that if you do your duty you will be sure to get on, and soon obtain a good rating.”

Dick touched his cap, as he had seen some of the men doing when they spoke to an officer, and replied, “I’ll do my best, sir.”

“That’s right, my lad,” observed the first lieutenant, as he turned away to attend to some other duty.

Although on deck strict order and discipline prevailed, Dick on going below found a very different scene, and it was some time before he got accustomed to the uproar, the men in hoarse voices bawling to each other, and laughing and joking and playing all sorts of tricks, some rushing here and there, others seated in groups, amusing themselves in a variety of ways.

“At all events, there can’t be much to make them unhappy, for they seem to be a merry set of fellows,” thought Dick, as he was standing by himself, watching what was going forward. An officer, with a silver chain and whistle round his neck, coming by, asked him his name. Dick told him, and replied to a few other questions. The officer passed on.

“Who’s that?” asked Dick of another lad who happened to be standing near.

“That’s Mr Bitts, the boatswain.”

“He seems a fair-spoken gentleman,” observed Dick.

“Gentleman! I don’t think he calls himself a gentleman; but he has a good deal to do with us, and it is wise to stand well with him, for he can use that rattan he had in his hand pretty smartly.”

Shortly afterwards Mr Bitts came back. Touching Dick on the shoulder, he said, “I want a boy, and I have applied for you. You’ll understand you are to attend on me, so look out and do your duty.”

Dick, on inquiring of the other lad, found he was to be the boatswain’s servant, which, although not an office of much honour, had its advantages, if he could manage to please his master. Dick soon found that his duties were not very onerous, and provided he was smart and active, Mr Bitts appeared to be satisfied. Altogether, when the hammocks were piped down, and he was allowed to turn into the one allotted to him, which the boatswain ordered one of the men to show him how to sling, he was tolerably well pleased with the prospect before him. As he was not placed in any watch, he had the advantage of sleeping through the whole night.

When the hammocks were piped up the next morning, he turned out refreshed and ready to do anything required of him. He had lost sight of Ben, who having found several acquaintances on board, and being engaged in talking with them, did not trouble himself about him.

The next day, the captain coming on board, the crew were mustered, when all the men as well as the officers had to come on deck. Dick was thinking what a fine body of men they appeared, when his eye, glancing aft, fell on two of the midshipmen, one of whom had his arm in a sling, and he at once recognised Lord Reginald and Mr Voules. The former seemed to know him, for he saw the young lord turn to the other midshipman and say a few words, and then look again towards him. Dick had not before inquired what ship he was on board, but he now found that he belonged to the *Wolf*.

“I hope we shall not come across each other, and I’ll do my best to keep out of his way,” he said to himself. “He’ll not forget, however, how he came to have his arm in a sling, and maybe he’ll try to pay me off; if he does, I’ll show him that I won’t stand bullying aboard, any more than I would on shore.”

Captain Moubray, having made a short address to his crew, reminding them of the renown they had already gained, and expressing his confidence that they would keep up their credit, ordered the boatswain to pipe down.

Dick, according to his resolution, kept clear of Lord Reginald.

“It is lucky for you, my lad, that I had applied for you, as the midshipmen have asked for you to be the boy of their mess,” said Mr Bitts, when Dick was attending on him that evening. “That young lord and Mr Voules wanted me to swap you for Tom Dolter, but I took Tom’s measure some time ago, and let me tell you, my lad, that you may bless your stars. It’s not pleasant to serve a dozen masters, though, if I hadn’t held out, that young lord and Mr Voules would have had their way.”

Dick had good reason to be thankful at his escape. Next day the frigate went out to Spithead, took her powder on board, and blue-peter was hoisted, as a signal that she was about to sail.

Chapter Seven.

Defiant looks—The spirit of ill-will increases—Some “very kind intentions”—Dick’s persecutors—In the midshipmen’s mess—Paddy Logan and Toady Voules—The last look at Old England—The first encounter—Mr Bitts to the rescue—Ideas of revenge—A sail on the lee bow—Preparing for action—A fierce battle—The Wolf victorious—Bravery of Dick—Hard work to keep the prize afloat—Bound for Plymouth with the prize.

The frigate’s sails were loose, the crew at the capstan tramped round to the merry sound of the fife, the boatswain’s pipe was heard shrilly repeating the orders he received; the sails were sheeted home, the anchor came to the bows, was catted and fished, and the *Wolf*, with canvas widespread to the breeze, glided majestically through the waters of the Solent. Dick wisely kept as much as possible out of the way of Lord Reginald. When they occasionally came in

sight of each other, he did not fail to remark the angry look the young lord cast at him, while he himself could not help glancing at the other's arm, still in a sling.

"That young ruffian's insolence is unbearable!" exclaimed Lord Reginald, on one occasion, turning away and addressing Voules, whom he happened to meet. "I wish that he had been caught on shore, when he would have been sent off to prison, and we should not have been troubled with him here. I was half inclined to denounce him as a fugitive from justice when I first saw him on board; but as we wanted hands, I thought that the captain would not thank me."

"We'll pay him off somehow or other," answered Voules. "I'll find the means to do it, and he'll wish he had been sent to prison before he stepped on the *Wolf's* decks."

"I say, Oswald, what's happened to your arm?" asked Charles Ludlam, the senior mate of the berth, in which most of the members of their mess happened to be collected.

"A blow I received on it," answered Lord Reginald, not being willing to explain matters.

"He got it while attempting in a very gallant way to seize a fellow who was suspected of being a smuggler," observed Voules, coming to his friend's rescue. "You may depend upon it that Oswald would have caught him if it had not been for that."

"Faith! What business had he to be trying to seize a smuggler?" asked Paddy Logan, who was no admirer of Lord Reginald, and still less of Voules.

The latter was somewhat puzzled how to reply. "In support of the law which you Irish fellows delight in breaking," he at length answered.

"Do you dare to cast reflections on the honour of Irishmen?" exclaimed Logan, firing up. "Naval officers are not expected to be excisemen. Of course the fellow had every right to defend himself."

"I cast no reflections on the honour of Irishmen, but you yourself show your readiness to take the part of a lawless character," answered Voules. "Besides, the young scoundrel had previously grossly insulted Oswald and me."

"Then he was influenced by private motives rather than public spirit," observed Ludlam, who was fond of speaking the truth, even though it might be unpalatable to his hearers. "Still, Oswald, I am sorry you are hurt, and hope that you will be wiser in future."

"I shall always be found ready to defend my own rights whether against my equals or plebeians," answered Lord Reginald, haughtily. "I consider that I acted properly, and do not require to be pitied by you or any other person, merely because I happen to get an inconvenient blow on the arm."

"Mayn't any one else pity you?" asked Tommy Shackel, the smallest midshipman on board, who was apt to take a malicious pleasure in seeing his seniors have a scrimmage among each other.

"Hold your tongue, Master Jackanapes!" exclaimed Voules; "Oswald knows best what he likes and dislikes."

"I only asked a question," said Tommy, in his squeaky voice; "and I put it to Oswald, and not to you."

"How dare you speak to me in that fashion?" exclaimed Voules, about to give the small midshipman a box on the ear.

"You'd better let him alone!" cried Paddy Logan, jumping up. "I appeal to Ludlam, who allows no bullying in the berth. Because you have had the honour of staying at Elverston Hall, you fancy you can exhibit your airs to us, but you are mistaken, my boy, as much as Oswald was when he first joined."

Voules retorted, and Paddy and he would soon have come to blows, had not Ludlam interfered, and by the exercise of the authority he maintained in the berth, restored order.

This scene took place on the first evening that the members of the berth all met together.

The frigate was now standing down between the mainland and the wooded shores of the Isle of Wight. Calshot Castle—then held as a fortress, with a governor and a garrison—was seen on the right. On the left hand was the little town of Cowes, surrounded by woods, among which, here and there, a few cottages peeped out. Then Lymington became visible on the Hampshire shore, and, beyond it, the long shingly beach of Hurst. Many eyes on board were turned in that direction. Lord Reginald and Voules, using their spy-glasses, thought that they could catch a distant view of the hall, while forward, Dick Hargrave, Ben, and several other men were turning their gaze on well-known spots. Dick felt more sad than he had done since he came on board. He was thinking how anxious his father, mother, and poor Janet would be about him; even should Mrs Simmons have conveyed his message to them, they would only know that he had been carried off in the tender, and would remain ignorant of the ship on board which he had been sent. He had not written, for he possessed neither pens, ink, nor paper, and would have found it a difficult matter to indite an epistle with the uproar going on around him. Poor Dick gazed on until the tears came to his eyes. Though it was greatly owing to his own fault that he was being carried away from home and those he loved, he was not the less to be commiserated. While he thus stood, scarcely conscious of what was going on around him, Lord Reginald, who had been sent forward with a message to the third lieutenant on some duty, passed him.

"What makes you stand idling there, boy?" exclaimed the midshipman, looking at him as if he had never seen him before, giving him a blow with the end of a rope. "You have no business on deck; go and attend to your duty below."

Dick's first impulse was to raise his arm to defend himself. It was with difficulty he could refrain from retaliating.

“I have no duty that I know of to attend to, and I have a right to look towards yonder shore, which neither you nor I may see for some time to come,” he answered. “What! You are a sea lawyer, are you?” exclaimed Lord Reginald, angrily, Dick’s words adding intensity to the vindictive feelings he already entertained towards him.

“I’ll report you to the first lieutenant, and he’ll soon find means to make you mend your manners.”

Dick was going to reply, when he saw Voules coming along the deck, and he had the discretion to hold his tongue, knowing that the worst interpretation would be put on whatever he said. This was the commencement of hostilities on board the frigate between the young lord and the farmer’s son. Scarcely a day passed that they did not come in contact with each other, when Lord Reginald never lost an opportunity of abusing the ship’s boy, or striking him, if he had the least excuse, with a rope’s end. Dick bore the ill treatment manfully, and endeavoured to the best of his power to do his duty. Though treated kindly by the boatswain, with the ordinary feelings of a yeoman’s son he would not willingly have rendered menial service to any one, but as it was his duty he did not complain, and did his utmost to please his master. Mr Bitts had, by some means or other, discovered how Lord Reginald behaved to Dick, but had not actually seen him struck. The boatswain was not a man to allow any one to interfere with his prerogatives. He at length, however, saw the young lord, who did not observe him, strike Dick across the shoulders with a rope’s end, and order him off to perform some duty or other.

Mr Bitts immediately came forward and confronted the midshipman, with an angry glare in his keen eyes, for although Mr Bitts was not a man of many inches, he was a determined person, with huge whiskers, a firm mouth, large forehead, and broad shoulders. “Are you aware, Lord Reginald Oswald, that you are infringing the rules of the service? That boy belongs to me, and I’ll let you know that neither your lordship nor any one else shall dare to ill-treat him.”

Lord Reginald looked somewhat astonished at this unexpected address. He was too proud to apologise, as he might have done and so settled the matter. “The fellow was idling,” he answered, haughtily, “and I am not expected to know what boys you consider belonging to yourself. If I find him or any one else neglecting his duty I shall see that he attends to it.”

“I shall report you, Lord Reginald Oswald, if I find you interfering again with that boy, or any other over whom you have no authority,” retorted the boatswain.

“You may stand well in the opinion of the captain and some of the officers, but others, let me tell you, hold you at a much cheaper rate.”

“This insolence is unbearable!” muttered Lord Reginald; but he recollected that, although he was the son of a marquis, the boatswain was his superior officer in the service, and that he should be guilty of insubordination should he continue the dispute. He walked away, therefore, with feelings more embittered than ever against Dick Hargrave. Soon afterwards, meeting Voules, he told him what had occurred.

“I don’t know what will become of the discipline of the ship, if the warrant officers venture to interfere in the way old Bitts has done,” observed Voules. “We must pay him off some day; but as to that fellow Hargrave, he is beneath your notice. I wish that we could have got him as our mess boy; we would soon have tamed his spirit. However, I won’t let slip any opportunity of punishing him as he deserves.”

Voules was as good as his word, every time the opportunity occurred, though he took very good care that Mr Bitts should not see him ill-treating Dick. He told Lord Reginald what he had done, apparently taking a pleasure in nourishing the resentment the young lord felt against the farmer’s son. It was but natural that Dick himself should feel ill-will towards his persecutors. He did not complain to Mr Bitts, of whom he stood not a little in awe, but he frequently did so to Ben Rudall, who ground his teeth and clenched his fists as he listened.

“We’ll pay the chaps off one of these days,” he muttered. “You’ve heard tell, Dick, of the mutiny at the Nore, when the men rose and took the whole fleet from their officers, and would not give in until the Admiralty granted their terms. To be sure, a few of them were run up to the yardarm, but the men won’t stand bullying now any more than they did in those days. If officers don’t know how to behave themselves they must be taught. I wouldn’t advise you to give the young lord tit for tat, or turn round when he next hits you, and use the rope’s end on his back, but I should be wonderfully inclined to try it on, and let them hang me afterwards if they like.”

Dick listened eagerly to what Ben said—the advice was too much in accordance with his own feelings.

Voules had spoken of him to the first lieutenant and to some other officers, and described him as a young ruffian who had been leagued with smugglers, and was now the associate of men of the worst character on board.

Dick was accordingly strictly, if not harshly treated, and though he had at first been well-disposed to do his duty, he became every day more and more discontented, and ready to retort upon those whom he looked upon as tyrants.

The frigate had been ordered to cruise in the Channel off the French coast, and a sharp look-out was kept night and day for an enemy.

“We shall soon see how these young gentlemen behave if we get alongside of mounseer. They can hold their heads high enough now, but when the Frenchman’s shot come whizzing about their ears, they’ll duck them fast enough,” said Ben.

“Is there a chance, then, of our having a battle?” inquired Dick. “I should like to be in one, just to see how things are managed.”

“If Captain Moubray is the sort of man I have heard him described, he’ll do his best to look out for an enemy,” replied

Ben.

Still, day after day passed by and no suspicious sail was met with. At length, one evening, soon after dark, the *Wolf* was standing in towards the French coast. Having passed the Island of Groix, she continued on until several shots were fired at her from a fort, which, however, did no damage. She put about, and a short time afterwards, the wind being East-North-East, the look-out aloft shouted—

“A sail on the lee bow!”

The stranger was now seen to be running west by south. The *Wolf* immediately made all sail, and as she got nearer, two muskets were fired towards the chase, which appeared to be a large ship, to bring her to. Instead of so doing, however, the Frenchman, for such she undoubtedly was, set all the sail she could carry, endeavouring to escape. This seemed strange, for as far as could be judged, she was a larger ship than the *Wolf*.

“Will she get away?” asked Dick, who was standing near Ben Rudall at one of the bow-ports on the maindeck, through which they could dimly see the chase rising like some phantom giant stalking over the deep.

“Not if we continue to overhaul her as we are now doing,” answered Ben.

“Will she fight?” inquired Dick.

“Ay, and fight hard, too, just as a rat does when caught in a corner. It’s a way those Frenchmen have, though why she runs now is more than I can tell. Maybe some of us will be losing the number of our mess. I should not care if I was among them myself. It’s a dog’s life I lead on board here; but I am thinking of poor Susan. If I am hit, it will be hard lines with her; she and the young ones will have to bear up for the work’us, for there’s no one will care for the smuggler’s wife, as they call her.”

“But I hope you won’t be killed, Ben,” said Dick; “there’s no reason why you should be more than any one else.”

“Well, well, I’m not afraid,” answered Ben; “the enemy’s shot are in no ways particular, and I should not be so very sorry if one of them was to take off the head of that Lord Reginald or Toady Voules, as his messmates call him.”

“I could not bring myself to wish either one of them such a fate as that,” observed Dick, who had not altogether forgotten his mother’s instructions and Christian principles.

“I have no reason to love either the young lord or his toady, and I should not weep my eyes out if they were to be killed—they’d only get their deserts; and for my own part, I would like to see them both knocked over by the same round shot,” growled Ben, between his teeth.

The frigate was now approaching the chase. The drum beat to quarters, and the crew hurried up from below, most of them stripped to the waist with handkerchiefs round their heads and loins. The glare of the fighting lanterns, hung up on the beams along the deck, cast a glow on their muscular figures, the breaches of the guns and other salient points, while all the rest were cast in the deepest gloom.

Ben went to his gun, and Dick was ordered below to the magazine to bring up ammunition. Though much bigger than any of the other lads so employed, as he had been only a short time at sea, he had to perform the humble duty of a powder monkey. He would far rather have been engaged in working one of the guns.

The *Wolf* was carrying all the canvas which could be packed on her, studding-sails on either side and royals aloft. The chase also, under all sail, was still doing her utmost to keep ahead, but the *Wolf*, being the fastest ship of the two, gained rapidly on her. The men stood at their guns, waiting eagerly for the moment that the order to fire should be given, laughing, however, and cracking their usual jokes. The officers went their rounds, to see that all necessary preparations had been made.

Dick was seated on his ammunition tub on the maindeck, when Lord Reginald and Voules, who had each a certain number of guns to look after, passed him.

“I say, Oswald, that young smuggler looks pale enough now,” observed Voules, in a voice sufficiently loud for Dick to hear him. “We must keep a sharp look-out on him, or he’ll be running below to stow himself away in the hold.”

“Trust me for that! those ruffians ashore are the greatest cowards afloat,” answered the young lord, as he passed on.

Dick heard him. “I’ll show him that I am no coward,” he said to himself.

Ben also, who was stationed at one of the guns it was Dick’s duty to serve, heard the remark. “‘Cowards!’ does he call us?” he muttered. “He and Mr Toady will be the first to show the white feather, I’ve a notion.”

Shortly afterwards the sounds of two guns were heard. One shot, glancing along the *Wolf’s* bow, sent the splinters flying off it, while the other was seen to ricochet over the smooth water. The enemy had fired her stern chasers. The *Wolf*, without yawing, could not reply. She stood on, therefore, eager to come up with the chase. The latter was seen directly afterwards taking in her studdingsails and royals. The British crew cheered as they saw this. There was no longer any doubt that the enemy was ready to fight. The order was now given to take in all the studdingsails. The royals were next handed; the crew, who had left their quarters for the purpose, immediately hurrying back to their guns. Both frigates were still rapidly running through the water. Suddenly the chase put down her helm and luffed up on the starboard tack, intending to rake the *Wolf*, which was now coming up on her weather quarter.

“Hard a-starboard!” shouted Captain Moubray, and the *Wolf* was brought up on the opposite tack, thus avoiding the raking fire, and receiving the enemy’s shot on the starboard side. “Well done!” cried the captain. “Now hard a-port!”

The ship once more came up to the wind, and just clearing the French frigate's starboard quarter, shot up right abreast of her to windward. Both thus in near proximity, poured their broadsides into each other, and the battle became hot and furious. The British crew ran their guns in and out, the frigate's shot dealing death and destruction along the decks of her antagonist. It was just the position English sailors like the best. Dick saw several of his shipmates knocked over, and one poor boy, with whom he had just been talking, fell close to his side. He knelt down to help him, but not a movement was perceptible. He took his hand; it fell on the deck. The boy was dead.

Dick's tub was soon exhausted of its contents, and he hurried below to the magazine to get it refilled. He lost not a moment, but was again at his station.

"They shan't say I'm skulking," he muttered. "I wonder what Lord Reginald is doing."

Dick might have seen the young lord, in spite of the shot crashing on board and sending the splinters flying about in all directions, killing or wounding several near him—the colour in his cheeks somewhat heightened, perhaps—attending to his duty and cheering on his men, and when the captain of a gun was killed, taking his place and laying hold of the tackles to haul it in for reloading.

For some time the two frigates ran off before the wind; as tacks and sheets and yards were shot away, gradually decreasing their speed. In consequence of the injuries the French frigate had received, the *Wolf* shot slightly ahead, when the former attempted to cross her stern, for the purpose of raking her, or gaining the wind, but not having room for this manoeuvre, she ran her jib-boom between the British ship's main and mizzen rigging.

The third lieutenant, calling several of the men, attempted to lash it there, while the *Wolf* poured in a fire which swept across the Frenchman's bows, but half those engaged in the effort, while hanging in the rigging, were shot, and the lieutenant himself fell badly wounded to the deck. Immediately afterwards the ships separated and stood on as before, exchanging furious broadsides. Dick saw Ben still working away at his grin, as eager as the rest of the crew, having evidently forgotten all about his gloomy anticipations of losing the number of his mess.

For upwards of two hours the ships had been engaged, and no perceptible advantage had been gained by either. At length the *Wolf* again forged ahead. Captain Moubray did not neglect the much-wished-for opportunity, but ordered the helm to be put hard a-starboard, and, while thus passing across the hawse of the French frigate, poured in a broadside which swept her decks fore and aft, killing and wounding many of her crew, and inflicting serious damage on her masts and rigging. Again the *Wolf's* helm was put hard a-port, which brought the enemy a little before her starboard beam, when again the ships ran on with the wind about a point on the starboard quarter. Still it remained doubtful which would gain the victory. The British officers and crew had, however, made up their minds not to give in while a stick was standing; but the most indomitable bravery cannot always overcome the chances of war.

While Captain Moubray, with the master by his side, was eagerly watching every movement of his antagonist, to take advantage of what might occur, a shot from her struck the mizzenmast, already severely wounded. With a fearful crash down it came on deck, inboard, killing one of the men at the wheel, which it much damaged, and severely injuring many others, while it encumbered the whole quarterdeck with its rigging, spars, and sails. They could hear the crew of the French ship cheer as they saw what had happened.

"You may 'hulloo' as long as you like, mounseers, but we'll be giving you as good before long," cried Ben; several of his shipmates echoing his words.

They were right, for scarcely had the Frenchmen's cheers ceased, than down also fell their mizzenmast with a tremendous crash, evidently doing much damage. Almost immediately afterwards the mainmast followed, though the foremast still stood, enabling her to continue the action.

The boatswain and his crew hurried to clear the wreck, while the carpenter endeavoured to repair the damaged wheel. The two ships again lay abreast of each other, though at a greater distance than before. The *Wolf*, however, did not, in consequence of the accident, slacken her fire, and she and her opponent were gradually sheering closer together, when the latter was seen to put her helm hard a-starboard, so as to lay the *Wolf* on board. The order was now received from the captain to load the maindeck guns with double shot and the carronades with grape.

"She will strike us on the bow," observed Captain Moubray to the master, "and as she is sure afterwards to rebound, the quarters of the two ships will be brought together. She intends to board us. Boarders, be prepared to repel boarders!" he shouted. At the same time the word was passed along the decks, not again to fire until the order was received from the captain.

The two ships drew closer and closer together, until the bows met with a loud crash, and although the Frenchmen at the same time let fly a broadside, the English gunners, obedient to their orders, refrained from firing in return. As was expected, the bows rebounded from each other; the quarters of the two ships almost immediately came together. The quarter of the French ship was seen crowded with men, ready to spring on board the *Wolf*.

"Now, my lads, give it them!" cried Captain Moubray, and his word was passed along the decks.

The big guns sent their balls, and the carronades their showers of grape, into the very midst of the Frenchmen. Fearful must have been the effect among the crowded masses, and cries and groans resounded through the night air.

Four guns only replied to the last broadside, showing the havoc and confusion it had caused. At the same moment flames burst forth from the Frenchman's deck. The English worked their guns with redoubled vigour. Scarcely had the fire disappeared from one part of the French ship, than it broke forth in another. Her shrouds and running rigging had been cut away, and her remaining mast was tottering. Still the Frenchmen fought on, though they could scarcely, it seemed, have hoped for victory.

Once more the ships separated, still continuing to exchange broadsides, though many of the Frenchman's guns had been silenced. Still, from the number of men seen on her decks, they might hope to gain the victory by boarding. To guard against such a contingency was now Captain Moubray's chief care. Again the bows of the two ships met, when the outer arm of the *Wolf's* best bower anchor, entering the foremost main-deck port of the French frigate, held her fast.

Though the English continued to pour broadside after broadside into their enemy, no signal of surrender was shown. Every moment it seemed as if the foremast of the latter, already tottering, would go by the board, and probably fall on the deck of the *Wolf*.

"We must put an end to this!" cried Captain Moubray. "Boarders, follow me!"

He sprang forward, several of his officers and those to whom he had given the word, pressing round him, all eager to be the first on the enemy's deck. Among them was Lord Reginald, who, regardless of danger, burned to distinguish himself. The gallant boatswain led another party, hastily collected on the main-deck. Richard Hargrave, on hearing the boatswain's summons, and finding that ammunition was no longer required on his side, left his station and joined them. Two stout planks had been thrust through the Frenchman's second bow port. By this means the boatswain's party forced their way, for the gun which filled the port, having been dismounted, allowed them ingress.

With cheers and shouts the British seamen, led by the captain, leaping down on the Frenchman's deck, with pistols flashing and cutlasses hewing and hacking, quickly drove their enemies aft. As they reached the main hatchway, many of the latter, unable to resist the impetus of the onslaught, sprang down below, where they were met by the boatswain's party, who, sweeping along the fore part of the deck, quickly cleared it. Still a determined band resisted. A marine was on the point of running his bayonet into the breast of Lord Reginald, when the captain cut down the man. In vain the Frenchmen attempted to resist. Foot by foot they were driven back, until the cry rose from an officer on the quarter-deck of "We surrender." At the same time he lifted a lantern above his head, as a signal which all might understand.

"Lay down your arms, then!" cried Captain Moubray, "and no more blows shall be struck."

The boatswain, with Richard Hargrave and others, were still using their cutlasses with deadly effect, the shouts and cries of the Frenchmen, as they endeavoured to withstand them, preventing all other sounds from being heard.

Before advancing towards the French commanding officer, to receive his sword, Captain Moubray sent Lord Reginald and a party of men below to stop the slaughter. He sprang down in time to see Dick Hargrave and two other men engaged in a fierce combat with three Frenchmen, who, ignorant of what had taken place above, were still holding out.

"You mutinous rascals!" exclaimed Lord Reginald to Dick and his companions; "didn't you hear the captain's orders to desist from fighting? The frigate has struck, and is our prize."

Then shouting to the Frenchmen in their own language, he told them what had occurred, when immediately dropping the points of their weapons, they sprang back, to be out of reach of the British seamen's cutlasses.

"I am not a mutinous rascal," exclaimed Dick, turning to Lord Reginald; "I didn't know that the Frenchmen had given in."

"How dare you speak to me in that way?" exclaimed the young lord, even at that moment not forgetting his enmity towards Dick. "Look out for the consequences!"

He then shouted to Mr Bitts, and in another minute the fighting, which had gone on for so many hours, altogether ceased. Both decks presented a terrible spectacle. In all directions lay the bodies of dead and dying men. Many had already passed away, others were writhing in agony, while the surgeon's attendants, regardless of what was going on around, were employed in carrying below those to whom assistance might be of use. One lieutenant alone stood on the quarter-deck. Captain Moubray, advancing among the bodies of his late foes, inquired for the French captain. The lieutenant pointed to a form which lay near the wheel, covered with a flag.

"The captain of the *Thesbe*—the ship I yield to you—lies there," he answered, presenting the hilt of his sword. "There lies the first lieutenant, and there the second, and I, the third, am in command."

"I return your sword to as brave a man as I can ever hope to meet. You have fought your ship with the greatest gallantry. Englishmen cannot desire to encounter more noble foes," said Captain Moubray, returning the sword, which the lieutenant, taking, sheathed with a deep sigh.

Indeed, out of a crew of between four and five hundred men, upwards of a hundred had been killed, and nearly the same number wounded, while the frigate's hull was fearfully shattered, her bulwarks were torn away—she was a mere wreck.

Captain Moubray, returning to his ship, sent a prize crew on board under the command of Mr Jager, the second lieutenant, who had with him Lord Reginald, Voules, and Paddy Logan, and forty men, Richard Hargrave being among the number.

It was no easy matter to clear the ships, so firmly had the *Wolf's* anchor hooked on through the *Thesbe's* port. It was at last, however, freed. Scarcely had the two ships separated, than down came the *Thesbe's* foremast, narrowly escaping falling across the bows of the *Wolf*.

In an action lasting the best part of six hours, the *Wolf* herself had suffered severe damage. The third lieutenant, the

second lieutenant of marines, a midshipman, and ten seamen were killed, and nearly fifty officers and men wounded.

She had lost her mizzenmast, and her other masts and several of her yards were injured. Her sails and rigging were cut to pieces. So numerous were the shot-holes in her hull, that the carpenter and his mates were unable to stop them until she had three and a half feet of water in her hold. A portion of her diminished crew was sent to the pumps, while every officer, man and boy, was employed in fishing the masts and spars, knotting and splicing the rigging, and shifting the sails. The two ships lay close together, drifting with the tide. The prize was won, but it was a question whether she would be kept. They were close in with the French coast; and should any other of the enemy's ships be in the neighbourhood, it was certain that they would be sent to look after the combatants. Mr Jager and his prize crew had work enough to do to keep the *Thesbe* afloat, to heave the dead overboard, to attend to the wounded. The surgeons laboured away all night in amputating arms and legs, and binding up the limbs of those most injured. Not only was the cockpit crowded, but every cabin was full of wounded men. The greater part of the prisoners were of course removed on board the *Wolf*, but a few were retained to assist in working the pumps and attending to the wounded.

While the carpenters were engaged in stopping the shot-holes—through which the water was rushing with a rapidity sufficient in a short time to carry the prize to the bottom—it was impossible to attempt repairing other damages.

When morning broke, a shattered, blood-stained hull lay floating, with her victor watching near her. An anxious look-out was kept for any sail which might appear. Should a single frigate be seen, Captain Moubray and his officers resolved to fight their ship and defend their prize to the last.

No one thought of resting. Mr Bitts piped his call, until, as Paddy Logan observed, "it seemed mighty curious that he had any wind left in his body."

The frigate's crew laboured on, until many were ready to drop with fatigue. All knew that not a moment was to be lost. Another contingency might occur, besides the appearance of an enemy of superior force; a northerly gale might spring up, and drive the disabled frigates on the French coast. Happily, the masts of the *Wolf* were secured, the rigging repaired, and fresh sails bent, and the wind coming from the southward, she took her prize in tow, and shaped a course across the channel for Plymouth.

Chapter Eight.

On board the prize—Ben gives bad advice—A strange line-of-battle ship—Friend or foe?—The Wolf and her prize reach Plymouth—Not allowed to go ashore—Peter Purkiss—Dick deserts—Homeward bound—Visit to the smuggler's wife—Reception at the farm—Dick recognised by Lord Reginald and Voules—Fear of being retaken—Dick leaves home—Captured and sent on board a cutter.

The *Wolf*, with a fair breeze, having her prize in tow, shaped a course for Plymouth. The wind though favourable was light, and should it continue so, it would be some time before she could reach her destination. It was fortunate, however, that the sea was smooth, as it enabled the carpenters the more easily to get at the numerous shot-holes in the sides of the prize, and to stop the water coming in, which it had been doing at a rapid rate, making it necessary to keep the pumps constantly going. This was hard work for the prize crew, for the few Frenchmen left on board, though they did not refuse to go to the pumps, worked listlessly, and very soon knocked off, declaring that they could work no more. The British seamen had therefore to work away until they could stand no longer.

Lieutenant Jager, commanding the prize, had sent Lord Reginald and Voules to see that the crew at the pumps were persevering in their labours. Among them his eye fell on Ben Rudall and Richard Hargrave, who had both been working away for some time until their arms ached.

"Spell oh!" cried Ben.

"Spell oh!" echoed Dick, in order that some other men might come and help them.

"Keep at your work, you idle rascals!" cried Lord Reginald.

"I am not an 'idle rascal,'" answered Ben, leaving the pump and folding his arms; "I have been working for two hours, and can work no longer until I have had some rest."

Dick, who could really work no longer, and was wellnigh ready to drop to the deck, also knocked off, though he said nothing.

Lord Reginald's anger was aroused in a moment. Seizing a rope, he struck Dick across the shoulders. "Go back, both of you!" he exclaimed; "we can have no skulking on board here."

"I am not skulking," answered Dick, again seizing the pump handle and working away as hard as his strength would allow.

"Do you dare to answer me?" exclaimed the young lord, striking Dick.

Ben stood still, fixing his eye on the midshipman, who, though he flourished the rope, did not strike him, and Ben, with a look which showed the ill feelings aroused in his bosom, returned to the pump.

Lord Reginald stood by, watching them until the whole gang, utterly unable to work longer, were relieved by fresh hands.

“Let me see that you fellows keep at it longer and better than the last have done,” he said.

“That’s what we get for working our lives out,” growled Ben, as he and his shipmates staggered forward and threw themselves down to rest. “It’s just as well he did not strike me, or something might have come of it. If I were you, Dick, I wouldn’t stand it; I’d give him as good in return. He can but hang one, and that would be better than leading a dog’s life on board this ship.”

“He might flog you round the fleet, which would be something worse than hanging,” observed an old man-of-war’s man, who had overheard Ben. “You wouldn’t like that. I’ve a notion, mate, that it’s wiser to grin and bear it, and hope for better times.”

“I do hope for better times,” said Ben, addressing Dick, when no one else was within hearing. “I’ll tell you what, lad; I’d advise you to give them leg-bail, if you have the chance. That’s what I’ve made up my mind to, as soon as we get into port; they’re sure not to keep a strict look-out, and, as usual, crowds of people will be coming on board to visit the ships. Tom Harris was right; keep your temper, as you did just now. To strike an officer, even though he strikes you first, is a serious matter, and I was wrong in advising it. But though, if you desert and are caught, you run the risk of a flogging, the chances are you’ll escape, for they’ll not take the trouble of sending after you if you can once get off into the country.”

“I’ll think about it,” said Dick. “I can’t bear being struck by that young lord, or by any one else; and if he treats me as he has done before, I cannot answer for keeping my temper.”

The conversation was put an end to by the whole gang being ordered back to the pumps. The carpenters were gradually getting the leaks stopped, and before night the crew were able with less difficulty to keep the water under. Fresh hands were sent on board to attempt getting up jurymasts, in case the *Wolf* should be compelled to cast off the prize. It was still doubtful whether they would reach the port in safety. An enemy might at any moment appear, and not only retake the prize, but themselves. A single frigate would prove a serious antagonist to the *Wolf* in her present battered and disabled condition.

During the night the breeze increased slightly, and the two frigates made better progress. Lord Reginald had told Voules of Hargrave’s impudence, as he called it, and the midshipman had reported it to Mr Jager.

“If we have mutinous behaviour among our own crew, we shall have the Frenchmen rising upon us,” observed the lieutenant. “You must keep an eye, Voules, on those fellows, and put down that spirit of insubordination.”

“A flogging would do that lad Hargrave good,” observed Voules, “and that old smuggler richly deserves one also.”

Voules, believing that it would please Lord Reginald, kept a watchful eye on both Dick and Ben, hoping that they would give him the opportunity of reporting them.

Twice finding Dick moving slowly, as he considered about his duty, he started him with a rope’s end. Several of the other men, knowing that he was no longer under the protection of the boatswain, took the opportunity of bullying him in a variety of ways. Ben did not interfere, his object being evidently to disgust him with the service. Fortunately for Dick, however, his persecutors had no time to annoy him when below, for, fatigued with their work, the moment they turned in they fell asleep. All hands, indeed, were employed from morning until night in clearing the ship of water, getting up jurymasts and repairing the worst damages, so that there might be a chance of keeping her afloat should bad weather come on. Hitherto but little progress had been made. All the sail which the *Wolf* could carry was set. The prize was at length able to help herself by hoisting a small amount of canvas. A very sharp watch was kept for the appearance of any strange sail.

At length, early on the second morning, the look-out from the masthead of the *Wolf* shouted, “A sail in the south-west!”

The first lieutenant went aloft to have a look at her. On his return to the deck, he reported that she was a large ship, standing on a course which would soon bring her up to them. It was difficult, at that distance, to say whether she was a frigate or a line-of-battle ship.

“We must steer as we are,” observed Captain Moubray. “Whatever she is, we must fight her.”

He then hailed the prize, directing Lieutenant Jager to get all the guns he could ready for use, so that he might be able to take a part in the fight, should it be necessary. He was, however, to do his best to escape, while the *Wolf* engaged the stranger.

The French officers on deck eagerly watched the ship coming up. As her topsails rose above the horizon, various opinions were expressed about her. Some thought that she might be the leading ship of a French squadron; others that she was a British man-of-war. As, however, she drew nearer, no other vessels were seen astern of her. One after the other the officers went aloft, to try and discover her character. She was soon pronounced to be a seventy-four, at least. The Frenchmen became highly elated, having fully persuaded themselves that she was a French line-of-battle ship.

“Never mind, my friend,” said one of them, “you have treated us well; we hope soon to have an opportunity of showing our gratitude.”

“Much obliged to you,” answered the first lieutenant, to whom the observation was made. “It is not settled beyond doubt that yonder ship belongs to your nation. There is something about the cut of her canvas which tells me that she is an English line-of-battle ship. If she’s an enemy, we intend to fight her, and, if we can, enable our prize to escape.”

“Morbleu!” exclaimed the Frenchman. “One might suppose that you rarely capture a prize, you seem so anxious to retain the one you have now got.”

On board the prize, all the preparations which could possibly be made were carried out. Such guns as were uninjured were loaded, fresh tackles rove. Her hard-worked crew recovered their spirits, and even Ben, for a time, ceased to growl. Still, considering the battered state of both ships, there seemed every probability, should the stranger turn out to be an enemy, that they must fall into her hands; and that a French prison would be their destination, instead of the triumphant reception they expected to meet at home, and the prize-money with which they hoped to fill their pockets.

“It would be a great bore if that fellow does turn out to be a Frenchman,” observed Voules to Lord Reginald. “I was in hopes that you would be able to get leave to pay another visit to Elverston Hall. It would be a great pleasure to accompany you.”

“Of course, my dear fellow, I shall be delighted, as my father gives me leave to bring any friends I like; though it appeared to me that you got rather tired at last, or you wouldn’t have taken to dangling after the ladies in the curious fashion you did.”

“Tired! Oh dear no! their delightful society was sufficient attraction. I was never happier in my life.”

“Well, the honest truth is, my brother John told me that he thought you spent too much of your time with them, and he made one or two other remarks which I don’t wish to repeat. You’ll take the hint, should you go there again. However, instead of that, we may possibly have to spend the next few months at Verdun, or some other delectable place in France. I suppose they won’t shut us up in the Bastile, or treat us as Napoleon did Captain Wright?”

“Oh, don’t talk of that!” cried Voules. “We must hope that yonder ship will prove to be a friend; for though the captain may resolve to fight her, should she be an enemy, we must inevitably suffer severely, even if we escape capture.”

As the stranger drew nearer and nearer, the excitement on board increased. The countenances of the Frenchmen at length, however, began to look blank. Then, as the glorious flag of England blew out from the peak of the stranger, a cheer rose from the deck of the *Wolf*, which was taken up by that of the prize.

Signals were exchanged. The British ship made her number, the *Triumph*, seventy-four, Captain Sir Thomas Hardy, one of the noblest officers in the British service. Drawing nearer, and directing the frigate to cast off, he took the prize in tow, and all three ships proceeded together, as had previously been intended, to Plymouth. Having arrived at the mouth of the harbour, the *Wolf* once more took charge of her prize, while the *Triumph* again stood out to sea on her cruise. Cheers saluted the *Wolf* as she proceeded through the narrow entrance to Hamoze, and scarcely had she dropped her anchor than numberless boats were alongside, containing people of all ranks, eager to hear an account of her victory. As soon as the prisoners and wounded had been sent on shore, the decks of the prize were crowded with visitors, and the Frenchmen lost no credit when it was seen to what a state she had been reduced before they yielded.

Ben found several old friends, with whom he had many long talks, though what they were about Dick did not hear. The prize agents took charge of the captured frigate, and her crew returned on board their own ship. Battered as was the prize, she sold for a good sum, and was bought in by the Government. Then came pay day, and many a golden guinea jingled in the victors’ pockets, though with most they did not jingle there long. Leave being given to as many as could be spared to go on shore, scarcely had the poor fellows landed than they were set upon by harpies of every description, whose object was to extract the said golden guineas, which Jack—not knowing what to do with—was willing enough to throw away. Some of the brave heroes might have been seen driving about in a coach and four, crowding the vehicle inside and out, with bottles and mugs on the roof, cheering as they went. Others might have been met with parading the streets, bedecked with pinchbeck watches and chains, which they had purchased under the belief that they were pure gold; seldom without a companion of the other sex on their arm, dressed out in the finery their money had bought. The dancing saloons and grog shops were crowded, few troubling themselves as to how the seamen were employed, provided that they returned on board in due time with empty pockets, ready to fight the battles of Old England, and win more prize-money, to be expended in the same senseless fashion.

The crew of the *Wolf* had been turned over to a hulk, while the dockyard people took possession of her to repair the numerous damages she had received, with orders to proceed with all possible despatch.

General leave had of course not been granted, for many of the crew who had lately joined could not, it was considered, very justly be trusted: the smugglers, the jailbirds, the pressed men, and the boys. A certain number of old hands, together with the ever-faithful marines, were retained on board to watch them. Grumbling was of course the order of the day.

Ben, being among those who could not obtain leave, was loud in his complaints. He vowed that leave he would have, though it might be French leave. “It is hard that a steady man, who never got drunk, and always did his duty from the time he stepped on board, should not be allowed to go on shore to send off his prize-money to his wife!” he exclaimed.

People still came off in considerable numbers every evening, to see the victorious frigate; and although when the workmen were about they could not go on her deck, they could see her from the hulk.

“Now is your time, Dick,” said Ben, one evening when the decks were more than usually crowded. “Here’s an old chum of mine alongside, Peter Purkiss; he’ll take us ashore and will rig us in smock-frocks and gaiters, to look for all the world like countrymen. You slip first into his boat, and as soon as it’s dark I’ll follow; we’ll then start away out of the town, and by the morning we shall be a long stretch off, my boy; no fear of being caught then.”

Dick hesitated; he had often thought that if properly treated he should like the service. The step his evil counsellor advised would be fatal to all his best aspirations.

“Do as you like,” said Ben; “depend upon it that Lord Reginald won’t rest until he has seen you and the cat make acquaintance.”

At that moment Dick caught sight of the young lord talking to Voules. They did not observe him, but he thought that there was something sinister in the expression of their countenances. “They shan’t catch me, as they fancy they will,” he said to himself. He no longer hesitated. Several persons were descending the side; going down to the main-deck, he slipped through a port into the boat Ben had pointed out.

“Where is your shipmate Ben?” asked the old boatman.

“He said that he was coming as soon as it was dark,” answered Dick.

Several other people from the shore got into the boat, and ordered old Peter to land them without delay. Dick every moment expected to be discovered and to hear a hail ordering him back, but no one had observed him, and he was soon landed.

“Now, lad,” said the old man, “I’ll take you to my house, as I promised. Ben will no doubt come next trip. You must be smart, though, lest we should meet any of your officers.”

As it was growing dusk Dick hoped not to be seen, and soon reached a house not far from the water’s edge. The boatman, taking him into a small room, produced a carter’s frock and gaiters, with a billycock hat and a large red handkerchief to tie round his throat.

“Put on these duds, and keep close until I come back, when you and Ben may start together,” said old Purkiss, as he left him to return to his boat.

“Maybe he’ll find it a harder matter to slip away than I did,” said Dick to himself, “and if he doesn’t come, I shall look foolish. Still, I have no fancy to go back and be bullied by that Lord Reginald and his toady Voules.”

Dick waited some hours; at last old Purkiss came back.

“Poor Ben’s in for it,” he said. “He was just slipping down the side when the master-at-arms laid hands on him, and I’m afraid he’s in limbo and very little chance of getting out of it until the ship goes to sea. Whether or not he thought something of the sort might happen, I don’t know, but he gave me these ten guineas which he wants you to take to his wife. It won’t do, however, for you to stay longer here, unless you wish to go back and be flogged to a certainty for attempting to desert. I’d advise you to cut and run this very night. Now, lad, fair play’s a jewel. I am helping you off, and I expect to be paid for what I’m doing, as well as for the clothes I got for you. A five-pound note will satisfy me, though it wouldn’t if you were not a chum of my old shipmate Ben.”

Dick paid the money without hesitation, for he knew that old Purkiss might have fleeced him, had he been so disposed, of every sixpence in his pocket.

“Now we are clear,” said the old man, who prided himself on his honesty, “and I want to give you a piece of advice, which mind you stick to. Don’t show your cash to any one, or you’ll be robbed and murdered maybe. I’ll give you change for a guinea in sixpences and coppers; don’t show too many of them either; better by far pay in coppers for the food you want, and sleep under haystacks or in barns until you reach home. You may get a lift in a cart or waggon, but don’t let anybody know you’ve been on board a man-of-war. Just say you’ve been down to see an old friend, Peter Purkiss, and that’s true for the most part, and that you are going home again to your father and mother. Now, lad, it’s time to be off. I’ll put you in the way out of the town, and when once you are in the country strike away north-east. You’ve got Dartmoor to cross, and as it’s a wildish tract, I’d advise you to get a lift if you can until you are over it. If you can’t get a lift, don’t attempt to cross it at night, or you may lose yourself.”

Peter, who was a good-natured old fellow, though his morality was not of the strictest order, gave Dick a hearty supper, then, taking a thick stick in hand, started off with him, walking at a rapid pace until they reached the confines of Plymouth—a much smaller town in those days than it is at present. Dick then, having received directions from the old man as to the road he was to take, commenced what he had made up his mind would be a long tramp homewards.

He was strong and active, and had not been long enough at sea to lose his shore legs. The night being clear, he was able to see the road, and he knew by the position of the Great Bear, which he always kept on his left hand, that he was going in the right direction. The dread he felt of being overtaken by a pressgang, or by the seamen of his own ship, whom he thought might be sent in pursuit, made him walk all the faster. It was with difficulty indeed at first that he restrained himself from breaking into a run; but he guessed rightly that he would thus be more likely to be stopped by any one who might meet him, and he restrained himself, continuing on only at a rapid walk. Every now and then, however, he turned his head over his shoulder, fancying that he heard footsteps, expecting to find himself seized and carried back to be ignominiously flogged—a fate he well knew would be in store for him, should he be caught. He was not, however, very well contented with himself. He was perfectly aware of the light in which the crime of desertion was regarded; and that he was abandoning all hopes of rising in the service, for which he had always had a liking, notwithstanding the way Ben had abused it. He had sufficient discernment to distinguish the good, true-hearted seamen from the bad, and he had observed that the former were well treated and looked on with respect by their officers. Then the recollection of the way Lord Reginald and Toady Voules had behaved to him would occur. “If it hadn’t been for them, and others like them, I should have been happy enough on board, and willing to do my duty,” he exclaimed. “I should have got on very well with Mr Bitts, for he was always kind in his way, and wanted to make a seaman of me; and I should have been one, for he was ready to show me how to do everything I wanted to learn.

However, it's all past now, and I must go back to the plough. I must take care, though, that Mr Gooch doesn't hear of my being at home again, or he will be down upon me. I suspect that father will be afraid of that, and will be sending me off to a farm away from home, so that, after all, I shall not be with him and mother and Janet. I've half a mind even now to go back again—but then there's this flogging, and Lord Reginald would be down upon me more than ever; and what would Ben say? and old Purkiss would get it for helping me off."

Such were some of Dick's meditations as he trudged on during the night, making good about four miles an hour, so that he was nearly thirty miles away from Plymouth when morning broke. He still walked on until he came to a roadside inn, where, feeling very hungry, he stopped for breakfast. While the landlady was cooking some eggs and bacon, he fell asleep, with his head on the table.

"What ails you, lad?" said the woman, as she placed the smoking hot dish near him, and shook him by the shoulder. "It's not the time o' day people who have had a night's rest take to sleeping."

"But I haven't had a night's rest," answered Dick, rousing himself. "I have been walking on all the morning; but I am more hungry than sleepy, so I thank you for the eggs and bacon, and would be glad of a jug of ale to wash them down."

The landlady, still looking at him somewhat suspiciously—detecting, perhaps, the seaman's shirt below his frock—placed the ale before him. From the questions she put to him, Dick thought that she guessed who he was, and deemed it prudent to again set off. Recollecting Peter's advice, he produced sixpence to pay for his breakfast, and then at once took his leave. For another hour or more he trudged on, until he became so weary that he could scarcely move. He saw a haystack a short distance from the road, inviting him to rest beneath it. Hardly had he thrown himself down on the lee side, away from the public path, than he was fast asleep.

It was late in the afternoon before he awoke, when he continued his journey, stopping only at the first inn he came to that he might obtain some food. He at length reached Exeter, but as he saw seamen moving about and ships in the distance, he was afraid of stopping there, and, passing through it, he again found himself in the country.

Many a weary mile he trudged on. What might be in store for him he could not tell, but anything would be better than going back. Puzzling questions were often asked him, and he ran, on several occasions, great risk of being detected. His sun-burnt countenance and seaman's roll, which he had already acquired, often nearly betrayed him.

As he approached his home, the anxiety to get safely to his journey's end increased. At length, passing through Christchurch, he recognised the familiar scenery of his native district. The high white cliffs of the Isle of Wight, the Needle rocks below them, and the tall lighthouse of Hurst, with its cheese-like castle, bathed in a rich glow from the rays of the setting sun. He sat down on the top of the cliff, and considered—while he ate some bread and cheese he had obtained at his last stopping-place—in which direction he should bend his steps. Longing as he did to go home, he was anxious to fulfil Ben's commission by delivering the money entrusted to him for Susan. He decided to do this first.

"She'll be longing, poor woman! to hear of her husband; and it won't make much difference to father and mother whether I get home an hour or two later."

Having come to this resolution, he hurried on, wishing to reach Keyhaven soon after dark, as he had no desire to be seen by any one. He reached Susan's cottage.

"Who's there?" asked a voice from within, in reply to his knock.

"Open the door, and I'll tell you," he answered.

Susan herself admitted him, though he would scarcely have known her, so pale and wan did she look. She did not know him, and he had to tell her who he was. She then began to make inquiries about "her good man."

Dick had no very satisfactory account to give. All he could say was that Ben had intended to desert and come home, but that in all probability he had been caught and kept on board. "He did not forget you, however," said Dick, presenting ten guineas to the poor woman.

At the sight of the money Susan's countenance brightened. "Bless him! he was always kind and ready to give when he had it; but it is the last, I much fear, I shall ever get from him!" she exclaimed, and then burst into tears.

"I hope not," said Dick. "The ship will be paid off some day, and then he will be able to come home, with plenty more in his pocket. I have sometimes wished that I had stopped, but he advised me to run with him; and it might have been better if I had been caught, and he got away."

"It cannot be helped, Dick," said Susan, inclined to take the matter very philosophically; "though when the ten guineas are gone—and they can't last for ever—I don't know what I shall do. If it hadn't been for them, I should have been in the workhouse next week."

"I must tell my mother about you," said Dick; "maybe she'll send some food for you and the children."

"Your mother will be a long way off, Dick. You haven't heard, maybe, that they are going to leave the farm next week, and have taken one the other side of Christchurch. Your father, after all, accepted Lord Elverston's offer, though it was what my good man always said he would not do if he was in his place, and the farm is to be taken into the park. It was a sore trial to your father and mother, but after you went they seemed not to care what became of them."

"And Janet! Have you heard how she is?" asked Dick, eagerly.

“She’s better than she was, and it is said she’s at the bottom of the matter.”

“How’s that?” asked Dick, somewhat astonished.

“Why, Lady Elverston, who is a very kind lady—and even those who don’t like my lord confess that—was very often at your cottage, and one day she told your mother that she thought Janet’s sight might be restored. She promised to take her up to London to a doctor of some sort, who makes blind people see, they say. So it is all arranged, and after that your father gave in. As soon as they move to their new home, Janet is to go up with my lady.”

Dick could scarcely believe what he heard, and was now, naturally enough, in a greater hurry than ever to get home. He promised, if he could manage it, to come back and see Mrs Rudall again.

In better spirits than he had been for some time, he set off on his walk home. He had not much fear of being recognised, since Susan had failed to know him. He therefore took the shortest road. Seeing a light beaming through the window, he guessed that his father and mother were still up. The door, however, was bolted. He knocked loudly, crying out, “Let me in! let me in!”

“Oh, that’s Dick!” he heard Janet exclaim.

The door was hastily opened, and in another minute he was in his mother’s arms.

“Where do you come from?” asked his father, somewhat sternly. “You have given us all a great fright about you since we found that letter which you left in your room; and the rumours we heard did little to allay it.”

Dick expressed his contrition, declaring that he had acted for the best, and then gave, as briefly as he could, an account of himself up to the present time.

“No man must do evil that good may come of it, and in this case I don’t see that any good has come of it,” said his father. “You leagued yourself with smugglers and got pressed in consequence, and now you have run from your ship, perhaps to be seized and carried back as a deserter.”

“But I must take care not to be seized, and am ready to stop and work with you, father. I deserted because I was forced to serve against my will, though I found the life on board not so bad as I expected, and if it hadn’t been for the bullying I got from Lord Reginald and that other midshipman, I would have remained where I was.”

Mrs Hargrave and Janet now took Dick’s part, and his father was ultimately pacified, though, as he said, it went against the grain to have a son of his called a deserter, however ill he might have been treated. Dick found that the account Susan had given him about Janet was correct; that she was shortly to accompany Lady Elverston to London, to be put under a celebrated oculist, and to undergo the operation of couching.

“Bless her ladyship’s heart for her kindness!” said Mrs Hargrave.

“We have not many days to remain here, and I must have you stay in-doors, lest you should be seen by any who have an ill will against you, Dick,” observed his father.

“I don’t think they would know me any more than Susan Rudall did when I paid her a visit,” answered Dick. “I’d rather not be boxed up in the house, if I can help it. I should soon fall sick after being accustomed to the sea air so long.”

“Better remain in-doors at home than be locked up in a prison,” observed his father. “It is a sad thing for me to have to say it, but remember, Dick, you have made yourself liable to that, and it will be wiser for you to remain in hiding until we go to our new farm and people have forgotten all about you.”

Dick did not longer argue the point, but he made no promises. His mother, observing how weary he was, and that he could scarcely keep his eyes open, suggested that he should go to bed, and gladly acting on the advice he staggered off to his room, which remained exactly as he had left it.

Dick took a day to recover from his fatigue and, after that, shut up in his room, be began to find the time pass heavily away. His mother was engaged in household affairs, and in preparing for the removal, while his father was absent from home until late in the evening, having to make more than one trip to the new farm. Janet came and sat with him frequently. She was in good spirits at the anticipation of recovering her sight, about which she was very sanguine. Still Dick pined for fresh air. “You ought to get out,” he said to Janet, “instead of sitting all day shut up here. I’ll chance it; put on your shawl and bonnet; we are not likely to meet any one, and if we do they’ll not interfere with us.”

Janet, without further consideration, forgetting her father’s warning, agreed, and she leaning on Dick’s arm, they took their way down a green lane in which she especially delighted, and which turned off near the house. She knew that scarcely any one passed that way, as she had frequently gone along it alone, with her dog to guide her. Tempted by the pleasantness of the evening, they went on for some distance, through a forest glade.

“We ought to be going back,” said Janet at length, “for I feel the air damp, though you don’t find it out, Dick, and I know that the sun must have set.”

“There will be plenty of light for me to see my way home,” answered Dick; “but we will turn, as you wish it.”

They had not got far on their way back, when Janet felt Dick give a start, and she heard the sound of horses’ approaching at a quick pace.

“What do you see?” she asked.

Dick did not answer; he was looking about to find some place of concealment. Had he been alone he could easily have hid himself, but he could not leave Janet. The horsemen approached rapidly. Dick tried to walk on in an unconcerned manner. In another minute they were up to him, and he saw Lord Reginald and Mr Voules. He felt sure that they recognised him, for he saw the latter turn to the young lord and make some remark, though, possibly on Janet's account, he did not speak sufficiently loud to allow what he said to be heard. They both, however, stared very hard, and then passed on, allowing Dick and his sister to proceed on their way.

"Who are those persons?" asked Janet.

Dick told her, but, not wishing to alarm her, observed, "If they knew me, they didn't think it worth while to interfere. I don't suppose any harm will come of it."

Janet, however, became very anxious. "As they are officers of the ship you ran away from, they'll think it right to take you. Oh, Dick! you must try and hide where they can't find you. It would be dreadful to have you carried off again!"

"Don't tell father and mother, then; it will frighten them, and I'll see what's best to be done. Both these fellows hate me, and I don't suppose they will let me remain in quiet. They were afraid of attempting to seize me, for they knew well that they would have found it a tough job."

It did not occur to Dick that he enjoyed his safety at the moment from being in company with his blind sister, as Lord Reginald, at all events, was unwilling to interfere with him.

Janet, in her eagerness to get home, almost dragged Dick along, and he felt her arm tremble as she thought of the danger to which he was exposed. According to his wish, she said nothing to her mother of the encounter. Mr Hargrave was not expected home until late. Dick had been thinking of what he should do. As soon as he had had supper, Janet having gone to her room, he jumped up, saying—

"Mother! that young lord and his friend are at the hall, and they have seen me. They may not trouble themselves about me, but I'd rather not trust them. I'll go off and hide somewhere; and if they send here, you can say that you don't know where I am. Tell father that I am sorry, very sorry, that he should be troubled so much about me; but it cannot be helped now. Those two midshipmen will be joining their ship soon. It won't be long before she's ready for sea again, and then I may go back to the new farm without fear. No one in that neighbourhood will know me, and I'll promise to work hard and make amends to you and father, and keep clear of smugglers in future."

Mrs Hargrave was naturally much grieved, but she had no other proposal to offer. She knew the angry feelings which existed between her son, and the young lord, and thought it best that they should not again run the risk of meeting.

"But where do you intend going?" she asked.

"That's the very thing I don't want you to know, mother," he answered. "You can now say honestly that I left home, and that you have no idea where I went to. Good-bye, give my love and duty to father."

Mrs Hargrave embraced Dick with tears in her eyes. He ran in to wish Janet good-bye.

"I have told mother all about it," he said. "Keep up your spirits! no harm will come to me. I need only keep away for a week or two, and as soon as the ship sails, I shall be all safe."

Janet was not so satisfied as her brother appeared to be on that point. She threw her arms round his neck, and burst into tears.

"Cheer up, cheer up!" said Dick, "I know I am a brute to have made you all so unhappy, but when I come home again I intend to turn over a new leaf."

Janet held his hand. An indefinite fear of what might happen seized her. He tore himself away, half inclined to be angry with her and his mother, for making so much fuss about the matter, and rushed outside the house. He soon turned off the high road and hurried on along a path in the direction of Keyhaven.

"I'll get Susan Rudall to stow me away. She'll be grateful to me for bringing her the money, and, as I've got a few guineas in my pocket, I can pay her well for keeping me, and it will be an advantage to her," he said to himself. "I must take care that no one sees me going into her cottage, and I don't suppose the young lord or that fellow Voules will think of looking for me there."

The night was dark, but Dick, who knew the way, ran on, stopping every now and then to listen if any one was approaching. He had got close to Keyhaven, when it became necessary to use more caution, as people who knew him might probably be about, and should an inquiry be set on foot they might state that they had met him. He had almost reached Susan's cottage when, turning up an angle of the road, he found himself close to several men who were coming up it. He stopped, he could not go on without passing between them. Acting on the impulse of the moment, he turned and ran back, hoping to find some place where he might conceal himself until they had passed.

"Stop that fellow, whoever he is!" shouted a voice, in an authoritative tone.

A couple of men darted forward, and before Dick had got many paces away he found himself seized by the shoulder.

"Halloa, my fine fellow! who are you? and what are you about?" asked one of the men.

"I am going to visit a neighbour," answered Dick, trying to free himself.

"You must come back to our officer first, and give an account of yourself," said the first speaker, whom Dick

recognised as a man-of-war's man.

Resistance was useless, and he made no further attempt to escape. The officer and the rest of the men soon came up, and Dick repeated the account he had given of himself.

"Very fine!" was the answer; "but you must come up to the station, and if Lieutenant Hilton knows you he will be able to state how far what you tell us is true."

Dick, making no answer, walked on between his two captors. From what he could make out, the men belonged to a revenue cutter, which had dropped anchor off Hurst that evening, in consequence of information received of some smuggling work likely to take place in the neighbourhood.

"My ill luck!" thought Dick. "If it hadn't been for that I should have got down to Susan's without difficulty, and now, because I am known to have been on board the *Nancy*, they'll accuse me of being concerned in this matter, of which I never so much as heard, until this moment."

Dick was perfectly right in his conjectures. Lieutenant Hilton, who had just returned from visiting the neighbouring posts, no sooner set eyes on Dick, than he exclaimed, "Why, that's young Hargrave, the very fellow Lord Reginald Oswald was speaking to me about, not an hour ago, a deserter from the *Wolf*, a desperate young ruffian, by all accounts. I'll hand him over to you Mason, to carry on board your cutter, but you must take good care that he doesn't escape."

The commander of the cutter laughed. "I'll clap him in irons, and he'll be clever if he gets his wrists out of them," he answered.

Dick was led down to the beach by the cutter's crew, who at once pulled on board. Being hauled up the side without ceremony, he was handed down below, and a pair of handcuffs were placed on his wrists.

"You've had a long run on shore, my lad, and it is to be hoped you enjoyed yourself," said the seaman who was fastening them on. "I wouldn't stand in your shoes for something, let me tell you. You've heard tell of Tim Macarthy, who three times ran from his ship, and got hanged. You must look out that the same doesn't happen to you if you play that trick again."

Dick made no reply; his spirit was so utterly broken that he could have burst into tears, had he not made a strong effort to restrain himself.

"They shan't see me play the woman, if I can help it," he said to himself; "but if ever I have the chance I'll make that Lord Reginald pay for it. If he hadn't informed against me, the chances are I should have got off. He and his messmate hadn't the courage to stop me by themselves, and so they must needs gallop off and tell that lieutenant that they had seen me. What a fool I was to go down to Keyhaven, instead of striking away inland, where I should have been safe from them. Now, I suppose I shall be flogged and branded as a deserter, and perhaps be hung, as that fellow says. I shouldn't care if I had changed my name, I should not like to bring disgrace on my father and mother. It would break their hearts to know such had been my fate."

These, and if possible, still more gloomy thoughts passed through Dick's mind, until, leaning his head against the side of the vessel, near which he had been placed, he fell off into a troubled slumber.

Chapter Nine.

Treatment of the prisoners—Chased by a privateer—The pressed men armed—The fight—Dick's gallantry—Capture of the lugger—Prize crew sent on board—Attempt of the Frenchmen to take the cutter—Dick Hargrave's presence of mind—Reception on board the frigate—Nearly flogged—Ben Rudall's statement—The captain's dilemma—Dick's gratitude.

Dick was not the only occupant of the cutter's hold. There were several other men—some pressed, others released from prison on condition of serving on board the fleet; and these for security were kept down below, until they were placed on board the ships for which they were destined. Besides them there were a few volunteers, mostly young men, who had joined at the places at which the cutter had touched.

Daylight was streaming down the hatchway when Dick awoke. The cutter was still at anchor. He knew that although he was so near home there was no chance of his friends learning where he was, and of their trying to obtain his release. His father he would rather not see. He made out, from the conversation going on around him, that the cutter was bound down to Plymouth, with men for the *Wolf*, to replace those who had been killed and wounded. If he had any wish, it was that the vessel would get under way. He was eager to face the worst, and get it over as soon as possible. A dull stupor at length came over him, and for long he sat neither asleep nor awake, without thinking. He could hear the tramp of feet overhead; still the vessel remained stationary. He was aroused when the breakfast was served out to him and the other prisoners. He ate mechanically, exchanging only a few words with those near him, and then went off into the same state as before. At length he heard feet descending the companion ladder, and looking up, he saw the officer who had captured him holding a lantern in his hand, accompanied by two persons, whom he recognised as Lord Reginald and Mr Voules.

"Is that the young fellow, my lord, who deserted from the *Wolf*," asked the officer.

"No doubt about it," answered Lord Reginald. "I'm glad you have caught him."

"I should have known him from among a hundred," said Voules, "though he has got out of his sea rig. Take care that

he doesn't get away from you. I should be sorry if he escapes the flogging he'll get on board!"

"You see I have him fast enough at present," answered the officer, pointing to the handcuffs on Dick's wrists, "He may be very clever, but he'll not get out of those in a hurry."

The midshipmen looked round, but could identify no other prisoners as deserters from their ship.

"I shall not sail until the tide makes to the westward; so if your lordship intends to honour me by returning in the cutter to Plymouth, you will have time to go back to Elverston and get your traps," Dick heard the lieutenant observe as they ascended the companion ladder; but the reply did not reach his ears. As the cutter remained stationary, he had good reason to fear that the two midshipmen would take a passage in her, and that he should be subjected to their taunts and ill-treatment, and have no chance of being set at liberty, which he might otherwise have had when they once got to sea. Whether or not he was right in his conjectures he could not tell. He heard several persons come on board; then the anchor was hove up, and the cutter got under way. He would have given much to have sent a message on shore, but he had no opportunity.

A fresh breeze carried the cutter along at a good rate. Before nightfall she was off Portland. Hitherto neither Lord Reginald nor Voules had come below.

"I only hope they'll not show themselves, for it will be a hard matter to keep a quiet tongue in my head if they speak to me," thought Dick. "It will be all the same, though, for I shall be flogged to a certainty when I am on board again, and I should like to give them my mind first."

Though below, Dick could judge pretty accurately what the cutter was about. She was evidently making little or no way, for he could hear not the slightest sound of a ripple against her side. She lay, indeed, becalmed, in West Bay, between Portland and The Start. It was night, and the men round him were asleep, as their loud snores in various tones told him. He would have had no inclination to talk, however, had they been awake. The only other sounds which reached him were the occasional footsteps of the watch on deck, as they paced over his head, or the creaking of the jaws of the mainboom and gaff, and, now and then, the flap of the mainsail. In vain he tried to get one subject out of his head—the thought of the flogging. Not that he dreaded the pain he should suffer one-tenth part so much as he did the disgrace. His father's heart would well-nigh break should he hear of it. The stout English yeoman was as proud in his way as was the Marquis of Elverston.

"It is he—he, that Lord Reginald, who has brought me to this!" he muttered, clenching his fists and grinding his teeth. "If ever I have the chance I will be revenged on him! I must, I could not help it." Dick conjured up a fearful picture—the young lord in his power, his hand upon his throat. He forgot that it was through his own folly that he had enabled Lord Reginald to treat him in the way he had done. Had he kept free of the smugglers, had he not been tempted to desert, Lord Reginald, when exhibiting his ill feeling, would have been seen by all to be in the wrong.

The cutter made no way during the night, and though she drifted to the westward with one tide, the flood carried her as far back again; so that when morning broke The Start and Portland Bill were almost at equal distances from her. Dick dozed off while the crew were washing decks. He was only fully aroused when, as before, breakfast was brought down for the prisoners. After some time, sounds of laughter and frequent footsteps reached his ears, and he guessed that the commander with his young passengers were walking the deck after their breakfast. Presently he heard the former order the steward to hand him his spyglass.

"What is she, Mr Mason?" asked Lord Reginald.

"A large lugger, at all events. She may be a Jersey privateer, or she may be French. As she is bringing up a fresh breeze from the eastward, we shall know more about her soon."

"Suppose she is French, shall you attack her?" asked Voules, in a tone which showed no great satisfaction at the thoughts of such an event taking place.

"She is more likely to attack us, as she probably carries six or eight guns and one long nine-pounder. Such is the armament of most of those craft, and twice as many hands as we can muster, while we have only got our four small carronades, which are of very little use except at close quarters."

"Then I suppose we shall have to run for it," said Voules; "there'll be no honour or glory in fighting her."

"I shouldn't like to have to run from an enemy unless she was very much larger than yonder craft appears to be," exclaimed Lord Reginald.

"As to that, my lord, we must do our best not to be taken, and shall have to fight for it. We have hands enough to work our guns, but if she runs us aboard, her numerous crew will tell fearfully in her favour."

"But you have a good many prisoners below; I suppose they could be trusted to help us?" said Lord Reginald.

"I shouldn't like to put cutlasses into their hands; they might turn against us," observed Voules.

"No fear of that," answered the lieutenant; "they are Englishmen, and if they see an enemy will fight fast enough. I shall trust them, at all events, and as soon as I can make out whether yonder lugger hails from Jersey or not, I will have them on deck and arm them."

Dick, as he heard this, heartily hoped that the stranger might prove an enemy. The rest of the prisoners, he judged, from the remarks they made, were much of his way of thinking.

"The mounseers won't make any difference between us and the crew, if we're taken," observed one of the men.

“Right there, mate; better have a jolly stand-up fight than be sitting down here all day, doing nothing,” remarked another.

The officers had gone aft, and Dick could not hear what was said. In a short time, however, he knew that the cutter was moving by the rippling against her side.

Presently she heeled over slightly, showing that the breeze was freshening, and he heard the order to set the squaresail and square-topsail. There was little doubt, then, that the commander was following the advice given by Mr Voules, making the best of his way to the westward. He would do that under ordinary circumstances. It was still uncertain whether the lugger which had brought up the breeze was a friend or an enemy.

He had heard the order to hoist the ensign, and some time afterwards a voice called out, “That’s a French craft, I’ll take my davy, though we can’t see her colours.”

Again some time elapsed, when a gun was heard, but the sound was so faint that Dick thought the vessel which fired it must be at a great distance. Presently Mr Mason came down into the hold.

“Lads,” he said, looking round, “you are all Englishmen, though you are pressed against your will to serve his Majesty. I put it to you, whether—as I think it likely we are somewhat over-matched—you’ll fight to preserve this vessel and to save yourself being carried to a French prison. I have come down to give you your liberty, as I am sure that you will all make the same answer, and if cutlasses are put into your hands, that you’ll fight as bravely as any men on board. We shall then, I have no fear, lick the lugger, and carry her as a prize into Plymouth harbour.”

A hearty cheer was given. “We’ll thrash the mounseers; no fear about that,” answered the men; Dick joining as warmly as any one.

The men’s handcuffs were soon taken off. Dick, on finding himself free, sprang to his feet and grasped the cutlass which was put into his hands. On reaching the deck he found the cutter was prepared for action. Two of the guns were trained aft, boarding-pikes were placed along the bulwarks. An arm-chest stood open, containing pistols, hand-grenades, swords, and cutlasses, while a number of muskets lay on the companion hatch.

The two midshipmen, with pistols in their belts and cutlasses at their sides, stood watching the lugger, which under press of sail was coming up astern. She was evidently a much faster craft than the cutter, though the latter was a stout vessel of her class. The lugger now began to fire her long gun; the shot, though failing to strike, pitched sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other side of the cutter.

“Why don’t we try and knock away some of her spars?” observed Lord Reginald.

“Little use firing our pop-guns,” answered the commander; “our shot won’t reach her as yet.”

Presently the long gun sent its missile through the cutter’s squaresail. Another shortly afterwards made a second hole, but did no other damage.

“Those fellows know how to handle their gun. We shall see how they behave when we get them within range of ours. Stand by, Beal, to give it them,” he said to the gunner, who had brought a match from the galley fire.

The guns were fired almost simultaneously. What effect their shot produced could not be seen, though Beal declared that one, if not both, struck the lugger. They did not, however, stop her way. She fired her long gun in return. It was well aimed, for down came the squaresail, the halliards shot away. The lugger’s crew were heard cheering.

“Shout away, my fine fellows!” cried Beal; “we’ll make you sing a different note if you come alongside.”

Hands were instantly ordered to repair the damage. It took some time, however, to bend fresh halliards and hoist up the yard. During the interval, the lugger had gained considerably on the cutter, but this enabled the latter to fire her stern chasers with more effect. The men worked vigorously, loading and firing almost as fast as the lugger’s crew did their long gun. Still, with short guns the aim was uncertain, and of the many shots fired, comparatively few did any damage to the enemy. Mr Mason’s object was to get to the other side of The Start, when probably the firing might attract the attention of some man-of-war near the mouth of Plymouth harbour, which might come out to the rescue. He was determined, however, to fight to the last, rather than yield his vessel. The Frenchman’s object was evidently to knock away some of the cutter’s spars, to get alongside as soon as possible, trusting to obtain the victory by boarding her, well aware of the small crew she was likely to carry; probably, also, supposing that she conveying specie or valuable stores to Plymouth, as was frequently done, instead of sending them by land. Most of the damage inflicted on the cutter was therefore aloft. Her sails already showed many holes. Her starboard backstay had been shot away, her topmast was wounded, though it still stood. Mr Mason now made preparations for what he saw was inevitable.

“When the cutter boards, my lads, remember we must not only drive back the boarders, but follow them into their own vessel and take her. Even if we wished it, should we lose any of our spars, we could not get away from her. It is pretty certain that her guns are heavier than ours. Lord Reginald, I’ll get you to stand by the helm with half a dozen hands to manage the cutter in case we are separated, and all the rest of you will board with me. Lads, I’ll depend upon you to carry that craft. I know what privateersmen are like, when they see cold steel in their faces. They’ll come on boldly enough at first, but when once beaten back, they’ll turn tail like hounds, and skulk for shelter below.”

The cheers which rose from the throats of the crew, joined in heartily by Dick and the rest of the pressed men, gave promise of victory, in spite of the odds which might be against them. The firing was continued by both vessels as fast as the guns could be loaded, the lugger gradually gaining on the chase.

The lieutenant ordered as many hands as were required, to drag over the two stern guns to the side on which the lugger might come up; while the other two were loaded with musket-balls ready to fire into her.

At length, a shot aimed high by the lugger struck the cutter's topmast. The spar held on for a minute, but a stronger puff of wind filling the sail, with a loud crash it gave way, and down came the gaff-topsail and square-topsail. The mainsail and squaresail still, however, stood. The lugger now came up hand over hand. The two stern chasers were once more fired. The lugger was steering for the cutter's starboard quarter. In a few minutes the guns were dragged over to the starboard side and run through the two after ports, while the other remaining gun was hauled up with equal rapidity to the same side.

"Lower away the squaresail; down with the helm. Now fire, lads!"

Four guns were simultaneously discharged, raking the lugger fore and aft. The next instant the helm was again put up, or the lugger would have run into her stem on. Instead of this, striking on the counter, she ranged up alongside. A large body of men were seen grouped on the forecastle armed with pikes and cutlasses. The moment the sides of the two vessels touched, with loud shouts, led by one of their officers, they leaped on board, many to meet their doom, for before they reached the deck they were cut down by the stalwart arms of the British seamen. Others followed, but, met with a bristling array of pikes and cutlasses in their faces, they dared not spring from their own bulwarks. The men aft, under the command of Lord Reginald, had been keeping up a warm fire of musketry, when the lieutenant, turning his head, saw a party of the enemy kept in reserve, about to board the cutter aft. He instantly sprang towards the threatened point, followed by several who had gallantly been keeping the first party of boarders in check. Among them was Dick Hargrave and several of his companions. Leading the French boarders was a big fellow with huge bushy whiskers, and a red handkerchief tied round his head. With a sword of a size which few men could have wielded, he made a desperate slash at the lieutenant, which would have brought him to the deck, had not Dick sprang forward and, interposing his cutlass, dealt the next instant such a blow on the sword arm of the giant, that the fellow's weapon dropped from his hand.

"Thank you, my good fellow, I saw what you did," said the lieutenant. "Now lads, we will drive these Frenchmen below, as we promised them. All of you follow me!" and, led by the lieutenant and Dick, the English crew threw themselves on the lugger's deck, trusting rather to their cutlasses and stout arms than to any other weapons.

Voules, with those who had remained on the cutter's forecastle, now gained a footing on the fore part of the lugger's deck. Her crew fought bravely, but besides their big officer, many of them were cut down. Inch by inch the lieutenant and his men made their way forward, until the quarter-deck was cleared, the Frenchmen being either killed or wounded, or driven down the main-hatchway or overboard. One of their officers alone remained alive, and, seeing that all hope of gaining the victory was lost, he shouted out "We surrender!" Dick, who knew the meaning of the cry, repeated it in English, and running aft to the peak halliards, quickly hauled down the Frenchman's ensign.

"Well done, my lad!" cried Lieutenant Mason. "I'll not forget you."

The Frenchmen, who had hitherto kept their cutlasses in their hands, threw them on the deck, asking for quarter for themselves and their companions below. Their officer, coming aft, surrendered his sword. Those below now being called up one by one, were transferred to the cutter's hold, and Mr Voules, with eight men, including Dick Hargrave, was sent on board the lugger to navigate her into Plymouth.

"You will keep close to me, Mr Voules," said Lieutenant Mason, "for I have as many prisoners on board as I can well manage, and should they be disposed to rise upon us they might succeed if we don't keep a bright look-out."

The French privateersmen were indeed a very rough-looking set of fellows. By the way they had fought they showed that they were capable of daring and doing any act of violence. Although nearly twenty had been killed or wounded, they still far outnumbered the cutter's crew, now reduced by three killed and five wounded, as well as by those sent on board the lugger.

The two vessels were soon separated, though they kept as close as they could together. Voules and his men had enough to do, heaving the dead overboard and attending to the wounded, while they had to wash down the bloodstained decks. Some of the rigging, too, required knotting and splicing, and several shot-holes had to be plugged in the vessel's side. It was the first command Voules had ever enjoyed, and he walked the deck with his spyglass under his arm, issuing his orders in an authoritative tone. At last his eye fell upon Dick, who was engaged in some work which it appeared he was not doing according to the midshipman's notion of the way it ought to be done.

"What are you about there, you lubberly hound?" he shouted out, springing up to him with a rope's end. Dick leaped out of his way, and the uplifted rope fell on the back of another man, who turned round with a look of no little astonishment.

"I beg pardon, sir, but you hit somewhat hard," said the man. "I'll splice this here rope for the lad, for if he's not quite up to it, he knows how to use his cutlass, at any rate. If it hadn't been for him, our commander would be among those poor fellows who have lost the number of their mess in this here fight."

"Belay the slack of your jaw, fellow!" exclaimed Voules, turning away.

The man thrust his tongue into his cheek as he caught the eye of another seaman standing near him.

Dick kept out of the midshipman's way as much as he could, though he continued actively engaged as before. His spirits rose with the feeling that he was at liberty, and that he had gained Lieutenant Mason's good opinion. "I wish that I had been allowed to remain on board the cutter. I could serve under her commander, and do my duty. But when I get on board the frigate, all will be changed, I fear," he said to himself; "however, I must not think about that. I must do my duty as well as I can now, and maybe he'll speak a word for me, though I have little to expect from such

fellows as Mr Voules and his friend."

The breeze continued, The Start was passed, the Eddystone light came in sight. No one on board the vessels turned in. The whole crew on board the lugger could only just manage her sails, while that of the cutter were required to keep a watch on the prisoners. The two vessels kept close together, Voules every now and then hailing the cutter, to learn if all was right on board her. The lugger had twice to shorten sail, or she would have run ahead. Dick, as he walked forward, kept his eye on the cutter. The idea had come into his head that the Frenchmen might rise on their captors. He had formed a higher estimate of their courage than had most of his shipmates. The lugger was now about twenty fathoms off on the cutter's quarter. Voules, who had become very hungry, telling the man at the helm to keep the vessel as she was going, dived below, in the hopes of finding something to eat. Two or three of the men, following his example, had gone below, with the same object in view. Dick, who was standing on the lugger's forecastle, with his eye turned towards the cutter, suddenly saw a flash, though there was no report. This was immediately followed by shouts and oaths.

"Starboard!" he cried out to the man at the helm; "there's something going wrong on board the cutter."

The lugger was just then feeling the breeze, and forging ahead. This brought her bows close to the cutter's side. Dick could see that a struggle was going on around the main hatchway, up which a number of figures were forcing themselves. His cries brought the lugger's men forward. To lash the two vessels together was the work of a moment, and then he, with five of his shipmates, leaped down on the cutter's deck. Their arrival turned the scales in favour of the crew, who, surprised by a sudden uprising of the French prisoners, were struggling hard to keep them down, several having incautiously unbuckled their cutlasses while engaged in repairing the rigging. Lieutenant Mason and Lord Reginald were aft, at supper. So sudden and silent had been the rising, that they had only just before reached the scene of action when the lugger ran alongside. "Thank you, Voules; you came in the nick of time," cried Lieutenant Mason, when the Frenchmen were forced below.

Voules made no reply. He had been busily engaged in the lugger's cabin, and was not aware of what had taken place until all was over.

"It was this here lad, sir, who did it," exclaimed the seaman who had received the blow aimed at Dick's shoulders; "he see'd what was happening. If it hadn't been for him, no one else would have found it out."

"Thank you, Richard Hargrave; that is the second time to-day you have rendered me good service," said Lieutenant Mason.

"Richard Hargrave!" said Lord Reginald; "he is the last person I should have thought likely to do anything worthy of praise."

"Depend upon it, your lordship will find there is something in that lad, if he has the opportunity of proving it," observed Lieutenant Mason.

No lives had been lost in the outbreak. Order was quickly restored, the lashings cast off, and the lugger's crew returning to her, the two vessels pursued their course as before. The Frenchmen now saw that all hope of escape was gone, and quietly submitted to their fate.

The night was sufficiently light to enable the cutter and her prize to make their way up Plymouth harbour. Before the day broke they were both safe at anchor in Hamoze, close to where the *Wolf* lay.

Soon after sunrise Lieutenant Mason, with the two midshipmen he had brought for the frigate, went alongside her. Captain Moubray, who was on board, at once desired to see him. Having given an account of the capture of the lugger and described the good conduct of the pressed men, and especially mentioned Richard Hargrave, he added, "He saved my life, sir, in boarding the lugger, and afterwards, when the Frenchmen were on the point of breaking out of the hold, he brought the lugger alongside just in time to enable us to drive them below without bloodshed. He had, I understand, deserted from the frigate, but as he was in the first instance pressed, I trust that you will pardon him, and judge rather by the way he has lately behaved than his past conduct."

"I'll take the account you give into consideration, Mr Mason," answered the captain. "To prevent desertion, it is absolutely necessary to punish those who are retaken; but I should be very unwilling to do so in this instance. I will see this Richard Hargrave, and if I can overlook his offence without injury to the discipline of the ship, I will gladly do so."

With this promise, Lieutenant Mason was obliged to remain satisfied. It was all he could do to show his gratitude to Dick for saving his life. He had, however, several duties to perform—to get rid of his prisoners, and to hand the lugger over to the prize agents. On paying his respects to the admiral, he received many compliments on his gallantry, and a promise that his conduct would be duly reported. He then mentioned Dick Hargrave's conduct. "Very praiseworthy," observed the admiral. "I am glad you have spoken of him to Captain Moubray, who will doubtless see that he is rewarded, and keep an eye on him in future."

Dick, soon after he got on board, fell in with Ben Rudall. Ben looked very downcast.

"Sorry to see you back, Dick," he said. "What has happened? Did you manage to get home and see my old woman, and give her the money? or did they catch you afore, and take it from you?"

Dick briefly explained all that had happened, and gave an account of the action with the lugger, and how the lieutenant had spoken of him.

"That's good luck for you. It may save you from what I got. I thought I was safe off, but I was brought back, and had a

taste of the cat in consequence."

Dick received a very different greeting from what he had expected. The news of his behaviour had spread from mouth to mouth, and he was looked upon by his messmates in a far better light than formerly. Seamen are always ready to acknowledge merit, and his attempt to desert was overlooked, especially when it was known among the men that he had been put up to it by Ben Rudall. He was naturally somewhat nervous as to how he might be treated by the captain, not being aware that Lieutenant Mason had spoken in his favour, for he had no hope that Lord Reginald or Voules would have mentioned his conduct on board the cutter.

At length his name was called along the decks. He hurried aft. The master-at-arms, who had been looking for him, told him that he was wanted on the quarterdeck. He screwed up his courage to brave the worst. He found the captain and first lieutenant standing aft, as he approached, hat in hand.

"Richard Hargrave, you entered some time back on board this ship, and deserted. You made no attempt to return of your own accord, and were retaken. You know the punishment, and discipline requires that it should be inflicted," said the captain in a stern voice.

"I was pressed against my will, sir; and I did my duty in the action with the French frigate which we took. But I wanted to see my mother and blind sister, and I ran, and can't deny it. Now I've been brought back, I'll try to do my duty. That's what I've got to say, sir."

"Have you nothing more to say?" asked the captain.

"Yes. When I was set free, I did duty on board the cutter, and helped to take the French lugger. The commander says I saved his life; and afterwards, when I was on board the prize, it was through me that the lugger was brought alongside the cutter, and the Frenchmen, who were rising on her crew, were overpowered."

"You acted well, then, on both occasions?" said the captain.

"Yes; I did what I thought was my duty," answered Dick.

"Still, you do not deny that you deserted, and had no intention of returning?" observed Captain Moubray.

"I cannot deny it, sir," said Dick.

"You know that desertion is always punished by flogging?" said the captain.

"Yes," answered Dick; "if it were not for the disgrace I shouldn't mind it."

"It is a greater disgrace to desert your ship," said the captain; "but discipline must be maintained, although, considering your gallant conduct on board the cutter, I would gladly overlook your crime."

Just as Dick was expecting to hear his sentence pronounced, he was conscious that some one, who had come up, was standing by his side, and glancing round, he saw Ben Rudall.

"Beg pardon, Captain Moubray, for speaking, but I makes bold in this here case to come for'ard, as I knows more about the desertion of this lad than any one else," said Ben, giving a pull at his hair. "I put him up to it, as I had been the cause of his being taken, and as I knowed that he is the only son of his father and mother, they would be main glad to have him back again; and I had made up my mind to go too, as I have a wife and children at home waiting for me, but I was taken and brought back."

"Then you merit the punishment more than he does," said the captain.

"That's just it, sir; and I axes the favour of being flogged instead of him. My hide is tough, and can bear it; but his is young and tender, and ain't been accustomed to hard blows."

The captain looked greatly puzzled. He was struck by Ben's magnanimity, if so it could be called, in being ready to sacrifice himself, and was therefore unwilling to punish him; yet the crime of inciting another to desert was greater even than the act of desertion, and he felt, as the man had acknowledged it, that he ought to be punished as a warning to others.

The first lieutenant relieved him of his dilemma by observing that, "That man has already been flogged for attempting to desert, and I may venture to think that it would not do to punish him again for the same crime."

"You are right, Mr Curling. The discipline of the ship will not suffer, should I overlook this lad's offence in consideration of the gallantry he has displayed."

"I feel sure of it, sir. It would do more harm to punish than to pardon him."

"Go forward, my man," said the captain, addressing Rudall. "I have heard what you say about this lad, and let it be known among the men, that although he is let off this time, I will not again pardon any attempt at desertion, whatever may be the excuse offered."

Ben, pulling a lock of his hair, obeyed the captain's orders, and went forward, exhibiting very little trace of the lawless, vaunting smuggler he had appeared to Dick on board the *Nancy*.

"And now, Richard Hargrave," said the captain, addressing Dick, "you made a bad commencement by committing a grave crime, but you have shown that you are capable of performing your duty well and gallantly. Your late conduct

atones in a great measure for your previous behaviour; and as you know what your duty is, I would urge you to perform it, in spite of the bad example or advice of such associates as may try to lead you into evil. Remember that the eyes of the officers will be upon you, and I shall be glad to hear a favourable report of your conduct."

Dick, grateful to the captain for pardoning him, and especially for the last encouraging words which he had spoken, could with difficulty refrain from bursting into tears. His breast heaved, a choking sensation came into his throat, and he was unable to utter a word beyond "Thank you, sir; thank you, sir;" and making the usual salute, he turned round and hurried below.

Chapter Ten.

An East Indian convoy—Toady Voules turns nurse—Fair run to the Cape—Fear of privateers—Carelessness—A strange signal—Midnight attack—Timely assistance—Treachery—Lord Reginald in command of the prize—Treatment of the Maria's crew—Discontent—A stern chase is a long chase—Obstinacy of the young lord—Voules's advice neglected—A calm—Bursting of the hurricane—Wreck of the privateer—Washed ashore.

A few days after Lord Reginald Oswald and Richard Hargrave returned on board the *Wolf*, she went out of harbour and came to an anchor in Cawsand Bay, where she, with another frigate, surrounded by a fleet of merchantmen which they were to convoy to the East Indies, lay waiting for a fair wind.

Dick had never seen so many ships together. To his eyes they presented a grand sight, as with colours flying and sails loosened from the yards, they were prepared to obey the signal for getting under way. He felt proud of belonging to one of the ships which had charge of so many fine vessels, many of them capable, it seemed to him, of coping with even the enemy's men-of-war. The wind suddenly came round to the northward. The *Wolf* fired the signal gun, the anchor was hove up, her canvas was let fall and sheeted home, and she glided out of the Sound, followed in rapid succession by the merchant vessels; the *Ione*, the other frigate, bringing up the rear and acting as whipper-in to the fleet, which, as they spread out on their course down the British Channel, with their snowy canvas extended below and aloft, seemed increased in number. The signal midshipmen had work enough to do in watching the merchant vessels, and in hoisting and hauling down the bunting as the requisite signals were made, while both frigates were continually firing their guns to hasten on the laggards, or to make the faster sailing ships shorten sail.

Rapid voyages were not expected to be made in those days, for the more nimble-heeled had to wait for the slower-sailing craft, while the men-of-war had to keep the whole of the vessels under their charge in sight, and as close together as circumstances would allow.

The midshipmen had assembled for dinner in their berth on the day the fleet sailed, with the exception of those on duty.

"Faith, Ludlam! I thought you'd have been our new third, rather than Oswald, who hasn't been in the service half as long as you have, and isn't as good a seaman by a long score," said Paddy Logan.

"It's my ill luck; I've not got a marquis for a father, and must submit," answered Ludlam, shrugging his shoulders.

"It's a crying shame, I say. Oh! you should have seen him come on board last night, with his new-fledged honours thick upon him, in the shape of an epaulet on his left shoulder. How he strutted about the deck, with a shaggy Newfoundland pup running after him! and how he shook hands with Curling and Jager, giving a nod to the master and old 'cheese-parings,' as if he considered them scarcely worth his notice, though he did condescend to offer the tips of his fingers to Renton, our new lieutenant of marines, and to Dr O'Brien! I say, old Voules, I thought he was going to cut you altogether; but perhaps he'll honour you by giving that yelping pup of his into your charge to dry nurse. You'll not have many opportunities of paying court to him if he treats you in the fashion he does others."

"I pay court to Lord Reginald Oswald! never did such a thing in my life," answered Voules, blushing to the forehead. "But you are mistaken, Paddy, as to the way he treated me. If you had seen him afterwards, you would have said that he was as friendly as ever, only now, as he has become a gun-room officer, he is of course obliged to keep up a certain amount of reserve."

"Reserve! do you call it?" cried Tommy Shackel. "He glanced at me as if he had never seen me before, and when I went up to him, and put out my hand, he drew back with a look of astonishment at my audaciousness, I suppose, as he thought it."

"You fellows shouldn't speak of Lord Reginald in the way you are doing," exclaimed Voules. "I consider he was an ornament to our mess while he remained in it, and it is but natural that his father the marquis should get him promoted as soon as he was eligible. As a friend of mine, I cannot allow him to be spoken of disrespectfully."

There was a general laugh at this remark.

"Faith! an' who's speakin' disrespectfully of him?" asked Paddy Logan. "Sure, we're only saying that he's inclined to give the cold shoulder to those he looks upon as his inferiors in rank. And the belief is, Voules, that he's going to throw you overboard, notwithstanding all the court you paid him."

"I say I never did pay him court," said Voules, emphatically. "He did me the honour to select me as his friend, and I fully believe that he intends to treat me as a friend in future."

"'The proof of the pudding is in the eating!'" answered Paddy. "As I said, Voules, to show his affection, I have no doubt he'll make you dry nurse to that pup of his. Faith! what an honour it will be!"

At this last remark, Voules was nearly boiling over with rage, but just then, as the whole mess was against him, he saw that it would not do to give away to his feelings, and Paddy Logan continued—

“When you last accompanied Oswald—I mane his lordship—to Elverston Hall, you thought instead of joining us again, you would have got your promotion, as you always boasted that the marquis had promised to obtain it for you.”

“I boasted of no such thing!” cried Voules, scarcely able longer to restrain himself. “I merely said that the marquis had promised to give me his interest as soon as his son had been promoted. Before many months are over, I expect to get my step and be appointed to some ship on the East Indian station.”

As may be supposed, his messmates watched him whenever he was speaking to Lord Reginald, to observe the terms he was on. Voules was evidently himself not very confident about the matter. Instead of taking his arm and walking up and down the quarter-deck, on the larboard or lee side, as he had been accustomed to do, he approached the lieutenant with the usual mark of respect shown by an inferior to a superior officer, always addressing him as “My lord,” and looking highly pleased on all occasions when spoken to. It was asserted in the berth that there must have been some difference between them, or that Voules had offended the young lord, but what it was no one could exactly tell. However, by his humble conduct, Voules won his way back into the good graces of Lord Reginald, who did not find either of his brother officers or the lieutenant of marines or purser very genial companions. The two lieutenants were middle-aged men, who had gained their present position by long service and hard work, and they looked with a jealous eye on one who had been placed on the next ratline below them, over the heads of many older men than himself. The marine officer was a married man, rather grave and saturnine, and the purser had Republican tendencies, though he did not exhibit them except in the expression of his feelings towards lords and big-wigs in general.

Thus Lord Reginald was induced to seek the society of Voules and his former messmates more than he otherwise might have done. As Paddy had surmised, Lord Reginald did actually tell Voules that he should be much obliged if he would look after his pup Neptune, and the toady was frequently seen carrying its food to the dog, washing and brushing it, and attempting to teach it various tricks. Before long a drawing appeared, with Voules dressed as a nurse, a mob cap on his head, a bowl of pap by his side, from which, spoon in hand, he was feeding the puppy on his knees, while a figure, which could not fail to be recognised as that of Lord Reginald, was standing by, saying, “You make a capital nurse, and I shall be happy to recommend you to a similar situation.”

It was handed about among the members of the mess, until somehow or other it reached the gun-room. When Lord Reginald saw it, he laughed heartily, and declared that he must show it to poor old Toady.

He occasionally dined in due course with the captain. On such occasions his rank enabled him to speak more familiarly than any of the other officers would have done, with the exception perhaps of the first lieutenant. Captain Moubray was not the man to have allowed him to take the slightest liberty on duty. Lord Reginald had seen Dick Hargrave, with the other men from the cutter, come on board, and as he eyed the young sailor the ill feelings with which he had before regarded him regained their ascendancy in his bosom. Dick would willingly have kept out of his way, but in the course of duty they were constantly brought together, when he saw by the glances the third lieutenant cast at him, and the tone of his voice, that he was as much disliked as ever. His own proud spirit was aroused. He could not help often returning glance for glance, though he kept his lips closed to prevent himself saying anything which could be taken hold of. Lord Reginald never addressed him by name, but frequently shouted at him, and bestowed epithets of which—“You lazy hound!”

“You skulking rascal!” were among the least offensive.

Dick bore this as other men had to bear it from their officers in those days, and although from any one else he would have been very indifferent to such treatment, he felt little inclination to brook it from one whom he considered had so wronged him.

It must not be supposed that Lord Reginald fancied that he was acting in a revengeful spirit towards Richard Hargrave. He considered that he had formed a correct opinion of Dick, whom he looked upon as a daring young ruffian, and that Captain Moubray had acted unwisely in not punishing him for deserting the ship. He ventured, even, after introducing the subject of desertion, to express his opinion of Richard Hargrave, Ben Rudall, and other men of extremely doubtful characters whom he classed together. “They come from my part of the country,” he observed, “and are all smugglers to the backbone, ready for any sort of outrage. At one time my father lived in dread of having his house burnt down by them, so fearful were the threats of vengeance they uttered in consequence of his determination of putting a stop to their illegal practices. That young Hargrave was a poacher as well as a smuggler, and nothing but strict discipline can keep him in order.”

The captain bit his lip, for he could not fail to see at what the third lieutenant was driving. “They cannot poach or smuggle here, and the daring and hardihood they have exhibited in their illegal calling may be turned to good account,” he answered. “They are the fellows to send on any dangerous or difficult undertaking, and we may feel very sure that they will not show the white feather.”

“Young Hargrave is a desperate ruffian, notwithstanding, and I wouldn’t trust him,” muttered Lord Reginald.

“He has shown his ruffianism by acting very gallantly on two occasions, I understand,” observed the captain. “I wish we had a couple of hundred young fellows on board of the same description. After a few months’ training they become prime seamen, and will fight their guns to the last.”

Under ordinary circumstances, during a long voyage, time would have hung heavily on the hands of the officers, but with a large convoy to look to, there was plenty to do at all hours of the day and night. Not only had the merchantmen to be watched, but a bright look-out had to be kept for strange sails, especially for any daring privateers, who, tempted with the prospect of obtaining a rich booty, might pounce down on some unfortunate trader

during a dark night and carry her off. This had actually been done on several occasions, and Captain Moubray endeavoured to impress upon the masters of the vessels under his charge the importance of sailing in due order together, and keeping a strict watch at night. The convoy hove to off Saint Helena, to obtain fresh provisions and water. The line was passed without any enemy having been encountered, when, falling in with the south-east trade wind, they got well to the southward, after which with a fair breeze they stood to the eastward on their passage round the Cape of Good Hope. It was considered advisable not to put into Table Bay, to avoid the risk of information being given to the enemy of their whereabouts. Unusually fine weather had hitherto been enjoyed, and the ships keeping well together at length entered the Indian Ocean.

Although the masters of the merchantmen generally strictly obeyed orders, there were one or two who caused more trouble than all the others put together, by sometimes carrying too much sail and getting ahead of the convoy, sometimes too little and lagging astern, knowing that they could always regain their position. This occurred especially at night, when the skippers, wishing to save their crews the trouble of making sail, would wait until daylight to do so.

One evening a strange sail had been seen to the northward, and Captain Moubray had ordered the *Ione* to go in chase and ascertain her character, while he shortened sail so as to bring the *Wolf* on the weather quarter of most of the ships. At dark the *Ione* had not returned, though Captain Moubray ordered a look-out to be kept for her, expecting every moment to see her signal. At the same time, of course, a constant watch was kept on the various vessels of the convoy, which could be seen like so many dark shadows gliding over the ocean to leeward, each carrying a light to show its position.

It was blowing a fresh breeze from the north-west, but there was not much sea on. The captain frequently came on deck, inquiring whether the *Ione* had yet shown her number. The same answer had been returned that no light had been seen to windward. He was pacing the quarter-deck with his night-glass in his hand, when the sound of a gun, which seemed to come up far away from the southward, reached his ears.

“What can that be?” he asked of the first lieutenant, who just then joined him.

“That’s more than I can positively say,” answered Mr Curling. “It must be a signal from one of the convoy, something must have happened to her, and she wishes to draw our attention.”

While he was speaking the sound of another gun came up from the same direction.

“We will run down and see what’s the matter,” said the captain; “but you need not turn the hands up at present.”

The helm was put up, the yards squared away, and the frigate, allowing the sternmost of the merchantmen to pass her, ran down in the direction whence the sound of the firing had come, and where, a long way off, a light could be seen, showing the whereabouts of the vessel supposed to be in distress. Several times the sound of a gun was heard, and the frigate, as she drew nearer, returned the signal. All eyes were directed towards the light, when flashes were seen, the rattle of small arms was heard over the clashing of cutlasses, and some declared that they could distinguish the shouts and cries of men engaged in mortal combat.

“There can be no doubt as to what is passing. Turn up the hands, Curling. There seems to be either mutiny on board the ship, or some other vessel has run her aboard. If we attempt to go alongside with this sea on, we shall too probably sink both together, while if we fire into one, we may injure our friends. We must board her in the boats. We will stand on, shorten sail, heave the ship to, then lower them and let them drop alongside.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” said the first lieutenant, and immediately issued the necessary orders.

So fiercely engaged all the time were the two vessels, that no signal was made by the English merchantman to show that she was aware help was at hand. The captain’s orders were quickly executed, and the frigate now being on the weather bows of the two ships, the boats were lowered and placed under the command of the second and third lieutenants, Mr Bitts, Voules, Paddy Logan, and another midshipman, with a party of marines, going in them. They had not far to pull, for the vessels going ahead, the boats dropped alongside the English merchantman, which was to windward.

Led by Mr Jager, Lord Reginald and Mr Bitts quickly clambered up her side, and reached her deck, where a fierce struggle was taking place, the enemy having boarded and almost overcome her crew, who, however, though many of their number had fallen, were still struggling manfully. They cheered as they discovered the timely assistance which had arrived.

Mr Jager and his party furiously attacking the enemy, soon turned the tide of war and drove them back to the starboard bulwarks, where the bravest in vain attempted to defend themselves. Those who could manage it leapt back on board their own vessel, others making the attempt were cut down, and not a man of the remainder escaped, all being killed or desperately wounded by the onslaught of the *Wolf’s* crew.

The Frenchmen were in the mean time attempting to cast off the grappling irons, but in the darkness and confusion they were unable to succeed.

“Follow me, my lads! We must board the enemy. It will not do to let her get away,” cried the lieutenant.

Dick, who was near him, with Ben Rudall and several other men, sprang into the main rigging of the privateer, for such she appeared to be, and clearing a space before them with their whirling cutlasses, leapt down on her deck. Others came after them. One party following Mr Jager, drove the enemy forward, where the larger part of them were assembled; while Lord Reginald and the boatswain attacked those on the quarter-deck, compelling them inch by inch to give way, until the poop was gained.

The struggle did not last long. Cries for quarter were heard from the people forward as well as from the after part of the ship, but the crew of the English merchant vessel seemed little disposed to grant it, and continued hacking away at every Frenchman they could come up with. Again and again Mr Jager had to order the combatants to desist, and shouted to the Frenchmen to throw down their weapons.

“Hold, my men! Don’t you see the enemy have given in?” he exclaimed. “We are bound to show them mercy, as they ask for it.”

“It’s mighty little we can see how to know friend from enemy,” cried a voice from among the seamen.

“Bring a lantern or two along here,” cried the lieutenant, and he called out to the Frenchmen to throw down their weapons, while he peremptorily ordered his own men to desist from striking.

Lord Reginald and the boatswain had in the mean time driven their opponents, the larger number of whom were officers of the ship, right aft to the starboard quarter, where they stood grouped together, defending themselves bravely until, seeing that all hope was gone, they too cried out for quarter.

“Quarter! Yes, we’ll quarter you!” cried Mr Bitts the boatswain. “Come on, lads! We shouldn’t let such ruffians as these live.”

Lord Reginald, however, interposed, and speaking French well, directed his hard-pressed foes to throw down their swords and they should be safe. It was not without difficulty, however, that he restrained the merchant seamen from rushing in and cutting them down. Unfortunately, some Frenchmen who had leapt below, maddened by their defeat, fired up the hatchway, when the victors, springing down after them, followed them round the deck, killing all they met with.

On the lanterns being brought, the deck presented a fearful scene, for more than half of the crew lay dead or desperately wounded. The survivors, with their officers, three of whom only had escaped, were mustered, and being deprived of the pistols and long knives generally worn in their belts, were conveyed across the deck of the trader into the boats. A savage, sunburnt crew they appeared as the light of the lantern fell on their countenances, and doubts were entertained whether they could claim to be even privateersmen, so greatly did they resemble the most desperate of pirates.

The deck of the merchantman had even a more fearful aspect than that of her foe. Besides the Frenchmen who had been killed, and whose bodies lay thick under the starboard bulwarks, nearly a fourth of her people had been shot or cut down, while bravely defending their ship. Among them was the master, who had been nearly the last to fall, just before the man-of-war’s men leaped on board.

His body presented several wounds; one through his breast had evidently been fatal. He was a strongly built man, with a sunburnt visage. Probably he had been endeavouring, by his courageous resistance, to redeem his fault in not more carefully attending to his sailing directions.

The first officer presented himself with his arm hanging loosely by his side, from a severe cut in the shoulder and another wound in his leg, while the second and third were both more or less hurt.

The first officer informed Mr Jager that they had taken the privateer for one of the convoy. That when hailed a reply was given in English, and that the same voice inquired whether they had a surgeon on board, as their own had gone mad, and they had three sick people who required immediate attendance. While the surgeon was preparing to go, and they were thus thrown off their guard, the stranger was seen to be sheering alongside. The master, suspecting treachery, called up the watch below, and ordered all on deck to seize such weapons as were at hand to resist the boarders, while he directed the rest of the people to arm themselves.

Scarcely were the crew thus partially prepared for an attack, than the stranger, running alongside, threw grappling irons aboard them. On this the master had the gun fired, which was first heard on board the frigate. His promptness had saved the ship. The crew well knew that they were fighting for their lives.

As soon as one party had armed themselves completely they took the places of those who had received the first attack and had driven the enemy back. In vain, however, they attempted to cast off the grappling irons. The ships’ yards had become locked, and no effort they could make could separate them. Thus, had not the frigate come to their assistance, they must have been taken. Whether or not the privateer would have succeeded in getting off with them was doubtful. As soon as the prisoners had been secured, Mr Jager ordered Lord Reginald and the boatswain to return on board the frigate and bring back the captain’s orders. In the meat time he and the men remaining with him, aided by the crew of the merchant vessel, got the two ships free from each other, and, making sail, stood for the frigate, which, as soon as the boats got alongside, had kept away. Neither ship was injured, except where their sides had ground together, and the yards when interlocked had torn the canvas and carried away some blocks and ropes.

Some time elapsed, during which the *Wolf* had been making signals to the rest of the convoy, to put them on their guard, lest other ships of the enemy should be in the neighbourhood. Dick and Ben had remained on board the prize.

“I say, I wonder who’ll have charge of this craft,” observed the latter to Dick. “I hope it will be Mr Jager. She’s a fine little ship, carries twenty-four guns, and would make a capital cruiser. If the captain commissions her, and sends her away to play the same game on the enemy that she’s been playing on our ships, we may chance to fill our pockets with prize-money. I think it’s very likely, too, and if Mr Jager gets command we shall have an officer who’ll keep his eye open, and not let the grass grow under his feet.”

“I should like it well enough, especially as we shall be free of that Lord Reginald and Toady Voules,” said Dick. “They have been as bad as ever lately; one sets on the other. Voules knows that the third lieutenant hates me, and so, to

curry favour with him, he loses no chance of bullying me. I have kept out of trouble as yet, but I don't know how long I shall be able to do so."

"But what if the toady be sent with us? He is on board now, and may be appointed to do duty as first lieutenant," remarked Ben.

"I shouldn't mind him alone," answered Dick. "When he hasn't his master to hound him on, he'll let me alone. He does it to please the other, and when Lord Reginald's eye is off him, he won't bother himself about me."

As may be supposed, Ben and Dick had very little time for conversation. They were speedily called to trim sails, and the scanty crew of the prize, beginning to get weary from their constant exertions, were looking out for the frigate to heave to, a sign that the boats were about to return. She waited, however, until daylight broke, when once more, having gathered the convoy together, she hove to, and the prize coming up, doing the same, the boats were soon alongside.

"I say, Ben," said Dick, as they approached, "it is my belief that Lord Reginald is to have command, for there he sits, with his dog by his side, and a big portmanteau between his knees. I'd sooner be out of this craft than in her. I hope we shall be sent on board the frigate again."

Dick was right. Lord Reginald, his dog and portmanteau, were soon on board. He presented some papers to Mr Jager, who replied—

"Very well, I congratulate you on having so fine a command, and I confess that I wish I had been able to take charge of the prize, but as the doctor considers me unfit to be away from him, I must submit. Who are to form the prize crew?"

"Voules and Lucas, the men on board, as well as the men I brought with me," answered Lord Reginald. "They'll do very well, and, as we are rather short-handed, no more could be spared from the frigate."

"Then all I have to do is to wish you good-bye and a pleasant cruise. It's fortunate we had not to fire into her, or the vessel must have gone into harbour to refit. Now she's as well able to keep the sea as she ever was."

"I hope her late master was a man of taste, and has some good curry and plenty of cuddy stores," said the young lord, laughing; "and I say, Jager, I wish you'd ask the captain to send me back the French cook. He'll know best how to dress his own provisions, and I should like to keep a good table while I am on board."

"I'll do your bidding," answered Mr Jager, and shaking hands with Lord Reginald and his two subordinates, he returned in the boat to the frigate.

The *Marie* proved herself to be a capital sailer, a quality her crew had counted on when they ventured to attack the *Dunmore Castle*, expecting to be able to pillage her and get away before daylight.

Lord Reginald walked the deck with a self-satisfied air, which was well imitated by Voules and Lucas. The young lord invited them into the cabin to mess with him, an honour they gladly accepted. "We shall have a jolly time of it," he said, "and I hope old Moubray will send us on an independent cruise when we get to Java."

"He'll have to send us more men, then, for we are too short-handed to meet an enemy," said Voules; "otherwise, I'd rather not go at all."

"No fear on that score," observed Lord Reginald. "We shall get as many as we want out of the merchant vessels. They must spare us their men, whether they like it or not. By-the-by, that young Hargrave is on board; I would have dispensed with his services. The very sight of him is annoying. He eyes me with the same daring, impudent look he always did, and I shouldn't be surprised if he and the other smuggler were to try and get up a mutiny on board, if they have the opportunity."

"I'll see that he plays no trick of that sort," answered Voules. "I'll take the spirit out of him, depend upon it, and make him wish that he had remained on board the frigate."

"I don't want him treated unjustly, or punished unless he gives occasion by his conduct," remarked Lord Reginald.

"Oh, no, no," answered Voules, with a significant smile; "of course not. The truth is, I have a grudge against him myself. The other night I heard him, when he didn't know I was near, speaking of me as 'Toady Voules.'"

"Did he, indeed?" said Lord Reginald, leaning back and laughing. "Why, that's the name you've got in the mess. Ah, ah, ah! However, for one of the men to make use of it is next door to mutiny. They must not be allowed to speak so disrespectfully of their officers."

Voules, who was considerably irritated by his superior's remark, did not fail to exercise his ill feelings on Dick, and not a day passed that he did not find some excuse for ill treating him and making him perform the most unpleasant duties. Voules, like other men of mean spirit, delighted in acting the tyrant; indeed, had he wished to create a mutiny, he took the most effectual means of causing one. He had now numberless opportunities which he could not have obtained on board the frigate. He was constantly abusing the men during every operation they were ordered to perform, though his chief displeasure fell on the heads of Ben and Dick, who were instantly placed on the black list, when their grog was stopped and they were compelled to walk the deck with a shot in each hand during their watch below, or other punishments were inflicted. Dick, as he had resolved, kept his temper and submitted without complaint to this injustice; but Ben nourished a spirit of revenge, and secretly formed a plan for wreaking his vengeance on the heads of his persecutors. With this object in view, he found out who among the crew were most dissatisfied and were likely to join him in his project. He did not, however, venture to speak to Dick. He fully believed

that he should in time win him over. “He’ll do something or other before long, which will rouse even his spirit,” he said to himself, and “then he’ll be more ready than any of us to do what I want.”

Although the provisions in the cuddy were of good quality, and there was a sufficient supply for ten times the number of the commander’s limited mess, those of the crew were scanty and of bad quality, and it seemed surprising that Frenchmen should have consented to live upon such fare.

The steward told the men of the abundance which existed aft, but when they complained through Mr Voules to Lord Reginald, they were told that the provisions intended for the cabin could not be spared, and that they must be content with what they had got. Neither did Dick nor any of his officers dream of what was going forward.

The convoy was approaching its destination. The *Ione* had rejoined the day after the capture of the *Marie*, but no other event of general importance had occurred. The fleet was now within two hundred miles of the Straits of Sunda, when from the masthead of the *Marie*, which was to leeward, a sail was seen to the southward.

She immediately communicated this by signal to the *Wolf*, and received in return an order to chase the stranger and ascertain her character. The other part of the signal was either not seen, or misunderstood by Lucas. “Up with the helm!” cried Lord Reginald; “square away the yards! If the fellow doesn’t appear to be too tough a customer, we will bring him to action and sail back in triumph.”

The young lord did not observe the expression which passed over Voules’s countenance, but fully believed that they had been ordered to chase, and, if to chase, to fight the vessel in sight, should she not prove to be an enemy of overwhelming force. Though Voules had never shown the white feather, he was decidedly prudent, and he remembered the *Maria’s* limited crew, which, though sufficient to navigate her, was not strong enough to man the guns.

The *Marie* looked more formidable than she really was, and as she approached the stranger made all sail to escape. The latter soon showed that her sailing powers were not much inferior to those of the *Marie*, by keeping almost the same distance ahead as she had been when she first discovered that she was pursued.

The *Marie* soon lost sight of the fleet. Voules suggested that as there was no probability of coming up with the chase for many hours, that they should haul their wind and stand back.

“Certainly I will not do that,” answered Lord Reginald. “Captain Moubray must have known that we could not come up with her in a hurry, and intended that we should overhaul her. We are gaining on her, and if we continue the chase and do not lose sight of her during the night, we shall probably, some time to-morrow, get alongside.”

“If we get so far away we shall find it no easy matter to regain the fleet,” observed Voules. “The chase may not prove to be worth the trouble we are taking to capture her.”

“That remains to be proved,” answered Lord Reginald. “If you feel uncomfortable, turn in and go to sleep, perhaps when you awake you will find that we have fought an action, and taken the enemy.”

Voules reddened at the taunt. It was a cruel return, he thought, for all the flattery he had bestowed on the young lord. “I have no wish to avoid a fight, but I say again, there is no chance of its taking place for many hours to come, at least at the slow rate at which we are now overhauling the chase, and if we take her—which is problematical—we shall find it a difficult matter to rejoin the convoy.”

Lord Reginald was in one of his obstinate moods. The more Voules urged him to abandon the chase, the more determined he was to continue it.

The wind remained fresh, and he asserted that they were gaining on the chase.

Dick and Ben were stationed forward.

“How soon do you think we shall come up with that craft?” asked Dick.

“Maybe to-morrow and maybe the next day, if we follow her long enough and the wind doesn’t shift. But if it does, and she slips away to windward, the chances are we shan’t see her again. The weather doesn’t look very settled to my eye, though I am not accustomed to these seas, but I have heard tell that it blows pretty strong hereabouts at times.”

The day wore on; still the chase kept well ahead. She was probably bound to one of the Dutch settlements in the Moluccas, and intended to pass through the Straits of Lombok or some other passage into those seas to the east of Java.

Night came on. It was bright, and the stranger could still be distinguished as she glided over the moonlit sea.

“Everything is in our favour,” observed Lord Reginald to Voules; “but we must take care not to lose sight of her for a moment. Take care that sharp-eyed fellows are stationed on the forecastle. I must turn in for a spell, though do not fail to call me should anything occur.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” answered Voules, though he grumbled not a little, as he went forward to see that his lordship’s orders were carried out. He found Ben and Dick on the forecastle. “Can you see the chase?” he asked, pretending not to notice who they were.

“Ay, ay, sir. It must be a pretty deal darker than it now is, not to see her,” answered Ben.

“Well, well, take care that you keep her in sight, and sing out if she changes her course.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” answered Ben, and Voules went aft again earnestly hoping that thick weather would come on, and that the chase would be lost sight of. He could then throw the blame on the two look-out men, who would not be likely to escape punishment. They, however, during their watch, had no difficulty in keeping the chase in sight; when they turned in she appeared right ahead as clear as ever, with the moonbeams shining on her white canvas.

When Lord Reginald came on deck at the commencement of the morning watch, the chase could still be seen, and he felt convinced that the *Marie* had gained upon her. This made him determined to hold on. The sky, however, gave indications of a change of weather. Dark clouds were gathering in the horizon astern, while the wind came in fitful gusts, sometimes falling so much that the sails flapped against the masts. As the sun rose, the whole sky was suffused with a fiery glow, which, reflected on the ocean, made it appear like a sea of burnished copper. As the sun rose higher the heat became almost unbearable, growing more and more oppressive.

“Does your lordship recollect that we are in the region of hurricanes?” asked Voules. “It would be prudent to shorten sail.”

“Not until the chase does, though. I wouldn’t for much lose the chance of coming up with her. If we hold on for another two or three hours, we can get her within range of our guns. We have been gaining on her faster than ever lately.”

“If the wind catches us and whips the masts out of the ship, the ‘holding on’ will do us little good,” replied Voules.

“Well, we will see about it by-and-by,” said Lord Reginald, who was on the point of going down below to breakfast, the steward having just announced that the meal was ready.

The midshipman Lucas was left in charge of the deck. Soon afterwards an old seaman, who acted as quartermaster, came up to him. Touching his hat, he said—

“Won’t you order the hands to shorten sail, sir? We can’t tell when we shall have the wind down upon us, and we shall be losing some of our spars, if no worse happens.”

“His lordship wants to come up with the chase first, though I should be glad to have some canvas taken in.”

Just then the look-out forward shouted, “The chase is shortening sail, and is hauling up to the northward!”

Lucas ran aft and shouted down through the skylight, announcing what had occurred. “Shall we shorten sail, too, sir?” he asked.

Voules sprang on deck, and looking round him, without waiting for Lord Reginald’s orders cried out, “All hands shorten sail!”

The royals were quickly handed, but there was brief time to stow the canvas before the wind filled the sails, and away flew the ship before it. The fore top-gallant sail, imperfectly secured, blew out, and in an instant was torn into shreds, which fluttered wildly for a few seconds, and became wrapped in inextricable coils round the yard. The courses were next brailed up, but it was hard work to stow them. Lord Reginald saw, when too late, that it would have been wiser to shorten sail before the wind struck the ship. All hands were now employed in reefing the topsails, for the masts bent like willow wands. Though the ship was kept before the wind, there was great risk of their being carried away. Two hands were sent to the helm, but even they had the greatest difficulty to steer the ship. The only hope of saving the masts was in keeping directly before the wind until the canvas could be taken off her. The mizzen-topsail had been furled. The main-topsail was already on the cap, when a loud report was heard as it was split, and fluttering violently threatened to carry away the men off the yard.

The crew with their knives endeavoured to cut it adrift, when they were called down to assist in securing the foresail. It was of the greatest importance to keep head sail on the ship, lest she should broach to. The sea was rising, sending the spray in thick masses over the ship, obscuring all objects round her.

Dick and Ben had been actively engaged aloft.

“I say, Ben, what’s become of the chase?” asked Dick, shading his eyes and looking out ahead through the driving sheets of spray.

“That’s more than you or I or any one else can tell. She may be where she was, or she mayn’t. Mortal eyes can’t see through that thick mist ahead, and we are not likely to set ours on her again even if she keeps afloat, and that’s more than I can say any ship will do if it comes on to blow much harder than it does now. I thought I knew what a gale of wind was, but this beats all I have ever seen. Old Harry Cane rampaging about on board with a vengeance!”

The hurricane had in truth burst on the *Marie*, and the utmost skill of the best seamen was required to preserve her from destruction. All that day she ran on before the wind. Spilling-lines had been got over the closely reefed fore-topsail, but even then it seemed that the sail would break away. With a report like a clap of thunder the mizzen-topsail was blown clean away from the bolt ropes. The royal masts were seen bending about like fishing-rods, first one way then the other. The lee clue of the fore top-gallant sail was blown adrift. Two hands went aloft to endeavour to stow it. One of the poor fellows, in making the attempt, was torn from his hold. A wild shriek was heard as he sank into the seething foam, without hope of being rescued. The other, pale and trembling, came down, leaving the sails fluttering wildly. Scarcely had he reached the deck than away went the fore top-gallant mast over the side.

Lord Reginald bravely maintained his presence of mind, endeavouring to act for the best, as he stood holding on to the mizzen rigging while he issued his orders. Voules looked pale and anxious; he comprehended fully the dangerous

position of the ship. Unknown islands were ahead, against one of which she might strike with but little warning. Again he urged the men to keep a lookout, not for the chase but for land, now so much dreaded.

Lord Reginald came aft, and stood by his friend, “Well, Voules; things don’t look promising,” he said, in as cheerful a voice as he could command.

“No, and they may look worse, if we find ourselves running down on one of the many islands which dot these seas.”

“We must keep a bright look-out, and haul up in time,” replied the young commander of the *Marie*.

“But if we do haul up with this hurricane raging and this sea running, we may drift on shore notwithstanding,” answered Voules. “Our only chance will be to endeavour to get round the island, if we see it in time, and to anchor under its lee, if holding ground can be found, and wait there until the storm is over.”

“We will have a look at the chart, and ascertain how far off the land is,” said Lord Reginald.

Going below, he and Voules eagerly examined the chart. No islands appeared for some distance ahead. To the northward, was the east end of Java, with Bali, Sumbawa, and Floris, extending in a long line beyond it. Should the wind shift to the southward, they might run through one of the passages existing between those islands; but still, the ship was a considerable distance to the southward of them, and they hoped that the hurricane would cease before they were driven thus far. On returning on deck, the wind appeared to have increased rather than decreased. As they were standing together, looking anxiously at the bending masts, the remaining top-gallant sails were torn from their lashings, and before any hands could be sent aloft to secure them, the masts themselves were carried away and the lately trim ship looked now almost a wreck. To cut them clear was a work of no little danger. The men saw what was required. Several volunteered, notwithstanding the risk they ran, to go aloft. Among them was Dick. With knives and axes they cut desperately at the rigging, until, as the ship heeled over, they fell clear of her into the water. Relieved of so much top hamper, she appeared to be greatly eased. Another night was approaching, but the storm raged as furiously as before. All night long the ship ran on, the seas increasing in height, and threatening every instant to poop her. Although for a short time Lord Reginald turned in, yet neither he nor any one on board could obtain much sleep. Several times he came on deck, only to see the ship labouring on amid the foaming billows.

Another morning dawned, the weather looking as wild as on the previous day. Few on board failed to ask themselves, “Shall we see another sunset?” Again and again Lord Reginald and Voules examined the chart, with anxious forebodings of evil. They saw that numerous islands and reefs lay ahead of them. Lord Reginald proposed hauling the ship up before dark, to escape the risk of running on one of them during the night. Voules feared that if it was done the canvas would not stand, and that she would then be drifted helplessly on any reef or island in her way. No sun was to be seen; the whole sky wore one uniformly leaden hue, while the dark seas of the same tint rose and fell, their tops covered with masses of foam which, blown off by the wind, filled the atmosphere. “Should there come a lull, we will haul up,” exclaimed Lord Reginald. “We shall do it at our peril,” observed Voules. “It must be done,” was the answer. “Stand by to haul out the spanker! Starboard the helm!”

The ship as she came to heeled over almost on her beam ends, while the seas broke over her, driving the masses of spray into the eyes of the crew, so that they could scarcely see a few yards before them, while the lee side of the deck was almost under water. Although no signs of a leak had hitherto been discovered, the acting carpenter, who had been ordered to sound the well, came aft with a pale face, announcing that a large quantity of water had found its way below.

“Man the pumps!” was the answer, and the already hard-worked crew were soon labouring away to clear the ship. So often, however, were the nozzles of the pumps under water, that the men could not tell whether they were drawing or not, and the cry, “Hold on for your lives!” compelled them frequently to let go and clamber into the rigging, or hold on by the stanchions, while a furious sea swept over the deck, threatening to carry them away. Again darkness had come on. Except a closely reefed fore-topsail and mizzen-trysail, not a sail remained. She was furiously plunging into the seas, when once more a report was heard, and the fore-topsail was seen blowing away in shreds. Directly afterwards the spanker gaff came down, and now not a shred of canvas remained, the ship in consequence drifting bodily to leeward. Most of the crew were forward, the officers and some of the men remaining on the poop. Among the former were Dick and Ben.

“I thought things were getting very bad,” said Ben. “They could not be worse.”

“What, then, do you think will happen?” asked Dick. “Why, we shall either go down or be driven ashore. It matters little which, for if the ship strikes there’s little chance of any of us reaching the land, with these seas breaking over her, and then sweeping everything before them. I know what it is on our own coast. With such a hurricane as we have got blowing, it will be ten times worse.”

“Then is there no chance of saving our lives if we strike?” asked Dick.

“Our best chance is to get hold of a piece of wreck and hold fast to it. You may be washed on shore, or you may be carried out to sea—it is six of one and half a dozen of the other. You may depend upon it, there’s a watery grave for some of us before the night is over.”

Dick felt his heart sink, but he remembered the prayers his mother had taught him. He tried to pray for himself; he knew, too, that she would be praying for him. His courage rose, he determined to struggle bravely for life.

Ben advised that they should go forward and stick to the forecastle. “That generally holds together the longest, and will give us a better chance of life,” he observed. “Don’t let go until the ship breaks up, and then you will have no choice, and must do as I before told you.”

Dick replied that he would follow his advice, and they made their way to the forecastle.

As may be supposed, it was only by speaking at the tops of their voices that they could make each other heard. Their sentences, therefore, were brief and to the point. In the mean time, Lord Reginald, with Voules and Lucas, clung on to the mizzen rigging; near them were gathered the few men who had come aft. Anxiously they looked to leeward, hoping against hope that they might still be at a distance from land. The stout ship was drifted on, the hapless people on board frequently being covered by the seas which broke over her. At last Voules uttered an exclamation of dismay.

“I caught sight of land close under our lee; before ten minutes are over we shall be upon it,” he cried out; “and Heaven have mercy on our souls!”

“We must look out for a spot on which to run her, and if we lose her, we may save our lives,” said Lord Reginald.

But although the attempt was made, the ship would not answer her helm. An anxious gaze was cast at the dark shore, on which the roar of the breakers could be distinctly heard. All they could now do was to cling to the bulwarks until the fatal crash came, and after that, how long the stout ship would hold together it was impossible to say. Much would depend upon the ground on which she was thrown. If on rocks projecting from the shore, she would in all probability be soon dashed to pieces. Even the stoutest seamen held their breath as they waited for the inevitable catastrophe.

Lord Reginald, as he stood on the deck, could feel the ship now as she rose, now as she fell in the trough of the sea, surging on closer and closer to the dreaded coast. Those agonising moments were not to last long. At length came a fearful crash. The mainmast, as if torn up by some invisible hand, fell over the side, the foremast and mizzenmast following in quick succession.

“She’s struck, she’s struck! All’s lost, all’s lost!” cried several of the crew; while many who had hitherto shown ample courage in battle, shrieked out in their agony of fear.

“Hold on, until the ship breaks up!” cried Lord Reginald. “We may have a chance of getting on shore in the morning.”

Though he gave this advice, he had little hope of its being followed. Sea after sea continued to dash against the ship, and he feared, from the cries which reached him, that many of his men were being torn from their hold and carried away. He could just distinguish Voules and Lucas clinging to the bulwarks a short distance from him. Now he cast his eyes on the dark shore with a line of foaming breakers between him and it. Then he looked seawards, and as he looked he saw an enormous black wave advancing, higher, it seemed to him, than any of its predecessors. On it came, and struck the ship, with a blow resounding louder than the loudest thunder. The centre of the ship seemed to melt away with part of the poop, carrying off several who had been clinging to it. No one could render help to another. It was each man for himself. He saw a figure, which he knew to be young Lucas, caught by the sea and whirled round and round. Voules still remained, holding on to the bulwarks. Then another sea came; he felt the poop breaking up beneath his feet. In another instant he found himself among the foaming breakers, surrounded by masses of wreck. He sank, but again coming to the surface, clutched a piece of timber. It was of too small a size to float him. He was rolled over and over, until compelled to let go. As he did so he saw close to him a large beam, with a bolt projecting from one end. Grasping the bolt, he got astride of the beam, being thus enabled to keep his body above the water, though he ran a risk of having his legs injured by the heavy pieces of wood dashing about on all sides. In vain he shouted, to ascertain if Voules or Lucas were near him. The only objects he could distinguish were the masses of dark timber amid the white, foaming breakers, and the outline of the rocky shore. It seemed even then doubtful whether he should ever reach that shore. Once, indeed, he fancied that he saw a human form clinging to a spar at no great distance from him, but unable to direct the movements of the piece of timber on which he floated, he could render no assistance to the hapless person, who returned no answer to his shouts. His own fate seemed uncertain. Should the timber be dashed against the rocks, he would in all probability be ground to pieces before he could escape, but on looking towards the land, he fancied that he could make out a sandy beach. He prayed that the timber to which he clung might be directed to it. Still, as he heard the fearful roar of the breakers, and watched the masses of foam which swept towards the shore, he felt the uncertainty that he should ever reach it. Several times he was nearly torn from his hold by the masses of wreck driven against him. His strength was decreasing. Another sea came rolling on, it might wash him from his hold. He clung to the bolt with all his might, and almost the next moment he felt his feet touch the ground. At first he was afraid of letting go. The second time he put down his feet he trod on the sand. Fearful that the beam which had carried him in safety might roll over and crush him, he let go, and making a last effort, struggled upwards. The foaming seas washed round his legs, and threatened to carry him back, but on he struggled, gasping for breath until the dry ground was reached, and then, by one strenuous effort, getting out of the reach of the water, his strength giving way, he sank to the ground, utterly exhausted.

Chapter Eleven.

Death of Voules—All lost—Despair of Lord Reginald—Neptune—Water found—A mournful duty—Burying the drowned—Remorse—The rival Crusoes—The last of poor Ben—Stone throwing—Nothing but clams—Neptune and the pigeon—The body of Lucas discovered—Good intentions—An angry meeting—Neptune’s dislike to shell-fish—A perilous swim—Looking over the island—Another stormy encounter—Labour in vain—Pride against reason—Bow-making—Nep finds a treasure.

Lord Reginald lay for some minutes on the beach utterly exhausted, but not senseless. He recollected vividly all that had occurred. So battered and bruised did he feel, it seemed to him that he had only escaped from drowning to die a more lingering death on the barren shore, or to be massacred by the savage inhabitants of the island on which he had been cast.

“Is it my fate alone to have escaped among all the stout fellows who manned the ship?” he at length asked himself. “Perhaps even now some are struggling in the waves, and as I have been carried in safety to the shore, I ought to try and help them.”

This thought made him attempt to rise, and he found that he could do so with less difficulty than he had supposed possible. The wind had begun to fall almost directly after the ship had struck, but still the seas rolled in as heavily as before. He knew, weak as he was, should he venture into their power, that he might be lifted off his feet and carried away in their cruel embrace. On looking around he saw a mass of broken spars, torn canvas, and running rigging thrown up within his reach. On examining it he found that he could unreeve some of the rope. He set energetically to work.

By using a knife which he fortunately had in his pocket, he was able to cut off several lengths, which, knotting together, formed a long rope. Taking three spars he forced them with all his might, in the form of a triangle, into the sand, and secured one end of the rope to the spar nearest the sea, while the other end he fastened round his waist. This done he was able to advance further into the water than he would otherwise have ventured to do.

He stood listening and straining his eyes over the foaming masses which continued to roll up unceasingly before him. He could distinguish the black ledge upon which the *Marie* had struck on one side, and on the other a lofty point which ran out to an equal distance forming the bay on the shore of which he had been thrown. The waters of the bay appeared still covered with floating masses of wreck tumbling and tossing about. While he was looking a crescent moon broke through the clouds, revealing to him for an instant what he supposed was the bows of the ship still holding together. The next instant the moon was obscured, and the object shut out from sight. Some of the crew might still be clinging to it, and if so he might not be left entirely alone. He shouted again and again, but no answer came; indeed, the roar of the breakers prevented his voice being heard at that distance. Some one might be clinging to any of the pieces of wreck floating about before him.

He listened, and at length fancied that he heard a faint cry. He gazed anxiously in the direction from whence he believed it came. He had picked up a long stick, so that he might the better be able to resist the force of the breakers should they surround him, or prevent him being carried off as they receded from the beach. Again he shouted, and once more fancied he heard a faint cry.

Yes, it was a human voice borne to him by the wind across the seething waters. He waited anxiously for the re-appearance of the moon, hoping that her light would enable him to discover the whereabouts of his shipmate, whoever he might be. He wished to save life, but he wished also to have a companion to share his misfortune.

At length, the moon appearing, he saw a piece of wreck, to which a human being was clinging, being carried by every succeeding sea closer and closer to the beach. The man was evidently lashed to it, or he could not have clung on. Lord Reginald at once saw the difficulty there would be in extricating him before the beam was rolled over and over. He again got out his knife that he might cut the lashings. The beam was almost within his reach, he could clearly see that it bore a man who, however, neither cried out nor made a sign that he was alive. “Still, the poor fellow may recover,” thought Lord Reginald, and rushing forward as the next sea threw the piece of timber on the beach, he at once seized the inanimate form, cut the rope, and with a strength he scarcely believed himself to possess, dragged it up out of the reach of the water. As he did so he saw by the uniform that it was his own messmate Voules.

He laid him on the dry beach, and having loosened the handkerchief round his neck, knelt down by his side, and endeavoured to restore him to animation by chafing his hands and chest. After he had been thus engaged for some time, he heard Voules emit a low sigh.

“He is not dead, at all events, and may, I trust, be restored!” he exclaimed, resuming his efforts.

Voules sighed again, but still lay without making any effort to move. Lord Reginald looked round to try and ascertain if any place which would afford him and his shipmate shelter from the night air, was near. He could only see black rocks rising up above the beach, though in one place there appeared to be an opening, but it was too dark to distinguish whether there were trees beyond.

“It will never do to remain here all night,” he said to himself; “it is still some hours off morning, and we both of us may perish.”

The effort he had to make to take care of his friend was of the greatest benefit to himself. It prevented his thoughts dwelling on his own sufferings. He tried to lift up his companion, to carry him in his arms, but his strength was insufficient, and after going a few paces he was obliged to let him sink again on the ground.

“Voules, Voules, my dear fellow, do speak!” he exclaimed; “tell me where you are hurt. What can I do for you? You are safe on shore. If you could but arouse yourself, we might get under shelter.”

But Voules only gave an occasional sigh. He seemed too weak almost to groan. Again Lord Reginald attempted to carry him towards an overhanging rock which rose at some distance beyond the beach. In this he succeeded better than at first, and after stopping two or three times he reached it. To his satisfaction, he discovered that there was a small cave, the bottom covered with dry sand. This would, at all events, afford a more comfortable resting-place than the open beach, as well as shelter from the rain, which now came on in dense showers. It was so dark, however, that he could not see his companion’s features. Seating himself by his side, he once more began to chafe his hands and breast, he then turned him on one side, when his patient threw up some of the water which he had swallowed. Thus relieved, Voules appeared to recover slightly.

“You’ll do well, I hope, my poor fellow, if you would but pluck up courage,” said Lord Reginald. “When daylight returns we shall find some food and water.”

“I fear not,” answered Voules, in a faint voice. “I am bruised all over, and I feel as if my right leg was broken.”

“I hope not,” said Lord Reginald, examining the limb. To his dismay he found that Voules was right. “We must try and set it,” he observed; “though it will prevent you being of much use for some time to come, you must not despair on that account. I earnestly hope that some of the men may have escaped to help us, though I could discover no one on the part of the beach where we were thrown.”

Voules groaned deeply. “I am much obliged to you, Oswald, for what you have done for me, but it is of no use. I almost wish that you had left me to perish in the sea, for I feel that I am dying. It is very terrible; I have all sorts of sins on my conscience. Then I think of how I encouraged you to get that young Hargrave and the older man Rudall carried off from their homes, and how they have both now probably been lost. It seems to me as if their deaths were at my door.”

“If they are at yours, they are at mine also,” said Lord Reginald. “I dislike the fellows, and though I should be thankful if any of the crew escaped, I should not like to see their faces. The chances are they would wreak their vengeance on our heads, helpless as we are, without the slightest means of defence.”

“I should be thankful to think that we had not been the cause of their deaths,” said Voules.

“Well, well, don’t talk about them, but try and get some sleep, old fellow; it will restore your strength more than anything else.”

Voules groaned. “I shall never sleep again, until the last sleep of all,” he muttered.

“Try, try,” said Lord Reginald; “I’ll sit up and keep watch.”

“Thank you,” murmured Voules.

Lord Reginald was silent, but Voules’s heavy breathing and the low moans to which he gave vent, showed that his slumbers were troubled, if he slept at all. The young lord could understand how much his companion suffered from the pains which racked his own body, and yet, with the exception of the few bruises he had received, he was unhurt. For a long time he sat and watched, earnestly wishing for day, and at length he himself sank down on the sand and fell asleep. His dreams, too, were troubled. All the horrors of the shipwreck were ever present to his thoughts. Now he fancied himself struggling in the waves, now reaching the beach, but in vain attempting to climb up it, the seas carrying him back every time his feet touched the firm ground. He awoke with a start, fancying that Voules was calling him. The sun had risen, and the rays were streaming across the white sand in front of the cave. The storm had ceased, though the seas still came rolling sluggishly on, dashing into foam as they reached the beach.

“Did you call, Voules?” he asked, raising himself on his elbow to look at his companion, who however made no answer. “I must not awaken him,” he said; “sleep will do him more good than anything else. I must go out and try and find some fresh water and food of some sort.”

He got up on his feet; though he felt weak, he was able to walk. He was about to go out, when he cast a glance at Voules. He started back with horror, as he saw the pallid countenance before him, the glazed eyes staring wildly, the fallen jaw.

“Can he be dead?” he exclaimed, stooping down. He could not discover the faintest breathing. He lifted an arm, it fell lifeless on the sand. “Voules, Voules!” he almost shrieked out; “speak but one word to me.”

No answer came from those open lips, and he saw too evidently that his companion was dead. The horrors of his situation burst upon him with more force than ever. He was alone in that apparently desert island; no one to consult with, no one even to speak to. He threw himself on the sand, and for some time lay almost as motionless as the inanimate form near him, believing that he himself would die. Then the desire to prolong his life returned. A burning thirst oppressed him; though he had eaten nothing since the previous day at noon, he felt but little hunger. He was about to leave the cavern in the hopes of discovering a spring, when he saw in the distance an object moving towards him.

At first he thought it must be some wild beast, but presently his favourite dog, Neptune, hove in sight, and came rushing on, leaping up, uttering loud barks of joy, placing his paws on his shoulders, and trying to lick his face.

“Where have you come from, Nep?” he asked. “Your coat is perfectly dry, you must have been on shore some hours.” But Nep only wagged his tail, and bounded round and round him. Lord Reginald fondly patted the dog’s head. “Thank Heaven, you have been saved, Nep. I have one trusty companion left, and I must not lose heart.”

The dog seemed to understand him, and redoubled his signs of satisfaction. Suddenly he stopped, and looked towards the body of Voules, then he approached it cautiously, and after examining it for a moment he set up a loud howl, and turning round, ran crouching back to his master, as if fully conscious of the fate of the unhappy young man.

“Yes, he’s gone, in truth!” said Lord Reginald. “You and I are now alone. We must set out to try and find a spring and some food, if they exist on this dreadful spot; but you don’t look either hungry or thirsty. Perhaps you have found a spring. Come along, Nep; come along!” So saying, Lord Reginald, accompanied by the dog, directed his steps towards an opening in the line of cliffs which circled round the bay. As he advanced, the opening widened out, and to his joy he saw numerous cocoanut and other trees. At first he could discover no sign of a spring.

“That verdure cannot exist without water,” he said to himself; “there must be some near at hand. Surely, if it exists Nep will find it.” As he advanced further he found himself in a small valley running directly up from the sea, and shortly afterwards his eye fell on the sheen of water. It appeared to be a stream running down the centre and losing

itself in the porous sand before it reached the ocean. He uttered a cry of joy, and pushed forward. He was soon stooping down, lapping the water up eagerly with his hand. He then began to feel the pangs of hunger. The only fruit he could discover were cocoanuts, but they hung so high above his head that he had no hope of obtaining any. He was too weak to attempt climbing even the smallest of the trees on which they grew. He thought of various devices for bringing them down. He might manage to get some could he find a long thin line which, by means of a stone, he might throw over the boughs. Then he searched about for other food. He looked also anxiously for human habitations. The sun beat down with intense heat into the valley, and the tall trees afforded but little shade. He was compelled at length to retreat towards the cavern. That, at all events, would be cool, he thought. A few more cocoanut trees only had to be passed, when, just as he was going under the boughs of one, he saw a large brown mass covered with fibre lying before him. Though he had never before seen a cocoanut when growing in a wild state, he knew what it was. He seized it eagerly, and began tearing off the outer cover. Conveying it to the cave, with a piece of stone he broke off the top, and having swallowed the refreshing juice in the interior, he soon broke it to pieces so as to get at the flesh. With this he somewhat satisfied the gnawings of hunger.

“Such food won’t suit you, my poor dog!” he said, looking at Nep. However, the dog wagged his tail, and very readily swallowed a few of the pieces cut out of the shell, which his master threw him. He had now to consider what was next to be done. His eye fell on the body of poor Voules.

“He was a miserable counsellor, and did me harm by attempting to flatter me; though I confess that I had but little real regard for him, I certainly wish that he was still alive; but as he has gone, I must endeavour to pay him the respect I would to any fellow-creature, and give him decent burial.” Saying this, he got up and looked about to settle by what means he could accomplish his object. The shore was strewn with timber and pieces of plank of all shapes. Hunting about he soon found a piece which would answer his purpose, though had he possessed an axe he might have chopped it into a more suitable shape; as it was, however, it would have to serve his purpose. His next care was to select some fitting spot for the grave. He pitched on one under the cliff, where the sand appeared sufficiently soft, while the shape of the rocks around would make it easily recognised.

He began to dig away, but the sand fell in almost as quickly as he shovelled it out of the pit, and he had greatly to increase its size before he could reach any depth. He felt sick at heart as he performed his unaccustomed task.

Neptune stood by watching him, apparently understanding his object, although he could render no assistance. At last the grave was dug. His courage almost gave way as he prepared to place the body of his late companion—one whom he had known for so many years—in his last resting-place. While chafing Voules’s chest he had observed a locket hanging to a riband. He undid it, that he might deliver it to his friends. On opening it he saw that it contained the miniature of a young and pretty girl.

“Poor thing!” he said. “She thought him probably all that is brave and good. Now she’ll value him the more because he has gone! I wouldn’t undeceive her for worlds, though I have but little chance of ever being able to deliver this to his friends.” He took his watch, and a few other articles. There was a pocket-book, but he had neither time nor inclination to look into it. Indeed, in all probability, whatever writing there was had been obliterated by salt water. Among other things was a small pocket spyglass, which was likely to prove useful. He found, on trying to lift the body, that his strength was insufficient for the task, so that he had to drag it by the collar of the coat to the edge of the grave, into which he managed to lower it.

“Rest there, my poor shipmate,” he said. “I little thought when we were last on shore, amusing ourselves to our hearts’ content, that such would so soon be your end. Yet, what may be mine?”

He rested for some moments, gazing with a sort of fascination on the dead body, unwilling to cover it up for ever from view. “It must be done!” he said at length, and he began to shovel in the sand, a task which was very quickly accomplished.

“Now I am all alone, the sole inhabitant of this island. That, however, would be better than finding it peopled by a savage tribe, who would either kill me or make me work for them as a slave. Had I the strength, I would build a tomb of rock over him, but he’ll rest well enough without it. I suppose there are no creatures which will come and dig him up.”

He would gladly after this have rested in his cave, for the rays of the sun, now high in the heavens, beat down with intense force on his unprotected head. At the same time, the pangs of hunger reminded him that he must go in search of more substantial food than cocoanuts would afford. He had heard that turtles laid their eggs on the sandy beaches of these islands, but whether he should find them at this time of the year, or whether the young turtles had been hatched and crawled away, he was utterly ignorant. As he walked along the shore, he carefully examined the sand, in the hopes of finding some mounds or the marks of turtles’ feet to show where their eggs had been deposited, but not an indication of any sort could he discover.

“I shall have to depend upon shell-fish,” he said to himself; “there must be numbers sticking to the rocks, and I must try and get them off with my knife. I wish that I had some fishing-hooks and lines. By scrambling out to the end of a reef I might very likely catch as many fish as I require, but as I have not the hooks and lines, I must manage with what I can get.” He sighed as he felt his helplessness. On looking along the beach he saw it covered with pieces of wreck as far as the eye could reach. He might at all events find something useful among the articles thrown up. He had not got far when he caught sight of a human form surging up and down, close to the beach. It might be some person who, having clung on to a piece of the wreck during the night, was attempting to reach the shore. He rushed forward to assist the man to land, but scarcely had he seized an arm than he saw that it was that of a dead body. He did not, however, let go his hold, but dragged it up on the beach.

“I must bury the poor fellow, at all events,” he observed, looking at the countenance of the man, who was one of the ordinary seamen. The discovery of the body made him look more narrowly along the beach, and he saw several

others either thrown up, or floating close to the shore. The sight brought Richard Hargrave to his recollection. “He is probably among them,” he thought, “and I was the cause of dragging him away from his home, prompted by my revengeful spirit and bad feelings. I am as guilty as if I were his murderer. I wish that he had made good his escape and remained at home, and I would give much now to know that he had reached the shore in safety, but that is not likely.” He dragged up body after body, scanning their countenances anxiously, fearing that he should recognise that of Richard Hargrave. At last he came to one with grizzled hair and beard, which he recognised as that of the smuggler Ben Rudall, who had by his means been torn from his home.

“Unhappy wretch! By the way Voules and I treated him he must have had a miserable life of it on board. I suspect that he and Hargrave, if they had had the opportunity, would have treated me as I deserve. Would that I could forget the past! However, I cannot let them lie here to rot.” On counting the number of bodies he had hauled out of the water, he found that there were no less than five. The task was abhorrent to his nature. “I little thought that I should ever become a grave-digger!” he exclaimed, bitterly. “However, it must be done; I couldn’t rest at night if I knew they were there. I only hope that the sea has washed away the remainder, that I shall not have to bury the whole of my crew; perhaps by that time I shall become accustomed to it, only every day will render the business more horrible.”

The young lord, however, managed to muster up resolution to commence the task. He went back for the piece of board which had served him to dig the grave of Voules, and commenced shovelling away the sand some distance above high-water mark. It would evidently require a large grave, and the task would occupy him some hours. The sun, which was intensely hot, beat down on his unprotected head, while the perspiration streamed from his forehead. At last he could work no more, and, supporting himself by the spade, followed by Neptune, he staggered to the nearest spot where he observed some shade beneath the cliff. As he threw himself on the ground, the dog lay down by his side with his tongue out, showing that he too felt the heat.

Overcome with fatigue, he dropped into an uneasy doze, painful fancies filling his brain. How long he had thus remained he could not tell, when, on opening his eyes, they fell on a figure standing by the half-finished grave. His disordered imagination made him fancy that it was one of those he was about to bury who, recovering, had regained his feet. Or could it be a spirit?

His eyes dilated as he gazed. The person, after looking into the grave for a few seconds, turned round and went towards where the bodies lay and then knelt down by the side of one of them. Lord Reginald, not seeing him, as he was concealed by the slope of the beach from where he lay, fancied as he gradually recovered his senses that he must have been subjected to some hallucination, and resolved to finish his task.

“Come, Nep,” he said, rising, “we must finish the work, terrible as it is!” What was his surprise to find that his dog had gone? He made his way back to the grave, keeping his head turned in an opposite direction from the bodies, unwilling to look at them from the sickening feeling which came over him when he did so. Descending into the pit he had formed, he began to throw out the sand. While thus employed he heard a voice close to him say—

“Shall I help you?”

His first impulse was to spring out of the grave and express the joy he felt that one of his crew had escaped, but on looking up he saw Richard Hargrave standing near, with a piece of wood similar to the one with which he was employed. At first his feelings softened towards his enemy, for so he regarded the young seaman, but the next instant he fancied that he detected a look of scorn in his countenance. Still, he wanted to get the work done, and alone he could not accomplish it. He therefore answered, “Yes, you may fall to, for it is more than one man alone can do.”

Without exchanging another word, Dick leapt down into the pit and began shovelling out the sand in a far more effectual way than Lord Reginald had done. When the grave was of sufficient size, Dick got out and immediately went towards one of the bodies, beckoning his companion to assist him in carrying it to its last resting-place. Lord Reginald hesitated, but when Dick began to drag the body by the shoulders he took it up by the feet. One by one three of the other bodies were carried to the grave. Lord Reginald was about to lift up the feet of Ben Rudall, when Dick exclaimed—

“No, no; let him alone. We will give him a grave to himself. He was an old friend of mine, though he might have led me astray, and I want to pay him all the respect I can.”

Lord Reginald let the feet drop, and without speaking returned to the grave, where he began to shovel in the sand. Dick joining him, the task was soon accomplished.

“As I undertook to dig this poor fellow’s grave alone, I won’t ask you to help me,” said Dick, turning aside without attempting to exchange any further words with his companion.

Lord Reginald, utterly exhausted, retreated to the shade of the cliff, calling in an angry tone to Neptune, who had followed Dick, to watch his proceedings.

He observed that Hargrave wore a hat roughly made from palm leaves, and was thus able to endure the heat much better than he could. It did not occur to him that he possessed a handkerchief in his pocket which, had he bound round his head, would have afforded him some protection. At length he could endure the thirst from which he was suffering no longer, and getting up, endeavoured to make his way to the spring at which he had before obtained water. He reached it at last, and sank down by the side of the pool, scarcely able to lift the water with his hand to his parched lips. He succeeded, however, and felt somewhat restored. Nep showed how thirsty he was by lapping it up eagerly.

He waited some time, half expecting that Hargrave would join him. He was too proud to call him, and inquire how he

had escaped from the wreck, which he wished to know, as well as to ascertain if any one else had been saved. Even Neptune appeared surprised, and showed an inclination to start off every now and then and join Dick, who had become a great friend of his on board.

All this time Lord Reginald had eaten nothing except the remains of the cocoanut. He was sensible that he was becoming fainter and weaker. Whether or not Nep had got any food when he disappeared, he could not tell, but from the way he observed Hargrave work he felt very sure that he, at all events, was not starving.

He saw numerous birds of gay plumage flying among the trees, but he had no means of getting them. He thought that he might possibly knock some of them down. For this purpose he returned to the beach to pick up some pebbles. Having filled his pockets, he went back to the neighbourhood of the stream. Though he got frequently within reach of the birds, he could not manage to hit one of them. At last he had exhausted every one of his pebbles, and, prompted by hunger, was about to go back to obtain more, when he bethought him that by hiding behind a bush an unwary bird might come near enough to enable him to knock it down with a stick which he had picked up. He waited for some time. Though several birds came near—one a fine fat pigeon with beautiful plumage—they kept beyond his reach. At length, losing his patience, he threw his stick at a bird which had perched on a bough about twelve feet off. The bird rose, wagging its tail as if in derision, and flew off unhurt. Nep, who was by this time as famished as his master, showed his eagerness by dashing here and there after the birds, which flew near the ground.

“It’s of no use, Nep,” said Lord Reginald; “we must try what the sea-shore will yield.” They returned together to the beach. The tide was low and shell-fish—some of large size—clung to the rocks or lay on the sand.

Supposing that the latter were dead or not fit to eat; he attempted to cut off with his knife some of those clinging to the rocks, a more difficult task than he had expected, and he blunted it considerably in the attempt. At last he got several off, and with these, as well as a few of the freshest looking which he had picked up on the beach, he returned to the cave.

He nearly cut his finger in attempting to open them, and when he had succeeded in separating the shells of a couple, he recollected that he must cook them before they would be fit to eat. First he had to collect firewood. For this purpose he was compelled to go back to where he could obtain some dry branches, broken off by previous gales. While thus engaged, he saw some smoke in the distance.

“That must be a fire kindled by that fellow Hargrave,” he said to himself; “he probably has found something to eat, but I cannot go and ask him for a light, still less can I bring myself to beg for some of the food. Probably he would refuse me if I did. No, no, I will let him come to me and ask my pardon for his insolent behaviour.”

By exerting himself, the young lord collected a bundle of sticks. On his way he found another cocoanut, which prize he was glad to obtain, for it would serve as bread to help him swallow the shell-fish.

With his bundle on his shoulders he returned to the cave. He unscrewed the object glass from Voules’s telescope, but in vain tried to obtain a light. The sticks might have burned had a flame once been established. He had, therefore, to go back and search for dry leaves or moss, or some more inflammable substance.

He found some fungus, which from its dry nature he thought would quickly ignite. With this and his arms full of leaves, he once more made his way back to his cave. The sun was by this time sinking low, and he was afraid after all that its rays would be too oblique to enable him to obtain a spark. He anxiously held the glass in its right position, and was thankful when he saw a fine line of smoke ascending; by blowing gently and placing some dry leaves above it, he at length obtained a flame, with which he set the pile of leaves he had placed under the sticks on fire.

“I am now as well off as that fellow Hargrave,” he said to himself, as he placed the shell-fish on the embers. He had never before attempted to cook anything, and had very little notion of how it was to be done.

He saw the shells getting hotter and hotter, when on raking them out he found the interior burnt to a cinder. “Rather overdone,” he thought; “I must not let them stay in again so long.” He succeeded rather better with the next, but had to confess that they were very tough.

Though his hunger was not satisfied, he had no inclination to eat more; having broken the shells, he bestowed the remainder on Neptune, who apparently preferred them raw to cooked. He eked out his scanty meal with cocoanut, having drunk the juice, which he found very refreshing after the salt, coarse-tasting clams. He had no longer any fear of starving, though the food he had obtained was neither wholesome nor palatable.

After finishing his meal, he threw himself on the sand within the shadow of the cave, trying to reflect what he should next do, but his mind was in a state of confusion. He could not sufficiently collect his thoughts to arrive at any determination. Neptune lay by his side, occasionally licking his hand, trying to amuse him. He felt the solitude to which he was doomed trying in the extreme. The only human being on the island beside himself, was, as far as he could tell, young Hargrave, whom he had despised and hated, and who seemed in no way disposed to forget the mutual ill-feeling which had so long existed, or to show him any marks of attention. He looked out, half expecting to see his enemy approach, but the latter had evidently taken up his abode in the further part of the island, and kept out of his way.

Another night was approaching; it was necessary to collect some more wood to keep in his fire, for should a cloudy day come on, he would have no means of relighting it. At last, seeing the necessity of exerting himself, he got up, intending to fill two of the largest clam shells he had picked up with water, which might serve to quench his thirst during the night. Directly he rose to his feet, Neptune showed his satisfaction by leaping about him, and barked with joy when he found that he was directing his steps towards the fountain. On arriving at it, both he and the dog drank their fill, then placing the shells by its side, he set to work to collect fire-wood. There was no great amount of fallen sticks, and it took him some time before he could pick up a sufficient quantity.

As formerly, he observed in the distance the smoke of a fire, which he felt sure had been kindled by Hargrave. The dog, by pulling his trousers, attempted to draw him in that direction.

“No, no; we will not go and interfere with the fellow. He’ll fancy that we want his assistance, or are begging for some of the food he may have obtained. We must show him that we can do very well by ourselves,” he said, addressing his dog. Fastening the sticks to his back by a piece of rope he had picked up, and taking the two clam shells in his hand, he set off to return to the cave. He had gone a short distance without thinking of Neptune, when on looking round he found that the dog had disappeared.

“Where can the animal have gone to?” he exclaimed. “Has he deserted me for the sake of that scoundrel? If he has, when he comes back I’ll tie him up and teach him that he must not associate with my enemy.”

On reaching the cave he sat down more oppressed even than before by gloomy thoughts. He believed that the *Marie* had been cast away on a remote island, near which no English ship was likely to pass, and that he might remain there for months, perhaps for years, without having an opportunity of escaping, even should he live so long; but he felt so sick and weak that he feared his existence would soon be cut short. “Perhaps,” he thought, “that young Hargrave may take it into his head to murder me. What is there, to prevent him? All that he has to do is to bury me in the sand, with the rest of the poor fellows. And if questions are asked, he could say I was cast lifeless on the shore, or died afterwards from sickness, and such, judging from my sensations, is very likely to be the case.”

The pangs of hunger aroused him. As there was sufficient daylight remaining, he went down to the rocks and cut off a few more shell-fish. The task was so hard a one that he did not collect more than he required. He had slightly improved in the art of cooking them, but he much wished that he had some pepper and salt to make them more palatable. They were nearly cooked, when he saw Neptune scampering along the beach towards him, with something in his mouth. The dog approaching laid it down at his feet, and Lord Reginald discovered that it was a beautiful pigeon.

“Is that what you left me for?” he exclaimed, highly delighted, patting the dog. “This will be far better than those dreadful clams which I could hardly swallow, and which when swallowed made me feel as if I had eaten lead.”

Neptune wagged his tail, as much as to say, “I am very glad, master, I have brought you something you like.” The puzzle was now how to cook the bird. At first he thought of putting it in a clam shell to bake. He had actually placed it on the fire, feathers and all, when he remembered that it must be plucked. This he did in a somewhat awkward fashion. Then he recollected seeing pictures of camp fires, with animals spitted on sticks roasting before them. He selected such from the heap near him as would serve his purpose. Peeling one with his knife, he ran it through the bird, then placed it on two forked sticks, which he stuck in the ground. This done he raked the ashes of the fire beneath the bird close round it, and began turning his spit with his hand. It was hot work, and exercised all his patience. At last he saw that the bird was becoming browner and browner. He was satisfied that he was cooking it in the right fashion. Neptune lay down with his paws out, watching the process. Lord Reginald was too hungry to wait, and taking it off the spit he put it into a clam shell to serve as a dish, and began eagerly eating it. Though, from being just killed, and underdone, it was somewhat tough, it afforded him a far more satisfactory meal than any he had tasted since he had reached the island. He would have been wise had he reserved a portion for next morning’s breakfast, but without consideration, after he had satisfied his hunger, he threw the remainder to Neptune, who gobbled it up in a few seconds.

Being now perfectly dark, having made up his fire he retired to his cave, where, with a piece of wood which he had brought up from the shore for his pillow, he lay down to sleep with Neptune by his side. He knew that his faithful dog would keep watch, and that he need have no fear of being attacked by any wild beasts which might exist in the island. It was some time before he could go to sleep, but at length, overcome by fatigue and mental anxiety, he dropped into an unquiet slumber.

It appeared to him that he was dreaming or thinking the whole night through. Great was his surprise to find it broad daylight when he awoke. Instead of the hurricane which had lately blown, there was a perfect calm, though the smooth undulations broke in a line of foam along the beach where it was not protected by rocks. His fire had gone out, but he had no difficulty in lighting it by means of his burning glass. His first care was to make it up. He then set off to collect some more shellfish.

He had got down to the shores of the little bay which has been before described, and was scrambling along the reef, when his eye fell on a figure apparently clinging to a cleft of the rock on the opposite side, just above high-water mark. The figure seemed to move. Taking out his small telescope he watched it eagerly, trying also to discover some means of getting to the spot. He at once saw by the dress that the figure was that of young Lucas. Was it possible that he was still alive? He feared not. He lost no time in returning to the beach, and then made his way along the rocks until he descended to the point where he had seen his shipmate. A glance at the features told him that the midshipman was dead, and had probably been washed up by the sea into the cleft of the rock. How to remove the body was now the question. He could not let it remain there festering in the hot sun, and it seemed impossible for him to carry it over the rough rocks on his shoulders. At last he thought he might tow it to the shore. There were plenty of materials for forming a raft. He soon lashed a few pieces of wreck together, when, having launched them, he took off his clothes and towed them out. Had it not been for the uniform he could not have distinguished his young shipmate. Extricating the body, not without difficulty, from the cleft of the rock in which it had been fixed, he lowered it down to the raft. Then taking the end of the tow-rope in hand, he began to swim towards the beach. The raft was heavy, and so weak did he feel that he was afraid he should be unable to reach the shore with his melancholy freight.

He was puffing and blowing away, and making but slow progress, when he saw Neptune—who had disappeared in the same mysterious way as he had done on the previous day—coming scampering along the beach. He called the dog, who with a bound plunged in and swam towards him. He placed the tow-rope in the mouth of the animal, who, seeming to know perfectly well what to do, swam with it towards the shore, allowing his master to rest his hand on

his back. He thus, in a much shorter time than would otherwise have been possible, reached the beach. He felt so fatigued that he had to rest while the hot sun dried his body, before he could again put on his clothes.

Neptune, who was now aware of the freight he had brought ashore, waited as if to see what more was required of him. Suddenly he seemed to recollect that he had another duty to perform, and running back to the spot from which he had leapt into the water, he took up a pigeon, which he brought to his master.

“You are a wonderful dog,” said Lord Reginald, patting his head. “How have you managed to catch this bird?”

He would gladly have got through the painful task he had set himself, but the pangs of hunger made him determine to cook the bird first. Following the plan he had adopted on the previous evening, he soon had it plucked and spitted. As he opened the crop he was surprised to see three large nuts drop to the ground, which split as they fell; it seemed wonderful that the pigeon could have swallowed them, large as they were. The kernels, which he put into the fire and roasted, were especially nice and served instead of bread. Neptune, as before, came in for the remainder of the bird. He ate it up, but not greedily, as if he was in want of food. “The rogue has been catering for himself, I suspect I hope that he may bring me something for dinner, for though a pigeon a day is something, sufficient to keep body and soul together, I shall require more to retain my strength.” As he again rose a sensation of lassitude oppressed him. He felt very much disinclined for the painful task he had undertaken. It must be done, however, and rousing himself he seized the wooden spade he had before used, and set to work to dig a grave near that of Voules. He had not long been engaged in his task, when looking up he saw Richard Hargrave approaching. This at once made him suspect that he had been watched by his rival, although he had not discovered him.

“I don’t like to see you engaged in that sort of work; it is as much my duty as yours,” said Dick. “So I have come to help you.”

“I shan’t require your aid,” answered Lord Reginald, haughtily; “you can bury any of the men you may find, but I choose to bury this young officer myself.”

“Very well, do as you like,” said Dick, indignant at having his well-meant offer refused. “I thought as we had both suffered a common misfortune, you would have been glad of the society and assistance of a fellow-creature.”

“You don’t suppose that any common misfortune would bring me down to your level?” exclaimed Lord Reginald. “I don’t require either your sympathy or your assistance; all I desire is that you should keep out of my way, and remember that I am still your officer.”

“I remember that you were once my officer, and that as such you took every opportunity to show your ill-feelings towards me, or allowed others to do so. One of them lies there, and unless you exercise such sense as you have got, you’ll soon take your place by his side. I speak plainly, but I speak the truth. Except the few shell-fish, and the couple of cocoanuts you have picked up, you have been unable to procure any food for yourself.”

“You are wrong there,” said Lord Reginald; “my faithful dog has catered for me, and I have no doubt he will continue to do so; but I do not choose to waste words on you. Be off, and look after your own affairs.”

Dick laughed scornfully. “Do you suppose that the dog would have got those birds by himself?” he asked. “You give him credit for more cleverness than he possesses.”

“I have told you I do not desire to hold any conversation with you,” said Lord Reginald, not inquiring for an explanation of the last remark Dick had made, though it somewhat puzzled him.

“You must take the consequences of your obstinacy, then!” exclaimed Dick, walking away with as haughty an air as Lord Reginald himself could have assumed.

The poor young lord resumed his uncongenial occupation, which Dick’s appearance had interrupted. The grave was dug, and the body of the midshipman dragged into it. He lost no time in covering it up, as it was painful to look upon those features, once so full of life and animation. “Are we two, then, the only survivors from the *Marie*?” exclaimed Lord Reginald. “I wish that some one else had been saved, though I now know for certain that the only ones with whom I could have associated are dead!”

Instead of setting to work to try and improve his condition, oppressed with lassitude, he lay for the remainder of the day in front of his cave, doing nothing.

Neptune remained by him for some time, then apparently getting weary of inaction, after playing about on the sand, scampered off into the interior.

“I hope that he has gone to get me another pigeon, or something else,” said Lord Reginald, when he found that the dog had disappeared. “Sagacious brute, he knows my wants, and is sure to bring me something.”

Hour after hour, however, passed by, and he began to get very hungry. The dog did not return, and evening was approaching. He at last got up, and set off for the spring, to obtain a draught of water, and hoping to find at all events another cocoanut in the palm grove, where he had procured the others. Having drunk as much water as he required, he searched about. Though numbers of cocoanuts grew on the trees above his head, he could not find one fallen to the ground. There were a few husks, which had been broken open and their contents abstracted. He looked about, expecting to see his dog. Neptune did not make his appearance. All he could do therefore, was to collect some more sticks to keep up his fire, after which he obtained some clams from the seashore, off which, though imperfectly cooked, he was fain to make his supper. He had just finished when he saw Neptune coming towards him, not scampering along as usual, but advancing slowly, with his tail between his legs. Lord Reginald looked out eagerly for the pigeon, but Neptune’s mouth had nothing in it. “What, my good dog, have you been unsuccessful in your

hunting?" he said. "It is a bad look-out for me, as I shall have nothing but these clams. However, you shall share them with me."

When, however, he offered the shell-fish to the dog, he refused to eat them, and, looking ashamed of himself, crouched down by his side.

Another night passed away. When the young lord tried to get up in the morning, his limbs ached, and he found himself much weaker than before. He became somewhat alarmed. "If this goes on I don't know how it will end," he said to himself. "It is evident that the clams do not agree with me; however, as I have nothing else, I must eat some for breakfast."

In spite of the pain he was suffering, he crawled down to the beach, and collected as many as he thought he and his dog would require. Bringing them back, and making up his fire, he tried to cook them with more care than before. But they tasted like so many pieces of salted leather, and he could with difficulty swallow them. Neptune ate a few; they were evidently not much to his taste. He soon showed signs of a wish to get away from his master. Twice he started off, but Lord Reginald called him back.

"Come, old dog, we will go and hunt together, and I hope that we shall be more successful than before," he said, at length getting up, and taking a stick to support himself. Sick as he was, he thought a bath would refresh him. He accordingly went down to the bay, and taking off his clothes waded in. The cool water had the effect he expected. He thought he might venture to swim out to a little distance. The dog followed him, keeping close to his side. He had not got far when Neptune uttered a bark, very different in tone to that which he usually emitted. It appeared to be indicative of alarm, and Lord Reginald, looking ahead, saw a black fin rising above the water. He immediately turned, and swam with all his might back to the beach, expecting every instant to feel his leg seized by a shark, for he knew too well that the black fin belonged to one of the monsters of the deep. Nep continued close to him, though he might have got ahead, but the moment he touched the beach he scampered up it, and then turned round and barked furiously, leaping and splashing about in the shallow water. Lord Reginald also, as soon as his feet touched the sand, waded out as fast as his strength would allow, and did not stop until he reached dry ground. Scarcely had he landed, than a pair of huge jaws appeared above the surface, making directly for the dog. But Neptune was too active to be caught, though he had a narrow escape. Lord Reginald, exhausted by the exertions he had made, sank on the sand. Some minutes passed before he could manage to put on his clothes. It was a warning to him not to bathe in future in the bay.

As soon as he had somewhat recovered, again taking his stick in hand he set off, as he had before intended, for the fountain. He felt much refreshed, after taking a draught of pure water and washing his face and head in it, and was sufficiently strong, he thought, to make an exploring expedition through the island, to ascertain its size, and whether he could obtain more food than the sea-shore afforded. Finding an accessible hill he toiled up it. From the summit, he obtained a view over the larger portion of the island. It was generally volcanic and barren. The hill on which he stood formed the side of a volcano, but whether active or not, he could not determine. It was destitute of vegetation, and was covered with black lava, which, from being hard and smooth, he supposed had long been exposed to the atmosphere. There were, however, level spots, in which grew a number of tropical trees, and he could see far off, a broad valley, through which a stream meandered. He looked round for signs of inhabitants, but could discover no huts or buildings of any sort, or traces of cultivation. In the far distance, round a point which ran out to the southward, beyond the spot where the *Marie* had been wrecked, he saw a wreath of smoke ascending through the pure air. This, he had no doubt, rose from Richard Hargrave's fire. Descending the hill, he made his way along a valley, which was of far greater extent than the one he had just discovered near his cave. He was struck with the number of birds—some of beautiful plumage, and others resembling barn door fowls, which were running about among the trees, picking up seeds and fruits fallen from the lofty boughs. He caught sight of some small deer, but the moment they saw him, they scampered off as fleet as the wind. Further off he came upon a small herd of queer-looking pigs. They took to flight, and although Neptune made chase, they quickly distanced him. Presently he heard a chattering above his head, and looking up he saw a number of very small monkeys, grinning out at him from among the boughs. Impulsively he threw his stick at one of the nearest, but the monkey saw it coming, and quickly getting out of the way, clambered with its companions to the higher boughs, where a bullet alone could have reached it.

"There's game enough here to support a ship's company," he thought; "but they only appear to tantalise me, and I may be doomed to starve in the midst of abundance." Among the birds were numerous white cockatoos which flew over his head, but as he approached took good care to keep out of his way, while green pigeons, similar to those Neptune had brought him, were in great numbers, and evidently less timid. Some flew close to him, or remained perched on the boughs, but though he threw his stick at several, he failed to bring one down.

"I wonder that this island, like others in the neighbourhood, is not inhabited." The thought then occurred to him that the volcano had either driven the natives away, or prevented them from occupying it, although the fertility of the valley through which he was walking showed that it was capable of supporting a tolerably numerous population.

He went on and on, interested in the objects he saw, and almost forgetting his fatigue, being able occasionally to quench his thirst at the stream along the banks of which he made his way. He cast a longing eye at several fruits hanging from the boughs of trees of the palm species, but they were all beyond his reach, and no way occurred to him of getting at them. The chief inconvenience he suffered was from the want of a hat, as the sun beat down with intense force on his head, but although he had seen Richard Hargrave wearing one, it did not occur to him that he might manufacture a similar protection. He at length remembered his white handkerchief, which he tied round his head, placing several layers of leaves beneath it, to add to its thickness. This somewhat relieved him, but did not

"YOU SCOUNDREL!" EXCLAIMED THE YOUNG LORD.

Frontispiece. *See page 163.*

shelter his eyes and face. At last he reached a hill of slight elevation, to the top of which he climbed. It overlooked a small picturesque bay. On the nearest point was a large mass of wreck, apparently the bows of the ship, which, when she parted, had been driven there by the current and the fury of the hurricane.

On one side, though at no great distance from the shore, was a neat hut, at which a person was working, whom he felt sure was Richard Hargrave. Neptune, on seeing him, bounded off without asking his master's leave, and Lord Reginald, to his intense disgust, saw the dog rush up and lick the hand of his rival, who patted him, then going into the hut, quickly came out with some pieces of meat, which he gave to the dog.

The sight exasperated the young lord, so that, not considering the folly of what he was about, hurrying down the hill, he made his way towards Dick.

The latter, who had mounted a ladder to continue his work, turning his head, saw him coming, and descended to meet him.

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed the young lord, his features distorted with anger. "You are trying to entice my dog from me by giving him food, which you might at all events have had the grace to offer to me, your officer."

"I have no wish to entice your dog from you!" answered Dick; "and I would advise you to calm your anger, and listen to reason. I sent you two pigeons I trapped, by your dog, first giving him a hearty meal, that he might not eat them on the way, and from your own lips I know that you received them, though you had not the grace to thank me, and declared that you could do very well without my assistance; so I left you to look after yourself, though I hadn't the heart to refuse to feed your dog, when I knew you would have nothing to give him."

"That's false!" exclaimed Lord Reginald. "I know full well that your object was to deprive me of my dog, for the faithful animal—though his instinct induces him to take the food—managed to break away from you, and to return to me, and had you really wished to assist me you might have sent some more of those pigeons, or any other provisions you have obtained."

"It's of no use arguing with an angry man," retorted Dick. "You accuse me of uttering falsehoods. Again I assure you that I have spoken but the simple truth, and say that, as you have obstinately refused my assistance, you must take the consequences."

"Impertinent scoundrel!" cried Lord Reginald. "You dare to speak to me thus! I desire you not again to feed my dog, or to let him remain if he comes to you. He and I must forage for ourselves, and there's game enough in the island, so I shall be able to catch as much as I require for myself and him."

"As you please," said Dick, turning aside, and whistling as he went on with his work, which the arrival of Lord Reginald had interrupted.

The young lord, calling Neptune, who seemed very unwilling to leave, walked off, foaming with anger, and muttering, "I must put a stop to this, or it is impossible to say what he will next do!" As he reached the top of the hill, he could not refrain from turning round, to watch the proceedings of his rival.

Dick had built a good-sized hut under the shade of a grove of trees, and had dug up the ground in an open space near it, to form a garden, which he had begun to rail in. "The fellow seems determined to make himself at home, as if he expected to live here for years to come. A low-born fellow has mechanical talents such as I don't possess; they certainly give him an advantage over me, under the circumstances in which we are placed, but I must see what I can

do for myself. My cave has only hitherto afforded me shelter, but should the wind blow strong and directly into it, I should not find it a comfortable abode. I must try and build a hut for myself. I don't see why I shouldn't, though it might not be so well finished as his. But there's wreck enough on the shore for the purpose, though I shall be puzzled how to get it up. Then about providing myself with food, I'll make a bow and arrows; I shall then be able to shoot some birds, or perhaps a deer, and occasionally a pig. Anything would be better than being beholden to that fellow. It is important that I should show how independent I am of him."

Such thoughts occupied the young lord's mind as he continued his walk along the valley, Neptune every now and then giving chase to a deer or a hog, but the animals scampered off, soon leaving him far behind, and on each occasion he came slinking back to his master, greatly disconcerted at his want of success.

"I see, poor fellow, you are not more likely to catch one of those creatures than I am," he said. "We must try what we can do in some other way. We need not starve in the midst of abundance, that's very certain." He looked about carefully on every side for a young sapling or a tree of some flexible character of which he might form a bow, but he was too ignorant of their nature to know which to select.

"I must try them first, perhaps I shall hit upon one which will answer my purpose."

At last he came to a small straight stem. "This will do, at all events," he thought, and he set to work with his knife to cut it down. As the knife was blunt, he made but slow progress. Even when it was down, he would have to pare off the lower part, so as to make it of the same size as the upper. At length by cutting round and round, he made a notch of sufficient depth to enable him to break off the stem. Shouldering his prize, he walked on to the cave, which he thought would be cooler than any other spot.

Poor Nep followed him, wondering what was going to happen. On measuring the sapling he found that he might have cut it much higher up and saved himself a great deal of trouble. The bow, were he to use it of its present length, would be much too long. He had therefore to remedy this by cutting off two feet at the bottom end. He then peeled it and began shaping the stick by paring off the thicker end. He had shaped it very much to his satisfaction, before it occurred to him to try and bend the bow. What was his annoyance to find, on making the attempt, that bend it would not. It would have formed a very good lance, had he retained the full length, but it was useless for a bow. Again and again he tried to bend it. Using all his force, he felt it yield in his hand, and presently it snapped across. He threw it to the ground with an exclamation of disgust, and for a few minutes felt utterly dispirited.

"I ought to have tried it first to ascertain whether it was of the nature of the yew. Surely savages in this region use bows. There must be wood suited for the purpose, so that if I can find it, I ought to be able to make as good a bow as they can."

While occupied he had not felt hungry, but as he began to move about, he was reminded by his sensations that he must find something to eat. He felt a dislike to making another meal off the shell-fish, but he knew that unless he should be successful in catching some bird or animal he would be compelled to do so. Neptune also showed that he was conscious of the necessity of providing for the inner man. The moment he saw his master get up, he bounded forward, leaping and frisking about to encourage him to proceed.

Poor Lord Reginald, as he walked on after the dog, felt downcast and faint. By going to Richard Hargrave and apologising for his conduct, he might have obtained all he required, but he would rather starve than do that.

As he reached the valley he saw a large number of white cockatoos and green pigeons flying about, and preparing to roost for the night.

"If I can manage to steal on some of those fellows at night, I might catch a few; that, perhaps, is the way Hargrave gets them."

But that was a long time to wait with the possibility of not succeeding, and so Neptune thought, for he went ranging far and wide, evidently looking for food.

Going to the fountain, Lord Reginald took a draught of cold water, hoping that it might stay his hunger. Though it somewhat refreshed him, he soon became more eager than ever for food, and sat down on the bank to consider how he could possibly obtain it. In vain he had thrown sticks and stones at birds. Perhaps he might form some traps, as he knew that such means were used for catching birds, but how to construct them was the puzzle. He turned the matter over and over again in his mind, and discovered that he had no inventive genius. "I shall have to go back to the shellfish, after all," he said, with a sigh; "but I must get a stick for a bow. I will try two or three, out of which one surely will answer the purpose."

Weak as he was, he again got up, and searching about for the sort of wood he wanted, he fixed on a couple of saplings and the branch of a tree. He intended to make the string by untwisting some of the rope from the wreck, while there were plenty of reeds by the side of the stream which he thought would serve as arrows, though how to form heads he had not yet decided. He hoped that by working away by the light of his fire, he might get a bow finished before the morning.

He intended to test the sticks before bestowing labour on any of them, but in the mean time it was absolutely necessary to get some food, for he felt so weak that he could scarcely drag himself back to his cave. Nep was certainly of the same opinion in regard to the necessity of finding provisions, as he continued hunting round and round in all directions, occasionally stopping and barking eagerly at a monkey, which looked down at him from a high branch, or at an opossum, to one of which he gave chase, but the creature got up a tree before he could reach it, and from its hollow kept looking at the strange animal which had invaded its native domains. At last Lord Reginald saw Nep run to the top of a mound, which he observed in an open space in the wood. It appeared to be composed of sticks, dead leaves, stones, rotten wood, earth, and rubbish of all sorts. The mound was between five and six feet

high, and fully twelve feet across. He thought it must be the grave of some of the aborigines who had once inhabited the island, but the dog was evidently of opinion that it contained something worth looking after, as he began scratching away with might and main, in so eager a manner, that Lord Reginald was induced to go up and ascertain what he was about.

Nep had already dug a deep hole, and on looking into it, his master saw, to his surprise and satisfaction, a number of eggs as large as those of a swan, of a red brick colour. Stooping down, he eagerly picked up one of them, which he broke and found that it was perfectly sweet. Here was a storehouse, which would supply him with an abundance of excellent food.

Having collected as many eggs as he could carry in his handkerchief, calling Nep, who seemed in no way disposed to leave the treasure, he set off for his cave. Making up his fire, he put three of his eggs under the ashes to cook, the only way he could think of to dress them, while he ate a portion of the one he had broken, which, though raw, was palatable, and contributed to allay the pangs of hunger. The remainder he gave to Nep, who eagerly gobbled it up, showing how hungry he had become.

That the eggs were laid by birds, he had no doubt, though of what species they were he was unable to determine. He resolved, however, to return next morning, and to wait near the spot, supposing that they must be large birds, and that he should be able to kill one, which would afford him ample food for a day or two. “I shall then be as well off as that fellow Hargrave,” he thought to himself, “and I at all events shall be independent of him.”

Having finished his supper, he commenced making a bow. One only of the sticks appeared suitable for the purpose. On bending it, back it sprang with considerable force. While still working away by the light of his waning fire, sleep so completely overpowered him, that he let fall his knife, and the stick of his bow by his side, while his head bent down over his breast. When he awoke, his fire was almost out, and as he could see to work no more, he crept back into his cave, where he lay down to sleep, with Nep, as usual, by his side.

Chapter Twelve.

A trying time—The fatal crash—Ben Rudall’s last effort—Among the breakers—Thrown on shore—The first shelter—The carpenter’s chest—Setting traps—A very satisfactory meal—Visit of Nep—A present for Lord Reginald—Dick building his hut—Meeting of the rival Crusoes—Supplies stopped—Collecting stores—Boat-building—Useful employment of time—Constructing a cot—The megapodes—A crossbow.

We must now go back to the night of the shipwreck. Dick, with Ben Rudall and several other men, had been stationed forward, and remained at their posts when land was first seen under the lee.

“There’ll be a watery grave for most of us,” said Ben when the cry arose of “Land, land!” often so cheering to seamen, but on the present occasion of such dreadful import.

“We must have a struggle for our lives, at all events,” said Dick. “Better than going down in mid-ocean, without a plank to cling to.”

“You don’t know what a surf like that breaking on a lee-shore under your lee can do!” observed an old salt, who stood holding on to the bulwarks with one hand, while he searched for a quid of tobacco with the other.

“They would grind up a stout ship like this in a few minutes if she strikes. It can’t be helped; I’ll take one chaw, though it may be my last, and I only wish that I could get a glass or two of grog. It would make one feel more comfortable like.”

“We can do without grog, surely,” said Dick. “It strikes me that we ought to try and keep our senses wide awake, so that we can judge of what’s best to be done. I for one shall struggle to the last, and hope to reach the beach in spite of the surf, either on a spar or a piece of wreck.”

“We arn’t wrecked yet; maybe we shall be able to run into some cove or other where we can bring up.”

“Not unless we had a pilot on board who knows the coast. From what I hear, none of the officers have ever been in these seas before, and we have little chance of dropping anchor in a safe harbour.”

The gale came down with increased fury. “Hold on, lads, for your lives!” cried Ben, who had cast one anxious look to leeward. “Keep clear of the falling masts, for before a minute is over we shall be on shore!”

Scarcely had he spoken than there came a fearful crash. The masts went by the board. The sea, with thundering roars, broke over the doomed ship. Crash succeeded crash. The shrieks of those carried away could be heard every moment. Dick kept to his resolution of clinging tightly to a stanchion. Presently came the final crash, when the *Marie* parted amidships, and those forward found themselves separated from their companions. The sea twisted the bow round and floated it away, but it still held together. “We shall be carried off from the land!” cried Ben Rudall. “We had better try to get hold of some spars and float ashore.”

“I thought you advised us to cling to the ship as long as she held together,” observed Dick.

“But she’s not holding together,” answered Ben. “To my mind, she’ll either go down in deep water, or go to pieces when we are too far off to reach the shore.”

Still Dick had made up his mind to stick to the ship.

“Well, mates, who’s for the shore?” cried Ben.

“Only those who are tired of life!” said the old seaman; “the wise ones will stick to the wreck. The chances are that will be cast on the beach, where we shall have a better chance of landing.”

Ben, however, still adhered to the belief that they would have a better prospect of saving their lives by clinging to some of the floating mass than by holding on to the forecastle, over which the sea was continually washing.

Several, while doubting what to do, were swept from their hold, and had no choice given them. Ben, with three others, got hold of some pieces of timber.

“If you escape and I get drowned, give my love to poor Susan and the children. Say that my last thoughts were about them,” cried Ben, as he threw himself after his companions.

Dick and the old seaman alone remained. The mass of wreck was tossed wildly about for some minutes, being swept by a current parallel to the shore, until at length, lifted by a sea, it drove on a reef, when the next sea rolling up, carried its two occupants overboard, together with several fragments of the bulwarks which it had torn off.

Striking out for his life, Dick succeeded in getting hold of a piece of timber. As he did so he heard a cry, and glancing in the direction from whence it came, he dimly saw his late companion through the gloom, lift up his arms and sink amidst the foaming waters. Dick held fast to the timber. Although not a bad swimmer, he knew that he should have but little chance of keeping afloat in that boiling cauldron. The seas washed him on nearer and nearer the shore, when just as he felt his strength failing him, he found that the timber had grounded; so letting it go he scrambled up before the next wave overtook him, and reached the dry sand, on which he threw himself, well-nigh exhausted by his exertions. Soon recovering, he looked out, in the hopes that some of his shipmates might be thrown up on the same beach, but though he for long watched anxiously, running up and down along the whole circuit of the bay, he saw no one, and came to the melancholy conclusion that all on board excepting himself had been lost.

Numerous articles, besides masses of wreck, were, however, cast on shore, and those which appeared the most valuable he made every exertion to secure. Among them was a large chest, which he hoped by its weight to have belonged to the carpenter. Though unable to haul it up beyond where the water had floated it, having found a rope he made it fast to the handle, and carried the other end to the trunk of a tree. In vain he looked out during the time, in the hope of seeing any of his shipmates coming on shore; he feared all had been drowned or washed away. At length he made out amid the foam two bodies floating at no great distance from the shore. They both appeared lashed to pieces of timber. They might still be alive.

He dashed into the water, just as the sea sent one of the pieces of wreck close to him, when seizing it he dragged it up, and instantly casting off the lashings, carried the man up to the dry beach. He then dashed forward again, and succeeded in getting hold of the spar to which the second man was lashed. It cost him much labour, and he was very nearly carried out himself, but by exerting all his strength he succeeded at length in getting the spar also up to the beach.

Cutting the man loose, he carried the body up and placed it beside that of his companion. He then set to work to try and restore the men to life, rubbing their hands and chests, but all his efforts were in vain. As far as he could tell, they were the only people who had reached the beach. He thought of poor Ben. He still had some hopes that he might have been washed on shore, but although he called his name several times, no answer was returned.

Finding that all his efforts were vain, he then got up, wishing to procure some shelter for himself during the inclement night. Observing the mizzen rigging with a piece of sail entangled among it, he cut the canvas loose, and contrived with a couple of bales and some pieces of board, to rig up a rough hut.

The storm abated and the moon shone out for a short time, enabling him to complete his work. Scarcely was it finished than down came the rain, and he was glad to crawl in and obtain rest. He slept on until morning. Immediately on getting up he went down to the beach on the chance of finding any of his companions, but no one was visible, either alive or dead. There were, however, a number of articles and masses of wreck floating or cast on shore, while the bows of the ship still hung together at the end of the reef. Hunger reminded him that he must look out for food. The trees and shrubs he saw growing inland gave him hopes of finding provision for his wants.

His first care was to form a covering for his head, as he had already found the heat of the sun excessive, and he had lost his hat during his swim ashore. He had often seen the seamen on board form straw hats. He at once looked out for such leaves as would serve the purpose of straw, and soon finding some, he sat down under a tree and diligently set to work. The fibre of the leaf served as thread, the thick stem as a needle. Certainly the hat was not over well shaped, but it answered the purpose of protecting his head and neck from the burning rays of the sun.

His next idea was to obtain such food as the sea would afford. Without difficulty he collected as many shell-fish as he required from the reef, and was returning with them when he saw a cask, which from its appearance he hoped contained biscuits. He at once rolled it up to his hut, then set about collecting wood for a fire.

He easily found a supply of dry sticks which, with some pieces of wreck, were amply sufficient for his wants. As he was collecting the sticks he was delighted to see the number of birds as well as animals inhabiting the island.

“If I can catch you fellows, I shall have no want of food,” he observed. “I must set my wits to work, and make some traps.”

A couple of large clam shells which he had found on the beach, served to carry water. He had in his pocket a flint and steel, with which he soon managed to produce a blaze. While the shell-fish were cooking, he opened the cask, which he found contained flour. Though the outside was wet, by digging down to a little depth, he found the interior

perfectly dry. A clam shell served him as a kneading-dish, and he quickly made some dough cakes, which he baked in the embers. He was thus able to enjoy a very satisfactory breakfast, although he had cold water alone as a beverage. There were a number of other casks and cases, and he hoped to find among them some more flour, and perhaps some tea or coffee, and salt beef or pork.

The first thing to be done was to secure all the articles which came on the beach, before another tide should float them off. He at once set about this. It was somewhat hard work, for many of the cases were heavy, and he could with difficulty drag them over the soft sand. Having drawn up all he could see floating on the shores of the bay, he bethought him that by going further to the south, he might find others in the bay off which the ship struck.

He accordingly set out, and climbing over the intervening rocks, what was his surprise on looking down to see a person at work, whom he recognised as Lord Reginald. He at once guessed how he was employed.

“It isn’t fair to let him do that work all alone, though I’d rather have kept clear of him, and very likely he’ll not take in good part whatever offer I make,” he said to himself.

He approached, and was received as he expected. The interview has already been described. Dick felt a sincere grief when he found Ben Rudall’s body among the drowned; it was not likely that any others had escaped. The headland which extended away to the westward, would prevent any persons landing on that side, and he felt sure that Lord Reginald and he were the only people who had escaped from the wreck.

The treatment he received made him resolve not to trouble Lord Reginald in future with his company. “He’ll come to his senses by-and-by, and find out that he and I are pretty much on an equality, or rather that I have the advantage of him, as I shall be able to get on much better than he does,” thought Dick.

From the first, he saw the necessity of providing for his daily wants. He must look out for food, and erect some shelter for himself. The hut in which he had spent the first night was hot and close, and though it might serve him until he could get a better habitation erected, he was anxious to build a more substantial place to live in. He was desirous, also, without delay, to examine the large chest. It would have been a difficult task to get it beyond the reach of the sea, even should Lord Reginald have condescended to help him. He considered, therefore, how he could best do it alone. There were several broken spars about. These he collected, and managed, by digging away the sand, to place them so as to serve as rollers beneath the chest. He then picked up several blocks, with which he formed a tackle, and secured it to the stump of a tree. By hauling away with all his might, he found that he could move the chest, and by shifting the rollers by degrees he hauled it up beyond high-water mark. The next difficulty to be overcome was to get it open. He had no tools to work with, and without tools it would baffle the strength of fifty men. Looking about, however, he discovered a large flat stone which might, he hoped, serve as a wedge; after a further search he picked up another heavy round stone, and armed with these he began to work away at the lock. It resisted for some time, but by hammering away with might and main the lock yielded, and the interior, full of carpenter’s tools and numerous other articles, was revealed to his sight. He had now the means of building a comfortable house. He had been taught to handle tools by a carpenter in his younger days, and he had also—which was of great importance—often formed traps for the purpose of catching birds and animals, so that he might thus supply himself with food. He saw a number of green pigeons, which appeared very tame, and lots of cockatoos, though they looked too wise to be trapped.

Selecting such of the tools as he thought he should require, he collected a quantity of wood, and took them up to the shade of the nearest tree, where he could work in tolerable comfort. In a short time he had formed three traps, similar to those made by boys in England to catch sparrows, but of much larger dimensions.

Having picked up a quantity of seed fallen from the trees, for bait, he set them in different places apart, where from a distance he could command a sight of them. He watched eagerly, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing one go down, and directly afterwards the other two. He ran up to secure his prizes. Each had caught a pigeon, and wringing their necks he reset the traps, and returned to his tree. Some dry fungus served him for tinder. Having his flint and steel, he struck a spark and soon had a fire blazing. He plucked one of the pigeons and set it on to roast, considering that it would be sufficient for one meal, and intending to keep the other two. He then made some dough cakes, which he cooked as before, on a large stone surrounded by ashes. He had begun his meal when he saw Nep ranging in the distance. He called the dog to him, and observing his hungry look, gave him the remainder of the pigeon and some dough cake. The dog, having eaten what was bestowed upon him, looked still anxious.

“I see what it is; you are thinking of your master, old fellow. Now you take back that bird. He is probably very hungry, and you may tell him I sent it, if you like. I don’t suppose he will refuse to eat it, even if he knows where it comes from. Now mind, Nep, don’t you stop on the way and bolt it down, or I shall be obliged to give you a thrashing when you come back.”

Nep seemed fully to understand what he was to do. Taking the bird up with as much care as if it were alive, he set off in the direction of the cave.

“He’ll do it,” said Dick, well satisfied with himself. “I couldn’t bear to have him starve, while I am enjoying an ample meal. The chances are that he hasn’t got the sense to obtain anything for himself. Nep might be able to catch some animals for him, but he won’t succeed in getting hold of a bird.”

Dick felt much more satisfied with himself after this. He now began to consider how he could make himself comfortable. While setting his traps he had observed several trees which bore fruit, and he therefore felt convinced he should be able to obtain as much food as he required, besides any fish he might catch. On searching the carpenter’s chest, he found a number of hooks of all sizes, together with some fine line, so that he might go out fishing as soon as he had time. Several of the bales consisted of cotton or linen cloth, and another prize was a box belonging to one of the officers, which contained clothes, shoes, some nautical instruments, a spyglass, and several

books, which, although they were in French, were better than none at all, as he might by their means teach himself that language.

Having collected all the wood which had drifted ashore from the wreck, he dragged it up by means of his tackle, and he had soon enough to build a small hut. He lost no time in making a commencement. The tropical rains, he thought, might soon begin, and it was important to get under shelter before then. He settled to build his hut in such a way that he might increase its size as he could procure more materials. At present his plan was to build the frame of drift wood, and then to cover it over with planks, for which he might cut down trees and saw them up into boards.

For some time, however, his progress was slow, as he was compelled to look out for provisions. For this purpose he had to form several more traps, as sometimes whole days passed without those he had at first set catching a bird. Neptune paid him another visit, and he sent a second pigeon by the dog to Lord Reginald. Remembering that several articles had been thrown up on the beach of the smaller bay on which Lord Reginald had been cast, he thought that he would ascertain if there were any things worth having among them. He set off, therefore, armed with a stick for this purpose. He was going along the beach, eagerly looking out for whatever he could draw on shore, when he saw Lord Reginald engaged in burying the midshipman.

The coldness with which his overtures were received made him determine to leave Lord Reginald to his own devices.

“He’ll soon find out how well he can get on alone,” he said to himself, and turning on his heel he went back to his hut. “If the foolish fellow chooses to starve, there’s no reason why the poor dog should. If he comes, I’ll do my best to feed him, at all events.”

Dick had now plenty of work before him. His spirits rose as he laboured away, and he made good progress with his hut. It was almost fit for occupation. As long as he could procure nourishing food without difficulty, he devoted himself without interruption to the work. Neptune paid his visits as before, and Dick fed him well, but would give him no food to carry to his master.

“No, no,” he said; “he boasts that he can feed himself, let him do so. If he starve, that’s not my look-out, but you, poor brute, deserve being cared for.” At length, to Dick’s surprise, Lord Reginald made his appearance. At first Dick hoped he had come with overtures of peace, but the young lord’s haughty bearing and outrageous remarks convinced him that there was little hope of their living on amicable terms together.

“Let him go and live by himself as best he can,” said Dick. “I should have liked to have had a companion, but I would rather be without one than be compelled to associate with so ill-tempered a fellow as he is.” And he went on boring holes and hammering on the planks of his house. Next day Nep made his appearance, begging for food, which Dick gave him, but though he had several pigeons, he would not send one by him.

Nep stayed on, hoping to get it, but Dick was determined that the young lord should be made to feel his own helplessness. “If he want food for himself, he must come and ask for it,” he said; “he chose to despise my former presents, and I intend to teach him which is the best man of the two.”

Dick soon got his hut roofed in, so that should rain come on, he would be under shelter. He had still to make furniture for it, and to build a storehouse and other conveniences.

Before commencing these operations, he bethought him of the best means of securing a supply of provisions, so that he need not be interrupted in his work.

During two or three excursions he had made through the valley, he had seen the number of birds and animals inhabiting it. The pigs, he thought, he could catch in pitfalls, though it might be a task of some difficulty without an iron spade to dig them in hard ground, but he was not to be daunted, and he determined to form some instrument with which to accomplish his purpose.

Then he thought, “I ought to have a canoe to go out fishing, while the fine weather lasts.” As he wandered about, he looked out for a tree to suit his purpose. He found one of sufficient girth and length, with a perfectly straight trunk, though whether the nature of the wood was suitable for a canoe, he could not ascertain, except by cutting it down. He had often felled trees at home, but without an axe he could do nothing. He went back to the carpenter’s chest, in the hopes of finding one. Searching among the tools, at the bottom he discovered three spare heads. He had, however, to fix a handle to one of them. The first thing to be done was to find a piece of wood suited for the purpose. After hunting for some time, he discovered a piece of oak, washed ashore from the wreck. On measuring it, he ascertained that it was large enough to form three handles. Before, however, he could use a saw to his satisfaction, he considered that it would be necessary to form a stool, which he did from a piece of plank, with four stout legs fixed in the ground, close to his hut. He could now shape the handles without difficulty. Having sawn out one, he set to work with chisel and plane, and quickly formed a long handle which pleased him well. Fixing it securely in the axe-head, he poised it, and found that it was all he could desire.

Throwing off his jacket and waistcoat, rolling up his shirt sleeves, and fastening a handkerchief round his waist, he set to work, and began chopping away at the trunk of the tree, on the lee side, so that, the last stroke being given on the weather side, it might fall without fear of crushing him. He laboured away without cessation until he had cut through nearly half the tree, when his arms began to ache. He stopped, retiring to a little distance to contemplate his work. “Another two hours will do it, and I should like to get it down before dark,” he exclaimed.

The wood was tolerably soft. This gave him hopes that he should be able to shape it without difficulty. His first idea had been to form only a fishing punt, which would enable him to go off a short distance from the land, or to visit the various bays in the island, where fish might abound. But as he considered the size of the tree, he thought it might be as well to construct one large enough to cross to any of the islands to the northward, which he knew to exist in that direction. For some thirty feet the trunk was almost of the same circumference. By adding weather boards, and

decking over a portion of the stern and head, he might form a boat of a size sufficient to venture on a long voyage.

After resting himself, he again set to work, until he had cut into the heart of the tree. Having penetrated deeply into the tree on the lee side, he now stood on the weather side, and prepared to give the finishing strokes. After every stroke, he watched to see in which direction the tree was bending, that he might spring out of the way, in an opposite one to which it tended. At length, the wood began to crack, and the tall tree hung over on the side he expected. He plied his axe with redoubled vigour, when, tottering for a moment, down it came with a crash, making the earth around tremble, and throwing up a cloud of dust and leaves. He uttered a shout of satisfaction as he saw the first part of his work accomplished. In his eagerness, he would have begun shaping it out immediately, but darkness had come on, and prevented him from working. He had been so engaged, that he had forgotten all about his food. Hurrying to his traps, he found a couple of pigeons, which he hastily plucked, and, having made up his fire, put on to roast. While they were cooking, he kneaded some small dough cakes.

“I wish that foolish fellow had more sense; I would gladly have given him some of these,” he thought. “The chances are he hasn’t been able to kill anything. Hunger, however, will perhaps bring him to his senses, and I shall have him here begging. I can’t have the heart to refuse him, though he ought to be made to feel his own helplessness.” Having finished his supper, Dick hung up the other bird, and put away his cakes for breakfast, that he might set to work as soon as it was daylight.

He had not hitherto formed a bed-place for himself, being content to sleep on the ground, with some canvas and cloth from one of the bales, which he had first well dried in the sun, for a covering. Being very tired, he lay down, but fancied that he felt creatures crawling over him, so he resolved to make a cot before the next night, that he might sleep more comfortably. He had noticed some palm needles and a quantity of twine in the carpenter’s chest, which would be of great service. He awoke before daylight, but afraid of losing time, he remained awake, thinking over his plans, until he saw the first gleams of dawn breaking in the eastern sky. He then at once rose and went down to the beach to take a bath, splashing about all the time he was in the water, and looking out seawards, in case of sharks or other dangerous creatures being near. Thoroughly refreshed, he returned on shore. Having dressed, he went back to his hut to commence his work for the day. He was so eager to get his boat finished that he would at once have begun on that, but there were other things of more immediate importance. The first was to see that his traps were properly set, as he knew that he was more likely to catch birds in the morning when they came down to feed, than at other times in the day. It took him, however, some time to collect the nuts and other fallen fruits on which the birds fed. As he was thus employed, he counted several different species, mostly of beautiful plumage, while a number of monkeys played on the boughs above his head, chattering furiously, as if to ask him where he came from.

“If the birds fly away, I shall be able to catch some of you fellows, at all events,” he said, looking up at them. “I have heard say that some people do eat monkeys, though I would rather have any other meat. I’d sooner have one of those deer or hogs I see scampering away there; though, as I have not much chance of finding a gun and powder, I must make a crossbow and arrows. I used to shoot pretty well with one; if I can get the right sort of wood I have no doubt I could make one that would carry fifty yards or so, and I dare say that I should be able to kill some of those fellows, by lying in ambush, or creeping up to them. I’m sure, at all events, that I can knock over as many monkeys as I require.” Having set his traps, he ate the remainder of his pigeon and some of the dough cakes, which he washed down with a draught of pure water.

He then began on his cot. He might have made a hammock with far less difficulty, but it would require more space to hang than his hut afforded, and would not be altogether so comfortable as a cot.

With two long poles and two short ones for the head and foot, he formed a framework, to which he secured canvas. Then fastening on the knittles, he secured a couple of blocks to the rafters of the hut, and thus formed a satisfactory sleeping-place.

With some of the cloth he made a pillow and mattress, which he stuffed with dried leaves, while another piece of cloth served as a coverlid of sufficient thickness for that climate. “I shall want a table and stool, and I must see if I can find any plates and dishes, mugs, or a saucepan.” He very soon had fallen into the habit of talking to himself.

The day was wearing on. He had seen nothing of Lord Reginald nor of Neptune. He was surprised that the dog had not paid him a visit, but concluded that he had found sufficient food for himself and his master, or that he would certainly have done so. Dick accordingly began to plan his canoe. He had found pencils and paper in the well-stored carpenter’s chest. He drew the proposed shape of the stem and stern. His chief doubt was about the length. He finally settled to make the canoe thirty feet long. The tree was upwards of four feet in diameter. He proposed to make the gunwale two feet above this by raising it all round, and he thus hoped to get a craft of sufficient beam to carry cargo and go through a considerable amount of sea. He had the whole plan more clearly defined in his own mind than he could have designed it on paper. His first business was to chop off the bark and to saw the two ends even; then to level one side of the tree, cutting off rather more than one-third. On the level thus formed, he drew a line from one end to the other, carefully measuring it so that both sides might be equal. He next marked off from his drawing the shape of the bow and stern. By the time these operations were completed it was again night. He determined that nothing except what was absolutely necessary should stop him until he could finish it. He intended to fix on a keel and stern, so that the boat might carry sail. While on board the *Wolf*, he had often heard the warrant officers discuss the best form of boat. The carpenter described the canoes in those seas with outriggers, which would prevent them upsetting. Dick had comprehended the object of these; indeed, the carpenter had shown him some prints in Captain Cook’s voyages, which enabled him still better to understand the use of such contrivances. Though Dick was highly proud of his proposed craft, he was fully sensible of the importance of procuring food.

Next morning when he went to his traps, he found that no birds had been taken. He concluded that, seeing so many of their companions caught, the rest had become wary, but he saw many others of different species, which he hoped either to trap or shoot. To do this he must manufacture his proposed crossbow. Without loss of time, taking an axe and saw with him, he set out in search of the necessary wood, for none of that from the wreck was likely to answer

the purpose. He went on through the broad valley, until he arrived at the smaller one, in which was the spring whence Lord Reginald procured his supply of water. He looked out, but could see nothing of either the young lord or his dog. As he passed through the wood, he observed several birds; they had large feet and long curved claws, and were about the size of a small barn-door fowl. Their plumage was mostly of a dark olive colour, with tints of brown on the other parts. They were busily employed in eating fallen fruits, and picking up worms and insects, running about here and there at a great rate. Curious to observe them, he hid himself behind a tree, when he saw some, evidently hens, hopping to the top of a large mound, where having scraped away the earth to a considerable depth, they each deposited an egg, covering it up again with the greatest care.

“Oh, oh!” thought Dick, “if your eggs are fit to eat, I shall have a good store of provision,” and going to the mound he soon shovelled away the earth, beneath which he found a good number of eggs. These he deposited carefully in a handkerchief, wrapping them up with leaves, to prevent them breaking.

The birds were a species of megapode, which are found chiefly in Australia and Borneo and the intermediate islands. They are allied to the gallinaceous birds but differ from them in never sitting upon their eggs, which, thus buried in vegetable rubbish, are left to be hatched by heat and fermentation. It is said that a number of birds unite in forming these mounds, and lay their eggs together, but take no further care of their offspring. As soon as the little birds are hatched, they run away from the mound, and at once begin picking up food suitable to them, trusting to their speed to escape from their foes. Dick, of course, knew nothing of this, but was well satisfied at finding so large a supply of fresh-laid eggs. He was also not aware that it was the very mound from which Lord Reginald had obtained the only food, besides shell-fish, he had been able to procure since his arrival in the island. Dick would certainly not otherwise have carried them off. Reaching the sea-shore, he turned back, for fear of encountering Lord Reginald, as he had no wish to have another interview with one who received his advances so ill.

“I suppose that he will manage to kill or trap some of those birds for himself,” he thought, “or, if he is hard up, that he’ll come back and ask my assistance. Meantime I must see what I can do for myself.” After hunting about and trying a number of trees, he selected four branches of wood, on which he meant to try experiments to ascertain which was most suited for a crossbow. The stock and string he would have no difficulty in forming. He had the whole plan clearly in his head, and now he had got the eggs, which would last him for two or three days, he was in no hurry to finish it. He found a piece of deal, which could be easily worked, and he immediately commenced cutting it into shape, using his saw, plane, and chisel. The first piece of wood he tried for the bow broke. He had to take another, which bent easily enough, but had not sufficient spring. With the third he was more successful, and was fully satisfied that it would answer his purpose. He formed a string by twisting several lengths of twine tightly together, and he found that he could send a bolt of wood between thirty and forty yards. By the light of his fire he worked away until late in the night, when he was compelled from sleepiness to turn into his cot, with which he was well pleased. It formed a comfortable couch, and neither crabs, nor beetles, nor centipedes, nor other creeping things came near him. Still, he could not go to sleep. His thoughts constantly reverted to the poor young lord, who was resting in his cavern with dry sand, or a bed of leaves, at best, for his couch.

“Though he treats me with disdain, I ought not in consequence to allow him to perish. He is proud and obstinate, but, of course, he hasn’t liked the way I have spoken to him. I hope to-morrow morning he’ll think better of it, and will come to me for assistance, or will send Neptune. It is hard that the poor dog should starve because his master and I have fallen out.”

Notwithstanding these thoughts which passed through Dick’s mind, he did not feel inclined just then to set out in search of Lord Reginald. After thinking over what he would say to him if they met, satisfied with his good intentions, he fell asleep.

Chapter Thirteen.

Seeking food—Disappointed—Shaping a bow—Reduced to extremity—Poor Nep in disgrace—Fever—How Dick fared—The crossbow bolt—A curing-house—Neptune’s appeal for help—Dick turns nurse—All but lost—A change of quarters—Lord Reginald’s delirium—Finding juicy fruit—The recognition.

Lord Reginald awoke with aching head and confused brain. For some time he lay unable to collect his scattered thoughts. At length he remembered how he had been engaged on the previous evening. He saw the bow he was trying to form, by his side, and Neptune lying down at his feet, keeping watch. As soon as the dog observed that his master was awake, he got up and licked his hands and face, trying to arouse him.

“I see you want food; so do I,” said Lord Reginald, sitting up. “When I have finished the bow we shall have plenty. In the mean time, we must get a supply of those eggs we found the other day.” He tried, as he spoke, to rise. With some exertion he got on his feet, but felt scarcely able to walk. Taking his stick, however, he managed to totter out of the cave. The fresh air of the early morning somewhat revived him, and, followed by Neptune, he made his way towards the curious mound in which he had found the eggs. He felt very giddy, and could scarcely drag his legs along. The necessity of obtaining food, however, compelled him to proceed. Nep kept by his side, looking up into his face, and wondering why he didn’t move faster. He had great difficulty in climbing to the top of the mound, and nearly sank down in the attempt. At length he succeeded, when Nep ran forward and began scratching away as he had done before. Lord Reginald, sinking to the ground, watched him. “It appears to me as if some one has visited the place since I was last here,” he thought.

Nep continued scratching away, but no eggs appeared. As Nep at length enlarged the hole, three eggs were disclosed to sight. Lord Reginald broke one of them, and cast it from him with disgust, for it contained a nearly formed bird. Nep, not being so particular as his master, supposing it was intended for him, without ceremony at once gobbled it up. The second and the third egg were in the same condition. Nep took them also as his share, and

afterwards went on scratching away, apparently hoping to find more. Lord Reginald was too weak to help him.

“That fellow Hargrave has been here, and carried off all the sound eggs, leaving only these few for the sake of tantalising me,” he exclaimed in a bitter tone.

After Neptune had scratched over the whole top of the mound, Lord Reginald, finding that he had no chance of obtaining any eggs from it, made his way with tottering steps towards the fountain, at which he and Neptune, as usual, quenched their thirst. It seemed to him, that he could never drink enough to allay the burning fever which raged within him. Neptune ranged about, and showed a great inclination to set off in the direction of Richard Hargrave’s hut, but Lord Reginald called him back, jealous of the regard he paid to his rival.

“If you play me that trick, master Nep, I shall tie you up. Remember, I will have no paying court to that fellow,” he cried out.

The dog came back with his tail between his legs, looking as if he would answer, “It will be your loss, master, but I obey you.”

Greatly refreshed by the water, Lord Reginald found that he had sufficient strength to get to the beach. He managed, not without difficulty, to cut off from the rocks a further supply of clams, with which he returned to his cave. He made up his fire, and dressed some of them. Nep watched him, showing that the eggs had not sufficiently satisfied his hunger. It was with difficulty, however, when cooked, that, hungry as he was, Lord Reginald could eat any of the shell-fish. Even had he been in full health and strength, such food was not sufficient, without vegetables, either to satisfy his hunger or keep him in health.

“There, Nep,” he said, throwing the remainder to his dog, “they’ll suit you better than they do me.”

Nep ate them up, and then came and lay down by his master’s side.

“I must try and get this bow finished, old dog. We will then try and procure some venison, or one of those hogs, if I cannot manage to shoot a bird,” he said.

He took up the stick he had been forming into a bow, and worked away as he had done on the previous night, but he had blunted his knife in cutting off the clams from the rocks, and had no means of sharpening it effectually. He tried to do so on a flat piece of rock, and then on the sole of his shoe, but after an attempt he found that it was very little sharper than before. He discovered, indeed, that he was ignorant of the way to sharpen a knife, as he was of most other arts.

At length, however, the bow was finished in a rough fashion, with a notch at each end to hold the string, which had now to be formed. He had first to untwist a piece of rope, then to divide it into small strands, and to twist them up again by means of a winch, which he manufactured like those he had seen on board. The string was much thicker than he wished to make it, but he could not otherwise give it sufficient strength. At last that was finished, and fitted to the bow. He had still the arrows to make. He remembered the reeds he had seen growing by the side of the stream, and rising with difficulty, he dragged himself along, supported by his stick, until he reached the spot. He selected a few of the requisite size and length, but with his blunt knife it took him a long time even to cut one, and his strength was almost exhausted before he had collected half a dozen. With these he returned to the cave.

The wings of the pigeons which Nep had left supplied him with feathers, which he bound on to one end. His difficulty was to form points. At first he thought that he could grind down some stones into the required shape, but after labouring away for some time, he had to give up the attempt. He then tried some hard pieces of wood, which he cut into shape and then hardened in the fire. Though not so heavy as he wished, he hoped that they might answer his purpose, and enable him to shoot straight for some distance. He had been all day without food except such shell-fish as he had taken in the morning, and he felt little able to draw his bow with any effect. As soon as he had finished his first arrow he got up, and placing it in the string, shot it along the shore. The arrow took a wavering flight, and flew some fifty yards or so, burying itself in the sand. Nep got up to it, barking with delight, while Lord Reginald crawled after it. On pulling it out, he found to his excessive vexation that the head had come off, and some time was expended in digging it out. Observing that he had not formed a sufficiently deep notch to bind it on tightly, he remedied the error, and was tolerably well satisfied with the result. Having finished the other five arrows, he set out, hoping to return with an ample supply of food. If he could but kill one deer, or a pig, or two or three birds, he would have sufficient to feed both himself and Neptune. The sun was still hot, but in his eagerness he thought little about it, and dragged himself along, hoping soon to see something at which to aim.

He would not have disdained even a monkey, if he could kill nothing else. He first made his way to the spring, where he had to quench his burning thirst. He then crawled on until he reached a tree, behind which he stood, hoping that some animal might come by at which he might take a steady aim. He waited and waited, however, in vain. He saw several deer in the distance, but they bounded along far out of range of his bow. At last he saw two hogs come grunting up, turning up the ground with their snouts in search of roots. They approached slowly. Trembling with eagerness, hoping that he might be able to kill one of them, he kept the arrow in the string, ready to shoot. The hogs came on moving from one side to the other, till they had got to within about thirty yards of it, when, fearing that they might suddenly turn off away from the tree, and sure that he could send his arrow to that distance, steadying himself as well as he could, he bent his bow. The arrow flew from the string, but though it struck the hog with a force which made the creature squeak, it glanced off from its thick hide, and both the animals, looking round, scampered away at a rate which made it hopeless to attempt overtaking them. Lord Reginald, however, getting ready another arrow, shot it, but it missed both hogs, who escaped, whisking their tails. He followed to pick up the arrows. Neither of them was broken. He next tried his skill at a cockatoo, but the arrow glanced against a bough, and the bird flew away with a scream of derision,—so poor Lord Reginald thought it. He was equally unsuccessful when aiming at some green pigeons. He had lost five of the arrows, and was almost in despair, when he caught sight of a monkey. He fixed the

last arrow to the string and took as he thought a steady aim, but the monkey gave a nimble skip, and went chattering away to a distance, as if fully aware of the evil intended him, while the bow, as it sprang back again, gave a crack, and to Lord Reginald's dismay he found that it was broken. He dashed it down to the ground.

"Unfortunate being that I am!" he exclaimed. "Surrounded by plenty, I am doomed to starve." The agitation of his feelings almost overcame him. "I must depend in future for subsistence on the shell-fish, the *very* taste of which I abhor."

With difficulty he staggered towards the cave; that would at all events afford him shelter at night. On the way he stopped to drink at the spring, and fill a large clam-shell which he had previously carried there with water. He could scarcely, however, carry it along without spilling the contents. He at last reached his cave. On looking around he discovered that Neptune was not with him. "The dog has gone off to that fellow Hargrave, for food. I'll take care that he doesn't go again. He ought to be satisfied with what I can get," he exclaimed.

Putting down his shell he crawled towards the rocks, and cut off a few clam-shells, sufficient for his supper. He guessed that Nep would not require any. He then made up his fire with the few sticks he had remaining. He was about to throw his bow, which had caused him so much labour, on the top of it, when it occurred to him that by binding it tightly round with string, he might make it stronger than before.

He wisely determined to do this. He had just finished eating his supper when Nep appeared.

"You ungrateful dog!" exclaimed Lord Reginald. "You have been tempted off by my enemy. I'll take care that you don't go again," and fastening a piece of rope to the animal's collar, he secured it to a portion of the wreck, which had been thrown up not far from the mouth of the cave.

Poor Nep looked very much surprised at the way he was treated, but accustomed to obey, he lay down with his face between his paws, while Lord Reginald retired into the cave and threw himself on the ground. While actively engaged, he had for a time thrown off the painful sensation caused by fever, but the terrible disease had now a firm grip on him. His head and limbs ached, his throat burned. Though he drank and drank again from the water which he had brought in the clam-shell, no quantity seemed to assuage his thirst. He was unable to sleep for a moment, tossing about, now rolling on one side, now on the other, and often crying out in the intensity of his sufferings that death might relieve him.

Thus the night passed by. Day came, but brought no cessation of the fever, which rather increased than diminished. All day long he lay racked by pain on the cold sand. A mournful howl reached his ears, and he saw Neptune straggling to release himself from the rope which held him. He attempted to rise and set his dog free, but his strength was gone, and he sank back again, unable to crawl from the spot.

He thought of home, of his mother and sisters, and of his father, always kind and indulgent to him, whom he would never see again. The recollection of his numberless sinful acts came with fearful force into his mind. "No hope, no hope!" he muttered, as he clenched his hands. "What would I now give for a few weeks, or even days, to redeem the past? That lad Hargrave, whom I tore from his home and ill treated, whose life I took a pleasure in making miserable; he would not forgive me, even if I asked him; and should he discover me he would exult over my sufferings."

Such were the thoughts which passed through his brain. Often he groaned with pain, and when at length he had exhausted every drop of water, the fever seemed to increase, and he felt himself growing weaker and weaker. He almost wished that he had shared the fate of Voules and the rest of his companions, and had been drowned before he reached the shore. He had had a few days of grace granted him, but he had made no use of them. Instead of trying to be reconciled to his enemy, he had treated him with haughtiness and contempt. In vain he endeavoured to pray,—confusion of mind, brought on by fever, prevented him from collecting his thoughts, and all sorts of fearful phantoms passed before him. Again he was on the deck of the *Marie*, surrounded by the dead and dying, when he saw as clearly as if they had been present, the distorted features of the privateersmen struck down by the cutlasses of his crew, and the reports of pistols and clash of steel sounded in his ears. Then once more the tempest was raging, and the sounds of the seas dashing over the ship, the wind howling amid the rigging, the sails flapping wildly from the yards, the creaking timbers, the cries of the crew, were again heard. He attempted to shout to issue his orders, but his voice failed him; not a word could he utter. Sometimes he fancied that he could hear his own voice, at others that it was Nep's loud howls which broke the silence. Another night passed away, and a second morning came. Only a person who had played no tricks with his constitution could have endured what the young lord passed through.

He was fully aware at times that he was dying, that unless assistance came he could not survive many hours. He stretched out his hand towards the clam-shell which had contained his stock of water, but it was empty. His tongue felt like a hot burning coal in his mouth. He closed his eyes from very weakness. How long he had thus remained he could not tell, when he was aware that Neptune was licking his hands and face. He had just sense enough left to know that it was his dog, though by what means the animal had got free he could not divine. He heard the faithful creature moan and whine round him and lie down by his side. The little strength he had was rapidly decreasing, and he soon lost all consciousness.

In a *very* different position was Richard Hargrave. With wholesome food and abundance of employment, he retained his health and strength, and his mind had no time to dwell on his forlorn condition. At break of day he rose from his comfortable bed, and kneeling down, said his prayers as he had been wont to do at his mother's knees when a child. He then got up, and considered to what he had best first turn his hand.

Not far off from the hut was the log which he was anxious to shape into a canoe, and on his bench in the verandah lay his crossbow, nearly finished, only requiring a few touches to make it perfect, the most important being the arrangement of the lock, that he might let the bolt fly immediately he touched the spring. This done he set to work to form some bolts. The shafts were easily manufactured, but the bolt heads required more time. Hunting in the

carpenter's chest he discovered a ladle and a quantity of lead. He then searched about for some clay for forming moulds. He remembered the white appearance of the bank of the stream at a certain spot, and hastening to it, he found, greatly to his satisfaction, that it was composed of exactly the clay suited for his purpose. He soon returned with a sufficient supply to form a mould, hoping to be able to make it of a proper shape with a stem to fit into the shaft. By boring a hole into the stem he was able to secure it with wire firmly to the wood. To give the bolt a sharp point he fixed a large nail ground fine, in the centre of the lead, thus obtaining sufficient weight and sharpness for his object. Although this bolt might be blunted should it strike a bone, yet it was well calculated to pierce the thin skin of a deer, which, from the size of the island, should it only be wounded, he would be certain to find again by tracing the blood stains on the grass.

Having formed half a dozen bolts in the way which has been described, he set off on his first hunting expedition. He had not gone far, when a herd of small deer—the only species which existed in the island—came in sight. He had observed on former occasions that when he got to the windward of them they invariably scampered off to a distance, and although no hunter, suspecting the cause, he determined to try and get near them by creeping up from an opposite direction. Hiding himself as much as possible behind the trees and bushes, he made his way towards the herd, making a long circuit until he got well to leeward. Then stooping down he crawled gradually forward, stopping every now and then when he saw their heads turned towards him, but they still continued cropping the grass and the leaves of the bushes and lower branches of the trees. At last he got to within thirty yards of one of the herd, which had separated from its companions. He stood almost breathless, eager to shoot, and yet afraid of missing. He let fly his bolt, which entered the breast of the animal. It staggered for a moment, then turning round, set off with the rest of the herd along the valley. He was provoked at not having killed it at once, for he knew that if often hunted the creatures would grow wild, and he would have great difficulty in getting up to them. He, however, eager to secure the deer, set off running, keeping it in sight. At first the wounded deer went almost as fast as its companions, until it gradually slackened its speed, leaving a long red trail, which grew thicker and thicker, to mark its course. It was soon left behind by the rest of the herd; still it struggled on, until at length Dick saw it stagger, then turn round and finally sink to the ground. He hurried forward, and with a seaman's sheath-knife, which he had found among the things in the carpenter's chest, he quickly put an end to its sufferings.

The deer was so small that Dick, whose shoulders were pretty broad, was able to carry home his prize. His wish was to preserve as much of it as possible. He reflected that, as there were only a certain number of deer on the island, were he and Lord Reginald to remain there any length of time, the whole might be destroyed. Had he possessed salt, he would have been able to pickle the venison, for there were plenty of tubs for the purpose. Though he knew very well that he could obtain salt, yet the flesh of the deer would have become uneatable long before he could get a sufficient quantity. He had read somewhere of a mode of preserving the flesh of animals by drying it in the sun, and he had also seen his mother smoke bacon, so he determined to try both these ways. The preserved meat might also be of the greatest use, should he determine to sail away from the island in the canoe he was about to build.

On reaching home, for such his hut was to him, he set to work to skin and cut up the deer. He then lighted a fire, and put a shoulder and leg on to roast, that he might at all events preserve this much, should his experiments fail. A portion of the remainder he cut into thin strips, which he hung up to a cross-pole, supported on two forked sticks. He had great faith, however, in his plan for smoking venison. As there was clay near at hand, he mixed a quantity with grass, and quickly built up a square tower, with an entrance below and rafters across it, and a wooden roof. As he knew that it would be necessary to have a draught to keep up the fire, he formed tunnels under the tower.

He had now his curing-house complete. He worked very hard, as he was aware that the flesh would very rapidly become uneatable. Having hung up the remainder, he placed a fire inside, piled up with green wood, which burnt slowly, producing a large amount of smoke. Not until he had done this did he—hungry as he was—fall to on the venison. Scarcely had he put a morsel in his mouth than he thought of Lord Reginald.

"I wonder whether he has been able to procure any food like this," he said to himself. "If not it will go hard with him, for although shell-fish may do very well for a short time, with nothing else to live on they would prove very unwholesome. However, I suppose he will come to his senses by-and-by. If he makes his appearance, I shall be glad to offer some to him. Fancy the proud young gentleman coming, hat in hand, and asking for a slice of venison! I wonder poor Nep doesn't show himself, as before, to get a meal. I should have thought his instinct would have induced him to come. Surely his master cannot be so cruel as to keep him back, unless he has found plenty of food for him."

Such thoughts occupied Dick's mind while he ate a hearty meal, the most abundant he had enjoyed since the shipwreck. He had just finished, and having hung up the remainder of the roast meat, was about to add more fuel to the fire in his curing-house, when by chance looking up the valley, he saw Neptune scampering rapidly along towards him.

"Oh, oh! knowing old fellow! He's found out there's something to eat in this direction," said Dick. "He shall have it, too, and willingly would I give it to his master."

As Neptune drew near, Dick was surprised to observe a piece of rope round his neck, and a part trailing on the ground two or three feet in length. In a minute Nep was up to him, licking his hand. Dick was at once struck with his woebegone, starved appearance; the very countenance of the dog seemed changed; there was even an expression of melancholy in his eye, which spoke as much as words could have done. Dick examined the rope, which was a pretty thick one, such as Neptune, strong as he might be, could not have broken. The end, he was convinced, had been gnawed through.

"Now, if that young lord hasn't had the barbarity to tie up the dog, to prevent its coming to me," he exclaimed. "He deserves to starve, and I suspect he and the dog have been doing that for some days, or Nep would not look so thin and miserable," and he returned to his larder, followed by Nep, who ravenously bolted the pieces of meat which he gave him.

The dog, though he had had a good meal, did not seem content, but evidently wished to convey some intelligence to his entertainer. He first ran off in the direction of the cave, and then seeing that Dick did not follow, came back and uttered a low bark; then away again he went, almost immediately to return, when he seized Dick by the trousers, evidently wishing him to accompany him, and then looked up at him in an imploring manner, which could not be misunderstood.

“I suppose Lord Reginald is ill, or has met with some accident, and the dog wants me to go and help him. Well, I ought to do it, there’s no doubt about that,” said Dick, moving a few paces in the direction the dog had taken. On this Nep uttered a bark indicative of his satisfaction, coming back and licking Dick’s hand, then running on again. Dick had no longer any doubt that Nep was anxious to take him to his master, and he set off at a rapid rate, while Nep bounded away before him, uttering the same sort of bark as before, to hurry him on.

“The poor fellow may be dying,” thought Dick, his kindly feelings overcoming all sense of the injuries he had received. “The sooner I get to him the better, or I may be too late to render him any help.”

On this, greatly to Nep’s delight, he began to run as fast as he could, leaping over the fallen trees, allowing no impediment to stop him. He stopped for a moment to pick some juicy fruit resembling limes, which grew on a tree in his path, on which Nep came back and gave another pull at his trousers, as if fearing that he was going to stop. On passing the fountain he found a large clam-shell, which had evidently been left there by some one. He expected every moment to find Lord Reginald stretched on the ground, dead or dying, but Nep still kept on until he reached the sea-shore. He then saw the dog enter the cavern. At first he felt unwilling to follow, but Nep quickly rushed out again, and once more seizing his trousers, pulled away until Dick showed that he understood him. On going in he perceived in the dim light the unfortunate young nobleman extended on the sand, in a stupor so nearly resembling death that he started back in horror, fully believing that his spirit had already fled.

Fearful, indeed, had been the effect of the fever. The expression of his handsome features was changed, his countenance had assumed the hue of death. His eyes, half closed and fixed, had lost all signs of intelligence. His lips were parched and burning. His hair, tangled and disordered, hung in masses over his fine brow.

Dick, on kneeling down, felt greatly relieved on discovering that he still breathed, though unconscious of his approach. He lifted the young nobleman’s hand. The palm was dry and burning. In an instant, forgetful of the enmity which existed between himself and the unhappy sufferer, he bitterly regretted that he had not, when he came to his hut, attempted to gain his good will. He remembered that once when a child he himself had been attacked by a fever, which had brought him to the brink of the grave; he had then received the greatest kindness from the marchioness, who had brought delicious grapes from the hot-house, and ices, which had, his mother always told him, done much to preserve his life.

“If he had treated me ten times worse than he has done, I ought to endeavour to do my best to attend to his wants,” said Dick.

As he thought of this, he endeavoured to raise the head of the sufferer, who uttered a sound in so mournful and low a tone that Dick could not at first understand him, but on bending over him, he caught the single word “water.” Dick looked eagerly round, the shell was empty. He then bethought him of the fruit he had picked, and cutting one of them in two, he allowed a few drops of juice to trickle into Lord Reginald’s mouth. This had an almost instantaneous effect. He squeezed out a larger quantity; some minutes more elapsed, when at length Lord Reginald became conscious of the relief, and eagerly swallowed the refreshing juice. Still Dick saw that his chance of recovery, while he remained in the cave, was very small, and after reflecting awhile he came to the conclusion that he ought, if possible, to remove him to his own hut. This would be no easy task, but Dick’s arms were strong, and once having made up his mind, he lost no time in carrying out his intention.

Nep stood by, anxiously watching him, apparently perfectly satisfied with what he was doing. Lifting the young nobleman up as if he were a child, he carried him out of the cave, and made his way towards the fountain, every moment expecting to see his hapless burden breathe his last. The fountain, however, was reached; then, placing him on the grass, he poured some of the refreshing fluid down his throat. This seemed greatly to revive him, and he thanked Dick, sometimes addressing him as his brother, and sometimes as “Voules.”

“You are a better fellow than I took you for,” he murmured. “Poor old Toady! I thought you would have left me to shift for myself; but we have gone through strange scenes. Didn’t you die, and didn’t I bury you? but I’m glad you’ve come to life again, and I won’t have you laughed at behind your back.”

Thus he rambled on, but soon again relapsed into unconsciousness. Dick had to stop several times to rest himself, but as he was anxious to get the sufferer within the shelter of his hut, he went on again the moment he felt able to proceed. Great was his relief when at length he placed the young lord in his cot. He was aware that he must not venture to give him meat; indeed, the poor young man could not have swallowed it had he made the attempt, but he at once mixed him some of the juice of the fruit with water.

Lord Reginald had swooned from weakness, and from being carried along so far in the open air. For many hours he lay in a state of stupor. Dick sat by his side, continually moistening his lips with the juice of the fruit and water, and bathing the sufferer’s hands and temples, while he anxiously watched for returning life. All night long he sat up, fanning his brow with the feathers of some of the birds he had killed, and keeping away the stinging insects which flew into the hut.

The next morning Lord Reginald opened his eyes and exclaimed in a dreamy tone, “Where am I? What has happened?”

“You are well cared for, my lord,” answered Dick; “but don’t talk; you’ll get round the sooner if you keep quiet.”

Lord Reginald's answer showed that he was still in a state of delirium. "Thanks, Julia; thanks, mother; you have nursed me very tenderly. I'll do as you wish, only don't let that young ruffian Hargrave come near me. He has been the bane of my life. I wish that we had got him out of the *Wolf* before we sailed from home, or that a chance shot had taken his head off. You don't know what I went through when I was wrecked on that horrible island. He came and taunted me, and would have left me to die in a wretched cave by myself, while he was living luxuriously on birds, deer, and pigs that he killed."

Having thus rambled on for some time, Lord Reginald began to blame himself, and to confess that he had allowed Dick to be unjustly treated, and had instigated Toady Voules and others to behave ill to him.

These latter expressions greatly relieved Dick's mind, although the abuse which Lord Reginald had showered on his head would not have made him less attentive to his patient's wants. For hours together the latter rambled on; sometimes he fancied himself at home, and asked for ices and peaches and grapes from the hot-houses, turning his eyes to Dick, and ordering him to bring them immediately.

The word "grapes" reminded Dick that he had seen a juicy fruit somewhat resembling the grape of temperate climes, of which several of the birds of the island appeared to be very fond. He hurried out to search for them, leaving Nep to watch by his master's side. He was fortunate in discovering some bunches which appeared ripe, and instantly returned with them. Dick ate several himself, to ascertain their character, and was satisfied that they were wholesome and at the same time nutritious, though far less juicy than real grapes. On his return, Lord Reginald abused him, supposing him to be one of the servants, for having been so long away; then eagerly seizing the fruit with an expression of joy, he endeavoured to convey it to his mouth, but such was his weakness that, letting it drop, he asked Dick to feed him.

Dick bore all the abuse he got with the greatest patience. At length, exhausted by the violence of the fever, Lord Reginald sank again into a death-like stupor, in which he lay without moving the whole night and until the next day was far advanced. Dick, as before, continued to bathe his hands and face at intervals, and when perceiving by the painful motion of his lips that he wanted something to drink, he raised his head and placed to his lips a shell full of the juice of several fruits which he had collected. Lord Reginald eagerly drank this delicious beverage, then, opening his eyes, which Dick thought would never again have unclosed, the young lord looked up in his face, as if to thank him for the relief. Dick saw by the expression of wonder and astonishment in those eyes, so lately fixed and rayless, that he knew him, and that the delirium had passed away. Lord Reginald tried to speak, the colour for a moment mounted to his pallid cheek as he said, "Hargrave, I don't deserve this kindness at your hands." Then with a deep sigh he once more relapsed into insensibility.

Chapter Fourteen.

Self-reproach—The crisis over—A storm—Returning to life—Gratitude to Dick—A right understanding—Turtle-catching—Gaining strength—Dick's care rewarded—An agreeable surprise—Something to read—A refreshing change—Hat-making—Hardly strong enough—Going on with the canoe—A design on the porkers—Pig-driving—Coffee berries and sugar-canes discovered—An earthquake—Grave apprehensions—The burning mountain.

Richard Hargrave sat by Lord Reginald's cot, watching his sufferings, with the anxiety and sorrow he would have felt for a brother and dear friend. Not a spark of animosity remained. In his heart he fully believed that the young lord would die, and was ready to accuse himself of being his murderer. Only a short time during each day did he venture to leave him, to set his traps, or shoot birds, or collect fruits, which latter were more especially required by the sufferer. On each occasion when he hurried back, he dreaded to find that his patient had expired during his absence. Neptune was always left in charge, as Dick hoped that the instinct of the dog would induce him to summon him should he be required. He was well aware that it would be dangerous to give any heavy food to the sufferer, and yet he dreaded, lest by taking too little, he might die of starvation. There was, however, he hoped, sufficient nutriment in the fruit to keep up his strength without increasing the fever. Day after day went by, and the violence of the complaint in no way appeared to abate, nor did the young lord recover his reason except at long intervals, when the words he uttered showed that he was fully aware of his own condition. His thoughts were evidently of a gloomy character, as he was constantly uttering expressions of self-reproach. No longer petulant or impatient, he appeared sunk in the deepest despondency.

This change of ideas was more alarming even than his wild fits of raving to Dick, who began to accuse himself of being the cause of much of the young lord's conduct. He considered their difference of rank; he recollected his own defiant looks and expressions, which had so often aroused his rival's anger. "Had I treated him with respect, which of course he thought his due, and avoided him as much as possible, he would soon have forgotten a person so much beneath him in rank," exclaimed Dick. "True, he abused his power on board the *Marie*; but how have I behaved since we were thrown together on this island?"

At last one morning, Lord Reginald appeared to drop off into a more quiet slumber than usual, and Dick was induced to go out in search of game with his crossbow in his hand. Scarcely had he left his hut than several deer, without discovering him, came bounding by. He shot a bolt, one of the animals was struck, and immediately fell dead to the ground. Thankful for his success, he quickly returned with it, and having skinned it he cut up a portion into small bits, which he put into a pot, with the intention of making some broth. Several times while thus engaged, he returned to the side of Lord Reginald, who still slept on. He had obtained from the rocks a small quantity of salt, sufficient to flavour the broth. While it was boiling he roasted another piece of meat, and hung up the remainder in his smoking-house, which had answered beyond his expectations. Though the meat dried in the sun might keep, yet it was hard and dry, and presented a far from satisfactory appearance.

He had observed signs of a change of weather. Clouds had been collecting for some time in the sky. Scarcely had he completed his culinary operations, than the rain began to pour in torrents, while the thunder rolled, and flashes of vivid lightning darted from the clouds. The fire was put out, but Dick managed to keep the broth warm. He anxiously watched Lord Reginald, expecting that the roar of the thunder would awaken him, but he slept quietly through the storm, and appeared to be breathing more easily than before. At length the thunder-clouds rolled off, the wind ceased, and the air appeared far purer than it had hitherto been. Dick, who had opened the shutter, which he had kept shut during the rain, went to the door to open that also and enjoy the fresh air. He was standing inhaling it with much satisfaction, when he heard Lord Reginald's voice exclaiming—

"What has happened? Is that you, Hargrave?" Dick hurried to the side of the cot, and was thankful to observe a marked change for the better, in Lord Reginald's countenance, which, though thin and pale, had a composed appearance. "Do not be agitated, my lord," said Dick; "you have been very ill, but I trust you may now recover, as the worst is past I would advise you not to talk, but let me give you some broth, which I have fortunately just prepared. It will assist to restore your strength quicker than the fruits on which you have so long lived." Saying this, without waiting for a reply, Dick poured some of the soup into a shell, which he presented to the invalid.

"Hargrave, I can scarcely believe my senses!" said Lord Reginald. "I don't deserve this kind treatment at your hands. Have you really been watching over me all this time?"

"Do not talk about it, my lord," said Dick. "Here, take this; it may not be first-rate soup, but I think it will do you good."

As he spoke he placed the shell to the lips of his patient, who taking it in both his hands, drank off the contents.

"First-rate stuff, whatever it is," murmured Lord Reginald. "Pray give me some more, I feel it putting new life into me. I have had a narrow escape, I suspect. If it hadn't been for you, Hargrave, I should have died; I am fully aware of that."

"I only did my duty, and I am thankful to see your lordship so much better," said Dick.

"You are a generous, noble fellow, Hargrave, that I know, for, after the way I treated you, I had no right to expect that you would trouble yourself about me."

"I should never have forgiven myself if I hadn't done my best to look after your lordship," answered Dick, turning away to make some of the cooling drink, which had hitherto proved so beneficial to his patient.

"Hargrave, my dear fellow," said Lord Reginald, in a comparatively strong tone of voice, "can you really forgive me?"

"My lord, I am sure I need your forgiveness, so pray don't ask me to forgive you, though I do so most heartily. Let bygones be bygones. It will be the happiest day of my life when I see you restored to perfect health."

"Hargrave, I wonder I could have been guilty of persecuting a man capable of such generous conduct," exclaimed Lord Reginald.

"Again I say, my lord, don't talk about it," answered Dick, observing that Lord Reginald was becoming too much agitated. "I trust in a short time that you will be well enough to say what you think fit; but I want you to understand that not a particle of ill feeling, to the best of my belief, remains in my heart."

"I must say what I have got to say, or I may never have an opportunity," replied Lord Reginald; "for what I can tell I may not have another interval of reason. I wish to assure you that I die at peace with you, and pray for forgiveness from all I have ever ill treated. When I am gone, cut off a lock of my hair, and if you ever reach home give it to my mother, and tell her that one of my greatest regrets was not being able to see her and my brothers and sisters again, and confessing to my father that I had attempted to misrepresent you to him. Again, I ask, can you forgive me?" and Lord Reginald stretched out his emaciated hands towards Dick, who gave his in return, as he answered—

"Yes, yes, indeed I do, most heartily." As Lord Reginald grasped his hand, he pressed it to his lips, and burst into tears.

Dick felt a choking sensation, such as he had never before experienced, and turned away from a delicacy of feeling, lest Lord Reginald should be ashamed of the agitation he was exhibiting. He felt also very anxious to calm the mind of his patient, who in his weak state was ill able to undergo any excitement.

For a long time after this the poor young lord was unable to rise from his cot, but every day Dick observed a change for the better, it being a good sign that he evidently enjoyed the food provided for him.

Dick had now to leave him for a much longer time than before to the care of Neptune, who never quitted his master's side during his absence.

One night, after his day's work was over, Dick had wandered down to the sea-shore, with a thick stick in his hand, which he usually carried to defend himself, should he encounter any savage beasts, as he thought that such might possibly exist, though he had not hitherto seen them.

As he approached the beach, he caught sight on the white sand of some dark objects, which were crawling up slowly from the sea. Though he had never before seen any, he at once guessed that they were turtles. He remained concealed, so as to allow them, without being frightened, to reach the upper part of the beach, where they began scratching away and depositing their eggs.

"We shall have food enough now, without diminishing the stock of wild animals on shore," thought Dick. "Those are

just the things to do Lord Reginald good. If we have to make a voyage, we can lay in a good store of them."

He wisely waited until a number of turtles had deposited their eggs in the sand, then rushing from his place of concealment, he turned over half a dozen on their backs, thus effectually preventing them from making their escape. Then, seizing one by the hind legs, he dragged it up towards his hut, when he killed it. Lord Reginald was still awake. He ran in and told him the good news.

"I wish that I could get up and help you, Hargrave," was the answer.

"Do not think of it, my lord," said Dick. "I can manage them by myself," and away he again started, and dragged up in succession the remainder of his captives. These, however, he did not kill. He determined, if possible, to keep them alive until the flesh of the first was consumed. They might exist on their backs, he knew, for a considerable time, but he rightly feared that the heat would kill them, unless he could bring up a sufficient quantity of water to pour over them. This would be a severe task, and it appeared to him that the best thing he could do would be to build a pen, and enclose these and any others he might catch on subsequent nights. He accordingly at once, as the moon was bright, set about carrying out his intention. By actively plying his axe, he cut down a number of thick stakes, which he drove into the sand just above high-water mark, so that by digging a channel he might let the sea in at every high tide. As he had abundance of rope, he lashed some cross bars along the sides, so as to keep the stakes firm. He saw there was no necessity for putting the perpendicular stakes close together, as the turtles were upwards of two feet across, and could not manage to get through a less space. In a couple of hours he had finished his task, and dragging back the turtles he allowed them to crawl about in their natural position. He waited until the next morning to roof in his pen, which was necessary, he saw, for the sake of keeping the turtles cool.

"You have worked hard, my dear Hargrave," said Lord Reginald, when he returned. "I should not have thought of attempting the task until to-morrow morning. It would have taken me the whole day, or probably longer. As soon as I am well, you must teach me how to use your tools, and let me help you, for I have no desire to eat the bread of idleness."

"I have been accustomed to carpentering since I was a boy, so that what your lordship would find difficult would prove easy to me," answered Dick; "but I should be very thankful if your lordship will think fit to work at the canoe which I thought of building before you were taken ill. I haven't seen a single vessel pass since we have been here, and perhaps none will come near us for many months to come. We might find it necessary to quit the island to rejoin our ship or to get on board some other vessel. In the mean time we may use our boat to go out fishing, and thus obtain a change of diet."

"A boat! Do you really mean to say that you could build a boat?" asked Lord Reginald in a tone of surprise.

"I intend to try and do so, for though I have never actually built one, I have assisted in repairing several, and know how they are put together," answered Dick, and he then explained the character of the craft he proposed to build. "My idea is, that when your lordship can take a part in the work, we may build one large enough to carry us to Batavia, or to one of the other places of which the English have of late taken possession."

"I really don't know that you ought to count much on my help, though I'll do my best," said Lord Reginald; "but the idea is a capital one, and I long to get well to be able to help you. But you must be pretty tired by this time, and you ought to lie down and get some sleep. I feel ashamed of keeping you so long out of your cot."

"Thank you, my lord. If I thought it worth while I would soon make another for myself; but my bed is as comfortable as I want, and I beg you will not think I miss the cot," was the answer.

Dick awoke early, and found Lord Reginald sleeping soundly and calmly. As he watched him he began to hope that he might recover, and he knelt down and prayed that he might be made the instrument of restoring him to health.

His patient gave no sign of waking. Dick, having first made up his fire ready for cooking breakfast, went down to the shore, to see how the turtles had behaved in their pen. He found to his satisfaction that although they had turned up the sand, they had not escaped. He at once cut a number of boughs to place over the top and the upper part of the eastern side, so as to shade them from the heat of the sun, which rose before he had completed his task. He then returned, and looking into his hut, found that his companion was still sleeping.

He now set to work to cut up the turtle, and to cook some of it for breakfast. He felt very doubtful as to how this should be done, but thought he should be safe in putting some on to stew, and in carving some cutlets, which he placed before the fire to cook, as he had done the venison. He also kneaded some cakes as thin and delicate-looking as he could make them. This done, he entered the hut, when he found Lord Reginald sitting up in his cot.

"I should much wish, Hargrave, to get up and wash my hands and face, but I feel so weak that I am afraid I could not accomplish it alone. May I venture to ask you to assist me?" he said, in a hesitating tone.

"My lord, I should be delighted to help you; but I am sure you had better not make the attempt. I'll get some water. I have a piece of cloth which will serve as a towel, and as I have a comb which I found in the carpenter's chest, I will, if you will let me, comb out your hair, and try and make you comfortable."

"Thank you, thank you," answered Lord Reginald; "but I feel ashamed of giving you trouble."

Dick smiled, and, going out, returned with a large clam-shell, which made an excellent basin, filled with water. Lord Reginald in vain made the attempt to wash his face. Dick, placing the shell before him, performed the office, and having washed his hands and combed his hair, with as much care as his mother might have done, the young lord repeated his thanks, and assured Dick he felt quite another being.

“I hope you will feel still better,” said Dick, producing several clam-shells, one containing several nicely cooked cakes, another some turtle cutlets, a third some stewed turtle, while a fourth was full of the several fruits he had gathered. “I have cooked a variety of dishes; but after your illness your lordship may fancy one more than another. Just tell me what you like best, and I will try and prepare it for you.”

“Thank you, Hargrave; I feel as if I could eat a whole turtle, or a deer for that matter,” answered Lord Reginald, laughing in a way which greatly cheered Dick’s spirits. However, on making the attempt, Lord Reginald found that a very small quantity satisfied him, and Dick did not press him to eat more.

Every day after this he made rapid progress, though Dick would not allow him for some time to get up or do anything for himself. In the mean time, Dick dug out of the sand a number of turtles’ eggs, which he hung up in bags in a cool place in the shade, hoping thus to preserve them. He also caught several more turtles, which he turned into his pen. He was never idle, sometimes working in his garden, in which he had planted a number of seeds, some evidently of melons and pumpkins, from which he hoped in a short time to obtain fruit. Of the nature of others he was not acquainted, but he had little doubt that they would prove useful in some way or other. Outside the hut he had built a storehouse, in which he placed all the articles which had been cast on shore.

He had one morning taken his crossbow and gone out before sunrise in the hopes of killing a deer or some birds, that he might afford a variety of diet to Lord Reginald, knowing that such would contribute greatly to restore his strength. The deer, however, were too wild, and he was led further from home than he intended. At last, in despair of killing one, he looked out for some of the feathered tribe, and succeeded in knocking over a couple of white cockatoos and a green pigeon, with which he hurried back to the hut. On his return, he was greatly surprised to see Lord Reginald not only dressed, but employing himself in preparing breakfast.

“I am sorry, my lord, that I was not back earlier,” exclaimed Dick, “that I might have helped you to dress.”

“I regret that you should have had so long to undertake a task which I ought to have performed myself, had I been able. Do not speak about it, my kind Hargrave,” answered Lord Reginald, smiling. “I feel myself bound to take an equal share in all the work we have got to do. You have hitherto toiled for me, and it is now my business to work for you. Just tell me what you want done, and I will do it to the best of my power.”

“Pray don’t talk in that way, my lord,” said Dick. “I wish that you knew how much pleasure I feel in serving you.”

“I am sure of that; but once for all, Hargrave, I want you to understand that while we remain on this island I am ‘Reginald’ or ‘Oswald,’ and you are ‘Hargrave,’ the better man of the two. Don’t ‘My lord’ me any more. I am not worthy of it. That sort of style may do very well in Old England, or on board a man-of-war, though my messmates there treated me as an equal, and took good care to make me feel that I was one, too. Will you accept my services, and let me work under your orders?”

“I cannot refuse you anything,” answered Dick; “but until you are as strong and hearty as I am, you must let me work for you, and not knock yourself up by attempting tasks for which you have not the strength.”

“Well, well, my dear Hargrave, we understand each other, and while we are talking the turtle and cakes are getting cold.”

Dick at last, getting Lord Reginald to sit down on one of the three-legged stools he had made, placed the breakfast on the table.

“There is one thing you are not provided with, Hargrave, that is tea and sugar,” observed Lord Reginald; “but perhaps we may find some substitute. Coffee grows in these latitudes, and very likely we may find sugar-cane in some part of the island.”

“I saw some pods full of seeds, looking in shape *very* much like coffee berries, only they were white,” said Dick.

“That was because they were unroasted,” answered Lord Reginald. “I should not be surprised if those seeds were really coffee berries, and if so we shall soon have something to drink instead of this nectar, of which I confess I am beginning to get very tired, delicious as it tasted while I was suffering from fever.”

Dick sighed as he thought, “Perhaps the young lord will get tired of other things, as also of my society, when he regains his strength.”

His companion looked at him, but made no remark. “What about the boat you propose building?” asked Lord Reginald, when breakfast was over. “Could not we begin on that? And if you will show me how I can best help you, we will lose no time.”

“I am very sure your lordship—I beg your pardon—you are not strong enough to do any heavy work,” answered Dick, “especially in the sun. I must first make you a hat such as I wear, which will help to guard your head, and we will then, in the cool of the evening, begin work. We must first strip off the bark from the outside, then cut away the angles at the bows and stern. By-the-by, I have just remembered finding some books in an officer’s chest, and though I cannot read them, as they are in French, they may amuse you while I am at work.”

“That is fortunate,” exclaimed Lord Reginald. “Pray get the books, and let me have a look at them. I shall be very glad to read while you are at work, if you still insist on my not helping you.”

Dick hurried out to his store-room, and soon returned with several volumes. Two were on navigation, another on astronomy, and a fourth on natural history; but Lord Reginald found that the others were not such as were likely to prove edifying either to himself or Dick. He first took up one, and glancing over its pages, said, “Throw that into the

fire." A second and a third were treated in the same way. He looked at the last more carefully, but finished by saying, "Let that go, too. I am very sure that it will be better not to read at all than to fill our minds with the evil thoughts such works as these are likely to create. I should at one time have been amused, and considered that there was no harm in perusing such tales. After being so mercifully preserved, I look at matters in a very different light. I am sure that allowing our minds to dwell on any such subjects as those books contained, is offensive to a pure and holy God. What would I not give for some really well-written books, and more than anything for a Bible, which, after all, as I have often heard my mother say, is the Book of books."

"I have heard my mother say the same," observed Dick. "I am very thankful that you have put the temptation out of our way."

"What else did you find in the chest?" asked Lord Reginald.

"Some nautical instruments, which, although they are French, I dare say you know how to use," said Dick. "And,—how stupid I was not to think of it before!—some shirts and waistcoats and other articles of dress. I must get you to put them on at once, while I wash out your own linen: they will add much to your comfort, and though they may be damp, the sun will soon dry them." Dick immediately hung out the French officers' clothing, and then brought a clam-shell, larger than an ordinary foot-tub, full of water, that Lord Reginald might enjoy a bath, which he had hitherto been afraid of taking.

"I feel quite like a new man!" exclaimed the young lord, after he had dressed himself. "If you will not let me work to-day, I hope by to-morrow to show that I can do something. It won't be for the want of will if I don't succeed."

Dick, who had before this gone out, had returned with a supply of palm leaves, and sat down to make a hat, while Lord Reginald opened one of the books, and with considerable fluency translated a portion of its contents. Dick listened attentively while he plaited away at the hat, stopping every now and then to ask for an explanation.

"I am glad to see you take interest in the subject," said Lord Reginald, "and if we continue it, I shall not only improve myself, but be able to give you a good notion of navigation. The instruments, which are the same as we use, will help us, and in a short time you will become as good a navigator as I am, as this book is evidently a capital one."

Dick looked up and smiled. "You see, you can instruct me in some things, as well as I can teach you how to handle a saw or a plane."

"All right!" said Lord Reginald, laughing; "so much the better; we are quits, as I said."

Dick was longer than he otherwise might have been in making the hat. When it was finished, his companion declared that it was capital, and that it would thoroughly defend his head from the rays of the sun. Dick had made the top very thick, while the sides were strong and light, with openings all round, which allowed of ample ventilation. He then insisted on Lord Reginald lying down while he went out to attend to his turtle-pens and garden, and to prepare a large saw to use on the boat.

In the evening Lord Reginald declared that he felt quite able to commence work.

"I don't want to hinder you," said Dick; "but I am afraid that you will find your strength not equal to the task."

Lord Reginald, however, insisted on trying, and Dick, notching the wood, fixed the saw ready for work, he taking one end and Lord Reginald the other, but before the latter had pulled it backwards and forwards a dozen times he had to confess that he could not go on, and sat down completely exhausted. Dick instantly ran and got some broth he had prepared for supper. Though the young lord revived after he had swallowed some of it, Dick insisted that he should not again make the attempt, and persuaded him to sit down in the shade, while he, with his axe, began stripping off the bark.

Dick pursued the plan followed by boys when cutting out a model boat. He first carefully planed the upper surface, using a level, until he was satisfied that it was perfectly even. He then began pencilling out the form of the upper works, so that both sides might be exactly even, avoiding the risk of making the boat lop-sided.

"You seem to me, Hargrave, to bestow a great deal of pains on the work you are about," observed Lord Reginald. "You will have to scoop out the whole centre part; what can be the use of polishing it down in that fashion?"

"If I don't do that I may run the chance of not having the sides even," answered Dick. "Now, all we have got to do, when we have formed the upper part, will be to turn it over, so that the log may lay quite flat, and, with the aid of some forms which I propose making, shape out the two sides. Though by using the forms we shall take longer than if we did without them, it will be better than trusting only to the eye."

Before dark Dick had made some progress, but as he could not expect much help from Lord Reginald for some days, he determined in the mean time to prepare the wood which he would require for the gunwale, and also the forms. For the latter purpose he used some flat boards, which, as the canoe was four feet wide, required only to be a little more than two feet broad. This latter work he was able to carry on indoors during the evening, while Lord Reginald assisted him in drawing out the plan. They agreed that it was important to give the boat a flat floor, though she might be made more seaworthy by having a deep keel, which could be easily bolted on.

Before they lay down to rest that night, they had in their minds' eye completed the craft. Dick saw Lord Reginald busily drawing on a blank page in one of the books.

"There, Hargrave; that's what our craft will be like," he said, when he had finished, handing him the paper. "You see, I give her three lugs, with a flying main-topsail, so that we can carry plenty of sail, if required, or get her quickly

under snug canvas. By raising the gunwale two feet all round, and decking over the fore and after ends, we shall have plenty of room to stow away our provisions, and be able to go through a pretty heavy sea. She'll be a fine craft, depend upon that, and I shall feel quite proud when we run alongside the old *Wolf* and hail her, to ask 'What ship is that?' as if we didn't know her."

"I am afraid it will be many a long day before we get the boat to look like that," observed Dick. "Digging her out will be a tedious business, I suspect, and it will take a considerable time, after the lower part of the hull is finished, to raise the gunwale and put on the deck. Then, remember, we have to fit her with outriggers, which we must make as strong as possible, or they may chance to be carried away."

"Oh, you don't know how hard I shall work when I once begin," answered Lord Reginald. "I can fancy myself already chopping and sawing and chiselling away under your directions, for I shall leave all the more delicate work to you, though, as I improve, I may be able to help you in that also."

Notwithstanding Lord Reginald's eagerness to begin, Dick saw the next day that he was far too weak to do any work out of doors. He could sit only in the shade, with a book in his hand, or watching him as he laboured at the bench.

"Why, Hargrave, you ought to have been rated as one of the carpenter's crew, for you work as well as the best of them could do. However, I hope, when we return on board the frigate, that you may have a far higher rating than that. You will have learned navigation by that time."

"I'm afraid that will not be of much use to a man before the mast," observed Dick.

"But, my dear Hargrave, I hope you won't always remain before the mast," answered Lord Reginald.

"I don't see any chance of my ever being anywhere else; and pray do not raise my expectations, as I should never have thought myself of being promoted, except some day, perhaps, after I have more experience, I may become a warrant officer," said Dick.

"Well, well, perhaps I ought not to have spoken of my own hopes and wishes," replied Lord Reginald. "I let out a thought which has been in my head for some days, and I would on no account try to raise hopes which may never be realised."

Eager as Dick was to work at the boat, he was compelled to make excursions in search of game, and he seldom returned without two or three birds or a small deer. Besides opossums, he had occasionally caught sight of a tiger-cat, which, however, was not of a size to make him fear that it would venture to attack him, savage as it appeared while climbing a tree or leaping from bough to bough. Though he had no wish to interfere with the tiger-cat, he had a great fancy for catching some of the pigs which scampered about beneath the trees, picking up fruits and nuts, and digging for roots. His bolts, though capable of penetrating the more delicate skin of the deer, glanced off the thick hide of the pigs. He bethought him, therefore, after watching their runs, that he would make a pitfall in which some might be caught without difficulty. Finding the ground tolerably soft, he set to work immediately with a wooden spade, and dug a hole four feet square and the same in depth, which he covered over carefully with bushes and earth. His success was greater than he expected, for the very next day, on visiting the pit, he found two fat porkers grunting away at the bottom, and tumbling over each other, in vain endeavouring to extricate themselves from their prison. Running back to the hut for a rope, he managed to get it with a slip-knot over the hinder leg of one of the pigs, which he quickly hauled out. He took the precaution of having a thick pointed stick in readiness, should the pig attempt to charge him. At first the animal lay on the ground, astonished at the unusual treatment it was receiving. Dick then getting his stick ready in one hand and the rope in the other, gave a pull away from the hut. The pig instantly jumped up and dashed off at full speed, in the direction Dick wanted it to go. He followed, laughing, every now and then giving a pull at the rope, which he kept as tight as he could, at the same time holding his stick ready for his defence. With loud squeaks and angry grunts, on it rushed towards Lord Reginald, who was quietly reading, seated on the ground in the shade, while Dick shouted and laughed in addition. The noise aroused the young lord, who started up with looks of astonishment in his countenance. He was just in time to leap out of the way, when the pig charged full at the spot where he had been sitting, Dick being only just able to check the brute's progress, but he managed to bring it up by making the rope fast round small tree which came in his way. No sooner was the pig thus brought to a stand, than, looking round, it espied its captor, who, however, springing back, avoided the onslaught. The pig, after making several strenuous efforts to escape, grunting and squeaking terrifically all the time, exhausted by its exertions, lay down, with its keen eyes watching for an opportunity of revenging itself.

"I say, Hargrave, I might try my hand at building a pig-sty," said Lord Reginald. "I doubt that I am capable of any higher style of architecture, but I think I can accomplish that."

"At first it occurred to me that we might build one," answered Dick; "but I now think that it would occupy too much of our time, as it must be a very different style of structure to our turtle-pen. This fellow would soon knock down any building, unless very strongly put up. I should be sorry to see your lordship engaged in such work."

"'Your lordship,' you should say, 'is not capable of so stupendous an undertaking,'" remarked Lord Reginald, laughing. "But I say, Hargrave, you are forgetting our compact. Call me 'Reginald' or 'Oswald,' which you please."

"I beg pardon," said Dick; "but if this fellow cannot be taught to behave himself, the sooner we turn him into bacon the better, and we can keep his companion in the pit until we want him to undergo the same process."

As the boat was now really begun, their work could be carried on without interruption. Dick, the next day, took another excursion in search of the coffee berries he had seen, as well as of any other vegetable productions of the island. After searching for some time at the further end of the island, he discovered the pods he had before seen, which were now completely ripe. Examining them carefully, he was convinced that they were coffee berries. He accordingly collected as many as he could put in the sack he had brought, thankful that they would afford a useful

and agreeable beverage to his companion. A short time afterwards, he came upon a wilderness of canes, which he had before mistaken for bamboo, and on tasting them, he was convinced that they were sugarcanes, probably the remains of a plantation, long ago deserted. He cut a bundle, hoping that he and Lord Reginald might design some plan for extracting the juice and turning it into sugar. He was about to set off with his burden—a pretty heavy one—when to his astonishment, and no small dismay, he felt the ground shake beneath his feet. This unusual circumstance was followed almost immediately afterwards by a deep hollow sound, and on looking up, he saw, in the direction of the cave dense masses of smoke issuing forth, followed by lurid flames, while several streams of lava began to flow down the hill. As the lava, however, took a course towards the sea, in an opposite direction to where he was standing, he watched for some moments the eruption, instead, as some people might have done, throwing down his load and running away from the neighbourhood. Satisfied, at length, that it was not increasing, he turned his steps homewards. He found Lord Reginald, who had felt the earthquake, and had been watching the volcano in activity, very anxious about him.

“I am thankful to see you back, Hargrave,” he said. “Though no harm has happened, one thing is certain, that it will be wise in us to try and get our boat finished as soon as possible, so that, should the hill have another blow up, we may make our escape.”

“I hope that matters will not come to such a pitch as to drive us off the island,” answered Dick; “but if you are well enough to-morrow, we will begin work in earnest.”

“I am well enough to begin it at once,” was the answer. “What have you got there?”

Dick showed the contents of his sack.

“Coffee berries, to a certainty,” said Lord Reginald, tasting one of them. “All we have now to do is to roast and grind them. I am capable of doing that, at all events, and now let me taste one of those canes? Sugar, no doubt of it. Why, if that burning mountain doesn’t drive us away, we may live on here in luxury for months to come.”

“I shall be glad enough to remain, and never was so happy in my life,” answered Dick, who spoke from his heart. “I am very glad to hear it, Hargrave. I may say the same for myself, and I really think that I shall be sorry when the life we are now leading comes to an end.”

Chapter Fifteen.

Progress in boat-building—Hot pokers—System in working—Fixing on the keel—Dick and his pigs—Finishing the boat—The only regret—Preparing for the trial trip—The launch—Once more afloat—Aspect of the island—The volcano—Cleaning decks—A strange sail—Running for the bay—“What’s to be done?”—The boat recalled—A storm—A fearful night.

The two Crusoes, now no longer rivals, worked vigorously away at their boat. Every day Lord Reginald gained strength, and was able the more effectually to help Dick, who, however, never spared himself. With the young lord’s assistance, he sawed off the large pieces at the end intended for the bows, which he afterwards shaped with his axe and plane. From the stern, much less had to be taken off. Here the axe did nearly all the work. Having then planed all round the sides and bows, the log presented the appearance on the upper part of a well-formed canoe. The workmen had now to turn her over, and to commence shaping the lower part. Having stripped off the bark, which he could not before get at, Dick, again using his level, planed it evenly, and then carefully marked out the part to which the keel was to be fixed. With his adze he shaped both sides, using the forms he had previously prepared. In some parts there was very little wood to take off, though he had to cut away considerable at the bows and stern. Lord Reginald found that as yet there was comparatively little for him to do, as, from want of experience, he could not for some time use either the adze or the axe.

At length, the whole of the outside of the canoe was shaped, and Dick and his companion surveyed it with no little satisfaction.

“We must now turn her on her keel again, and begin digging her out,” observed Dick. “It will cost us no little trouble, I suspect. We may begin with the axe, but it won’t do to use that as we get on, for fear of making a hole through the side or bottom. We must then employ the gouge, and I have sharpened up all the large ones I found in the carpenter’s chest.”

“I have heard of a mode of digging out canoes by means of hot stones or hot irons. We have irons enough for the purpose, and by lighting a fire near at hand, might keep them constantly hot,” said Lord Reginald.

“I should be afraid of burning through the wood, or causing it to split, unless we use the irons only in the centre. We might try that, and see how it answers,” replied Dick.

Several stanchions and other bars of iron, which had been extracted from the wreck, were accordingly fitted with handles, and they soon had half a dozen “hot pokers,” as Lord Reginald called them, heating in a fire close to the canoe. Dick, however, was of opinion that they made far more progress with the adze, but as Lord Reginald could not use it in an efficient way, Dick proposed that his companion should work away at one end with the hot pokers, while he plied his adze at the other. He chose the stern, and using the adze vigorously, chopped away the wood under his feet, sending out large chips at every stroke, while Lord Reginald ran backwards and forwards with his hot pokers; but though he made a great deal of smoke, he found that he burnt away only a small quantity of wood with each instrument. Though there was no doubt that he would succeed in the end, he had to confess that Dick’s method was the most rapid.

“Still,” he observed, “every little helps, and I’ll go on burning away at my end, while you continue chopping at yours.”

This plan was agreed to, and they were both well satisfied with the progress made during a single day. It took them, however, not one day, but several, before the canoe was cleanly dug out. The last part of the process was much slower than the first, from the necessity there was to be careful lest they should dig their gouges through the sides. As these became thinner and thinner, Dick would frequently stop and run his brad-awl through to ascertain their thickness more exactly, taking care to stop the hole afterwards.

As may be supposed, they constantly kept an eye on the volcano, which occasionally threw up flames and smoke, but gave no indications of preparing for a more serious eruption. Still, the two Crusoes agreed that it would be wise in them to get their craft ready for sea, in case of being compelled to put off from the island.

It was a day of rejoicing when they had at length completed the hull, and as they looked all round her they felt satisfied that she was of equal thickness at the sides, except the bow and stern, which were of course thicker. They had now again to turn her over to fix the keel, which was already prepared.

While Dick had been engaged in finishing off the inside with his gouge, Lord Reginald had searched all the timber thrown on shore, for bolts and nuts. About a dozen were found, with which the keel was fixed on, and bolted inside in a way which gave it great strength, so that it could not be torn off, even should a rock be struck. Having sheered up the canoe, she now stood on an even keel, and Dick and his companion walked to a little distance to admire their handiwork, and both agreed that she was as perfect as could be.

“Yes, and we owe her perfection to your judgment, Hargrave. For by myself, I should never have thought of building such a craft,” said Lord Reginald. “She will be more perfect, however, when we get the bulwarks and deck on her, the thwarts fitted, and the masts stepped and the sails set, and we stand away from the island.”

“I am in no hurry to go,” said Dick. “If I had not felt it was my duty to work and get her done, in case an outbreak of the volcano should place your life in danger, I don’t think I should have worked so hard.”

“But yours is of equal value,” said Lord Reginald.

“Pray don’t say that; except my father and mother and my blind sister—who have probably long since thought me dead—I have no one to care for me, and you have numerous relations and friends; besides which, I hope you will some day have the opportunity of serving our king and country, and becoming one of England’s admirals.”

“Come, come, Hargrave, you are breaking through our agreement, and professing to be of less value than I am. Your friends care for you, as much as mine do for me, and more so probably, if the truth was known, and as to my becoming an admiral, you have as great a chance as I have.”

“I am sorry to have to differ from you,” said Dick, laughing in spite of himself. “However, we will get the craft ready and make a trial trip in her, and then it may be wiser to stay here until we are driven off the island, or some friendly ship comes in sight. Some day or other an English vessel must pass this way, or the *Wolf* herself may come to look for us.”

“Very little chance of that, or she would have come long ago,” answered Lord Reginald. “However, I agree with you that it will be better to live on here as long as we have plenty of provisions, and trust to be taken off by friends, than have to cruise about in an unknown sea without a chart, with the chance of being picked up by Frenchmen, or of running into an enemy’s port.”

Lord Reginald had now almost completely recovered his strength, and was able to help Dick in a variety of ways. They were both up at daylight every morning, their first visits being to their turtle-pen, and pig-sty as they called the pit where the porker was confined. The first pig caught, Dick had been compelled to kill, from its savage disposition, while the one in the pit had become perfectly tame and grunted with pleasure, whenever he approached with food. Had it not been for his wish to finish the boat, he would at once have built a sty for it, but he waited until the craft was completed.

Neptune would lie in the shade, an attentive observer of all their operations, and at times would come and look up in his master’s face, as if asking whether he could not be of some assistance. Lord Reginald at last taught him to carry about the tools, and when Dick wanted one, he had only to point to it, and the dog would bring it up to him immediately. It took some time to put on the bulwarks, as ribs had to be fitted to give them sufficient strength. Perseverance conquered all difficulties, and at last the hull was raised two feet all round, somewhat higher at the bows, over which a deck was fitted nearly six feet in length. Over the after part, a deck four feet long was formed, with water-ways six inches wide down the sides. The three masts were quickly made. There were plenty of spars for the purpose, as well as for the yards; three oars, and a pair of paddles, which might be useful to pull the boat round when going about. In the evening they worked away, making the three lugsails, the topsail, and a small fore-staysail. On the top of the gunwale, four spars were fixed to serve as outriggers, supporting at either end two long flat boards, which they hoped would effectually prevent their boat from capsizing. An English flag had been washed ashore, which, although somewhat torn, after its dimensions had been reduced, would serve very well for the purpose required.

Dick had a surprise for Lord Reginald. He had been anxious about the possibility of their boat leaking, through cracks which might open as the wood dried. Among the stores he had collected was a cask of pitch, which he now rolled out. He had to exert his ingenuity in forming a tar brush for putting it on. This he manufactured out of cocoanut fibre. An iron kettle, which had been too large for ordinary use, served for heating it. They found that they had more than sufficient to pay over the whole outside, as well as the inner part of the bows and stern and the parts where the bolts fixing on the keel came through. The decks, which were covered over with canvas, were also thickly pitched so as to prevent any leaks. The craft was now completed. Having set all their sails to see how she looked, the flag was hoisted

with three cheers, and they were now ready for whatever might occur. The same rollers which had served to bring the log to the neighbourhood of the hut, now enabled them by dint of hard labour and the due application of handspikes, to move their craft down to the beach just above high water. It was close to the spot where Dick had drawn the carpenter's chest on shore, and the same tackle he had then rigged would serve to haul her up again after they had made their experimental trip. This they resolved to do the next morning. Dick proposed that they should lay down moorings, where she could remain afloat. The bay was sheltered except from a southerly wind, and should it come on to blow from that quarter they must either run round to the other side of the island or haul her up again.

It was nearly dark by the time they had got their craft down to the beach, and with hearts grateful to Heaven that they had thus far been able to carry out their design, they returned to their hut. As may be supposed, they spent their evening in discussing their arrangements. They had still no small amount of work to accomplish, provisions to prepare for their voyage, and the means of carrying water, which was not the least of the difficulties they had to overcome.

Neither, however, was anxious to leave the island. Dick was perfectly happy in the life he was leading, and dreaded, should he ever go on board a man-of-war again, notwithstanding the hints thrown out by Lord Reginald, that he should be separated from one for whom he had acquired so deep an affection, and should be exposed to the same rough treatment he had before had to endure. Lord Reginald was unwilling, in so frail a bark, to run the risk of navigating those dangerous seas without a chart for his guidance, and was fully impressed with the belief that ere long some British man-of-war would be sent to search for them, or that they might get on board some English merchantman. Notwithstanding this, he was prepared, should it become necessary, to undertake the voyage, and either to steer to the south of Java, or to run through one of the numerous passages between the islands to the east of that island, and so to reach Batavia. His belief was that the *Marie* had been wrecked on an island to the south of Floris or Sumbawa, at no great distance probably from Timor.

So interested had they been in discussing these subjects, that it was later than usual before they turned in. Dick, who from having been the chief architect, was far more anxious than his companion to try their new craft, was the first to awake. Quickly dressing, he ran down to the beach to have a look at the craft, and see that she was all right.

In a short time the tide would be high, and as the beach was steep, she might, resting on the rollers, be quickly launched, having the tackle ready to check her if necessary.

The wind was along shore, so that they might at once make sail, and either stand out to sea or run round the coast, and get a better view of it than they had hitherto done. The weather, too, was as fine as it had been for some time past. As far as Dick could judge, there was every prospect of its continuing favourable. He hurried back to light a fire, and prepare breakfast.

Neptune, who had followed him, when he saw the cooking operations had made some progress, gave several loud barks, which awoke Lord Reginald.

"You should have called me, Hargrave!" he said. "I should have liked to have assisted in making preparations for our trip."

"As we may be kept out some hours, I was anxious that you should have as long a sleep as possible," answered Dick.

"Thank you; but I am as strong as ever now, and feel ready for any amount of fatigue," said the young lord. "By-the-by, as you talk of the possibility of our being out several hours, it will be prudent to take some provender on board. Even if we are so much employed as not to care for eating, Nep, at all events, will have nothing to do, and will be glad of some food."

"I thought of that," answered Dick, "and I have filled half a dozen cocoanut shells with water, and proposed taking some smoked venison and pork, with some flour cakes and a basketful of fruit. If you think we may require more provisions, we may tumble one of the turtles into the bottom of the boat; it will serve as ballast, and not be the worse for the trip."

"Why, we shall have sufficient provisions to last until we reach Batavia," said Lord Reginald, laughing. "However, it's as well to be prepared. By-the-by, you were speaking of ballast, the craft will require more than the turtle, and our provisions, even for a short trip."

"I thought of that, too," said Dick, "and I have made a number of canvas bags, which we can fill with sand and take on board the boat after she is afloat."

As soon as they had finished a hearty breakfast, carrying down their stores, they put them on board, and at once set to work to launch the boat. It was an anxious time, as it is to every ship-builder when he sees a vessel on a new construction, about to float on the element which is to be her future home. The tackle was hooked on, and the end secured on board. Several pieces of rock, of a size which they could lift on board, had been got ready, afterwards to be bound together, so as to form moorings of a sufficient weight to hold the boat. These had been left down on the beach close to the water, so that it would not take long to lift them in. Lord Reginald went on board to ease off the tackle, while Dick, with a handspike, gave the necessary impetus to the craft. She glided down the beach, gaining speed as she advanced, until with a splash her bows entered the water. Dick gave a few more heaves to encourage her, and in another minute she was almost afloat. He shoved at her stern with all his might. Then leaping on board he got out an oar and urged her on until she was in deep water. He had fastened a rope to a stone, which on being thrown overboard kept her head seaward, when she was hauled back again sufficiently near the beach to enable them to lift their ballast-bags and mooring-stones on board. The former having been properly stowed, the latter, according to their arrangement, were bound tightly together, and the tackle being cast off, they paddled her into the bay, far enough from the shore to enable her to ride in safety. The moorings were then let drop, and the tackle so arranged that the boat could be hauled towards the beach without the necessity of their first going on board.

With justifiable pride they surveyed their handiwork. “Now let’s get under way!” cried Lord Reginald. “She floats well on the water, and is higher out of it than I expected.”

As the wind was light, all the canvas was hoisted. The sails filled, and being sheeted home, the little craft stood away from the land.

“She behaves beautifully! You ought to have been a ship-builder, and you would soon have become famous. Indeed, I am sure that you would succeed in whatever you undertook,” exclaimed Lord Reginald.

“You flatter me too much,” answered Dick. “I picked up a knowledge of carpentering when I was a boy, and necessity is said to be the mother of invention, so, soon after we were wrecked, I began to consider how a craft could be built. I have had her planned out in my head for many a day. In what direction shall we sail?”

“We will beat up to the westward, as the island extends furthest in that direction,” answered Lord Reginald. “We will then run round it, and by making a long tack out to sea, we shall weather the eastern point and stand back again into this bay. Should the wind not drop, we shall do it in four or five hours, though of course it is impossible to say how long we shall be detained. However, we will trust to having a good breeze, and at all events getting back before night. If we are kept out, the worst that can happen will be to lose our sleep. We must keep a vigilant watch, and on no account lose sight of the island.”

To this Dick, of course, agreed; indeed, he would not have dreamed, now that he was once afloat, of disputing any suggestion of one whom he looked upon as his commanding officer.

“There is one thing you have forgotten, Hargrave.”

“What is it, my lord?” asked Dick.

“You forget our compact, Hargrave. It must last until I dissolve it, and that will not be while you and I are together,” answered Lord Reginald. “However, as I was going to observe, we have forgotten to give this craft a name. She deserves a pretty one. Have you thought about the matter?”

“No,” replied Dick.

“Well, then, I confess that I have; but I want you to name her,” said Lord Reginald.

“If I may be pardoned for proposing such a name, I should say call her the *Lady Julia*,” answered Dick, after a few moments’ consideration.

“Lady Julia, I have no doubt, would be flattered,” said Lord Reginald, with perfect gravity, “and I should be very happy to call our craft after her; but I think, as you are the architect, and not only the architect but chief constructor, that she should be called after your sister. In my opinion the *Janet* is a very pretty name.”

“I would rather that you settled the point,” answered Dick, “and if you think fit to call her the *Janet*, I shall be perfectly pleased.”

“The *Janet* she shall be, then,” answered Lord Reginald; and from thenceforth their craft was called the *Janet* by the two Crusoes.

After standing on for some distance, Lord Reginald proposed that they should go about. This required no little skill and activity. It was necessary to haul down a foresail and mainsail. This they did, Dick leaping from one to the other, and shifting the yards over, ready to hoist again, the staysail bringing her round, but as, from her length, she was a long time about it, Dick found it necessary to get out one of the paddles, a few strokes with which were of great service.

Lord Reginald managed the mizzen, while Dick rehoisted the foresail and mainsail. The rudder, it should have been said, was fitted with long yoke-lines, which, being led well forward, made the operation of steering more easy than it would otherwise have been.

“I suspect that in a heavy sea we shall find that the *Janet* doesn’t come about as well as we should wish,” observed Lord Reginald.

“We shall improve by practice,” said Dick, “and you forget that in a heavy sea we shall not be carrying our mainsail, and may be even without the foresail, so that we shall only have the fore-staysail and mizzen to manage, and we may expect to be favoured with calm weather. She goes to windward, at all events.”

Still, Lord Reginald, like many other naval officers, was not much accustomed to sailing boats, and was less satisfied with the sea qualities of their craft than he could have wished.

Dick’s trips on board the *Nancy* had taught him how a lugger should be managed, but she had, he confessed, a more numerous crew than that of the *Janet*. However, he hoped by activity to make up for that deficiency.

As the *Janet* glided rapidly over the smooth surface of the ocean, he naturally felt proud of her. On hearing the eastern end they came in view of the side of the volcano sloping up almost from the water. Here and there, just above the beach, a few scathed trees were seen, but the rest of it was covered with lava which had rolled down from the summit, filling up all the hollows, and extending some distance, layer above layer, into the water.

It was satisfactory to see that this was the direction which the lava had hitherto taken, but they also perceived that it might at any time rush down the opposite side of the hill, and destroy the animals and rich vegetation existing in the

two remaining fertile valleys. Dick was employed in looking out ahead for any reefs or other dangers which might exist off the island, when Lord Reginald exclaimed—

“Look there, Hargrave! Look there! You see the volcano is in an angry mood.”

As he spoke, a low dull sound was heard coming from the shore, and from the top of the volcano rose a dense black mass, which extended itself like an umbrella. Directly afterwards down came a shower of ashes, covering every part of the boat, while the coast itself was completely shut out from view, except where a lurid glare could be seen on the summit of the hill, and from the streams of lava descending the sides. Masses of rock and other dense substances were also thrown up, and their splashes could be heard as they fell into the water, though they themselves were invisible.

Lord Reginald steered to the northward, in order that they might as soon as possible get away from the dangerous neighbourhood, but it was some time before they were free of the ashes and once more had the bright sun shining down upon them.

They looked anxiously towards the island, and were thankful to observe that a large portion to the eastward was bright and fair, showing that it had not suffered materially from the eruption. It might, however, only be the commencement of a still more serious outbreak, and they were thankful that they had their vessel ready, in case it should become necessary to escape for their lives. As they opened up the eastern side of the hill, they saw the trees which had hitherto escaped, burning furiously, surrounded by the hot lava. They had too much reason to fear that the conflagration might extend still further, and destroy the whole of the remaining vegetation, though it was possible that the stream would stop its progress, and that the part of the island on which they had been living might be spared. Dick now set to work to get rid of the ashes which covered the boat. It was no easy task. He had only a piece of board to serve as a shovel, and a handful of oakum. He cleared the decks and water-ways and thwarts, but he found it impossible to get them out of the bottom of the boat.

“Never mind,” said Lord Reginald, “it will serve instead of a coat of paint.”

“She will look very like a coal barge,” answered Dick, who was vain of the hitherto clean appearance of their craft.

The wind continued very light, and it was some time before they reached the eastern end of the island, which they calculated was at the utmost ten miles long and five or six broad. They looked out narrowly for any small harbour into which they might run, should the wind come from the southward, and blow into their bay.

With the risk of another eruption of the volcano, it was important to be able to start at a moment’s notice. Should the wind blow into the bay, it might be impossible to launch the *Janet*. At the very eastern end they came off an opening with a reef running out to a considerable distance on the southern side. It had the appearance of just the sort of harbour they required, but as Dick had not visited it, he could not tell whether there would be space sufficient for the *Janet* to swing clear of the rocks. They had been examining it narrowly, and Lord Reginald proposed that they should row in the boat, to ascertain its capabilities, when Dick turning round for an instant to the south-east, exclaimed—

“A sail, a sail!”

Lord Reginald sprang to his feet, and looking in the same direction, observed, “She’s a large ship, too, and standing this way. What if she should prove to be the *Wolf*?”

Dick made no answer. He almost hoped that she would not prove to be their ship. The time he had enjoyed so much would come to an end, and he must henceforth associate with those in whose society he could no longer take pleasure.

Lord Reginald, not for a moment doubting that Dick was as pleased as he was, altered the *Janet’s* course in the direction of the stranger. They had brought a telescope, a remarkably good one for its size. He turned it towards the approaching ship.

“From the cut of her sails, I doubt whether she’s the *Wolf*, after all,” observed Lord Reginald, “even if she’s English,” he added. “No, that she’s not. She’s hoisted her colours. If my eyes don’t deceive me, that’s the French flag. Here, Hargrave, see what you can make out.”

Dick took a steady look. “That’s the French flag, no doubt about the matter,” he answered; “if you look again you will be certain of the fact.”

“I was nearly certain of it before,” answered Lord Reginald, “and as I have no fancy to be taken on board a Frenchman, we will haul our wind, and get back to our bay. We should fetch it with one tack, and by unstepping our masts very probably the boat will not be seen, or our hut either, unless the Frenchmen narrowly examine the island.”

“With all my heart,” said Dick, greatly relieved, as he hoped to get into the bay before the Frenchmen had discovered the *Janet*.

She, it will be remembered, was low down in the water, so that the look-out aloft on board the stranger might not have seen her from the distance they were off. The wind freshened, and the little craft made good way.

“The sooner we are on shore the better. I don’t like the look of the weather to the westward,” observed Lord Reginald.

The sky in that direction had a lurid appearance, betokening a strong wind, produced possibly by the eruption. Dick was of the same opinion, and felt more than ever anxious to get on shore.

“We shall fetch into the bay now,” observed Lord Reginald.

The little craft behaved admirably, and by careful management was put about without the aid of an oar. She now hauled up for the bay.

“We shall fetch the moorings, if the wind holds as it now does; but we must lower the mainsail if it increases much,” said Lord Reginald.

Dick kept the halliards in his hands. For some time she stood up to her canvas, when a strong blast striking her, she heeled over until her lee outrigger was under water.

“Lower away!” cried Lord Reginald, and in an instant the mainsail was taken off her. “We shall probably have to take in the foresail, too,” he observed.

Dick stood by, ready to lower it. Before many minutes were over it had also to be taken in, and the fore-staysail and mizzen were as much canvas as she could carry.

The ship had by this time come almost off the island; the whole hull down to the water could be seen. Lord Reginald had, however, too much to do in attending to the *Janet*, to look after her; he had now to pick up his moorings. Dick had manufactured a strong boat-hook, and was standing at the bows, ready to get hold of the buoy.

“There it is, sir,” he exclaimed; “if you luff up now, we shall get hold of it.”

Lord Reginald put down the helm, and Dick at the same moment hauling down the fore-staysail, and the lugger shooting up, he got hold of the buoy, and soon had the cable secured. The question was now, whether they should haul the boat up on the beach or leave her afloat. She was less likely to be seen hauled up, and a few branches would completely conceal her. They decided to haul her up, and by bringing the cable aft, with a warp attached to it, her bows approached sufficiently near to enable Dick to leap out and get hold of the tackle. This being secured to her bows, the stern warp was slackened off, and rollers being placed under her keel, both exerting all their strength, they hauled her up the beach. The masts were unstepped, and a few boughs, which were quickly cut, were stuck into the sand on either side of her, to hide her from view.

Lord Reginald had now time more narrowly to watch the proceedings of the ship. Having come directly off the bay she hove to. “She has lowered a boat,” he exclaimed. “The Frenchmen must have seen the lugger after all, and are coming in to ascertain what has become of her. We must decide how to act. If we hide our selves, they may in wantonness destroy our hut and our boat. What do you propose we should do, Hargrave?”

“I should rather hear what you think best. I’m sure I shall be ready to agree with you,” answered Dick.

“No, no; I would rather hear what you think best,” said Lord Reginald.

“Then I would stay where we are, and explain that we have been shipwrecked, and would prefer remaining on the island to leaving it.”

“To tell you the truth, I am afraid, Hargrave, that they’ll not give us the choice; but still, I agree with you that is the best plan to try them. They may possibly allow us to remain, and not injure our property; but I own I very much fear that they will carry us off, for the sake of exchanging us for any of their countrymen who may have fallen into the hands of the English.”

During this conversation they remained concealed in the bushes, watching the progress of the boat. The anticipation of being detained on board a French ship of war, and afterwards, perhaps, shut up in prison, was not a pleasant thought. That such would be their fate, neither Dick nor Lord Reginald had any doubt. They saw that the boat was a large one, and the gleam of musket barrels showed that she carried armed men.

All this time the wind had been increasing, and the weather looked worse and worse. Presently a flash issued from the side of the ship, and a loud report reached their ears.

“That’s a signal for the recall of the boat,” observed Lord Reginald.

The officer in command, now that he was so close in, appeared unwilling to obey it, but another gun was fired to show that the captain was in earnest in the matter, and the boat being put round, the crew, bending their backs to the oars, pulled away towards their ship.

They had no time to lose, for the threatened gale was fast approaching. A third gun was fired to hasten them; the wind, however, came from the north-west, which was in their favour, while Lord Reginald and Dick were thankful that there was little risk of the *Janet’s* suffering. They, however, as a precautionary measure, by rigging an additional tackle, got her higher up the beach. They also secured her by stays at either side, fixed to pegs run deeply into the sand, for they well knew the effects of a hurricane in those seas.

They had good reason to be thankful that they had got on shore before it came on. Dick looked towards the volcano. The eruption had, however, subsided, and the rain, which now came down in torrents, had apparently extinguished the fire which they had so much dreaded. What had become of the ship they could not tell, as she had completely disappeared in the watery veil which intervened between her and the land. They could only hope that the boat had got alongside, and that her crew had been taken on board. Dick had built his hut so strongly that it withstood the furious blast raging round, which shook it every now and then, threatening to tear it up from the foundation, while the roof creaked and clattered as if about to be carried off. The night was a more fearful one than any they had passed since that of their shipwreck; but how different were their feelings! The two inhabitants were then at deadly enmity; now they were bound together by the nearest ties of friendship, and each was anxious to serve the other.

The thunder roared, the lightning flashed, and the rain continued to come down in liquid sheets.

“We have reason to be thankful for this,” said Lord Reginald, “for had not the rain come on, the whole island might possibly, by this time, have been covered with flame, and we should not have had a spot on which to rest our feet with safety.”

Their chief anxiety was about their boat. Though the ocean might not reach her, she might be blown away, or the tree to which she was secured might be torn up by its roots, and crush her; if so, should another eruption of the volcano occur, their condition would be truly dreadful.

Chapter Sixteen.

Continuation of the gale—A shipwreck—To the rescue—Dick saves Lord Reginald’s life—Nearly drowned—In the cave—Increased numbers—Cause for alarm—The return to the hut—Things thrown on shore—Preparations for quitting the island—Increased stores necessary—Commotion of the island—A hasty embarkation—Voyage of the Janet—The pirate fleet—A chase—Alongside the Wolf—Going on board—Dick made an officer—Mr Bitts gives good advice—The return to England—An unlooked-for meeting at Elverston Hall—Home—Ben Rudall’s wife—Conclusion.

The gale raged through the livelong night. The roaring of the breakers on the shore, the howling of the wind amidst the rocks and trees, kept the two Crusoes awake for many hours. They heartily hoped that the wind might not change and drive the ship they had seen in the evening on the island, to share the fate of the *Marie*.

Sleep at last overtook them. They were awakened at length by a tremendous crash. They both leapt out of bed, and hurried on their clothes. The hut, shaken violently by the force of the wind, seemed every moment as if about to be carried away. It was with difficulty that they could force open the door to ascertain what had occurred. It was already broad daylight. Several tall trees near them had fallen. They looked anxiously in the direction of the boat. The tree to which she was secured stood firm, and the additional ropes, which they had wisely used, had kept her in her position. The wind had shifted, and the sea was rolling into the bay, and dashing up almost close to her stern. Their next glance was at the volcano—that was still in a state of eruption, sending up smoke and flame, but if any ashes or stones were cast forth they were forced by the wind to the other side of the island. The young men earnestly prayed that they might not be sent in the direction of the hut, for while the storm raged their boat would be useless, as they could not venture off in her. Their next look was seaward in search of the ship. She was nowhere visible; indeed, the thick masses of spray thrown up high into the air shrouded all objects at a distance.

“Can she have gone on shore at the other end of the island?” exclaimed Lord Reginald. “If so we may still be in time to save some of her people.”

Dick agreed with him, though fearing that, should the ship have struck on the rocky coast, all hands must have perished.

“If we save any of them, they may be glad of food,” said Lord Reginald, and putting up such provisions as they had cooked, they hurried off, each armed with a long stick, followed by Neptune, who, although he seemed to have an instinctive dread of approaching the burning mountain, was yet willing to follow his master. Instead, however, of bounding on before, as was his usual custom, he kept close at Lord Reginald’s heels. They took the most direct route along the broad valley, intending then to turn to the left down the narrow valley which led to the bay near which the *Marie* had been lost.

For some time they were protected by the high ground on the southern side of the broad valley, but on opening the smaller one they met the full force of the gale, and it was with difficulty that they could make progress against it. The tall trees twisted and bent, and quantities of nuts came tumbling down, which they often had difficulty in avoiding. To the right was the burning mountain, towards which they cast many an anxious glance, for at any moment it might send forth a shower of stones and ashes, which might overwhelm them. As they reached the sea-shore, near the cave, they saw that their worst anticipations had been fulfilled. At the further end of the reef lay the wreck of a fine ship. The larger portion had been torn away by the fury of the seas. The masts, bowsprit, and upper works had all gone. Not a human being could be discovered on board, while the foam-covered masses of water which raged around her must have carried off any who might have attempted to reach the shore. The waves, surging through the bay, rolled high up on the beach, rendering it dangerous even to approach them. Masses of timber and plank, of casks and cases, everywhere covered the space between the wreck and the beach.

“There’s not a living man to be seen. I fear all must have perished!” exclaimed Lord Reginald.

“I am afraid that you are right,” answered Dick. “No, no. I see two clinging to a spar in the middle of the bay. One, at all events, is alive. He must have caught sight of us, for he waved his hand. If the spar is driven in here we may save him.”

Together they hastened down to the edge of the water. Lord Reginald, in his eagerness, dashed forward, when a sea, rolling in, took him off his legs. In another instant he would have been carried away, had not Dick, at the risk of his own life, dashed forward and grasped him, struggling back with the greatest difficulty. Scarcely had they regained their feet, when the spar came so close that Neptune, making a spring, caught a rope which was hanging to it, and dragged it up towards them. Lord Reginald seized it and held on, while Dick prevented the spar from being rolled over on the two men clinging to it, for their strength was almost too far gone to enable them to help themselves. Dick, getting out his knife, first liberated one of the men, and assisted him up the beach out of the reach of the water. He then hurried down to render the same service to the other.

“Thank you, my friends!” said the man first rescued. “You have saved my life when I had well-nigh given up all hope.”

The other was too far gone to utter a word.

“What! are you an Englishman?” inquired Lord Reginald, on hearing the first speak.

“Yes, but my companion is a Frenchman, and yonder wreck is that of a French ship, on board which I was a prisoner.”

“Whether French or English, this poor fellow wants looking after,” observed Lord Reginald. “Come, lend a hand, Hargrave, and we will carry him into the cave; it is the most sheltered spot hereabouts. Can you walk, my friend?” he asked of the Englishman.

“I’ll try, sir,” was the answer.

While Lord Reginald and Dick carried up the Frenchman to the cave, the other man crawled, rather than walked after them, unwilling longer than possible to remain exposed to the force of the fierce wind. On reaching the cave they found a pile of sticks which Lord Reginald had formerly collected. Dick having a flint and steel with him, they soon made up a blazing fire.

Their first care was then to strip the Frenchman and chafe his limbs and chest. Under such treatment he soon revived. Though both the shipwrecked men were severely bruised, none of their limbs were broken.

The Englishman, whose appearance was that of a mate of a merchantman, said that his name was Robson, that he had been captured three weeks before by the French ship—a large privateer—and that his companion was one of her crew. He had been somewhat roughly dealt with on board, but that the man saved with him was the only one who had treated him kindly. As neither had eaten anything since the previous day, they were very thankful for the provisions their rescuers had brought, and leaving the two men to finish their meal and recover their strength, Lord Reginald and Dick again set out to search for any other persons who might be thrown on shore.

On leaving the cave they found that the gale had already begun to abate. They thus made their way with greater ease than they had expected along the beach, which was strewn with pieces of wreck. They met with several dead bodies, but not a single living being could they discover, either on shore or floating on the pieces of limber still tossing about.

They were returning along the beach to the cave, when they saw the two men they had left there running towards them, their countenances, as they approached, exhibiting the greatest alarm.

“There’s something dreadful going to occur, sir,” exclaimed Robson. “We were just about to lie down, when we heard the most fearful rumbling noise, and the rocks about us trembled as if they would come down on our heads. Let us get away from this place as fast as we can, or we shall have been only saved from drowning to suffer a worse death.”

The dashing of the seas on the beach had prevented Lord Reginald and Dick from feeling the commotion which had so frightened the strangers, but Neptune showed that he was as anxious as they were to escape.

“You are right, my friend,” said Lord Reginald, looking up at the mountain. “We have a disagreeable neighbour up there, and it will be wise to get as far away from him as we can. Whatever happens, we may hope to be safe at the other end of the island.”

As no time was to be lost, they returned along the valley by the way they had come, glancing back every now and then to ascertain the state of the volcano. It was still throwing up volumes of smoke and flame, but no stones or ashes fell where they were. At any moment, however, should the wind change, they might be carried in their direction. The two strangers were much alarmed, and had their strength been greater would have hurried on faster. Lord Reginald kindly took Robson’s arm to help him along, while Dick supported the Frenchman. Robson was much relieved on hearing that his preservers had a boat to carry them away from the island.

“I only hope, sir, that the mountain won’t get worse until the weather moderates, and we are able to put to sea,” he observed.

“We are pretty well accustomed to it now,” said Lord Reginald, “and I hope that we shall run into no real danger. We shall be glad, I own, to get off, if we can find our way to Batavia or any other place in the hands of the British.”

“I have been cruising in these seas for some years, and though the Frenchmen didn’t let us know whereabouts we were, if I could once get sight of Bali or Lombok, or for that matter any of the islands to the eastward of Java, I should soon find my way,” answered Robson.

“One thing is certain, that we must steer to the northward to get into the Java sea, and as we have a compass we shall have no difficulty in doing that,” said Lord Reginald.

“Then, sir, I hope you’ll put off without delay. I don’t like the looks of that mountain blazing away there,” exclaimed Robson, casting an alarmed glance over his shoulder.

“We will not stay longer than is necessary,” said Lord Reginald. “We are thankful that we did not sail yesterday, or our craft would have been lost to a certainty.”

The mate, before entering the hut, was anxious to see the boat, and Lord Reginald and Dick, with some little pride, led the strangers up to her. The mate opened his eyes.

“You are right, sir, in being thankful that you were not at sea last night,” he observed. “She may do very well in

smooth water, but in a sea way she would prove a curious craft to manage."

Dick felt somewhat indignant at this remark, though Lord Reginald only laughed.

"I agree with you, my friend; but we have to choose between being smothered or burned by the volcano, or making a voyage in her, and I prefer the latter alternative." On entering the hut, the mate, having complimented Dick on its comfortable appearance, assured him that he considered the boat a wonderful structure, and such as he himself would never have thought of building.

Pierre Didot, the Frenchman, was equally complimentary.

The two shipwrecked men were thankful to lie down and go to sleep, while Lord Reginald and Dick went along the shore to try and pick up anything of value which might be cast on the beach. They were rewarded by discovering another cask of flour and an officer's chest, which among other things contained a chart of those seas. Had they known their true position, this would have been of great value, but as they were unable to ascertain this, the chart would be of little service, till they reached some land which the mate might recognise.

They possessed, it is true, some nautical instruments, but as they had no chronometer and no almanac, Lord Reginald had been unable to work out his observations correctly, though he had instructed Dick in their use.

The chest also contained a flask of gunpowder and a pistol. Some way further along the beach they picked up three muskets, which had been jammed into the rack in which they had been fixed, and the whole together had been washed ashore.

"They are too much injured to be of use, I fear," observed Lord Reginald.

"Perhaps we can manage to put them straight; at all events we will try," answered Dick.

Several other articles, however, were found, two of them being empty water-casks, which were likely to be of more use than anything else. They returned to the hut, well laden with their treasures. They found the two new-comers sitting up, having just awakened, much refreshed by their sleep.

As soon as Pierre heard of the muskets, he said that he had belonged to the armourer's crew, and was certain that he could repair them.

Dick having prepared dinner, as soon as it was discussed the whole party set off to bring in the stores.

"I say, that mate of yours works like a good one," observed Robson to Dick. "If I ever get the command of a craft, I should like to have you and him with me."

"Thank you," said Dick, laughing. "I'll tell him what you say; I am sure that he'll be pleased to hear it."

As they had a long way to go, it was late before they had brought in all the articles collected. There were more than sufficient completely to fill Dick's store.

The next morning, Pierre set to work on the firearms, and was busily employed the whole day, singing merrily while at work, as if he had entirely forgotten the loss of his companions. The rest of the party were engaged in filling the water-casks, as well as a large number of cocoanut shells. They also collected a quantity of fresh nuts, and all the fruit and vegetables likely to keep during the voyage. Robson, however, was in no hurry to put off; the sea, indeed, continued too heavy to enable them to launch the boat. He examined her over and over again, evidently unwilling, except compelled to do so, to make a voyage in her. He suggested strengthening the outriggers, by carrying ropes from the two ends under her bottom. He also advised that she should be covered in more completely with canvas, which being laced down the centre, spaces only being left here and there for her crew, would prevent her filling should a sea break on board.

The first use Lord Reginald made of one of the muskets, when completed, was to kill four deer and a couple of hogs. These Dick dried and salted, that they might have sufficient provisions for their increased numbers. He formed also two additional oars, that, should they meet with calms, they might be able to pull, or enter an unknown harbour, with less risk of running on a rock or reef.

Many months had passed away. To Dick they had been the happiest in his life. Though ready enough to trust the *Janet*, he was in no hurry to leave the island. Lord Reginald, perhaps, was the most anxious to leave; still he did not shut his eyes to the danger of a voyage in so frail a craft. Everything had been got ready for a start, when one morning the party in the hut were awakened by a more violent upheaving of the earth beneath them than they had yet experienced. On rushing out of doors, they saw the whole island moved in a fearful manner, tall trees waving to and fro, and masses of rock falling into the valleys below.

"To the boat, to the boat!" cried Lord Reginald. "My friends, there is not a moment to be lost. Should the volcano not burst forth, the sea may recede and leave our craft far inland. The first thing we have to do is to get her afloat."

They hurried to the boat, and the tackles being got ready and the rollers placed under her keel, they commenced launching her. With four hands this was a more easy operation than when undertaken only by two.

Scarcely had the after part reached the water than the fearful rumbling noises increased, and the volcano begun to spout forth its contents, in a far more terrific manner than had hitherto been witnessed, while the atmosphere grew lurid with flame. Streams of lava were also seen descending on every side of the hill.

The crew of the *Janet* worked with redoubled vigour, and by hauling on the rope attached to the moorings, she was

quickly got afloat. While her stern still touched the beach, all hands were engaged in lifting on board the cargo, which, owing to Lord Reginald's forethought, had previously been arranged, water, fuel, and provisions, and besides other stores, several of the most useful of the carpenter's tools. Pierre had ingeniously contrived a cooking stove, which was placed just abaft the foremast. As the boat was loaded, she was hauled off from the beach. All the party were on board, with the exception of Lord Reginald, who, followed by Neptune, ran back to the hut, to ascertain that nothing of consequence was left behind. He discovered that the compass had been forgotten. He was just taking it up, and was looking round to see if there was anything else, when Nep, giving a peculiar bark, pulled his trousers, and he heard Dick's voice frantically calling upon him to return. He hurried out, and made towards the boat. As he did so, he saw that the volcano was in a state of violent eruption. He did not stop to take a second look, but climbing up over the quarter, and hauling up Neptune after him, he shouted to Dick to haul off. The *Janet* was quickly run out to her moorings. The wind was from the westward. The warp being hauled in, sail was made, and Robson and Pierre, getting out the oars, pulled with all their might. They had good cause for doing so. A vast umbrella-shaped cloud hung over the mountain, extending on every side, and already ashes had begun to fall into the water close astern, while as they got further off, they could see huge stones, sufficient to have sunk the boat, falling into the bay where they had lately floated. The breeze freshened; still that threatening cloud grew larger and larger, the sun, which had risen, appearing like a huge globe of fire through it. They would have been thankful for a gale of wind to carry them to a safe distance. Lord Reginald got out another oar aft, and Dick one forward.

The young lord considered that it would be safer to keep the boat's head to the eastward, and then haul up to the northward, the course they intended to steer. As they watched the island through the dense cloud by which it was surrounded, it appeared one mass of flame; while the volcano itself, with the hills beneath it, appeared melting away.

"It's only to be hoped that they may sink to the bottom, and not break up any more stout ships!" cried Robson. "However, as I have gained my liberty, I have no cause to complain."

The wind freshened, and the *Janet* under all sail making good way, by nightfall the burning island appeared like a bonfire, far over the larboard quarter. As it was necessary to keep a bright look-out, Lord Reginald and Pierre took one watch, Robson and Dick the other.

"Well, I never did think she would go along in this style," observed Robson, looking over the side, and noting the way the *Janet* moved through the water.

Among the articles picked up had been a half-minute glass, and a long line having been fitted, her speed could be ascertained. With the wind on her quarter she was found to be making seven knots an hour, which was considered by all to be wonderfully good going.

For two days the *Janet* stood on without any land appearing in sight. At length, on the evening of the third day, an indistinct outline was discovered right ahead. A calm came on, and all night she lay without advancing on her course. Although Dick and the other men offered to get out the oars, Lord Reginald would not permit them to exert themselves, knowing that they might require their strength for an emergency.

As the sun rose a breeze sprang up, and again they were skimming along over the smooth sea, at the rate of five knots an hour. At length, the land became more and more distinct. It was of considerable height, but the mate acknowledged that he could not tell what it was. At last he declared it to be the island of Sumbawa, and by steering to the west an opening was discovered. As no one knew the character of the inhabitants, it was agreed that it would be wiser not to land, and the little craft keeping in mid-channel, was not likely to be observed from either shore.

For some hours they were becalmed, and it was not until nearly daylight that they approached the entrance of the straits. Running on all day with a fair breeze, before nightfall they had entered the Java sea. Here, however, the chart showed islands innumerable, and dangers of all sorts. During the night, to avoid the risk of running on them, the *Janet* was kept under easy sail. For several days they sailed on, steering to the north-west, Lord Reginald determining not to touch at any place until Batavia was reached, unless compelled to do so from want of water or fresh provisions. They were in the longitude of Madura, a large island lying off the north coast of Java, when a numerous fleet of small vessels was seen in the north-east, standing towards them. Robson having taken a look at the strangers through his glass, cried out that they were piratical craft, which infested Borneo and the neighbouring coasts, and were wont to show no mercy to any falling into their hands.

"We must try and keep ahead of them, then," answered Lord Reginald, "and if they come up with us, fight to the last. With these three muskets and a pistol, we can do a little, and must make the best use we can of our boat-hook and oars."

"The best thing we can do with our oars is to keep ahead of them," answered the mate. "They are big craft, and would run this lugger down without ceremony."

"And we will keep ahead of them," was the answer. "We will get out the oars, and try and make the *Janet* walk along."

In spite, however, of the strenuous efforts made by the *Janet's* crew, it was too evident that the pirates, if such they were, were overhauling her, having a stronger breeze than she had got to send them through the water. A small island appeared on the starboard bow. The mate suggested that by landing there, they might escape into the interior, and save their lives.

"Or be murdered by its inhabitants," said Lord Reginald, laughing. "We will trust to our own little craft. We shall get the breeze before long, and we will then see if we cannot distance our pursuers."

There appeared, however, too much probability that his hopes would prove vain. The pirate fleet, of thirty vessels or more, each manned by some fifty or sixty cut-throats, was approaching nearer and nearer. Lord Reginald having had

the muskets handed to him, loaded them carefully, and placed them by his side.

“We will keep pulling to the last, and when they come within musket-shot, I’ll pick off some of the fellows in the leading vessel. That will make them fancy we are better armed than we are, and they may not think it worth while to attempt capturing us.”

They were at this time passing to the southward of the island before mentioned. The breeze freshened, and the *Janet* made better way than she had hitherto been doing. However, the pirates had already got almost within musket-shot, but Lord Reginald was unwilling to throw a charge away. At length, turning round and seeing that the leading pirate was within range, he fired. He quickly took up the next musket, and as he did so, he called to Dick to come aft and reload them. By the time the third musket was fired, Dick had loaded the first. A dozen shots had been fired, though it was difficult to ascertain the effect produced. By this time the *Janet* had opened out the west end of the island, when Dick, looking up, just as he was handing a musket to Lord Reginald, exclaimed—

“A sail, a sail! and a man-of-war, too, standing down towards us, under every stitch of canvas she can carry.”

“She’ll be up to us in twenty minutes more, and all we need do is to keep ahead of our pursuers,” answered Lord Reginald, taking a glance at her, before firing the musket he had received from Dick. That glance, however, was sufficient to convince him that she was the *Wolf*.

He was again about to fire, when the pirate craft were seen in a state of confusion, putting about. As fast as they could, lowering their sails and getting out their oars, they pulled away for their lives in the wind’s eye. They had an advantage by keeping closer in shore than the frigate could venture; besides which, the wind was light, and thus gave them a better chance of escape. They had, however, been seen from the frigate, which stood on after them, and at first appeared as if about to pass the *Janet*. In a few minutes, however, the British ensign was seen flying from the lugger’s mainyard; at the same time it was perceived that the frigate would have little chance of overtaking the pirate proas.

Lord Reginald stood up and waved his hat, while all hands shouted at the top of their voices.

“They’ve made us out. She’s about to heave to, sir. Hurrah! hurrah!” shouted Dick.

The frigate, coming up with the wind, hove her maintop-sail aback. The lugger stood on for a short time, then hauling her wind, ran up under the *Wolf’s* lee.

“What craft is that?” asked a voice from the frigate’s gangway.

“The private yacht *Janet*, bound from we don’t know exactly where, for Batavia, or for any British man-of-war we can fall in with, especially the *Wolf*,” answered Lord Reginald.

“You’ve fallen in with the very frigate you’re in search of,” answered Mr Curling, the first lieutenant, who had before spoken. “Come alongside, and let’s hear more about you.”

“That’s more than we can do with these outriggers,” said Lord Reginald. “Lower a boat, and we will step into her.”

This was speedily done, and Lord Reginald, in another minute, was ascending the sides of the frigate.

Dick hesitated about going on board. The moment he had been dreading had arrived; he must now be separated by an immeasurable distance from the man he had learned to love and respect.

Lord Reginald received a warm welcome from Captain Moubray and his brother officers. Great, indeed, was their astonishment at seeing him. It was fully believed that either the *Marie* had been captured, or that she had been lost in the hurricane which came on soon after the convoy reached Batavia.

“And now we must either drop your craft astern or hoist her up, for we must continue the chase of yonder piratical fleet,” said the captain.

“I doubt very much whether we shall be able to tow her without the risk of tearing out her bows,” said Lord Reginald, “it will be safer to hoist her up, though to do so we must first unship her outriggers. Her builder is on board, and as soon as he has completed his task I should wish to introduce him to you, as he is a young man of talent to whom I am most deeply indebted.”

“I shall be happy to make his acquaintance,” answered the captain, not dreaming of whom Lord Reginald spoke.

The carpenter, with three or four hands, under Dick’s superintendence, quickly unshipped the outriggers, and all wondered, when they saw how narrow and frail she looked, that she should have come without accident so great a distance.

As she touched the deck out jumped Neptune, leaping and barking with delight at seeing his old shipmates, who patted his head and stroked him as he rushed in and out among them. The boat being hoisted in, and the mainyard being braced round, the frigate was steered as close as the wind would allow in the direction taken by the pirate fleet.

Dick, who had not as yet been recognised by any of his old shipmates, busied himself in stowing away the *Janet’s* masts and sails, until Lord Reginald, coming along the deck, took him by the arm and led him aft to the captain.

“Now let me introduce my friend, Mr Richard Hargrave. I can especially recommend him to you, sir, as a young man of sterling worth, possessed of talents of no ordinary kind, and he has twice saved my life.”

The captain, to Dick's great surprise, shook him cordially by the hand. "I shall be happy, Lord Reginald, to do my best to serve him," he said, not recognising Dick as one of his crew.

"The greatest favour you can do me would be to place him on the quarter-deck, and I can answer for it that he will prove an ornament to the service," answered Lord Reginald.

Perhaps no one was more astonished than was Mr Curling, who remembered Dick, though the others did not, and also the ill feeling shown towards him by Lord Reginald, but he kept his counsel, waiting to hear the captain's reply.

"He is rather old to enter the service, but as I am glad to do anything you wish, and to reward him for saving your life, I cannot refuse your request," answered the captain; "and as we have several vacancies which I can fill up, I will appoint Mr Hargrave as one of the midshipmen of this ship."

Lord Reginald expressed his gratitude to the captain, and, shaking Dick by the hand, heartily congratulated him on his promotion. "I ought to have said, sir, that he has served on board this ship, and I think the officers who observed him will acknowledge that he always did his duty."

"I can answer for that," said the first lieutenant. "I am truly glad to find that I was not mistaken in the opinion I long ago formed of him."

"Now, my dear Hargrave," said Lord Reginald, "I must introduce you to the other midshipmen. They will all be eager to hear an account of our adventures on the island, and I am sure you need have no fear as to the way they will receive you."

Before, however, Lord Reginald took him into the berth he got him rigged out in a uniform supplied by the purser, which, with other articles of clothing belonging to Voules, made up his outfit.

The midshipmen received Dick in a friendly manner, no allusion being made to his former rating. He took the first opportunity of paying a visit to the cabin of Mr Bitts the boatswain.

"I thought I knew you when you came on board, but was not certain enough to go up and speak to you," said Mr Bitts. "And now, Mr Hargrave, pray understand that though I did use my rattan now and then pretty sharply, I did it for your good, but as I had then a sincere wish to make a first-rate sailor of you, so I shall consider it a favour, if you ever want instruction in seamanship, if you'll come and ask me, and I shall be proud of affording it. There's many a wrinkle I can give you which the quarterdeck officers might not think of. Some day, and I hope it will not be long hence, you'll be my superior in the service, and it will be my boast to be able to say, 'I taught him; I knew he'd turn out an honour to the navy.'"

Dick thanked Mr Bitts, and promised faithfully to take advantage of his offer.

In the mean time, the frigate under all sail had been chasing the pirates. Though she went much faster through the water than they did, she had to make frequent tacks to keep them in sight. They were still a long way ahead of her when darkness came on, and in the morning no sign of them could be seen.

After spending some time fruitlessly looking about for them, and after visiting several of the Dutch settlements lately taken possession of by England, the *Wolf* returned to Batavia, where the *Janet* was landed, and Dick, had he been so disposed, might have exhibited her as a curiosity in naval architecture. Here also Robson and Pierre went on shore, the former to obtain a berth as mate of an English merchantman, the latter to return at liberty to his native country on the first opportunity. From Batavia the *Wolf* sailed for Madras, then, after cruising for some time in the Indian seas, and capturing several prizes, she was at length ordered home. She had made during the time she was on the East Indian station a considerable amount of prize-money, and though a midshipman's share is not very large compared to that of the captain, Dick's was not only sufficient to obtain a good outfit, but he had besides a well-filled purse in his pocket.

"I want you to make me your banker," said Lord Reginald, as they were one day walking the deck together, and talking of home, "and that you may make such presents to your father and mother and blind sister as you choose, you must draw on me for your future requirements. I will ask my father to get you on board the next ship to which I am appointed, and I hope that by the time I am made a commander you will have become a lieutenant, and that we shall still serve together."

Lord Reginald was somewhat surprised, though Dick thanked him heartily, when he declined the first part of his offer.

"My wants are not likely to be great, and I hope that the cash I now have and such prize-money as we may gain in future, will be ample to supply them," he added.

"Well, well," said Lord Reginald, fully appreciating Dick's feelings on the subject, "you are very unlike poor Voules, who did not scruple to borrow what he had no intention to repay; but we will not talk of his faults, poor fellow! I understand him now better than I did, but I have more reason to blame myself for having been toadied by such a man, than to find fault with him for paying court to me."

The *Wolf* reached Portsmouth after a somewhat long voyage, and going into harbour, was at once paid off.

Lord Reginald invited Dick to accompany him to Elverston. "Don't say who you are, and they'll suppose that I have got another Voules in tow," he said, laughing.

Dick thought it would appear ungrateful not to accept the invitation.

Lord Reginald was received as one from the dead, as the news of his disappearance had reached home, and nothing

had been heard of him since. After his mother and sisters had somewhat recovered from the agitation into which they had been thrown by his reappearance, and he had received the congratulations of his father and his elder brothers, Viscount Elverston and Lord John, he took Dick by the arm and introduced him as his friend and late shipmate, without mentioning his name. The whole party then entered the drawing-room. There were several persons, including three young ladies, engaged in various feminine occupations. One of them, a bright-eyed blooming girl, Dick thought resembled greatly in features his sister Janet. He was describing to Lady Julia, who, now married, was staying with her husband in the house, their adventures on the island, when, turning round, he saw the last-mentioned young lady trembling violently, and gazing earnestly at him.

“Oh, my brother, my dear brother!” she exclaimed, suddenly rising and throwing herself into his arms, quite forgetting the company present. “Have you really come back? I know you, Dick, though I never saw your face before. I know you by your voice and your likeness to our father.”

Dick, giving vent to his feelings in a way midshipmen are not wont to do, pressed her to his heart.

“You are quite right, Miss Hargrave, it is your brother Richard, and my dearest and best friend,” said Lord Reginald, coming forward.

Matters were soon explained, and Dick received the heartfelt thanks of the marquis and Lady Elverston as the preserver of their son, and compliments innumerable flowed in upon him from all the company present.

As soon as he could he seated himself near Janet, who told him of the welfare of their father and mother, and how she had been restored to sight by the removal of the cataract from her eyes by a skilful oculist to whom Lady Elverston had taken her.

Dick and Janet set off the next day for their father’s farm. Dick’s stay on shore, however, consisted but of a few weeks, some of which were spent at Elverston in company with Lord Reginald. He paid poor Susan Rudall and her children a visit, when he performed the painful duty of giving them an account of Ben’s death. Lord Reginald, however, cheered her up somewhat, by assuring her that she should not come to want, a promise which he faithfully fulfilled, the marquis making her an allowance, while Lady Elverston obtained employment for her in the neighbourhood.

At length, Lord Reginald and Dick joined a fine frigate, to which the former had been appointed as second lieutenant.

The marquis as speedily as possible obtained Dick’s promotion. Both he and Lord Reginald rose to the top of their profession, and few more gallant officers have served their country than Admirals Lord Reginald Oswald and Richard Hargrave.

The End.

| Preface | | Chapter 1 | | Chapter 2 | | Chapter 3 | | Chapter 4 | | Chapter 5 | | Chapter 6 | | Chapter 7 | | Chapter 8 | | Chapter 9 | | Chapter 10 | | Chapter 11 | | Chapter 12 | | Chapter 13 | | Chapter 14 | | Chapter 15 | | Chapter 16 |

---

destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.