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W.H.G. Kingston

"The Story of Nelson"

Volume One--Chapter One.

The Story of Nelson.

My great ambition as a boy was to be a sailor; the idea of becoming one occupied my thoughts by day and influenced my dreams by night. I delighted in reading naval histories and exploits and tales of the sea, and I looked upon Rodney, Howe, Nelson, and Saint Vincent, as well as Duncan, Collingwood, Exmouth, and Sir Sidney Smith, as far greater men, and more worthy of admiration, than all the heroes of antiquity put together—an opinion which I hold even to the present day, and which, I hope, all my readers will maintain with me.

Once it happened during my summer holidays that, most unwillingly, I was taken up to London. During the time, a naval friend, having compassion on me, suggested that I might find matter of interest by a trip to Greenwich, and a visit to the Hospital. I jumped at the proposal. I can never forget the feelings with which I entered the wide, smooth space on which that beautiful collection of buildings stands, forming the Royal Hospital for Seamen, with its broad terrace facing the river, and found myself surrounded by many hundreds of the gallant veterans who had maintained not only so nobly the honour of Old England on the deep, but had contributed to preserve her from the numberless foes who had threatened her with destruction.

The building is of itself interesting. On this spot once stood the Royal Palace of Placentia, in which no less than four successive sovereigns were born—Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, Mary, and Elizabeth. Charles the Second had intended to rebuild it, but left it unfinished; and it was put into the heart of good Queen Mary, the wife of William of Orange, to establish that noble institution for the reception of the disabled seamen of the Royal Navy, which, much augmented in size, has ever since existed the noblest monument to a sovereign's memory.

I visited the beautiful chapel and the painted hall, where already were hung a number of fine pictures, illustrative of England's naval victories; and my friend then took me to see an old shipmate of his, who was one of the officers of the Hospital. When he heard that I wished to go to sea, and was so warm an admirer of Nelson, he exclaimed—"He'll just suit me. Let him stay here for a few days. We'll fish out some of our men who long served with Nelson, and if he keeps his ears turning right and left he'll hear many a yarn to astonish him. He must have patience though. The old fellows will not open out at once; their memories are like wells, you must throw a little water down at first before you can get them to draw."

I was delighted with the proposal. My friend, however, began to make excuses, saying that he ought to take me back, and that I had no clothes with me. At this the Greenwich officer, Lieutenant R—, laughed heartily.

"A shirt-collar and a pocket-comb? What does a midshipman want more?" he exclaimed. "But I will find him all the luxuries he may require. Let him stay, and tell his friends that he is in safe keeping."

So it was arranged, and I found myself an inmate of Greenwich Hospital.

After I had been seen walking up and down the terrace a few times with Lieutenant R—, the pensioners, when I spoke to them, answered me readily, though at first rather shy of talking of themselves or their adventures. At length I fell in with a fine old man, and sitting down on one of the benches facing the river, I began to tell him how much I honoured and loved all sailors, and how I longed myself to become one.

"Ay, boy, there are good and bad at sea as well as on shore; but as to the life, it's good enough; and if I had mine to begin again, I would choose it before all others," he answered, and once more relapsed into silence.

Just then Lieutenant H— passed; he nodded at me with a smile, saying, as he passed on, "My old friend there will tell you more of Lord Nelson than any man now in the Hospital."

The old man looked at me with a beaming expression on his countenance.

"Ay, that I can," he said, "boy and man I sailed with him all my life, from the day he got his first command till he was struck down in the hour of victory. So to speak, sir, I may say I knew him from the very day he first stepped on board a ship. This is how it was: My father was a seaman, and belonged to the 'Raisnable,' just fitted out by Captain Suckling, and lying in the Medway. One afternoon a little fellow was brought on board by one of the officers, and it was said that he was the captain's nephew; but the captain was on shore, and there was nobody to look after him. He walked the deck up and down, looking very miserable, but not crying, as some boys would have done—not he. That wasn't his way at any time. When the captain did come on board, and he saw his nephew, he shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say that he didn't think he was fit for a sea-life. No more he did look fit for it, for he was a sick, weakly-looking little fellow. However, it wasn't long before he showed what a great spirit there was in him."

"Ay," said I, "there is a story I have heard which proved that, when he was merely a child. He and another little fellow had gone away bird's-nesting from his grandmother's house, and he not coming back, the servants were sent to look for him. He was found seated by the side of a brook, which he could not get over. 'I wonder, child,' said the old lady, when she saw him, 'that hunger and fear did not drive you home.' 'Fear, grandmamma!' answered the boy, 'I never saw fear! What is it?'"

"True, true!" exclaimed the old man. "Fear! I don't think he ever felt it either. Well, as I was going to tell you, my father followed Captain Suckling into the 'Triumph,' and young Nelson went with him; but as she was merely to do duty as guard-ship in the Thames, the captain sent his nephew out in a merchant-vessel to the West Indies, to pick up some knowledge of seamanship. When he came back he soon showed that he had not lost his time, and that he was already a good practical seaman. Soon after this an expedition was fitted out for a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole, under Captain Phipps and Captain Lutwidge, in the 'Racehorse' and 'Carcass.' My father volunteered, and so did Mr Nelson, who got a berth as captain's coxswain with Captain Lutwidge. The ships, after entering the polar seas, were quickly beset with ice. Mr Nelson, who had command of a boat, soon showed what he was made of. My father was in another boat, and as they were exploring a channel to try and find a passage for the ships into the open sea, one of the officers fired at a walrus. 'Ah, I've hit him!' he exclaimed, 'not a bad shot!' and he thought no more about the matter. But the brute gave a look up with a race like a human being, as much as to say, 'We'll see more than one can play at that game,' and down he dived. Presently up again he came, with some twenty or more companions, and with the greatest fury they set on the boat with their tusks, and tried to capsize her. My father and the rest of the crew fought desperately with boat-hook and axes, but they were getting the worst of it, and well-nigh gave themselves up as lost, when another boat was seen coming along the channel towards them. On she dashed; a young officer, a very little fellow, with an axe in his hand, sprang to the bows, and began dealing his blows right and left at the heads of the walrus till several were killed, when the rest dived down and took to flight. That young lad was Nelson. Soon after this, one morning he and another boy were missed from the ship. It was reported that they had gone away in pursuit of a bear which had been seen prowling about. A thick fog had come on, and they did not return. The captain began to think that they were lost, and a party was sent out to look for them. After wandering about for some time, the fog cleared off, and there was Mr Nelson, with a ship's musket in his hand, close up to a big white polar bear, who could have made mincemeat of him in a moment. The party shouted to him to return, but he wouldn't listen to them; and they expected every moment to see the bear turn and crush him. Still on he went, moving sideways with the bear. When they got up, they found that there was a wide chasm which had prevented him from getting closer to the animal. They led him back to the ship, and when the captain asked him why he had gone, he answered, with a pouting lip, that he had set his heart on getting a bear's skin for his father, and that he didn't think he should have a better opportunity.

"The captain reprimanded, but forgave him. There were greater dangers in store both for him and all in the expedition; and for a long time they had little hope of getting the ships clear of the ice. Mr Nelson exerted himself to cut a channel to let them escape; and at length a favourable wind getting up, they stood clear of it just as it was expected that they would be frozen in. They found themselves free, and reached England in safety. Mr Nelson had nearly been killed by the cold, and now he was to be tried by the scorching climate of the Indian seas. Such are the rapid changes we seamen have to undergo. He was appointed to the 'Seahorse,' and out she went to the Indian station. The climate soon did what no dangers or common hardships could do; it took away the use of his limbs, and almost overcame his brave spirit. He retained home, feeling that he should never succeed in the navy or in anything else. But then suddenly he thought, 'I was not born to die unknown. I'll try what I can do. I'll trust in Providence. I'll serve my king and country—I will be a hero.' I heard him say this long after, and I have often since thought if all lads were to try to do their best, and trust in Providence, we shouldn't hear of so many as we do getting into poverty and disgrace.

"No officer, I have heard, ever passed a better examination for seamanship and navigation than did Mr Nelson. His uncle was present, but did not say who the young man was till the examination was over. Whatever he did he tried to do as well as he could; that was the reason of his success. Just about this time, young as I was, my father took me to sea with him, and we went out to the West Indies. We were shortly turned over to the 'Hichinbrook,' a prize captured from the enemy, and mounting twenty-eight guns. I was walking the deck with my father when a thin, small young man stepped up the side. I should have taken him for a midshipman, but he had on a post-captain's uniform. He nodded, as an old acquaintance, to my father, who stood hat in hand with the other men to receive him. 'That's Mr Nelson, our new captain,' said my father; 'he'll not let the grass grow under his feet.' That was the first time I ever saw the great Lord Nelson. What my father said was true. We soon sailed to convoy a fleet of transports destined to attack Saint Juan de Nicaragua. Up a muddy river we pulled, led by our captain, with a hot scorching sun striking down on us. We arrived before a fort. Captain Nelson leaped on shore, sword in hand, leaving his shoes in the mud, to attack it. The fort was taken, and so was San Juan itself; and though the grass did not grow under our feet, it was soon growing over the heads of numbers of the fine fellows who composed the expedition—both redcoats and seamen; and though our captain, receiving notice of his appointment to another ship, the 'Janus,' sailed away immediately, we lost the greater number of our people by sickness. The captain was so knocked up that he had to go home invalided, as did my father, who was never able again to go to sea. I went with him, and we lived for some time

at Deal.

"I remember early in January, 1782, a tremendous gale sprang up. My father and I were standing on the shore, he with his glass in his hand watching the ships driving here and there, one running foul of another, when we observed a heavy store-ship drive right down on a frigate.

"'They'll grind each other down to the water's edge,' observed my father. 'Does no one on board know what to do? I'd like to be off to lend a hand, but that's impossible; few boats could live in such a sea.'

"While we were talking, a lad came running along the beach, saying that an officer was in a great taking, wanting to get off to his ship, and no one would go.

"'Who is he?' asked my father.

"'A Captain Nelson,' answered the lad.

"'I'll go, if any man will trust his boat,' exclaimed my father. 'Come along, Ned.'

"We ran along the beach, and there we found our late captain walking up and down, fuming away, and trying to persuade the boatmen to take him off.

"'I'll go, sir, if I had a boat,' said my father. 'I've long sailed with you.'

"'Ah! Ned Freeman. Thank you—thank you,' exclaimed the captain. 'I'm sure you'd go with me anywhere.'

"'We'll take the captain off if he'll give us fifteen guineas,' observed several of the men, owners of a fine boat.

"'Done!' exclaimed the captain. 'Off we go at once.'

"My father and I, with the other men, launched the boat. Away we pulled with the white-topped seas dancing up round us and the dangerous Goodwin Sands to leeward, towards which the frigate was driving fast. Captain Nelson, by word and look, urged us on, though more than once I thought the boat would have been swamped, and all hands lost. We did succeed in getting alongside. The captain sprang on board, and soon had got the ships clear with only the loss of the frigate's bowsprit and pennant.

"'Well, Freeman, if you can't sail with me, your boy must,' said the captain, as the boat was about to shove off for the shore; 'I'll look after him.'

"'Will you go, Ned?' said my father to me.

"There was no time for consideration. I said, 'Yes, father.'

"My kind father wrung my hand, and we parted never to meet again.

"The 'Albemarle' soon after sailed for Canada and the West Indies. Our captain had a kind heart. On our first cruise we captured a fishing vessel belonging to Boston. The master wrung his hands, declaring that he had no other property, and a large family at home to support, who would all be brought to beggary. The captain told him not to be cast down; that he would employ him as a pilot, and give him back his vessel at the end of the time. He was as good as his word, and I never saw a poor fellow so happy and grateful as the fisherman was when he was put on shore. Some time after, when we were all suffering from scurvy, not having had a fresh piece of meat or vegetables for many months, the same man came off to us with a full supply for several days, which I believe saved the lives of many poor fellows on board.

"Soon after this, while cruising off Boston, a squadron of four French line-of-battle ships and a frigate were seen from the masthead. They made sail in chase, but the captain knew well all the shoals and quicksands in those parts, and soon got into channels where the big ships were afraid to follow. The frigate, however, kept on her course, and when we saw this we hove to, to wait for her. We all looked forward with joy to a brush, but she did not like our appearance, and much to our disappointment, about she went and rejoined her consorts.

"I can't tell you all the things we did in the West Indies. At last we went home, and were paid off; and I remained on shore with my widowed mother till I heard that Captain Nelson had commissioned the 'Boreas.' I went and joined him. He received me heartily, and away we sailed for the West Indies.

"Young as was our captain, he found himself senior officer on the station—that is to say, second in command under the admiral; for in those days we had old heads on young shoulders; so we should now, if boys would try to imitate the example of wise and noble men, not to ape the folly of foolish ones. We were chiefly among the Leeward Islands.

"While visiting the island of Nevis, the captain fell in love with a lady, a Mrs Nisbet, and they married: a very good, kind young lady she was, that I remember; but after we returned home I saw no more of her. The 'Boreas' was paid off in 1787. Thus I have told you most of what I remember about Nelson's early days. He was soon to be known to the world as the greatest naval captain of his time."

Volume One--Chapter Two.

"You have heard speak of the 'Agamemnon' of 64 guns. I was one of the old Agamemnons, as we called ourselves. We, all her crew, were proud of her, and good reason we had to be so. Captain Nelson commissioned her on the 26th of January, 1793, and it wasn't many days after this that I joined her. You see I kept my eye on him. When a man has

found a good captain, if he's wise he will follow him whenever he can.

"I can't now remember all the places we went to. First, we were one of the Channel fleet. Then we were sent out to the Mediterranean, where our captain astonished the admirals, and made the soldier-generals almost tear their eyes out by the way he did things. He took care that the weeds should not grow to the bottom of the ship he commanded. First we had to conquer the island of Corsica. (See Note.) We drove the French out of every place but the strong fort of Bastia, so we landed, and hauled our guns up the heights, and kept up such a hot fire on the place that it gave up, and then the soldiers marched in and gained the glory. Then we took a place called Calvi. Here it was that a shot, striking the ground, threw up some sand in the captain's eye, and though we thought but little of it at the time, he never saw again with that eye. It was very hard work, and the country was unhealthy, and many of us grew sick, so that we were heartily glad when it was over. There was something better in store for us too. News was brought us that the French fleet, nearly twice as strong as ours, was on the look-out for us. Our fleet was under the command of Admiral Hotham. You may be sure that we kept a bright look-out for the enemy. At last they hove in sight, and one of our frigates, the 'Inconstant,' got so close that she brought to action the 'Ça Ira,' a French eighty-four, which had carried away her main and foretop masts. The 'Inconstant,' however, was obliged to bear away, and a French frigate came up and took the line-of-battle ship in tow, while two other line-of-battle ships guarded her on her weather bow.

"Our captain had been watching all that took place, and, though we had no line-of-battle ship to support us, we made all sail in chase. There was not a man on board whose heart didn't beat high with pride at the way we went into action against odds so great; but we Agamemnons knew well enough what our captain could do and would do. As soon as the enemy could bring their guns to bear, they kept firing away their stern-chasers at us. We stood on, without answering a shot, till we were within a hundred yards of them. 'Starboard the helm!' cried the captain. The after-sails were brailed up, and the ship falling off, our broadside was brought to bear on the retreating enemy. Now we opened a tremendous fire on them, every gun telling. Then the helm was put a-port, the after-yards braced up, and again we were after them.

"Again and again we practised the same manoeuvre, never allowing the 'Ça Ira' to get a shot at us with one of her broadside guns. The enemy, however, were not idle with their after-guns, though it was not till we had torn her sails almost to ribbons that the French frigates began to open their fire upon us. Then down came more of the enemy's ships towards us. The captain seemed only the better pleased at seeing this, and it's my opinion he would have hove to to meet them, and still managed to come off victorious by some means or other, even if the admiral had not made the signal of recall. Though our sails and rigging were much cut up, we had only seven men wounded, while the 'Ça Ira' lost one hundred and ten that day.

"The next day we were again at it, for we managed to cut off the 'Ça Ira,' and the 'Censeur,' which had her in tow. This time we got one on each side of us, and both of them fought well; but we fought better, and at length both struck, and our boats were sent on board to take possession I never before had witnessed such a scene as that I saw on board the 'Ça Ira.' On her decks lay three hundred brave fellows, dead or dying, or badly wounded, besides those she had lost the day before, while the 'Censeur' had lost three hundred and fifty. Our captain wanted to follow up the enemy, and it's my belief, if we had, we should have taken every one of them; but the admiral would not let him, and said we had done very well as it was. So we had; but, you see, our captain was the man who always wanted to do something better than well. *Do well* sits on the main-top—*Do better* climbs to the truck.

"The 'Agamemnon' had been so knocked about, that the captain now shifted his flag into the 'Minerva' frigate, and took me and many other men with him. One of our first duties was to carry off the English garrison and privateers and merchantmen from Corsica, which had declared for the French. We soon afterwards fought several actions with the enemy, and then war broke out between England and Spain, and we had a narrow escape from an overwhelming force of Spanish ships. We had just sailed from Gibraltar, when two Spanish line-of-battle ships followed us. We were keeping pretty well ahead when a man fell overboard. To let a man drown without trying to help him was against our captain's nature. A jolly-boat, commanded by Lieutenant Hardy, was lowered, and away she pulled to try and pick up the poor fellow. The boat was within range of the enemy's guns: the man was not to be seen. The captain had been anxiously watching all that took place. 'I'll not lose Hardy,' he exclaimed. 'Back the main-topsail!' No order was ever obeyed more readily, and soon we were dropping back towards our boat, and towards the enemy. We fully expected to be brought to action, but we did not care for that; we got back Mr Hardy and our boat, when what was our astonishment to see the headmost Spaniard shorten sail to wait for his consort. There can be no doubt he thought we had assistance not far off. The Spaniards were very timid of us in those days—they had good reason to be so. With flying colours we sailed out of the Straits, laughing at our enemy.

"Both officers and men were constantly being shifted from ship to ship in those days; and, as soon as we reached Cadiz we found ourselves transferred to the 'Captain,' a fine seventy-four. Captain Nelson hoisted his pennant, as commodore, on board of her, with Captain Miller under him. You have heard speak of the battle of Saint Vincent. Sir John Jervis, who was made Earl Saint Vincent, was our admiral, and Commodore Nelson was second in command. He was now going to show all the world what he really was. The Spaniards had twice as many ships as we had. They were much bigger, and carried heavier guns; but what did Nelson or we care for that. It is the men who fight the battles, and Nelson knew the stuff British seamen are made of.

"Early in the morning of the 14th of February, the Spanish fleet hove in sight, and we bore down on them. They were in line, that is, one following the other. We managed to break that line, and cut off one part from the other, just as you cut a snake in two. We followed the head, the biggest part. That part bore away before the wind to join the tail. The 'Captain' was instantly wore round, instead of tacking, according to a signal just then made by the admiral, and away after them we went, followed by the 'Culloden,' 'Blenheim' and 'Diadem.' The 'Captain' was in the rear of the British line; but by the manoeuvre just performed, we came up with the Spaniards, and in a short time we and the 'Blenheim' were tooth and nail with no less than seven Spanish line-of-battle ships—one, the 'Santissima Trinidad,' of 130 guns, and the 'San Josef' and 'Salvador del Mundo' of 112, the others being of 80 and 74-guns. For nearly an hour we pounded away at them, till Captain Collingwood, in the 'Excellent,' came up, and gave us a helping hand by pouring a tremendous broadside into the 'San Nicolas.'

“Our captain now let us fall close alongside that ship, and then he called for boarders, and away we dashed into her. Right through her we went; her flag was hauled down, and then, more boarders coming up, on we dashed aboard the big ‘San Joseph,’ and in a little time we had her also. We followed our captain to the quarterdeck, and then the Spanish officers assembled, and their captain and all of them presented their swords to Commodore Nelson. As he received them he gave them to one of his barge-men, William Fearney, who, with no little pleasure, tucked them under his arm, just as you see in the picture in the Painted Hall yonder. All the seven ships were taken, and if the Spaniards had had any pluck we should have taken the remainder; but they hadn’t, and made off while we were unable to follow. That is the worst of fighting with cowards. If they had been brave men they would have stopped to fight, and we should have captured every one of their ships. That was the battle of Saint Vincent. The commodore was made an admiral and a knight, and now everybody in England, high and low, rich and poor, had heard of him, and sung his praises.

“You’ve seen a picture of Sir Horatio Nelson, as he was then, in a boat attacked by Spaniards, and his coxswain, John Sykes, defending him, and receiving on his own head the blow made at him by one of the enemy. I’ll tell you how it was:—

“His flag was flying on board the ‘Theseus,’ and he had command of the inner squadron blockading Cadiz. The Spanish gunboats had annoyed us, and he resolved to attack them with the boats at night. In we pulled. In the admiral’s barge there were only his ten barge-men—I was one of them—Captain Freemantle, and his coxswain, John Sykes, when suddenly we found ourselves close up with a Spanish launch carrying twenty-six men or more. To run was not in our nature, so we tackled to with the launch. It was desperate work, and the Spaniards fought well. Sir Horatio was foremost in the fight; but the enemy seemed to know who he was, and aimed many a blow at his head. Sykes, not thinking of himself, defended him as a bear does her whelps. Blow after blow he warded off, till at last his own arm was disabled. Still, instead of getting over to the other side of the boat, he stood by the admiral. Down came another Spaniard’s sword which Sir Horatio could not ward off, but Sykes sprung forward and received the blow on his own head, which it laid open. This did not make us less determined to beat the enemy. One after the other we cut them down till we killed eighteen, wounded the rest, and towed their launch off in triumph. It will just show you how the men who served with him loved the admiral. That was a desperate fight in a small way, let me tell you; but before long we had still worse work to go through.

“Many men are thought a great deal of if they gain one victory. Nelson never but once suffered a defeat. It was at the island of Teneriffe. He was sent there, by Sir John Jervis, with a squadron to cut out a rich Manilla ship returning to Spain, which lay in the harbour of Santa Cruz. Our squadron consisted of four ships of the line, three frigates, and the ‘Fox’ cutter. Our first attempt at landing failed, and then the admiral, who never would be beaten, against the orders of Sir John himself; determined to take command of the expedition on shore. Midnight was the time chosen for the attack. The orders were, that all the boats should land at a big mole which runs out from the town. Away we pulled; the night was very dark, the boats got separated, and when we reached the mole there were only four or five boats there. A heavy fire was at once opened on us, but the admiral would not be turned back. Drawing his sword, he was springing on shore, but the same moment he was struck by a musket ball, and fell back into the arms of his step-son, Lieutenant Kisbet. The lieutenant and one of our men bound up his arm, while all those who could be collected jumped into the boat to shove her off. It was difficult work, for she had grounded. We pulled close under the battery to avoid the heavy fire from it. As we moved on, all we could see was the bright flashes from the guns extending in a long line in front of us. On again pulling out, a fearful cry was raised. It came from the ‘Fox’ cutter. A shot had struck her between wind, and water, and down she went, leaving her crew struggling in the waves. The admiral had just before been lifted up in the stern-sheets by Mr Nisbet to look about him.

“‘Give way, lads—give way,’ he shouted, forgetting his own desperate wound. ‘We must save them.’

“Soon we were in among the struggling men, and hauling them into the boats as fast as we could, the shot all the time rattling about us. The admiral seemed to have recovered his strength, and worked away with his left arm, assisting in saving a great many. Eighty men were saved, but more than half the crew were lost. The first ship we came to was the ‘Seahorse.’ Her captain’s wife, Mrs Freemantle, was on board, but he was with the boats, and no one could tell whether he was alive or dead.

“‘No, no,’ exclaimed the admiral; ‘I can give the poor lady no tidings of her husband; she shall not see me in this state. Pull to another ship.’

“We managed to reach the ‘Theseus,’ a rope was lowered, he sprung up the side, and would have no help. We could scarcely believe our eyes, for we thought he was half dead. His was a wonderful spirit. Then he sent us off to try and save a few more of the poor fellows from the ‘Fox.’ When we got back we found that he had made the surgeon at once cut off his arm. We brought him the news that Captain Freemantle, though badly wounded, had got off in safety to his ship. You may be sure that both he and all of us were very anxious to know what was going forward on shore. At length we heard that Captain Troubridge had managed to collect two or three hundred men—all who were not drowned or killed by shot—and having marched into the square, had taken the town. Of course, he could do nothing against the citadel. Some eight thousand Spanish troops were collecting about the place, but he was not a man to be daunted; telling them that he would burn the town if they molested him, he was able to draw off all his men in safety. During that business we lost two hundred and fifty men and officers. It was a sad affair, but though it was a failure every man engaged in it did his duty bravely, and no one could blame the admiral for what had happened. We heard that the Spaniards treated our wounded men who were left on shore with the greatest kindness and care. No one among the wounded suffered more than the admiral, and it was some months, I’ve heard say, before the pain left his arm.

“Once more we returned to old England, and the admiral went up to London to try and get cured of his wound. Since he left home he had lost an eye and an arm, and had been terribly knocked about besides; but people thought of what he had done, not of how he looked, and he was received with honour wherever he went.

"I and a few others of his old hands lived on shore, keeping a look-out for when he should get another command. We were afraid of being pressed, and made to serve somewhere away from him. One and all of us were ready enough to fight for our king and our country, provided we could fight under him. We had not long to wait. We soon got news that the 'Vanguard' was to be commissioned to carry Sir Horatio Nelson's flag to join the Mediterranean fleet under Earl Saint Vincent. That was in the year 1798.

"We sailed from Gibraltar on the 9th of May with three line-of-battle ships, four frigates, and a sloop of war, to look after the French fleet, which consisted of thirteen ships of the line, seven frigates, twenty-four smaller ships of war, and a fleet of transports, bound, as we afterwards learned, for Egypt. If the French had conquered that country, they would have gone on, there is no doubt of it, to attack our possessions in India. The admiral, I dare say, knew the importance of stopping that French fleet. In spite of their numbers we did not fear them. Proud we were of our ship, and prouder still was our admiral of her and her crew and the fleet he commanded. While we were in the Gulf of Lyons, after it had been blowing hard all day, it came on one dark night to blow harder still, and, without warning, first our main and then our mizen-topmast went over the side, and lastly the foremast went altogether, so that we no longer could carry sail on it. What a crippled wreck we looked in the morning! There was a thick fog: not one of the squadron could be seen. We were boasting the day before that we were ready to meet more than an equal number of the finest ships the French could bring against us; and now we lay docked of our wings, and scarcely able to contend with the smallest frigate. Providence was watching over us, and we had good reason to believe this when some time afterwards we learned that that very day the French fleet sailed from Toulon, and passed within a few miles of us, while we were hid from them by the fog. At last Captain Ball, in the 'Alexander,' came up, and towed us into the harbour of San Pietro in Sardinia, where in four days, with the aid of his and other two ships' companies, we got completely refitted and ready for sea. Away we went in search of the French fleet, with General Bonaparte himself on board. We heard of the French at Gozo, and our admiral would have attacked them there, but they had gone; then on we sailed for Egypt, hoping to find them off Alexandria, but not a sign of them could we discover. If we had had our frigates, we should have found them out fast enough. Leaving Alexandria, we steered for Syracuse, where we provisioned and watered; we visited the Morea; we hunted along the Greek coast. At last we entered the Gulf of Coron, where Captain Troubridge brought us the news that the French fleet had been seen steering from Candia for Egypt four weeks before. Instantly all sail was made for Alexandria. Still we scarcely expected to find the French fleet there. Great then was our joy when the signal was seen flying from the masthead of the 'Zealous,' Captain Hood, that the enemy's fleet were moored in Aboukir Bay. Not a moment was lost in clearing the ships for action. We all knew that we had hot work before us. We found the French fleet moored in a sort of curve in the bay, but far enough from the shore to let some of our ships get inside of them; that is, between them and the land. This the French little expected, and many hadn't even their guns loaded on that side.

"Oh! it was a magnificent sight, as on we sailed, receiving a hot fire from the shore batteries, but not answering a shot, while silently we furled our sails, and got ready for anchoring. I believe that silence made the hearts of the Frenchmen quake more than our loudest hurrahs would have done. It was evening; the sun was just sinking into the ocean as we entered the bay. The 'Goliath' led the way, followed by the 'Zealous,' and then came the 'Orion,' all anchoring inside the enemy's line. The 'Vanguard' (our ship) was the first which anchored outside, within half pistol-shot of the 'Spartiate.' We had six colours flying, just as a sign to the Frenchmen that come what might we were not likely to strike to them; and now there was very little to be seen but the flashes and thick smoke from the guns. Other ships followed us outside the French line, but the greater number were inside. No sooner were our anchors dropped than we opened fire, our example being followed by the other ships as they brought up. We blazed away in right earnest; there was no flinching from our guns. What the Frenchmen were about I cannot tell, but we seemed to fire two shots to their one; but then their guns carried heavier metal than ours, and they had many more of them. It was so dark that we had to get our fighting-lanterns hung up along the decks. Just fancy us then stripped to the waist, with handkerchiefs bound round our heads, and straining every nerve as we ran in and out, and cleaned and loaded our heavy guns, and blazed away as fast as we could. We were covered, too, with smoke and powder, and before long most of us were sprinkled pretty thickly with our own or our shipmates' blood. Such was the sight you would have seen between decks on board every ship in the action.

"I must tell you what happened in other parts. There was a shoal we had to pass on our starboard hand. The 'Culloden,' the ship of the brave Captain Troubridge, struck on it when standing in, for by that time the darkness of night had come on. He instantly made signals which prevented the other ships, the 'Alexander,' 'Swiftsure,' and 'Leander,' following, and getting on shore. They did their best to help off the 'Culloden,' but could not get her off so stood on into the battle. Before even they opened their fire, five of the enemy's ships had struck. On standing on, Captain Hollowell fell in with the old 'Billyruffian' ('Bellerophon'), with already two hundred dead and wounded, and almost a wreck from the tremendous fire of 'L'Orient' of 120 guns. The 'Swiftsure' took her place, and soon made the Frenchman pay dear for what she had done. I heard of this afterwards. A seaman at his gun can know little more of an action than what he sees before his nose, and that is chiefly smoke and fire, and part of the hull and rigging of one ship, and men struck down, and timbers and splinters flying about, and yards and blocks rattling down, while he hears alone the roar of the guns, the shouts, and shrieks, and groans of those around him. This sort of terrible work was going on for some time, when the word got about that the admiral himself was desperately wounded in the head. It made our hearts sink within us with sorrow, but it did not cause us to fight less fiercely, or be less determined to gain the victory. How anxiously we waited to hear what the surgeons would say about the wound of our noble chief! and when we were told that it was merely the skin of his head which was hurt, and which had almost blinded him, how hearty the cheer we gave. It must have astonished the Frenchmen, who could not tell the cause. Then at it again we went blazing away like fury, the round-shot and chain-shot and bullets whizzing and tearing along our decks, making the white splinters fly, and sending many a poor fellow out of the world, when suddenly the darkness, which had till now surrounded us, was lighted up by the bright flames which darted out of every port and twisted round the masts of a burning ship. We soon learned that she was a French ship, the big 'L'Orient,' with which the 'Billyruffian' had been engaged. Never did I see such a sight; in a few minutes she was just one mass of flame, from her truck to the water's edge. Her miserable crew, from one end of her to the other, were leaping into the water to avoid the scorching heat. 'Out boats!' was the order, and each of our ships near at hand sent as many boats as could be manned to the rescue of our unfortunate enemies. Had they been our own shipmates, we could not have exerted

ourselves more. Still the battle raged from one end of the line to the other. Suddenly there was a sound as if the earth were rent asunder. In one pointed mass of flame up went the tall masts, and spars, and the decks of the huge 'L'Orient.' They seemed, in one body of fire, to rise above our mastheads, and then down they came, spreading far and wide, hissing into the water among the boats and the hundreds of poor wretches struggling for their lives. Among them was the French commodore. Captain Casabianca, I heard, was his name. He was a brave man. He had his son with him, a little fellow only ten years old, as gallant, those we rescued told us, as his father. They were blown up together. We saw the two, the father holding on his son clinging to a spar. We pulled towards them, but just then a bit of the burning wreck must have struck them and carried them down, for when we got up to the spot they were nowhere to be seen. That's the worst of a battle; there are so many young boys on board who often get as cruelly hurt as the men, and haven't the strength to bear up against their sufferings. Well, as I was saying, we pulled about, picking up the half-burnt struggling wretches wherever we could find them among the bits of floating wreck. Only seventy were saved out of many more than a thousand men on board. That was about ten o'clock. For some time not a shot was fired. Every man felt that something awful had happened, but still many of the Frenchmen hadn't given in. So at it again we went, and blazed away at each other till three in the morning. When daylight returned, only two of the enemy's ships of the line had their colours flying, and they had not been engaged. They, with two frigates, cut their cables in the forenoon, and stood out to sea, we having no ships in a fit state to follow them. There were thirteen French line-of-battle ships when the action began; we took nine, two were burned, and two escaped; and of the four frigates one was sunk and another burned; while the enemy lost three thousand one hundred and five men in killed and wounded. Captain Westcott was the only captain killed, but we lost in all nearly nine hundred other officers and men. As soon as the battle was over, an order was issued that all on board every ship should return thanks to Almighty God, who had given us the victory. Many a hearty thanksgiving was offered up that day. It was a solemn ceremony; not a word was spoken fore and aft till the chaplain began the prayers. A dead silence reigned throughout the fleet. The Egyptians and Arabs on shore could not make it out, I've heard say; and even the French officers, prisoners on board, infidels as they were, listened with respect, and could not help believing that there must be a God who had given us the victory. Hard work we had to get our ships and prizes fit for sea again after the battering they had got; as it was, we had to burn four of our prizes, as it would have taken too long to refit them; and then at last away we sailed with the larger part of the fleet for Naples.

"The battle I've been telling you about was called the battle of the Nile. It was, I've heard say, one of the most glorious and important ever fought on the sea."

Note: Lord Hood was commander-in-chief. The object of the attack was to co-operate with the patriot Corsicans, who, under their well-known gallant general Paoli, desired to liberate themselves from the yoke of France, then ruled by the tyrannical and cruel convention. The story of the struggles of Corsica to gain her independence is deeply interesting.

Volume One--Chapter Three.

"After lying at Naples for a long time, Lord Keith came out and took the chief command, and we sailed with a squadron for Malta. On our way we fell in with a French fleet, the biggest ship of which was the 'Généreux,' one of the line-of-battle ships which had escaped from the Nile. We captured her and a frigate, and not long afterwards the 'Guillaume Tell,' the other line-of-battle ship, after in vain attempting to escape from Valetta harbour, surrendered to us; and thus every ship of the fleet which had escorted Bonaparte to Egypt was captured, except, I fancy, one frigate.

"At last we went into Leghorn Roads, and after some time Lord. Nelson and Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and other people who had been on board, landed, and travelled through Germany towards England. I have heard say that he was more than once very nearly caught by the French during the journey through Italy. What a prize he would have been to them. I remained in the 'Foudroyant' for some time. We all missed the admiral, and hoped that he would come out again, and hoist his flag on board his old ship. Whatever ship he went to it was the same, the men loved him, and would have done anything for him. At last I was sent home in a prize, and was paid off. As the admiral was taking a spell on shore, I thought I would take one too, and enjoy myself. I spent some time with my old mother; but one night, going down to see an old shipmate who was ill at a public-house near Deal, I found myself in the hands of a press-gang, and carried aboard the 'Elephant,' Captain Foley, I had made up my mind to belong to the flag-ship of Admiral Nelson, whatever she might be. Still, it couldn't be helped, and, of course, I determined to do my duty. I there learned that Captain Hardy had commissioned the 'Saint George,' of 98 guns, and that it was supposed Lord Nelson would hoist his flag on board her. This he shortly afterwards did, and it was some consolation, when we sailed for Yarmouth Roads, off the Norfolk coast, to join him. It was soon whispered about that there was work for us to do, and we guessed that there was truth in the report when the fleet was ordered away up the Baltic. This was in 1801; a long time ago it seems. You see that Russia, and Sweden, and Denmark were all going to join against us to help the French; and as the Danes had a fine fleet, it was necessary to destroy or capture it, to prevent it doing us mischief. We therefore sent to tell the Danes that they must give it up and be friends, or that we would knock their city about their ears, and sink their ships. They dared us do our worst. They ought to have known what Lord Nelson was likely to do; but you must understand that Sir Hyde Parker was commander-in-chief—he was only second in command. A great deal of time was lost in diplomatising, and all that time the Danes were preparing their ships and batteries to receive us. If you take a look at a chart of the mouth of the Baltic, you will see what numbers of shoals, and small islands, and narrow channels there are about Copenhagen. Fortunately one of our captains, Captain Dommet, knew the coast, and he persuaded Sir Hyde Parker only to let the lighter ships go up to the attack. The 'Saint George' drew too much water, and, fortunately for us, Lord Nelson chose our ship to hoist his flag on board. Didn't we cheer him as he came alongside. Copenhagen stands on a dead flat facing the sea; it is defended by a large fort and two heavy batteries, thrown up on rocks or sand-banks. Besides these there was the Danish fleet drawn up in a long line before the city, and eighteen floating batteries, mounting no less than 690 guns. Some way off, in front of the city, is a shoal called the Middle Ground, and then another channel, and then comes the long island of Saltholm. On the last day of March we entered the channel between the Swedish and Danish coasts, having the castle of Helsingburg on one side,

and that of Elsinore on the other, and on we sailed in front of the city till we came to an anchor off the island of Arnak. Sir Hyde Parker remained near the mouth of the channel with the heavier ships, so that Lord Nelson had the lighter ones all to himself, while the brave Captain Riou commanded the frigates. All the night was spent in preparing for battle, and Captain Hardy was employed in sounding the channel, through which we were to pass to the attack. He even reached in the darkness close up to one of the Danish ships, and sounded round her. There was the whole squadron anchored so close in with the Danish shore, that had our enemies known the range they might have done us much mischief. Lord Nelson spent the chief part of the night dictating orders to his clerks, to send round to his captains to tell them what to do. At last the morning broke, and, with a fair wind, the 'Edgar' leading under a press of sail, the fleet stood down the Danish line, and took up their positions as arranged, the brave Captain Riou and his frigates being opposed to the Crown Battery, at the farther end. With a groan, we who once belonged to her saw the old 'Agamemnon' take the ground on the shoal I have spoken of; the 'Bellona' and 'Russel' touched also, but sufficiently within range to take part in the battle. Soon after ten the 'Edgar' began the action, and one by one, as the other ships slipped from their anchors, and following at intervals, took up their position, they also commenced firing. The commander-in-chief; Sir Hyde Parker, was away on our right, you'll understand, with the bigger ships, and from the way the wind was he could not have come up to help us. Now, along the whole line the action became general. Opposed to us there were the forts and the 'floating batteries' and the Danish ships of war, all blazing away together; and many of them had furnaces for heating red-hot shot, which several times nearly set our ships on fire. No men ever fought better than the Danes, and several times when we had killed or wounded all the defenders of a battery, their places were supplied by fresh hands from the shore, who worked away at their guns as bravely as the first, till they, poor fellows, were shot down. More than once the ships of the enemy had hauled down their flags, and when we were going to take possession again opened fire on us. This enraged us, as you may suppose; but we cut them up terribly, and many of their ships and floating batteries were sinking or on fire. For three hours or more we were at it, pounding away without being able to silence them. They were cutting us up too, let me tell you, riddling our hull, and round-shot, and red-hot shot, and chain-shot, and bar shot flying around, about, and through us. It seemed a wonder that a man was left alive on our decks. Lord Nelson kept pacing the quarterdeck, watching everything that was going on. A young Danish officer had got a big raft, with a breastwork mounting some twenty guns, and in spite of our marines, who kept up a sharp fire on him, he held his post till the battle was over. The admiral praised him for his gallantry, and, I believe, would have been very sorry if he had been killed, much as he was annoying us. A shot now struck our mainmast, sending the splinters flying on every side. I saw the admiral smile. 'This is hot work,' he observed to one of the officers; 'in another moment not one of us may be alive, but, mark you, I would not be anywhere else for thousands.' It's my opinion that most men would have thought we were getting the worst of it; and if we hadn't had Lord Nelson for our chief; we should have thought so likewise.

"Sir Hyde Parker's flag-ship was near enough for us to make out his signals. It was reported that the signal for discontinuing the action had been made. 'Acknowledge it!' cried Lord Nelson. 'Is our signal for close action still hoisted?' 'Yes, sir,' was the answer. 'Then keep it so,' he replied. Soon afterwards he put his glass up to his blind eye, and turning to Captain Foley, he exclaimed, 'I have a right to be blind sometimes, and really I don't see the signal. Never mind it, I say, nail mine to the mast.' Admiral Graves in like manner disobeyed the order, and the rest of the squadron, looking only to Lord Nelson, continued the action.

"I was telling you about the brave Captain Riou and his frigates. The 'Amazon,' his ship, had suffered much, and was so surrounded by smoke that he could see nothing of the batteries to which he was opposed. He ordered, therefore, his men to cease firing to let the smoke clear off; that they might see what they were about. This allowed the Danes to take better aim at them, and so tremendous was the fire opened on them that there seemed every chance of the frigates being sent to the bottom. Just then, Sir Hyde Parker's signal was seen flying. Captain Riou judged that he ought to obey it. He had already been badly wounded in the head by a splinter. 'What will Nelson think of us?' he exclaimed, mournfully, as the frigate wore round. Just then his clerk was killed by his side, and directly afterwards shot struck down some marines who were hauling in the main-brace. It seemed as if not a man on board could escape. 'Come, then, my boys,' exclaimed their brave Captain Riou, 'let us all die together!' They were the last words he ever spoke. The next moment a shot cut him in two. There was not a more gallant officer, or one the men loved better, in the service.

"Well, as I was saying, on we went at it for four long hours. In spite of the shot, and bullets, and splinters flying about on every side, I had not had a scratch. Several poor fellows had been struck down close to me. I cannot say that I thought that I should not be hit, because the truth is I did not think about the matter. I went on working at my gun like the rest, only just trying how fast we could fire, and how we could do most damage to the enemy. That's the way to gain the victory; it does not do to think of anything else. At last I felt a blow as if some one had struck me on the side, and down I went. My trousers and belt were singed and torn, and the blood started from my side; but I bound my handkerchief over the wound, and in a little time got up and went back to my gun, and there I stayed till the fighting was done, and then I let them carry me below to the cockpit, for walk by myself I could not.

"Some of our ships suffered dreadfully. The 'Monarch' lost two hundred and ten men, the 'Isis' a hundred and ten, and the 'Bellona' seventy-five, and all the other ships great numbers. At last, however, the Danes could stand it no longer, and ship after ship struck; but still the shore batteries kept firing on, and killed great numbers of men on board the prizes. One of their ships, the 'Danbrog,' after she had struck and was in flames, fired on our boats. Notwithstanding this, when she was seen drifting away before the wind, the fire gaining on her, Captain Bertie, of the 'Ardent,' sent his boats to the assistance of the poor fellows as they leaped out of the ports to escape the flames. At last Lord Nelson, wishing to put a stop to the carnage, wrote to the Crown Prince, the Danish commander, saying if he did not cease firing he must burn the prizes. A wafer was brought him. 'That will not do,' said he, 'we must not appear in a hurry; bring a candle and sealing-wax.' Captain Sir Frederick Thesiger, with a flag of truce, took the letter, and after some time the Danes sent one in return to arrange what was to be done, and the battle of Copenhagen, for so it was called, was over.

"While negotiations were going on, Lord Nelson ordered the ships to take advantage of a fair wind, and to start out of the narrow channels. As we in the 'Elephant' were going out we grounded, as did the 'Defiance,' about a mile from

the Trekroner battery, and there we remained for many hours. At last, however, we got off. We had to burn all our prizes except one ship, the 'Holstein,' 64, which was sent home. The next day Lord Nelson went on shore to visit the prince, and settle matters. He was received with great respect, and he told the Danes that he had never had a braver enemy, or known men fight better than they had done, and that now he hoped that they would all be friends again for ever after. Lord Nelson now returned to the 'Saint George,' and the fleet sailed to the eastward to look after the Swedes. We were off Bornholm, but the 'Saint George' could not get through a shallow channel which had to be passed, and was some twelve leagues astern of us. Every minute we expected to be engaged with the enemy. At midnight, who should step on board the 'Elephant' but Lord Nelson himself. The night was very cold, but he had come all that distance in an open boat without even a cloak, so eager was he to be present at the expected battle. None took place, and after a little time I was sent home invalided."

Volume One--Chapter Four.

"When I came home from the Baltic, I and others were landed at Yarmouth, and sent to the hospital. I was some time in getting well. I'll tell you what set me on my legs again. One day as I was lying on my bed in the crowded ward, thinking if I should ever recover, and be fit for sea again, the news came that a brig of war had entered the harbour with Lord Nelson on board. Would you believe it, I was thanking Heaven that our brave admiral had come back safe, and was in a half dreamy, dozing state, when I heard a cheer, and opening my eyes there he was himself going round from bed to bed, and talking to each of the men. He knew me at once, and told me that I must make haste and get well and join his ship, as it wouldn't be long probably before he again hoisted his flag.

"'You shall have any rating you like, remember that,' said he, taking my hand. 'We must have medals and prize-money for you; you have gallantly won them, all of you.'

"He passed on, for he had a kind word to say to many hundred poor fellows that day. When I got well I went home for a spell; but before long I heard that Lord Nelson had hoisted his flag as commander-in-chief of the channel squadron on board the 'Medusa' frigate. I went on board, and the admiral instantly rated me as quartermaster. We had plenty of work before us, for General Bonaparte, who was now Emperor of France, wanted to come and invade England. He had got a flotilla of gunboats all ready to carry over his army, and he had a large fleet besides. Many people thought he would succeed. We knew that the wooden walls of old England were her best defence, and so we afloat never believed that a French soldier would ever set foot on our shores.

"They had, however, a large flotilla in Boulogne harbour, and it was determined to destroy it with the boats of the squadron. I volunteered for one of our boats. The boats were in three divisions. We left the ships a little before midnight. It was very dark, and the divisions got separated. We knew that it was desperate work we were on. Ours was the only division which reached the harbour. There were batteries defending the place, and troops on the shore, and soldiers on board the flotilla, and the outer vessels were guarded with iron spikes, and had boarding nets triced up, and were lashed together. In we darted. It was desperate work, and the fire of the great guns and musketry soon showed our enemies to us, and us to them.

"'Just keep off, you brave Englishmen, you can do nothing here,' sung out a French officer in very plain English.

"'We'll try that!' was our reply, as we dashed on board, in spite of iron spikes and boarding nettings. On we went; we cut out several of the vessels, and were making off with them with loads of Frenchmen on board, when, would you believe it, if the enemy didn't open their fire on the boats, killing their own people as well as us. To my mind, those French, in war, are as bad as cannibals—that's what Lord Nelson always said of them. If it hadn't been for this we should have burned or captured most of them. While I was just springing on board another vessel, among the flashes from the guns, the flames and smoke, the hissing and rattling shot, I got a knock on my head which sent me back into the bottom of the boat. I knew nothing more till I found myself on board my own ship, and heard that we had lost some hundred and seventy poor fellows. I was sent to the hospital, where one of our gallant leaders, Captain Parker, died of his wounds.

"The next ship I found myself on board was the 'Victory.' There wasn't a finer ship in the navy, more weatherly or more handy—steered like a duck, and worked like a top. Lord Nelson himself got me appointed to her. Away we sailed for the Mediterranean. While Admiral Cornwallis watched the French fleet at Brest, we kept a look-out over that at Toulon under the command of Admiral La Touche Treville, who had commanded at Boulogne, and boasted that he had beat off Lord Nelson from that port. He could not boast, though, that he beat him off from Toulon; for, for eighteen long months, from the 1st of July, 1803, to the 11th of January, 1805, did we keep watch off that harbour's mouth. If such a gale sprung up as would prevent the French getting out, we went away, only leaving a frigate or so to watch what took place; but we were soon to be back again. Thus the time passed on. We saw the shore, but were not the better for it; for few of us, from the admiral downwards, ever set on it. At last the French admiral, La Touche Treville, died, and a new one, Admiral Villeneuve, was appointed. We now began to hope that the French would come out and fight as; for you see Lord Nelson did not want to keep them in—only to get at them when they came out. If it hadn't been for the batteries on shore, we should have gone in and brought them out. We had gone away to the coast of Sardinia, when news was brought that the French fleet was at sea. Instantly we got under weigh, passing at night through a passage so narrow that only one ship could pass at a time, and fully expecting the next morning to be engaged with the enemy. First we looked for them about Sicily; then after them we ran towards Egypt, and then back to Malta, where we heard that they had put into Toulon. Now, we kept stricter watch than ever, without a bulkhead up, and all ready for battle.

"It was on the 4th of April, that the 'Phoebe' brought us news that Admiral Villeneuve, with his squadron, had again slipped out of Toulon, and was steering for the coast of Africa. Frigates were sent out in every direction, to make sure that he had not gone eastward; and then after him we stood, towards the Straits of Gibraltar, but the wind was dead against us, and we had hard work to get there. I had never seen the admiral in such a taking before. We beat backwards and forwards against the head-wind, but all to no purpose—out of the Gut we could not get without a

leading-wind, and so we had to anchor off the Barbary coast: there we got supplies.

“At last, on the 5th of May, an easterly breeze sprung up, and away we went, with a flowing sheet, through the Straits. We called off Cadiz, and the coast of Portugal, and then bore away for the West Indies, where we heard the French had gone. We sighted Madeira, and made Barbadoes, then sailed for Tobago; and next we were off for the Gulf of Paria, all cleared for action, making sure that we should find the enemy there. We thought it would have killed the admiral when he found that he had been deceived. Back we sailed, and heard that the French had captured the Diamond Rock. You’ve heard about it. It’s a curious place, and was commissioned like a man-of-war. If it hadn’t been for false information, and if Lord Nelson had stuck to his own intentions, we should have caught the French up off Port Royal, and thrashed them just at the spot Lord Rodney thrashed Admiral de Grasse—so I’ve heard say. Well, at last, we found that the French had left the West Indies for Europe, so back across the Atlantic we steered; but though we knew we were close astern of them, they kept ahead of us, and at last we sighted Cape Spartel, and anchored the next day at Gibraltar.

“I know it for a fact, that it only wanted ten days of two years since Lord Nelson himself had last set his foot on shore. It was much longer than that since I and most on board had trod dry ground. That was serving our country, you’ll allow—most of the time, too, under weigh, battling with tempests, and broiling under the sun of the tropics.

“We victualled and watered at Tetuan, then once more stood to the west’ard—then back to Cadiz, and once more crossed the Bay of Biscay, thinking the enemy were bound for Ireland. Foul winds made the passage long. Once more the enemy had baffled us, and at last, when off Ushant, we received orders to return to Portsmouth to refit.

“That very fleet Sir Robert Calder fell in with on the 22nd of July, just thirty leagues westward of Cape Finisterre, and, although his force was much smaller, he captured two of their line-of-battle ships. It was a very gallant affair; but people asked, ‘What would Nelson have done?’ While the admiral was on shore we were busily employed in refitting the ‘Victory,’ while a number of other ships he had wished to have with him were got ready for sea. On the 14th of September he once more came aboard the ‘Victory,’ and hoisted his flag. The next day, we sailed for Cadiz. We arrived off that place on the 29th, where we found the squadron of Admiral Collingwood blockading the French and Spanish fleets under Admiral Villeneuve.

“What Lord Nelson wanted, you see, was to get the enemy out to fight him. He wanted also, not only to win a victory, but to knock the enemy’s ships to pieces, so that they could do no more harm. To get them out we had to cut off their supplies; so we had to capture all the neutral vessels which were carrying them in. You must understand we in the ‘Victory’ with the fleet did not go close into Cadiz, but kept some fifty or sixty miles off so that the enemy might not know our strength. We had some time to wait, however. Lord Nelson had already given the French and Spaniards such a taste of his way of going to work, that they were in no hurry to try it again. You’ll understand that there was a line of frigates, extending, like signal-posts, all the way from the fleet to the frigate cruising just off the mouth of the harbour—that is to say, near enough to watch what was going on there.

“Early in the morning on the 19th of October, the ‘Mars,’ the ship nearest the chain of frigates, repeated the signal that the enemy were leaving port, and, at two p.m., that they were steering S.E. On this Lord Nelson gave orders for the fleet to chase in that direction, but to keep out of sight of the enemy, fearful of frightening them back into port. Still, you’ll understand, the frigates kept in sight of them, and gave notice to the admiral of all their movements. The enemy had thirty-three sail of the line, and seven frigates, with above 4000 riflemen on board. Our fleet numbered only twenty-seven sail of the line, and four frigates. We were formed in two lines. Admiral Collingwood, in the ‘Royal Sovereign,’ led fourteen ships, and Lord Nelson, in the ‘Victory,’ eleven.

“On the morning of the 21st of October, 1805—you’ll not forget that day, it was a glorious one for England, let me tell you—we sighted the French and Spanish fleet from the deck of the ‘Victory’ off Cape Trafalgar. They were formed in a double line in a curve, one ship in the further line filling up the space left between the ships of the nearest line. They also were trying to keep the port of Cadiz under their lee, that they might escape to it. Lord Nelson determined to break the line in two places. We led the northern line with a light wind from the south-west. Admiral Collingwood led the southern, and got into action first, just astern of the ‘Santa Anna.’ We steered so as to pass between the ‘Bucentaur’ and the ‘Santissima Trinitade.’

“‘Well, there are a lot of the enemy,’ exclaimed Tom Collins to me, as I was standing near the gun he served.

“‘Yes, mate,’ said I; ‘and a pretty spectacle they will make at Spithead when we carry them there.’

“‘Ay, that they will,’ cried all who heard me, and I believe every man in the fleet felt as we did.

“We were watching all this time the magnificent way in which the brave and good Admiral Collingwood stood into action and opened his fire. That was about noon. There was a general cheer on board our ship and all the ships of the fleet. At our masthead flew a signal. We soon knew what it meant. It was—‘England expects that every man will do his duty.’ For nearly half an hour the noble Collingwood was alone among the ships of the enemy before any of his followers could come up. We, at the same time, had got within long range of the enemy. On we floated slowly, for the wind was very light, till at last our mainyard-arm was touching the gaff of the ‘Bucentaur,’ which ship bore the flag of Admiral Villeneuve; and though our guns were raking her and tearing her stern to pieces, we had ahead of us in the second line the ‘Neptune,’ which poured a heavy fire into our bows. Our helm was then put up, and we fell aboard the ‘Redoubtable,’ while the ‘Téméraire,’ Captain Blackwood, ranged up on the other side of her, and another French ship got alongside the ‘Téméraire.’ There we were all four locked together, pounding away at each other, while with our larboard guns we were engaging the ‘Bucentaur,’ and now and then getting a shot at the big Spaniard, the ‘Santissima Trinitade.’ Meantime our other ships had each picked out one or more of the enemy, and were hotly engaged with them. At the tops of all the enemy’s ships marksmen were stationed. The skylight of the admiral’s cabin had been boarded over. Here Lord Nelson and Captain Hardy were walking. More than one man had fallen near them. Mr Scott, the admiral’s secretary, had been struck down after we had been in action little more than an hour.

Suddenly as I turned my head I saw a sight which I would rather have died than have seen. Lord Nelson was just falling. He went on his knees, then rested on his arm for a moment, and it, too, giving way, he rolled over on his left side, before even Captain Hardy could run to save him. Captain Hardy had to remain on deck. I, with a sergeant of marines and another seaman, carried him below, covering his face with a handkerchief. We placed him in one of the midshipmen's berths. Then the surgeons came to him. We feared the worst, but it was not generally known what had happened. I can tell you I was glad enough to get on deck again. It was bad enough there to see poor fellows struck down alongside me, but the sights and sounds in the cockpit were enough to overcome the stoutest heart—to see fine strong fellows mangled and torn, struggling in their agony—to watch limb after limb cut off—to hear their groans and shrieks, and often worse, the oaths and imprecations of the poor fellows maddened by the terrible pain; and there lay our beloved chief mortally wounded in the spine, parched with thirst and heat, crying out for air and drink to cool the fever raging within. For two hours and a half there he lay suffering dreadful pain, yet eagerly inquiring how the battle was going. Twice Captain Hardy went below to see him; the first time to tell him that twelve of the enemy had struck; the last time that still more had given in, and that a few were in full flight, after whom our guns were still sending their shot. Thus Lord Nelson died at the moment the ever-to-be-remembered battle of Trafalgar was won.

"It was a sad voyage we had home, and great was the sorrow felt by all, from the highest to the lowest in the land, for the death of our beloved leader. I will not describe his funeral. It was very grand, that I know. Many of the old 'Victory's' attended his coffin to his grave in Saint Paul's Cathedral. When they were lowering his flag into the tomb—that flag which had truly so long and so gloriously waved in the battle and the breeze—we seized on it and tearing it in pieces, vowed to keep it as long as we lived, in remembrance of our noble chief. Here is my bit—see, I keep it safe in this case near my heart."

England's greatest military chief now lies by the side of one who had no equal on the ocean, in the heart of her metropolis. Within the walls of her finest cathedral, what more appropriate mausoleum could be found for Britain's two most valiant defenders, Heaven-sent surely in the time of her greatest need to defend her from the hosts of her vaunting foes.

Volume Two--Chapter One.

The Grateful Indian.

We cannot boast of many fine evenings in old England—dear old England for all that!—and when they do come they are truly lovely and worthy of being prized the more. It was on one of the finest of a fine summer that Mr Frampton, the owner of a beautiful estate in Devonshire, was seated on a rustic bench in his garden, his son Harry, who stood at his knee, looking up inquiringly into his face.

"Father," said Harry, "I have often heard you speak about the North American Indians—the Red men of the deserts. Do tell me how it is that you know so much about them—have you ever been in their country?"

"Yes, my boy; I passed several of the earlier years of my life in that part of North America which may truly be said to belong as yet to the red men, though as there are but some fifty thousand scattered over the whole central portion of it, it must be acknowledged that they do not make the best possible use of the territory they inhabit. A glance at the map of North America will show you where the Red River is, with its settlement founded by Lord Selkirk. I was very young when I went there with my father, my elder brother Malcolm, and John Dawes, a faithful servant who had been brought up in the family from childhood. John was a great sportsman, a most kind-hearted fellow, and could turn his hand to anything. We went through Canada to Lake Superior, and from thence it took us, by a chain of lakes and rivers, about twenty-five days to reach the banks of the Red River, I need not describe how we selected our ground, built a cottage, ploughed a field, and stocked our farm; we will suppose all these preliminaries over and our party permanently settled in our new home. I must tell you before I proceed a little about the Indians of this region."

Volume Two--Chapter Two.

There are different tribes. Some are called Crees, others Ojibways or Salteux, and these are constantly at war with the Sioux to the south, chiefly found across the United States boundary. There are also found on the prairies Assiniboines, Blackfeet, Bloodies, and others with scarcely more attractive names. All these people were at that time sunk in the most abject state of heathenism, and were constantly at war with each other. They were clothed chiefly in skins made into leather, ornamented with feathers and stained grass and beads. The tents of the prairie Indians were of skins, and those of the Indians who inhabit the woods of birch bark. Many had rifles, but others were armed only with bows and spears, and the dreadful scalping-knife. Of these people the Sioux bore the worst character, and were the great enemies of the half-bred population of the settlements. These halfbreds, as they are called, are descended from white fathers and Indian mothers. There are some thousands of them in the settlements, and they live chiefly by hunting and fishing, and retain many Indian customs and habits of life. Such was the strangely mixed community among whom we found ourselves.

The autumn was coming on, and the days were shortening, but the weather was very fine—sharp frosts at night, though warm enough, yet bracing, with a bright sky and pure atmosphere during the day. Sometimes a light silvery mist or haze hung over the landscape. Such is the Indian summer, the most delightful period of the year in North America.

The day's work was over, and while my brother and I were preparing the table, and Sam Dawes was cooking the supper, we were startled by a loud and peculiar shout, or rather shriek. Our father, who had been sitting reading, started up, and taking his rifle from the wall, turned to the door. Sam, quitting his frying-pan, also took down his rifle

and followed with us. In the distance was an Indian decked with war paint and feathers bounding over the ground towards us, while further off were five or six more, as if in hot pursuit of the first.

“That first fellow is an Ojibway by his adornments, and a young man by the way he runs,” observed Sam. “He’s seeking protection here, that’s poz.”

“And he shall enjoy it, though we should have to fight for him,” observed my father warmly. “We must teach the Red men that we always protect those in distress.”

The fugitive came on at great speed. He was flying for his life. His pursuers, however, were gaining on him. They had fire-arms in their hands, but did not use them.

“They have exhausted their powder,” observed my father. “That is fortunate.”

The young Indian was within fifty yards of us. We could see the gleam of the scalping knives which his foes had drawn, thirsting for his blood. He bounded on up to the door of the hut and fell exhausted within. Then for the first time his pursuers perceived that we stood armed at the entrance. Guessing truly that we possessed plenty of ammunition, and two or more of their number might fall if they attempted to advance, they paused, casting glances of disappointed vengeance to wards their victim, who lay unconscious behind us. Our father told Malcolm and me to take him in and to try and revive him. We did so, and when we had moistened his lips with water he quickly revived. Springing up he seized Malcolm’s gun and hurried to the door. The other Indians had not moved. On seeing him, however, they instantly darted behind some trunks of trees for shelter, and then we saw them darting away till they got beyond range of our fire-arms. The young Indian would have followed, but my father restrained him, and gave him to understand that though he had saved his life he had no intention of allowing him to take the lives of others. Darkness was coming on, and we soon lost sight of the band. Having closed our door with more than usual care, we placed food before our guest, of which he eagerly partook, and then told us that his name was Sigenok; that he with others of his tribe had been out hunting, and had been surprised by a war party of Sioux, who had taken the scalps of all the rest. He had wandered away unarmed from the camp when he saw all his companions killed. To revenge them, which the Indian thought was his first duty, was then impossible, so he took to flight, hoping to retaliate on another occasion. His wary foes, however, discovered his trail and followed. He had caught sight of them when they were not aware of it, and redoubled his speed, making for the settlements. He gave us to understand that he could not have continued his flight many more hours, and that he was very grateful to us for preserving his life. We had brought a dog from England, and we had lately got another, both very sagacious animals, and so we stationed them outside the hut at a little distance to give us due notice should the Sioux return.

Sigenok, as soon as he had satisfied his hunger, praying his confidence in us, laid himself down in a corner of the room and was immediately fast asleep. He spent two days with us to recover his strength, which had been greatly tried, and then set off to carry to his tribe the sad tidings of the loss of their friends. For an Indian he was a good-looking young man, and decked with his war paint and feathers he had a picturesquely savage appearance.

Volume Two--Chapter Three.

The winter came—we did not feel the cold so much as we expected—it passed on and spring approached. We were looking forward to the pleasures of summer and to a buffalo hunt which we had promised ourselves, when, after finding the heat unusually great at night, on rising in the morning, loud cracks in the ice were heard, and we discovered that a thaw had commenced. We were surprised at the rapidity with which the snow melted, and the low shrubs and the green grass appeared, and long dormant Nature seemed to be waking up to life. “How jolly,” exclaimed Malcolm; “we shall soon be able to paddle about in our canoe; we may as well have a look at her to see that she is in order.”

We had a supply of gum with which to cover up the seams as the Indians do, and our canoe was soon fit for launching.

“We must look to the plough and our spades,” remarked our father; “we shall speedily be able to get in our seeds.”

Perhaps Sam Dawes thought more of his fishing lines and nets and guns.

The next day an Indian coming up from the lake told us that there was an extraordinary accumulation of ice at the mouth of the river, which had begun to swell, with an impetuous torrent, carrying vast masses along with it. Speedily it rose higher and higher, the waters came up the bank and then filled the narrow gully which usually discharged water into it after rain, but now carried its waters backward into the plain.

“It will soon subside,” observed our father. “That current will soon carry away the barriers at the month.” So we all went as usual to bed.

The next morning when we looked out we were on an island. The water covered our field and the greater part of the garden round the house. Between us and the house of the nearest settler to the south was one sheet of water, while to the north not an habitation was visible. We made out at the distance of a mile our neighbour and his family crossing in a large boat to the hills on the east. “We may possibly have to follow his example,” observed our father; “but I hope that the waters may decrease before that becomes necessary.”

The sheep and cows were now collecting of their own accord in the garden, and we had to drive up the pigs, whose sty was threatened with submersion. The scene was truly one of desolation as we looked beyond our own homestead; trunks of trees and palings, and now and then a haystack, and barns, and parts of houses, and occasionally whole dwellings came floating by, showing what ravages the flood must have committed above us. Malcolm and I agreed that it was fortunate we had repaired our canoe. As the waters extended, the current in the

river was less strong. Our father observed this. "My sons," he said, "freight your canoe with the tent and some provisions, and take this case of books, and go off to the hills. Should the waters increase return for Sam and me; we must remain to look after the cattle. Mounted on our horses we shall be able to drive them to yonder rising ground on the south-west."

He pointed to a slight elevation, between which and us he considered that the water was not more than one foot and a-half deep. Accustomed to obey without question, Malcolm and I, having loaded our canoe with as many valuables as she could possibly carry, prepared to cross to the eastern hills, hoping that our father and Sam would start at once with the cattle towards the more remote but seemingly more accessible ground to the west. Just as we were shoving off he remarked—

"The water has not risen lately; we may still avoid a remove. Heaven prosper you, my dear boys."

We hoped that his words would prove true—the sky was bright, the water smooth, and it was difficult to believe that there was any danger. Malcolm and I were expert with the use of the paddle, but in crossing the river we were swept down some way, and narrowly escaped staving in the canoe against stumps of trees or palings and remnants of buildings. We persevered, however, and at length reached the eastern hills, or the mountains as they were called. Here we found our neighbour and several other families encamped. He told us that he had driven his cattle off on the first day, and wished that we had done the same. The waters did not appear to be rising, though we looked with anxiety towards our home; but it was too small a speck to be visible among the wide expanse of waters at the distance we were from it. We had put up our tent and were intending to occupy it, when we recollected that there were several of the other settlers' wives and daughters without so good a covering, so we went and begged them to occupy it, while we slept under our canoe.

The night was bright and starlight, but we could not sleep much for thinking of our father and Sam Dawes. We resolved as early as we could see in the morning to go back to them. We were awoke early in the morning by a peculiar murmuring and hollow sound. As soon as it was daylight we looked out over the flooded country.

We asked others if they had heard the noise. They replied that they had, and that it was caused by the water rushing over the land. "Then the flood must have increased," exclaimed Malcolm and I with anxiety.

"No doubt about it, boys," was the unsatisfactory reply.

We were for starting off immediately, but one of the farmer's wives, to whom we had given up our tent, insisted on preparing some breakfast for us, and in putting a supply of food into our canoe.

"It is a long voyage, my boys, and you do not know what you may require before you return," she observed.

We paddled on very anxiously. We had only the line of eastern hills we were leaving and some high land to the south to guide us, but we thought that we could not help hitting upon the spot where our abode stood. For a long way we paddled on easily enough, only taking care not to run against stumps of trees, and as we got nearer the settlement, stakes or ruined buildings were our chief danger. Too many evidences met us on either side that the water had increased considerably since the previous day. In vain our eyes ranged around, in no direction was our cottage visible. We must have mistaken the locality. The current was here very strong, we thought that we might have drifted down further than we had calculated on doing. We went further west, and then steered south, where the current was less strong. After going some way, Malcolm stopped paddling suddenly, and exclaimed—

"Look, Harry! look there! Do you know that tree?"

"Its head is very like one that grows close to the house," I answered.

We had both mechanically turned the head of the canoe in the direction in which he pointed. We had been engaged in fastening a flag-staff to the tree near our house. A minute would decide whether this was it. Our hearts sank within us, our paddles almost dropped from our hands, when we perceived among the bare branches the rope and the pole which we had been about to erect. Where was our cottage? where our kind father and the faithful Sam? Not a vestige of the cottage remained, it had too evidently been carried away by the flood.

"Had they been able to escape with the cattle?" was the question we asked each other. We hoped they might; but still it was too possible that our father would have persisted in remaining in the house, as a sailor will by his ship, to the last, and Sam we knew, would never have deserted him. We could just distinguish the heads of some strong palings above the water, marking the position of our cottage. We made fast to the tree for a few minutes to rest and recover ourselves, and to consider what course to pursue. We naturally turned our eyes towards the rising ground in the south-west, to which our father intended to drive the cattle. It seemed a long, long way off, still we determined to attempt to reach it. We felt thankful that the farmer's wife had supplied us with provisions, though we were too anxious just then to be hungry. We left the tree and paddled on, but it was very hard work, for there was a current against us setting towards Lake Winnipeg; but the canoe was light, and as there was no wind we managed to stem it. Hitherto the sky had been bright, and there had been a perfect calm, but as we paddled on we saw clouds rising above the high ground for which we were steering. They rose, and rose, and then rushed across the sky with fearful rapidity, and the water ahead of us, hitherto bright and clear, seemed turned into a mass of foam, which came sweeping up towards us.

"We cannot face it," exclaimed Malcolm. "Quick, quick, about with the canoe, we must run before it."

We were hardly in time. The blast very nearly upset the canoe, and we had to throw our whole weight over on the side the wind struck her, to prevent this, as she spun round like a top, and away we flew before it. All we could do was to keep the canoe before the wind, and to steer her clear of logs of wood or stumps of trees, against which she might have been cut and knocked to pieces.

"But where are we going?" we asked ourselves. "If we continue thus, we may be driven into Lake Winnipeg, and hurled among the masses of ice which are dashing about on its waters."

We thought still more about our father and Sam. How disappointed they would be, should they have reached the dry land when the storm came on, and they knew that we could not get to them. But our attention, I must own, was soon concentrated on our own situation. The rain fell in torrents, sufficient of itself almost to swamp our light canoe, while the thunder roared and the lightning darted from the sky, filling my heart, at all events, with terror. I felt both awe-struck and alarmed, and could scarcely recover myself sufficiently to help Malcolm. He was far less moved, and continued guiding the canoe with his former calmness. At last I could not help crying out—

"Oh, Malcolm, how is it that you cannot see our danger?"

"I do, Harry, clearly," he answered gravely; "but we are in the performance of our duty, and God will take care of us."

His words and tone made an impression on me which I have never forgotten. When dangers have surrounded me, I have asked myself, "Am I engaged in the performance of my duty? then why need I fear, God will protect me. He always has protected me." The grandest receipt for enabling a person to be truly brave, is that he must ever walk on in the strict line of duty.

We were driving northward at a fearful rate, for the rapidity of the current was greatly increased by the wind. We wished that we could get back to our oak tree, as we might make fast to its branches, but it was nowhere visible. To have paddled against the gale would have only exhausted our strength to no purpose. As Malcolm found that he could guide the canoe without me, he told me to bail out the water. As I turned round to do so, I shouted with joy, for I thought I saw a large boat under full sail coming down towards us. On it came, much faster than we were driving; but as it drew near, it looked less and less like a boat, till to my bitter disappointment I discovered that it was a large haystack which had been floated bodily away. At length just before us appeared a clump of trees, and we hoped that the ground on which they stood might be out of water. Malcolm steered towards the spot. We might remain there till the storm was over. The trees bent with the wind, and it appeared as if they could not possibly stand. We approached the spot perhaps with less caution than we had before employed. Suddenly the canoe spun round, a large rent appeared in her bows, over she went, and we were thrown struggling into the water. Before we could regain the canoe she had floated far away, and not without a severe struggle did we succeed in reaching the land. We climbed up by, some bushes, and found ourselves on the summit of a little knoll rising out of the water, and not comprising more than fifty square yards. Our first impulse was to look-out to see what had become of our canoe, and we stood watching it with a bewildered gaze as it floated away half filled with water. It was not till it had disappeared in the distance that we remembered—it had contained all our provisions. That was bad enough, but we had never experienced hunger, and did not know how long we might exist without food. What appeared, then worse was, that the waters were rising round our island, and we might soon have no dry spot on which to rest our feet. We might climb up into the trees, but we had seen other trees washed away, and such might be the fate of these our last refuge. The day wore on, the storm ceased, and the weather again became calm and beautiful. I now grew excessively hungry, and cried very much, and felt more wretched than I had ever done before. Malcolm, who bore up wonderfully, tried to comfort me, and suggested that we should hunt about for roots or underground nuts such as we had seen the Indians eat. We fortunately had our pocket knives, and with these we dug in all directions, till we came upon some roots which looked tempting, but then we remembered that we had no means of kindling a fire to cook them, nor could we tell whether they were poisonous or not. The hunt had given us occupation, and prevented us for a time from dwelling on our misfortunes.

We then tried every device we could think of to kindle a fire, for we wished to dry our clothes, if we could not cook our roots. None of our attempts succeeded, and Malcolm suggested that we should run round and round our island to try and warm ourselves before night came on. At last I felt very sleepy, and so did Malcolm, but he said that he would let me sleep first while he watched, lest the waters should rise and carry us away before we had time to climb up a tree.

I lay down and was asleep in a minute, and when I awoke the stars were shining out brightly through the branches of the trees, the young grass blades reflecting them on their shining surfaces, while I saw my good brother still walking up and down keeping guard over me. The noise of the rushing waters sounded in my ears and made me desire to go to sleep again, but I aroused myself, ashamed that I had slept so long, and urged my brother to lie down.

"No, Harry," he answered, "I wished you to get as much rest as possible; but look there, we shall soon be obliged to climb a tree for refuge."

Walking a few paces, I found that the water had greatly encroached on our island; a southerly wind had begun to blow, which sent large waves rolling in on us.

"Should the wind increase, they will completely sweep over where we stand," I exclaimed. "Oh, Malcolm, what shall we do?"

"Trust in God," he replied calmly. "From how many dangers has He not already preserved us. But remember, our father has often told us that it is our business while praying to God for help, to exert ourselves, and so let us at once try and find a tree we can climb quickly in case of necessity, and whose boughs will afford us a resting-place."

I loved Malcolm dearly. I admired him now more than ever, and was ready to do whatever he wished. We soon found a tree up which we could help each other. The wind howled and whistled through the trees, the waves lashed the shore furiously, and Malcolm had just time to shove me up the tree, when one larger than the rest swept completely over the ground on which we had been standing, with a force sufficient to have carried us off with it. We had seated ourselves among the branches, which waved to and fro in the wind, and as we looked down, we saw the water foaming round the trunk, and often it seemed as if it must be uprooted and sent drifting down with the current.

Malcolm said that he felt very sleepy, and told me that if I would undertake to hold him on, he would rest for a few minutes. I gladly promised that I would do as he wished, but asked him how he could think of sleeping while the tempest was raging round us.

"Why, Harry, we are as safe up here as on the ground," he answered, in his usual sweet tone of voice, "God is still watching over us!"

I need scarcely say how tightly I held on to his clothes, trembling lest he should fall. I felt no inclination to go to sleep, indeed I soon found that I must have slept the greater part of the night, for before Malcolm again opened his eyes, I observed the bright streaks of dawn appearing over the distant hills in the east. Daylight quickly came on. It was again perfectly calm, and on looking down, we could see the blades of grass rising above the water. Malcolm woke up, saying that he felt much better. Looking down below us, he said that he thought the water had decreased since he went to sleep. He might have been right, I could not tell.

At that moment there was only one thing I thought of, the pain I was suffering from hunger. "I shall die! I shall die!" I exclaimed. Malcolm cheered me up.

"Help will come though we cannot now see how," he observed; "God will protect us. Trust in Him."

Still I felt that I should die. It is very difficult to sustain gnawing hunger, such as I then felt for the first time. I have no doubt that Malcolm felt the same, but he was too brave to show it. Hour after hour passed by; the water did not appear to be rising; the blades of grass were still seen below us round the tree. I however felt that I could not endure many more hours of suffering. "I must fall, indeed I must," I cried out over and over again. I should indeed have let go my hold, had not my brave brother kept me up. Even he at last showed signs of giving way, and spoke less encouragingly than before. He was silent for some time. I saw him looking out eagerly, when he exclaimed—

"Cheer up, Harry, there is a canoe approaching; it will bring us help."

I gazed in the direction towards which he pointed. At first I could only see a speck on the water. It grew larger and more distinct, till I could see that it was certainly a canoe. Then we discovered that there were two Indians in it. We shouted, but our voices sounded shrill and weak. The Indians heard us, for they waved their paddles and turned the head of the canoe towards the clump of trees. The canoe could not get under the tree, but one of the Indians jumped out, and Malcolm told me to slide down. The Indian caught me and carried me in his arms to the canoe, for I was too weak to walk. Malcolm followed, and the Indian helped him along also. It was not till we had been placed in the canoe that we recognised in our preserver the young Indian, Sigenok, whose life we had saved. We pronounced his name. He gave a well-satisfied smile.

"Ah, you have not forgotten me, nor I you," he said in his own language. "Favours conferred bind generous hearts together. Sigenok guessed that you were in distress. Your elder brother has long been looking for you."

It appeared that Sigenok had been at a distance hunting when the flood commenced; that he had hastened back, and soon perceiving from the height the water had attained that our house was in danger, had embarked in his canoe and hastened toward it, but on his nearing the spot found that it had been swept away. Guessing that we had escaped to the eastern hills, he paddled there, when our friends told him that we had proceeded in search of our father and servant. Having ascertained the exact time of our departure, with the wonderful powers of calculation possessed by Red men, he had decided the events which had occurred and the course we had pursued, and was thus able to look for us in the right direction. Had he not found us there, he would have visited other places which he mentioned, where we might have taken refuge. As he was leaving the hills the farmer's wife had given him a supply of food for us, and on his producing it our hunger was soon satisfied. We now told him of our anxiety about our father and Sam Dawes. He listened attentively, and then shook his head.

"They and the cattle never reached the hills," he observed. "We will search for them. There are still some hours of daylight. If the house has held together, they will be found much further down than this."

I fancied by the Indian's manner that his hopes were slight. We now shoved off from the little island which had afforded us so valuable a refuge, and Sigenok and his companion paddled off at a rapid rate to the north. Anxious as I was, I soon fell asleep, and so I believe did Malcolm for a short time. I was aroused by a shout from Sigenok. I lifted up my head and saw a dark object in the distance rising above the water.

"It is our house!" exclaimed Malcolm, "Sigenok says so. Oh, that our father may be there!"

We kept our eyes anxiously fixed on the distant object. It was growing dusk. Malcolm said that he saw something moving on it.

"Man there, alive!" observed Sigenok.

Our hopes were raised; but he spoke only of one man. How long the time appeared occupied in reaching the spot! Even through the gloom we could now distinguish the outline of our log hut, which had grounded on a bank among some strong fences and brushwood, and was now fixed securely, partly tilted over.

"Who is there? who is there?" we shouted. "Father, father! we are Malcolm and Harry!"

"Woe's me, young masters, your father is not here," said a voice which, hollow and husky as it was, we recognised as that of Sam Dawes. We were soon up to our hut, to the roof of which Sam was clinging. The Indians lifted him into the canoe, for he had scarcely strength to help himself.

"But our father, Sam! our father!" we exclaimed. "Where is he? what has happened?"

"He no speak till he eat," observed Sigenok, after he had secured the canoe to the hut.

We took the hint, and gave him some food. In a short time he revived, and told us that our father, after we went away, would not believe that the water would rise higher, and that they had retired to rest as usual, when they were awoken by the sound of the water rushing round the house; that they both ran out and mounted their horses to drive off the cattle, as had been arranged. Our father took the lead, urging on before him the cows and horses, while he followed with the sheep, when his horse fell and he was thrown into a deep hole. As he scrambled out, the current took him off his legs. He was nearly drowned, but after floundering about for some time, he found himself carried up against the hut. He immediately climbed to the roof and shouted as loud as he could in the hopes of recalling our father, but there was no answer. Again and again he shouted. He tried to pierce the gloom which still hung over the land, though it was nearly morning. He felt a wish to leap off and try and follow his master, but what had become of his horse he could not ascertain. The waters were increasing round the cottage. He felt it shake violently, when, to his horror, it lifted and floated bodily away. The logs had been put together in a peculiar manner, dove-tailed into each other, which accounted for this. He told us how forlorn and miserable he felt, without another human being in sight, believing that his master was lost, uncertain as to our fate, and that he himself was hurrying to destruction. More than once he felt inclined to drop off the roof, but love of life, or rather a sense of the wickedness of so doing, prevailed, and he clung on till the hut grounded where we found it.

We were now in as secure a place as any we could find in the neighbourhood, and so Sigenok proposed seeking some necessary rest before continuing our search. We proposed going into the house to sleep, but we found that our bed-places had been carried away, and so, of course, had every particle of furniture, as the bottom of the hut had literally come out. We therefore returned to the canoe to sleep. At early dawn we once more paddled south. There was little current and a perfect calm. The waters, too, were subsiding, for several slight elevations, before submerged, were now visible. After paddling for many hours, we reached the south-western hills I have before described. Several settlers were there, but no one had seen our father. We crossed back to the eastern hills before night-fall. There were no tidings of him there. The flood subsided, and we, like others, set off to return to the now desolate site of our former abode. Sigenok conveyed us in his canoe, and we pitched our tent on the very spot our hut had occupied. In vain we searched for our father, in vain we made inquiries of other settlers, no one had seen him. Day after day we waited, thinking that he might have been swept downward with the flood clinging to a piece of timber or some other floating body, and that he might as yet be unable to return. Sam Dawes looked more and more sad when we spoke of his return. Sigenok, who had remained by us, shook his head. "He gone, no come back," he observed. Our hearts sank within us as the sad truth forced itself on our minds that we were orphans.

Volume Two--Chapter Four.

Long we continued to hope against hope. Neither was our father's body, nor were any of the cattle he was driving off ever discovered. The current must have swept them down into Lake Winnipeg.

"I aint much of a person for it, young masters," said Sam Dawes, taking a hand of each of us and looking at us affectionately, "but I loves ye as sons, and I'll be in the place of a father, that I will."

Faithfully did Sam Dawes keep his word.

"Grief is right and does us good in the end, depend on't, or it wouldn't be sent; but it mustn't make us forget duty. Now you see it is our duty to live, and we can't live without food, and we can't get food without we work, so let's turn to and plough and sow the ground."

This proposal may seem like mockery, but among the valuables placed by our father in the canoe was a good supply of seed corn and other seeds, and we had discovered our plough driven deep into the ground. Sigenok disappeared the moment he understood our intentions, and Sam looked very blank, and said that he feared he did not like work and had gone off.

"I think not," observed Malcolm; and he was right. In a few hours Sigenok returned two horses and several hides well tanned, and needles, and fibre for thread. I thought Sam would have hugged him, he was so delighted. Without loss of time they set to work and cut out a set of harness, and, lighting a lamp, seated at the entrance to our tent, laboured at it the greater part of the night, Malcolm and I helping as far as we could. Sam made us go to sleep, but as I looked up they were still at work, and when I awoke in the morning it was finished. The horses were a little restive, evidently not being accustomed to ploughing, but they obeyed Sigenok's voice in a wonderful way, though it was necessary in the first place to teach him what ought to be done. It is said by some that Indians will not labour. I have reason to know that they will when they have a sufficient motive. Sigenok showed this. His motive was gratitude to us, and affection excited by compassion. No white man would have laboured harder. When the wheat and Indian corn was in the ground, he with his horses helped Sam and us to bring in stuff for fencing and to put it up. All this time he slept outside our tent, under shelter of a simple lean-to of birch bark. Another day he disappeared, and we saw him in the evening coming up the river towing some timber. He brought a heavy log up on his shoulders. "There is part of your house," he observed, "we can get the rest in time."

So we did; we borrowed a large boat, and taking advantage of a northerly wind, we brought up, piece by piece, the whole of our hut, which had grounded near the banks of the river. Our neighbours, in spite of the value of their time to themselves, came and helped us, and we very soon had our hut over our heads, though, excepting the articles we had saved in the canoe, we had no furniture remaining.

"Sigenok live here with you," observed our Indian friend.

"Of course; very glad," we answered, thinking he intended to take up his abode in our hut.

We had arranged that morning to go to the Fort (Fort Garry, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company) to obtain flour and other articles. We were not without money, for our father had put his desk in the canoe, and in it we found a sum of money, considerable for our wants. On our return from the Fort, we found that Sigenok had erected close to our door an Indian wigwam. It was simple of construction. It consisted of about a dozen long poles stuck in the ground in a circle, and fastened together at the top so as to make the figure of a cone. Against these poles were placed large slabs of birch bark, in layers, which, having a tendency to regain their circular form, cling round the cone, and are further secured with bands of fibre. In the centre is the fire, while the smoke escapes through an opening left in the top; some mats on the ground, and some lines stretched across on which clothes or other articles can be hung up, form the chief furniture of these wigwams. To these may be added a bundle of hides or mats, and an iron pot.

We had purchased some bedding at the Fort, and Sam and Malcolm soon knocked up some rough furniture, which served our purpose. We should often have been on short commons had not Sam and Sigenok been expert fishermen, so that we were never without an ample supply of white-fish, or gold-eyes, or sturgeon.

"This very well," observed Sigenok. "Fish very good, but in winter buffalo better."

"Will you help us to go and hunt the buffalo, then?" we both exclaimed.

Sigenok nodded; it was what he had proposed to himself that we should do. Although a wood Indian, he had connections among the prairie Indians, and from living with them had become a good rider and expert hunter. Sam did not like our going; he was afraid some accident might happen to us, but he had not the heart to tell us so. He was to remain at home to take care of the farm. Sigenok procured two other horses, one for himself, and another to drag a light cart which we bought, made entirely of wood. It was laden with our tent and provisions, and our rifles and powder and shot. We felt in high spirits when we were ready to start, and wishing Sam an affectionate farewell, set off to join a large band of hunters proceeding to the plains. There were nearly three hundred men, besides their wives and children. The greater number were half-breeds, but there were also a large body of Indians, among whom we found Sigenok's relatives, who received us in the most cordial manner, and told us that we should be their brothers, that our friends should be their friends, and our foes their foes. The half-breeds had nearly five hundred carts, each with a distinguishing flag; and there must have been even a larger number of hunters, all mounted. Their tents, or lodges, are formed of dressed buffalo-skins. They are pitched in a large circle, with the carts outside; and when in a hostile country, with the animals in the centre, otherwise they feed outside the circle. They have a captain, and regular officers under him; and a flag hoisted on a pole in the centre serves as a signal. When hauled down, it is a sign that the march is to be continued. When the whole body was on the move, it reminded us of a caravan in the East, with the long line of carts winding along over the plain, and the horsemen galloping about on either side.

For several days we travelled on without seeing any buffalo, till one day, soon after we had camped, notice was brought by the scouts that a large herd were in the neighbourhood. All was now excitement and preparation in the camp. Sigenok called us early in the morning, and, after a hasty breakfast, in high spirits we mounted our horses, and accompanied the band of hunters. We made a wide circuit, so as to let the wind blow from the buffaloes towards us. I should tell you that the animal denominated the buffalo by the North Americans is what is properly called the bison by naturalists. They roam in vast herds over the interior of America, from Mexico as far north as the large river Saskatchewan and Lake Winnipeg. We rode on, drawing nearer and nearer, till, as we ascended a slight elevation, we saw over it on the plain on the other side a vast herd of big-headed, dark, hairy monsters, more buffaloes than I supposed existed on the whole continent. They were feeding quietly, as if not aware of the approach of foes. Our captain, an experienced hunter, rode along the ranks commanding silence, directing every man to look to his arms, and exhorting the novices not to shoot each other, a danger which might justly be apprehended. Each hunter now ascertained that his rifle was loaded, and then filled his mouth with bullets—a ready-at-hand pouch, that he might the more quickly drop them into his piece. I was afraid of following this example, for fear of the bullets dropping down my throat or of my gun bursting. Malcolm and I kept close to Sigenok. He told us to do what he did, not to lose sight of him, assuring us that our horses understood hunting perfectly. Our hearts beat with eagerness. We had now got near enough, in the opinion of our leader, to charge. The signal was given, and at headlong speed the band of huntsmen dashed in among the astonished animals. The buffaloes fled in all directions, the horsemen following, firing right and left, and loading again with extraordinary rapidity, seldom missing; and as each animal fell, the hunter who had killed it dropped some article of his dress, or other mark, by which he might distinguish it.

It was the most exciting scene in which I was ever engaged—the hunters, so lately a dense and orderly body, were now scattered far and wide over the plain, many miles apart, in pursuit of the buffaloes; some terror-stricken, others infuriated to madness. Sigenok had killed five or six, and Malcolm had also, much to our gratification, killed one, though I had not been so successful, from nervousness, I fancy; when the Indian being at some distance, as we were in full chase of another buffalo, a huge bull started out from behind a knoll, and rushed towards us. My brother's horse started at the unexpected sight, and putting his foot into a badger hole, stumbled, and threw him over his head. The faithful animal stood stock still, but on came the bull. I shrieked out to Malcolm to leap on his horse and fly, but he was stunned, and did not hear me. The bull was not twenty paces from him; in another instant he would have been gored to death. I felt thankful that I had not before fired. Raising my rifle to my shoulder, I pulled the trigger, the huge animal was within ten paces of him; over it went, then rose on its knees, and struggled forward. I galloped up to Malcolm, who was beginning to recover his senses. With a strength I did not fancy I possessed I dragged him up, and helped him on his horse just before the monster fell over the spot where he had lain, and would have crushed him with his weight. By the time Sigenok returned, the buffalo was dead. He highly praised me when he heard what had occurred, but said that we had had hunting enough that day, and that he would now summon his people to take possession of the animals we had killed. The skins are called robes, and are valued as articles of trade, being taken by the fur traders and sent to Canada, England, Russia, and other parts of the world. Parts of the flesh of the slain animals was carried into the camp for immediate consumption, but the larger portion was prepared forthwith in a curious way for keeping. The meat is first cut into thin slices and dried in the sun, and these slices are then pounded between two stones till the fibres separate. This pounded meat is then mixed with melted fat, about fifty pounds of the first to forty pounds of the latter, and while hot is pressed into buffalo-skin bags, when it forms a hard, compact mass. It is now called pemmican, from *pemmi*, meat, and *ken*, fat, in the Cree language. One pound of this mixture is

considered as nutritious as two of ordinary meat, and it has the advantage of keeping for years through all temperatures.

Volume Two--Chapter Five.

Soon after the grand hunting-day I have described, our scout brought word that a party of Sioux were in the neighbourhood. Our fighting-men attacked them and killed several. A scalp-dance took place, and other orgies which I will not describe. I was so horrified with what I saw, that I agreed with Malcolm that we would get back to the settlements as soon as we could. We expressed our wish to Sigenok, and he promised to return with us on the following day. Malcolm's great wish was to withdraw Sigenok from his savage companions, and to induce him to settle down as a civilised man and a Christian. We talked to him on the subject, but he replied, that he had been all his life accustomed to hunting and fighting, and that he could not abandon them. The next day we set out, leaving the larger body of Indians still encamped.

We had travelled on for two days, when the belief being entertained that we had no enemies to fear, there was less than the usual caution observed by the natives in our march. We were passing through a sparsely wooded country, I was in advance with Sigenok, while Malcolm and several young Indians, whose interest he wished to excite by descriptions of England and the wonders of the civilised world, brought up the rear, at a considerable distance. Suddenly Sigenok stopped, the crack of a rifle was heard, several others followed. "The Sioux!" he exclaimed, turning round his horse. "Quick! quick! our friends are attacked." No other order was required; keeping close to him we all galloped back the way we had come, getting our rifles ready for action as we proceeded. A terrible anticipation of misfortune seized me as I thought of Malcolm, and the fate which might have overtaken him. Still he and his companions might be defending themselves, and we should be in time to rescue them. My heart sunk when the firing ceased. I knew that the Sioux would not have attacked the party unless greatly superior in numbers, and I dreaded that all was over, and that having slaughtered their victims they had retired victorious. Sigenok might have thought the same, for he sent out scouts on either side, and advanced with greater caution than before, though still at a rapid pace. We pulled up at an open glade. Sad was the sight which met our eyes. On every side were strewed the bodies of our companions, all denuded of their scalps. I almost fell fainting from my horse. I dreaded to find the body of my dear brother among them; still I eagerly hurried on to ascertain his fate. He was not to be found among the slain. My hopes slightly revived. He might have escaped and be concealed somewhere near, or he might have been carried off as a prisoner. My blood ran cold when I thought of this latter possibility, for I had heard of the horrible mode in which the Red men tortured their prisoners, and I dreaded lest such should be the lot of my poor brother. The rage and fury of the Indians at finding that their friends had thus been cut off was terrific, and their threats of vengeance terrible.

I had hitherto, till this expedition, seen the Red men only under more favourable aspects. I now perceived what they could become when excited by passion. Still the loss of my brother made me anxious that they should immediately undertake an expedition which might result in his recovery. I saw the Indians examining the ground round on every side, and they soon pronounced an opinion that the party who had attacked their friends did not equal them in numbers, and would not have succeeded had they not lain in ambush and taken them by surprise. We must have passed close to the Sioux, but in consequence of the superiority of our numbers they were afraid to attack us. A council was immediately held; the principal men spoke, and various plans were suggested. The result of them was, that it was determined to form a camp on the spot, while twenty well-mounted warriors should go in pursuit of the Sioux, I entreated Sigenok to allow me to accompany him. "You are young for warfare, but your heart is strong—you shall go," he answered. No time was to be lost. It was of great consequence to follow up the foe so rapidly that they might not be prepared for our approach. A hurried meal was taken, and each warrior furnishing himself with a supply of pemmican for several days, we immediately set off. Three men, on foot, always kept ahead to act as scouts and to feel the way, while their horses were led by the rest, and when the first were tired others took their places. The Sioux must have retreated very rapidly, for two whole days passed, and though my friends assured me we were on the right trail, we had not overtaken them. I was almost in despair, and began to doubt that, even if Malcolm was alive, he could be with them. I had just expressed my fears to Sigenok when one of the scouts came hurrying back and exhibited a tag—the end of a boot-lace, such as my brother had worn. This Sigenok considered a sure sign that Malcolm was with them. My eagerness, therefore, increased to overtake them, but the Indians assured me that great caution was requisite, and that instead of going faster, it might be necessary to go slower. This is often the case I have since found in other affairs of life.

More scouts were now sent out and still greater caution used. It was the intention of my companions, if possible, to make the onslaught on the camp of their foes at night. All depended, however, on our approach not being suspected. The Sioux, of course, would have scouts out, and the difficulty was to avoid their meeting ours, or discovering any traces. At last, just before dusk, one of our scouts brought in word that they had encamped, and that we were about two miles from them. It was suspected, from the way in which they had formed their camp, they must have thought that they had distanced us. We had now no longer any doubt about overtaking them, but the question was as to the best means of making the attack. The Indians' chief thought was of revenging themselves for the loss of their relatives, my only desire was to recover my brother should he still be alive. We continued to advance till we got within about half a mile of the Sioux camp—the hilly nature of the ground and the woods concealing our approach. Beyond that we dared not proceed, as the country was so open that we might easily have been seen had we made the attempt. The band, accordingly, here left their horses under charge of five of their number, and as soon as it was dusk they commenced their stealthy approach to the camp. Sigenok and another young and active Indian undertook to look after me. Not a word was spoken after we set out—not a leaf was moved, scarcely a blade of grass was uselessly pressed down. On they crept slowly, and so gently that I could scarcely hear the footfalls even of my two companions. I imitated their way of walking, and as I had on mocassins I also was able to avoid making the slightest noise. We had got within a thousand yards of the camp when we all stopped to listen. The camp was still astir, and there were sounds of feasting and revelry. The Indians with me ground their teeth—their enemies, fancying themselves secure, were about to indulge in a scalp-dance over the scalps they had taken in the morning. As yet the scouts had not got near enough to ascertain if my brother was with them. I entreated Sigenok to let me go and

ascertain. "Not without me," was his answer. "Bah, we will go."

I eagerly and fearlessly pressed on. We had to crawl along the ground lest our figures might be perceived, by the sharp eyes of the Sioux against the sky. We reached a small stream. The camp was formed a little way beyond it. We waded across it, and creeping up, looked over the bank. In the centre was a fire which, as it blazed up, threw a strange light on the groups of fierce savages clustering round it. At a little distance was a figure which attracted all my attention—it was that of my brother. He was seated on a log of wood, close to which a stake was driven in, and to this his wrists were tightly secured, though his feet were free. His head was bent down; he sat perfectly quiet, as if resigned to his fate. By the gestures of his captors I thought that they were talking about him, and I feared that they were proposing forthwith to put him to death. I dared not ask Sigenok what he thought; the slightest sound might have betrayed us. Oh how I longed to rush forward and join his fate, whatever that might be. I believe that I should have done so when I saw him lift up his pale countenance, so expressive of grief and pain, had not Sigenok held me back. He was, I was sure, thinking of me, and how miserable I should be when he was taken from me, and I was left alone in the world. Sigenok now made a sign to me to retreat; keeping close to him as before, I unwillingly left the spot. We crawled on till we rejoined our companions. It may seem surprising that the Sioux should have been so completely off their guard; but this arose from their despising their foes, the fact being that the Ojibways are generally very unwarlike, and they, therefore, believed that they would not venture to follow them. My companions' plans were soon formed. It was arranged that the whole party should creep forward as we had done, and that each man should single out one of the enemy according to his position, and that at a signal from Sigenok, the low croak of a frog, all should fire at the same moment. With the sound of the first shot the men with the horses were to come galloping on, as if a fresh party were approaching the scene of conflict. As, undoubtedly, all the Sioux would not be killed, some might, otherwise, attempt to rush on their concealed foes, but, with the fear of falling into the hands of their enemies, they would now take to flight.

My heart beat quick as we now moved on towards the camp of our treacherous foes. The night was very dark, and so noiseless were the movements of the Indians that, till I actually touched Sigenok's heel, I fancied at one time that I must be alone. The shouting and shrieking of the Sioux as they sang their songs of triumph yet farther assisted us to approach. In another moment the death volley would be given, and most of those fierce savages would be laid low. My only wish all the time was to rush forward and to release my beloved brother. How breathlessly I waited for the signal! The warriors were moving about, and Sigenok was not yet satisfied, apparently, with the positions which they had taken up. Little did they dream of the danger which threatened them. Sigenok's object was to wait till the Sioux were separated as much as possible, so that there should be no mistake as to which of them should be aimed at by the warriors of our party. After sitting down for some time, they all arose with eager and violent gestures; some went in the direction of the temporary wigwams they had formed, and others advanced towards Malcolm. By their looks and gesticulations I had little doubt that it was with the intention of torturing him. Poor Malcolm lifted up his countenance and gazed with calm resignation at his approaching tormentors. My knees trembled for very anxiety. Just then I heard a low "croak! croak!" Though warned, I believed that it was really a frog close to me. It was followed by a click as if caused by the cocking of the rifles. The Sioux one and all started and looked round. Their quick ears had detected the sound. There was another low croak, and at the same instant a rattling volley, and fourteen savages lay stretched on the grass. The rest rushed in all directions seeking for shelter, but in their alarm, scarcely perceiving whence the volley had proceeded, some darted towards the bank of the stream where my friends still lay concealed rapidly reloading their rifles.

Scarcely had the smoke cleared off than I saw through it a savage darting towards Malcolm with uplifted knife, resolved apparently, before he died, to plunge it in his bosom. I shrieked out, and sprang forward to throw myself between them. The savage saw me, and was about to vent his rage on my head, but at the moment his gleaming knife was uplifted to strike, a bullet struck him, fired from Sigenok's rifle, and he fell within a foot of me, in vain endeavouring to reach me with his weapon. I sprang to my brother's side, he was unhurt, my knife was busily employed in cutting through the thongs which bound him. More shots were heard as my Ojibway friends caught sight of their Sioux foes endeavouring to escape. A few of the latter had, however, got to some distance and were trying to catch their horses, on which their only hope of safety now depended. The object of the Ojibways was, of course, to prevent them, lest they should carry the news of what had happened to their tribe, who would, in their turn, send off another war party in pursuit of us.

The approach of our horses was now heard. Sigenok with a dozen other men threw themselves on their backs almost without stopping them, and galloped off in hot pursuit of their flying enemies. I stood by the side of my brother, who was too much bewildered to understand what had happened. His first words were, "Harry, dear Harry, tell me is it a dream or a reality. Am I really free?"

"Free, Malcolm, I trust," I answered; "though I might almost ask you the same question; I can scarcely believe my happiness."

"Now I take your hand and hear your voice, I know that it is true," he said eagerly. "And that poor savage who lies so helpless there, I thought he was going to kill me; but I have been mercifully protected; I will tell you all about it by and by. Oh what a dreadful state of existence is this wild life; we will quit it, and return to our quiet home and never leave that. I had often read about savages, and thought them very fine fellows, but little knew what they really are—how bloodthirsty, cruel, murderous. Let us fly, Harry, let us fly at once. Do not stay here."

I pacified him after a little time, and persuaded him to remain till Sigenok returned. "He, though still a savage, is, at all events, faithful," I observed; "he will not desert us till he has seen us home and safe again with Sam Dawes. I wish that we could wean him altogether from his mode of life, and induce him to become a civilised man."

While Malcolm and I were talking, the rest of the Ojibways had collected, with the exception of those who had gone in pursuit of the Sioux. The fire had sunk low, and I was thankful that the darkness prevented us from watching the horrid task in which they were engaged—that of scalping their fallen foes. The exclamations they uttered while thus employed, showed the delight they took in the dreadful work. "Our brothers are avenged! our brothers are avenged!"

they kept shouting. "Their mothers, and wives, and children will not mourn alone; there will be grief and wailing also in the lodges of the Sioux. They will no longer be able to boast that they are the great warriors of the plains. We have conquered them; we have slain them; we have their scalps to show." Nearly an hour thus passed; so greatly excited all the time were the savages that they took little notice of us.

At last we heard shouts in the distance, which became louder and louder, till by the light of the fire, which had been renewed, we saw Sigenok and his companions ride into the camp flourishing at the end of their spears the dreadful trophies of their success. But I should not have described those scenes at all, were it not to afford you a true picture of savage life, not as it is painted by romance writers, but as it really is, debased, and wretched; and hopeless. We soon reached the camp and recommenced our return to the settlements as rapidly as we could push on.

Sigenok told us that the Sioux of whom they had gone in chase, had nearly effected their escape, but that he had come up with them as they were attempting to pass a broad river, and where, from being in the water, not hearing the approach of their foes, he and his companions had shot them all down, so that he believed not one had got off. Still, had one escaped he might prove as dangerous as many, and therefore it might be safer to proceed homeward at once. We urged him to do so, and accordingly without even resting, we at once set out to return to the camp. We reached it in safety; but I will not attempt to describe the scenes which took place, and the savage triumph even of the women; how they shrieked, and shouted, and danced, and clapped their hands till they appeared like so many furies rather than human beings. As a war party of the Sioux would be able to travel much faster than we could, the household goods were at once packed, and we set out on our return homeward. We travelled rapidly, and to guard against surprise we had scouts in the rear constantly on the watch for the approach of a foe. The conversation of the men all the way related to the events of the expedition, and they evidently gloated over the way in which they had put their enemies to death.

As we proceeded I often turned my head when I heard any noise behind me, expecting to see the enemy darting out of a wood, or scouring over the prairie in chase of us, and at night, while we were encamped, I frequently started up under the belief that the Sioux were upon us.

"All our sufferings, and the dangers we have gone through, and the horrors we have witnessed, have been owing to our folly," observed Malcolm; "had we remained at home, steadily assisting Sam Dawes to cultivate the farm, we should have escaped them all. We will be wiser in future."

Volume Two--Chapter Six.

With great satisfaction, and gratitude for the dangers we had escaped, our eyes once more rested on the silvery waters of the Red River, as it wound its way through the rich plains of the settlement, towards the lengthened expanse of Lake Winnipeg. Malcolm and I, putting our spurs into our mustangs' flanks, galloped on eager to announce our arrival to Sam Dawes. He was labouring by himself, putting up a fence to a new field. He saw us coming, and, throwing down his axe, hurried forward to meet us. Never was there a more happy meeting. He had a great deal to tell us, as we had to tell him. Gathering up his tools, he walked by our sides to the hut; a hut though it was no longer, for by his persevering industry he had converted it into a very comfortable residence; while he had replaced, though in a somewhat rough fashion, nearly as the furniture we had lost. My brother and I felt ashamed at having deserted him for so long, while he was labouring for our benefit.

"Well, dear masters, I did oftentimes feel sad and lonely like while you were away, but now I've got you back safe all that seems as light as a feather," he exclaimed, pressing our hands and looking into our faces with the affection of a parent. He told us that great changes had taken place in the settlement during our absence, that a clergyman had settled near us, that a church was built and a school established, and that many new colonists had bought land along the banks of the river for many miles towards the south as well as to the north of us. The good clergyman had also induced several families of Indians to settle in the neighbourhood, and that they seemed to have accepted with joy the glad tidings of salvation which he had been the means of offering them.

"I wish that Sigenok would come and join them then," exclaimed Malcolm warmly; "so brave and energetic a man would bring many others over to the truth."

The next day Sigenok himself came in to see us. Malcolm opened the subject of which he had been speaking. Sigenok listened attentively, and said that he would go and hear what the missionary had to say. He did so.

The winter set in, and the river and lake were frozen over, and the ground was covered with snow, and sleighs had taken the place of carts, and thick buffalo-skin coats of light dress, and stoves were lighted and windows closed, and the whole face of Nature seemed changed. Sigenok came to us. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "when I knew you first my heart was like the great prairie when the fire has passed over it, all black and foul; now it is white like that field of glittering snow on which we gaze. I am a Christian; I look with horror on my past life, and things which I considered before praiseworthy and noble, I now see to be abominable and vile."

Day after day, in spite of cold and wind and snow, did Sigenok come up to the missionary's house to receive instruction in the new faith which had brought such joy to his heart. Many followed in his footsteps, and there now exists a whole village of Christian Indians in the settlement who have put away and for ever their medicine men and their charms, and their false Manitou, and their cruelties and bloodthirstiness, and are worshippers of the true God in sincerity and simplicity of faith. Several of the Indian boys brought up at the school have obtained a considerable amount of learning, and some are ordained ministers of the gospel, and others catechists and schoolmasters at various missionary stations scattered throughout the wide extent of Rupert's Land.

You may like to hear something more about that wonderful land, that *terra incognita* of British Central America. At the time of which I have been speaking it was supposed that the only fertile land was to be found on the banks of the

Red River, but it is now ascertained that an extremely rich and fertile belt extends from the Red River right across the continent, for eight hundred miles or more, to the base of the Rocky Mountains, where it unites with the new province of Columbia. This fertile belt is capable of supporting innumerable herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, and droves of horses, and of giving employment and happy homes to millions of the human race. It produces wheat and barley, and oats, and Indian corn, or maize, in great perfection, and potatoes and variety of other roots and vegetables of all sorts, and the finest grass for hay, and hemp and tobacco, and many other plants with difficulty grown in England. The rivers are full of fish, and game of all sorts abound. The climate is very uniform throughout, like that of Upper Canada—warm in summer and very cold in winter, but dry and healthy in the extreme.

When, as I hope the case may be before long, those lakes and rivers along which we travelled on our journey from Lake Superior to the Red River are made navigable for steamers, this country will become the great highway to British Columbia, to China, Japan, and the wide-spreading shores and isles of the Pacific. With a line of settlements established across it, the journey may easily be performed, and some day, Harry, you and I will run over, and we will pay a visit to the very scenes which I have been describing to you; but instead of roving savages, murdering and scalping in every direction, living by hunting and fishing, I hope that we may find the Indians settled down as Christian men, and persevering cultivators of the soil which Providence will compel to yield a rich return for their labour. You will wish to know more of your uncle Malcolm's and my proceedings. We soon became acquainted with the good clergyman I have mentioned, and after a time he suggested to us that, as our education was far from perfect, it would be wise if we recommenced our studies. This we did, and though we continued to help Sam Dawes in his farm labours even more efficiently than before, so steady was our application when engaged with our books under our kind tutor, that we made considerable progress in our studies. For three years or more lived on very happily, with nothing, to change our course of life, when we received notice from England that a relation of our father's especially wished us to return. On consulting our friend the clergyman, he strongly recommended us to accept the invitation offered us. As we expected speedily to return we left Sam Dawes in charge of the farm, though he was almost heart-broken at parting from us. He would, indeed, never have consented to remain had he not believed that it was for our interest to do so. On reaching England great was our surprise to find that our relative intended to leave us his property. On ascertaining our attainments in knowledge, he insisted on our both going to the university. Your uncle Malcolm took high honours, and entered into holy orders. I became, as was our relative, a merchant, and without allowing business to absorb me, I have considerably increased the small portion he left me. Your uncle Malcolm and I have constantly talked of going over to visit Sam Dawes, but circumstances have prevented us. We long ago made over the farm to him, and he has greatly increased and improved it. He is, we hear, a hale old man. And now, Harry, I have told you a long story enough for to-day. Some other time I will tell you more about the wonders of Rupert's Land.

Volume Three--Chapter One.

The Boatswain's Son.

It was the memorable 1st of June. A sea fight ever to be renowned in history was raging between the fleets of England and France. The great guns were thundering and roaring, musketry was rattling, round-shot, and chain-shot, and grape, and langridge, and missiles of every description, invented for carrying on the bloody game of war, were hissing through the air, crashing against the sides of the ships, rending them asunder, shattering the tall masts and spars, sending their death-dealing fragments flying around, and hurling to the deck, mangled and bleeding, the gallant seamen as they stood at their quarters in all the pride of manhood, fighting for the honour and glory of their respective countries. A dark canopy hung over the scene, every moment increasing in density as the guns belched forth their flashes of flame and clouds of smoke, filling the pure air of heaven with sulphureous vapours, and almost concealing the fierce combatants from each other's gaze.

"Who is that brave youngster?" asked the captain of the renowned "Marlborough," a seventy-four, which lay hotly engaged surrounded by foes in the thick of the fight; "I never saw a cooler thing or better timed."

"The son of Mr Ripley the boatswain, sir," was the answer.

"I must have my eye on him, there is stuff in that lad," observed the captain. The deed which had called forth this eulogium was certainly well worthy of praise. The "Marlborough" had for some time been furiously engaged, almost broadside to broadside, with the "Impétueux," a French seventy-four, which ship had just fallen aboard her, the Frenchman's bowsprit becoming entangled in her mizen rigging. To keep her antagonist in that position was of the greatest consequence to the "Marlborough," as she might thus rake her fore and aft, receiving but little damage in return. An officer and two or three men sprang into the "Marlborough's" mizen rigging to secure the bowsprit to it. The French small-arm men rushed forward to prevent this being done, by keeping up a fire of musketry. The two seamen fell. The lieutenant still hung in the rigging, but the rope with which he was lashing the bowsprit to it was shot from his hand; no other was within reach. Having just delivered the powder he had brought from below, young Ripley was watching the proceeding. Seizing a rope he sprang into the rigging unhurt amid a shower of bullets, and handed it to the brave officer. Together they made the required turns for lashing it fast, and descended to the deck in safety. The young powder-boy then resuming his tub was speedily again seen at his station, composedly sitting on the top of it as if he had performed no unusual deed. The "Marlborough" had soon another antagonist, the "Mucius," seventy-four, which fell aboard her on the bow, the three ships thus forming a triangle, of which the British ship was the base. With these two opponents, each more powerful than she was, the "Marlborough" continued the seemingly unequal fight, but the stout arms and hearts of her crew made amends for their inferiority in numbers. Her mizzenmast fell soon after the "Mucius" engaged her, her fore and main masts followed, and the Frenchmen began to hope that victory was to be theirs, but they had not discovered at that time the stuff of which British tars are made. Though dismayed herself, she had her foes fast so that they could not escape. So well did her crew work their guns, that they quickly shot away the bowsprit and all the lower masts of the "Impétueux," those of the "Mucius" soon sharing the same fate. At this juncture another French ship, the "Montagne," passing under the "Marlborough's"

stern, fired a broadside into her of round-shot and langridge, killing many of her brave crew, and wounding among others her captain, though receiving but a few shots in return. The first battle in that long, protracted, and bloody war was over, and won by England's veteran admiral, Lord Howe; six of the enemy's finest line of battle ships forming the prize of victory, and among them the "Impétueux."

The "Marlborough's" captain had not forgot the promise he had made to himself in favour of Young Ripley. As he lay wounded in his cabin he sent for the boatswain. The proud father had heard of his son's gallantry, and the captain's words had been repeated to him. It would have been difficult to find a finer specimen of the superior class of British seaman, the pith and sinew of the navy, than the boatswain of the "Marlborough" presented, as, still in the prime of manhood, he stood, hat in hand, before his captain. By his manner and appearance he looked indeed well fitted for the higher ranks of his profession, but it was his lot to be a boatswain, and he did not complain. With unfeigned satisfaction he heard the account of his son's gallantry and coolness rehearsed by the captain's lips.

"You have always proved yourself to be a brave man and a good officer, and although I have it not in my power to reward you as you deserve, I can your son," said the captain. "Would it be satisfactory to you to see him placed on the quarterdeck?"

The father's heart beat quick; the blush of gratified pride rose to his cheeks as he answered, "It is the thing of all others I should prize. I trust that he will not be found unfitted for the rank to which he may attain if you thus put his foot on the lower ratlins."

"I am glad to have hit the thing to please you, Mr Ripley," said the captain. "Your son shall at once be rated as a midshipman in the ship's books;" and then he added, a shade of grief passing across his countenance, "He will have no difficulty in getting an outfit from the kits of the four youngsters who were killed on the 1st. By the by, what is he called?"

"Pearce, sir—Pearce Ripley is his name," answered the boatswain.

"Very well; send my clerk to me, and tell your boy that he is a midshipman. The first lieutenant will introduce him to his new messmates, and secure him a favourable reception," said the captain as the boatswain withdrew.

Pearce Ripley was a fine-looking lad of about fourteen, with an ingenuous countenance and frank manner, which spoke of an honest, brave heart. With the ship's company he had been a general favourite; it was to be proved how far he would recommend himself to the officers.

In the afternoon the young gentlemen, as all the members of the midshipmen's mess were called, were summoned on the quarterdeck, and briefly addressed by Mr Monckton, the first lieutenant. Pearce Ripley was then sent for, and the boatswain's son had no cause to complain of his, reception by those whose messmate he was about to become. They, with one exception, came forward and cordially shook him by the hand, and when he entered the berth they all seemed to vie who should pay him the most unobtrusive attention as forthwith to place him at his ease. So surely will true bravery and worth be rightly esteemed by the generous-hearted officers of the British Navy. Pearce had gained the respect of his messmates; he soon won their regard by his readiness to oblige, his good temper, his evident determination not to give or take offence, and his general kind bearing towards all. On duty he showed that he was resolved to merit the good opinion which had been formed of him. The only person who differed from the majority was Harry Verner, a midshipman of about his own age. Though Verner had shaken hands with him, it had been with reluctance and marked coldness. His manner was now haughty and supercilious in the extreme, and he took every opportunity of making sneering remarks about men who had risen from the lower orders always being out of place and never doing any good. "If such were to become customary in the service, it would drive all the gentlemen out of it," he remarked one day in. Pearce's hearing. "Not if those who entered it knew how to behave as gentlemen," Pearce replied, quietly. Verner said nothing in return, but he gave a look to show his intense displeasure. Generally Pearce walked away when Verner spoke in that style, or when at table, and he could not move, pretended not to hear what was said.

The fleet reached Portsmouth. Great was the satisfaction of the British nation at the victory won. The good King George the Third and the kind Queen Charlotte went on board all the ships and visited the wounded; honours were awarded to the chiefs, and those officers who had especially distinguished themselves were presented to their Sovereigns. Among others was Pearce Ripley, as midshipman who had helped to take the "Impétueux." The "Marlborough's" crew declared on this that he was a marked man and must get on in the service. The remark greatly excited Harry Verner's indignation and wrath. "It is high time for me to quit the service after this," he remarked, when the King patted Pearce on the head, but did not even glance towards him. Of memorable days in English history, the 1st of June, 1794, stands justly prominent.

Volume Three--Chapter Two.

The "Marlborough," though victorious, had received so tremendous a battering from her numerous opponents, that it was very clear the stout craft could not again go to sea without a thorough repair. Her officers and crew were therefore distributed among other ships then fitting out, and thus Pearce, for the first time in his life, was separated from his father, to whom he had always been accustomed to look up for guidance and advice. In some respects this might have been an advantage to the young midshipman, but the parting cost both more pains than either confessed. "I am no great preacher, my boy, but remember there's One ever watching over you, and He'll be true to you if you try honestly to be true to Him," said the boatswain, as he wrung his son's hand, and stepped down the side of the fine frigate to which Pearce through the interest of his late captain had been appointed. The crew went tramping round the capstan to the sound of the merry fife, the anchor was away, and under a wide spread of snowy canvas the dashing "Blanche" of thirty-two guns, commanded by the gallant Captain Faulkner, stood through the Needle passage between the Isle of Wight and the main, on her way down channel, bound out to the West Indies. It

was a station where hurricanes, yellow fever, and sicknesses, and dangers of all sorts were to be encountered, but it was also one where enemies were to be met with, battles to be fought, prizes to be captured, and prize-money to be made, glory, honour, and promotion to be obtained, and who on board for a moment balanced one against the other?

Several of Pearce's old shipmates were on board the "Blanche," and two of his messmates, from one of whom, Harry Verner, he would rather have been separated; the other, David Bonham, he was very glad to see. Between Bonham and Verner the contrast was very great; for the former, though of excellent family, was the most unpretending fellow possible, free from pride, vanity, and selfishness, and kind-hearted, generous, good tempered, and the merriest of the merry. The first A.B. who volunteered for the "Blanche," when he knew Mr Pearce had been appointed to her, was Dick Rogers, an old friend of his father's, with whom he had served man and boy the best part of his life; and if there was one thing more strongly impressed on Dick's mind than another, it was that John Ripley, the boatswain, ought to have been a post-captain. For his father's sake Dick had at first loved Pearce, and now loved him for his own. "Though his father isn't what he should be, he shall be, that he shall, or it won't be my fault," he said to himself. Dick was no scholar, and had not many ideas beyond those connected with his profession, except that particular one in favour of Pearce which might or might not be of any service to him, and yet let us never despise a friend, however humble. Pearce did not, though he possibly had not read the fable of the lion and the mouse.

Dick Rogers was short and broad in the shoulders, though not fat, with a huge, sandy beard, a clear blue eye, and an honest smile on his lips, and saying that he was a seaman every inch of him, he needs no further description. Verner let it be known, among their new messmates, that Pearce Ripley was only the boatswain's son; and hearing this, Bonham took great care to recount to them his gallant act on the 1st of June, and to speak otherwise in his praise. Dick forward did not fail to make the young midshipman his theme, and there the fact of his parentage was undoubtedly in his favour. "We shall be, no doubt, alongside an enemy some day soon, and then will be seen what stuff the youngsters are made of," was the remark of several on board. They were not wrong in their prognostications. The Island of Desiderade, near Guadeloupe, was in sight to windward. "A sail on the weather bow!" was shouted by the look-out at the mast's head, always the keenest sighted of the seamen on board in those days.

The frigate made all sail in pursuit of the stranger, a large schooner under French colours. The chase stood into a bay defended by a fort, where she was seen to anchor with springs to her cables. Along the shore a body of troops were also observed to be posted. The drum beat to quarters as the "Blanche" worked up towards the fort, when, the water shoaling, she anchored and opened her fire in return for that which the fort, the schooner, and the soldiers were pouring in on her. Captain Faulkner's first object was to silence the fort. This was soon done. The schooner, which it was clear was heavily armed, must be brought out. The boats were called away, under command of the second lieutenant. Pearce leaped into the one to which he belonged. A master's mate, Fitzgibbon, had charge of her, and Dick Rogers formed one of her crew. Harry Verner was in another. Away the boats dashed, at a rate boats always do move pulled by British seamen when a prize is to be taken. The Frenchmen worked their guns bravely. A shot disabled the leading boat. Pearce, sitting by Fitzgibbon's side, heard a deep groan, and before he could even look up the master's mate fell forward, shot through the head. His boat took the lead. "Now's your time," cried Dick Rogers; "we'll be the first aboard, lads." The crew were not slack to follow the suggestion. In another moment they were up to the schooner, and, leaping on her deck, led by Pearce, laid on them so fiercely with their cutlasses that the Frenchmen, deserting their guns, sprang over the bulwarks into their boats on the other side nearest the shore, and, before another boat reached the vessel, pulled away towards where the troops were marching down to their support. The cables were quickly cut, and amid a shower of bullets sail was made, and the prize carried out. "I said as how he'd do it—I said he wouldn't be wanting," exclaimed Dick Rogers, as he gave his account of the cutting-out expedition to his chums on board. "He'll do more too come another occasion." That occasion did occur before many days were over. Two days afterwards the "Blanche" was joined by the "Quebec" frigate, and together, when sailing by Guadeloupe, they discovered the French thirty-six-gun frigate "Pique" lying at anchor in the harbour of Pointe-à-Pitre, ready for sea. Not to deprive his brother captain of the honour he might obtain by engaging an antagonist so worthy of him, Captain Carpenter parted company, and the "Quebec," steering westward, was soon out of sight. The next thing to be done was to get the French frigate to come out from under her protecting batteries to fight. This seemed no easy matter, for prizes were captured and sent away under her very nose, and still she did not venture forth. At length, however, on the memorable evening of the 4th of January, the "Blanche," towing off another prize in triumph, the "Pique" was seen to follow. The sun went down. It was the last many a brave man was destined to see. Darkness had come on, when the French frigate was observed through the gloom astern. The "Blanche" tacked in chase.

In the solemn hour of midnight, while darkness covered the face of the deep, the two vessels approached each other, their relative positions clearly distinguished by the light from the fighting-lanterns which streamed from their ports. The British crew, mostly stripped to the waist, stood at their quarters, grim and determined, with the gun-tackles in hand, eager for the moment to open fire. Pearce was on the quarterdeck. Young as he was, the whizzing of shots and the whistling of bullets scarcely made his heart beat quicker than usual, and yet, as in gloom and silence he waited for the signal when the bloody strife must commence, he felt an awe creep over him he had never before experienced. Nearer and nearer the combatants drew to each other. The "Pique" commenced the fight. The "Blanche" returned her distant fire; and, after various manoeuvres, the two frigates ranged up alongside each other and hotly engaged, broadside to broadside, in the fashion in which British tars have ever delighted. Fiercely the two crews fought; the French, once having begun, proved themselves no unworthy antagonists. The main and mizen-masts of the "Blanche" fell, and the French, seizing the moment, ran alongside and attempted to board. The British crew sprang up to repel them. Among the foremost was Pearce, with Dick Rogers by his side. With their sharp cutlasses they drove the Frenchmen back. Again the guns roared as before. Once more the French ship fell aboard the "Blanche," her bowsprit touching the latter's capstan. Captain Faulkner hurried to secure it there, for the "Pique," thus held, was exposed to the raking fire of his frigate. Among those who flew to assist him were Pearce Ripley and Dick Rogers, the Frenchman's musketry playing hotly on them. "This is something like what you did in the old 'Marlborough,' sir," said Dick to Pearce, so loud that all might hear him—so many did, and noted the words. Death was busy around them. While he was passing the lashing the young and gallant Captain Faulkner fell to the deck—a musket ball had pierced his heart. That was no time for grieving, even for one well-beloved as the captain. A hawser

was being got up from below to secure the enemy's ship; but before it could be used she broke adrift, to the disappointment of the British tars. A cheer, however, burst from their throats as, directly afterwards, the "Blanche," paying off for want of after-sail, the "Pique," while attempting to cross her stern, fell once more aboard her. This time they took good care to secure the bowsprit to the stump of their mainmast; and now, running before the wind, the "Blanche" towing her opponent, the fight was continued with greater fury than ever. In vain the Frenchmen strove to free themselves by cutting the lashings—each time they made the attempt the marines drove them back with their musketry. Still it seemed doubtful with whom victory would side. The "Blanche" had no stern ports through which guns could be fought; the carpenters were unable to aid them. A bold expedient was proposed. The guns must make ports for them selves through the transom. Firemen with buckets were stationed ready to extinguish the fire which the discharge would create. With a thundering roar the guns sent their shot through the stern, and, the fire being extinguished, they began to play with terrific effect into the bows of the French frigate. Her foremast was immediately shot away; her mizen-mast was seen to fall. Still her crew, getting their quarterdeck guns trained aft, fought on; but what were they to the "Blanche's" heavy guns, which mercilessly raked her, the shot entering her bow and tearing up her deck fore and aft, sweeping away numbers of her crew at each discharge. "If those Mounseers are not made of iron, they'll not stand this battering much longer," cried Dick Rogers, who was working one of the after-guns. Pearce was standing near him. The space between the decks was filled with smoke, though which the twinkling light of the lanterns could scarcely penetrate, the flashes at each discharge showing the men, begrimed with powder, with sponge and rammers ready to load, or with their tackles to run in their guns. A cheer from the deck told them that the Frenchman's remaining mast had fallen, and now another and another that the foe had struck. The "Pique" was totally dismasted; the "Blanche" had but her foremast standing. Every boat was knocked to pieces, and how to get on board the prize, still towed by the hawser, was the question. "The hawser must form our bridge," cried Mr Mime, the second lieutenant of the ship, springing on to it, followed by Pearce, Rogers, and several men. Their weight brought the rope down into the water. For some distance they had to swim till they could climb up by it on board. What havoc and destruction a few short hours had wrought. Of a crew not far short of three hundred men, one-third lay dead or wounded, the deck covered with gore and the wrecks of the masts and spars; guns lay dismounted, bulwarks knocked away, all telling the tale of the bravery and hardihood of both the combatants. When the sun arose there lay the victor and the conquered almost equally helpless. Such was one of the scenes through which young Ripley fought his way upwards, and gained a name and fame.

Volume Three--Chapter Three.

The person who is constantly keeping his eye on the reward he aims at is very likely to stumble and fall, and never to reach it. He, on the contrary, who thinks only how he can best perform his duty will be upheld and encouraged, and very probably obtain a higher reward than any at which he might have aspired. Pearce Ripley found this to be true in his case. Duty was his leading star. It never occurred to him to say, "Will this please my captain?" "Will this advance me in the service?" The "Blanche" was soon refitted and at sea again. Several prizes were made, and, greatly to his satisfaction, he was appointed to the command of one of them, with Bonham as his mate, and Dick Rogers as boatswain. She was a richly-laden West Indiaman, recaptured from the enemy. He was ordered to take her to England, where, on his arrival, he found his commission waiting for him.

Pearce received a right hearty welcome from his father, and intense was the satisfaction of the brave seaman when his son showed him his commission and appointment as second lieutenant to the "Vestal," an eighteen gun sloop of war, commanded by Captain Gale, and destined for the North American station.

"You have got your first step up the ratlins, Pearce. Go on as you have begun, and Heaven preserving your life, there is no reason why you shouldn't reach the highest," said the proud father, as he once more parted from his son.

Those were days of pressgangs, and Dick Rogers took good care to hide away till he ascertained the craft Pearce was to join, when he at once volunteered for her. Bonham, who had still a year to serve, was appointed to the same ship. The "Vestal" had a quick run across the Atlantic till within about five days' sail of Halifax, Nova Scotia, when a heavy gale sprang up, which tried to the utmost her seaworthy qualities. The sloop behaved beautifully, hove to, and rode buoyantly over the raging seas. Well indeed was it for her that she was properly handled, for the gale went on in creasing till the oldest seamen on board declared that they had never met with such another. It continued for a week, each day the wind blowing harder and harder, or if there was a lull it seemed to come only that the gale might gain greater strength. For days not a glimpse of sun, or moon, or stars had been obtained. It was the morning watch; the grey cold dawn had just broke. Pearce was on deck, when sweeping his eye round the horizon as the sloop rose to the summit of a sea he perceived on the lee beam the hull of a ship, rising and sinking amid the tumultuous waters. At first he thought she was keel up, but as the light increased he saw that she was a large ship with the stump of the foremast alone remaining. That she was in a bad plight was very clear. She was remarkably low in the water he fancied, and who could say how long even she might keep afloat.

The captain, being summoned, soon came on deck. To bear away for the stranger would be a work of danger to the "Vestal." Still who could tell how many human beings might be on board that sinking ship! With hatches battened down and men lashed to the helm, the captain resolved to go to the rescue.

The seas came roaring up with furious rage, as the sloop flew before them, some breaking aboard; and rounding to under the stern of the ship, she again hove to. Many people appeared on the deck of the stranger who, stretching out their arms, implored assistance. How was it to be afforded? Would a boat live in such a sea? Such appeals to British seamen are never made in vain. Pearce Ripley offered to make the experiment if men were found ready to go with him. There was no want of volunteers. A boat was lowered. It seemed as if she must be engulfed before she left the sloop's side. Ripley's progress was watched by eager eyes from both ships. Now he is in the trough of the sea, a watery mountain about to overwhelm him; now he is on the summit surrounded by driving foam. A shout is raised as he neared the sinking ship, but to get alongside was even more dangerous than the passage from one to the other. As the ship rolled and her deck was exposed to view, he saw that there were women on board, and other people

besides the crew. Ropes were hove to him. He seized one, and sprang up the side. A few hurried words told him what had occurred. The ship was conveying troops and stores to Halifax, the master and first mate had been washed overboard, the second lay wounded by the falling of a spar. Many of the crew had been lost with the captain. There was no sea officer who could enforce orders; the men were mutinous. Ripley instantly assumed the command. There were several ladies. "They must first be placed in safety before a man enters the boat," he cried out, presenting a pistol at some seamen who showed an intention of leaping into her.

Some entreated that their husbands might accompany them. "Oh, father, father, come with me," exclaimed a fair girl, who was being conveyed to the side to be lowered into the boat; "I cannot, I will not leave you." She looked towards a fine, soldier-like man, who stood with several officers around him. "Impossible! Heaven protect you, dearest. Even for your sake I cannot desert my post. It is here with my men," was the answer.

The boat had already nearly as many persons in her as it would be safe to carry. This was no time for delay. Pearce lifted the young lady in his arms, and lowered himself with her into the boat. The boat returned to the "Vestal," and all those who had been rescued were put on board. The young lady again and again entreated him to save her father. Pearce promised to make every effort to bring off the colonel. "But unless his men are rescued, I doubt that he will leave the ship," he added, as he returned to his boat.

Two other boats were now lowered, but it was too evident that they could only save a part of the people from the foundering ship. Those on her deck were now seen forming a raft. It was their last hope of life should the boats not take them off. Though several of the people made a rush to the side, they were driven back by the officers and soldiers who remained firm, and the men were told off in order to allow of them to embark as arranged by Pearce. Twice the boat returned without an accident to the "Vestal." The young lady cast a reproachful look at Ripley, when she saw that her father was not among the saved. "He would not come, lady, but I will make another effort," he exclaimed, as he prepared once more to leave the corvette's side. Just then arose the fearful cry, "She is sinking! she is sinking!"

"Oh, save him! save him!" shrieked the poor girl in an agony of terror, stretching out her hands towards the spot where she fancied that she saw her beloved father struggling in the waves. Pearce and his brave companions needed not such an appeal to make them use every effort to reach their drowning fellow-creatures. Some had leaped on the half-finished raft as the ship sunk beneath them, but many of these were speedily washed off. Others were clinging to spars, and oars, and gratings. Pearce was soon in the midst of the hapless beings, many with despair on their countenances, unable to reach the boat, sinking as he neared them. He looked round for the colonel. He could not distinguish him among the rest. Three people had been hauled in, when as the boat rose to the summit of a sea he saw below him a person clinging to a grating. A hand was waved towards him. "Give way, lads," he shouted, and in another minute he had the satisfaction of hauling on board the brave officer for whom he was searching.

The other boats took off the people from the raft. He picked up several more, and returned in safety on board. The meeting of the father and his daughter need not be described. They were, he found, a colonel and Miss Verner. He was struck by the name as that of his former unamiable messmate. When the weather moderated, and the colonel was sufficiently recovered to appear on deck, he warmly expressed his gratitude to Pearce, and his admiration of the gallantry he had displayed. His daughter Alice was not less grateful. A calm succeeded the gale, and Pearce had frequent opportunities of seeing her. He did not mention Harry Verner to her, and indeed so great was the contrast he perceived between the two in manners and behaviour, that he could not suppose they were nearly related. Still there was at times an expression in Colonel Verner's countenance when he was annoyed which reminded him strongly of Harry.

There was a frank heartiness and sincerity about the young lieutenant which at once gained Miss Verner's regard. It was very different to what she had been accustomed, still his manner towards her was gentle and deferential, as if he in no way presumed on the service he had rendered her. Indeed, it never entered his head that he had rendered her any especial service, or that he had the slightest claim on her regard. He felt, as he wrote to his father, "that he had had the good fortune to command the boat which saved a colonel and Miss Verner; that they were very nice people; that the colonel was to be stationed at Halifax, and had invited him to his house whenever he could get leave on shore." He added, "That will not be very often during these stirring times, but I shall thoroughly enjoy it when I do go, for Miss Alice Verner is the most beautiful and amiable girl I have ever seen or expect to meet; without a bit of pride about her, and she talks to me as if I were an old friend."

At length the "Vestal" dropped her anchor in the fine harbour of Halifax, and with a regret which surprised him, Pearce saw the passengers depart for the shore.

"Remember, my dear Mr Ripley, Miss Verner and I shall at all times be glad to see you," said Colonel Verner as he was about to leave the ship. Alice did not say as much as her father, but Pearce believed from the expression of her countenance that she willingly seconded her father's invitation. Still he knew that the familiar intercourse which had been so delightful to him on board must come to an end. "What can she ever be to me more than she is at present?" he exclaimed to himself. "She says that I saved her life and her father's life; but then I saved the lives of many other people. To be sure I have got one step up the ratlins, but it may be very long before I get another. No, no, I'll not think about it."

The next day a special invitation to the governor's table, where he met Colonel and Miss Verner, and where all the gentlemen from the governor downwards drank wine with him, considerably altered his feelings. This was the first of many attentions which he received from the military officers and the principal inhabitants of Halifax. His time on shore was indeed fully occupied in making morning calls and in attending the parties to which he was invited. A portion of every morning he spent in the society of Miss Verner. It was very delightful, and he felt sure that he was welcome.

At length the "Vestal" was suddenly ordered to sea. Pearce had the greatest difficulty in getting on shore to wish his

friends good-bye. Alice turned pale when he told her that the ship was to sail that evening. "You will come back here surely, Mr Ripley," she said, in a trembling voice; "you have been every thing to us since that awful day when you saved our lives from the sinking ship; we shall miss you, indeed we shall, very much."

Pearce could not frame a reply, at least, satisfactory to himself. He scarcely knew what he said, as he hurried away. The words might have made a vainer man than he was much happier than they did him.

The "Vestal" was bound for the West Indies. She cruised for some time, making several rich prizes, which she sent into Port Royal, Jamaica, and which filled the parses of her officers and men in a very satisfactory manner. Still, no honour or promotion was to be obtained by the capture of honest merchantmen. At length, however, there appeared a chance of falling in with an antagonist worthy of her. One morning at dawn a stranger was discovered on the lee beam. The "Vestal" was kept away, and all sail made in chase. As the "Vestal" gained on the chase, she was discovered to be a large ship, and pronounced to be flush-decked.

"Then we'll tackle her; never mind how many guns she carries," exclaimed the captain—a sentiment to which his officers and men responded heartily.

The chase was accordingly continued, and as the vessel came up with her on the weather quarter, it was seen that she was a large flush-decked ship, carrying twenty-two guns. The ensign of France flew out from the stranger's peak, and was saluted by a shot from one of the corvette's bow guns. The battle thus begun, the "Vestal" keeping the weather gauge, was continued for half-an-hour with great fury, till the Frenchman's foremast went by the board. The enemy's guns were well handled, and the corvette began to suffer accordingly. The first lieutenant and five men were killed, and the captain, a midshipman, and several men wounded. The captain was carried below, and the command devolved on Pearce. The young lieutenant's heart beat high. "Bonham," he said, addressing his friend who was standing near him, "we'll take that ship, or go down with our colours flying." The breeze which had fallen returned, and as the corvette was still under perfect command, he was able at length to obtain a position by which he could pour several raking broadsides into the bows of the enemy. Her main-top mast was shot away; her mizen-mast followed. The ensign of France was again hoisted, but did not long remain flying. Pearce poured in another broadside, and down it came, the cheers of the British crew giving notice of what had occurred to their wounded shipmates below. The prize, which proved to be the "Désirée," had lost a considerable number of her crew, most of them killed during the latter part of the action. Bonham was sent on board to take command, and in two days the "Vestal" and her prize entered in triumph the harbour of Port Royal. Here the admiral with part of the fleet were at anchor. Pearce went on board the flag-ship to make his report. He was warmly received, and highly complimented on his conduct. The next day he found that he was to be first lieutenant of the corvette, and Bonham received an acting order as second lieutenant. The "Vestal" had received so much damage, that she was obliged to refit at Port Royal. This took several weeks, and Captain Gale considered himself sufficiently recovered, when she was ready, to go to sea in her. Pearce had, however, virtually the command. Several more prizes were taken. "That's young Ripley's doing," exclaimed the admiral, "he deserves his promotion, and he shall have it."

Volume Three--Chapter Four.

Once more the "Vestal" was at anchor in Port Royal harbour. In vain her brave captain had striven against the effects of his wounds. He must return home if he would save his life, he was told, so he applied to be superseded. The admiral came on board the "Vestal" to inspect her. The next day he sent for Ripley, and put a paper into his hand. Pearce's heart beat quick with proud satisfaction. The document was an order to take the acting command of the corvette. "I have written home by this post to ask for your commission, and to recommend that you should be confirmed in the command of the 'Vestal,'" added the admiral. "I am sure that you will take care she does as good service as she performed under Captain Gale." Bonham, who had received his commission a few months before, became first lieutenant, and a young *protégé* of the admiral's received an acting order as second; so that the united ages of the three principal officers of the ship amounted to little more than fifty-five years. Old heads were worn then on young shoulders. Many prizes had been taken, and the time approached for their return to Port Royal. The corvette lay becalmed. A French store-ship was expected, which had been separated from her convoy. The "Vestal" lay disguised, as was usual in those days, looking very unlike the smart sloop she was. A blue line was seen in the horizon, the sign of an approaching breeze, and in the midst of it a sail. The breeze brought up the stranger, a fine brig, to within about a mile, when it died away. She was an armed vessel, and showed by her colours that she was French. Before long, two boats were seen to put off from her. Three boats were instantly lowered from the opposite side of the "Vestal," and manned. The Frenchmen pulled rapidly on, expecting to make an easy prize of the "Vestal." Their look of consternation was very great when they first perceived the painted canvas which concealed the corvette's guns. Pearce had carefully watched for the first sign of their wavering, and now ordered the three boats to make chase. The Frenchmen, taken by surprise, made but a slight show of resistance, and in ten minutes the whole party found themselves prisoners on the deck of the corvette. The "Vestal" was now towed up towards the brig, which opened her fire at the boats, but this did not deter them from placing the corvette on her quarter, when a few rapidly delivered and almost raking broadsides compelled her to haul down her colours, having had the chief officers left on board and ten of her crew killed or wounded. The privateer, which mounted fourteen guns, was on her way to France, having a large amount of specie and valuable goods on board, the result of a successful cruise.

It was with no little pride that Captain Ripley returned to Port Royal from his first cruise, with the fine brig in company, the British ensign flying over that of France. The admiral congratulated him on his success, and at the same time put his commission and appointment into his hand.

"You must be ready for sea again very soon though," said the admiral; "I have dispatches to send to Halifax, and unless another cruiser comes in, I must send you."

Pearce, rather to the admiral's surprise, replied with animation, that he should be ready to sail that evening if required, provided he could get water, fuel, and fresh provisions on board. The admiral gave him permission to make

everybody exert themselves.

By noon the next day the young commander had got his ship ready for sea, and receiving his dispatches with a joyous heart, he shaped a course for Halifax. A bright look-out was kept, but on this occasion it was to avoid strange sails. He was only to fight for the purpose of escaping capture. Halifax was reached, and Pearce having delivered his dispatches, hurried up to Colonel Verner's house.

Miss Verner was at home. She started, and the colour rose to her cheeks when Captain Ripley was announced. She put out her hand, and did not withdraw it, for Pearce forgot to let it go.

"Are you really a captain already?" she asked.

"Yes; that is, a commander. I am captain of the 'Vestal,'" he answered, and he told her how Captain Gale had, been compelled to go home, and that he had been appointed in his stead. He mentioned also the number of prizes he had taken—a matter which interested Colonel Verner more than it did her.

"That young Ripley is a very fine fellow," observed the colonel to a brother officer. "Why, in one cruise he must have made not far short of ten thousand pounds as his own share of prize-money. A capital haul for the admiral. Those naval men have better chances than we have of filling their purses."

If Pearce had received attentions when only a young lieutenant, he was doubly courted now that he was a commander, with an established name for gallantry and energy. Alice Verner no longer hesitated acknowledging to herself that she had given him her entire heart. She felt honoured by his preference, and proud of it among so many others who seemed anxious to obtain it. Halifax was always a lively place. There were a great number of resident families with young people, and dances were therefore much in vogue. Consequently naval officers were always welcome, lieutenants and passed midshipmen were acceptable, but young commanders were treated with especial favour. A more experienced man than Pearce might have had his head turned with the attentions he received. While, however, he was grateful for them, he enjoyed to the full the society in which he found himself, and became neither conceited nor vain. He had also the opportunity of comparing Alice Verner with other girls, and he became more than ever convinced of her superiority to them all. His stay at Halifax was likely to be short. He naturally wished to spend as much of his time as possible in her society. She invariably received him so frankly and cordially that all restraint was thrown aside. He felt almost sure that she loved him; so he took her hand and told her how much he loved her, and that he believed he had made enough prize-money already to enable her to live as she had been accustomed to; that he hoped to make more, and that, he had good reason to believe he should before long be a post-captain, when he should be her father's equal in rank. Alice was not very much surprised nor agitated, because she was before sure that he loved her. Still it was very pleasant to hear him say so. Pearce also felt supremely happy, and did not for a moment contemplate the clouds and storms which might be ahead. Alice herself might possibly have seen difficulties which he did not. She loved her father, but she knew that he was a proud man and weak on certain points, and that few men thought more of family and connections. It had always surprised her that he had not inquired more particularly about Pearce's parentage, but she concluded that he was acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and was satisfied. It was, at all events, her duty to tell her father that Captain Ripley had declared himself. Pearce was to dine with them that day. In the meantime he had to go on board. He returned some time before the dinner hour. Colonel Verner had not come in, so that Alice had not had an opportunity of speaking to her father. Pearce told her that a frigate had arrived that morning direct from England. Everybody was eager to hear the news she brought. Probably that kept the colonel from home. While seated together, and interested more in themselves than in the world at large, the door was suddenly opened, and Lieutenant Harry Verner was announced.

"Why, Cousin Harry, where have you dropped from?" said Alice, rising to welcome him, "I did not even know that you were a lieutenant. You have grown up out of a little midshipman since I saw you last."

"I've dropped from His Britannic Majesty's Frigate 'Hecate,' of which I have the honour of being third lieutenant," announced the young man. "And as for changes, though you are lovely as ever, I shall not know soon whether I am standing on my head or my feet;" he looked fixedly at Pearce as he spoke.

"I beg your pardon, Captain Ripley," said Alice, recovering herself from the slight confusion into which she had been thrown; "I should have introduced my cousin to you."

"Harry Verner and I are old shipmates I suspect, unless there are two of the name very much like each other," said Pearce, rising and putting out his hand.

"Yes, as midshipmen we were together, I believe," answered Harry, superciliously; "but really it is difficult to remember all one's old shipmates."

Pearce under some circumstances would have been inclined to laugh at Harry Verner's impudence, but it was very evident that the lieutenant wished to pick a quarrel with him, which was by all means to be avoided. Alice had thought her cousin a tiresome boy; he now appeared to have grown more disagreeable than before. Colonel Verner came in and welcomed his nephew, who was the only son of his elder brother; other guests arrived, and the conversation became general. Harry at once assumed to be the person of most importance in the house, and though he was laughing and talking with every one, Alice discovered that he was constantly watching her and Captain Ripley whenever they spoke. Captain Ripley had to return on board. He never slept out of his ship if he could avoid it.

"I suppose, colonel, that you can give me a shake down," said Harry; "I have got leave to remain on shore."

Her cousin's remaining prevented Alice from speaking to her father that night. Harry showed no intention of going to bed till Pearce had taken his leave, and Alice had retired. He then, jumping up from the sofa on which he had thrown himself exclaimed, "My dear uncle, where did you pick up that man?"

"Whom do you mean, Harry?" asked the colonel, rather astonished at his nephew's somewhat impertinent manner.

"Why, Captain Ripley, who has just left this," answered the lieutenant. "He seems as much at home with Alice as if he were engaged to her. Indeed, I am half expecting you to tell me that he is."

"Really, Harry, you are speaking too fast," said the colonel; "Captain Ripley is one of the finest officers in the navy, and having rendered the greatest possible service to my daughter and me, I feel bound to treat him with every consideration and kindness."

"Which he repays by aspiring to my cousin's hand," answered Harry. "Were he a man of family I should say nothing, of course; but he is, sir, a mere adventurer. His father is a common boatswain—a warrant officer—not a gentleman even by courtesy, and his mother, for what I know to the contrary, might have been a bum-boat woman, and his relations, if he has any, are probably all of the lowest order."

The colonel walked up and down the room very much annoyed. "Though what you say may be true, Harry, that cannot detract from Captain Ripley's fine qualities nor relieve me of the obligations I owe him," he observed after a time. "Of course, were he to dream of marrying Alice, that would alter the case, and I should be compelled to put a stop to our present friendly intercourse; but I do not believe that such an idea enters his head. He is like you sailors generally, here to-day and gone to-morrow. Probably when he leaves this we may not see him again for years to come."

"Not so sure of that," said Harry; "Ripley was always very determined when he made up his mind to do a thing, and you will pardon me, uncle, but the way in which he was speaking to her when I came into the room was anything but that of an ordinary acquaintance."

"I'll see about it, I'll see about it," exclaimed the colonel, now more than ever annoyed. "It is impossible that a man of such low extraction should aspire to the hand of my daughter. The idea is too absurd!"

Harry Verner retired to rest that night under the comfortable belief that he had revenged himself on the man whom he had always disliked, and now envied, for his rapid promotion and success.

Volume Three--Chapter Five.

The arrival of the "Hecate" relieved the "Vestal," which was ordered to proceed at once to sea. Poor Alice received Captain Ripley with marks of sorrow in her countenance which alarmed him. "My father will not hear of it," she exclaimed, giving way to a burst of grief; "but I told him, and I promise you, that I will marry no one else."

"I know, I feel, and I am sure you will not, dearest," said Pearce, tenderly gazing at her. "And be of good courage, I trust yet to do deeds and to gain a name to which those who now scorn me for my humble birth may be proud to ally themselves."

Pearce had never before uttered anything like a boast, but his swelling heart assured him of what he could do, and his indignation at the contempt in which his father was held made him speak in a vaunting tone so different to his nature. The moment of parting arrived; Alice, unasked, renewed her promise, and Pearce hurried on board unwilling to encounter any of his ordinary acquaintances in the town. It was well for Harry Verner that he did not fall in with him. Before night the corvette was far away from Halifax. Pearce was not exactly unhappy, but he was in an excellent mood for undertaking any daring act which might present itself. Once more he returned to Jamaica, picking up a few prizes on the way. "Always welcome, Captain Ripley," said the admiral, cordially greeting Pearce when he appeared at the Penn to report himself. "You've done so well in the sloop that we must get you into a smart frigate; you'll not have to wait long for a vacancy, I dare say." This commendation was sufficient to restore Pearce's spirits. He hoped to do something before the corvette had to return home. There are two classes of people who hope to do something—one waits for the opportunity to occur, the other goes in search of it and seldom fails in the search. Pearce Ripley belonged to the latter class. Several more prizes were taken, and a considerable amount of damage done to the commerce of the enemy; but still the "Vestal" had not fallen in with an enemy the conquest of whom would bring glory as well as profit. Week after week passed away. It had been blowing hard. The wind dropped at sunset; the night was very dark and thick, an object could scarcely have been discerned beyond the bowsprit end. The island of Deserade, belonging to France, bore south-east by south, six or seven leagues, when, as day broke and the light increased, a ship was perceived close on the weather-beam, which in a short time was made out to be an enemy's frigate. The breeze had by this time sprung up again and was blowing fresh.

"We may fight her or try to escape," said the captain to Bonham, eyeing the frigate as if he would rather try fighting first.

"I should say that the odds being so greatly against us we ought to try to escape," answered the first lieutenant; "but I speak my own sentiments, and I am sure that of all on board, if fight we must, we will all be ready to stand by you to the last. Victory does not always side with the biggest."

Sail was accordingly made to the north-west, but no sooner had she shaped a course than the frigate under a cloud of canvas came tearing after her at a rate which proved that the "Vestal" had not a chance of escaping. The crew showed by unmistakable signs that they expected to be captured, by going below and putting on their best clothes. Pearce called them aft, "Lads, we have served together for three years, and done many a deed to be proud of. Do not let the Frenchmen boast that they took us without our having done our best to prevent them. I purpose to fight that frigate if you will stand by me, and that I am sure you will."

"Aye, aye, that we will, and would if she were twice as big, and sink at our guns before we strike," shouted Dick Rogers, and their loud cheers expressed the sentiments of the rest. The corvette at once prepared for action, and as

soon as all was ready she shortened sail to allow the frigate to come up, greatly to the Frenchmen's surprise probably. The latter began firing as soon as her guns could reach the corvette. "Let not a shot be returned till I give the order, lads," cried Ripley; "we must throw none away." He waited till his carronades would tell with effect. "Now give it them, lads," he shouted.

The heavy shot crashed against the side of the frigate in a way which astonished the Frenchmen. With wonderful rapidity the guns were run in, loaded, and again sent forth their death-dealing shower of iron, this time tearing through the frigate's upper bulwarks, sweeping across quarterdeck and wounding her masts. "Hurrah! we have knocked away her wheel," cried Bonham, who had sprung into the mizen rigging to ascertain the effect of the last broadside; "she's ours, if we are smart with our guns."

The Frenchmen had just fired a broadside which had killed three of the "Vestal's" crew, knocked one of her boats to pieces, and done other damage, but had not materially injured her running rigging. Firing another broadside in return, Pearce saw that by wearing sharp round he could pass under the stern of the frigate, and at the same time bring a fresh broadside to bear on her. The manoeuvre was rapidly executed, the effect was very great on board the enemy. The crew were seen to be hurrying to and fro as if in dread of some event about to occur. It was next seen that all sail was being made on the frigate. The men had deserted their guns. The British seamen plied the enemy with their carronades with still greater energy. The great masses of iron were hauled in and out as if they had been made of wood. Their only fear was that their antagonist would escape them. More sail was made on the corvette to keep up with him. To prevent the corvette from following, the Frenchmen again returned to their guns, and the frigate suddenly hauling up let fly her broadside.

Pearce saw the manoeuvre about to be executed, and was just in time to haul up also to save the "Vestal" from being raked. The frigate's shot, accompanied by a shower of musketry, came tearing on board. Hitherto one officer and four men had been killed on board the "Vestal," and six wounded, including the master slightly—a heavy loss out of a sloop's complement, but Pearce saw victory within his grasp, and resolved to persevere. The last broadside from the frigate told with fearful effect on the corvette. Her spars and rigging were much cut about; three more men were struck, and the brave captain was seen to stagger back. Had not Rogers sprang forward and caught him in his arms he would have fallen to the deck. He was speechless, but he motioned to Bonham, who ran up to continue the fight. When an attempt was made to carry him below, he signified that he would remain on deck till the battle was won. The surgeon came up and stanchd the blood flowing from his shoulder. The nervous system had received a violent shock, but he could not tell whether the wound would prove mortal, the surgeon reported. Still the battle raged. The French were again seen to quit their guns. The corvette followed up her success. It was observed that buckets were being hauled up through the ports, the frigate must be on fire; her foremast fell, the corvette ranged up alongside, the French ensign was still flying. Bonham was ordering another broadside to be poured in, when down came the enemy's flag, and at that moment, Pearce recovering, joined in the cheer which burst from the lips of the British crew.

"Go and help the poor fellows," were the first words the young captain spoke. The corvette's boats which could swim were lowered and armed with buckets, the English seamen hurried up the sides of their late opponent. Her deck presented everywhere signs of their prowess, covered with the bodies of the slain, and the wreck of the foremast and rigging; the wheel had been shot away and three men killed at it. As a security Bonham, who had gone on board and received the commanding officer's sword, the captain having been killed, sent him and three others on board the corvette, while he and his men set to work to extinguish the flames. The magazine was happily drowned, which was not itself a sufficient reason for the frigate to have struck, though the state of her masts and spars, and the number of her killed and wounded showed the skill and courage of her comparatively tiny opponent. The fire was at length got under, very much by the efforts of the Englishmen, who had to hint to the French that if they did not exert themselves they would be left to perish, as it would be impossible to get them all on board the corvette before the frigate would become untenable. The corvette and her prize having been put somewhat to rights, made sail for Jamaica. They had a long passage up, and the greatest vigilance was necessary to keep the prisoners in order. A plot was discovered for retaking the frigate, and Bonham had to threaten the French officers with severe punishment should anything of the sort be again attempted.

Pearce Ripley lay in his cabin unable to move. The hearts of the officers and men were deeply grieved, for the surgeon would not pronounce a favourable opinion. He was young, and had a good constitution. He might recover. The corvette succeeded in carrying her prize to Jamaica. The admiral himself came on board to see Ripley and to congratulate him on his achievement. "Your promotion is certain, Captain Ripley," he said kindly; "and I should think his Majesty, when he hears of your gallantry, won't forget to give a touch on your shoulder with the flat of his sword, eh. You will find handle to your name convenient, and you deserve it, that you do, my lad."

The admiral's kindness contributed much to restore Pearce to health. While he remained on shore Bonham received an acting order to take command of the "Vestal." Before Pearce had totally recovered he received his post rank with a complimentary letter on his gallantry. Bonham, at the same time, found that he was made a commander; the "Vestal," having been upwards of four years in commission, was ordered home, Captain Ripley taking a passage in her. She escaped all the enemy's cruisers, and arrived safely in Portsmouth harbour. She was, however, considered fit to go to sea again after an ordinary repair, and was recommissioned by Captain Bonham. Pearce was sent for by the First Lord of the Admiralty to attend the King's levee. He was presented to his Majesty, that good old king who truly loved a sailor, and knew how to appreciate honour and valour. On kneeling to kiss his sovereign's hand he felt a touch on his shoulder, and with astonishment, gratitude, and delight, heard the King say, "Rise, Sir Pearce Ripley; you are well deserving of knighthood."

Pearce felt very much inclined to shake the King cordially by the hand, and to assure his Majesty that no reward could be more satisfactory. He did not, however, nor did he say why he was so pleased with the rank bestowed on him, but made the usual bow, and moved off to allow others to present themselves. There was one, however, waiting for him outside the palace, as fine and officer-like looking man as any of those present in admirals' or post-captains' uniforms—his father, and the knowledge of the intense delight his promotion gave him, greatly added to the

satisfaction Pearce felt on the occasion. Sir Pearce Ripley was gazetted the next day to the command of a fine frigate, the name of which he soon made well-known by the gallant exploits he performed in her.

Volume Three--Chapter Six.

Two years had passed by. Colonel Verner, now a general, with his daughter, had returned to England, and they were spending some weeks during the summer at the house of a friend, Admiral Sir J. B—, in the Isle of Wight, in the neighbourhood of the then pretty little village of Ryde. Alice looked thinner and paler than formerly, but her beauty was in no way impaired, and the sweet smile which lit up her countenance—one of its chief charms when she spoke, was still there. She had accompanied her father and the admiral on a walk into Ryde. When some little distance from the village, they met a fine dignified-looking man, his silvery hair showing that his age was greater than would have been supposed from his florid, clear complexion. An undress naval uniform set off his fine figure to advantage. The admiral looked at him for a moment, and then shaking him cordially by the hand, inquired what brought him to Ryde.

"I have taken a cottage in the neighbourhood for my son's sake when he comes home, for as I have quitted the service I shall always be ready to receive him," was the answer.

"Oh, then we are near neighbours. Come over and dine with me to-day. I like to talk over by-gone days with an old shipmate," said the admiral.

The stranger accepted the invitation, and after a little more conversation, he walked on.

"A distinguished man," observed General Verner, when the admiral rejoined him.

"A right noble and brave man," said the admiral, but made no further remark.

The stranger was in the drawing-room when Miss Verner entered, and was soon engaged in an animated conversation with her. She thought him somewhat old-fashioned in his phraseology, perhaps, and mode of pronunciation, but she had so frequently heard officers of high rank speak in the same way, that she was not surprised, and as he had seen a great deal of the world, and described well what he had seen, she was much interested. As she listened, she felt her interest increase, and became insensibly drawn towards the old gentleman. As there were many married ladies present, she was led out among the first, and so she did not see when he left the room, which might have given her an idea as to his rank, but she found herself sitting next to him at dinner. Her father was opposite, and appeared to be much interested in his conversation. According to the good old custom, the admiral drank wine round with all his guests. "Mr Ripley, will you take wine?" he said, addressing her companion in his kind friendly tone. She started, and she felt the blood rush to her cheeks. She had not recovered from her confusion before the ceremony of wine-taking was over, and the old gentleman again addressed her. Could he be the father of Pearce? She had always understood that his father was a boatswain, and this old gentleman could not be that, or he would scarcely have been dining at the admiral's table. Her father would make the inquiry probably of the admiral; if not, she must try to muster courage to do so. In the mean time she would ask her companion if he knew Sir Pearce Ripley. In a low and somewhat trembling voice she put the question.

"Indeed I do, young lady, and am proud to own him as my son," answered the old seaman, fixing his clear grey eyes on her, as if he would read her heart. "I have a hope that you know him too, and that no two people love him better in the world," he added in a whisper.

Alice felt her cheeks glow, and yet she was not annoyed. "Indeed you are right," she said, in a low tone, which she hoped no one else would hear, for several people were speaking loudly, and there was a clatter of knives and forks.

"He will be in England again soon to refit, for he has allowed his frigate very little rest since he commanded her," observed the old gentleman. "He, I hope too, will then get a spell at home, for since he went to sea at ten years of age, he has never once been ten days on shore at a time, aye, I may say, not a month altogether."

Alice whispered her hope that he would remain on shore. After retiring to the drawing-room she looked anxiously for the arrival of the gentlemen. Her father and Mr Ripley entered together. The general soon came and sat down by her.

"A very agreeable old naval officer that is we've been talking to," he remarked; "I did not catch his name, but the admiral tells me that he is a master in the service."

Alice was pleased to hear this, but much puzzled. She managed to speak to the admiral when no one was near. He put on a quizzical look. "Now, young lady, if you had been inquiring about Sir Pearce Ripley, his son, I should not have been surprised," he answered. "The fact is, my friend Ripley became a master late in life. He had served in the lower grades of the profession, and if the rules of the service had allowed it, he should have been made a post-captain. I cannot tell you all the brave things he has done. When in charge of a prize, he fought a most gallant action; he prevented his ship's company from joining the mutineers at the Nore. On two several occasions, he saved the ship from being wrecked, not to mention his conduct on the first of June, and on numerous previous occasions. I placed his son on the quarterdeck, predicting that he would be an honour to the service, and so he is, and I am proud of him."

While the admiral was speaking, Alice was considering whether she should confide her case to him, and beg him to intercede with her father, or rather to speak to him of Mr Ripley in a way which might overcome his prejudices. She almost gasped for breath in her agitation, but her resolution was taken, and without loss of time she hurriedly told him of her engagement to Sir Pearce Ripley.

"I am heartily glad to hear of it, my dear young lady," exclaimed the admiral warmly; "he is worthy of you and you are of him, and that is saying a great deal for you. Hoity toity! I wonder my friend General Verner has not more sense; the idea of dismissing one of the finest officers in the service because he hasn't a rent-roll and cannot show a

pedigree as many do a yard long, and without a word of truth from beginning to end. If a man is noble in himself what does it matter who his father was? The best pedigree, in my opinion, is that which a man's grandson will have to show. Better to have one noble fellow like old Ripley there for a father, than a line of twenty indifferent progenitors, such as nine-tenths of those who set such store by their ancestry can boast of."

Alice very naturally agreed with the admiral, who was himself a man of much older family than her father. He attacked the general the next morning. He hated circumlocution and went directly to the point. "You object to your daughter marrying Sir Pearce Ripley because his father was a boatswain. I tell you I was for many years of inferior rank to a boatswain. I entered the navy as captain's servant. What do you say to that? It does not signify what a man has been, it is what he is should be considered. Now, my dear general, just clap all such nonsense under hatches, and the next time young Ripley asks your daughter to marry him, let her, and be thankful that you have secured so fine a son-in-law and so excellent a husband for the girl."

General Verner had not a word of reply to his friend's remonstrance. The admiral, when he met Alice, exclaimed, "I've been pouring my broadsides into your father till I left him without a stick standing and every gun dismantled; if you give him a shot depend on't he'll strike his flag."

Volume Three--Chapter Seven.

The admiral's house commanded an extensive view of the Solent, looking across to Portsmouth, down the channel towards Cowes and up over Spithead. One bright morning after breakfast, the admiral, as usual, with his eye at the telescope, was watching the ever-varying scene on the waters before him, when he exclaimed, "Two frigates standing in, and one is French, a prize to the other. To my eye the Frenchman seems the biggest of the two; I must send over and learn all about it." He rang the bell, his old coxswain appeared. "Judson, take the wherry and board that frigate, and give my compliments and learn the particulars of the action, and if her captain can spare time I shall be very glad to see him. Here, give this note if—" The admiral spoke a few words in an undertone heard by no one else.

Judson hurried off. There was a fair breeze to Spithead, and back—a soldier's wind. Alice watched the progress of the boat with great interest. She reached the English frigate, remained a short time, and was speedily on her way back. Before she had long left the frigate she was followed by another boat which overtook her as she reached the shore.

A short time afterwards, Judson appeared, and put a card into his master's hand. "Say that I shall be delighted to see him when he can come up."

"What about the action, Judson?" asked the admiral.

"Just the finest, sir, that has been fought during the war," answered Judson. "He'll be up here presently, and tell you more about it than I can."

Scarcely ten minutes had passed by, when Judson announced, "Captain Sir Pearce Ripley!" The admiral received the young captain with every mark of regard. "And now let me introduce you to my guests, General and Miss Verner; but, by the by, you know them, I think."

Alice, lost to all sense of decorum, sprang forward to receive him. The general put out his hand in a cordial manner, and with many compliments congratulated him on his success. The admiral having listened to an account of the action, dragged off the general to see some improvements on the farm; the ladies of the family left the room, and Pearce Ripley heard from Alice's own lips that her father fully sanctioned their union. He claimed a sailor's privilege, and before a month had passed their marriage took place.

Bonham obtained his post rank, and though he had not the talent of his friend, he ever proved himself an active efficient officer. Harry Verner quitted the service, finding that, notwithstanding his connections, his merits were not appreciated, and that he was not likely to obtain his promotion. He soon afterwards broke his neck out hunting. Sir Pearce Ripley commanded several line of battle ships, and took an active part in three of England's greatest naval victories. He in due course became an admiral, and was created a baronet, and his sons entering the navy rose to the highest rank in their noble profession.

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