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Vol. II, by J. H. Ingraham**

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**Title:** Captain Kyd; or, The Wizard of the Sea. Vol. II

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**Release Date:** April 9, 2011 [EBook #35810]

**Language:** English

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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CAPTAIN KYD; OR, THE WIZARD OF THE SEA. VOL. II \*\*\*

**CAPTAIN KYD;**

**OR,**

**THE WIZARD OF THE SEA.**

**A ROMANCE.**

**BY THE AUTHOR OF**

**"THE SOUTHWEST," "LAFITTE," "BURTON," &c.**

"There's many a one who oft has heard  
The name of Robert Kyd,  
Who cannot tell, perhaps, a word  
Of him, or what he did.

"So, though I never saw the man,  
And lived not in his day,  
I'll tell you how his guilt began—  
To what it led the way."

H. F. Gould.

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**VOL. II.**

**NEW-YORK:**

1839.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1838,  
By HARPER & BROTHERS,  
In the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New-York.

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CAPTAIN KYD;  
OR,  
THE WIZARD OF THE SEA.

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BOOK I.  
CONTINUED

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CHAPTER VIII.

"The wind blows fair! the vessel feels  
The pressure of the rising breeze,  
And swiftest of a thousand keels,  
She leaps to the careering seas."

WILLIS.

"Commanding, aiding, animating all,  
Where foe appear'd to press, or friend to  
fall,  
Cheers Lara's voice."

*Lara.*

Towards noon of the day on which the events related in the last chapter transpired, a signal was displayed on one of the towers of Castle Cor, and shortly afterward the yacht, which hitherto had appeared so lifeless, got under weigh. Like a snowy seabird seeking her nest, she spread her broad white sails and stood in towards the land, fired a gun, and hove to within cable's length of the beach. A well-manned boat, with a crimson awning stretched above the stern-sheets, and gay with the flags of England and of Bellamont, presently put off from her, and pulled to the foot of the path that led up to the castle. In a few minutes afterward a party was seen descending the cliff, consisting of Lady Bellamont, Grace Fitzgerald, Kate Bellamont and the earl, on the arm of whom the latter leaned pale and sad, followed by a large number of attendants, and others who had come to witness the embarkation. On arriving at the boat, which lay against the rock so that they could easily step into it, they were received by the commander of the yacht in person—a bluff, middle-aged seaman, his manners characterized by a sailor's frankness, united with the ease and courtesy of a well-bred gentleman.

"How is the wind, Kenard?" asked the earl of the officer, as he came to the place of embarking; "'tis somewhat light and contrary, methinks, for our voyage."

"It comes from the south by west, my lord, but we can lay our course till we clear the cape, when it will be full fair. I trust our cabin will be honoured with a larger share of loveliness than I had anticipated," he said, smiling with gallantry as he saw Kate Bellamont and the countess were of the party.

"So you did not give me the credit for being so *very* lovely until you had seen me, Master Kenard," said Grace, wilfully misapplying his words.

"When I look on your face, I assuredly can have no wish that my cabins should be graced with more beauty than I behold there, fair lady," answered the seaman, lifting his cap gallantly.

"A pretty speech to come from the sea," said Grace, laughing.

"Come, fair niece, the winds wait for no one," said the earl, stepping from the rock upon the cushioned seats of the gig, after having taken a tender leave of his countess and daughter.

"Adieu, then, sweet cousin!"

"Adieu, dear Grace!"

And, for a moment, the lovely girls lingered in a parting embrace, kissing again and again each other's cheeks, while their full eyes ran over. It seemed as if they never would separate!

"Nay, my sweet Grace, will you give all your adieus and affectionate partings to your cousin?" said the countess, interrupting their lingering parting.

With another warm embrace, another kiss, and a fresh shower of tears, Grace released herself from Kate's entwining arms and threw herself into those of Lady Bellamont. The earl then gently took her hand and led her into the boat.

The baggage, in the mean while, had been placed in it by the servants and seamen, and the earl and his niece having taken their seats beneath the silken canopy and once more interchanged adieus with those on the rock, the captain bade the men give way in the direction of the yacht, the yards of which, at the same moment, were manned to receive the noble party. The boat, urged on its way by eight oars, cut swiftly through the crested waves, and in a short time after leaving the land was alongside. The deck of the vessel was within a few feet of the water; and half a dozen steps, let down by a hinge into the boat, formed a safe and easy means of getting on board. As Grace, who had not ceased to wave her handkerchief to the party on shore, placed her foot upon the deck, her eyes rested, with surprise that nearly broke forth into an exclamation, on Mark Meredith, who stood close beside her, manning, with other young sailors, the rope that lifted the stairs. Forgetful of his duty, he looked with all his soul after her retiring form, as, leaning on her uncle's arm, she walked aft amid the loud cheers from the crew on the yards.

"Run away with it!" cried the officer of the gangway to the young seamen at the fall.

But Mark was deaf to the order, and was nearly thrown down by the rapid movement of his companions ere he could recover himself.

"So, so, my green un! you must have quicker ears than this if you would serve King Billy. And what are your eyes doing aft? Tom," he added, to a seaman who was fitting a tompion to the starboard gun amidships, as Mark, blushing and confused, retreated from this reproof among the crew, "is this lad in your mess?"

"Ay, sir," said the man, ceasing his occupation and respectfully lifting his cap.

"Then teach him that a seaman must look ahead and not astern," said the officer, dryly.

"Ay, ay, sir," was the equally dry response.

"Lay in, lay in, off the yards!" now shouted the lieutenant; "all hands make sail!"

The boatswain's whistle rung sharp and clear as it repeated the call to the deck; and in an instant the yards, save two or three men left on each to assist in loosening the canvass, were deserted, and the sailors descended with activity to the deck.

The yards were now swung round to the wind, and every light sail was spread to woo the gentle breeze that came off shore. Yielding to its influence, with a ripple about her prow as she began to cleave the water and a slight inclination towards the direction opposite from the wind, the graceful yacht slid smoothly over the sea, with a rapid yet scarcely perceptible motion.

Grace stood beneath the awning that covered the quarter-deck, and, as they glided down the bay, watched the shore, which seemed to move past like a revolving panorama. Castle Cor, with its lordly towers, rose to the eye lone and commanding for many a league; and she could fancy, long after the flag that fluttered on its topmost tower was no longer to be seen, that she could discern the white kerchief of her cousin waving to her from the cliff. As the vessel continued to gain an offing, the battlements of Castle More, far inland, became visible; and as her eyes wandered from the cliff to these towers, her thoughts ran rapidly over the scenes in which Lester, the preceding day, had been an actor; and she wondered as she thought. Had she known all—had Kate made her her confidant after her interview with the sorceress, she would have had food for wonder indeed!

Gradually the scenes with which she was familiar faded from her view. The towers of Castle Cor and the far-distant battlements of Castle More sunk beneath the horizon, and she found herself, on turning, after taking a long, last, lingering look at these dear objects, to the scenes about her, that the vessel was moving before a steady breeze past the outermost rocky headland of the bay, and boldly entering the open sea. The sun was shining redly in the west, his broad, flaming disk on a level with the ocean, the top of every leaping wave of which he touched with fire: a dark cloud hung just above it, with lurid edges; and the whole aspect of the heavens was to her eye angry and menacing, and betokened a tempest. The yacht cut her way swiftly through the water, as if, so it seemed to her imagination, flying from the approaching storm, with every sail flung broad to the breeze, which, after the course was changed to the east on doubling the headland, blew directly aft. She cast her eyes along the decks, and saw that the most perfect quiet and order reigned throughout, and that every seaman was employed in some occupation of his craft, or stationed at his post ready to obey the orders of his officer. Now and then an old sailor would

cast his eyes to windward, look a moment at the sun, then lift them to the sails, and, with an approving glance, again pursue his momentarily interrupted task. This trained coolness of men accustomed to meet the dangers of the deep, but whose very feelings were subdued and regulated by the stern discipline of their profession, reassured her; and when she saw the captain of the yacht carelessly lounging over the quarter-rail, chatting with his first lieutenant, and her uncle lying at his length on one of the luxurious couches calmly reading a book, all her fears vanished, and she watched the descent of the sun, which resembled a vast round shield of dead gold, into the sea, with a pleasure unalloyed by apprehension. Slowly and majestically it descended till half its orb was beneath the sea, which now no longer reflected fire, but grew black as ink up to its blood-red face. All at once it appeared as if dark lines had been drawn across its disk, as though traced by a pencil.

"Look!" she involuntarily exclaimed, pointing towards it; "see those lines on the sun."

The earl threw aside his book and sprung to his feet, so sudden and energetic was her exclamation. The captain and his officer both started, and also looked in the direction indicated by her finger.

"What?" cried the former, after looking an instant, "lines on the sun? *Ropes*, lady! By the rood, 'tis a ship!" he exclaimed.

The upper portion of the luminary was yet above the horizon, and the practised eye of the seaman detected in the delicate tracery, that had struck and pleased the eye of Grace, the outlines of a distant vessel lying under bare poles. He looked a little longer, and distinctly saw her hull rise on the swell in bold, black relief against the sun.

"My glass!" he hastily demanded.

It was placed in his hand by an under officer, when, directing it towards the object, he looked steadily for an instant, and then, turning to his noble passenger, gave him the spyglass, saying,

"'Tis a pirate, my lord! Doubtless the same I have been advised to look out for, as having been seen in these seas."

"What cause have you to suspect it?" asked the earl, surveying the stranger through the telescope.

"His wish to avoid observation; his lowering his sails; his peculiar rig—three straight sticks for masts—and the knowledge that they swarm in these waters," was the confident reply.

"They have disappeared!" exclaimed Grace, as the upper rim of the sun sunk beneath the watery waste, leaving all the sky cold and cheerless.

"He is still there, maiden," said the captain, "but has no longer a bright background to show his spars on. If he is trying to hide from us, he has made no calculation for the sun, and has been raw enough to run directly in its wake; but doubtless he dropped sail just where he was the instant he discovered us."

"From fear, captain?"

"No, my lord," was the reply, in a voice lowered so as not to reach the ears of Grace. "These fellows are night-birds. His object is to hide himself till dark, and then—no doubt taking us for a merchant coaster—pop down upon us, under cover of the darkness, when he is least expected. But we have him our own way now, thanks to the kindly sun and our fair young lady here."

"Can you cope with him, should he come down upon you under cover of the night?" asked the nobleman.

"I shall not run from him, my lord. I have eight bulldogs here that can growl and bite as well as e'er a mastiff in his majesty's service: and from the size of his sticks, and his light rig, he carries not so many. But, more or less, he lies to windward of us, and so has the advantage; and, if he can outsail us with a flowing sheet, will, if such be his pleasure, be down upon us ere the middle watch is called. Besides, there is a cap full of wind gathering in that quarter, which will help him along if his humour takes him this way."

"Is there a probability that we shall be pursued, Kenard?" asked the nobleman, with seriousness, glancing anxiously towards Grace, who was watching, with a childish pleasure, the black waves as they leaped up to the stern, broke in glaring white heads, and fell in crystal showers back into the sea again.

"There is, my lord," was the quiet answer.

"It is my desire, then, that you use your best efforts to escape."

"My lord!" exclaimed the hardy seaman, in a tone of disappointment, yet emphasizing the words as if he had not heard aright.

"Exert all your skill and seamanship to avoid a meeting with this bucanier, if such he be," repeated the earl, who perfectly comprehended him. "Those who are unfitted to encounter danger should not be thoughtlessly exposed to it," he added, looking towards his niece. "There is one here, whom you see, that cannot profit by your success, yet will suffer everything by your defeat. Were I alone, my brave captain, I would give you the weight of my blade in this matter. As

it is, we must fly."

"We will but let him come within reach of my barkers, my lord, and wake him up with a couple of broadsides, and be off again before he knows what has hurt him."

"I must be obeyed, Kenard," said the earl, decidedly, turning away and joining his niece.

"That Dick Kenard should ever run away from a bucanier," said the seaman, grumblingly, to himself, as he took up his trumpet to give orders, "and without showing him his teeth, is a disgrace both to himself and his majesty's navy. Bluff King Billy himself, were he on board, would be the first to stand by me for a hard brush. This comes of leaving my snug little clipper, the Roebuck, and taking command of this gingerbread yacht, fit only for boarding-school girls to sail about in on a park-lake. Howel," he said, to his lieutenant, in no very good-humoured tones, "have all sail made on this penny whistle; stretch out every rag she's got; make every thread tell. Set stun'sails both sides alow and aloft. See to it!"

For a few moments the yacht was a scene of apparent confusion, but really of the most perfect order. Commands were given and repeated, and instantly obeyed. Additional sails rose on either side of those before standing, as if by magic. Men moved quickly in all directions, yet each obedient to his own officer, and each engaged in obeying a particular order, as if but one had been given, and he the only one to execute it. The masts were soon white with broad fields of canvass, stretching far out on either side of the vessel; and the increased ripple around the bow, and the gurgle heard about the rudder, indicated that she felt the new impulse, and was moving with increased velocity.

The captain, who had, in the mean while, walked the deck with a moody pace, looked up as the bustle made in increasing sail ceased.

"She is under all she will bear, sir!" said the lieutenant, approaching him.

"What way has she?"

"Five knots."

"'Tis her canvass presses her along then," said the captain, looking aloft with a gratified eye, "for there is scarce wind to float a feather."

"She moves wing and wing, like a duck," said the officer, in reply; "for I've sailed in her many a cruise before you took command of her, sir, and know what she'll do; but, with the wind a point or two forward the beam, a spar would work better and gain more headway than she will."

"Pray Heaven the wind soon chop round ahead, then," said the captain, with energy; "I would not lose the chance of a brush with this three-masted rigger for a post-captaincy. Keep good lookout astern, and watch everything like a change in the wind: report if you see anything moving between the sea and sky, he added, going to the companion-way.

"And what if I can change the wind for you by bringing her to, a few points, by degrees," archly suggested the lieutenant, in a low voice, as he was about to descend into the cabin.

"'Tis a temptation, i'faith, Howel," he said, laughingly; "but wouldst have me keep a false log? No, no. Not Dick Kenard, for a score of pirates."

The captain disappeared as he spoke, and the lieutenant, with his speaking-trumpet beneath his arm, and his right hand thrust into the breast of his jacket, mechanically paced the deck fore and aft the starboard guns in the waste, leaving the whole of the quarter-deck to the earl and his niece.

Twilight was stealing over the sea, and the headland of Cape Clear looked, through the hazy distance, like a cloud resting on the water. With her head reclining on her uncle's shoulder, Grace watched in silence the stars, as one by one they came out of their blue homes and took their places in the sky; and her fancy amused itself, as she saw them light up one after another, with the idea that the invisible angels, which are said to keep watch over the earth, were hanging out lamps to give light to it in the absence of the sun. The musical murmur of the parted water, as it rippled past the vessel's sides; the occasional dash of a wave against the stern; the gentle, rocking motion of the yacht, as it coursed along, threw over her spirit a pensive sadness. Twilight is sacred to thought! Its dreamy influence begets reflection. There is something in its deep silence that elevates and spiritualizes. To religion and its mysteries, the mind then insensibly turns, and always for its good. If men think at all, they will think at this magic hour. If they are religious ever, they will be devotionally so then. There is no man, however humble or however lost, who does not at times feel its sanctifying influence. It is the sabbath of the day, and its time to the thoughts of the heart of man is a holy time.

The mind of Grace experienced the sacred influences of the hour. For a while she gave herself up to her thoughts, that would take to themselves wings and fly whither they would. At length night came on in all her starry glory, and the meditations of the maiden grew less ideal; and returning from contemplating, as young and ardent minds delight to do, creation and its wonders, religion and its mysteries, the wearied wing of her imagination rested among those whom she had left at Castle Cor. She thought of Kate and of Lester—grieved at their quarrel, and sympathized with her unhappy cousin. She then thought of Mark; of his intrepidity on the cliff; of his pride, and of his low station. She caught herself wishing, she could hardly tell why or wherefore, that he had

been noble; and began devising some way of drawing him from his degrading occupation of a fisherman, and elevating him to a worthier station—when all at once she remembered, what she had forgotten, that this was in part accomplished—that he was on board the same vessel with herself! She started at the recollection, and looked around confused. But the darkness concealed her changing colour from her uncle, who nevertheless spoke, as she so suddenly lifted her head from his shoulder.

"What, dreaming, my Gracy? It is growing late, and time for you to retire. We will take some refreshment below, and then I will resign you to your maid—for this little head should have a softer pillow than an old uncle's arm."

As the earl spoke, he took the hand of his niece, and descended with her to the cabin, where, after partaking of their evening meal, they parted, one to go to the deck and join the captain, the other to retire to the state cabin. This was furnished with costly hangings, couches of down, gilded sofas, thick carpets, tables inlaid with pearl, a toilet stand and laver of ebony and marble, and pier glasses extending from the ceiling to the floor; while nothing that could contribute to the comfort or administer to the luxury of the occupant was wanting.

When the earl returned to the deck it was nearly ten o'clock, and the moon was high in the east. He wrapped himself in his cloak, and walked for an hour thoughtfully, occasionally casting his eyes to windward, or stopping to examine the compass. The captain, in the mean while, leaned over the quarter, fixing his eyes steadily towards the direction from which his vessel had come; at one moment putting his night-glass to his eye; at another giving an order to the lieutenant of the watch, and now and then addressing a brief sentence of caution or reprimand to the helmsman.

Seven bells had struck, and it was near midnight, when, after taking a long and scrutinizing survey of the horizon, he crossed the deck towards the earl, and said, with impatient disappointment,

"We are safe enough, my lord. There will be no one to trouble us to-night."

"I am glad it is so, Kenard. You may have been mistaken in his character."

"No. But he probably has discovered what we are, and has thought better of it. Ha! did not the main-topgallant-sail flap then?" he asked, looking aloft.

"The wind is lulling, I believe," said the earl.

"It is, by Heaven!" exclaimed the seaman. "What headway do we make? Heave the log."

"She logs full four, but makes not above three and a half knots way," repeated the officer of the deck.

"We have a strong current setting to the south and east in our favour by the dip of this ripple, which will make it four again. Ten minutes ago we were running eight! There is a chance of exchanging compliments with our neighbour, my lord; yet I have done my best to keep out of his way."

"But, if we have no wind, he must be in the same situation."

"He will have it first, and bring it along with him. There was a wind-bag hanging over the sun that will soon be piping a merry note. There flaps the fore-topsail against the mast! The wind is leaving us. She does not now move two knots through the water," he added, glancing over the side. "We shall have it dead calm in ten minutes. Take in the lower stunsails, Howel, and stand by to hand all the light canvass! we shall have it soon! Preparation is half the victory, my lord," he added, turning to the earl with a formal bow.

"What mean these preparations?" inquired the earl; "for I profess to be better landsman than seaman."

"And it requires no unskilled hand to sail the ship of state, my lord, of which, I hear, you are an able officer," said the captain, in a complimentary manner. "This southwest wind, which has held us so fair, is dying away to make room for a tight blow here away from the northwest, which I have been watching suspiciously. There heaves a cloud now towards the zenith; you can scarcely discern its outline for the haze, my lord; but you will find no stars in that direction, and the horizon looks thick and black."

"The wind has quite gone," said the earl, raising his palm to catch the air.

"It is now time to make ready to welcome its successor. Turn up all hands, Howel. Take in every stitch of light sail!"

In a few moments the yacht was stripped to her two topsails, spanker, and jib.

"Put a single reef in the topsails, Mr. Howel," ordered the captain, as he saw that the dark cloud rose rapidly in the northwest.

"It is done, sir!" reported the officer, a few moments afterward.

"Very well! Secure the guns with single lashings only, and have the decks clear for action!" was the next order.

"Action, captain?" exclaimed the earl, who had witnessed these preparations with interest.

"It is best to be prepared, if that dark cloud rolling towards us should chance to conceal a foe in its bosom. A dark cloud, as well as a dark eye, sometimes hides dangers, my lord."

"You may be doing right, Kenard, but Heaven defend us from other dangers than the elements threaten us with."

These several orders were executed; and the yacht lay rocking, with scarcely any progressive motion, on the sluggish surges, which all at once began to heave and swell, as if lifted by some vast and mysterious power beneath. She was nearly divested of her canvass, yet still beautiful in her nakedness, showing to advantage the graceful symmetry of her tapering spars, and the exquisite shape and proportions of her hull. Like a bird seated on the water, she yielded to every undulation of the heaving billows with a grace that seemed the instinct of life.

The stillness that now reigned was profound and awful.

"List, my lord," said the captain, after the lapse of a few moments, during which all eyes were turned to watch the storm-cloud walking the skies in its power, and flinging its broad shadow on the sea.

The earl bent his ear more acutely, and heard a deep moaning sound, like winds howling in caverns under-sea. Gradually it grew louder, and at the same time the dark cloud cast itself across the skies towards the zenith, its edges streaming in advance, like hair blown out by the wind. In a few seconds the moon was darkened, the stars became suddenly extinguished, and an impenetrable gloom fell like a pall over the deep. Not a breath yet moved the air. But deeper and more awful grew the moan of the storm as it swept down the sea. Louder and louder it came, and now was distinctly heard the roar of agitated waves, tossed by the shrieking winds; and between the sky and sea, which seemed to meet within reach of the hand, glared a line of white foam, seeming, to their imaginations, the glittering and gnashing teeth of the mad tempest. The earl hid his head within his cloak, and uttered a prayer for the safety of the souls on board; the captain stood upon a gun, with his eyes upon the coming storm, professionally cool and collected.

"Two steady men go to the aid of the helmsman," he said, in a calm, low voice. "She will bear nothing, Howel; we must make an Eolian harp of her. So! stand by the topsail halyards."

"All ready, sir," replied the lieutenant, in the same subdued tone.

"Let go all!"

The topsails came down by the run, and in a moment's time were furled by the active seamen.

"Let go the jib and spanker," he now shouted, in an energetic tone.

"All gone, sir!"

The yacht was now under bare poles, and left to the mercy of the hurricane. The roar of the coming tempest was now deafening, and the vessel began to pitch wildly, yet there was no sensible agitation of the air.

"Every man throw himself on his face to the deck!" cried the captain, suddenly, in a loud tone. "My lord, you will be safer below. Our decks will be swept clean as your hand."

"I will remain, Kenard."

"And I will remain with you, uncle," said Grace, suddenly appearing before them like a spirit, in her snowy night-robe, which seemed like a garment of pale light in the surrounding blackness and gloom; "I will share the danger by your side," she added, with decision.

There was no time to refuse her entreaty or conduct her to the cabin—the tempest burst upon them, as if a cloud, swelling with wind and rain, had broken over the vessel. Instantly all who were on their feet were prostrated. Howling and shrieking through the rigging, accompanied by a crashing and splintering that appalled every soul on board with the present sense of danger, it swept over them with terrific fury. Borne down by its weight, the vessel careened till she lay almost on her beam's end, while the mad surges leaped over her bulwarks and deluged the nearly perpendicular decks. The darkness became illumined by a wild, strange light from the foaming sea, and every object was distinctly seen by its supernatural glare. The captain got upon his feet, and, climbing to windward, lashed himself to the main rigging, and gave such orders as the crisis demanded. But his voice could not be heard, and his presence and example were alike useless at a moment like this. The vessel was driving in the van of the tempest with inconceivable velocity. The waves seemed to lift her hull, and hurl her onward like a feather. The brave seaman beheld many of his crew swept off, and saw them, without the power to help them, struggling amid the boiling sea; but their shrieks were lost in the louder shrieks of the wind, and the flying vessel soon left them far astern. Others were lashing themselves to the rigging; others clinging to the guns; and all were exerting themselves to preserve their lives. Casting his eyes aloft, he saw, with a pang of grief, that his main-topgallant-mast was gone, and that his fore-topmast was wounded and tottering fearfully at every pitch of the vessel. The first fury of the tempest was spent, and there being a momentary lull, it occurred to him that it might yet be saved.

"Ho, there, forward!" he shouted.

His words seemed to have an electrical effect upon the crew, as if the sound of a cheerful human voice, in that fearful moment, inspired them with hope. Half the danger was lessened to their

minds, and twenty voices replied,

"Ay, ay."

At the instant, there came a second blast of the tempest, and a huge sea breaking over the vessel, swept the captain into the waste, and bore three more of the men into the sea, who the next moment were lost in the darkness astern. The first glance of the captain, on recovering his feet and sustaining himself by clasping round a gun, was to the fore-topmast.

"She yet stands it!" he exclaimed, "but another such a blast will pitch it end foremost through our decks. Ho, my lads, which of you will take a couple of fathoms from the topgallant-halyards and go aloft and fish that stick?"

Many an eye was turned upward, but not a foot moved.

"A light lad will do it best. The spar must be saved where it is; for, if it falls inboard, 'twill make a hole through our decks big enough to let the ocean in. Be quick, lads!"

"I will do it, sir," said a young sailor, springing into the weather rigging, with a coil of rigging on his arm.

"That's my lad. You shall wear an epaulet for this."

With the eyes of the whole crew upon him, the intrepid young seaman ascended the rigging, though with much difficulty, as the wind pressed him so closely against the stays that he could scarcely climb from one rattling to another. After great peril he gained the top. Here, breaking from its latticed guard a couple of oaken slats, he swung himself into the topmast rigging, and, ascending to where the stick was splintered, commenced with great coolness, while the storm howled terrifically about him, to wind the rope about both it and the pieces of wood he had torn from the top. At every pitch of the vessel the wounded spar would gape wide, and threaten to carry him with it into the sea. But to the eyes of those below, who could plainly see him by the white light shed from the phosphorescent waves, he appeared to be as cool as if engaged in an ordinary duty on an ordinary occasion. After taking numerous turns about the mast till his rope was exhausted, he skilfully fastened the ends, and then, by a stay, descended like an arrow to the deck.

"What lad is that?" asked the captain, who had silently watched his labour.

"The fisher's lad," replied one.

"Gallantly done, my lad," said the captain. "This night has made thy fortune for thee, young man."

"I believe there is a vessel in sight, sir."

"What is that you say? Come aft, for this wind will let nobody hear anything but its own howl."

"I discovered aloft what appeared to be a vessel to windward, scudding under bare poles," repeated Mark.

"Ha, say you? Then we are like to have company in the gale."

As he attempted to ascend to the weatherside to look for the stranger, a fresh gust of the tornado burst upon the vessel and threw her upon her beam's end, the sea breaking over her bulwarks from stem to stern with the force and volume of a cataract.

"My niece, my niece!" cried the Earl of Bellamont, suddenly; "save her—oh, God! she is lost!"

The first shock of the tempest had thrown the nobleman and Grace to the deck; but he had contrived to shelter her in his cloak, under the lee of the companion-way, during its continuance, and, save the apprehension attendant on the danger she was in, she had suffered comparatively little. Her attention had been drawn, in the mean while, to the bold enterprise of the young sailor. She would have shrieked as he volunteered, but her voice failed her. She had watched his ascent and the progress of his perilous duty with trembling and with prayer; and, when he descended to the deck, she released her hold upon her uncle, and clasped her hands together in gratitude for his preservation. It was at this moment the vessel was thrown upon her beam's end, when, caught up by a wave, she was borne far from the reach of the earl, whose cries now drew all eyes towards him.

"My niece! Grace! Where is she?" he cried, in tones of despair.

"Here, uncle!" she faintly answered from the sea.

Guided by her voice, they discerned her at some distance from the vessel, her body immersed in the water, clinging by one hand to a stay which lay level with it. Every heave of the sea lifted her nearly out of the water to let her descend again far beneath its surface. Yet she held firmly to the stay with that tenacity which is taught by the love of life.

The earl no sooner beheld her than he was about to jump overboard to her rescue, when Mark, with a rope fastened around his waist, run along the level bulwarks and arrested him before he could take the leap.

"Stay, my lord! Hold firmly by the end of this rope, and I will save her or perish in the attempt."



As he spoke he cast himself into the sea; and partly by swimming and partly by the aid of the stay, he had nearly reached her, when a wave lifted her high on its crest, and forced her to release her grasp.

"Save me, Mark!" she cried, and sunk in the hollow it left, and almost within reach of his arm.

He dove, and brought her to the surface scarce ere she had gone beneath it. She instantly clasped her arms firmly around him with the instinct of self-preservation; her cheek lying against his, and her rich tresses blinding him.

"She is safe; draw us inboard," he shouted, buffeting the waves with one arm, the other encircling her with a firm grasp.

The earl, assisted by the captain and sailors, the next moment drew his half-drowned niece from the sea, dripping like a naiad, while the captain did the same office for the brave youth.

"Two epaulets, by the rood!" he exclaimed. "'Twas a lucky day Dick Kenard shipped a lad of your mettle. Ho, there, men! We must now look to the craft. Save the ship first, and think of ourselves afterward, is my maxim, my lord. Bear a hand with an axe! Cut away the masts!"

"Cast the lee guns overboard, and she may right, captain," said Mark, shaking the salt spray from his locks.

"We can but try it, my boy. Overboard with the barkers!"

Forthwith the men set to work and pitched the starboard guns into the sea, and, after cutting loose the fore and main yards, and giving every man's weight to the weather side, the yacht righted with a tremendous roll to windward and a lurch that threw every man flat upon the deck.

"There she is on her legs again," cried the captain, exultingly. "The storm seems to have shown its roughest paw, and we'll ride it out yet. We are less a topgallant-sail and a brace of yards, my lord; but an hour's calm will make all shipshape again. But the poor fellows that are washed overboard! there's no getting them back. They are gone to their last muster," he added, with manly sympathy.

The fury of the tempest had been spent on the yacht; and though it now blew a stiff gale, it was no longer attended with any of those tremendous gusts which had characterized it at the first. The sea no longer boiled and tossed confusedly, but on every side rolled its waves in one direction to leeward; and though they broke in snowy heads, and lifted themselves in mountainous billows, the regularity of their motion indicated that the tornado had settled into a steady though violent hurricane. The clouds, although still dark and laden with wind, flew higher above the sea than before, and in the east they broke into masses, showing between white places in the sky.

"She will bear her spanker close reefed, and a hand's breadth of the jib, Mr. Howel. Pass the word forward to set the jib, sir!"

There was no reply.

"Where is Mr. Howel?" he demanded, with a foreboding of the fatal result.

"He was washed overboard by the last sea we shipped," replied one of the men.

"A noble seaman gone! a lovely woman widowed! It has been a fatal night! Marston, ho! Where is my second lieutenant?"

"Mr. Marston was struck by a spar, and knocked into the water as we went over on our beam," answered another.

"This has been a dear night indeed, my lord," said the captain, addressing Lord Bellamont, who was supporting Grace in his arms by the companion-way; "I have lost my two oldest officers, and how many of my best men I know not. Edwards! Thank God, I have one lieutenant left. You must be my second now, and act as my first! Muster all hands aft. Let us see who are missing, and then let us set to work and put the crippled craft under an inch or two of canvass, if only to ease the fore-topmast, which, with this pitching, in spite of its support, will soon take leave of the ship."

The men were mustered aft, and thirteen less than the yacht's complement answered to their names.

"Ah, poor fellows!" sighed the captain, "they have got a seaman's end! but they would have had the same fifty years hence; or else have been thrown into a hole on shore, which is worse than they now have got. A short life and a gallant one, is my maxim, my lord," he said, turning round and speaking to the earl. "Poor brave boys, Heaven give them a snug berth aloft! Well, lads, let us get a bit of sail on the craft, and cry afterward. My lad," he continued, addressing Meredith, "I see you are a sailor! You must take poor Marston's place, and wait till you get on shore for your commission. Go forward and set the jib at once. Here! a dozen of you close reef this spanker, and let us see how long it will take for the wind to cut it up into ribands. Lively, men, lively! Stand by there, at the helm, to bring her smartly up to the wind as soon as she begins to feel her canvass. Hoist away briskly!"

In a few minutes the yacht was lying to under a reefed jib and close-reefed spanker, with her helm lashed to the starboard bulwarks; the steersman, with the two men who had been detailed

to assist him at the beginning of the storm, having been carried forward into the waste on the first billow that broke over the stern.

The force of the wind gradually lessened, and, in half an hour after the jib was set, an order was given to set the foresail, and shake the reefs out of the spanker.

"Put her away a point or two, and give her headway," said the captain to the lieutenant, as the above orders were executed. "So, steady! there she walks bravely! See, my lord, how like a duck she rides on the top of the waves. She's a tight boat for so gayly painted a craft, or we should, ere this, have been helping the mermaids string coral in their sea-caves below. Never judge a ship by the colour of her bends, is my maxim, my lord."

The yacht was now under steerage way, and rose regularly on the billows, which before had broken against her sides flinging the spray in showers upon her decks. The wind blew steadily, but no longer with violence; the storm-cloud, broken into a myriad of fragments, was scudding across the heavens towards the southeast; the waves momentarily diminished in size; and at intervals the moon shone down through an opening upon the sea, like the smile of hope beaming on the tempest-tossed mariners: all things indicated the termination of the hurricane, to the fury of which they had so nearly been sacrificed. The pumps were now tried, and it was ascertained that less than three inches of water had been made.

"A capital craft, my lord. The Roebuck would scarcely have ridden out a tornado like this, especially after having been laid on her ribs. I congratulate both your lordship and your niece on your escape from a grave in the sea, for which landmen, I am told, have a strange antipathy. But bury me, my lord, in the deep sea; let the green waves, which have borne me living, wrap about me dead. Let me lie where the ripple of driving keels and the song of the sailor shall be my requiem."

"You are eloquent, Kenard; and perhaps you are right."

"It matters little where a man's bones are laid, my lord; and the sea is as safe a repository, and will yield them up as readily at the judgment day as the earth. Ay, more readily, it may be," said the captain.

"It may be so," replied the nobleman, smiling at the literal way in which the seaman viewed the subject. "If it is now safe to unclose the companion-way, I will convey my niece to the cabin for a change of wardrobe."

"We shall have no more washing decks to-night," replied the captain, giving the necessary orders to remove the companion-way and hatches, which had been firmly closed as the storm came on.

They were now opened, and the earl awoke Grace, who, after her submersion, had dropped into a gentle sleep in his arms, and assisted her to her stateroom, where, arousing her terrified and almost insensible maid from the floor, he left her with a kiss of paternal affection, mingled with gratitude for her preservation.

"Shall I come to the deck again after I have changed my dripping dress?" she asked, with playful entreaty, as he was leaving her.

"No, my child, you need rest after your bath. Your cheek is pale as marble," he replied, tapping upon it.

"I shall be sick here; I miss the pure air; there is a suffocating sensation of closeness; and I think I feel the motion of the vessel more below. I must go on deck again, uncle," she said, earnestly. "Besides, the moon is coming out, and it will be pleasant to watch the caps of the waves sparkling in her light."

"There is no resisting you, Grace; I will come down for you when you are ready. Let us be thankful, my child, for our preservation," he added, devoutly.

"I am, uncle, indeed," she said, with touching sincerity.

And, as the earl closed the door of her stateroom, she kneeled by her couch in her wet garments, and offered up a short, heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving and gratitude for her safety; nor in it did she forget the youth who had been the instrument of it. How much nearer did the gallant service he had performed for her bring the handsome but humble young sailor to her heart! How much closer did the union of his name with her own in prayer bind him to her young and warm affections! And when she rose from her knees, her thoughts, it is to be feared, ran much more upon the instrument of her preservation than upon the Being who directed it.

When the earl returned to the deck, the moon was riding in a broad field of blue, unobscured by a single cloud, and on all sides the waves leaped towards it to fall back into the shining sea in showers of silver. The clouds were drifting far to leeward, and the darkness and terror that had hitherto reigned had given place to brightness and serenity. The yacht was gallantly riding over the crested waves, parting them with her prow and dashing to either side their glittering drops in snowy jets of spray. The fore-topgallant-sail was set, and drawing freely; and, notwithstanding the loss of her topsails and main-topgallant-mast with its yard, she held her course and was making good headway through the water. Two of her larboard guns had been shifted to the starboard, and other means had been taken to put her in suitable sailing trim. The men were engaged in clearing the decks; serving the rigging where it had been chafed; fishing the

foremast, which Mark had before temporarily secured and thereby saved; and otherwise repairing the disasters of the storm. Some of them, the earl observed, were filling the beds around the guns with shot, disposing cutlasses and muskets in stands and beackets about the masts, and making altogether very plain preparations for fight.

"You see, my lord, we are hard at work," said the captain, approaching the earl as he saw him come to the deck. "In half an hour, save bending a new set of topsails, we shall be as sound as we were before this squall. See that those guns are as dry as a boatswain's whistle," he shouted to the men.

"What is the meaning of these hostile preparations, Kenard?"

"I have reason to believe the pirate is lurking in this quarter. He was seen from aloft during the blackest of the storm, scudding through it, like the flying Dutchman, under bare poles. If he should discover us as we are, we should have a hard matter to escape him."

"He is likely to be as crippled as ourselves."

"Not he, my lord; the masts of these craft are stout single sticks, and their sails are fashioned so as to come down by the run at an instant's warning. There is no way of sinking one of those fellows without knocking his bottom out. Lively, men, lively. Ha! that's my lad! make them fly!"

It was Meredith he addressed. In the absence of the usual number of superior officers, prompted by an active spirit and the impulsiveness of his nature, and inspirited by the scenes in which he was placed and to which he readily adapted himself, he had involuntarily echoed the encouraging cry of the commander. The seamen, with that instinct which teaches men the presence of a master spirit, without questioning his authority, moved with more alacrity, and obeyed his orders without hesitation. They had borne witness to his courage and fearlessness, his contempt of death and promptness of action in danger: these were virtues which, in their eyes, were above all others, and in his case they atoned for want of years, experience, and seamanship. The charm by which he governed them, as if by common consent, was simply the exercise of the same mysterious power which, since the world was made, has governed the mass of mankind. Decision, bravery, and high moral energy of character! in one word, *courage*; the attribute through which one man leads a nation—speaks, and it is so! the dragon of human adoration! an attribute pre-eminently possessed also by spirits as well as men, and through the influence of which Lucifer was enabled to lead whole armies out of Heaven into hell!

"Is not that the bold youth who saved my niece?" asked the earl. "I think I should know the voice."

"The same, my lord; and, saving your lordship's presence, he is worthy the hand of any niece, humble or high, whom he so promptly perilled his life to save; for none but a brave man and a gentleman at heart would do so noble an act; that's my maxim, my lord."

"Doubtless a true one, Kenard. I shall bear this youth in mind."

"Do so, my lord; and I will, with your leave, set you the example. Though I am glad of the opportunity, I regret the necessity. My lad!"

"Sir," said the youth, coming forward with his cap in his hand.

"As I am without a third lieutenant, I have promoted you to this rank, and his lordship will see that your appointment is confirmed in the right quarter. You were bred upon the sea, and though, perhaps, have never sailed in a ship, are, I perceive a natural sailor. Now you may go to your duty, sir."

"Thank you, sir!" said Mark, with manly emotion. He could say no more, but turned away to hide his tearful gratitude.

"Hear there, forward. Obey this youth, who fills the place of poor Marston."

"Ay, ay, sir," cried the men, simultaneously; and, as their new officer walked forward, many a cap was respectfully touched to him, and many a gray head uncovered before the stripling—such is the tribute true bravery everywhere receives! so universal is the homage it irresistibly challenges!

"Do you see, my lord! That lad will make his way, mark me. Observe how readily he assumes the duties of his station. He is already in the rigging! going aloft to see that the men are properly fishing the fore-topmast."

"Your protégé shall not want advancement through my forgetfulness, be assured, Kenard. But why are you so anxiously looking through your glass to the windward?"

"For the three-masted frigate."

"You are doubtless mistaken in her character!"

"I cannot be, my lord. No honest trader in these waters ever had such a rig. She is a pirate, and, if she is anywhere near us, will be sure to give us a taste of her quality ere long."

"And we are far less prepared to meet him than before."

"Four guns, and a dozen men and two good officers less, my lord; nevertheless, we must do what

we can to fight him off. That he is in our neighbourhood somewhere, I am confident. These gentry are like sleuth hounds; once on your track, double and turn as you will, they never lose it till they run you down. I believe I see an object in the wake of the moon, under that cloud to the windward," he suddenly added, looking steadily through his spyglass. "It is gone. It may have been the cap of a wave! There, I think I see it again. By—"

"Sail, ho!" shouted Mark, from the fore rigging.

"Where away?" demanded the captain, without removing the glass from his eye.

"Just in the moon's wake, three points off the weather quarter."

"I see it. 'Tis the same, my lord. I was sure he would not take his eye off of us. Edwards, see all clear for action. Station all the men you can spare from working ship at the guns, and select twenty of the best for boarders. Be prompt. Keep away a point, helmsman. Aloft there! Get through with your duty and come down. I give you command of the lee battery, sir," he said to Mark. "Cheerily, men, all! Prepare for battle with merry hearts, that's my maxim, my lord," he added, turning round to the nobleman.

"How do you make her out now, Kenard?" asked the earl, who had heard the announcement of the stranger's vicinage with a pang of anxious solicitude for the safety of Grace; "I am unable to hold my glass steadily with this pitching of the ship."

"She is walking this way with a nimble foot," replied the captain, who, after giving his brief and rapid orders, once more turned to observe the motions of the strange sail. "She is a three-masted lugger—with her three huge topsails spread without a reef, ploughing her way towards us, and sending a cloud of spray to her masthead."

"Is she heavily armed?"

"I cannot see; but above her bulwarks is something like a mass of human heads."

"How far off is she?"

"Not more than two miles."

"In what time will she overtake us?"

"She must be going seven or eight knots; we do not make more than five," he said, glancing over the side. "Probably in two hours' time."

"In two hours! We can increase our sail; you have studding-sails, captain?"

"But not a stun'sail boom—every deck-spar is washed overboard. Crippled as I am, I cannot carry one stitch more sail, my lord. We must let him come as he will, and trust the issue to Providence. That's my maxim, my lord."

"Providence give us the victory!" said the earl, devoutly.

"Amen!" responded the captain, taking the glass from his eye, and reverently touching his cap.

The earl immediately went below, and met Grace coming from her stateroom wrapped in comfortable garments, and enveloped in a hood and cloak.

"My dear niece," he said, taking her hand and leading her to a sofa, "I have come to prepare you for a scene of trial and danger infinitely greater than that we have just passed through. Hitherto we have had to contend with the terrible display of the power of the Almighty, when he moves upon the deep in his anger—but it was tempered with mercy. We have now to meet the fiercer passions of men, to whom the word mercy is unknown."

"Speak, dear uncle!" she said, with a calmness that surprised him. "I fear not for myself—I have a trust, thanks to my sainted mother, that places me above all fear of death."

This was spoken with that serene confidence which innocence and purity alone can wear.

The earl pressed her hand in silence, touched by the sweet simplicity of her manner, and admiring the sublime hope which elevated her above the fear that gives bitterness to the cup of life.

"There is a strange vessel bearing down upon us, which the captain has reason to think is a pirate," he said, with more composure.

Grace turned pale, but betrayed no emotion beyond an upward glance of her eyes and a movement of her lips, as if in silent prayer.

"It is our intention to fight him, and only surrender with our lives. In case we should be overcome, and the pirates board us—and I should not survive to protect you any longer—" Here the earl stopped from emotion, pressed his niece to his heart, and then hastily added, "you are my brother's daughter! you have his spirit and decision! I will trust to you."

"Uncle, speak! explain, my lord!" gasped the young creature, terrified at his manner rather than his words, which her innocence could not comprehend.

He drew from his breast a dagger, and silently placed it in her hands.

"For what is this, my lord?" she gasped, half guessing its fearful meaning.

"You must sacrifice yourself before you suffer these ruffians to lay hands upon you," he said, with emotion that nearly rendered his words inaudible.

She clasped her hands over her forehead and stared in his face with a wild glare—her colourless lips parted with horror—and her whole frame shivering. Like a thunderbolt, the horrible reality of her situation had flashed upon her.

"Ha! what? ha! what? ha—wh—" and with a piercing and most heart-rending shriek she fell upon the cabin floor. He raised her, and spoke to her in tender accents of sympathy.

"Enough," she gasped—"enough, uncle—say no more."

"Dear niece, be calm!"

"Nay—do not think Grace Fitzgerald is not herself," she said, with forced calmness. "Uncle!"

"My dear child!" he answered, folding her to his heart.

"Give it me!"

"Oh God!" groaned the earl, overcome with the full realization of the evil that threatened her. "Must it be, my child?"

"It must. Give me the dagger," she added, with energy. "I will not now shrink from it—it may yet be, next to Heaven, my best friend."

"Take it, heroic girl—but our danger may not be so great—we may yet conquer! I feel, when I look on you, and reflect on your helpless state, the might of a host in my single arm. Ha! there is a gun. I must leave you for a while. Remain in your stateroom, and both you and your maid be careful to lie on the floor below the line of shot. God bless you, my child! Your presence alone should ensure the salvation of the ship."

He embraced her with almost parental affection, tenderly forced her to enter her stateroom, and closed the door. Then arming himself from his luggage with a brace of pistols, and buckling on his sword, he hurried to the deck as the report of a second gun came booming over the sea.

"She has fired, captain?" he said, as he joined the commander on the quarter-deck, who was looking to windward with his glass.

"A long shot to bring us to. It is plain he takes us for an unarmed vessel."

"This gives us an advantage, then," said the earl, turning his telescope in the direction of the stranger, who was plainly visible less than a mile distant, white with canvass, and fast gaining on the yacht, as she laboured slowly along under her diminished sail.

"A great one, if we can keep him in ignorance till he is close aboard," replied the captain. "By the rood! he comes down bravely. This it is, your lordship, to have sound spars, and plenty of canvass to hang on them," he added, looking moodily up, and surveying the bare poles of his own ship. "You are armed, I see, my lord. It is time I should be. Will your lordship be so good as to watch his motions. I will be on deck again in a moment."

He descended to his cabin as he spoke, and soon afterward returned armed with a cutlass, his head covered with a steel boarding cap, and with a couple of braces of pistols stuck in a leathern belt buckled round his waist. He caused his lieutenant and Mark to arm themselves in a similar manner. Every seaman, also, had a serviceable blade girded to his side, and one or more pistols in his belt; and harquebusses and cutlasses were placed on the companion and capstan, ready for indiscriminate use. Throughout the vessel, every preparation that the time and circumstances would admit of, or consummate skill on the part of its master could effect, was made; and every man stood at his post, silently and sullenly awaiting the approach of the pirate—for such it was now plain to every one was the character of the advancing stranger.

"There is a flash!" said the earl, who was intently watching the bucanier.

"No, it is a battle-lantern passed along the decks. He will not fire again seeing we do not heave to, but run us aboard, and carry us, if he can, cutlass in hand—this is the mode of fighting with these devils."

"They must not board us, Kenard!" said the earl, with calm determination in the tone of his voice.

"We will give him a touch of our quality before he comes to close quarters. An introduction before an intimate acquaintance, is my maxim, my lord."

"If you give him a broadside, I would suggest, sir, that the battery I command be added to the guns on the weather side," said Mark, who, while waiting the attack, had been pacing athwart ships near the cabin door, as if the presence of Grace in the cabin had something to do with the choice of his walk.

The captain stared at him a moment; but the respectful tones of the young man's voice, and the deference of his manner, left no room for reproof if he had designed to check the boldness of his new lieutenant.

"Born for a seaman, by the rood!" he exclaimed. "Shift the starboard guns to the weather side, Mr. Edwards. We shall only have a chance of one full broadside, and it is best to let him have all we can give him. If you want to be generous, give all you've got, is my maxim, my lord."

By the time the change in the battery was effected, the pirate was within three cables' length, or a third of a mile of the yacht, and, by the light of the moon, the decks could be discovered with the naked eye to be full of men, while her dimensions and rig were distinctly visible. She was one of that small class of three-masted luggers called frigatoons, common at the period, with very broad beam and round bows. She came along with the wind on her starboard quarter, noisily ploughing the waves before her with her blunt bows, under three huge lugger sails, covering each mast from deck to truck, a jib, and triangular mizzen sail not unlike a ship's spanker. The moon shone white on all, while its rays were reflected in quick flashes here and there, as if from steel, from amid the dark mass on her decks.

"A fine shot in that dense crowd, Edwards," said the captain. "Give every man a musket after the broadside is discharged, and let him pick a red cap for himself."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the lieutenant, preparing to obey the order.

Silently and steadily, as if no man was in her, the dark hull continued to approach.

"She is full near for a shot, Kenard," said the nobleman; "I can see the very faces of the men."

"A man should know the colour of his enemy's eyes before he fights with him, is my maxim, my lord," he said, coolly levelling his glass. "Let me single out their captain. Ah, there he stands beside the helmsman, a grisly old dog, and the moonlight on his weather-beaten features makes them appear bronzed. There is a youth standing beside him with a glass at his eye, whom he is speaking to. Ha! the old bucanier is giving orders to prepare for boarding, I see, by the wave of his cutlass and the motion of his lips. Now is our time," he added, energetically.

As he spoke he threw down his glass, drew his cutlass, and sprung upon the companion-way.

"Stand by for a broadside," he shouted, in a voice that reached the pirate.

"All ready!" answered the two lieutenants, in the same breath.

"Helm a starboard!"

"Starboard 'tis!"

"Steady now!"

"Steady."

"Let them have it!" he shouted, in a clear voice that rung like a trumpet.

Terrible cries of men taken by surprise, of men wounded and in pain, followed close the deep-mouthed roar of the guns: the volumes of smoke, that shot half way towards the pirate, then rolled swiftly back upon the yacht, and were blown to leeward, leaving a full view of the enemy. His foremast was hanging over the side; a glaring gash along the hull showed where a shot had told between wind and water; and a breach in the forward bulwarks, near the catheads, and the groans of the wounded, indicated the passage of a raking shot through the mass on deck; instead, also, of presenting her starboard bow to the range of the broadside as at first, she had yawed wide of her course, and was shivering helplessly in the wind.

"Neatly done! We have thrown them into confusion. If we can only keep her at this distance, we can riddle her like the top of a pepper-box, and have the pleasure afterward of seeing her go down to Davy's locker, bodily, before our faces. See your enemy buried handsomely, after you have done for him, is my maxim, my lord. There it comes," he shouted, suddenly. "Fall to the deck, all!"

He had hardly spoken, when, amid a loud yell from the pirates, who had recovered from the surprise of their rough salutation where, apparently, they had calculated on slight resistance, a heavy broadside was discharged: the balls came singing through the air, knocking against the sides of the yacht, and splintering and crashing the upper works, tearing the decks, wounding the spars, and creating terrible ruin and confusion, while shrieks of the wounded rose appalling from every part of the ill-fated vessel. The captain glanced hastily at the poor fellows that lay bleeding on the decks, then looked up anxiously at his masts, and leaned over the bulwarks and run his eye along the side of his vessel to see what injury she had sustained in the hull—for, in his eye, the wounds of the ship were of infinitely more importance than the wounds of the men.

"No damage to her timbers; but two poor fellows dead as they ever will be," he said to the earl, who stood beside him. "Five—six—seven wounded. Handle that man carefully, you lubbers, or you will do his business for him before you can get him to the doctor. See that the wounded are taken at once, and with care, to the cockpit, Mr. Edwards. Lively, there, at the battery; charge to the muzzle! Now watch the weather-roll. Fire!"

Again the sides of the yacht belched forth fire and smoke, shaking the little vessel through every oaken joint.

"Fire away as you load," again shouted the captain. "Let each gun fight for itself. Take sight at his poles, and bring his huge mainsails down without giving him the trouble to let go his halyards.

Give your foe a lift when you can, is my maxim, my lord. There, he returns it," he cried, as a flash illuminated the open decks of the pirate. "Down all!"

The hurricane of iron passed high above their heads, cutting the rigging and splintering long, slender pieces from the spars. The smoke from the guns, at the same time, rolled sullenly towards the yacht, hid the pirate from them, and enveloped the brig in an impenetrable cloud of sulphurous smoke.

"Stand by, boarders, to repel boarders!" shouted the captain, in a loud, quick tone. "He will be down upon us in his smoke before we know it. I thought there was more powder than iron in those guns, my lord, and suspected there was an object in it. Boarders, all!"

"Boarders!" answered the lieutenant.

"Keep good look-out through the smoke. There it lifts. By the rood! see, he is close upon us! Put a shot into his fore foot. Lame him, or he'll be thrusting his snub nose between our ribs."

As the captain spoke, Mark sprang towards the after gun, and levelled it against the bows of the pirate, who, having made sail under cover of his smoke towards the yacht, was now within twenty fathoms of her. He applied the flaming linstock and fired the piece. The shot, taking a slightly ascending course, struck beneath the bowsprit, tore it from its bed with its jib, and lodged in the mainmast ten feet from the deck, nearly severing it in two. Deprived of her jib, the lugger broached to, and once more presented her broadside to the yacht.

"Give it to him, my lads, before he brings his guns to bear!" shouted the captain. "Pour in your iron! That's my hearties! You knocked her a foot out of the water that shot, boys! Quit your guns now; there is no time to reload! Take to your cutlasses and pistols. We have the rest of it, lads, at close quarters. We'll show them what it is to board a king's ship. If your muskets are in the way in the fight, throw 'em aside and use your English fists! We'll whip them yet! If we believe we can do a thing, we can do it; that's my maxim, my lord. Your lordship will now have the pleasure of cutting a score or two of these murderer's throats, with the advantage of exercise to the muscles. Pleasure with business is my maxim. Stand ready all! When I give the word, each of you bring down one of those red devils that are crowding about her bows."

The men replied with loud cheers, and prepared resolutely to receive the attack.

The pirate, after the loss of his jib, being no longer able to hold a direct course, drifted towards the yacht, which, being at leeward and disabled both by the storm and action, was in no situation to choose her own position, and had, therefore, no other alternative than to lie passive as she was, and repel as she best could the expected attack.

The bucanier had now ceased firing, not being able to bring any of his side guns to bear, and converted all his crew into boarders, who crowded about the forepart of the lugger, ready to leap cutlass in hand on the deck of the yacht when they should have drifted near enough. The brig had also ceased her fire, her opponent having skilfully worked out of the range of her guns, by coming down, as well as his crippled condition would let him, upon her quarter.

The deck of the pirate was crowded with men, numbering eighty or ninety, apparently, in all, while the crew of the yacht, exclusive of the wounded, consisted of less than forty-five. But cool courage and confidence in the right, opposed to fierce and sanguinary passions in an evil cause, count to the righteous side in a battle for twice the number of opponents. The earl trembled for the issue. But the brave Kenard, with his knowledge of the spirit of his men, and his confidence in their English courage and in their contempt for pirates, whom he gave them the credit of despising as cordially as he himself did, gave not an anxious thought about the result, assured that, if each man did his duty, victory would side with the honest and brave. During the exchange of broadsides, he had kept his place on the quarter-deck, encouraging his men by his cheering voice: the earl was also beside him, scarcely less energetic in inspiring the crew with his own spirit. The first lieutenant was actively engaged, sword in hand, in directing the fire of the battery; while Mark, who was in a new element, flamed with the fierce fire of war, and seemed, amid the smoke and roar of battle, to have been suddenly endued with a new and sublime character. He was everywhere where his presence was most needed, encouraging and cheering on the men both by his voice and example; but, notwithstanding his animation and fire, was as cool and collected in the sagacious orders he gave as the oldest veteran.

But, with all his devotion to the fight, he forgot not that the cabin contained a lovely creature, helpless as she was beautiful, whose life depended on the issue of that night's conflict. Though his heart may have been proof against her charms, being shielded with the proof-plate of another's love, yet he felt an interest akin to love in her fate. She was the cousin of Kate! She had expressed an interest in him that he could never forget! He had saved her life! It was a second time endangered! These were all motives to sympathy; and, properly nurtured, the germes were there from which might spring a tenderer and deeper feeling. But he had no room in his breast for a second love. There was but one polar star to the eye of his affections; and steadily he steered the bark of his hopes towards it, although, like the north star of the mariner, the farther and nearer he sailed in its direction, it would higher and higher ascend the skies, mocking his aspiring ambition. Nevertheless, he resolved to steer steadily onward, even if he should perish at last amid the icebergs of her cold and wintry affections. But whatever a lover, in the warmth of his affections, may sincerely feel and solemnly vow—love unrequited, like the Persian flower, that withers when the sun is hidden by a passing cloud, without the warmth of its sun will speedily die. Time, in the present instance, will test the truth of this proposition.

The vessels were now within twenty feet of each other, the pirate rising heavily on each wave, and surging nearer and nearer at every heave of the sea. Silence was broken only at intervals by a groan from a wounded bucanier, and terrible expectation hung over the two vessels. The moon at length broke from a cloud and lighted up the scene. There were beauty and peace floating on her silvery beams; but the passions of men reigned, and their souls were closed to everything bright and lovely. Yet they hailed her light with a shout, for by it foe was able to see foe nearly with the distinctness of noonday.

"Now pour in your fire!" shouted the cool Kenard to his crew; "aim wherever you can see the glitter of an eye!"

The bows of the pirate vessel were within an oar's length of the yacht's larboard and weather quarter as this order was given, and a dozen half-naked, savage-looking men were just in the act of leaping into the main rigging. The simultaneous discharge of pistols, muskets, and blunderbusses was like the explosion of a volcano, and but one third of the bucaniers succeeded in springing alive into the chains: the remainder plunged, dead ere they struck the surface, into the sea. The fire was answered by a loud yell from the pirates, and a few straggling shots only from pistols; for these demons seemed to trust more to their dangerous cutlasses in their wild conflicts than to firearms. They now pressed forward over the bows in dark swarms. From every part of her that offered any prospect of reaching the yacht, they leaped without waiting for the vessels to come together, with cries and execrations most appalling, into the main chains, or sprang for the bulwarks, catching recklessly by their hands at whatever offered. Many fell short into the sea, or were hurled into it by those who met them; some leaped overboard, swam to the side, and drew themselves up by the rigging that hung over the water, but fell back with curses and cries of pain, leaving their hands, severed at the wrists and dripping with gore, clinging to the rope. Grappling-irons were thrown on deck, but were cast overboard by the crew before they could be entangled; and wherever a pirate struck the side of the yacht with his foot, he was opposed by one of its defenders.

Three times the Earl of Bellamont sheathed his sword in the breasts of as many of these ferocious beings and cast them backward dead into the sea, and as a fourth, who had thrown himself bodily upon the quarter-deck, made a tremendous stroke at him with his yataghan, he blew out his brains with a pistol. Everywhere, in their first daring attempt to board them, were they encountered with equal resolution and success, and of the twenty pirates that by some means or other succeeded in reaching the brig, not one retained a foothold on her decks—every individual of them being either slain outright, or hurled maimed into the water, where several swam about amid dark spots of blood, lifting their handless limbs, and in vain calling to their comrades to take them on board. The fate of these checked for a moment the ardour of the remainder, and they waited till the vessels should come together before making a second attempt.

The pirate, who had some time before dropped his lugsails, to prevent his shooting past the yacht, towards which the waves were slowly urging him, was now lifted and dashed with great violence against it, striking her on her quarter, carrying away her bulwarks, and opening her planks in several places.

"Throw yourselves into her now," shouted the pirate chief, leaping forward and waving his cutlass. "Flesh your blades in their carcasses! Give no quarter to beards—but spare bright eyes! Board! board! clamber over each other's backs—press on, press on! Follow your young leader. He will shame the best of ye!"

Like a crew of demons, yelling and shouting menaces of death, mingled with horrible execrations and oaths of vengeance for their slaughtered comrades, they obeyed the energetic and sanguinary orders of their chief. They were headed by the pirate's first lieutenant and a youth with long fair hair, which, in the light of the moon, shone like silver, who, with strange recklessness of life, cast himself from the bows as they approached the side of the yacht, and fell feet foremost into the midst of a grove of sharp steel, amid a shower of balls, that, while they told in the bodies of his followers, seemed to pass him as if he carried a charmed life. The old pirate captain himself headed another party near the stern of his vessel, which was slowly swinging round towards the yacht's bows, apparently for the purpose, when it should come in contact, of boarding on the fore-castle. Here stood Edwards the lieutenant, with a force of fifteen men to oppose him; while midships, and near the companion-way, Mark was stationed at the head of a third of the yacht's crew, and, acting as a reserve, was prepared to throw in the weight of his numbers as should be required, either on the fore-castle or the quarter-deck, at which latter point, at the head of an equal number, stood the captain, supported by the earl's good blade, ready to repel the attempt to board from the bows of the pirate.

More like devils incarnate than human beings, the pirates followed their young leader, and cast themselves from the bows, some running over the heads of their comrades and leaping on board; some, more active, flinging somersets through the air into the mêlée; and all rushing, crowding, and falling upon the deck in every possible attitude, seemingly indifferent, so that the yacht's decks received them, whether they landed head foremost or upright on their feet. Such a torrent of desperate men was irresistible. The defenders of the quarter-deck were borne down by the mere weight of the assailants' bodies, or their cutlasses were turned aside like feathers as they were levelled to meet this novel and terrible human storm. Immediately in advance of himself and the earl, the captain had placed half a dozen men with pikes, the bristly points of which served to protect, in some measure, their position by turning to one side the current of boarders.

The conflict now became most terrible and sanguinary. The crew, that had been borne down by



the first shock, had recovered their feet, and nearly every man was instantly struggling with a bucanier. Kenard fought like a lion, thrice clearing a space around him in which he could sweep his cutlass. The earl, at length, seeing some of the pirates rushing to the companion-way and attempting to force it, placed his back against it, and met their fierce lunges with well-directed thrusts, turning aside their descending strokes aimed at his head, with the skill of a swordsman and the coolness of a soldier. He fought not only on the defensive, but his eye was quick to see where any of his own party within his reach were being worsted, and his blade was instant in its service of relieving them from their mortal peril. Every sweep of his blade was fatal, for he fought for one dear to his heart whose life and honour were at stake.

For some time the battle was waged with doubtful success. At one moment the pirates, who, after the first wild charge, had formed into a body, would be driven over the side, and at another they would press the defending party towards the stern. Their youthful leader, who was everywhere present, cheering them on with animating cries as often as they were beaten back towards their own vessel, was at length opposed to Kenard face to face.

"I would not slay a youth like thee if I could help it," he said, parrying his attack, and endeavouring to close with him, and wrest the cutlass from his grasp.

"Thou shalt have no space left for compunction if thou shouldst," said the other, avoiding his grasp, and making a lunge at his neck, which he grazed with his blade.

"Have at thee, then, if such be thy play! give as you get, is my maxim, my lord!" he added, looking round as usual when he gave utterance to a maxim, to catch the earl's attention.

But his lordship was too busily defending himself and the companion-way against a gigantic and active Frenchman to acknowledge the usual appeal. The turning of his head gave the youthful pirate an advantage, of which he availed himself. With great dexterity, he twisted with his cutlass the weapon out of his grasp, and sent it flying through the air into the sea. He was about to follow up his advantage by sheathing his blade in his breast, when it was struck up by an intervening one, and turning round, the young pirate found himself confronted with the Earl of Bellamont, who, having that instant freed himself from his assailants, was looking round to see where his sword would be of most service, when he discovered the peril of the captain. His presence had an electric effect on the youthful bucanier. He started back with an exclamation of surprise, and half repeated the name of the nobleman. But instantly he checked himself, and successfully parried the pass he made at him, retreating at the same time, and acting wholly on the defensive. The earl wondered at his exclamation and at the sound of his voice, which reminded him of a familiar one. This sudden change in the tactics of one who hitherto seemed to know only how to advance and attack, also surprised him; and, although he surveyed him closely, as the drifting clouds across the moon let it shine brightly at intervals, his features were so shaded by a drooping bonnet, and so black and begrimed by the blood and smoke of battle, that his scrutiny was defeated.

"Nevertheless," thought he to himself, "have I heard that voice and seen that form before!"

Inspired as much by curiosity to ascertain who it was that revived such indefinable associations, as by a desire to put an end to a dangerous foe, he pressed him hard. With all the youthful bucanier's coolness and skill, he had been wellnigh worsted, never returning back a blow for those the earl gave him so freely, when a loud shout from the fore-castle caused every combatant on the quarter-deck to suspend his descending stroke, withhold his deadly thrust, or leave, half-sheathed, his sword in the body of his antagonist. As the earl paused to look for the cause of this fresh outcry, he saw that the lugger's stern had at length come in contact with the bows of the yacht, and that the pirates, headed by their old chief, were pouring across the bulwarks and leaping upon the deck, wild with fury and thirsting for blood. Hitherto chafing with inaction, and roused to a fearful pitch of excitement by the spectacle and uproar of the combat from which they were withheld, like tigers chained in an arena panting to mingle in the fierce conflict of their species, terrific and overpowering in proportion to the length and impatience of their restraint, was their first onset. The little band under Edwards, who had reserved their energies for this moment, drew back to the opposite side of the vessel to escape the tumultuous fall of their almost flying bodies on the deck, and poured in upon them a fatal fire of pistols and harquebusses.

"Now at them, my brave fellows, with your cutlasses," he cried; "throw away your pistols, and grapple while they are crowded together! Set upon the rascals, and give a good account of them!"

With a shout, they charged in a body, and a terrific and sanguinary contest ensued. Mark, with his division, hitherto had not been idle. He saw that the fate of the yacht would depend on the reception given to the last boarding-party, headed by the old pirate chief himself, and wished therefore to husband the strength of his men until this crisis. Nevertheless, while he was anxiously watching the lugger as its stern drifted round, he was present with two or three of his best men, to turn the tide of the combat on the quarter-deck, as it went now against the earl, now against the captain; and several times he received, in the hottest of the fight, the warm acknowledgments of both for the promptness in which he effected diversions in their favour. It now came to his turn to enter more closely into the combat.

No sooner did the boarders find themselves in a mass on the fore-castle of the brig, than they separated into two bodies, one of which received the charge of, and entered into fierce fight with, the division under Edwards; while the other, consisting of twenty men, headed by the pirate in

person, made a rush aft to carry the quarter-deck. Here a few of their comrades were fighting at a disadvantage under their youthful leader, who, taking the advantage of the earl's pause at the shout of the fresh boarders, had again mingled among his few remaining men, who were defending themselves on the opposite side of the deck against a much larger number of their antagonists.

Mark had anticipated the charge, and had formed his men in a firm phalanx to meet it. The first line consisted of five men, who just filled up the passage between the launch and the forward larboard gun, along which the pirates were advancing. Besides their cutlasses, they were armed with boarding-pikes, which protruded three feet in advance. A second and third line were armed with cutlasses and pistols. Their young leader himself sprung upon the gun as the rush was made, and in a cool, steady tone of voice, said,

"Stand firm, pikemen. Never mind their cutlasses; your comrades behind will take care of your heads. Now they come! Give them your pistols!" he exclaimed, as the bucaniers came upon them like a wedge, as if they would cleave bodily through their centre. They were checked by the advanced pikes, and thrown into confusion by the discharge of a dozen pistols, which they instantly returned with scarcely half as many, without material effect.

"Cut them down. Let not a handful of cowards put ye back. No quarter! Down with them! Strike off the poles of their pikes! Close with them," shouted the old pirate chief.

A second rush was made with better success. The old bucanier shivered with his cutlass, as if they had been pipe-stems, two of the pike-staffs, and the front line of men gave back.

"Drop your pikes and take your blades!" shouted Mark, at the same time discharging his pistols at the pirate chief and wounding him in the shoulder.

The combat was now waged with terrible ferocity.

"Fight hard, or we shall be routed!" cried Mark, with energy. "Stand steady, men! Keep your ground, or you will be cut to pieces. Stand! fly not, on your lives! One good blow—All is lost!" he suddenly cried, as he saw the men give back before the obstinate attack of the pirates.

Leaping from the gun into the midst, he dealt blows as if he had the strength of a Hercules, and essayed to stop, with his single arm and the intervention of his body, their onward and victorious course. But the impetus was already given, and they bore him forward with his men in a dense mass, so crowded together that no man could use his weapon. They were driven aft and upon the quarter deck, where the captain came to his aid and succeeded in rallying them for the defence of this important post. At the same instant the youthful pirate, seeing the success of his party, called his followers from their unequal contest, and leaped down with them among his crew, leaving half his men dead behind him.

On the fore-castle Edwards fought for a while with success, and had nearly beaten the pirates back to their vessel, when the victorious shouts of the conquering party gave them renewed spirit, and filled the minds of the crew with sudden panic. The bucaniers, taking advantage of their hesitation, in their turn became the assailants; and the men, completely routed, fled towards the quarter-deck, cutting their way with the desperation of fear through the party that besieged it, and, with the loss of a third of their number, succeeded in reaching it.

The whole of that portion of the yacht forward of the quarter-deck was now in possession of the pirates, a portion of whom began to force open the hatches; while the majority, under the direction of the chief and his youthful lieutenant, prepared to carry this last post, which was elevated four feet above the main deck, by forming their men into two divisions, and attacking it on both sides of the companion-way at the same time.

The earl, Mark, and the captain, though all three were wounded more or less severely, the latter supporting his left arm in a sling, assembled their force, now diminished to twenty men, to meet the escalade. The pirates, with yells of vengeance for their slaughtered comrades, began to bring to the assault loose spars, sails, and whatever they could lay hands on, which they heaped against the wall the deck presented. The harness-casks were rolled up, made firm, and covered with rolls of canvass; and the hatches, which some of them had torn off for the purpose of descending to plunder the hold, were laid against it, to aid them in constructing a glacis.

"Bring along those carcasses! pile them up here!" shouted the old chief, ferociously. "We will yet make a fair run of it."

The bodies of the dead, both of pirates and the crew of the yacht, were eagerly dragged forward and thrown on the pile, and it was soon raised so that the quarter-deck could be gained erect and sword in hand without the danger to which they would be exposed in climbing a barrier so well guarded.

"Now, men, make a run for it and sweep the deck!" he shouted.

The pirates retreated a few steps in two parties, headed by the old chief and his young lieutenant, and, with a yell, rushed forward and up the human glacis to the quarter-deck. But they were met with a resolution that matched their own ferocity, and several of them fell back dead, adding their own bodies to the pile they had the moment before assisted in constructing. A few battled for a few seconds, giving and receiving wounds, but were finally pressed back to the main deck. In the assault, Mark and the young pirate leader had once crossed weapons; but, ere

they could exchange passes, the latter was forced back by the retreat of his own party.

"Let them maintain the deck if they will," said the chief to his young lieutenant; "we have the command of the cabin and hold. Keep them busy while I force the companion-way, and see what kind of a prize she will prove. I little thought we had engaged with a king's ship, but we must now make the most of it. I have lost men enough for one night's work, and don't care to make a capture of the yacht if I can get anything of value out of her. So keep them employed on the quarter-deck till I take a cruise through the cabins."

As he spoke he gave orders for his men to force a spar from the doors of the companion-way which the earl had braced against it.

"Hold there, fiends!" cried the nobleman, as he saw these demonstrations of the pirate's intentions.

He sprung forward as he spoke, and with a blow of his cutlass clove the scull of a bucanier, who was wrenching the lock with a pike-head, so that it fell in two parts over either shoulder. He aimed a second blow at the pirate chief so suddenly that the point of the blade laid open his cheek, and an active movement to one side only saved his head from flying from his shoulders: at the same instant, a pistol-ball, fired by the chief, struck the earl near the knee, and he fell over into the arms of Mark.

The doors at once were forced open, and the old leader, accompanied by two or three of his men, descended to the cabin.

"To the rescue! To the rescue!" shouted Mark, on seeing them disappear, letting the earl down gently upon the deck.

"Protect or slay her, young man, and I will bless thee!" cried the earl, faintly.

He made no reply to the earl's words; and, heedless whether he was followed or not, leaped, cutlass in hand, through the top of the companion-way, and lighted on his feet at the bottom of the stairs.

The doors of the first cabin were open, and a glance showed him two of the pirates rifling the baggage of the earl, and the chief in the act of forcing the inner door leading to the stateroom occupied by Grace.

Poor maiden! how had she been occupied during the fearful conflict above and around her? How had she borne the terrific sounds of battle? From the first moment of the fight she had been kneeling in silent prayer—bearing on her heart's orisons the names of her uncle, and of one, though of lowly origin, not less dear to her. Of herself she scarcely thought: but at every report of cannon, every discharge of musketry, she shuddered for those who were exposed to the dreadful horrors of the fight. Her maid had become insensible through overpowering terror. Terror, too, was acutely felt by herself, but it was modified and subdued by the bright hopes of religion. She feared not death. "The sting of death is sin." She knew no sin! For her it could have no terrors. Nature, indeed, shrunk at contemplating its violent dissolution; but the glorious certainties of a new life beyond this reconciled her to put this away for that better one. She expected to die within the hour—perhaps *by her own hand!* The dagger her uncle had given her was hidden in her bosom, and, as she knelt, her grasp was firmly laid upon its hilt. Long, long and terrible had been the conflict to her ears—more terrible, perhaps, than if she had witnessed it. Its sanguinary horrors were indeed hidden from her sight; but her imagination, with its hundred eyes, aided by the horrid sounds that reached her, reflected the scene upon her dizzy brain in colours, if it could be possible, more dreadful than the reality. Who can imagine the effect upon her of the loud roar of the cannon vibrating through every oaken nerve of the vessel, and filling its hollow decks with a noise more awful than the thunder that explodes at her feet. Who can conceive the fearful shrinking of the heart at the rush of the balls—the sound of the crashing decks—the wild and unearthly shrieks of the wounded—the moans of the dying—the fierce yells of the combatants—and all the thousand and terrific sounds that assimilate war to the hellish pastime of accursed spirits. Who is there that, not participating in its mad excitement, calmly witnesses a battle, that will not turn away in disgust and horror, be ready to deny his humanity, and to believe men neither more nor less than demons incarnate?

When the cabin doors burst open, she hurriedly committed her soul to Heaven, and, rising from her knees, held the friendly dagger above her virgin bosom, and stood facing the closed doors of her cabin, feeling that the crisis of her fate was approaching its consummation.

The entrance of Mark into the forward cabin was not perceived by the pirates nor their chief. With a blow of his cutlass he nearly severed the head of one that was leaning over a chest, and, before the other could rise, the ball of his pistol had laid him across the body of his comrade. The next instant he was opposed to the terrible pirate leader himself.

"Ha, my young fledgling!" cried he, his cutlass descending with tremendous force, and with a fatal accuracy of aim, that would have cleft him to the chine had it taken effect; but, with youthful activity, he avoided the stroke which he could not avert, and the point of the pirate's weapon buried itself so deep in the floor of the cabin that he was unable to extricate it. Mark instantly availed himself of this singular advantage, and, quicker than lightning, sheathed his blade in his heart.

"Oh! villain, you have done for me!" he cried, pressing his hand on his side, through which the

crimson tide rushed in an irresistible torrent.

He staggered as he spoke, and a lurch of the vessel at the same moment sent him headlong, breaking his sword off close to the floor as he fell with it in his grasp, upon the bodies of his men.

"Courage! my lady!" said Mark, bounding to the door, and speaking in the triumphant tones of success. "Their leader is slain! we shall soon clear the vessel of his base herd! Courage!"

"Bless you for these words of hope! You are safe! and my uncle! how fares my dear uncle?"

Before he could reply the companion-stairway was filled with pirates.

"A female voice!" shouted one, as he entered the cabin.

"Love and ransom," cried another, with a sensual laugh.

"We will draw lots for her, Hans."

"The captain has saved us that trouble," growled a third. "Ho! who have we here?" he cried, seeing Mark, with his dripping cutlass in his hand, standing resolutely with his back against the door of the stateroom.

"Our captain is slain!" cried another, fiercely, now for the first time seeing the body of his chief lying in its gore.

The pirates for a moment forgot Mark, and gathered around their fallen leader. They raised him up, and his head fell back helpless upon his shoulder, and his eyes glared with the fixed stare of death.

"He is dead! His sword is broken. Let us avenge the old man!" they cried, with one voice. "Ha! here is the point of his weapon, that ne'er failed him before, sticking in the deck, and he hath been taken at vantage ere he could draw it out."

"He who hath done this for thee, old man, shall die by my hand!" said one of them, letting him fall again.

With one accord, their glances rested on Mark, and he was fiercely attacked by the one who had last spoken and another, while the remainder commenced breaking open chests in search of treasure. For a few seconds he defended himself with great skill and courage. But, being hard pressed, and twice severely wounded by his fierce opponents, he became faint with loss of blood; his head swam; his eyes became dim; he grew bewildered, and struck at random. His assailants saw their advantage, and one of them made a final lunge at his breast to transfix him. But, ere the blow could take effect, he sunk sideways to the floor, and falling behind the hangings, the blade buried itself within the door of the cabin.

"Curses light on the foul steel! Finish him, Renard."

"He is done for," said the other, sheathing his blade through the curtain.

"Now for the woman! His mistress, I dare say, he fought so like a lion. I will try and console her for his loss," he added, with a laugh.

The fall of its brave defender left the way undisputed to the inner cabin. With united efforts, they forced open the slightly-secured leaves of the door. Grace stood before them in an attitude of sublime self-sacrificing, her eyes raised heavenward full of hope and faith, while the uplifted dagger was in the act of descending into her bosom. The foremost pirate instantly comprehended her purpose. Quick as lightning, he leaped forward, and, with his cutlass, struck the weapon from her grasp as it was entering her bosom.

"By the Virgin! that was skilfully done, Renard!" said the other. "You have won her fairly."

"And he who would have her must win her from me," he continued, with dogged resolution, catching her as, with a shriek of hopeless despair and wretchedness unspeakable, she was falling to the deck.

"A sweet voice, but somewhat loud!" said the other, with a laugh. "Ho! what have we here? Another prize," he exclaimed, descrying the helpless maid. "Smaller game! but not the less welcome. Dead, for a guilder! No, she breathes! We are lucky, Renard. It will cost us some hard knocks to keep possession of our prizes."

"We have no captain now, and each man is for himself."

"Not quite. Our new fighting lieutenant will command us now; and suppose he should, as he is like to do, take a fancy to your bit of womankind?"

"He will first have to fancy me!" said the other, menacingly. "Nor shall he command me while men older than he are in the lugger."

"He will have a word to say on that score, and here he comes to speak for himself."

He had scarcely spoken ere the young pirate made his appearance in the cabin. The shriek of Grace had drawn him from the deck, where he had been defending the entrance to the companion-way against the whole force of the yacht, under the captain and the earl—the danger menacing his niece having suddenly restored the latter to almost supernatural strength, and a

fierceness of spirit that rose superior to physical suffering. With his wound hastily bound up, he had once more joined in the fight, and was foremost in battling with those who opposed his passage to the cabin. Repeatedly his life was exposed, but saved by the voice of the young leader, forbidding his men to harm him; and even in the heat, and noise, and fury of battle, their wild spirits involuntarily yielded obedience to a voice that seemed formed to command and to be obeyed.

With flashing eyes he entered the stateroom, and his glance rested on the lifeless form of Grace, clasped in the arms of the pirate Renard.

"I am right! It is she!" he cried. "Release your prize, villain!"

"You say well, boy; she is my prize," he answered, with a menacing look.

"Ha!" shouted the youth.

Quicker than thought he sprang upon him, got within his sword arm, seized him by the throat, closed with him, and buried his sabre to its hilt in his chest.

"So have I washed out the pollution of thy touch on this fair creature," he said, attempting to disengage Grace from his hold as he fell backward.

But his arm so firmly encircled her, that he was forced to sever the tendons of it with his cutlass before he could release her from this horrible embrace of lust and death.

"Oh God!" he said, involuntarily, "that I should be an actor in such a scene as this. Yet my presence here has been her preservation. I will save her and protect her now, even with the life of the captain!"

"His life is already ended," said the bucanier, who, on witnessing the fate of his comrade, had quietly dropped the lifeless form of the maid where he had found her.

He pointed as he spoke to his body.

"Dead!" exclaimed the youth. "Then am I chief here. I will save, for her sake, all that are left alive. But she shall not know me! She shall ever be ignorant to whom she is indebted. Yet methinks I would like to send by her a message to the haughty daughter of the house of Bellamont." This was spoken with bitter irony. "But I must try to restore her."

He poured a vase of water over her forehead, and moistened her lips, and she revived.

"Where am I? What has transpired? Who—how—where—"

She glanced wildly around, and everything that had passed flashed upon her mind. She bounded from him with a deplorable cry, and covered her face with her hands. "Mercy, oh God! mercy!"

"Grace!" he said, in a gentle tone.

"Who speaks? who?"

"Grace!"

"Thou art no enemy! Bless thee for the sound of thy voice. Tell me what has happened? Where is my uncle? Oh, speak as if life hung on thy words."

"The Earl of Bellamont is living."

"Heaven, I thank thee! And this dead body?"

"I have protected thee from a fate worse than death, with the life of this man."

"Who—who art thou? I should know that voice," she exclaimed, with returning confidence and hope, gazing upon his now swarthy and disfigured features which defeated her scrutiny, deeply shaded, too, as they were by his bonnet, which he pulled farther over his brows.

"An outcast, unworthy a thought from innocence and purity like thee."

"Yet you are my friend. How came you here?"

"To save thee!"

"I am confused, puzzled, perplexed! your voice, your air! I know not what to think or say. A pirate boarded us, and you—you are not a pirate. Oh, my uncle! my dear uncle! Heaven be thanked, you are safe!" she cried, darting forward and flinging herself into his arms as he entered the cabin, literally covered with blood, while behind him crowded a dark mass of pirates, through whom he had cut his way.

"How fares it with thee, my child?" he cried, with anxiety, pressing her to his breast.

"Safe from all but terror!"

"God bless thee! we will die together; there is no hope. Come on, ye fiends, now," he cried, turning upon his foes with one arm entwined about her, and brandishing his cutlass in the calm defiance of despair.

They rushed upon him with a shout.

"Back!" cried the clear, commanding voice of their young leader, in a tone that arrested every advancing foot and suspended every cutlass mid-air. "Look! there lies your late captain in his blood! Your first lieutenant is slain. I am now your leader. Obey me. Stand back, all of ye!" The men sullenly dropped their weapons and retreated to the foot of the stairs. "Earl of Bellamont! you and your niece are, from this moment, safe. Your yacht shall be instantly cleared of every man but its own crew, and you shall be at liberty to sail on your course. Call upon your captain for a cessation of hostilities on deck, while I draw off my men."

The astonished earl immediately obeyed.

"Who are you, mysterious young man?" he asked, turning to him after communicating his request to the captain. "Your voice and air are familiar."

"It matters not, my lord. I have saved thy niece from violence, and would, had I the power, earlier have put an end to this scene of bloodshed. Bid your captain call his crew to the quarter-deck, while I pass to my own vessel with my men."

The order, with the object of it, was repeated to the captain.

"Ay, ay!" he replied from the deck. "Let them go, with a left-handed blessing. But what has changed the devils about so? Have they had fighting enough?"

"We have mistaken the character of your vessel," said the young leader, evasively.

"Ha! you are there, my lion's cub, and can speak like a Christian, too. A little fighting always makes a man feel more civilized, is my maxim, my lord," he said, looking down upon them through the skylight.

"To your own vessel, men!" said the youth, sternly. "Throw down that casket! Take not with you the value of a groat. Go as you came, with only your arms in your hands."

The men looked at each other, and surveyed their athletic young chief, who stood like a youthful Mars, with the look and bearing of resolute command. His eye rested for an instant on each man, as he saw their hesitation, with a searching and terrible glance, and, as each one encountered it, he turned his eyes away and silently obeyed. As the last man left the cabin, he said,

"Some of you return, and bear your captain's body to the decks of your own vessel. Lay him decently along the quarter-deck."

Four of the pirates came back, and raised it without a word, while he stood quietly by, leaning on his sabre.

"Michael," he said, to one who seemed to take the lead of the rest, "I make you, for the present, second in command. Have the wounded conveyed to the lugger, and the dead thrown into the sea. Be ready to cut clear of the yacht at a moment's warning; and, with what time you have, repair damages and get sail on. Work will keep the men from thinking of mischief. Go! and see that I am obeyed. I shall instantly follow you."

The bucanier departed with ready obedience to the will of the lofty spirit that had at once assumed such irresistible power over his mind. The earl and Grace listened with surprise to the stern authority with which he governed such fierce men, and witnessed with wonder the entire control he seemed to possess over their wills. The former gazed on him for a few seconds as he stood beneath the swinging lamp, his features thrown into the deepest shadow by the falling brim of his bonnet and his drooping plume, and then spoke:

"Mysterious and wonderful young man, whoever you are, we owe you much. This life of crime and horror is not your sphere. There is humanity about you. Tell me," he added, with irresistible curiosity, "who are you?"

"A *bastard!*"

It is impossible to convey the manner and emphasis with which this word was articulated. It expressed volumes to both uncle and niece. It told a dark history of shame, scorn, and disgrace; explained why, being so above them by nature, he herded with the basest. A painful tale of moral wrong and suffering it unfolded to their imaginations, save that they knew not his name or family. They read from his brief confession all that could have been told them. The earl sighed, shook his head, and was silent. Grace looked upon him with pity.

He contemplated for a moment the effect of this disclosure, and then, turning haughtily away, said,

"The service I have done you is cancelled by your discovery of the baseness of the instrument. There is debt on neither side. Adieu, my lord—adieu, Lady Grace Fitzgerald."

"How know you my name and rank?"

"And *mine!*" simultaneously exclaimed both.

"It matters not. Thou wilt learn full soon enough to scorn as well as pity me."

With these words he departed. The yacht was cleared of its piratical horde, and the two vessels separated, and soon were steering on opposite courses.

## BOOK II.

### THE EFFECT.

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"'Twas in the third King William's time,  
When many a pirate bold  
Committed on the seas the crime  
Of shedding blood for gold."

"My name is Captain Kyd,  
As I sailed, as I sailed:  
My name is Captain Kyd,  
And so wickedly I did,  
God's laws I did forbid  
When I sailed."

*OLD BALLAD.*

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## BOOK II.

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### CHAPTER I.

"All in the olden time."

"Our ancestors smoked long pipes, wore breeches and buckles, spoke in a strange tongue, and were called Dutchmen; for what saith the chronicle?"

"Dutchmen lived in those days in Nieuve-Amsterdam."

Five years have elapsed since the events narrated in the last book transpired. In the interim, the seed then sown has had time to ripen to the germe; the germe to bud, and blossom, and bear fruit: youth has advanced to manhood; the characters then forming, formed; and the effects of the various causes then in operation fully wrought, and apparent to every eye. The scene, as well as the time of the story, is now changed, and, with its actors, transformed from the Old to the New World.

In the year 1695, William the Third appointed Richard, Earl of Bellamont, governor of the province of New-York. He did not, however, receive his commission until eighteen months afterward, nor arrive in his government until April, 1698. At this period the American coast, from New-England to the Capes of Virginia, were infested by a daring bucanier, who not only swept the seas with his fast-sailing vessel, but frequently run boldly, in open day, into the harbours of New-York, Boston, and Newport. To such an extent did his depra-dations reach, so fearful became the terrible name of "Kyd," that at length the fisherman feared to launch his boat, the mariner to spread his sail, and citizens trembled for their safety within the very centre of their fortified towns.

Such being the state of things, Lord Bellamont, on assuming the administration of colonial affairs, was especially instructed by the English government to make use of all the means placed at his command to remedy an evil so alarming, and fraught with consequences so fatal to the growth and prosperity of the colonies. For this purpose, immediately after his arrival at New-York, he had despatched the light-armed vessel which had brought him over from England in pursuit of the pirate.

She had been absent some time, and her arrival in the bay was hourly and anxiously looked for by the honest Dutch citizens. As the time for her return drew nigh, it was the custom of certain of these worthies, after the humble occupations of the day were over, to assemble at eventide about the stoope of *frau* Jost Stoll's tavern by the water side, and with their long pipes supported in their mouths with one hand, and a mug of double beer or mum held in the other, steadfastly to gaze down the bay, in expectation of the return of the crusier, the while gravely discussing their doubts of the bold bucanier's captivation by mortal ship; and by times relieving their discourse with dark tales of his marvellous and bloody exploits on the high seas.

Before entering further upon this division of the story, it perhaps may be necessary, for the proper understanding of it, to describe New-York as it was at this period. On the north side of the present Wall-street there extended from East River, then called Salt River, to the North River, a palisade ten feet high, constructed of piles firmly driven into the earth, strengthened and sustained by crosspieces of timber. The interstices were filled with earth and stone, and it was in every part ball-proof. South of this palisade lay all that then was New-York. Beyond were forests, and a vast tract called "King's Farms," now embraced between Canal and Liberty streets. This wall was perforated midway between the two rivers by a gateway, through which passed the road to Albany: this avenue is now called Broadway. At the eastern extremity of the wall, at the foot of Wall-street, and facing the water, was a half-moon fort, called a Rondeel: another was at Coenties-slip, or "Countess-slip," so called in honour of the fair Lady of Bellamont; and a third, equidistant from it, on the site of what is now the corner of State-street and the Battery. From Broadway, west, there was a sloping shore to the beach, there being neither wharf nor landing on this side of the town; and on the south, the tides came up nearly to the iron gate of the Battery that at present opens into Broadway—the site of the present "Marine Park" being at low tide a sandy beach strewn with vast fragments of rock, and called "The Ledge," where fishermen spread their nets and dried their fish.

At the foot of Broad-street, then called "Here Graft," and at that time the principal street of New-Amsterdam, were two great docks, called "West" or "East Dock," as they chanced to be on the east or west side of Broad-street. Through this street nearly to Wall-street also run a creek, widened into a canal, and spanned by bridges wherever it was intersected by streets. Near the head of this canal was the abode of the city ferryman, who conveyed passengers in a wherry either to the Island or Jersey shore. The houses of the better class stood principally on William and Pearl streets, the latter being open to the water, with dwellings only on the west side facing it. Maiden-lane was then a green lane with a fine spring at its head where the Dutch maidens were accustomed to bleach the linen they wove. Fronting the river stood the Stadt Huys (the ancient City Hall), a massive stone structure two stories high, with battlements rising above the gable ends. The lower story was used as the colonial prison. Opposite the Stadt Huys stood the fish-market. In the Bowling Green, then an oblong square, surrounded by locust-trees, was the City Market, which was held three times a week, and opened and shut by the ringing of a bell. The gate of the city was formed of a pair of massive leaves of oak, strengthened with bars of iron: they were shut at night on the setting of the watch, and opened at sunrise by ringing of bells. The citizens took watch by turns or were fined. They were to be "good men and true, and free from cursing and swearing." It was their duty to watch by the gate and the bridges, and thrice during the night to take the rounds of the city, particularly to see that neither Indians nor negroes were abroad, or lying about in the market-places. In cases of emergency or alarm, they were commanded to call on the nearest citizen for aid; each householder being required to keep always in his house a "goode firelocke," and at least six rounds of balls thereto. Gutters run through the centre of all the streets, which were unpaved; and in the middle of Broadway, near Wall, and also in Pearl-street, were public wells and pumps. The houses were built mostly in the Dutch style, with gable-ends to the street, and stoopes.

The "Rondeel," or crescent before mentioned, that defended the south side of the town at the foot of Broadway, was erected on the top of a large mound, fourteen feet high, with a green sloping glacis on every side. The wall of the fort was still twenty feet above the glacis, strongly constructed of stone, with two square wings, the centre being in the shape of a half-moon. On the north side stood a few apple-trees and an aged linden that over-topped the walls, from the parapet of which was a near view of the market, of the fields about the "Bowline Greene," the hay-scales, and the north gate of the city. In the centre of this fort stood a small stone chapel, the first Dutch church erected in New-York. Four cannon were mounted on the water side, and a heavy gun, of vast calibre, planted on the north side of the wall, commanded the gate of the palisades. East of the fort was a forest of several acres, in which were kept the governor's deer. Nearly hid among its old trees, yet open to the bay, stood, within a stone's throw of the gate of the fort, the gubernatorial mansion of the earl, a stately Dutch edifice of stone, painted white and ornate with scalloped gables, turret-like chimneys, a cupola, latticed galleries, and "stoopes." The ground before it sloped in a smooth lawn to the glittering beach; and from its door the eye embraced the whole of the far-extended bay, with its green and wooded islands, and a distant glimpse of the sea. On the east of this mansion, which, from its white exterior and imposing appearance, was named by the admiring burghers "Der Vite Sals," or White Hall; a name the site has retained to this day, commenced Pearl, then called Dock street. It was on the corner of this and Broad-street, and within one hundred yards of the White Hall, that the public-house of frau Jost Stoll was situated.

This ancient, well-frequented, and popular inn, the humble progenitor of the numerous costly and palatial *hotels* that now adorn the modern city, was one story high, and extended far back on both streets, showing a front on each. Its roof was tiled with glazed Dutch tiles, and ascended almost perpendicularly to a great height, where it met a second or super-roof, which was clapped over it like an extinguisher. In its descent towards the ground, however, it took a horizontal curve outward, and projected full seven feet from the walls across the sidewalk, supported along its eaves by a row of rude columns. The gable-ends rose ambitiously above the roof, from which be it said projected sundry dormant windows, which were cut into steps or half-embrasures, giving the building a sort of castellated aspect. Its windows, and they were many of divers shapes, square, circular, oval, and diamond, were placed in all possible positions, as the fancy of the architect dictated. On each street was a broad door, with a narrow carved canopy above it, and beneath a stoop with seats on either side. To these, for the accommodation of her numerous customers, the



bustling Dutch hostess had of late placed four long benches, two on each side of the house, against the wall and just beneath a row of windows with little three-cornered panes of glass set in leaden sashes. The advantage of two fronts to the inn is apparent, and was a very great convenience to the worthy citizens. In the summer mornings they were wont to sit on the south and shady side, which looked down the bay; and in the afternoon on the east and now shady side, which commanded not only a side view of the harbour, but a full view of the muddy dock, alive with ducks, at their feet, and the clumsy stone bridge that crossed it. But, since they had begun to watch for the reappearance of the "Ger-Falcon," the name of the vessel which was despatched in pursuit of the pirate, the south front, notwithstanding it was in the month of June, and the level sun lighted up the little windows of the inn like an illumination, had become the most frequented and popular; and, on the evening of the day in question, the east side was deserted by all save a tawny slave, a recumbent Indian, and one or two sleepy dogs. On the south front, therefore, at the time of the opening of the second part of this story, were gathered, towards sunset, beneath the shade of the projecting roof, a motley group, composed of some of the best burghers of New-Amsterdam, and, what is more, the choicest customers of *frau* Stoll. They were seated on benches on either side of the stoop, the two seats of which were occupied by a little, short, fat member of the corporation, and a tall, thin, long-nosed churchwarden, the chiefest dignitaries of the church and state. Besides these worthies, there were several artisans, and other worthy citizens of the ancient town.

"Dere vill be moche fear dat de tamt pucanier hash got de king's ship, and no te king's ship haav got te pucanier," said one of the worthy burghers, sagely shaking his head after a long look down the bay; and taking his pipe from his mouth and emitting a generous cloud of smoke, he looked round to see how his opinion was received.

"'Tis quite time, Mynheer Vandersplocken, that the ship should be back; but whether she brings a prize or no is another thing," said the warden, blowing through his pipe to ignite the tobacco therein.

"I'll ventur' to say you are right dere, Mynheer Varder," said an antiquated Dutch skipper, blowing forth with his words a volume of smoke that for a time rendered his round, rubicund visage and portly paunch invisible; "dis skipper Kyd ish not to pe taken sho easily. Schnaps and tunder! he would plow up his yocht to de tyfil first. Ay! he vill never haav te hemp cravat, te plack rogue."

"Is he black?" asked the warden, eagerly.

"Ay—ish't plack he ish, schipper Schenk?" repeated the burgher.

"Goot! schipper Schenk, den hash seen him! how doesh dou know dat he ish plack?" asked a third, who, from his greasy apparel, was the tallow-chandler of the town, laying his pipe across his oily knee and looking him in the face with the air of a man who expected to hear something marvellous.

"'Tish not plack in te face I mean, put in te heart," said the skipper. "I have seen him, as you say, Mynheer Schnops; and his hair vas white as te lint, and his eye plue as te sky, and his skin fair as te lantlaty's daughter here. A fair young man he vas to look upon."

"And cruel as fair," said the warden. "Tell us, worthy skipper Schenk, o' the time you saw this bold rover; doubtless it will be a tale to listen to."

"Ay, good schipper!" "Yaw, schipper Schenk, gif us te story," cried several voices.

Ashes were knocked from some of the pipes, and others were refilled; the more distant listeners moved nearer to the skipper, who, looking round with the patronising and superior air of a man who hath seen more danger than his fellows, settled himself into the attitude of a story-teller, and took a long-drawn whiff at his meerschaum:

"It vas in te Long Island Sount," he began, "just after the last line gale. I vas in mine little yocht, te Half Moon, and, haaving carried away my powsprit, put into a creek unter Sachem's Heat to cut another from te treesh dere. I left te men to vork hewing te spar, and walks about on te shore, looking rount, and tinking vat a nice plaace it vas—te Sachem's Heat—for a city, if te lant vas lower, so tat a tyke nicht be made all rount it."

"A tyke, sure; vat is te citee mitout te tyke? vera goot," were the approving ejaculations of his listeners.

"Ton't interrupt me, or tish tyfil a pit more you get o' mine shtory. Now vere vas I? Vell, as I vas saying, I vas valking by mineself ven I comes to te oder side of te heatlant, ant tere lay anoder vessel mitout a mast, ant more tan fifty men at vork putting new spars into her. Vell, I vas vondering vat craft it vas, for she vas carry many kuns, vhen somepoty vas lay a hant on mine shoulter, ant I looked rount ant vas see a tall, hantsome, ant fair young man, mit plue eyes ant light locks, mit pistols at belt ant swort py his side.

"'Goot tay, Mynheer Schipper,' says he, in a free ant easy vay. 'Ish tat your craft pelow in te creek?'

"'It ish, mynheer,' says I. 'Dis gale has put us poth into von bipe, if tat ish your craft pelow dere.'

"'It ish, schipper; vill you go on boart?'

"Ish must get my repairs tone ant pe off,' I sait.

"I haav a flasche of goot Scheitam, mynheer,' sait he.

"So I vent aboart, ant ve hat a merry time mit te Scheitam ant te bipe.

"'Tis ish te real shuniper from Deutch-lant, captain,' says I, pouring te last trop out of te flasche.

"It's made from the Italian shuniper, schipper,' says he.

"Deutch or Italian,' says I, 'it's te oil ov life; ant never pefore tid I trink such shin.'

"I am glat you like it,' says he; ant he mate a negro, in golt ant green jacket ant brocken, put on anoder flasche.

"By-ant-py, says I, 'Vat's te name o' your craft, captain,' tinkin it a ship in te king's navy.

"Te Silfer Arrow,' says he.

"Te Silfer Arrow. I haav not hear tis name in te navy.'

"Nor ever vill,' sait he. 'Fill your glass, schipper, I vill give you a toast.'

"So I filled to te top, ant, rising up, swore I't trink it on mine legs, if he gave te tyfil himself, for te Scheitam vas in me. So I helt on to te taple-corner, ant he sait,

"I give te healt of Kyt.'

"Nefer,' sait I; ant smashed my glass on te taple in a tousant atoms. 'I vill trink to te tyfil, put not to Kyt,' says I.

"His eyes flashed like coals ov vire, ant he put his hant on a pistol; put ten he laughed ant sait,

"Drink to my healt, ten, good schipper.'

"I'll trink your healt, captain, from te neck ov te flasche, till tere pe not von trop left pehint.'

"Pledge me, den,' sait he.

"So ve filled, ant I trank a bumper to his goot healt.

"Very vell, schipper. You haav done as I wished,' he sait, smiling. 'Who, tink you, is your entertainer?'

"Te'il care I,' sait I; 'I know te Scheitam, tat is enough for schipper Schenk to know.'

"Did you ever hear of te Adventure Galley?' says he.

"It's Kyt's vessel,' sait I, 'tat he scours te sea mit.'

"Look here, schipper, ant reat,' said he, shoving asite a sliting panel above te transum.

"I looked, ant reat, in large letters,

"THE ADVENTURE GALLEY.'

"Vat te tyfil!' sait I, laying a hant on my cutlass, 'tish is not te—'

"Te Adventure Galley, ant I am Captain Kyt,' says he.

"So I drew my cutlass ant mate a lunge at him, supposing I vas in for a death; but he wrested it vrom me, ant mate me sit down ant vinish te pottle, ant we soon got right vell acquainted.

"Vhen do you leave te creek, schipper Schenk?' says he.

"It vill take me two tays yet, mit my three men, to set te bowsprit. It's a pad pusiness, dish delay; ant I vish I vas vell out of dis place'—for I pegan to fear for my throat, notmitstanding ve drank Scheitam togedder. But Captain Kyt vas de shentleman. He sent his men to help mine, ant in four hours I vas ready for sea again, sount as ever. He came to see me off, sent two flasches ov de Scheitam, ant shook hants mit me, mit many pleashant vords, ant gave me dis arrow, saying, 'Tese are my passports for my frients. If you ever are in any tanger from my peoplesh, it vill pe your safeguart.' Ant he spoke true; for it hash twice saven my cargoesh."

As the skipper concluded, he held up to view a small silver arrow the length of his fore-finger, on which the warden discovered, as it was passed round from one to the other, the words:

"*Respect the sign.* KYD."

"Strange—it ish vonderful—vera goot!" exclaimed severally those to whom it was handed.

"He is not so wicked after all, then, schipper Schenk," said the warden.

The skipper shook his head, and replied mysteriously, "I vish I may always gif him a goot vide berth, datsh all, Mynheer Vorden, notmitstanding te Schietam."

"I can tell you a tale that will give you a different opinion, Master Warden," said an English mate, who formed one of the party of listeners.

"By all means let us hear it," said the warden, knocking the ashes from his pipe against his shoe, and refilling the bowl from a leathern pouch by his side wherein he was accustomed to carry a pound of loose Turkish cut.

"Ve vill lishten; tell it, skipper Jack," all cried, directing their eyes first down the bay to see if they could discover an approaching sail, and then turning and fixing them upon the face of the seaman.

"Well, shipmates," said the sailor, dropping from his mouth carefully into the palm of his hand a huge quid of tobacco, and sprinkling a shower of saliva over the pavement; "you see as how it was in the West Indies. Captain Kyd had captured a trader bound from Newport to Barbadoes, and, having taken out all the valuables, set fire to her, with every soul on board save a young gentleman and young lady—one being sweetheart to the other, you must know. These he took on board his vessel, the 'Ventur' Galley, and told the young lady, who was very rich, that if she would pay forty thousand dollars for her ransom, she should go free. So she went into the cabin with him, and wrote the order for the money. 'Now,' says she to him, 'I will not give it to you unless you promise to give me what I love best on earth.' 'Now,' says he to her, 'fair lady, what do you love best on earth?'

"'My betrothed husband,' said she.

"'Would you have his heart rather than all else in the world?' asked he.

"'Yes.'

"'I comply with your demand—but first you must dine with me,' said he.

"So a great dinner was served up, and only Kyd and the lady sat down to it—for he treated her with great respect all the time, and more like a gentleman than a bucanier. After they had dined, she said, 'Now grant me my wish, and let me have what I love best on earth.'

"'You have had it,' said he.

"'Where—what?' she asked, trembling all over at his fearful looks, and hardly knowing what to dread.

"'Your lover's heart.'

"'Where?' she asked.

"'You have just dined off of it,'" said he.

"What became of the lady?" asked the warden, after the exclamations of horror and surprise had subsided.

"She became a maniac, and in three days was buried in the sea," replied the narrator, replacing his quid and taking a hearty draught at a can of ale handed him by Frau Stoll herself.

"Donder ant blixen! I don't pelieve it—tish not true, I vould shwear," said the skipper. "He ish pad enough, put not so pad ash dat—tish one of te itle shtories tat peoplesh frighten von oder mit."

"'Tis said he always gets devil's luck, before he sails, from them as has dealings with the Evil One, and always burns a Bible on his capstan every time he weighs anchor," said the sailor, without regarding the incredulous skipper.

"The last time he was here, when he walked our streets so boldly, with a score of armed bucaniers at his back, before he set sail I heard how he got evil charms from the witch at Hell Gate," observed the warden, in a low, cautious tone.

"I can give ye a wrinkle on that point, I guess," said a lank, half-farmer, half-sailor looking being, who commanded a trader between the Rhode Island plantations and New-York—one of the first of the species now so numerous. "I anchored once, waiting for the flood tide to take me through the gate, close alongside the rock her hut is on. Feeling kind o' neighbourly, and not knowin' then who lived there, I got into my yawl, and pulled ashore to scrape acquaintance and talk a bit. As I came up to the hut I heard a strange noise, and smelt a brimstonish smell, and so thought I'd reconnoitre afore goin' in. Looking through the window, I see the old Witch of Endor and Captain Kyd, as I learned a'terward it was, goin' through the awfulest hellifications ever hearn tell on. She hanged a piece o' yarn round his neck, and then said as how he had a charmed life. Gracious! and the way it lightened and thundered jist then was a sin to death! Blue blazes an' brimstone—great guns and little guns—big devils and little devils, mixed up with owls and hobgoblins, snakes and catamounts, with a sprinkling o' hell-cats and flying serpents, touched off with the tarneldest yells, 'nough to lift a feller right off his feet by the hair of his head. I thought creation was comin' to an eend, and dropped down on my marrow-bones and prayed away like a disciple. Soon as I could get on my legs, I showed 'um some purty tall walkin' till I got to my yawl again, I tell ye! I expected nothin'd be left o' me when I got there but my eyebrows and shirt risbands."

"She is a fearful woman," said the warden; "and little thanks do we owe them for sending her among us. 'Tis said, before she was transported to the colony from Ireland, that she had spirited away by her foul charms the son of some noble house. Ill has fared the colony the three years she has been in't."

"She shoul't pe purned for von vitch vooman," said the skipper; "I would pe te first to make te

fagot plaze."

"I'll be there to help you a bit, I guess, too," said the Rhode Islander. "I han't been to Salemtown in New-England for nothin', I guess. The way they do with the critters there is a little the cutest. If they want to tell for sartin if an old woman's a real witch, they throw her into a pond. If she's drowned she's no witch; but if she swims, its gospel proof she is—coz what old woman could swim if she warn't a nat'ral witch. They then tie her to a stake and set fire to her."

"Mit your leave, goot peoplesh, I vill shay vat dey doesh mit vitches in mine countree," said the Dutch burgher, deliberately taking the pipe from his mouth. "Virst, dey tries her py veighing her in te scales mit von Piple; if she be heavier nor te Piple, she ish prove von olt vitch voomans. Dis ish vera goot! Secont, dey tries to shoot her mit silver pulletsh, ant den dey tiesh her heelsh ant het bot' togedder, and drops her into te deep vater. Dat is alsho more vera goot!"

"What are ye gathered here for, ye idle knaves and fat burghers, ye masses of smoked flesh—sponges steeped in ale—and paunches like your own pint-pots, frightening each other's cowardly ears with tales of fear. Who is it ye would kill with your silver bullet, Master Von Schmidt?"

The company started at the harsh, stern voice that addressed them so unexpectedly, and uttered, as they looked up, divers exclamations and interjections of surprise, not unmingled with apprehension. The warden rose from his wooden bench, and, hurrying away, disappeared quickly round the corner of the inn; the tallow-chandler upset his can of ale in his over-eagerness to gain the taproom; the burgher broke the long stem of his pipe by striking it against the door-sill as he crowded in on the tallow-chandler's heels; and on each countenance and in every gesture of those who remained was depicted consternation and anxiety.

The personage who had caused this sudden movement was a female of low stature, deformed and hideous in person, with a stern aspect, and a wild, restless eye—indeed, none other than Elpsy the sorceress. Suspected of having made way with the young Lester—the illegitimate Lester—she had been arrested by the countess and thrown into prison. But confessing nothing on trial, and the circumstances not being sufficient in themselves to convict her, after remaining in prison two years, she was sent, with other criminals and dangerous persons, to the colonies. Forbidden by the worthy burghers to harbour in the town, she had selected, as more in unison with her wild and wandering life, and the mysterious character she claimed, a lonely abode, once a fisherman's lodge, on the rocky islet on the right of the outlet of Hurl Gate, still known as the Witch's Rock. Here she performed her unholy rites, and far and wide her fame spread as a sorceress. Seamen, as they shot through the dangerous pass, propitiated her; and those who would have fair winds sought them of her in full faith. The good came to her for good, and the evil for evil. The tender Dutch maiden would do pilgrimage there to ask after the fate of an absent lover, or seek assurances of his happy and speedy return. There were tales, too, that she favoured the bucaniers who swarmed the coasts, and that their success was owing to the heavy bribes of gold they gave her for prosperous cruises. Occasionally she visited the town, to the consternation of its worthy citizens, who never failed to presage evil to "scot and lot" from her presence.

"What is it ye fear, Master Warden—what is it leads ye to leave your bench, schipper—is't your own shadows ye fear?" she now cried, fixing her eyes darkly and angrily upon each countenance.

"It ish out ov reshpect, Frau Elpshy," replied the half-tipsy schipper, mustering his physical to the aid of his moral courage, and speaking in a deprecatory tone. "We knowsh your power, ant make reverensh to it by getting up, ash you say."

"Ye are a hypocritical and fear-stricken set, all of ye—ever gulping ale, ye have only ale courage. Jost Stoll, woman, give me a can of thy best Island spirits. I have walked far, and am athirst and weary."

The strong potation was given her by the reluctant hostess, who dared not refuse her demand, lest, in the evil that she would visit upon her hearth-stone and roof-tree, she might lose far more than the value of a goblet. The weird woman quaffed the beverage at a draught, and, placing the cup on the bench with an emphasis, turned and looked down the bay with a steady gaze. Every eye followed hers. The sun had just touched the hills of Jersey with his lower edge, and the evening haze lifting from the water gave a dimness to distant objects. For some seconds she continued to gaze, and then suddenly cried,

"He comes!"

"Sail ho!" instantly shouted the Rhode Islander. At the same moment, a universal exclamation from the observers upon the stoope showed that all eyes had discovered the object that had attracted the attention and caused the sudden outcry of the woman.

Far down the bay, near its junction with the sea, diminished to a mere speck by the distance, and appearing not bigger than a snow-flake floating above the water, or a white gull riding on the waves, a vessel was seen entering the Narrows and standing towards the town. Instantly all was excitement. The noise and rumour of its approach flew from the Rondeel on the south even to the wall on the north. The worthy citizens, attended by their fraus and their little folk, maids and matrons, old and young, black and white, slaves and Indians, and everything that had life in New-Amsterdam, assembled in front of Jost Stoll's inn, with their eyes directed down the bay. With a steady, onward course, the vessel came gallantly up the channel, and such was the way she made that she promised to drop anchor off against the fort ere the twilight should be deepened into night. Gradually, as she approached, her form and size began to grow more distinct to the eye,

and her proportions to stand out clearer.

"She is a brig—but not the Ger-Falcon, I am thinking," said the warden, who had again taken his place among the crowd, his curiosity overcoming his superstitious fears—albeit, he gave the sorceress a wide berth. Nor indeed was he alone in his aversion to her society; for every one present seemed instinctively to avoid her neighbourhood: so that she stood alone in an open space before the inn, intently watching, without heeding those around her, the advancing sail.

"Vat oder prig can it pe, put te Sher-Falcon," said the skipper. "Dere ish none expected here till next Shaint Andrew's tay. De Barbadoesh packet vash just sail—de Glasgow merchantman ish not due till Christmash, and tere ish put one oder prig dat trade here, vich is gone to te Golt Coast for negroesh. 'Tis te Ger-Falcon, or te pucanier Kyt himself."

"Got forbid!" was the exclamation from every tongue.

"She should carry her colours boldly aloft if she were an honest trader," said the warden. "'Tis suspicious."

"The Ger-Falcon, neighbour, was a square-rigger, I guess," said the Rhode Islander, making a focus of his closed hands, and looking long and scrutinizingly at the stranger; "if I know a mainsail from a spanker, that craft is a 'morfydite, with a reg'lar straight stem for a mainmast."

"It ish true; tish not te king's vesshel," said the schipper, looking eagerly at her. "She ish not square-rigged; nor ish she von 'morfridyte neider. She ish polacca-rigged, and has von cut-vater like a pike's nose. Dat craft ish here for no goot."

As the skipper spoke he felt in his pouch anxiously, and, drawing forth his little arrow, looked at it between doubt and confidence, and, shaking his head bodingly, walked into the taproom to comfort his spirits with a fresh can of "mum."

The oracular shake of the skipper's head seemed to have affected all present. Glances of apprehension and words of trembling inquiry were interchanged; and, fluctuating between hope and fear, they continued anxiously to watch the approaching stranger, at times turning their glances towards the witch, to see if, on her dark features, they could read a confirmation of the fears the skipper's words and mysterious manner had awakened. As the vessel came nearer, it was clearly apparent to the most unpractised eye that she was not the vessel sent out in search of the bucanier, and for which they had so long been on the watch. There was something, too, in the shape and air of the stranger, that roused their suspicions of his pacific character, and the dreaded monosyllable "Kyd" was whispered under breath from one to the other. Many an anxious eye was turned towards the Rondeel, to see if the vigilance of the town's defenders was roused, and, to the confirmation of their fears, they saw that the little garrison was on the alert; that armed men were on the walls; that the tompions were taken from the guns; and that its captain stood with his glass on the outer bastion watching the vessel, while ever and anon an order, hastening the warlike preparations, reached their ears.

The stranger, a long, sharp, polacca-rigged brigantine, came swiftly on, boldly passed Red Hook, disappeared a few moments behind the wooded swell of Governor's Island, and reappeared on the east side, within gunshot of the town. Just as the more timid citizens began to think of withdrawing to the protection of the fort or the covert of their stout stone houses, and just as a warning gun was fired from the Rondeel, she rounded to, her canvass shivered in the wind, her after sails descended to the deck by the run, and her fore sails one after the other rapidly disappeared: a moment afterward, with everything furled, she dropped her anchor, and, swinging slowly round to it, remained, dimly seen through the thickening twilight, as stationary as the island off which she was anchored. After commenting upon her appearance and character, and giving vent to their doubts and suspicions, one by one the worthy citizens retired to their well-defended mansions, trusting to the governor to keep and hold the city should it be placed in peril before the coming dawn. Elpsy was left alone where she had stood all the while, watching the vessel's approach: the red light of the western sky lighted up her dusky features with a baleful glare, and her features worked with some deep, inward emotion. She would one moment strain her eyes towards the reposing vessel, and the next, with an exclamation of disappointment, stride, with an impatient step, to and fro the narrow strand before the alehouse.

"'Tis he," she said, looking fixedly in the direction of the vessel. "'Tis the day he said he should return, and he has not deceived me. Now will I bring about that I have laboured five long years to accomplish. He shall obey me; he shall do it; he shall do what I command—fulfil it to the letter, or he shall die. No boat yet!" she said, pausing and looking over the water. "He waits for night. He will scarce think to meet me here; but he shall not come and go again without seeing me. He escapes me no more. Let me lay my hand on his heart and get his promise to see me, and I will go back to my rock; for I know then he will come to me there."

The stars at length came out, and night took the place of the glowing twilight. The customers of Jost Stoll had returned to their homes, or were seated within, under protection of the massive shutters and bars, which, earlier than at her accustomed time, the fore-guarding landlady had placed over her windows. All was still throughout the town save the tread of the sentinel on the parapet of the Rondeel, the tramp of the night-guard going with quicker and more determined tread than usual to their posts, the regular dash of the waves on the beach, and occasionally the low, deep voice of the weird woman soliloquizing. At length, after many an earnest look and impatient word, the distant dip of oars in the direction of the brigantine reached her ears, and in a few minutes afterward, faintly visible through the darkness, a boat was seen approaching the

entrance of the canal below the inn. With a glad exclamation she hastened forward to meet it.

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## CHAPTER II.

"The stain of crime—the stain of crime  
Glow in immortal colours there!  
Not e'en the coursing flood of time  
Can make that foulest plague-spot fair.  
My love was thine; it would have stood  
The test of years, or falsehood even;  
But thine own hand, imbued in blood,  
Hath shut to thee both earth and heaven.  
Away, away! there flows 'tween thee and  
me  
The deep, dark ocean of eternity."

The worthy burghers assembled before the inn of *frau* Jost Stoll had not been alone in their anxiety for the return of the Ger-Falcon, nor in their curiosity about the strange vessel which had sailed so boldly into their harbour.

Between the Rondeel and the alehouse, amid a park of majestic trees with a lawn before it sloping to the water, stood, as has been before described, the ancient White Hall, the gubernatorial residence of the Earl of Bellamont. It was an antiquated, rambling edifice, with divers bastion-like projections, chimneys terminating in turrets, lofty-peaked gables, and long, low wings. Running along the whole front was a balcony, upon which the windows of the second story opened, converting it into an airy and elevated promenade for the occupants of the suite of rooms connecting with it. At the eastern extremity of this terrace, which here wound round an octagonal-shaped tower obtruding from the angle, was a deep curtained window, which led into a boudoir. The slanting rays of the setting sun fell in rich tints through it upon the carpet, and, reflected from its crimson curtains, diffused a roseate light throughout the chamber. Near the centre of this apartment, which was furnished with the most costly articles of luxury, stood a superb harp, with its music lying open upon a stand beside it, as if just deserted. Paintings, of subjects tastefully appropriate for such a scene, from the pencils of the old masters, hung upon the walls, and shelves of gilded books filled the sides of a niche, in which, on a pedestal of black marble, stood a snowy statue of Calliope. In an opposite recess answering to it was a Clio; and in a third, fronting the window, was a Madonna and child, by Guido, before which, on a tall tripod of silver and ivory exquisitely carved, was placed a crucifix of gold, set with precious stones, and several books of prayer and of pious reading.

By the open window which faced the south sat a female, in the white and flowing evening costume of the times. Her face lay in the palm of her right hand, which rested on a slab supported by bronze lions that stood beneath a lofty mirror half hidden in tapestry. A guitar lay unheeded upon her lap, on the silent strings of which her fingers unconsciously lingered, while her eyes were turned towards the sea, whither, it was plain, her thoughts had also flown. At her feet was a silken flag, on which was embroidered the crest of Bellamont—a boar's head—and beneath, in Gothic characters, the letters **R. F.**, the latter unfinished, with the needle left in it. She was exceedingly lovely, beautiful as the houris that awake the glowing lyre of the Persian bard. Her beauty was oriental too—soft, languishing, dreamy, and most dangerous to look upon. The amorous sun lingered and still lingered on her olive brow, rioting on its beauty, and, to the last, entwined his golden rays among her glorious hair. And such hair! It was dark as the midnight cloud. Evenly parted on her forehead, it was turned back from her blue veined temples to the top of the head, and braided to resemble the crest of a helmet; but several flowing waves of the luxuriant braid had burst the bondage of the fillet, and now sported about her superb neck in the gentle evening wind.

Five years had passed, and Kate Bellamont had become the lovely woman she now appeared. She had grown taller, being now a little above the common height, and her ripened figure was moulded in the most finished model of feminine grace. Nothing could be more fascinatingly perfect than the undulating outline of her person; and from the rounded arm and elegant hand, to the symmetrical foot just peeping from beneath her robe, resting its tip on an ottoman, all was grace and harmony. Her features, too, were in keeping with the enhanced beauty of her person. The expression of her face was something loftier and more decided, but blending, nevertheless, much sweetness with that peculiar and graceful dignity becoming a very beautiful woman. Her dark, floating eyes were fuller of passion and thought, and far more fatal to the beholder were their animated glances. The budding loveliness of her ruby, laughing lip had changed to a sweeter and more quiet character; yet love, now a practised archer, lay hidden there still, nestled amid smiles and dimples; perhaps, too, they bore a stronger impress of pride of birth and firmness of character than heretofore. Indeed, all that the youthful maiden had promised was fulfilled in the more matured woman, and the unfolding bud had burst into glorious flower.

As she gazed forth from the window, and looked long and anxiously down the bay, which stretched before her reflecting all the hues of the gorgeously painted sky, a pensive shadow would at times steal across her features, and a sigh escape her bosom; then, with a conscious

blush, she would drop her eyes, thrum a nervous note or two on the guitar, and again bend her searching, wishful gaze over the water.

At length, just as the sun was setting, a vessel appeared afar off in the entrance of the harbour, and with an exclamation of joy she bounded to the balcony, and watched, with no less interest than the skipper and his companions had done, its approach towards the town. As it came nearer, a look of disappointment clouded her features, and anxiety and suspicion began to take the place of hope.

"No, it is not he; such was not the fashion of his sails; nor does the flag of England fly from her mast as it is wont to do. Heaven forbid that accident should have befallen him. Oh, that he would return and relieve my anxious watching.—Yet perhaps this stranger may bring me news of him."

As this thought occurred to her, she watched the motions of the vessel with renewed interest, until she dropped anchor within gunshot of the town. The gun from the Rondeel, and the confused murmur of voices from the inn below, increased her curiosity; and the deepening twilight still found her at the window, with her eyes fixed on the scarcely visible hull, as if, although it might not contain him she looked for, it was yet in some way connected with her destinies.

Elpsy, it will be remembered, after her appearance at the inn of Jost Stoll, waited until nightfall, and then, hearing the approach of a boat from the strange vessel, hastened to meet it. It pulled in close by a large rock; and as the person it bore stepped to the beach, she at once knew him by his bearing to be him she sought. He gave a few brief orders to his men, warning them to be guarded against surprise, and then, wrapping his mantle about him, first loosening his sword in its scabbard and bringing his pistols round to be ready for use, he moved across the beach towards the silent inn. She permitted him to pass her unseen, and followed him till he reached the open space in front of the alehouse, when, seeing him pause as if to reconnoitre, she approached him from behind and lightly touched his arm.

Quick as lightning, his hand was upon her throat, and a pistol was held to her heart. But as quickly the hand was released and the weapon put up.

"Is it thou, Elpsy? Thou shouldst come less stealthily upon a man who is accustomed to the use of steel. Had I not recognised thy accursed shape, not to be mistaken even in this faint starlight, thou wouldst have caused me to shed thy blood. What wouldst thou?"

"The fulfilment of thy promise."

"Have they come?"

"All. 'Tis five weeks since the ship that bore them from the old country anchored in the harbour."

"All?"

"All, even thy—that is, even to the Lady Lester!"

"Ah, the poor lady! Does she live?"

"Scarcely. For years she shut herself in her castle; but the Earl of Bellamont, pitying her loneliness and her sorrows, a year since did prevail on her to take up her abode at Castle Cor."

"And so, when he was appointed governor, she came hither with him? I would see her, Elpsy."

"Nay, thou hadst better not. There is one who alone will demand all thy time and thought! Hast thou the will to perform? will no faint-heartedness come over thee?"

"None. I love her still. Time only increases my passion. Five years has given me worldly lessons. I am ready to fulfil the vow I made to thee when in port a few months ago, in expectation of her arrival, and now assert my claim to the rank and title of Lester, for I have been taught that kings have been bastards, and bastards kings."

"And to this title seek to annex that of the house of Bellamont?"

"But will she hear me still? I fear even thy art, aided by thy subtlest filters, could not make her love if love has once died in her heart."

"It will depend on thee—as it chance that thou love her or her title more."

"I care not for her title so I be once more her accepted wooer. Elpsy," he said, with animation, "I have loved this maiden well; never, save when sleeping—nor even then, for my dreams were of her alone—have I ceased to think of her. There is none, save thyself, that know I am not the true Lester?"

"None. Even Lady Lester still mourns thee as her son, and would be first to hail thee."

"The Mark Meredith?"

"Is lost at sea, and so thou art the only claimant."

"Canst prove it?"

"His name appeared, 'tis said, in every print, as one lost in a king's ship, that went down at sea, in a storm off Calais four years ago."

"'Tis better than I thought. Yet he was a brave lad! Does Lady Lester know of thy presence here?"

"She lives secluded in the White Hall, and knows naught that passeth in the world. But did she, am I not beyond the reach of justice, should she seek my death on suspicion of slaying thee? Was I not tried and nothing found against me—as how should there be? I am an exile and under sentence. Ha, ha, law cannot reach me; and man, unaided by it, dare not. I reign here; I rule all minds. It is they who fear, not I. They are the slaves of superstition, and I make them obedient to my will. Even thou, proud man, dost acknowledge my power."

"I do, Elpsy."

"Therefore shalt thou have its aid in thy wooing."

"Nay, first let me try my fortunes on the footing of our former love."

"If she will not listen to thee?"

"She will."

"Wilt thou resign her if she will not?"

He was silent for a moment, and then said,

"What would you have me do?"

"Take her with thee to thy vessel—once there, thy will must be her will. I shall give thee neither rest nor peace, on sea or land, till thou art the acknowledged Earl of Lester, and, by marriage, Lord of Bellamont. Go. Where you see the light burning in yonder window is her chamber. I saw her there as the sun went down. Go, and when thou hast spoken with her, come to my hut and tell me how thou art received. See thou lag not, for I have prepared the rites thou hast sought of me—and if thou wouldst have thy buried treasures hid from mortal eyes, and prosper in what thou undertakest, see thou art with me before the midnight hour."

"Stay, Elpsy; should she discover that Kyd and Lester are the same?"

"Then," said the woman, in a sneering and malicious tone of voice, "thou wilt have to woo the rougher, and 'twill be more to thy credit if thou carry her off. Would it humble thy pride to have her know it?"

"By Heaven, did I believe she did, I would not go near her."

The witch laughed in such a way that he half suspected her of betraying him. He laid his hand on her shoulder, and said quickly,

"Woman, thou hast told her, to gratify thy malicious soul."

"Think you I would crush the seed, when, by a little patience, I can pluck the fruit of the full-grown tree? Go, boy!"

As she spoke she pointed towards the White Hall. He left her without replying, and walked in the direction of the mansion, which stood silent and majestic amid its noble grove of oaks.

As the night advanced, lights were brought into the boudoir of Kate Bellamont. Turning away from the window with a sigh of disappointment, she struck a few sad notes on her guitar, and then, throwing it aside, took up the flag she was embroidering, and began mechanically to ply the needle, occasionally pausing in her graceful toil, with her head inclined towards the open window, as if she fancied she heard sounds from the water. Suddenly she started and sprung to the balcony. The regular dip of oars now struck distinctly upon her ears, each instant approaching nearer and nearer, and a dim object soon advanced from the distant gloom; and, as it came swiftly on, she could distinguish the bodies of men and the outline of a boat boldly relieved against the glassy flood. In a few seconds it was hidden by an oak and a clump of shrubbery, but she could hear it still as it made its way towards the entrance of the canal in front of the "Boat and Anchor," as the inn of Jost Stoll was designated. After listening a while longer, and hearing nothing to confirm her hopes that it bore a message to the White Hall, she re-entered her boudoir and once more resumed her embroidery. This in a little while she restlessly cast aside, and, approaching her harp, struck its golden chords, and, accompanying it by her voice, sung, in a wild and thrilling strain, a popular Irish air. Now slow and solemn sounded the deep, majestic notes; now light and free; now soft, and touching, and most melancholy, even to sadness, they wailed beneath the magic touch of her fingers—her voice, or deep as an angel's trumpet, or soft as a guitar, or clear as a flute, or wild and high like a clarion, following in faultless harmony through the rangeless fields of melody.

"Like an emerald gem on the breast of the sea,  
Dear Erin, my home! is thy vision to me;  
As the sun to the day—as the moon to the  
night,  
Is thy thought to my soul—'tis its warmth and  
its light.

"Sweet clime of my kindred—loved land of my  
birth!  
The fairest, the dearest, the brightest on



earth;  
Oh! where'er I may roam—howe'er bless'd I  
may be,  
My spirit all lonely returns unto thee.

"There first budded passion—there burst into  
bloom  
The flower of young hope—though it droop'd  
to the tomb!  
But that brief life of love! though whole ages  
may roll  
O'er my heart in despondence—'tis fresh in my  
soul.

"Let the winds wildly blow—let the waves  
madly rise,  
Till the storm-sprite's libation is flung in the  
skies;  
Still my spirit will seek, o'er the ocean's bright  
foam,  
For my home in dear Erin—my own native  
home!"<sup>[A]</sup>

[A] Composed by Owen Grenliffe Warren, Esq.

The last notes of the music were trembling on the chords, and the maiden stood as if entranced by her own strains, when a noise like the flitting of a humming-bird in the chamber caused her to start, and, at the same instant, something glittered past her eyes and fell at her feet. She stooped to lift it from the carpet with an exclamation between fear and surprise.

"A silver arrow! What can it mean? Ha! surely I have seen it before—no, no, it cannot be! I will examine it! what strange recollections—what long buried memories start up! I will see if my suspicions are true!"

She held it to the light with a trembling hand, and with undisguised astonishment read:

"Field of Archery, Castle Cor, May,  
MDCXCIV."

"Merciful Heaven!" she almost shrieked, "it is—*it is the same!* Who can have done this? Whence came it? 'Tis Lester!"

"It is Lester!" repeated a deep, rich voice.

She turned with a half cry and startled look towards the window, and, to her terror, beheld standing just without on the balcony, in the shadow of the curtain, a tall dark figure enveloped in a cloak, his features shaded by sable plumes drooping over his brow from a Spanish hat looped boldly up in front.

She would have shrieked, but her surprise and alarm for a moment denied her utterance. She leaned on her harp for support, and gazed on the intruder without the power to move. He advanced a step and stood within the window. The movement restored her presence of mind, and with a degree of self-possession that surprised herself, and in the tone and manner of one who feels herself insulted by intrusion rather than intimidated by the presence of the intruder, she cried,

"Stand, sir, whoever thou art! Approach no nearer, or I alarm the Hall."

As she spoke she extended her hand towards a silver bell that stood on a table near her. Quicker than thought, the stranger's hand was upon hers, and he was kneeling, without cloak or bonnet, at her feet. Surprise, rather than fear, rooted her to the spot. She gazed on him with astonishment; and, as she gazed, her features worked with extraordinary emotion. The light shone full upon his face, and exhibited the features of a fair, handsome man, scarce twenty-five, with light flowing hair, an eye like a hawk's, and a figure of the most noble and manly proportions. He wore a short Flemish cloak of green cloth, richly embroidered, and a short Spanish sword, with a jewelled hilt, hung at his side. His face was lifted to hers with eloquent pleading. She met his gaze with a wild, alarmed look—clasped her hands on her forehead as if she would recall the past, and steadfastly fixed her eyes upon him as if tracing in his features a resemblance that startled her.

"Kate."

Soft were the tones of his deep, rich voice as he spoke, and full of tenderness were his eyes as he lifted them to hers.

"Robert of Lester!" she cried, starting back as if memory had vividly returned at the sound of his voice.

"I am he," was the reply of the stranger, bending his head lowly, as if deprecating her displeasure.

"Leave me, sir," she said, haughtily, though returning love was evidently struggling for the mastery over her sense of right. As she spoke she drew herself up commandingly, though her bosom heaved with emotion, and her averted eyes contradicted her words.

"Dearest Kate!"

"Robert of Lester, I bid you leave me. Your presence is an intrusion, sir."

"Lady," he said, with tenderness, "do you not remember when, five years since, you placed, with your own fair hands, the arrow you now hold in them, in my bonnet."

"Nay, bring not up the past; 'tis buried—long forgotten," she cried, nervously, and in a voice tremulous with feeling. "Would to God you had not appeared to revive it."

"Lady," he continued, in a soft, subdued tone, that touched her heart, "does not love's early dream—"

"That dream is o'er. Oh, that you would cease to recall what will only render me miserable!" she added, with feeling, burying her face in her hands.

"Is there no room for pardon—none for forgiveness? Hear me, Kate! dearest Kate! You who were my playmate in childhood—who in youth first awakened love in this bosom. Dash not the cup of hope for ever to the ground! I have sought thee, and now kneel to thee, to tell thee how fondly, how madly I love—"

"Cease, sir. This is no language for me to hear. Once—but, no matter—'tis past. If you have aught to say touching matters foreign to this, speak, and I can listen; then, prithee depart. Oh, that thou hadst kept away from me for ever! The sight of thee has torn my heart!"

"Then there is hope?"

"None."

"Hast forgotten," he said, with passionate tenderness, "how often we have sailed together on the little mere by Castle More; how together we have pursued the stag through the forests of Castle Cor; how oft we have rambled by the shores of its bay by moonlight, entwined in each other's arms as we walked; how we loved one another, and did pledge in the sight of Heaven undying love—"

"Robert, Robert—" she cried, moved by the touching images he had recalled.

"Have you forgotten," he continued, in the same tone, rising and advancing a step nearer to her, while she leaned against the harp, nor thought to retreat from him, "oh, have you quite forgotten all this? Can you recall it and bid me leave thee? Will you spurn him you have loved and still love —"

"Hold, hold! I love thee not! no, no, I love thee not. You presume too much, sir," she added, starting from her attitude, and with difficulty assuming a haughty bearing. "A maiden may once love, and, finding she has loved unworthily, hate!"

"Dearest Kate," he said, in a tone that reminded her of the days when they were lovers, gently taking her hand.

"Nay, stand back, sir!" she cried, troubled and with difficulty governing the tones of her voice, which returning love fain would have fashioned in its own sweet way.

"Nay, dearest Kate, you love me still! Wherefore this shrinking form and averted eye—this wild look of alarm—this struggle to reprove when your heart gushes with returning love? Why do you gaze on me with looks of horror! At one moment terror is depicted on your face, at another tenderness takes its place. It could not be thus if you scorned me!"

"Robert, I cannot listen to you—'tis dangerous—fatal. If—if I did love you still, thy crimes—"

"Ha! do you know me!"

"As 'the Kyd.'"

"Who told thee this?" he asked, fiercely.

"Elpsy."

"When?"

"Yesterday!"

"The foul fiend!" he cried, pacing the floor. He then muttered, "So—this plan is defeated. I can no longer rewoo her as Lester! Ten minutes since, this false witch told me that none save herself knew that the bastard Lester and Kyd were one! I would have made her believe I had returned from five years of honourable exile, to which her anger had banished me, and penitent, wooed her as Lester, as I have promised the sorceress—for I can do now what then I could not do: five years of crime makes a wonderful difference in a man's feelings! Yet I will deny all. She should believe me before this witch."

Such were the thoughts that run rapidly through his mind as he walked the room. Turning round

to her, he said, in the tone of voice that innocence would assume,

"Alas, dearest Kate! has this baleful sorceress, with envenomed breath, instilled her poison in a flower so fair. Alas, and were I 'the Kyd,' would you, with the taproom gossips of the babbling town, believe me such as Rumour with her hundred tongues would make me? Shall I to *her* refer this altered air—this cold look—this hand that's neither given nor withdrawn? Dost remember when first we parted after our plighted vows beneath the linden by the southern tower of Castle Cor ('twas the third day before thy birthday, I remember it well); thy heart against mine beat wildly—thy head lay upon my breast—my arm encircled thy waist—my lips were pressed to thine—and this 'kerchief, bearing thy initials wrought by thine own fingers, and which I have kept sacred as the pious monk a relic of the cross, was saturate with tears—*thy* tears, Kate. And thus, though five long years have separated us, do we meet now!"

"Fore Heaven, sir! hast thou not given cause?" she exclaimed, recovering herself after a brief but terrible struggle with her feelings, for she was fast melting at his words. "Dost remember how thou didst leave me, and to what end? Hast forgotten thy crimes? I am mad to talk with thee. Thou art no longer Lester. In thee alone I see the freebooter, the bucanier, the terrible Kyd! Shame that a noble, for a light word spoken by a spirited maiden in anger, should thus have cast himself away!"

"I had other cause—thou dost yet believe me to be Lester—but—"

"I will hear no palliation—thou hast thrown thyself away—when, if thou hadst really loved me, thou wouldst have come back and sought to heal the breach."

"I would have done it—but—"

"Thou didst not. Therefore are we no longer aught to each other!"

"Thy words tell me what I have scarce dared to hope—that thou wouldst have received and pardoned me! But there was an impassable barrier—"

"Which was thy pride. Fatal, fatal has it been to thee."

"Nay, but a dark stain—"

"Enough, Robert of Lester! I will hear no more in extenuation or plea. Let this interview cease."

She turned from him as she spoke, though it evidently cost her an effort to do so, and made a step towards the door communicating with the main body of the mansion.

"Lady! Kate—dear Kate," he cried, passionately, approaching her and kneeling before her, "you have said you would have received me had I then returned. If thy love was true love, five years should not kill it, but increase it rather. Behold me returned; forget the long lapse of time; see me only at thy feet to atone the deep offence given on thy birthday, which has so long separated us; receive me as if but a day, and not years, had intervened; take me once more to the throne of thy affections; let me again be the Lester of thy early years—the Lester whom thou hast loved—*thy* Lester—thy—"

"Nay, Robert," she cried, with softness, yet turning her head away as she spoke, as if fearing to trust herself to meet his glance; "nay, it may not be. I pity you; but love!—love?—no, no, it lives no longer. Then art thou not guilty?" she cried, with sudden energy, recoiling from him. "Thou didst make me for the moment forget Kyd in Lester. Go, thou art not the Lester I have known. I no longer love thee, Robert; and if I did, crime on thy part has placed between us a wall high as heaven!"

"I am not so guilty as you believe, lady; but, if I have sinned against thee, thus here at thy feet I do atone my deep offence."

"Rise, sir. I accuse you not; with Heaven lies the knowledge of your guilt. But, if conscience goad thee not to it, why thus a suppliant?"

"Conscience useth neither spur nor exhortation. If I am proved innocent, yet is the homage of my knee still due to thee as the divinity that my soul for years has worshipped."

"Enough, sir! I tremble to hear thee link my name with such gross impiety. Detain me no longer."

"Dear Lady Kate!" he pleaded, entreatingly.

"Release my hand! and remember," she added, with a suddenness characteristic of this *capricieuse création*, "when you fashion your speech, that you address Lady Catharine of Bellamont!"

She drew back haughtily as she spoke, and the guilty lover bent his head low before the reproof, while resentment and grief were mingled in the expression of his countenance.

"Lady," he said, without looking up, and speaking in a voice apparently modulated by injured feelings, "do you believe the tales of crime men charge me with?"

"How else," she replied, pausing and turning back, losing, in her just resentment, the lover in the pirate, and speaking in tones of virtuous dignity, "How else? 'Tis rife on every tongue. Thy deeds are the undying theme of fireside wonder and village gossip. Nay, mothers use the dreaded name of Kyd to scare rude children to obedience!"

"By the cross!" he cried, starting up and speaking with fierce vehemence, "'tis all a foul invention; an idle tale and lying calumny; the escaped bile of some long-festering sore, nourished and fattened in the breast of scandal. Nay, dear Kate," he continued, changing his manner and voice, and speaking as if he made light of it all, "'tis not worth a passing thought! 'Tis an old-wives' tale only; and for such inventions thou hast too much good sense to crush the hopes of years; thou hast," he added, tenderly, "too deep remembrance of our former love to tear a heart that, like the rootless mistletoe which borrows life from that it clings to, lives only by its hold on thine!"

"Robert," she said, moved by the solemn and impassioned tones of his voice, his pleading look, his face upturned to hers, all eloquent with love and bringing him, as in happier days, before her memory, "Robert, I once loved you—how truly, Heaven and my own heart were witnesses. Thou wert virtuous then, and helmeted with truth, and thy heart was girt about with honour, like plate of proof. Thy look was noble, and thy port such as became the nobleness within. I was proud of thee. Absent, I treasured thee in my heart of hearts, and lived only—was happy only, in thy presence! When Rumour came trumpeting your misdeeds, *I* was the *last* to believe them true."

"Kate—dearest Kate—"

"Nay, speak not. Your tongue and eyes are not yet drilled to play their parts together."

"Kate—I entreat—"

"True love for a noble maiden should have been to thee a shield and buckler, Robert, and kept thee from this sad fall."

"Lady, you do me wrong. My hand, but not my heart, has erred—"

"I have not yet done. From one source, that mingles not with the noisy torrent Rumour has let loose throughout the world, I've gathered most certain proof that you are guilty both in heart and hand. Ay, men do not, for very fear, tell the half of what thou hast done."

"This source—the witch?"

"No. Long had I heard of Kyd the outlaw; long had crime and guilt, in shapes most dreadful and appalling, come to my shrinking ears coupled with his name. Night and day, as we crossed the sea, was double watch set, lest he should come upon us unawares. Everywhere did I hear of him and his deeds of blood, till I did believe him to be a demon human only in shape, let on earth for its punishment. 'Twas from one who had been thy prisoner I heard the sanguinary tale. 'Twas told me ere I knew thee other than the world knew thee—for 'twas only yesterday Elpsy told me, what before had crossed my mind as the mere shadow of a suspicion, banished as soon as it came, that thou wert Lester, and that revenge against me had driven thee to piracy. This I believe not; Heaven keep me from answering for thy guilt—rather attribute it to thy own evil passions, and, I fear, an innate love for rapine; for how else wouldst thou have torn thy noble mother's heart (I speak not of hers to whom thy troth was plighted), and foregone thy rank and title among men?"

"If thou didst know all, lady, thou wouldst not judge me thus—"

"Thou canst say nothing I will believe. He who told me is, as once thou wert, the soul of truth and honour!"

"Who is this Daniel come to judgment?" asked the bucanier, with irony.

"A naval officer, who was taken prisoner in the Indian Seas by a rover, and afterward made his escape by stratagem."

"This rover?"

"Thyself."

"There is but one of rank above a common sailor who was my captive and escaped," he muttered, turning away as if recalling the past; "Fitzroy I think was his name; it may be he; if so, I will no longer urge my innocence, but woo her under my proper colours. Pray," he said, abruptly addressing her in a voice in which awakened jealousy was mingled with sarcasm, "hast thou ever chanced to know a youthful officer called Fitzroy?"

"Fitzroy!" she repeated, with embarrassment, while the blood mounted to her cheek in a way in which it never does in a maiden's save when a lover is suddenly named.

"Ay, I said Fitzroy. Is there aught in the name to call up the rich blood to the face? Fitzroy's the name—Rupert Fitzroy, I think!"

In her agitation her eyes involuntarily turned to the spot where she had dropped the colours she was working, and, to her increased confusion, the letters she had just completed met her eye. His glance followed hers, and instantly he exclaimed, with an eye sparkling with jealousy and surprise,

"By the rood! lady, there are the very initials! So this pretty bit of bunting can tell tales! Now, by the cross, I see it all," he said, walking the room with anger and speaking in an under tone; "behind this tale of my deeds she let slip so glibly, and under cover of believing it, she fain would conceal her transferred love. Woman," he cried, sternly addressing her, "know you this Rupert Fitzroy well?"

"You hold no right to question me," she firmly replied, "and I refuse to answer."

"So, I have a rival! 'Tis love for another, and not hatred of the crimes you lay to my charge, that leads you to scorn me thus. The arms of thy house above his name! Ha! 'tis a well-ripened love! I'll find it out; and if he who stands between me and thee be on the sea or wide earth, I will cross blades with him. A proper youth, that thou art ashamed to own him—perhaps the young fisher's lad has taken my place—I have heard he took to the seas."

"Even he, if honourable, were worthier than thou, with the nobility which thou hast dishonoured. But he no longer lives. Lest you give wrong motives to my silence, I will confess to thee that I do know a Captain Fitzroy—Rupert Fitzroy—once your captive by most foul-handed treachery—now as far removed above you as the eagle, that looks unblenching on the sun, above the tortoise."

"You love him?"

"I do."

"Then, by the holy Heaven! thou shalt repent thy love and he, crossing my path ere the sun, that shall rise to-morrow, be a month older."

As he spoke he turned from her and disappeared through the window, leaving her overwhelmed with surprise, wonder, and alarm. She heard him strike the ground as he sprung from the low balcony, and listened with trembling to his departing footsteps as they rapidly crossed the lawn towards the seaside. For a few moments she remained standing as he had left her, as if endeavouring to realize what had passed, her eyes strained, her hands clasped across her forehead, her lips parted.

"Oh God, that this had been spared me!" she cried, with the bitterness of a soul surcharged with intense grief. "Have I seen him? Was it he? His voice—his air—oh, it was Lester's self!—he whom I have never ceased to love—whom—but these are dangerous thoughts—I must think of him no more. Oh crime, crime! what a deep and impassable gulf hast thou placed between us! Yet I have seen him, spoken with him! His hand has pressed mine in gentleness as it was wont. Oh how the past came back! time seemed obliterated, and I could at one moment have given myself up to him—but crime, crime! No, no, I must think no more of him; yet I am not sorry I have beheld him once more. Strange that, after so many years, and years of crime, have elapsed, he should still be dear to me! No, no, he is not dear to me—not *he* as he is—it is Lester of my youth—it is he that I love—he I alone think of, whose memory I can never cease to cherish; but this guilty being I know not! Yet he is Lester! My poor, poor head—my poor heart—how they strive with one another. Oh that my love could wash out his crimes! But whither do my thoughts wander? The sight of him has made me forget that I am no longer a wild girl at Castle Cor. I must root out his young love, and try no longer to identify myself now with myself then. I am now the betrothed of another—of another who has won me by his sympathy and gentleness, by his nobleness and his honour, by his manly virtues, and the deep devotion of his pure and elevated love. Rupert, I will not be false to thee; the trial is over. Henceforward I will fill my heart with thee alone, though I did tell thee, when thou didst woo me on the sea, that I would not give it all up to thee; that in one part was sacredly embalmed the sad memory of a first, yet unworthy love!"

Such were the conflicting thoughts that were passing through the mind of the troubled maiden, when she was startled by a low tap at the door. It was a second time repeated before she could command her voice to bid the applicant enter. The door slowly opened, and the family confessor of the Earl of Bellamont entered the boudoir. He was a man of commanding figure, with light flowing hair, and a peaked, auburn beard reaching to his breast, giving the appearance of the usual pictorial representations of the Saviour. He was about fifty years of age, and in the full prime and vigour of life. His forehead was white and high, his features noble, and his face eminently handsome, with a gay and youthful expression, while a light smile played constantly about his fine mouth. The under lip had a slight voluptuous fulness, with which the soft expression of his sparkling blue eyes harmonized, while both gave intimation of a liberality in morals by no means in strict conformity with the letter of his order.

Though holding the station of confessor in Lord Bellamont's family, Father Nanfan had not come with him from England. Twenty years before, a hermit had taken up his abode in a cave among the cliffs of Hoboken; his country, name, or order no one knew. He soon acquired great reputation for sanctity, and his fame spread far and wide. At length Governor Fletcher, hearing of him, visited him, and, for some cause which has not transpired, prevailed upon him to live with him as his private secretary. Subsequently, Father Nanfan won the confidence and esteem of the first Robert Livingston and other leaders of the time, and, through his talents, knowledge, and ambition, exercised great influence in the government. He moved the wires of the famous Leslierian rebellion, and, though unacknowledged, was the real leader of the faction. When Bellamont succeeded Fletcher, he had sufficient influence with the party to induce them to adhere to the new governor, who rewarded him by appointing him his private secretary and family confessor. He had been an inmate of the White Hall but a few days, when, concealed beneath his religious guise, Kate Bellamont thought she detected a dangerous and bad man. It might have been imagination, for she confessed that neither by word nor look had he given ground for such suspicion; yet, from the first, she had felt a dislike towards him, and experienced a fear in being alone in his presence, which she could neither define, nor, on any reasonable grounds, defend.

He paused an instant, with his hand upon the half-closed door, as he saw the embarrassment of

her manner, and fixed upon her inquiringly his large penetrating eyes, and then said, in a voice the words of which alone conveyed a reproof, for the gentle tone in which they were addressed to her were calculated to alarm from their tenderness rather than from their severity,

"Thou wert not present at vespers, maiden; and, at the bidding of thy noble mother, I have sought thee to learn why of late thy thoughts are more given to earthly than to heavenly things. If thou wilt kneel, I will now confess thee here."

"Nay, father, I will meet thee at matins and there confess. Beshrew me, sir, thou art full bold, and art disposed to carry thy priestly privileges to their full compass, that you intrude upon a lady in her private chamber. Hast heard me, sir? I would be alone; or, if thou wilt remain, thou art at liberty to do so, if first thou wilt move from the door and permit me to pass out."

"Nay, daughter, thou art troubled; the quick flush—the startled eye—the timid aspect—thou dost need to disburden thy heart!"

"I bid thee leave me," she cried, with mingled alarm and aversion.

"Calm your spirits, lady," he said, closing the door, and taking her hand ere she could prevent him, though she instantly withdrew it with a quick impulsive action, and retreated towards the window.

"Lady, I see you know me; you have read aright the admiring expression of my eyes when first I met thee—the devoted deference of my manner—the impassioned tones of my voice. Yes, sweet Lady Catharine, thy charms have fired me—thy image has taken the place of that of the Virgin Mother in my heart; for one smile, one look from thee, I am ready to sacrifice even my hopes of Heaven!"

He kneeled at her feet as he spoke, and his noble features, noble even through the guilt that shadowed them, were animated with passionate ardour.

"Hoary blasphemer, silence! Thank Heaven that gave me secret and instinctive warning of thy black character! Leave me, sir, or I shall call on my father!"

"He is not within hearing," he said, rising and taking both her hands; "and, if thou shouldst rouse his vengeance against me, his life, not mine, would be the sacrifice. So, if thou lovest him, beware!"

"Release me, then, sir. Coward—false priest—unhand me."

"One kiss from those voluptuous lips," he said, throwing his arm about her waist, "for full long have I fasted from beauty's favours."

"Ho, within there!" she shrieked.

Instantly he released her hand, but said, in a hoarse whisper, while his eyes flashed with resentment,

"If thou alarm the house, or give the least shadow of a hint of what has passed, and evil to me do come of it, the lives of all dear to thee shall be the sacrifice. If you will not love me, you shall fear me. Beware!" The next moment, changing his manner, he said, "Lady, it was but a momentary passion; it is passed; thy matchless beauty maddened me; fear me no longer. Forever keep silence, and thou wilt hear no more of my ill-matched love. Wilt thou forgive me, lady?"

"Seek it first of Heaven, dreadful man, if heavenward thou hast the boldness to lift thine eyes."

"Can I now hope to confess thee, maiden?"

"*Thou*, hypocrite! If it be that thou canst thus deceive thyself, and mingle holiness with sin, I am not to be part with thee in thy sacrilege! No, sir; rather would I ask absolution at the hands of the arch fiend than at thine. I know thee!"

"And of thy knowledge shall thou one day reap the bitter fruit," he said, in a voice and with a changed manner that intimated a threat.

"I do not fear thee, trusting in a power stronger than thou!"

"Thou wouldst have made a sublime priestess! Indignation but adds dignity to thy beauty, and excitement gives richness to thy cheek, brilliancy to thine eyes, and the haughty curl of thy lip is but the more tempting with its ripe fulness unrolled. By Heaven, I will not be thwarted; I am no newly boy, to be frightened at a woman's frown. I will clasp thee in my arms, and ravish a kiss from that mouth, which even scorn cannot make less lovely, in punishment for thy pride!"

As he spoke he approached, and was about to clasp her in his embrace, when he received a blow from a mace which felled him to the floor, and the next instant the sorceress was standing above him, with one foot upon his chest.

"Ha, ha, ha! we are well met, Father Nanfan. 'Tis thus thou dost assoilzie the souls of maidens, by first teaching them to sin! Oh, thou hypocrite. But there will be a time! Nay, thou canst not get up," she added, pressing the end of her mace hard upon his forehead as he struggled to rise. "Maiden, I have saved thy lips from pollution! and thou, monster, do I not know thee? Oh, ho! Get thee up and go!"

As she spoke she stepped aside from his body, and he rose to his feet, his countenance black with mingled fury and shame.

"Foul witch, I will have thy life—and thou, haughty lady, shalt not escape me!"

He was passing swiftly, with gestures of vengeance, from the room, when the sorceress laid her hand upon him.

"Beware, I bid thee! Me thou canst not injure! her thou shalt not!"

"Who shall hinder me, woman? I will have thee, ere to-morrow's sun, burned at the stake!"

"And I will have thee hung higher than ever Haman was, if thou move a step towards it. I know thee, and thy life is in my hands!"

"Ha! you speak mysteriously!"

"Do I? But there is no mystery about thee that Elpsy cannot unravel."

"Speak, woman!"

"Thou darest not harm me, nor do injury to any one I would protect; for I have the key to thy secret, and, therefore, to thy life."

"Thou! Who am I, then? What secret?" he hoarsely demanded.

She approached him, and whispered low in his ear.

He started back as if he had been struck with a dagger, and, staring upon her with wild surprise, in which intense alarm was mingled, cried,

"Who art thou, in Heaven's name?"

"Elpsy the sorceress!"

"But beside?"

"No matter."

"Wonderful woman! Thy unholy arts could alone have given thee this secret. Thou art indeed to be feared."

"Obey me, then, and secret it shall ever be."

"Speak; what would you?"

"Swear never to harbour revenge against this maiden, or any one of the house of Bellamont; of myself I speak not, for I do not fear thee! Dost thou swear?"

"By the sacred cross, I do."

"Thou art safe, then, so long as thou shalt keep thine oath. Go!"

The priest slowly left the chamber, and, as he closed the door behind him, the sorceress darted from the window upon the balcony, and disappeared in the darkness as suddenly as she had appeared, leaving the maiden overwhelmed with shame, anger, and wonder at the scenes and events in which she had borne so singular a part.

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## CHAPTER III.

"Lo! now in yonder deep and gloomy cave  
Th' unholy hags their spells of mischief  
weave—  
Raise the infernal chant; while at the  
sound  
Dread Spirits seem to dance the caldron  
round,  
And fiends of awful shape from earth and  
hell  
With direful portents aid the magic spell."

C. DONALD M<sup>C</sup>LEOD.

When Robert Lester, now Kyd the pirate, left the presence of Kate Bellamont, without seeking the stone steps that descended to the lawn, he leaped from the low balcony to the ground, and strode, at a pace made quick and firm by the strength of his feelings, towards a gate that opened into the lane in which the inn of Jost Stoll was situated. Avoiding the narrow street, though it was silent and deserted, he turned his footsteps aside towards the beach, and, winding round a ledge of rocks wildly piled together, with a few shrubs and a dwarf cedar or two clinging in the clefts,

he came to the mouth of the canal, where his boat lay half hidden in the shadow of a huge overhanging rock.

"Who comes," challenged one of several men that were standing around.

He was too much wrapped in his own dark thoughts to hear or give reply, and was only roused to a consciousness of his position by the cocking of pistols and the repetition of the challenge in a sharper tone.

"The Silver Arrow!" he answered, briefly.

"The captain! Advance!" was the reply.

"Ho, Lawrence, you are alert. Yet it should be so, for we are surrounded by enemies. You must learn, nevertheless, to challenge lower under the guns of a fort. By the moving of lights and show of bustle on the ramparts, we have already drawn the attention of the honest Dutch warriors whom our English governors have seen fit to retain to man their works."

"It's to save linstocks, by making them touch off the pieces with their pipes," said Lawrence; "their powder always smells more of tobacco than sulphur."

"A truce to this. Man your oars and put off," said Kyd, in a stern tone.

The men knew by the change in his voice that their chief was in a humour that was not to be disregarded; and scarcely had the orders passed from his lips, before every man was in his seat, with his oars elevated in the air. The coxswain, Lawrence, at the same time took his place at the helm, and in a low tone said,

"All's ready."

"Shove off and let fall," cried Kyd, in the same suppressed tone, springing into the stern-sheets.

"What course, captain?"

"Hell Gate," was the deep response, as he seated himself in the stern and wrapped his cloak about him.

"Give way, lads," followed this information, from the coxswain, and swiftly the barge shot out from the mouth of the canal; doubling the south point of the town, it moved rapidly up the narrow sound between Long and Manhattan Islands, now called East River, and was soon lost in the gloom.

When Kyd parted from Elpsy before the inn, she had remained standing in the place in which he had left her until his form was lost beneath the trees surrounding the White Hall; then, turning towards the street that led by a devious route in the direction of the north gate of the city, she walked a few moments rapidly along in the deep shade cast by the far-projecting roofs of the low Dutch mansions. Suddenly she stopped.

"He may have a faint heart," she muttered, as if her thoughts run upon the interview between the pirate and noble maiden. "She will not now accept him as Lester after I have told her who Lester has become. Oh, I did it to make him use force in his wooing. I would not have him, after all that has passed in the last five years, win her with honour to herself. I would have her humbled. I would have her become Lady Lester against her own will. And if he has remaining in his memory a tithe of her former scorn of him, he will love to repay her thus. Yet I doubt. I will go back and see that I am not thwarted. Never shall I rest, in grave or out, till he is Lord of Lester, and Kate Bellamont his wedded wife."

She turned as she spoke, and, retracing her steps towards the inn, continued on past it towards the wicket that opened into the park, and, gliding beneath the trees, stole towards the window of the maiden's chamber, directed by the light that shone through the foliage that climbed about it. Aided by her white staff, she was cautiously ascending a flight of steps that connected the extremity of the balcony with the lawn, when she heard Kyd's angry words at parting, saw him rush forth, leap to the ground, and take his swift way towards his boat. Her first impulse was to call him back; but, suppressing it, she softly approached the window for the purpose of using her own fearful power over the minds of all with whom she came in contact, in giving a turn more favourable to her design to the alarmed maiden's mind. She was arrested by the entrance of the priest as she was in the act of entering the chamber, and drew instantly back into the shadow. But she gradually moved forward into the light of the lamp, and, as her eyes rested on his features, they grew bloodshot with the intensity of her gaze. Her face was thrust forward almost into the room, her long scragged neck was stretched to its full length, and her whole person advanced with the utmost eagerness. It could not have been the words of the priest or his manner that caused an excitement so sudden and extraordinary. She evidently discovered in him a resemblance that surprised her, while it filled her soul with a savage and vengeful joy.

"It is he!" she gasped. "Ever before have I met him cowed! He, he alone! I would know him in hell! Ha, I have lived for something! Oh, this knowledge is worth to me mines of gold! I would have sold my soul for it! The same brow, still almost as fair; the same mouth, the same rich light in the eyes, and, save his beard, almost as young as when last we met. Ha! 'tis he. We have met to some purpose now. Ho, ho! am I not getting work to do? This is a new matter on my hands. I will plot upon it. Ha, dares he? The hoary lecher! Nay, she has flung him back! 'Tis a proper maiden!" she added, as she saw the priest foiled in his attempt to sully the purity of the noble



girl's lips.

Thus run the current of the weird woman's thoughts. With fierce resentment, she listened to the interview between the confessor and his penitent; and when a second time she saw him approach her with unhallowed lip, she sprung upon him: but whether to save the honour of the maiden's cheek, or prompted by some feminine feeling known only to herself, will, if it is not already so, doubtless by-and-by be apparent.

After she had quitted the chamber she swiftly crossed the lawn towards the inn, turned up the narrow path that bordered the sluggish canal, and, following it to its termination near the wall, turned short round some low stone warehouses to the left, and ascended a narrow, steep street that run along close to the wall, and therefore had obtained the distinctive appellation of Wall-street. Getting close within its deep shadow, she glided along stealthily till she came to a double gate, over which hung a small lamp. Beneath the light, leaning against a guardhouse constructed on one side of the gate, she discovered a man with a firelock to his shoulder and a long pipe in his mouth. A few paces from him walked to and fro a second guard, who from time to time paused in his walk, and, in a listening attitude, looked down the broad, open street that led from the gate to the Rondeel, as if expecting the approach of some one.

"Sacrement Donner vetter! 'Tish aight ov de klock, Hanse," he said, stopping and addressing his comrade as Elpsy approached; "te relief shall 'ave been here py dish time, heh?"

"It vill pe te Schietam at frau Stoll's vat keeps dem," replied the other, with a grunt of assent.

"Hark, Hanse! dere ish von footshteps along te vall—no heh?"

"Tish te pigs and te cattlesh. An' if it vas de peoplesh, vat matter so dey pe inside ov te valls? It ish against te rogue from te outside ov te vall vot ve keep te quart here for."

"Goot, Hanse. Ve lets nopoty in, to pe shure—nor lets nopoty out neider, heh? Pots gevitter! Vot vas te passvoord, Hanse? I vas licht mein bipe mid te paper te captain left mid us."

"Yorck."

"Yorck. Petween ourshelves, Hanse, Ich don't like dis new name ov our old city ov Nieuve Amstertam. Dese Anclish names pe hart to shpeak. 'Twas a wrong ding, Hanse, to put away te olt name, heh?"

"It vash, mein comrate, no vera koot."

"Pfui Teufel! Ich am klad I vas shmoke it in mein bipe. It vas patriotic, heh, Hanse? Let ush av te olt name pack again, Hanse."

"Vera koot, mein comrate, Ich vill."

"Ich too. Now if the peoplesh shay Yorck, tey shall pe put in de guarthouse for traitor. If tey shay Nieuve Amstertam, den tey pe Kristian peoplesh and honest men."

"If she pe a voman, comrate?"

"Den she shall pe von honest voman, to pe shure."

At this juncture of the embryo conspiracy, hatching in his very stronghold and among his tried warriors, against the Earl of Bellamont's government, striking at its very roots, and teeming with seeds of a civil war, a low, dark figure appeared from behind the guardhouse and suddenly confronted them.

"Himmel tausand! Te vitch—te tyfil!" they both exclaimed in one breath as she stood before them, plainly visible by the light of the lamp that illuminated her wild features, and threw into strong contrasts of light and shadow the prominent angles of her hideous person.

"Let me forth," she said, in a commanding tone, laying her hand with a determined gesture on the heavy bar that was placed against the gates.

The men drew back in alarm, and uttered exorcisms expressive of superstitious fear.

"Will ye not unbar? Brave men are ye to keep watch and guard over a city's gates. Unbolt!"

"Vat, Hanse, heh?" asked one of the men of his comrade, whose arm he had grasped; "sall ve lets her go?"

"It vill pe pest to hav her on te outside, comrate."

"So it vill pe, Hanse. Ve had petter let her out. I vill see if she knows te voord. Vitch vomans, vat ish te password, heh?"

"I give neither password nor countersign. I go and come as I list, and no man can hinder me. Stand aside."

As she spoke she placed her hands on the heavy bar, lifted it from its bed, and threw it at their feet. Then, turning the massive key that remained in the lock, the wide leaves flew open.

"Ve must not let it pe, Hanse, mitout te voord."

"Nor mitout leave, neider, comrate," cried one after the other, both being inspired with sudden

energy.

"Ve shall pe shot."

"Ant hung too."

With one impulse they rushed forward to secure the gate, when she closed it fast in their faces, and they heard the key turn in the lock on the outside with a scornful laugh.

"Himmel! It ish lockt insite ve pe, Hanse, heh?"

"Ant she tid not shay Yorck, comrate."

"Nor Nieuve Amstertam neider. If she vas say only Nieuve Amstertam now."

"Tere ish no more need to keep guart, comrate. Nopody can get in."

"Tunder! no more dey can, Hanse, heh? 'Tish after aight o'clock, and te relief ish not been come. Dere ish no more use to keep guart, Hanse, heh?"

"Tyfil, no. Ve vill go ant get some Schietams."

"So ve vill, Hanse, ant a fresh bipe too."

Thus determining, the stalwort guard of the city gates of ancient Amsterdam shouldered their firelocks, and, confident in the security of the city, descended the street together in the direction of the alehouse of *frau* Jost Stoll, while Elpsy kept on her course through the suburbs. Directly after leaving the gate she turned from the road which, bordered by forests, small farms, and here and there a lonely dwelling, run from the gates in a northerly direction. The path she took was a green lane, famous for lover's rambles, that led towards the East River. She traversed it at a swift running pace, now winding round some vast tree that grew in its centre, now ascending, now descending, as the path accommodated itself to the irregularities of the ground. In a few minutes she came to a romantic spring, open to the sky for many yards around, with greenest verdure covering the earth. She recognised it as a favourite resort for the industrious maidens of the town, who there were accustomed to bleach the linen they wove—and skilful weavers too were the rosy and merry Dutch maidens of that homely day! At evening they would go out to gather their bleaching; and, ere they left the spring on their return, the youths of the town would make their appearance, and, each singling out his sweetheart, take her burden under one arm, while, with the blushing girl hanging on the other, slowly they walked through the shady lane towards the town. Happy times! Gentle customs! Unsophisticated age! Oh, Maiden-lane, busy, shopping Maiden-lane! thy days of romance are passed! Who can identify thee with this green lane! But this is no place to eulogize thee; yet who may travel over the olden-time scenes of New Amsterdam, and not pause to pay them the tribute of a thought!

After leaving the spring, her way faintly lighted by the stars, the sorceress struck into a path that led northeasterly; and, after a rapid walk of nearly a mile, came to the shore of East River at a point that could not have been reached by water without going over nearly twice the distance she had come by the forest. Descending the steep shore, she stopped at the head of a small creek that made a few yards into the land, and drew from beneath the shelter of a thickly-netted grapevine a light Indian birch canoe of the frailest structure. Stepping lightly into it, giving her weight accurately to the centre, she seated herself on the crossbar that constituted both the seat and strengthening brace of the bark: striking the water lightly with a slender paddle, she shot rapidly out of the creek. The moon had just risen, and flecked a trembling path of silvery light along the water. Plying the magic instrument, first on one side and then on the other alternately, she darted along the surface of the water with inconceivable velocity. Her course was northwardly in a line with the shore, close to which she kept. Every few minutes she would cease her toil and bend her ear close to the water, listening for sounds; and then, with a smile of gratification, renew her swift course. At length, as she rounded an elevated point, the distant fall of oars reached her ears in the direction of the town.

"He comes! He has gained on me! I must be there to prepare for him! Hey, my little bark, let us fly now!"

She stood up in the skiff as she spoke, the moonlight streaming on her dark face, flung her cloak from her shoulders, and, tossing back her long red hair, seized the paddle with a firmer grasp, and away like a mad thing flew witch and boat. Soon she turned a headland, and the waves began to be violently agitated, tossing and bubbling round her, while a roar of breaking surges was heard in the direction towards which she was driving. Far and wide the solemn moan of agitated waters filled the air. She shouted with the dash of the waves, and hissed as they bubbled and foamed in her track. Momently the commotion grew wilder and more appalling. The waters seethed like a boiling caldron. Whirlpools turned her skiff round and round like a feather, and yawning gulfs threatened each moment to engulf her. Yet on she flew, standing upright in the boat, her hair streaming in the wind, her garments flying, and sending the boat irresistibly through the terrible commotion. The passage now became narrow, and on every side frowned black rocks, threatening destruction to the bark that should be dashed against their sides. Suddenly, when it appeared the boat could not survive an instant longer, by a dexterous application of her paddle she forced it from the boiling seas into a placid pool, sheltered by a low ledge, that formed the southern spur of a small islet a few rods square that stood at the mouth of "Hell Gate" on the north side.

"Ha, is it not a proper place for a witch, amid the mad waves and gloomy rocks! Oh, 'tis a home I love! The noise of the water is merry music! when it is lashed by a storm, the birds go sweeping and shrieking by like mad, and then it is music sweeter than the harp to Elpsy. So, I have well done my errand, and found him as he landed, and he is now on his way to me. And *who* besides Robert, have I seen? Ah—have I not made a good night's work of it! Well, it shall go ill with me if I reap not the fruit of what I have learned. Ho, Cusha, slave!"

As she called thus in a harsh, stern tone, she drove her skiff into a crevice in the rocks, where it became firmly fixed, and, stepping from it, she bounded lightly up the precipitous shore to the summit. The top of the rock, which was but a few feet from the water, so far as could be seen by the light of the moon, was a grassy surface, dotted with a few stunted trees and one large oak, that with its broad arms nearly shadowed the entire islet. Between the columns of the trees all around the sky and water were visible. But in one place it was broken by the outline of a large rock and the roof of a low hut placed against it, directly beneath the oak. It was a rude, rough structure, wild and desolate in its appearance. On one side it over-hung the foaming waters, that leaped so high beneath it as to fling the spray upon its roof. In every part of it were crevices, from which, as the sorceress looked towards it on arriving on a level with it, streamed rays of light as if from a bright flame within; while a volume of thick, dark smoke, of an exceedingly fetid and sulphurous smell, curled upward against the sides of the rock, and rolled heavily away among the foliage of the oak.

"The slave is prepared," she said, approaching the hut.

She had taken but a single step towards it when the deep voice of a bloodhound from within broke the silence that reigned.

"The hound is alert! Ho, Sceva!"

At the sound of her voice the alarm bark of the dog was changed into a cry of delight; and, springing against the door, he would have burst it through had she not spoken, and, at the same time, opened it. Instantly the animal sprang upon her and licked her face with his huge tongue, and growled a savage sound of welcome. He was a brute of vast size, and with long, coarse gray hair, stiff, uncouth ears, and immense head; around which, and along his spine to his fore shoulders, the hair grew long and bristly like a boar's mane. His eyes were red and fierce in their expression; and huge tusks, protruding glaringly over either side of his hanging chops, gave him an aspect still more repulsive and savage.

"Down, Sceva, down!" she said, sternly, as he caught his huge paws in the tangled masses of her hair in his rough caresses; "down, I say!" The animal slunk from her and crouched upon a pile of fern in a corner of the hut.

The abode of the sorceress was rude and wild in the extreme. It was a slight frame of branchless firs, constructed against a bare rock, which constituted the east side, or wall of it. The interstices between the upright stakes were filled in with loose limbs of trees, and planks from wrecked fisher's boats; the roof in many places was open to the sky, and in its centre was a large aperture that served for an outlet to the smoke that rose from a fire smouldering beneath a caldron placed underneath. By the fitful glare it sent round, the interior of the hut, with its furniture, was distinctly visible. Entwined about an upright pole that sustained the roof were dead serpents of enormous size, and of brilliant colours, their glittering fangs hideously shining in the firelight. Festoons of toads, lizards, and other revolting reptiles hung from the ceiling, while round the wall were placed human bones arranged in fantastic figures, and ghastly skulls glared on the sight on every side, while all that could affect the imagination was conspicuous to the eyes of the observer. In the caldron in the centre of the hut was seething a dark liquid that emitted a fetid odour, and threw up volumes of smoke, which, unable to escape freely through the roof, hung heavily to within a few feet of the ground floor. Over the caldron bent the figure of an African, who was stirring the liquid with a human thigh bone, and occasionally, with a child's skull, dipping a portion from it and pouring it on the fire beneath, which instantly flamed up fiercely, casting a blue, baleful light throughout the hut. The firelight shone bright upon his person, bringing into relief every feature of his hideous countenance. His head was of huge proportions, and deformed, being perfectly flat on the top, and obtruding in front into a round forehead like an infant's newly born. It was, save a thick fringe of hair that hung shaggy and grisly above his eyes, wholly bald. His eyes were large, and projected red and wild from their beds, while his nose and lips were of enormous dimensions, which, with the total absence of anything like a chin, gave the lower part of his face a brutelike look. Yet there was an extraordinary human intelligence in the expression of his eye, in which dwelt the light of no common intellect.

He rose as the witch entered, and displayed a skeleton-like figure of great height, the low roof compelling him to bend half his length. His neck was long and scraggy; his shoulders bony; his arms and legs lank and attenuated; while his fingers, with the hard skin that clave to them and their long oval nails, resembled, as he himself did altogether, save his huge fleshy head, a dried anatomical preparation. A kilt reaching half way to his knees, and a sort of cape covering his shoulders made of the feathers of owls intermingled with the brilliant dies of snakes' skins, were his only clothing. He wore about his neck as ornaments a string of newts' eyes and serpents' fangs, and on his wrists and ankles were massive bracelets of silver.

"Thy slave welcomes thee," he said, in a voice that corresponded with the hideousness of his appearance.

He lifted his hands to his forehead as he spoke, and made an oriental obeisance nearly to the earth.

"Thou hast obeyed me, Cushah! 'Tis well! See that all be ready for the rites. He comes a second time to secure our aid against the rock and the shoal, the waves and the wind, the hand of man and the bolt of Heaven!"

"Comes he in the right spirit?"

"He fears and obeys."

"'Tis enough."

"Let nothing be wanting to retain our power over the minds of mortals; let our art lose no title of its honour. I will now make ready to receive him. He leaves me not till he has done my bidding, and through him my ends are answered. Now let us prepare the rites!"

In the mean while the superstitious victim of the unholy rites in preparation was on his way towards the "Witch's Isle." For nearly an hour the crew had pulled steadily along, and, save now and then a cheering cry from the coxswain, urging them to renewed exertion, not a word was spoken. Silent and thoughtful, revenge and disappointed love mingled with shame the while agitating his breast, he sat by himself in the stern of his boat, and took a retrospect of his past life.

His sense of honour was now blunted, and the experience of a reckless life had made him weigh less nicely his acts, and pay less deference to the opinions of men. He now laughed at and cursed what he called his folly in sacrificing, for a mere boyish notion of honour, his earldom. From the time he had thrown himself on board the *Dane* at the tower of Hurltel of the Red Hand, up to the moment that found him on his way to the abode of the sorceress, he had been scouring the seas, a bold, reckless, and sanguinary bucanier. Under the name of 'the Kyd,' or AL KYD, the sea-king—which had been given him by the Algerine corsairs, among whom he spread terror whenever he cruised up the Mediterranean—he had filled the world with tales of bloodshed and predatory conflict unparalleled in the annals of piracy. He seemed, from the first moment he placed his feet on the deck of the *Dane*, to have made a shipwreck of principle; to have buried, as he had said on taking leave of Lady Lester, all human feeling with the filial kiss he placed on her unconscious forehead. Yet it has been seen, in his fight with the yacht which contained the Earl of Bellamont and Grace Fitzgerald, that he had not wholly lost sight of every social tie that bound him to those with whom he had once associated. But this was the last instance of his sympathy with others. Henceforward he seemed to war with mankind as if he would avenge on his species the wrongs of his birth. The instance here given may be thought an exaggerated estimate of the rapid growth of vice. But the daily annals of crime show that it is but a step from virtue to vice, from innocence to crime. And, let the cause be strong enough, there is never an intermediate step.

Had Lester altogether forgotten Kate Bellamont while running this career? No. His thoughts reverted to her daily. Sometimes with the gentle character of his former young love, but oftener taking colour from his present altered character, and then they were resentful. Twice he had resolved to visit Castle Cor, and obtain an interview with her, and, if not by fair, by foul means, make her his bride. But he had been pursued and driven from the coast by cruisers, and his intentions had been foiled. That he loved her still was evident; and if he could have been rewarded with her hand by doing so, he would have deserted his present career for her sake. But these hopes were dissipated from the fear that she might have discovered that Kyd and he were one. This suspicion did at times alone prevent his seeking her out more resolutely and casting himself at her feet.

At length, a few months previous to the arrival of Lord Bellamont to assume the government of New-York, he, with large treasures, came into Long Island Sound; and, after burying them on Gardiner's Island, beneath a certain triangular rock which, it is said, seventy of his men rolled upon the spot, he came through Hell Gate into East River, where he anchored. As he sailed past her rock the witch recognised him, though she had not seen him since they separated at Hurltel's Tower, and at midnight paid him a visit in her skiff. She recovered her former influence over him, crime, as it ever does, having made him superstitious. From her he learned that the Earl of Bellamont was to succeed Governor Fletcher, and that his daughter would probably accompany him to America. Probing his feelings in relation to her, she discovered that he was still attached to her; and to her joy she found, on feeling his moral pulse, that she had less to fear than on a former occasion. From the moment Lester had cast away his title and fled the country, she had given her whole mind to one single object, if she should ever again meet him: viz., to bring about his restoration to his title and estates. She rightly calculated that time and the lawless school in which he had placed himself would lead to a revolution in his feelings. She now found him ripe for her purpose. Learning from him that he was bound on a cruise to intercept a fleet from Barbadoes, and was to sail the following day, by his return she expected, as it turned out, that the Earl of Bellamont would have reached his new government. Therefore, before she left his cabin, she drew from him a promise that he would visit her at her hut the ensuing night; and there, amid the solemnities of her art, take the oath to lay claim to the title of Lester, and woo for the hand of the heiress of Bellamont: in fine, resume the position, notwithstanding all that had passed in the long interim, that he had held before the fatal field of archery at Castle Cor. Ere the next night, however, two frigates from Newport, learning his presence in the waters of Long Island, appeared in sight sailing up the Sound, when, weighing anchor, he sailed down the East River, passed boldly between Brooklyn and the town, exchanged shots with the *Rondeel*, and,

steering down the bay, put to sea. His second appearance, and the events that followed it up to the time when he is approaching the Witch's Island, have already been narrated.

"Give way, men—pull for your lives!" shouted the coxswain, as at length they entered the boiling waters of Hell Gate.

With great exertion and skill, the tide now setting strongly through the gut, they avoided the dangers that beset them on every side, and at length reached the island. Giving orders for his men to remain in the boat and preserve silence, Kyd stepped on shore in a secluded cove at the western extremity of the island most remote from the abode of the sorceress. He passed through a dark ravine, that led with many a rugged step to the top, and, looking round as he reached it, at length discovered the hut he sought. It was calculated, combined with the roar of the sea and the lateness of the hour, and a knowledge of the fearful character of the occupant and of his own evil purposes in seeking it, to affect his mind with gloom and superstitious fears. He cautiously, and not without superstitious awe, approached the door and struck it with the hilt of his sword.

He was answered by the deep growl of the bloodhound, and the moment afterward the sorceress chanted, in a wild, supernatural strain, an Irish weird hymn, the only part of which he could comprehend were the last two lines:

"Enter, mortal, if thou bear  
Priest nor Bible, cross nor prayer!"

With his drawn sword held firmly in his grasp, he opened the door. Instantly the place was filled with a blue flame, by the light of which the various supernatural paraphernalia of the sorceress's abode were made visible with the most appalling distinctness, while sounds infernal and terrific assailed his ears. He stood a moment filled with alarm, and overpowered by what he saw and heard. The sorceress, clothed in a garment apparently of flame, covered with strange and unearthly figures, her features wrought up to a supernatural degree of excitement and wild enthusiasm, stood before the caldron in a commanding attitude, her hair dishevelled, her long white wand held towards the intruder, and every sinew of her arms and neck distinctly brought into light. A serpent was bound about her temples, and one was entwined around each of her naked arms, while a fourth encircled her waist. Beside her stood a spindle, with a crimson thread upon it. She fixed her eyes on his with an unearthly expression as she extended her wand towards him, and, in a voice that became a priestess of rites so unholy as she performed, addressed him:

"Welcome, mortal! I have waited for thee. Kneel."

"Wherefore?" he asked, as if addressing a supernatural being, his imagination affected by the circumstances and situation in which he was placed, and scarcely recognising, in the fearful appearance and aspect of the sorceress, her whom he had seen and conversed with but a few hours before. "Wherefore should I kneel?"

"To swear."

"The oath?"

"To assume the title of Lester and wed the heiress of Bellamont."

"I have sworn it without thy aid. I have seen her."

"And she has scorned thee."

"She has. Foul witch, thou didst betray me to her!"

"Ha, ha! Thou hast learned this of her." She laughed maliciously. "I told her who thou wert, that she might scorn thee."

"Fiends! Dost thou not wish me to marry her?"

"Yes; but only against her will."

"Otherwise she will never. And, by the cross! I will not bear the haughty scorn with which she has received me. Witch, I am ready to take the oath; but, if I take it, thou shalt give me thy aid in avenging myself.

"On her!"

"Yes, but through her lover."

"Has she a lover?" asked the sorceress, with surprise.

"Did not thy art teach thee this?"

"Who?" she demanded, without replying to his question.

"A certain Captain Fitzroy."

"He who commanded the ship that brought them hither. Where were my wits I did not suspect as much?" she added to herself.

"Dost know him?"

"I have seen him on his deck as I passed in my skiff. He sailed instantly in pursuit of you, or I should have discovered something of this new love. She confessed it?"

"Without hesitation. I have sworn to seek him and cross blades with him."

"First repeat the oath thou hast come hither to take."

"If thou wilt exert all thy skill and art to give me success in my revenge, I will take it."

"Swear."

"Nay. I am told thou hast, as do all of thy unholy craft, an amulet which, worn on the bosom, will give him who for the time wears it a charmed life, and cause him to prosper in all that he undertakes. This amulet I ask of thee."

"First lay thy right hand upon the head of the serpent that binds my waist, and thy left hand upon thy heart, and, kneeling, swear to obey me in resuming thy earldom and thy wooing of Catharine of Bellamont, and it shall be thine."

He knelt, and with solemnity took the oath, repeating each word after her in an audible tone.

"This you promise to do or your soul forfeit."

"This I promise to do or my soul forfeit."

"*Or thy soul forfeit!*" repeated, from some unknown quarter, a sepulchral voice, that made him start to his feet with mingled surprise and alarm.

"Woman, what hast thou caused me to do?" he asked, with superstitious dread.

"No evil, so thou break not thy oath."

"*So thou break not thy oath!*" repeated the same voice, close to his ears.

"Sorceress, I will not break my oath," he said, after the surprise at this second interruption had subsided; "but until I have first crossed weapons with this rival lover, I approach her no more. He has gone to seek me, therefore should I meet him. But that he should dare to love where Robert Lester has loved, is ample reason why we should meet. Till I find him, be he above the sea, I neither assume the name of Lester nor see the haughty heiress of Bellamont. So give me success in this, and, after, thy wishes shall be fulfilled to the letter."

"Darest thou delay?" she said, striding up to him and taking him by the breast, while her eyes flashed vindictive fire.

"Thou hast not the whole control over my will, Elpsy. I fear and respect thy power, but I obey it and thee only so far as it chimes with my own ends. I have yielded to thee: now yield to me! Thy wishes, whatever may have prompted them, shall soon enough be realized. If thou wilt give me the amulet, and put thy arts to work and send me prosperous winds, I will, ere the month end, hold this Fitzroy my prisoner; and then, by the cross! in my very cabin shall he be spectator of my bridal. If in a month I do not meet him, I will then do thy pleasure."

The sorceress gradually released her grasp as he continued, and, when he had ended, said,

"'Tis well. Go."

"The amulet?"

"Nay. Thou shalt not have it," she said, firmly.

"By the rood! if thou give it not to me, I will wring thy shrivelled neck for thee," he cried, with sudden impetuosity.

"Lay but the tip o' your least finger upon me, Robert Kyd, that moment shall thy arm be palsied to its shoulder, and thy strength leave thy body, till the infant an hour old shall master thee!"

She stepped back as she spoke, and extended her wand towards him with a menacing gesture.

"Nay, nay, fearful woman," he cried, betraying some alarm at her words and threatening attitude, "I meant not to anger thee. Wilt give the amulet? I cannot go forth on this mission of revenge without it. I know its mysterious and wonderful power, and must avail myself of it on this occasion. Thou shalt have it after."

The sorceress looked troubled at his eager anxiety to possess the mystic seal, and at length said, in a solemn tone of voice, and with a manner calculated to have its effect on an imagination the least tinged with superstition,

"Mortal, thou knowest not what thou seekest! If he who wears this on his breast fail in his last trial of its mystic power, he shall become the slayer of the mother who bore him!"

"What is this to me? I have no mother, sorceress."

"Ha! well, no, no! thou hast not!" she said, with a singular expression. "Yet such is the doom of him in whose hands it fails. *Thou* shalt not wear it!"

"I will. If I tear it from thee by violence!"

"Twill then do thee no good. It must be placed around thy neck with solemn rites. Thou shalt have it," she said, suddenly, after a moment's thought, "for thy success is my success. The risk shall be run by me! Hast thou the nerve to go through the initiating rites?"

"I will stop at nothing. Give it me, with every hellish charm thou canst invent. Once my revenge accomplished, take it back."

"But *He'll* not give thee back the price thou payest for it."

"Ha! Well, be it so! I will not ask it. My soul is as well in the devil's keeping as in my own. The world beyond has for me neither hopes nor fears. My present aims accomplished, I care not for the bugbear future! In the name of the master whom thou servest, give me the amulet!"

"I obey," she said, with wild solemnity. "Slave, appear!"

She cast, as she spoke, a powder upon the flame, which shot up to the roof and filled the place with so dazzling a brilliancy that for an instant he was deprived of sight. The light sunk as suddenly as it had risen, and he saw before him a tall, skeleton-like figure, over whose face played an unearthly glare from the smouldering flame beneath the caldron. It was the slave Cusha. The pirate chief gazed on the hideous being with horror; his sword dropped from his grasp, and an exclamation in the shape of an exorcism escaped his lips. The sorceress witnessed his alarm with a triumphant smile; she then touched and turned her spindle, while the slave, obedient to her nod, kneeled and began to kindle the flame and stir the seething caldron.

The bucanier witnessed these preparations with curiosity not unmingled with dread, yet nevertheless determined to abide by the issue. All at once she began to chant: now in a low, deep voice, now in a high, shrill key, as her words required, the slave at intervals chiming in in a tone so deep and sepulchral that the startled bucanier could not believe that it was human, especially when his eyes rested on the hideous being from whom it proceeded, who grovelled on the earth at his feet.

WITCH  
(*to the wizard*).  
"Kindle, kindle!"

BOTH.  
"To our tasks!"

WITCH  
(*whirling the spindle*).  
"Turn the spindle!  
Mortal asks  
A web of proof  
From charmed woof!"

WIZARD.  
"The pledge, the pledge?"

WITCH.  
"Body and soul  
To *his* control,  
The pledge, the pledge!"

WIZARD.  
"The seal, the seal?"

WITCH.  
"A bleeding lock  
Of the victim's hair  
Given to earth, sea,  
Sky, and air,  
The seal, the seal!"

As the sorceress chanted this she broke from the thread what she had wound off, and, approaching him, chanted,

"Kneel, mortal, kneel!  
And let me sever  
The pledge that makes thee  
*His* for ever!"

He kneeled before her with the obedient submission of a child. She then entwined her fingers in a long lock that grew above the left temple, and, drawing from her bosom a dagger, held it above his head and chanted,

"Dost thou believe, Robert Kyd, Robert  
Kyd,  
Nor earth nor air, water nor fire,  
Ball nor steel, nor mortal ire,

My potent charm  
Have power to harm  
Till it fulfil its destiny?"

"I do."

"Dost thou believe, Robert Kyd, Robert  
Kyd,  
That within, without, body and soul,  
This amulet shall keep thee whole  
From ball and steel,  
And mortal ill,  
Till thou fulfil thy destiny?"

"I do."

"Thus I take the seal and pledge,  
That, soul and body, thou engage,  
When thy master calls for thee,  
Ready, ready thou wilt be."

She severed the lock of hair from his temples as she ceased, and commenced dividing it into four equal parts. When she had done so she stepped backward, and, standing in the attitude of a priestess about to perform an idolatrous sacrifice, cast a lock into the air, chanting in the same wild manner,

"Prince of Air! take the pledge!"

As she ceased a gust of wind swept over the islet, as if, so it appeared to the imagination of the excited victim of the rites, acknowledging the sacrifice. She then cast a lock upon the ground and chanted,

"Prince of Earth! take the pledge!"

Instantly the ground on which he stood seemed to tremble; he heard a deep rumbling as if in caverns beneath; and the little island appeared to shake as if an earthquake had answered the appeal.

"Prince of Sea! take the pledge!"

She cast a third lock into the caldron as she repeated the line: the water boiled and hissed with a great noise, and the waves from the sea at the same time seemed to dash with a louder roar against the rocks below, and flung their spray with a heavy dash upon the roof. A fourth lock she cast into the flames, chanting,

"Prince of Fire! take the pledge!"

Instantly the place was illuminated as if with the most brilliant flashes of lightning, while the loudest thunder seemed to explode at his feet.

He started upright at this, for hitherto he had continued to kneel, overcome by what he was both a witness of and a trembling participator in, and with every sign of mortal wonder and dread, cried,

"Sorceress! avaunt! I will no more of this!"

"Peace, mortal, peace!  
Cease, mortal, cease!  
See no word by thee be spoken  
Lest our magic charm be broken!"

As she chanted this reproof, she turned to the slave and continued in the same strain,

"Hast thou the murderous lead  
From the grave of the dead?"

"'Tis here," he said, prostrating himself, and giving to her, with divers mysterious ceremonies, a leaden bullet.

"Sought you the grave at midnight deep—  
Dug you down where dead men sleep—  
Search'd you—found you this charm'd ball  
—  
Did you this in silence all?"

"I did," answered the monster, prostrating himself.

"Slave, 'tis well.



From fire and air  
We now prepare  
Our mystic spell!"

She commenced walking around the caldron, drawing mystic figures on the ground and in the air. At the end of the first circuit she chanted, with slow and solemn gestures and growing energy,

"A brother's hand must have shaped the  
lead"—

at the end of the second, with more spirit, she sung,

"From a brother's hand the ball have  
sped."

The third time she chanted, in a still more excited manner, while she danced about the caldron,

"And a brother's heart the ball have bled."

As she ended her third sibylline circuit around the fire, she turned to the slave and said,

"Is such this lead?  
Swear by thy head!"

"It is," he responded, crossing his clasped hands across his forehead, and prostrating himself to the ground.

"'Tis well.

"Fire and water, perform thy task,  
A charmed life a mortal asks."

She now poured the water from the caldron, and, casting the lead into it, continued to dance round it, her gestures gradually increasing in wildness and energy, while in a low, monotonous tone she chanted unintelligibly certain mystic words, derived from the ancient Irish incantations. With folded arms the bucanier watched her aloof. At length she poured the melted lead into a shallow vessel containing water, when with a hissing noise it spread itself out into a shape resembling a human heart. Instantly the hut was darkened; loud unearthly noises filled the place; blue flames shot upward from the head of the sorceress and wizard slave, and, to the astonished bucanier, the apartment seemed to be filled with demoniac forms, flitting and gibbering about him.

Aghast and horror-struck, he cried aloud,

"Merciful Heaven, protect me!"

No sooner had the words gone from his mouth than the whole hellish confusion and uproar ceased, while, with an expression of fierce wrath, she cried,

"By that word thou hast taken from the charm one half its power. It will protect thee from ball, but not from steel; from earth and fire, but not from water and air; else, with this amulet against thy heart, thou wouldst bear a charmed life."

"'Tis nothing lost," he answered, recklessly.

"If ball can harm me not, a strong arm, quick eye, and faithful cutlass shall protect me against steel. Thou hast ensured me victory in love and revenge?"

"I have."

"More I ask not. Water can scarce drown one whose home is on the sea. Air I fear not!"

"Take heed, lest one day thou die not in it!"

"Ha! what mean you?"

"Nothing. Kneel while I hang this amulet about thy neck."

Attaching to it a strand of her own long hair, she suspended it about his neck as he kneeled before her, chanting,

"Mystic charm,  
Shield from harm!  
Winds and waves,  
Be his slaves!  
Mortal, naught can injure thee,  
Spread thy sail and sweep the sea!  
Vengeance now is in thy hand.  
Be thy foe on sea or land!  
If thy oath be kept not well,

Ill befall thee with this spell!"

Instantly thunder seemed to shake the hut, which was filled with a sulphurous flame, while a repetition of the sounds he had before heard filled him with consternation; and, ere he could rise to his feet, he was struck to the earth by an unseen hand.

When he recovered himself the hut was deserted, and, save a ray of moonlight streaming through the roof, buried in total darkness. Confused, his senses overpowered, and his imagination excited by the scenes he had been so prominent and passive an actor in, he left the hut, the door of which was wide open, sought his boat, and roused his men, who, save Lawrence, had fallen asleep.

Giving his orders briefly, he put out from the Witch's Isle, and at midnight stood on the deck of his vessel. Shortly afterward he got under weigh, sailed down the Narrows and put out to sea. When the morning broke, great was the surprise and delight of the worthy people of New Amsterdam to find that the stranger had departed as silently and mysteriously as he had come; and many were the sage conjectures ventured the following evening by the worthies that gathered, as usual, about the stoop of the "Boat and Anchor," as to his character; and, sooth to say, they hit not far from the truth.

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## CHAPTER IV.

"She saw the noble in the peasant's garb,  
And dared to love—nay, more, she dared  
to brave  
The world's dread frown, to follow him  
afar  
Amid the danger of the stormy wave."

"He bore a charmed life. O'er earth and  
sea  
No fiend so feared, no spirit dread as he."

An hour after sunrise the pirate vessel had gained an offing, and, under all her light canvass, wafted by a fresh wind from the northwest, was running the coast down, leaving the Highlands of Neversink on her starboard quarter. On her deck stood Kyd, with his glass in his hands, with which every few minutes he would sweep the horizon, and then turn and walk the deck. It was a bright, sunny morning; the crested waves leaped merrily about the prow and glanced in the sun as if tipped with gold.

The vessel was a low-built brigantine, with a flush deck, on either side of which was ranged a battery of six carronades—in all twelve guns. Eighty men, half of whom were blacks, that composed her crew, were variously occupied forward and in the waist, though many of them were lying listlessly between the guns. They were a desperate band, with hard looks, and the aspects of men accustomed to crime and inured to danger. Every man was armed with pistols and cutlass, while racks of these weapons, with the addition of boarding pikes and arquebusses, were ranged about the masts and bulwarks. Order and discipline prevailed throughout the wild company, and, save the bucanier-like character and build of the vessel, it differed not materially in its internal arrangements from a king's ship. The bold spirit that kept these inferior and scarcely less fierce beings in subjection walked the deck with a determined tread, now bending his eyes in thought, now lifting them, flashing with excitement, towards the sea, and rapidly scanning its wide circle. He was dressed in the same picturesque costume that he wore when he first appeared in the presence of Kate Bellamont at the White Hall, though his sword lay upon the companion-way instead of being sheathed at his belt. After taking a longer survey than usual of the horizon, and turning away with an exclamation of disappointment, he was addressed by a short, square-built, swarthy man, with large mustaches and long, matted hair that hung low over his eyes and descended to his broad shoulders, who had hitherto been silently pacing the leeward side of the deck.

"What's in the wind, captain? You seem to steer as if in chase! You gave your orders so briefly to get under weigh, and have loved your own thoughts since so well as to forget to speak. I have not even asked our course."

"We are full three leagues from our anchorage, and, if you have no objections, suppose we open our sailing orders."

"You are right, Loff," said Kyd, smiling at the blunt address of his first mate, "Listen," he said, walking aft, followed by the mate, where they could speak without being overheard by the helmsman. "Now learn my plans!"

"I have half guessed them."

"What?"

"Some Indiaman, ballasted with guilders, you have heard of in shore."

"Far better than a Spanish argosy. I pursue a rival. Thou art no stranger to an amour pursued by

me some years ago with a fair and noble maid of Erin. Before I took the seas I was her only and accepted lover. She is now in the port we left this morning."

"And so you are running away from her."

"No. As some fiend would have it, rumours of my deeds, blown far and wide, at last reached her ears. She lends them to the tale. And when last eve I hastened to her arms, she meets me cold as an icicle; but soon gets warm, charges me with my misdeeds, and at length, taking fire with her own heat, breaks out in full blaze, dips her tongue inch deep in gall, and paints me blacker than the devil."

"Just like these sort o' craft," remarked Loff, dryly.

"This is not all. I found she had plugged the hole in her broken heart with another lover sound and hale."

"And who was this interloper?"

"No less a cavalier than that Fitzroy of the British navy whom we took by stratagem in the Mediterranean, slaying his crew; and who afterward escaped us by swimming a league to the shore."

"I remember him. A proper youth for a woman's eye."

"It shall ne'er look on him again," said Kyd, with fierceness. "He told the story of his escape, confirmed that which before was rumour—"

"And so she put you out her heart and took him in."

"Even so."

"That's what I couldn't stand, captain."

"I'll have revenge. Besides, I think I have an old quarrel to settle with him, if he be the same Fitzroy who escaped from us. Did I not tell thee then he reminded me of one whom I had known under peculiar circumstances in my boyish days?"

"You did," said the mate, after a moment's thought; "and that you said you would, in the morning, see if your suspicions were true."

"And in the morning the bird had flown. It is this suspicion that, from the first mention of his name last night, added to a new object I have in view (which, if he be the one I suspect he is, cannot be accomplished without his death), that sends me in pursuit of him. 'Tis rumoured that he whom I mean was lost at sea; but, if he escaped us by swimming a league, he may have escaped also at that time."

"Where does he hail from now?"

"He is master of the brig of war that brought the new governor to the province; and, hearing of us, with laudable ambition set sail, directly after his arrival, in pursuit of us. He is now on his return, as his leave of absence has expired. I learn by a skipper of a Carolina schooner I hailed in the harbour as I passed him in my boat, that a vessel answering his description was seen three days ago becalmed off the Capes of Delaware."

"Shiver my mizzen! we will soon fall in with him if he is steering back to port."

"If the 'Silver Arrow' hang not like a sleuth-hound on his track, there is no virtue in wind or canvass."

"What is the name of the chase?" demanded Loff, taking a deliberate survey of the horizon with a weather-beaten spyglass he held in his hand.

"The 'Ger-Falcon,' I am told; and this name, for certain reasons, increases my suspicions that this Fitzroy is he I suspect. If so, I have an old score to balance with him. It is this that adds point to my revenge, and which has led me to seek aid of earth and hell to accomplish my desires."

The "Silver Arrow," bound on its mission of vengeance and crime, continued for the remainder of the day steadily to sail on its southerly course, keeping sufficiently far from land to command a scope of vision on either side nearly forty miles in breadth, so that any vessel following the shore northwardly, if within ten or twelve leagues of the land, could not escape observation.

Two hours before sunset of the same day, in the entrance of one of the numerous inlets that, like a chain of marine lakes, line the eastern shore of Jersey, lay a brig of war at anchor, her upper sails clewed down and her topsails furled. She was lying so close to the wooded shore, that the branches of the trees that grew on the verge of its high banks hung over and mingled with the rigging, while from the main yard it was easy to step on the rocks that towered above the water. On her decks lay several deer recently killed, while sailors were engaged in bringing on board, across a staging that extended from the ship to the shore, a noble stag, with antlers like a young tree. On the summit of a rock that overlooked the scene stood two young men habited as hunters, one leaning on a rifle, the other with a hunting-spear in his hand. Two noble stag-hounds lay panting at their feet. The scene that lay outspread around them was picturesque as it was boundless.

On the east, rolling its waves towards a silvery beach of sand that stretched north and south many leagues, spread the ocean, without a sail to relieve its majestic bosom, which, save here and there a gull with snowy wing skimming its breast, was as lonely and silent as on the day it was created. North, extended a vast forest of foliage, the surface of which, as the winds swept over it wave after wave, was not less restless than the sea. West, lay interminable woods; and nearer slept the lagoon, running northwardly and southwardly in a line with the coast on the outside, broken into many little lakes by green islands, on the sides of which browsed numerous deer. Immediately at their feet was the vessel of war, which, with its busy decks, gave life and variety to the scene.

The two who were enjoying the prospect strikingly contrasted in appearance. One of them was dark and strikingly handsome, with black, penetrating eyes, and a fine mouth characterized by much energy of expression. His hair was jetty black; and, parted on his forehead, fell in natural ringlets about his neck, descending even to his shapely shoulders. His figure was noble and commanding, and his air strikingly dignified. His age could not have been above twenty-three. There was a hue on his cheek, and a certain negligent ease in his air and manner, that showed that his profession was that of the sea. Yet his costume was by no means nautical. He leaned on a short rifle, with a black velvet hunter's bonnet in his hand, shaded by a sable plume. He wore a green embroidered frock, with buff leggins of dressed deerskin richly worked by some Indian maid, and on his feet were buskins of dressed doeskin. Around his waist was a black leathern belt containing a hunting-knife, with a drop or two of fresh blood still upon its blade, and a hunting-horn curiously carved and richly mounted.

His companion was less in height and of lighter make. His face was less browned, nay, scarcely tinged by the suns that had left their shadows upon the other's cheek. His forehead, though partly concealed beneath a hunting-cap of green cloth from which drooped a snow-white feather, was so fair and beautiful, that through the transparent skin of the temples were seen the azure veins tinting the surface with the most delicate lights of blue. The eyes were of a dark hazel, with a merry light dancing in them, which gave promise both of ready wit and good nature, and his cheeks had a bright, glowing colour, doubtless caused by the recent exercise of the chase. His mouth was extremely beautiful, with a winning smile playing about it like sunlight of the heart. The chin beneath was exquisitely rounded, neither too full nor too square, but of that faultless symmetry of which a sculptor would have made a model. About his neck and shoulders flowed glossy waves of auburn hair, while his upper lip was graced by a luxuriant mustache of the same, or, perhaps, of a little darker hue. He wore no cravat, and the collar of his green hunting-coat was turned back, displaying a throat and neck of dazzling whiteness and beauty. Through the bosom of the frock, which was folded back, appeared linen of the finest cambric, richly tamboured, as if done by the fair fingers of some tasteful maiden. The wristbands over his finely shaped and gloved hands were tamboured in the same beautiful manner, and fringed with lace of the most costly texture. Around his waist was bound a crimson sash for a hunting-belt, in which was stuck a *couteau du chasse*, with a hilt sparkling with jewels. Oriental trousers, ample in width and of snowy whiteness, fringed at the bottom with tassels depending from a hem of network, descended just below the calf of the leg, between which and the ankle appeared flesh-coloured silken hose of the finest texture and material. Boots of dressed doeskin, soft and smooth as a glove, nicely fitted the feet and ankles, and, divided at the top in two parts, were turned over like the buskins of his companion, but, unlike his, fringed with gold and ornamented with tassels. In his hand he carried a light hunting-spear, which he held with a spirited air, braced against the rock, his attitude being at the same time graceful and gallant. His age appeared to be less than seventeen. The two had gazed upon the noble and extended prospect spread out before them for some time in silence, when the elder, turning to his companion with a condescending yet courteous air, spoke.

"A fair scene, Edwin! I scarcely know which impresses me most, the majesty of the ocean or that of these boundless forests of the New World. Both are alike illimitable. Perhaps the sea has more of the sublime, for it is associated with the tempest in its terrible power, and its ever-heaving bosom seems to me the pulse of the earth."

"You give language to the thoughts which were passing in my own mind. The world seems to me a vast being ever—its flowing rivers like veins and arteries in the human system—its subterranean fires like the passions slumbering in our hearts—its ocean heaving like a bosom lifted by a heart beneath it. See! the stag has leaped the bulwarks into the water!"

His companion turned and beheld the noble monarch of the wood, who had broke away from his captors at a bound, parting the flood with his broad breast, and swimming across the lagoon towards the opposite shore, tossing his branching antlers in the air as if in defiance, and rejoicing at obtaining his wild freedom. A dozen pistols and handguns were instantly levelled at him, when the taller of the two cried out from the cliff,

"Hold! Fire not, on your lives! He has nobly won his freedom!"

Every weapon was lowered obedient to his voice, and proudly the enfranchised animal breasted his way towards a wooded isle a few hundred yards off.

"We have venison enough, and the princely creature shall escape," he added, turning to the other. "By the bow of Diana! we have well done for a four hours' hunt with but a brace of dogs—though ye are noble brutes, both Chasseur and Di!" The dogs seemed to comprehend instinctively his words of praise, and, with a glad whine sliding along to his feet, at a sign of encouragement bounded upon him with joyful barks. "Hist! be still! Ye are over rude because I give ye a word

and a nod."

"They must come in for a portion of our thanks from the earl when he gets his game."

"And a feast they shall have, for they have shown their true Irish blood."

"You speak of Ireland often, sir. You must love it."

"I do." He then said quickly, "You alone must he thank, Edwin, that he gets even a haunch instead of nearly a score of fat bucks such as strew our decks yonder. It was well thought of, as this bucanier had escaped us on this cruise, to put in at this famous deer island, and, by supplying the governor's table for the month to come, make him forget our failure. I would the stag had not escaped, nevertheless, for I would gladly have made a present of it to his fair daughter. You sigh, Edwin!"

"Did I?"

"By the bow of Dan Cupid, did you! You are full young to think of maiden's love."

"Am I?" said the youth, absently, and with an abstracted air.

"Truly thou must be in love, Edwin," said the other, with a kindly laugh, that became his manly and open features. "I marvel who it may be. You shake your head! Well," he added, laughing, "so long as it is not my noble Kate, I care not who it be. I knew a maiden once whom I would have loved—so gentle, fair, and good, besides nobleborn and generous was she—if I had not loved another—"

"Who—who this maiden?" he said, abruptly interrupting him, and laying his hand upon the arm of the speaker with surprising energy.

"Thou art over quick in thy speech," said the other, turning and speaking coldly.

"Nay, pardon me, sir, I did forget my station," said the other, bending his head and crossing his hands upon his bosom.

"Nay, Edwin, you go too far! I do not like this manner, and this, I know not what to call it, way you have of assuming an attitude, when reproved, becoming a bashful girl rather than the manhood thy mustache, if not thy years, challenges thee to assert. I will answer thy question. It was a fair and gentle creature, whom in my boyhood I knew only as the humble sailor knows the stars that burn nightly above him. I gazed on her afar off, and dared not approach her nearer, for she was noble, and, as thou knowest, I was lowly born. She was gentle, kind, and good; gratitude fills my heart when I speak of her, for I owe her much; she first awakened ambition in me, and pointed me the way to make myself noble. Her eloquence I shall never forget. Its effect upon me is indelible. I will some day tell thee how first I met her, and the interest she took in me."

"Did you see her often?"

"No. But once we spoke together! But that once produced the seeds of the fruit of happiness I since have gathered."

"Strange that seeing her but once should have had such an effect upon thee."

"It was like sunlight first let in upon the man's vision who is born blind."

"If such the influence she held over you—if thus you speak of her now, why did not her image take a deeper hold in your heart—nay, why did you not love her, sir?"

"Because I loved another."

The youth sighed, and then said, "What motive induced her to take this interest in you?"

"Save that it was prompted by her own gentle and good spirit, I know not," he said with frankness.

"May it not have been love?" said the other, with hesitation.

The elder started, and turned and gazed on the speaker an instant with surprise before he replied:

"Love! How could she love a lowborn boy like me? 'Twas pity, rather."

"Nay, 'twas love."

"Nay, I will not have the vanity to think so, nor will I do her motives so much wrong."

"Said you she was fair?"

"As maiden ever was."

"Gentle?"

"As a seraph, if it should come to earth to habit in woman's form."

"Good?"

"As an angel."

"Fair, gentle, and good?"

"All three."

"And yet you loved her not?"

"I loved *another!* therefore, if she had been indeed an angel, I could not have loved, though I might have worshipped her."

The young man bent his head low till the snowy plume hid his face, and a deep sigh escaped his bosom. "Her thou wouldst have me love, then?" he asked, after a moment's silence, during which the eyes of the other were habitually scanning the horizon.

"I would."

"Wherefore?"

"Because I love thee!"

"Love me!" he cried, starting.

"As a brother do I. In truth this chase has fevered you, and you are not yourself, Edwin. Let us aboard!"

They were about to descend to the ship, when the elder, glancing once more around the horizon, suddenly fixed his eyes in a northwardly direction, and, after a moment's steady look, exclaimed,

"A sail!"

The younger arrested his descending footstep, and also turned his eyes in the same direction, and discerned a white dot on the extreme verge of water and sky, the stationary appearance of which, though neither form nor outline was distinguishable at the distance it was from them, indicated it to be a vessel.

"It may be a merchantman!" he said.

"It may be the bucanier! Craft of any sort are so scarce in these colonial seas at this season, that the chances are full three to one for the pirate. We must on board and make sail."

As he spoke they descended, followed by their dogs, the precipitous rock, and the next moment stood on the vessel's deck. A few brief orders were given by the elder of the two, who, it was apparent, was the commander of the brig; the anchor was weighed, the topsails loosened and set, and, catching a light breeze that blew through the mouth of the lagoon seaward, she soon left the wooded shores, and rode gallantly over the billows of the open sea in the direction of the sail they had seen from the cliff. What had first appeared a white speck on the rim of the sea now grew into shape and form, and, with the glass, the upper sails of a brigantine could be seen down to her courses, her hull still being beneath the horizon.

Swiftly the brig of war cut the blue waves, all her light and drawing sails set. Her armed deck, on each side of which bristled seven eighteen pounders, with their armament, presented an appearance of that order and propriety which, even on the eve of battle, characterizes the interior of a British ship of war. The weather-beaten tars, who had all been called to quarters, leaned over the forward bulwarks, and watched with interest the distant sail, but made their remarks in a subdued tone to each other. All was ready for action in case the stranger should prove to be an enemy. The helmsman, with his eyes now dropped on the compass, now directed ahead towards the sail, stood cool and collected at his post; the officer of the deck paced with a thoughtful brow fore and aft in the waist, every few seconds stopping to survey the chase, while the junior officers, each at his station, silently regarded the object, their eyes sparkling with excitement as each moment brought them nearer to it. In a magnificent upper cabin or poop, constructed on the quarter-deck, and gorgeous with curtains of crimson, sofas, ottomans, and rich Turkish rugs laid over the floor with latticed windows opening on every side to the water, were the two hunters. They had now changed their costume for one more appropriate to the sea and the quarter-deck of an armed vessel. The youthful captain wore the undress uniform of his rank and profession, his hunting-knife replaced by a small sword, and his bugle by a brace of pistols. He was standing by the window with his eyes upon the vessel ahead. The other had substituted a plain suit of black velvet for his former rich costume, and an elegant rapier hung at one side and a silver inkhorn at the other. He was seated at an ebony escritoir writing, and, from his pursuit and apparel, evidently held the rank of private secretary.

"He is standing south by east, Edwin," said the youthful captain, turning from the lattice and addressing the youth with animation; "we shall intercept him by sunset if this wind holds. But methinks," he added with interest, fixing his eyes upon him as, with his rich hair drooping about his cheeks, he leaned, forgetful of his occupation, over the sheet, "that of late you are getting sad and absent. This station does not suit your ambition, perhaps. You would be an officer instead of a clerk."

"Nay, sir, I would be as I am; I am not discontent so that I can be near—" here he checked himself, bent his head to his writing, and did not look up until he felt a hand gently laid upon his shoulder. He started, while the colour came and went in his cheek with confusion, and he shrunk instinctively away.

"Beshrew me, fair youth! I know not what to make of thee," said the young captain, taking a seat

beside him, and resting one arm familiarly upon his shoulder. "Thou hast some deep, untold grief at thy heart. If it be a love secret—a tale of love unrequited—of cruel maids and broken promises," he said, gayly, "why, then, out with it; make me your confidant; I will tell you how to make her heart ache, and to wish thee back again. Come, Edwin, unburden thy thoughts. Unspoken, they will feed upon the cheek and eye, and the grave have thee ere thou hast attained manhood."

The youthful secretary was silent a few moments, and then said, with an attempt to smile,

"I have a tale of love, but not of mine."

"I will hear it, and then tell thee if I think it thine or no."

"There was once a noble maiden, the heiress of an earldom, who loved a peasant youth, handsome and brave, and the nobility he gat not by birth nature endowed him with. The maiden was proud and independent of spirit, and loved him for himself—for title, wealth, and rank she thought not!"

"A generous creature. And this humble youth loved her in return?"

"No."

"No! then, by Heaven, he was ignoble indeed, and her love was ill placed, poor lady!"

"Nay—he *loved another!*"

"Ha, was it so?" he said, with a peculiar smile; "then I must pardon him! But did she tell him of her love?"

"Never!"

"Who was this village maiden that supplanted her?"

"She was no lowly maid! but noble as herself."

"He was full ambitious! Did she love him in return?"

"Nay, not then," said he, hesitatingly.

"Edwin, you are giving my very history! You hang your head! What, is it I of whom you speak?" he exclaimed, with animated interest.

"I gave no name."

"Nay," he said, blushing, "I will not think, though the tale tallies in some parts so well with my own, that a noble maiden e'er could have regarded me with sentiments beneath her station. Go on."

"Time went on, and her love grew. Unseen, unknown, she exerted her influence, and had him (for he took to the seas) elevated from rank to rank, though his own prowess won for him each grade ere he rose to it; at length he became a captain. Many years had elapsed in the interval, and she had not seen him; but, every few months, rumour trumpeted to her his gallant deeds, and in her secret heart she rejoiced with all the pride of love."

"And still she loved him?"

"Better and better. Absence only increased the intensity of her passion. At length she resolved to see him, and, unknown to him, see if she could not win his love; for she believed, silly girl, that time had caused him to forget his first passion for the noble maid who had disdained him for his low birth. At length an opportunity presented itself that held out to her the prospect of accomplishing her wish. A nobleman related to her was appointed governor of a distant province, and this youth was appointed to the command of the vessel that should convey him to his government. The noble was the father of the highborn maiden he loved. Love roused *her* fears. She resolved to go in the same ship, and be a check upon the renewal of his love."

"Your story interests me. Do not pause. Go on!"

"So she disguised herself as a page, and, under the pretence of going to Ireland, to spend a few weeks with a maiden aunt, came on board his vessel, and offered herself as his secretary!"

"Edwin, this is a wondrous tale!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet with surprise. "Yet no, it cannot be," he said, half aloud, after steadily looking at him a moment. "Proceed!"

"She was received and sailed with him. Love excuses much. Yet her friends were on board with her, and it was not as if she had thrown herself on this rash adventure alone. The maiden that he had loved in youth he wooed and won. She knew him not as the humble youth. He had taken another name with his better fortunes. In the noble-looking officer that commanded the ship, and whose gallant name had filled the world, she did not recognise the humble lad whom she had known in earlier years. The disguised girl witnessed the progress of their love with a breaking heart."

"Poor maiden! She should have made known her love, and it might have met return."

"No, no, she could not. Yet she could not leave him, even when she knew he cared not for her—"

knew not of her existence, or that he was loved by her with such enduring attachment."

"Had it been my case, I would have loved her, had she made herself known, for her very devotion. Love begets love, and so does gratitude. I could not but have loved her."

"Nay—if you loved another?"

"Not while I loved that other. But if that love had met no return, or afterward were crushed and blighted by adverse circumstances, then my heart would have turned to this gentle, devoted, heroic maiden, whose love had been so strong as to lead her to idolize me, and follow me in disguise even over the sea."

"Wouldst thou have done this?"

"By my troth! would I. I half love the maiden now, of whose devotedness you speak so eloquently. If it were my case, Kate would have a dangerous rival. I never could resist so much womanly devotion. Not I, Edwin."

"Would you not rather despise her?"

"No. True love is sacred and honourable ever."

"When it o'ersteps the bounds of maidenly propriety?"

"Yes, Edwin, in a case like this of which you speak."

At this instant the officer of the deck reported that the strange sail had suddenly changed her course from the southeast, and was standing towards them.

The captain seized his glass, and, examining her, said with animation,

"Her hull has lifted, and she shows a tier of ports. A red riband running around her bends! polacca rigged, and courses up, with a bow as sharp as a canoe! It is 'the Kyd,'" he cried, with joyful surprise.

Instantly all was animation and intense excitement on board. The guns were double-shotted, the hammock nettings were stowed closer and firmer than usual, hand-grenades lined the decks, and every missile and weapon of offence or defence that could be pressed into service on so desperate an encounter as that anticipated, was brought forth and placed ready for use. All that skill and determination to conquer could devise was done; and, under a steady but light wind on her larboard quarter, she fast neared the stranger, who also was observed to shorten sail and make other demonstrations of a hostile character. They continued to approach each other until less space than a mile separated them, when the youthful captain, who, with his trumpet in his hand, had taken his place in the main rigging, shouted,

"Hoist the ensign, and pitch a shot from the weather-bow gun across his fore-foot."

The broad flag of England instantly ascended to the peak, and unfolded its united crosses displayed on its blood-red field. At the same time a column of flame shot from her sides, and the vessel shook with the loud report of the gun.

"It has dashed the spray into their faces," said the captain, who had followed the path of the ball with the glass at his eye. "Ha! by Heaven, there goes the black flag, with its silver arrow emblazoned on it. *It is Kyd*. He has fired!"

A puff of smoke at the instant curled up from the side of the pirate vessel, as it now proved to be beyond question, and the next moment a twelve pound shot, with a roaring noise, buried itself deep in the mainmast, twenty feet above the deck. The spar trembled from the shock, and even the vessel reeled to one side from the force of the iron projectile.

"This is an unlucky hit. It has weakened our best spar! We must have the weather-gauge of him, and run down and lay him by the board if he is so good a marksman at a long shot," said the captain.

No more shots were fired, and the vessels were now within hailing distance, when, cheering his crew by animated words as well as by his example, and irresistibly communicating to them a portion of his own spirit, the young captain stood by the helmsman, and directed him to steer so as to strike the advancing pirate with the larboard bow just forward of the fore-chains. He ordered the hand-grenades to be in readiness to be thrown on board as soon as they should come near enough, and the grappling-irons to be kept clear and cast at an instant's notice, while in two dense parties, commanded by the chief officers, the boarders were drawn up, prepared to leap on board cutlass in hand.

Swiftly and with appalling stillness the two hostile barks approached each other, both close hauled on the wind, and moving at nearly equal speed. It was within half an hour of sunset, and the level rays of the sun suffused the sea with a flush of gold and crimson. The wooded shores, which were two miles distant, were touched with a brighter green, and the western sky was as bright and varied with gorgeous colours as if a rainbow had been dissipated over it. The hostile companies in the two vessels saw none of its beauties and thought only of the sun that gave glory to the scene, as a light that was to lend its aid to the approaching conflict. Nearer and nearer they came together, yet unable, from their direct advance upon each other, to bring their guns to bear. To fire their bow guns would have checked their speed: both, therefore, advanced in silence



until each could see the features of his foe. Conspicuous on their decks stood the commanders of each brig, directing their several courses, and giving commands that were distinctly heard from one vessel to the other: Kyd, with his light flowing locks, his fair, noble brow and commanding figure, on the quarter-deck near the helmsman with a stern and hostile expression in his eyes and the altitude of one impatient to mingle in the conflict, which he seemed to anticipate with vengeful triumph: the young captain, calm, cool, and commanding, his features glowing with the excitement of the occasion, and animated, as it seemed, with an honest ambition to punish a lawless bucanier who had so long filled sea and land with the terror of his name.

"Stand by, hand-grenades!" he shouted, as the vessels were within a few feet of each other.

"All ready!"

"Cast!" he cried, with a voice of thunder.

Instantly a score of these missiles were flying through the air in the direction of the crowded decks of the pirate. But, ere they had left the hand, quicker than thought the pirate's helm had been put hard up, and every sheet and brace being at the same time let go, she fell off suddenly from the wind, and presented her broadside to the bows of the brig; all but one or two of the grenades fell short and plunged into the water, and those that struck her were thrown overboard ere they could do injury. At the same instant the bows of the brig struck her starboard side nearly midships, and such was the tremendous force of the shock that her slight timbers were stove in, four out of six of the guns that composed the battery dismounted, while, vibrating with the shock beyond its tensility, the foremast, with its chain of connected yards, snapped off even with the deck, and fell with a terrible crash and dire confusion and ruin into the sea. Loud was the shout of success that rose from the crew of the brig, and, rushing forward, they prepared to leap upon the deck of the bucanier.

"Back, men! she is filling!" cried the young captain, who had gained the bowsprit of his vessel, where he stood sword in hand, and, like his crew, in the act of springing on board.

"We are going down!" was the universal cry that rose from the pirate's decks, and the rush of the waters into her hold was distinctly heard above the noise and confusion of the scene.

"Let her sink!" shouted Kyd, bounding amidships among his men. "Here is a king's ship worth three of it!"

His appeal was answered by a demoniac yell from his pirate crew; and, inspired by their imminent peril as well as their natural ferocity, they sprung, as one man, upon the bows of the brig, and, by mere force of numbers and desperation, in an instant took possession of the forecastle, and drove its defenders aft. The last man had scarcely gained a footing upon it, when, with a plunge like the dying struggle of a wounded animal, the "Silver Arrow," so long the besom of the ocean, shot down into its unfathomable depths, finding a grave in the element upon which it had so long rode in triumph. The brig pitched and rolled from side to side fearfully as she was received into the vortex the sinking vessel had left, while she so far sunk down that the waves rolled a foot deep over her bows, and flowed in an irresistible torrent aft to the quarter-deck.

For a few seconds after the disappearance of the brigantine there was a deep hush over the human throng. Every soul was touched with the sublimity of the spectacle, and an impression, not unlike that with which a child looks on death, rested for an instant on all. But it was only for an instant: the situation in which the two parties were so suddenly and so singularly placed, in such relative positions to each other, flashed upon their minds, and every eye lighted up with the fire of conflict.

"Farewell to the brave galley!" said Kyd, as he saw the flag at her peak trail on the water as she went down. "Now, my boys, we have no vessel save this! Five minutes will show whether it belongs to his majesty or 'the Kyd.' Let us sweep yonder honest folk from her, boys," he cried, pointing aft, where the brig's crew were resolutely drawn up before the quarter-deck under their captain, by whose side stood, with a resolute eye and fearless attitude, his youthful secretary. "But, on your lives, spare the captain! Also harm not that fair youth beside him. I like his face for its resemblance to one I once knew. Now at them, and fight like devils, for either you or they must be driven overboard!"

"Receive them steadily and with firm front, my men," cried the captain of the brig; "remember, your lives depend on retaining your ship. Do not forget you are British seamen, fighting for your king and country, your wives and sweethearts! and that your foes are a set of bloodthirsty bucaniers, who fight from desperation, and show neither mercy nor favour. Edwin, my young friend, your station is not here."

"I will not leave your side," he said, firmly.

"Nay, then, here they come like mad devils. God and our country! Meet them half way! St. George and at them!"

He was the first to set the example, and met the desperate charge almost single handed. The number of pirates was more than seventy, while the crew and officers of the brig did not exceed sixty. Nearly the whole of these were now engaged; those at a distance, who were unable to mingle in the mêlée and use their swords, briskly discharging their firearms, while those of either party on the skirts of the fight cheered their comrades on with loud cries. For a few moments the brig's crew had the advantage, and pressed their assailants back on every hand, while from side

to side flowed the heady current of battle, and the human masses swayed this way and that like an agitated sea; and, with a roar still more terrible than the ocean in its wildest fury ever sent up, shouts of onset, cries of rage or pain, yells, and execrations filled the air, mingled with the reports of pistols, the clash of steel, and the strange thunder of a hundred feet upon the hollow decks. At length the seamen gave way before their desperate antagonists, whom the cheering voice of their leader inspired with tenfold courage and ferocity.

"At them. Leave not a man alive! One good blow and the brig is ours. Bear them down! Give no quarter! Ha, Fitzroy! Ha! do we meet again! I have sought thee to enjoy this moment. Back, hounds," he shouted to his men; "will ye press me? there is meaner game for you! I alone deal with him."

"The same moment, then, crowns my wish and thine," said Fitzroy, crossing his weapon.

They had exchanged a few fierce passes without effect, when they were separated by the tide of the conflict, and borne to opposite sides of the deck. At this moment Edwin the secretary, who had been animating the crew by his cheering cries, said quickly in the ear of Fitzroy,

"Make a sudden charge with all your force, save six men to man the two after guns; drive them back to the fore-castle, if possible, and then retreat, and I will, at the same moment, turn upon them the pieces which I have already had loaded with grape." This was spoken with rapidity and clearness.

"It shall be done," was the stern reply. "Ho, my brave tars! one blow for merry England! one good blow for the king. Charge them all at once. Follow me. Hurrah for the king!"

"Hurrah for King Billy, hurrah!" shouted the seamen, with one voice, catching the spirit of their young captain.

So sudden and well directed was the charge, that the pirates gave back in a body till they reached the windlass, when, in a voice like a trumpet, Fitzroy shouted,

"Every Englishman throw himself upon his face! Fire!"

"Down!" re-echoed Kyd, instinctively, at the same moment.

Disciplined to obey the lightest order, every sailor cast himself upon the deck; but most of the pirates heard too late the warning command of their chief, and the same instant, from both of the quarter-deck guns, a shower of grape whistled like a whirlwind over the heads of the crew, while with the roar of cannon mingled the groans and shrieks of half a score of bucaniers.

"Vengeance! vengeance! Will ye be slaughtered like dogs! Upon them! Cut them down! Leave not one alive! Vengeance!"

Loud and terrific was the cry of vengeance, followed by a rush of the pirates aft that was irresistible. The crew were cut down scarcely ere they had risen to their feet, and sabred with hellish ferocity wherever they could be grappled with. In a moment's space two thirds of the seamen, who had been seized with a sudden panic at the demoniac rush of the pirates, whom they expected to have seen discomfited by the wholesale slaughter of their comrades, fell a prey to their savage ferocity, and the decks were deluged with their blood. Many leaped overboard, and others sprang into the rigging to fall dead into the sea.

"On, on! the brig is ours!" shouted the pirate chief, waving his reeking sabre. "Charge the quarter-deck!"

Thither Fitzroy, with Edwin, had retreated with the remnant of his crew, which were scarcely twenty in number.

"Surrender!" demanded Kyd.

"With our lives only!" was the firm reply.

"Dash at them, ye devils! But see ye touch not the two I have marked as my own game! Let your blades drink deep; we shall soon be masters here. Now on!"

They were received by a discharge of pistols, which only increased the ferocity of those who escaped the fire, and, cutlass in hand, the quarter-deck was carried after a desperate resistance. Fitzroy was taken prisoner with much difficulty, and at the cost of several lives of his assailants, while Kyd himself disarmed the secretary. To a man the brave crew were slain, either in fair fight while defending their station, or massacred in cold blood at the termination of the sanguinary conflict. The pirates were now masters of the brig, though its conquest had cost them full half of their number.

"Clear the decks of both dead and wounded!" said the victor, leaning on his bloody sabre and gazing over the decks, which wore the aspect of a slaughter-house.

"Of our own men?" said he who has before been named as Lawrence.

"Ay! every man that cannot rise on his feet and walk. We want no hospital of the brig!"

At this order one or two of the wounded pirates attempted to get to their legs; but finding, after several ineffectual struggles, that it was out of their power, fell back powerless, with execrations on their lips, which had hardly ceased before their living bodies parted the crimson flood alike

with the dead. The sun still shone upon the scene of carnage, and, ere he set, the brig was cleared of the bodies of both pirate and seaman; the decks were washed; sail was made; the new crew were posted at their different stations as they had been, though in fewer numbers, on board their former vessel; and, half an hour after the conflict, as the disk of the sun sunk behind the Highlands of Monmouth, scarcely a vestige of the terrific contest was apparent in the orderly exterior and accurate nautical appointments of the captured vessel.

The moon rose like a shield of pearl, and flung her pale, snowy light along the dark waves, and silvered the sails of the brig as she went bowling along over the sparkling surges. On the quarter-deck sat Captain Fitzroy and his youthful secretary. They were unarmed, and the elder manacled with heavy irons; but the younger was unbound. Not far from them, at times stopping to survey them, walked moodily their captor, his brow knit with thought, and his lips compressed with fierce resolution. At length he stopped, and said to an inferior officer who stood in the waste leaning over the bulwarks and watching the swift and steady progress of the vessel through the water,

"Griffin, prepare the plank!"

"You do not mean—"

"It matters not to you what I mean. Obey me! You are given of late to question my orders too boldly. Bring the brig to and get out the plank," he reiterated, in a firm manner.

"There has been blood enough shed," said the man, with dogged determination, folding his arms and looking his commander in the face. "I will do no more of it."

"Ha! by the living spirit! Mutiny?"

"I will be a butcher no longer, be it mutiny or not. I am sick of it."

"Will you to your duty, sir?"

"To work the ship, but not to take more life," said the officer, steadily.

"You are mad, Griffin! My authority must not be questioned, even by you. I would not take your life," he added, placing his hand on the butt of a pistol and half drawing it from his belt. "You cannot be alone in this mutiny—you wear too bold a front."

"Nor am I. Ho! lads—*a Griffin! a Griffin!*"

The loud cry of the mutineer was responded to by the shout of eight or ten pirates, who instantly placed themselves, with drawn cutlasses, around him.

"By the cross! it is well matured!" muttered Kyd, with terrible calmness. "Back, fellows! To your posts! You, Griffin—for the last time—to your station, sir, and bring the brig to!"

"Never, sir! Draw and charge. Now is our time!" he cried to his party.

A cry between a yell and the sound made by the gnashing of teeth escaped the infuriated bucanier chief. Like a tiger, he sprung upon them single-handed, and struck back half a score of blades with a single broad sweep of his cutlass, while those who wielded them stood appalled.

"Back, dogs! Do ye fear me singly? Oh, ho, cowards! Stand where ye are! and you, traitor," he cried, breaking the cutlass of their leader short to its hilt, "go to your duty! I spare your life!"

"Never!"

"Then go to the devil with my compliments."

With the words he placed a pistol at his breast and fired: the man leaped high into the air and fell backward dead.

"Now, fellows, return to your stations," he said, returning his smoking pistol to his belt. "The first who hesitates or falters lies beside this carcass," he added, touching, with a contemptuous gesture, the body with his foot.

The mutineers dropped their weapons and returned to their posts without hesitation or a murmur. "Lawrence, you are no longer coxswain," said Kyd. "Take this mutineer's rank. See that my orders are obeyed! Lay the main topsail to the mast!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the new lieutenant, with alacrity.

The helm was put hard down, the vessel came up into the wind, the heavy sail was reversed against the topmast, and the vessel became stationary. A plank was then run out over the gangway bulwarks with the largest end inboard.

"Now, Rupert Fitzroy, prepare to die!" said the bucanier, approaching his prisoner, who stood with folded arms and calm brow gazing upon the moon walking in her brightness, and looking as if he anticipated the speedy flight of his spirit through the starry world. He evidently expected death, and was prepared to meet it. His companion stood by him leaning upon his shoulder; his hands were clasped together, and he was pale and deadly in aspect, but not less resigned: nevertheless, he involuntarily shuddered as the footsteps of the pirate approached them, and addressed the former.

"I will give you a free leap into the other world, as your blood is gentle, sir, and will set aside the cravat of hemp; though in a swing at the yard-arm many a better man has gone to his account than Mark Meredith."

"Ha! do you know me?" demanded the other, starting from his revery, and fixing his gaze upon him with surprise and curiosity.

"Thou hast heard whether I do or not, and what was but suspicion is now proved by thy manner."

"Who, then, art thou?"

"It matters not. You must die. The last link that binds you to life is broken. You will soon learn if the proverb be true that saith there is but a step between this world and the next, for you will speedily measure it. The step is rather a wet one, but there is a fire priests prate about that will soon dry you." This irony and sarcasm was spoken with the most unfeeling manner, while hatred and malice seemed to dictate each word.

"Surely you cannot, you will not be so inhuman as to do such foul murder!" cried the youthful secretary, placing himself between Kyd and Fitzroy, and stretching forth his hands deprecatingly.

"Who is the blacker murderer, sir—this man who robs of me my good name, or I, who merely take his life?" inquired Kyd, haughtily.

"I robbed you not of it," said Fitzroy. "'Tis true, I have talked to many of thy deeds. But your good name! 'twas already gone—thrown away by your lawless acts of piracy."

"'Tis false! I had never pirated when I took thee prisoner. Smuggling a few silks and laces, or costly wines; defending my ship against officious gentlemen under king's colours, who fain would board me, seeking contraband wares—this have I done, and will do again on like occasion; but pirated I had not then."

"A distinction without a difference; a mere quibble upon words, to cheat thy rankling conscience into security."

"Have it thy own way," said the pirate, with haughty carelessness. "I will not quarrel with a man who has but five brief minutes to use his tongue in. Is all ready there at the gangway? We're losing time here idly. Ho! lead him to his death!"

"Impossible," exclaimed Fitzroy, indignantly; "you will not carry out a suggestion so infernal."

"Nay, sir, you will not do such cold-blooded murder," cried the secretary, catching the hand of Kyd, and kneeling at his feet. "Spare! oh, spare his life, and I will be thy slave!"

"Silence, boy! and you, sir, if you would use your speech, husband it in words of prayer. Thy time has come as surely as the moon now shines in the east."

"All ready, sir!" said Lawrence, coming aft a step or two and addressing his captain.

"Will you walk to the gangway, sir, or shall my men conduct you?"

"Farewell, my faithful Edwin," he said, with manly dignity, tenderly embracing the youth. "We shall in a few minutes meet beyond the skies!"

The youth cast himself into his arms, and the next moment Fitzroy unclasped his hold and laid him upon the deck insensible.

"I am ready!" he said, calmly.

"Perhaps you have a last request to make," said the pirate chief, sarcastically; "doubtless some wish is lurking in your breast, which, unexpressed, will add bitterness to death! If so, intrust it to me. I'll be its executor. Perhaps," he continued, in the same tone, "you have a ring, a lock of hair, some tender love-token to be returned to the giver. Perchance some maiden will ask how Fitzroy died. I'll bear to her a message! Ere to-morrow night I shall see the peerless Kate of Bellamont; she'll love me for bringing it, and perhaps yield the pressure of her haughty lips. I've had love favours on my own account of the willing maid ere now."

"Villain! thou liest!" cried the young man, goaded to phrensy by his words, and only restrained from springing upon him by the weight of the irons which shackled him.

"Ask her when you meet hereafter in the other world, for you meet no more in this!"

"Monster! the cup of death hath its own bitterness, and needs not thy impious words to drug it."

"Thou hast nothing, then, to ask?" said the bucanier, in the same tone of irony he had hitherto used. "I fain would do thee a kindness."

"I *have* one request!"

"Name it."

"Take off my irons, and let me freely spring into the grave you have designed for me!"

"Knock off his chains! The devil'll have him bound in double irons ere the waves that gape to take him in flow smooth again above his head."

The manacles were unlocked and removed, when Kyd, turning to him, asked with bitter malice,

"What else?"

"This broadsword!"

Quicker than thought, he snatched a cutlass from one of the pirates, and attacked Kyd with a sudden vigour and skill that was irresistible. The bucanier retreated on the defensive several paces before he could rally or return a single blow for the shower that rained fiercely and unceasingly upon him. At length he caught the blade of his prisoner on the guard of his own, and arrested it. An instant they stood with their crossed weapons in the air, eying each other, and then simultaneously stepped back and resumed the fight. The pirates closed round and would have struck Fitzroy in the back, but the voice of Kyd restrained them.

"Not a blow, men! He is mine! I will tame him down ere long!"

For a few seconds longer they battled with terrible fury, neither having the advantage; now on one side of the deck, now on the other; now striding the body of the insensible Edwin, now fighting together in the waste, retreating and advancing alternately. At length the bucanier began to gain an advantage over his less athletic antagonist; he pushed him hard, and, step by step, compelled him to retreat towards the stern. Finally, by a strong and sudden stroke, he shivered his sword to his hand and left him defenceless. The blow with which he was about to follow up his advantage was arrested in its descent, and, turning away with a gesture of triumph, he said, as the other, with his arms folded, stood passive to receive the blow,

"'Tis enough for me that I have worsted thee! I have struck my game, so now let the pack worry him! Set upon him, men, and cut him down; he is yours!" he cried, with savage ferocity, pointing to the young officer.

The pirates, with a yell of joy, rushed aft like a pack of wolves and leaped upon him. With the strength and skill of desperation, he wrested the cutlass from the first who reached him, and, springing backward upon the taffrail, defended himself a few seconds against the fearful odds. But at length, yielding to superior numbers, he cast his sword into the air, and, leaping over the stern, amid the yells of the pirates and the firing of pistols, sunk from their sight.

Kyd cast a glance into the dark wave, and, after a few seconds' survey, said half aloud,

"He is no more! Henceforward I am sole Lord of Lester!"

These last words gave the clew to his strange and vindictive thirst for the death of his victim, and was a key to his otherwise unaccountable bloodthirstiness. "Ho! there, villains! why do you gaze upon the water? Make sail on the brig! Man the braces all! Helm hard up! There she yields! Now she falls off. Steady! belay all!"

The after sails swung back to their original position as the vessel obeyed her helm; and at first with scarcely perceptible motion, but gathering momentum as she moved, she parted the moonlit waves before her, and went careering over the sparkling seas in the direction of New-York.

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## CHAPTER V.

"He then would make the nearest isle,  
And go at night by stealth,  
To hide within the earth a while  
His last ill-gotten wealth."

H. F. GOULD.

Towards the approach of evening on the day following the events related in the last chapter, Kate Bellamont was walking beneath the noble oaks that shaded the lawn lying between the front of White Hall and the water. She had been for some time watching the slow progress of a brig into the harbour, which, on first discerning it from the balcony, her spyglass told her was the "Ger-Falcon." Her impatience had drawn her to the water side, where the thin waves uncurled upon a silvery beach at her feet.

Slowly it advanced up towards the town, and the shouts of the citizens, and gun after gun from the Rondeel, welcomed her return. It was nearly night when, coming between Governor's Island and the city, she fired a gun without coming to; the British ensign was lowered at the same instant, and up in its place went the black flag of the bucanier. A loud wail seemed to fill the town.

"The Kyd! the Kyd!" rung through the streets and everywhere spread consternation. The battery on the Rondeel opened a heavy fire, which was returned by two broadsides from the brig, which then stood across towards Brooklyn, and anchored east of the town out of the range of the guns of the fort.

Kate had witnessed all this, at first, with surprise, which grew to terrible anxiety and alarm; and when the return of the fire confirmed the hostile character of the vessel, now too plainly captured

by the corsair, a faintness came over her and she leaned against an oak for support. "Where was Fitzroy? A prisoner or slain!" were questions that she dared not ask herself. Overcome by her feelings, she was ready to sink at the foot of the tree in almost a state of insensibility, when she saw a skiff containing two men, which had been making its way from the direction of "The Kills," land not far from the "Rondeel." The twilight was sufficiently strong to enable her to see a fisherman step from it and approach her by the winding of the shore. She struggled against her feelings, for his manner seemed to betoken news; and with a quick step she advanced several paces to meet him.

"Do you bring news of Captain Fitzroy, or come you to confirm my suspicions?" she cried, as he came near her.

"Sweet lady," he said, wrapping his ample jacket closer about his person, "I am but a poor shipwrecked mariner. Yet I do bear sad news for thee."

"Of whom?" she asked, quickly, vainly endeavouring, in the dusk of evening, to read in his shaded features all he had not revealed.

"Captain Fitzroy!"

"Ha! speak! Words! words! why are you silent? I will hear thee."

"He has been captured by a pirate."

"I knew it."

"And is now prisoner to his captor in yonder brig."

"His own courage should have kept it."

"Nay, lady, he did all he could to save his vessel."

"What fate met he? What became of him, seaman? There is life and death in your answer! Lives he?"

"We were captured by Kyd, who now holds our vessel, and all were condemned to walk the plank."

"Ha! and he?"

"Nay, lady, he lives! He, besides myself, alone escaped the death designed for us."

"Lives, lives! 'Tis happiness to know it! How escaped you?"

"I took the leap into the sea. By floating and swimming I was half an hour afterward picked up by a fisherman, who brought me hither."

"And Edwin, his secretary?"

"Alas, I know not."

"Direful, dreadful news! Fitzroy, Fitzroy! oh that I had died ere this sad news of thy dishonour, perhaps thy death, had reached me! Merciful God! sustain me in this hour!"

She buried her face in her hands, and seemed overcome by grief.

"Nay, Kate, dearest Kate, I am here! Fitzroy is before you; it is your Rupert who clasps you to his heart. Speak! I am by you, and fold you in my arms!"

He cast off his fisherman's coat and bonnet as he spoke, and she looked up revived at his voice, and beheld, indeed, the face of him whom she had mourned as dead or lost to her for ever.

"Fitzroy!"

"Fitzroy, and none else, dearest Kate!"

"How could you put me to such a trial?" she cried, almost weeping on his shoulder.

"Nay, forgive me! I planned it not beforehand; but seeing, as I approached you, that you knew me not, the fisher's coat and cap I borrowed of him who fished me from the water having disguised me even to your keen-eyed love, I was tempted to try your affections."

"Nay, Rupert, did you doubt it?"

"I have no cause," he said, embracing her.

"And did you escape as you just now said?"

"Yes. My brig was taken by a strange fatality after I had sunk the pirate vessel. All my men were slain—none, save Edwin and myself, left alive. I, from some strange thirst for blood that possesses Kyd—for I can divine no other motive—was condemned by him to walk the plank. I succeeded in snatching a cutlass, for the purpose of selling my life dearly as might be, but at length was driven overboard. I had, before sunset, seen a fisher's skiff a mile off at anchor; and, rising far from the vessel towards her bows, struck out, when she had passed me, towards it. It so chanced that he had seen the brig lying to, and pulled towards her to find a market for his fish, when I hailed him and was taken on board. Knowing that the pirate would steer directly to this

port, I bribed the man to bring me hither through the Staten Island Sound: and here I am once more in your loved presence."

She mused while he spoke, and then, as if unconscious of his presence, said,

"Robert, poor Robert, to what height of crime has passion led thee—to what abyss will it plunge thee! Thou wert my first, my only love! As some wild vine clings around a stately trunk, curling its tendrils about its topmost limbs, as if in one embrace 'twould clasp it all, so did I entwine my heart around thee, taking thy shape! But, at last, the tempest came and swept my stately oak away. Lonely and lost, I stretched my wounded tendrils on every side, seeking some branch to cling to; then fell down, and lay in ruins along the ground.—Ha, Fitzroy! Why is thy eye with such fierce scrutiny fixed upon me?"

The lover started, and then a moment or two hurriedly paced the sward ere, with hesitation and embarrassment, he said,

"It has reached my ears—how, it matters not—that, since my departure, you and this freebooter Kyd have met in private. From his own lips there fell dark words of favours given or received! The thoughts (forgetful of my presence) you now gave tongue to put to this, together, the one strengthened by the other, give—"

"Fitzroy, cease! why will you seek to cast a cloud over the heaven your presence makes so bright?"

"Forgive me, but some demon tortures me with suspicion, spite of my confidence in thy love!"

"Ha, dost thou know this Kyd?"

"Only as a pirate! There is meaning in your question," he said, earnestly. "Who is he other than he seems?"

"To keep the secret from thee would be doing injustice to my pride of spirit. I have pledged my father to marry thee; I look upon thee as my husband; I will keep nothing from thee."

"Do you not love me, Kate?"

"If I had never loved till now, I should love thee, Rupert, next to my life. I have told thee the secret of my former love, and thou didst say thou wouldst take the half of my heart if thou couldst get no more!"

"I did, dearest Kate! The intensity of my love is alone my apology for intruding upon the sacredness of an earlier passion! Yet I thought thou hadst forgotten this—"

"I had—I but speak of it now. It is forgotten."

She now seemed to struggle with some powerful emotion, and then said quickly,

"The Kyd—is—is Lester!"

"By Heaven! your words have solved a strange feeling that governed me when I was in his presence to call him by a familiar name! But—"

"He is Lester—and Lester is 'the Kyd.'"

"He fled to sea I have learned, strangely leaving his title, wealth, and home. A pirate?"

"A pirate."

"How learned you this?"

"Through the sorceress Elpsy, and, more recently, through himself."

"You have met him, then?"

"I have, Rupert."

"He pressed upon thee his former passion?"

"He did."

"And you—"

"Fitzroy, enough; I will not be interrogated. If you doubt me, I am unworthy your love; you to suspect my truth, unworthy mine."

"Forgive me, Lady Catharine! Yet you met?"

"For a moment. I told him I was betrothed to thee, and he left me, as I believe, to pursue thee."

"This accounts for his vindictiveness. Pardon me if I have wronged thee. You do not hear."

"I was thinking of Lester," she said, with unsuspecting frankness.

He gazed upon her absent countenance a few seconds, struck his temples with vehemence, and groaned with anguish. Suddenly he turned towards her and said, with the sternness of grief mingled with reluctant jealousy,

"Lady Catharine of Bellamont, answer me in pity, by the love I bear you, by the troth you have plighted me! With all his insatiate avarice and thirst for blood, his moral baseness and his numerous crimes, does there not linger in the embers of your earlier passion one single spark a proper wind may kindle into flame?"

"There is deeper meaning beneath your words than floats upon the surface," she replied, with dignity; "my woman's pride should rise in my defence, and meet with scorn the foul suspicion that lurks beneath them! But I will excuse you. I will think you soured by the recent loss of your brig, and so forgive you."

"This is no answer, lady! This Lester or Kyd, I well know, loves you! Thinking me dead, he soon will press his suit. By soft words, vows, and deep protestations of innocence and promises of reform, will he seek to reinstate himself in your affections—if perchance they are forfeited! He is rich, noble, and smooth-tongued. I am, as now you see me, a shipwrecked mariner, with only my commission and my sword! Nay, you have even cast the loss of my vessel in my teeth!"

The handsome young man, with clouded brow, grieved and goaded spirit, turned away as he spoke, and, folding his arms, gazed moodily on the waves as they unrolled at his feet, tossing liquid diamonds upon the sand. Each word he uttered only served as weapons against him. Suspicion and jealousy will never turn back the current of woman's love if it has once flowed a contrary way. Gentleness will govern it and guide it; but violence opposed to it will, like a dam, convert it into an ungovernable cataract. The attachment between Kate Bellamont and Fitzroy was properly, so far as impassioned love was concerned, only on one side. Fitzroy, or Mark Meredith, had held her from youth in his eye as the star both of his ambition and his love; and when, by a fortuitous circumstance, five years after his departure as an humble lad from the fisherman's hut at Castle Cor, he found himself commander of the vessel destined to convey her to the New World, he, unrecognised by her, and under the name he had assumed, wooed her with diffidence, yet with the perseverance of a love that had strengthened with his strength and grown with his growth. She, in the mean while, was pleased by his attentions, flattered by his devotion, and not insensible to his love. She knew him only as Captain Fitzroy, who had been knighted for his gallantry on the sea, and whose youth only prevented him from attaining the highest rank in the navy. The earl (for the lovely Countess of Bellamont had deceased the year before) seconded the young hero's addresses, anticipating for the youthful knight the highest name and rank.

At length, on the day they arrived in New-York Bay she gave him the promise of her hand, though her heart went not with it. It was her father's wish that she should marry, and she herself believed Lester no longer lived. Fitzroy was therefore accepted; and though she did not regard him with the devotion of love, she esteemed him as a friend; while the gratitude she felt for his attachment he mistook for love. Although such second attachments are not altogether consistent with the character of a true heroine, yet they are not inconsistent with the character of a true woman!

The betrothed lady looked upon her lover with surprise as he concluded, and said mildly,

"This is strange! You are not wont to yield to moods of jealousy, Fitzroy!"

"Jaundiced and jealous I confess I am, until you answer me!" he said, with nervous impatience.

"Thou art ill, I fear," she said, laying her hand upon his shoulder tenderly; "and what at other times I might take deep offence at, having given no cause, I'll now regard as the workings of disease tinging your speech, which else were fair and worthy of you."

"I am not sick unless at heart," he said, burying his face in his hands. "She loves me not," he uttered to himself; "she loves me not! I have been blinded by my own deep passion! She loves me not! The hopes, the dreams of years are dissipated! She loves me not!"

All at once he turned to her and said,

"Once more forgive me, dearest lady! I was not myself just now; I knew not—I knew not what I said! 'Tis over now; forget it!"

"I knew thou wert not thyself, and felt not thy words," she said, with sweet dignity. "Nay, shrink not from my embrace, Rupert."

"I am unworthy!"

"Nay, Rupert, I know your thoughts! You do yourself injustice. So far as my love can be bestowed on any one, it is bestowed on thee. That I think of Lester as he once was with tenderness, I do not deny; that I now pity and fear him, you need not be told. Still I do confess to you, that, were he Lester now, and worthy of his name, my love would be his did he claim it. But we can never be aught to each other more. Be jealous no longer! 'Tis unworthy thee; and I will henceforth give thee no cause."

"Nay, lady," he said, with seriousness, kneeling and taking her hand, "though I love thee truly and tenderly; though I have loved thee since my heart was first awakened to passion; and although this hand has been the goal of my ambition, and is at length surrendered to me, and is thus clasped in mine, yet I resign it, and here tender back to thee thy reluctantly given troth, and leave thee free!"

"Thou wilt not, then," she said, playfully, after hesitating in what vein to reply, "deign to accept



my heart, while one little corner is reserved for the memory of a youthful passion?"

"Nay, if that little corner alone were wholly mine, and the rest were sacred to that youthful love, I should feel myself most happy—most blessed. But not that I may be free, but that thou mayest be, do I make this sacrifice."

"Then it need not be made, Rupert. For it would be also a sacrifice to me."

"Do you say that truly?" he asked, with warmth.

"Truly."

"I am then happy."

"You will not be jealous again?"

"No. But it was my love."

"I confess you had cause. But it exists no longer. Let us return to the Hall."

"I will escort thee there, and then, as I should have done ere this, aid the earl in preparing to defend the town, for it doubtless will be attacked ere morning by Kyd. Lester—Lester, said you? How strange, how very strange! An earldom thrown away; the haughty, highborn noble! Nay, I can scarce believe it. Yet, now I call him to mind, I do recognise the noble in 'the Kyd.' At another time, fair Catharine, you must explain this mystery to me!"

They advanced towards the Hall as he was speaking, and were soon lost in the shadows that were cast by the trees, that stretched their gnarled limbs on every side, covering the lofty roof of the White Hall with a canopy of the densest foliage.

They found in the library the Earl of Bellamont, attended by the captain of the Rondeel and two or three of his council, who were also the principal citizens of the town, in some excitement on account of the reappearance of the Ger-Falcon under the pirate flag. In a few words Fitzroy informed them of the particulars of his meeting with the pirate, the loss of his vessel, and his own escape.

"To the Rondeel, Captain Van Hooven!" said the earl to the commander of the fort, with animation, as he ended. "We shall doubtless be attacked. Let nothing be wanting to defend your position and protect the town. Attended by these gentlemen and Captain Fitzroy, I will visit the other forts and stir the citizens to arms. Watch any movement from the brig, and fire at whatever moves on the water."

They instantly separated: the captain hastening to his fort, the governor and his party to visit the town and the two other forts, situated the one at the Countess's slip, and the other at the foot of the Wall-street, and Kate was left alone. When their departing footsteps had died away, she felt an undefinable curiosity to watch the motions of the vessel, the appearance of which created such a sensation in town and hall. She therefore hastened to her boudoir and took her station upon the balcony. The night had already set in, and the brig lay dark, still, and indistinct where she had at first anchored. All was silent in that direction, and her nicest sense of hearing could not detect a ripple on the water. Did she listen for one? Did she expect one? Did she hope, yet fear; doubt, yet believe, that the outcast Lester would seek her presence once more? There is a difficulty in saying what emotions passed through the maiden's mind. It is puzzling to tell which way the beam of a lady's thoughts will turn when a lover is in each scale! Yet it by no means requires a skilful analyzer of the female heart to tell which of two lovers—a first one unforgotten, though discarded; a second unloved, though endured—will be most in her thoughts. It has ever been a noble, yet weak trait in woman, to love unworthiness, and rarely has there been found a man, however black with crime, however despised by his fellow-men, who has not been, in his lowest estate of guilt and degradation, the object of some woman's devoted and undying love. Such love for such beings seems to be allied to the tender pity with which angels regard the whole erring race of mortals! It is not intended by these reflections to say anything of Kate's feelings that can be construed into disloyalty towards Fitzroy: they are only intended to show that women are good, kind, forgiving, charitable, and somewhat capricious creatures, and that, in loving, they obey the heart rather than the head.

Kate, after watching the still waters of the bay for some time, and catching no sign of movement, hostile or otherwise, on board the vessel, descended the steps of the balcony to the lawn, and, advancing across it, approached the gate that led towards the inn of Jost Stoll, in the direction of which she heard the voices of many citizens congregated there and discussing the crisis of affairs. As she came near it it was opened, and a person hastily entered and closed it after him. She started at the intrusion, and was about to turn towards the Hall, when the stranger called her by name in a low tone.

She stopped and surveyed him an instant as he slowly approached.

"Edwin Gerald, is it you? You are then safe! I congratulate you with all my heart!"

"I am, lady," said the youth, sadly. "But—" and he hesitated.

"You bring me news of Fitzroy's death."

"You speak full lightly of it," he said, with surprise, "did you believe such my message. I know not whether he lives or not. Our vessel was taken by Kyd, who now holds it. Captain Fitzroy and

myself alone were spared. He for a dreadful death, I for the more dreadful fate of surviving him."

"You were attached to him?"

"I was. Now that he is no more, I have no longer reason for this disguise, and here—"

"Nay; do nothing rashly, fair sir; if you were about to tell me he loved me, I can tell you he has told me so himself within the half hour."

"How? Explain!"

"He is alive and well."

"Alive. Heaven, thou art kind! most kind! How was it?"

"He was driven overboard, as you believe, but was saved in a fisherman's boat. He will be rejoiced to learn of your escape. How was it, fair sir?"

"Kyd retained me prisoner to bear a courteous message to his lady love. I swore, to purchase my life, to be its bearer when he came to port. For this purpose I was landed above the town on the western side, and guided by him to this gate. He now awaits an answer to this billet. This done, I am released from my solemn oath to him. Fitzroy lives, said you, lady?"

She heeded not his words, but snatching the note from his hands, said hurriedly,

"Wait my return."

She flew to the balcony and shut herself in her boudoir, and, drawing the curtains close, half opened the letter, when she hesitated.

"Nay, it must not be! 'Tis wrong. I will return it.—But perhaps it contains something I should know! I should like to hear what the lost Lester can say. He comes, too, in such gentle guise! I will read it!"

The next moment it was open in her hand, and she read with a fluttering pulse,

"DEAREST KATE,

"Let me see you for a brief moment just as the moon rises, by the linden that grows at the foot of the Rondeel. My temporal, nay, spiritual welfare hangs upon your answer. I am penitent. I appeal to you as to a heavenly intercessor! Refuse not this request, lest the guilt of my suicidal blood fall on your soul.

LESTER."

She looked at the lines till they seemed composed of words of fire. Her brain reeled, her heart swelled, and she seemed torn by emotions of terrible power.

"Heaven guide me in this strait!" she cried, falling impulsively on her knees and clasping the letter in her folded hands. "Sudden and strange events crowd thick upon me, with tales of murder foul, and this newborn jealousy of Rupert—whom I know not if I love or no, yet whom I should love had *he* not risen from the grave, as 'twere, to step between me and my newly-plighted troth! My brain is crazed!"

She rose to her feet and walked the room thoughtfully, with the letter in her hand, now looking at it with tenderness, now crumpling it with disdain. Suddenly she stopped and said with energy,

"The struggle is over! I will meet him."

She stepped to the balcony, beneath which the young secretary stood, and said calmly,

"Return, and say I'll come."

She withdrew herself hastily into the boudoir as she spoke, and the youth left her to bear the message back to the bucanier, and thereby redeem his oath and regain his liberty.

The moon was just rising above the Heights of Brooklyn, when, wrapped in a mantle, her face concealed by its folds, thrown over her head in the shape of a hood, Kate Bellamont left her boudoir by the door that communicated with the main body of the house. With light and hasty footsteps she traversed a long passage that led to the library. She cautiously opened the door, and, evidently to her surprise and pleasure, found no one within. She crossed it to an opposite door, which she opened with the same caution, and found herself in the family chapel, dimly lighted by two wax tapers placed upon a small stand before a crucifix. She gathered the folds of her mantle closer about her form, and, looking round the obscure apartment to see if she was observed, knelt a moment in silent prayer before the altar, looking heavenward as she prayed, as if she sought guidance and protection. She then rose to her feet, and hastily walked towards a door partly concealed by tapestry, and passed through it into a conservatory verdant and fragrant with rare plants. A little wicket inserted in the Venetian blinds which surrounded this floral gallery she pushed open, and issued into the open air and upon a lawn that extended close up to the foot of the glacis that environed the Rondeel. She paused an instant ere she crossed the green, as if hesitating. The delay was but for an instant; for she directly afterward moved forward with a rapid pace towards a lofty tree, the topmost branches of which towered above the walls of the fort. Its foot was buried in deep shadow, the rising moon having only touched, as yet, the upper wall. Beneath it walked a man with a hasty and impatient tread, who at every third step

stopped and looked towards the Hall with anxious scrutiny.

"'Tis past the hour; the moon is mounting high in the heavens, and yet she comes not!" he said, as he paused and surveyed the darkly-shaded lawn that stretched between him and the mansion. "Cursed oversight in making this boy my messenger! He has doubtless told the tale of Fitzroy's fate, and she'll not meet his murderer. Ha! a form! Hers in a thousand! She comes! Now aid me, all good angels!"

He advanced to meet her as she came near the tree, and said in a low tone, lest he should be overheard by the sentry on the parapet above,

"Most kind, dear Kate! Forgive the rude and angry haste with which I last left you! You are indeed kind! My strong love told me my appeal would not be made in vain."

He kneeled at her feet as he spoke and attempted to take her hand. She drew back with dignity, and said with firmness,

"Let this distance be between us. You have desired to see me!"

"I have. Is there no hope for me, Kate?"

"How mean you?"

"Do you believe me so far steeped in guilt that heartfelt penitence for what is past will not replace me in the seal of your affections, which I do confess most justly I have forfeited? Is there no hope of pardon for the penitent?"

"The thief found mercy on the cross. Heaven still forgives the penitent."

"And will you be less indulgent? I speak not now of heaven. The seat I have lost is in your heart! It is there, sweet Kate, I would be replaced!"

"Cease, sir. I came not hither, Robert, to hold converse on this theme. Your epistle, which brought me here against my will and better judgment, discoursed other language; atonement to Heaven, not to me. If other than your soul's weal be your aim, then is our conference ended."

She turned to leave him as she spoke, but he caught her hand.

"Stay! be not so hasty! I do confess there is some ground for Rumour's widespread tales, but I am not so guilty as she'd make me. Is there no pathway to your forgiveness?"

"Yes, when you have atoned to Heaven!"

"None to your love?"

"None!"

"Nothing's proved!" he cried, with animation; "I bear the king's commission against piracy."

"The more guilty then, that, under cover of it, you commit piracies. This king's commission! Do not all men know 'twas given thee because you knew the haunts of a dangerous horde of pirates in the Indian seas, having been one of them, though now their foe and rival; and, by giving thee employment, to keep thee out of mischief?"

"'Tis false!"

"I've heard enough. More I could tell thee of recent occurrence."

"Ha, dost thou know—has the boy told—"

"Nothing. I know enough. Your guilt is written out upon the sky! He that runs may read it! Go on; slay and pillage. You have a love of human blood, and, like the wolf, who, once tasting it, will touch no other, glut thyself till satiate."

"Kate!"

"Away, sir! Speak not, come not near me! Thy touch, thy very glance is pollution."

She turned to fly towards the Hall as she spoke, but, darting forward, he caught her by the arm.

"By the cross! if you will act the queen, then will I play the king. I have been an angler, and have learned from it a lesson in love. My letter to thee was but a hook cunningly baited with a gilded fly I knew you would snap at! I have given thee line enough, and now will draw thee in captive!"

He threw his arm about her as he spoke, and was bearing her around the bastion of the fort towards his boat, which, by making a circuit from his vessel round the bay and approaching the town on the North River side, he had succeeded in running into a little cove west of the Rondeel unperceived. The surprise of the maiden was at first so great as to deprive her of the power of speech. But, as she was borne round the fort by his strong arm, she said, in a tone of perfect self-command,

"Unhand me, Lester! Release me. I forgive you."

"You are *mine*, proud beauty!" he replied, through his clinched teeth. "I have been the plaything of thy pride full long."

"Unhand me, sir."

"Pardon me if I am somewhat rough," he said, ironically; "on shipboard I will atone for it."

"Heaven, then, has given me this in my hour of need," she cried, snatching a pistol from his belt, and by a sudden effort disengaging herself and springing away from him several feet. As she spoke she levelled it against his person.

"Ha, ha! my pretty one, you do the heroine excellently. Give me that pretty toy, sweet Kate," he said, advancing towards her; "it becomes not a lady's fingers."

"Back, sir," she replied with resolution, presenting it full at his breast.

"Nay, nay, then."

He sprung upon her at the same instant to secure the weapon, when she cried,

"God forgive me, then!" and fired.

Instantly he released her wrist, which he had seized, with a cry of pain mingled with an exclamation of rage and disappointment.

The report of the pistol was answered by the roll of a drum on the Rondeel, and was followed by the noise of alarm and confusion in the town. Kate fled like a deer towards the Hall, while Kyd, wrapping his cloak about his left arm, which was bleeding freely, glided beneath the locust-trees that surrounded the Bowling Green, and gained his boat.

"Shall we pull back by the way we came?" asked the coxswain.

"No. Give me the helm."

The man obeyed his stern voice, and, after the boat had cleared the rocks, he steered her directly across the line of fire from the Rondeel towards his vessel.

Without hesitating, the men pulled steadily and in silence in the face of the fort, and, as the moon was now up, they could not remain long undiscovered. In a few seconds they were challenged from the battery. There was no reply. A second time they were hailed, but still the boat kept on her course straight for the brig.

"Fire!" cried a voice. "'Tis 'the Kyd.'"

Instantly, one after another, the heavy guns opened upon them from the parapet, but the balls went roaring through the air high above their heads. Still steadily and silently the boat kept on her course. A discharge of firearms followed with more effect. Three of the eight oarsmen were shot dead as they sat, and scarcely one escaped unhurt. The desperate helmsman sat stern and silent, and only with an impatient wave of his hand bid them row on. A second volley reached them, and but three oarsmen remained seated and labouring faintly at their oars. Kyd left the helm and caught the fourth oar as the dead man dropped it, and, cheering them on, soon reached his brig, amid a third volley that rattled around him like hail.

"Ship your oars," he cried, as they came alongside, rising to his feet.

Not a man moved.

"Spring to the bows and fend off!" he shouted.

There was no reply; the men sat upright, and swayed their bodies to and fro, and still pulled at their sweeps!

The boat, at the same instant, came against the brig's counter with a shock, and the three men were thrown from their seats backward to the bottom of the boat. They were dead! He had been pulling an oar the last few seconds with corpses. He shuddered and sprung up the side.

Instantly the brig got under weigh, and, sailing up East River to Hell Gate, passed through the dangerous pass, and came to, not far from the Witch's Isle. A boat was lowered, and Kyd descended into it and landed there. As he entered the hut the witch was seated on the ground over a fire, rocking her body to and fro, and chanting a wild song.

"Welcome, Robert Kyd," she said, without turning round. "Umph! I smell blood!" she cried the instant after. "Thou hast been at thy old trade. Hast thou had revenge?"

"I have. His vessel is mine. Him I have slain."

"Did I not promise thee this?" she said, rising and speaking with triumph. "Now thou art come to do my will and to fulfil thy oath."

"I have seen her within the hour," he said, with settled hate.

"And she has scorned thee?"

"Yes. I tried love at first, but it would not do, and—"

"You then tried force?"

"I did," he said, ferociously.

"And she is now in thy state-cabin?"

"No. I bore her part way to my boat, when she drew a pistol from my belt and shot me here."

"And she—"

"The garrison was instantly in arms; the town rose clamorous; she fled like a deer, and mocked pursuit. I barely escaped to my boat, and reached my brig with the loss of every man. By Heaven! I believe a score of balls struck my person, yet they seemed to fall from my cloak harmlessly like hailstones."

"It was the amulet!"

"True, woman! Yet I was wounded by a pistol in this girl's hand. Your charm here failed."

"No. Did I not tell thee—if not, be it known to thee, Robert Kyd—that ne'er devil wrought a charm a woman may not undo. Ball from men can harm thee not, but if a woman use the weapon the charm is naught. What wilt thou now do?"

"Return to Ireland and lay claim to the earldom. Perhaps, when I leave my present course of life, she will listen to me. By the cross! I am ashamed to woo a noble maiden whom I have loved, and still love, so roughly."

"I will woo her for thee."

"Nay."

"I will not heed thy nay! She must be thine. Yet I like this determination to assume your earldom. Go bury your treasures that are here, in some safe place, and sail for Ireland. After thou art become Lord of Lester, they can then be removed, and enable thee to support thy rank with princely state."

"I will take them with me, Elpsy."

"Thou wilt lose them, then, if pursued by a cruiser and forced to desert your vessel. Bury them here, and, when thou art an earl, thou canst come for them thyself, and bear them home without suspicion."

"Perhaps you are right; none will see in the Earl of Lester the outlaw Kyd. Save thyself and Kate of Bellamont, the secret is locked from all human knowledge."

"Her pride will keep her from revealing it, and my projects for thy aggrandizement seal my own lips," said the sorceress. "Here are the treasures which for three years thou hast accumulated," she added, removing a stone from a crevice in the rock against which her hut was built, and exposing, by a torchlight, a cavity therein filled with vast piles of gold and silver coins, countless rings for the ears and fingers, cups of chased gold set with precious stones, bracelets, ducal coronets sparkling with diamonds, and innumerable jewels of every description. He surveyed the valuable deposite, and then, shaking his head, slowly said,

"They have cost much blood, Elpsy."

"Therefore should they be well kept. Take them with thee, and hide them in some secret place, easy of access from the sea, till thou hast need of them."

"I know a spot where three tides meet, which will be a safe repository for them."

"Call thy men and bear them to thy vessel."

"Wilt thou go with me to perform the rites?"

"I have other things to do in town. I have made a discovery there that has filled my soul with joy! Ho, I will tell it you when you return, for it concerns you, boy. Cusha shall go with thee. Slave, appear!"

From an obscure corner of the hut the hideous African made his appearance, his malicious and cunning features glowing with the hateful look they habitually wore.

"Slave, take with thee thy charms and follow thy master here! See that the gold is buried with all the rites of our mystic art."

He prostrated himself to the floor, and left her to obey her commands.

In a short time the pirate's crew had conveyed the treasure from the hut to their boat, and thence on board the brig, and before daybreak the vessel was many leagues up the Sound, steering an easterly course. The succeeding morning she doubled the easternmost cape of Long Island, and, altering her course to the southwest, stood towards Sandy Hook under a stiff breeze from the southeast. By night she entered the Sound between Sandy Hook and the south side of Staten Island, and, steering directly across the mouth of the Raritan, anchored close to an elevated peninsula that formed the northern shore of the river.

The report of the pistol fired by Kate Bellamont not only alarmed the garrison and the town, but brought out the earl from the library, whither he had just retired with his friends, after having taken the rounds of the threatened town.

"What means this, dearest Kate?" he cried, meeting her flying across the lawn.

"Nothing, nothing, father!" she gasped, flinging herself into his arms.

"My child is not injured? What is this firing and sudden alarm? Why are you here, and flying as if for life?" he asked, with anxious solicitude.

"The Kyd—the pirate!" she exclaimed, with indignation.

"Ha!" he cried, bounding forward towards the Rondeel, and thence instinctively to the nearest shore where he anticipated he should meet him. A boat was just putting off. Without delay he hastened back to the Rondeel, and, taking the commander by the arm, led him to the rampart, and said,

"There is the pirate's cutter. Bring your guns to bear upon her."

The result of the fire is already known. When he saw that the boat reached the brig, and that she immediately got under weigh, he left the fort and returned to the Hall to seek his daughter. On his way he met Fitzroy, who had just arrived at the Hall, after having, through the governor, chartered a Bristol ship that was lying in the East Dock ready for sea, with the intention of putting on board of her the guns of the Rondeel, and attacking Kyd as he was at anchor in the harbour.

"She can be got ready for sea in twenty-four hours, my lord," he said with animation, as he met the earl. "But what is this confusion and heavy firing?"

"You are well met, Fitzroy! Go to my daughter, while I return to the fort! The bucanier has landed, so far as I can learn, and like to have carried Kate off, I believe. But I have had no time to inquire."

"I will see her at once," said Fitzroy, leaving him hastily.

"You will find her in her boudoir. I will remain and see that our defences are kept up! Ha! the pirate is under sail, and is moving up the Sound."

"He is going to sea again, doubtless; but, as our guns command both the channels out, he has taken the way by Long Island Sound."

"Heaven grant it be so!" said the earl, as he entered the Rondeel.

Kate Bellamont was walking her room with a rapid pace, a flushed cheek, and a flashing eye as Fitzroy entered.

"Ha, Fitzroy, you have come," she said, with the tone and bearing of Elizabeth of England when insult had touched her pride. "I am glad to see you! I have been insulted."

"Then you shall be avenged!" he said, taking her hand.

"Do you promise it?"

"By the love I bear you, I swear it!"

"Avenge me—wipe out the stain my woman's pride has suffered, and I will be thy slave!"

"Nay, dearest Kate, I would rather thou wouldst be my bride," he said, smiling and kissing her cheek.

"Rupert Fitzroy, touch me not! Think not of love! When thou hast captured this freebooter—when I behold him bound at my feet so low that I can place my foot upon his neck, I will then be thy bride. Ay, to the music of his clanking chains shall be performed the marriage rites."

"If not my own honour, thine at least demands his capture and death. Catharine of Bellamont," he said, kneeling before her and solemnly elevating his hands, "I swear by the cross that is the emblem of our holy faith that thou shalt be avenged!"

She looked on his animated features a moment steadily with her full black eyes, and then said,

"'Tis enough! By thy urgency in this matter thou wilt show thy love for me, and by my determination to press it to its issue thou mayest construe mine for thee. I am now calm. Here is the flag I have worked for thee. It bears thy initials, with the arms of my house, conjoined. Take it, and beneath it win thy bride."

"Lady, it shall be done, or I will never see thy face more!"

"Ay, it should be for the world's weal that it should be done," she said, with eloquent fervour, "when every breeze comes tainted with the smell of blood; when wondering crowds, each with a tale that outweighs that his fellow bears, in nimble speech deal out to one another hourly marvels! When in bolts, bars, and locks before unknown in this peaceful land, each household, for leagues along the coast, seeks ill security against midnight dangers! When the fisherman fears to launch his boat, and towns count their strength and weigh the odds (as if a foe were thundering at their gates) against sudden surprise. When he who spreads such terror is captured, I will then be thine!"

"For this very enterprise am I now preparing. Within this last half hour I have got a ship that sails

like the wind, which, with arms and ammunition on board, will place me on a better deck than that I have lost."

"Why did you delay to tell this, and lead me to blame you in my thoughts for supineness?"

"I would have kept it secret from thee till I had sailed."

"Wherefore?"

"Having," he said, with hesitation, "some regard for your former love—friendship, I should say."

"Love it once was, therefore speak out and call it love!"

"I feared this might lead you to dissuade me from it. But this sudden attitude you have assumed fills me with surprise and admiration."

"Rupert Fitzroy, have you not been told from what peril I was but now saved? Have you forgotten how, in a jealous fit, you have unawares let drop that Robert Kyd, with his false lips, had said—no matter what—but, being false, can never be forgiven? Until this man is captive and lying at her feet in chains, Catharine of Bellamont's hand shall not be given in marriage. You have heard me, Fitzroy?" she added, retiring to the farther part of her room, as if she would be left alone.

"I have, and you shall be obeyed," he replied, leaving the boudoir.

The next morning but one a merchant-ship was hauled from the dock in which she had been several weeks lying, undergoing repairs; and two guns from the Rondeel, and several from the other forts, were placed on board of her, making eight in all. With a bold and willing crew, most of whom had volunteered on the service, at sundown she got under weigh, under the command of Fitzroy, accompanied by Edwin his secretary, and put to sea in search of the bucanier. She sailed through the Narrows instead of Hell Gate, a fisherman having informed him, as they were getting under weigh, that he had seen a vessel answering the description of the pirate sailing towards the mouth of the Raritan; and as sufficient time had elapsed to have enabled him to sail up through the Sound and double Montauk Point, Fitzroy determined to go in pursuit of the vessel mentioned by the fisherman.

The promontory off which Kyd had anchored at the mouth of the Raritan, now called Perth Amboy, descended on the south side to the river above named, with a gentle inclination. On the east it was washed by the waters of Staten Island Sound, and the island which gives name to it stretched east of it, with its high wooded bank far towards the north, till it terminated in New-York Bay. On the summit of the promontory was a small rustic church, with a slender spire towering high above the surrounding trees and humble hamlets. Around the church was a primitive graveyard, with here and there the unpretending tombstone which designated the last resting-place of some English Protestant or French Huguenot. From this rural cemetery was a wide view of island, main, and ocean.

It was twilight when the bucanier's vessel anchored beneath this promontory. At midnight the little churchyard presented a singular scene. In a deep shadow cast by the moon on the west side of the lonely church, were gathered a group of men—the pale light shining broadly upon their rude costume and savage features, mingled with the red flame of dark lanterns, giving them a singularly wild appearance. They were standing with superstitious awe round an open grave, from which the fresh body had just been dishumed and was now lying white and glaring in its shroud upon the ground not far off. Over the grave stood the wizard Cusha, and beside it glittered heaps of treasure. Apart walked Kyd in thought, occasionally turning to the grave, and then walking with quicker pace and uttering his thoughts half aloud:

"Though reason tells me there is nothing in it, and laughs at charms, spells, and incantations curling her lip with incredulity, I cannot get the mastery o'er this superstition, but live its very slave, using the instruments of her dark craft as if my destiny and they were linked, yet scorning while I use them."

"All's ready, sir, black wizard and all," said the mate, approaching him and interrupting his meditations.

"You treat too lightly these ceremonies, mate! There may be deeper meaning in them than you dream of."

"If the infernal pit is at the bottom of them, they are deep enough! This negro wizard looks ugly enough to be the devil's grandfather."

"No more, Loff. Is all prepared?"

"All."

"Then give orders to the men."

"Ay, ay, sir. All hands to bury money!"

The pirates gathered round the grave, part of their number thrown into the shadow cast by the tower of the church, the remainder exposed to the full light of the moon. And moon scarcely ever shown on stranger or wilder scene. The negro was seated sullenly, with his head on his knees, upon the pile of grave-dirt, nor had he spoken until Kyd now approached and addressed him.

"If, as thou dost profess, dark slave, power to thee is delegated, by her whom thou hast served, to deal with beings of another world, by this amulet I wear I command thy service and obedience!"

As he spoke he held the amulet up to his view.

The wizard crossed his hands on his breast, and bowed himself to the ground.

"Cusha is thy slave. Speak."

"There lies heaped beside thee countless treasure—jewels, stones of price, gold and silver coin untold—each ounce of which has been purchased by its weight of human blood. What is so dearly bought should be safely stored and guarded. Perhaps some future day, aweared of the ocean, we may give up our roving life and settle down honest country gentlemen. We shall then need it to buy men's tongues and memories! Now perform the mystic orgies prescribed for such occasions."

The wizard slowly rose to his feet, and walked deliberately three times around the grave, the pirates giving back as he walked in superstitious alarm. The third time he began to chant, in a low key, unintelligibly; but, gradually rising in wildness and distinctness, he, with strange gestures and contortions of form and face, broke forth into the following chant:

"Beelzebub, prince of air!  
Mortals worship thee."

He elevated his arms as he sung this in an attitude of wild devotion.

"Apollyon, prince of sea!  
Mortals worship thee."

He stretched his arms towards the sea as he chanted, and a sudden dash and roar of its waves upon the beach rose to the ears of the listeners with an appalling sound.

"Sathanas, prince of earth!  
Mortals worship thee."

He struck the earth with his foot as he repeated the words, and then, prostrating himself, kissed the ground.

"Lucifer, prince of air!  
Mortals worship thee."

The wind seemed to sigh through the trees and to howl about the church tower as he recited the mystic verse. Then, with a singular union of all the gestures and ceremonies he had hitherto used, he chanted, in a tone that echoed like a chorus of demons through the surrounding forests,

"Prince of air, earth, sea and fire!  
Mortals bow and worship thee!"

"It's an accursed lie!" suddenly cried Loff, the mate, who, with the pirate crew, had been an appalled listener and spectator of the scene.

"Hist!" exclaimed Kyd, in a suppressed voice, forcibly grasping his arm; "a word of incredulity will destroy the spell."

"I have too much respect for my soul, captain, to let this black son of darkness sell it to the devil so glibly."

"Silence! Observe him!"

The wizard again began to chant, acknowledging the presence of each element by some appropriate gesture as he named it:

"By thy four great names we call thee!  
By the power thou hast conferr'd,  
Let our voices now be heard!  
By fire we call on thee!"

He then seized a torch held by one of the men, and waved it to and fro above his head.

"By water we call on thee!"

From a casket that he had placed beside him, he took up water in his palm and cast it into the air.

"By air we call on thee!"

He waved his arms upward, and a sound like the rushing of wind passed over them, and every torch flickered with the sudden agitation of the atmosphere.

"By earth we call on thee!"

He cast into the air a handful of the grave-dirt, which fell back to the ground with a hollow noise like the rumbling sound of an earthquake.



Every man stood appalled. Suddenly he ceased, and took, with much form and ceremony, a black cat from a pouch slung at his waist. He elevated her in one hand, while in the other he held a drawn knife above her, and chanted, turning the animal slowly round,

"No spot of white  
Must meet the sight!  
Thrice shall it wave  
Above the grave!  
At a single blow  
The blood must flow!"

He waved his knife at the repetition of the second couplet thrice above the grave, and at the close of the last line severed the head of the animal, which, with the body, he dropped into it. Instantly there issued flames and dense smoke from it, which first lighted up the scene wildly for a moment, and then left it in murky darkness. When the black volumes of vapour rolled away, the wizard was standing astride the grave in the attitude of a sacrificer, his blood-dripping knife in his outstretched arm: he then began to chant,

"'Tis kindled, kindled!  
Lucifer our prayer has heard!  
In his name  
Feed the flame!  
If dies the fire, the charm is broken!"

Then turning to Kyd, he cried,

"The book with name not to be spoken!  
The book, the book to feed the flame,  
The book, the book none dare to name!"

"Think he means the Holy Bible, Captain Kyd?" demanded Loff, with religious horror.

"Silence!" cried the pirate chief.

He took from the folds of his cloak as he spoke a thick book, and gave it to the wizard, who received it with three several prostrations. He then tore it in pieces and cast the leaves into the grave. Instantly blue flame rose from it to a great height, thunder rolled in startling peals, while the most vivid lightning hissed and glared around them; at the same instant the bell in the church tower tolled without human aid with a sound so deep and solemn, so wild and unearthly, that every man was filled with consternation and horror. The wizard alone stood unmoved; and standing with one foot upon the treasure, chanted,

"One half the sacrifice is o'er.  
In the grave your treasure pour!  
He who seeks must seek again,  
He who digs will dig in vain!"

"Thus much is over," said Kyd, advancing. "Pour the coin and jewels into the grave."

"Shiver my timbers! if I understand this!" exclaimed Loff. "There is more of Old Hoofs to do in the matter than I expected, or you wouldn't have caught me here. Umph! this black wizard smells of brimstone!"

After all the treasure was poured into the grave, the wizard, looking, as the moon shone upon his form and features, more like a demon than human, stood across it, and looked around malevolently upon the pirates as they leaned upon their spades prepared to refill it. After a moment's silence he began, in the same wild, monotonous chant:

"Safe from every human eye  
Shalt this gold securely lie;  
When a mortal who has seen  
The treasure placed the grave within,  
Shall in the grave alive be thrown:  
This done, the spot shall ne'er be known.  
And finish'd then the rites will be,  
Mortal, thou hast sought from me!"

"If I had my doubts before about his being leagued with Beelzebub, not one have I left now," said Loff, with indignation. "I can see a fellow walk a plank or seized up to the yardarm, but I am too tender-hearted to see such a thing done as he hints at in his infernal rhymes."

The whole pirate crew seemed to be animated by the same feelings. At first general consternation prevailed; but, gathering confidence, they whispered together, casting the while revengeful looks towards the wizard. Suddenly, by one impulse, they laid their hands, without speaking, upon him, and cast him headlong into the grave; and then, acting as one man, filled it up with its living occupant in a moment of time. The first action of Kyd was to spring forward and rescue him; but the determined attitude of his men, whose minds were too highly wrought up to be held under control, checked the impulse. He stood by till the grave was smoothed over, so that

not a vestige of it remained, and was then about to command them to return to the brig, which was seen through the trees lying at her anchor near the land; but ere he could give the order, the flame of a gun fired from her flashed upon his eyes, followed by a loud report, that echoed in many a deep, rumbling note along the wooded shore.

"A signal of alarm!" he cried; "to your boats all!"

He hastened forward to the verge of the promontory where the prospect was unobstructed, and, casting his eyes down the narrow strait that opens seaward between Staten Island and Sandy Hook, beheld not a mile off, coming round the headland, a large ship, her tall sails glancing like snow in the moonlight. Loud and clear rung his voice hastening his men to the brig, while gun after gun flashed and thundered from her, calling them on board to her defence. In less than five minutes three boats loaded with the pirates put off from the shore and pulled swiftly in the direction of the brig. Kyd stood up steering the foremost one. But the wind blew steadily and strong in from sea, and the strange ship came on so fast that she was soon no farther off from their vessel than they themselves. It was plain she knew what she was about.

"Strain every nerve, men!" he cried, in an even, determined voice that reached every ear, while its coolness was more effectual in inspiring confidence than loud shouts would have been. "Pull together and steadily! She must not reach the brig before us. Now, all together! Lively, lively! A few strokes and we shall reach her."

But they were yet several hundred yards from her, and the stranger came ploughing his way down without taking in a sail or altering his course, save just enough to enable him to cut off the boats, the approach of which, as well as the relative position of the brig with the shore, he was able to discern by the aid of the moon, which filled the atmosphere with brilliant light. In the mean while the brig cut her anchor, and, swinging round, with her diminished force directed a feeble and irregular fire towards her. But she kept on her course in majestic silence, without returning it and without apparent injury; and, ere the boats could reach their vessel, she sailed in between it and them, and poured a broadside into each. The brig felt the fire in every spar; but the boats, being so low in the water, escaped without injury, the shot flying high above the heads of the pirates, and crashing among the forests on the shore. The brig was now evidently in the power of the ship; and Kyd, finding that it would be impossible to reach her, shouted through the smoke, that settled thickly over the water, to his mate Lawrence whom he had left on board with but a dozen men,

"Let them not take her! Blow her up, and to your boat!"

His voice was distinctly heard by every man both in the brig and ship.

"Hard up! hard, hard!" was instantly heard in the clear voice of Fitzroy; and the ship, which was steering so as to lay the brig aboard, fell off and stood in towards shore. The moment afterward a small boat was seen to put off from the brig, which a few seconds afterward blew up with a terrible explosion, suddenly turning night, for many miles around, into broad day, and shaking the earth with the tremendous concussion. For an instant the air was filled with a shower of missiles, and trains of fire lighting up sea, forest, and boats with a momentary and wild glare; then all sunk into darkness, and the pale moon once more struggled to assert her right to the empire of her own gentle light, which had been so suddenly invaded.

"Now, my men, we are left to our own resources," said Kyd. "There is not water enough for this ship to pass up this narrow sound. Let us pull through it. Who our pursuer is I have no idea: a small corvette, sent expressly by the king in pursuit, doubtless. But let us do our best to get off. We shall find some trader in the harbour, and will cast ourselves on board of her. There is no other chance!"

His address was received with a shout, and the four boats, Lawrence having now joined them, began to pull northward through the Staten Island Sound. The ship, in the mean while, after recovering the ground she had lost in avoiding the explosion, stood steadily on after the boats, which were not a quarter of a mile ahead, occasionally firing a bow-chaser at the little fleet. The chase continued for half an hour, the pirates keeping the lead gallantly, and, being enabled to cross shoals by their lighter draught, occasionally they got far ahead, while the ship was slowly following the circuitous channel.

"She has a pilot who knows the ground," said Kyd, as he beheld the ship navigate safely an intricate reach of the narrow passage. "If he clears the Red Bank we have just come across, he will do what ship has never done before—go through into York Bay! Now she comes to it!" he cried, with animation, rising in his boat and watching the advance of the ship across the shoal. Suddenly he exclaimed, while a shout went up from the men, who were so interested at this crisis of the pursuit that they forgot to pull at the oar,

"She has struck, and heavily too! There goes her fore-topgallant-mast like a pipestem!"

"She will off with the flood," said Lawrence.

"It is full flood now. She will stick there as long as two timbers hold together, unless they pitch their guns overboard," said Loff.

"Ho, my lads, all!" suddenly cried Kyd, addressing them; "she is now ours. Back water! Let us carry her as she lies!"

He was answered by a loud hurrah, and the boats' heads were instantly turned towards the ship, which was about half a mile off. The boats shot forward with velocity, pushing before them vast surges which their ploughing bows turned up from the surface. They had got within half their distance of her, when boats were lowered from every part of her, and, as if by magic, filled with men.

"They are on the alert! He who commands her knows his business!" said Kyd, who, as his boats approached, had stood up in the stern of his own, with his drawn cutlass extended towards the vessel, inspiring his men and panting for the conflict. But, at this indication of their readiness to receive him, he suddenly cried, turning and waving his hand to the boats in the rear,

"Hold on!"

He then surveyed the enemy, and said in a calm, deep tone, every accent of which was expressive of his determined purpose,

"There are six boats, with at least twenty men in each; we number fifty or sixty only. Nevertheless, we must fight them!"

This proposition, notwithstanding the previous ardour of the crew, was received with a universal murmur of dissent.

"We are willing to pull towards New-York Bay, Captain Kyd," said Loff, "and take possession of some of the craft there; but there are too many odds against us to risk fighting yonder barges. Besides, on the bows of the largest boat I can see a gun relieved against the wake of the moon."

"It is too true. We shall be likely to have the worst of it," said Kyd, suppressing his rage, which was ready to burst forth at the refusal of his men, and satisfied on a second glance that it would be useless to attempt, with his ill-armed crew, to capture a flotilla of boats so well prepared both for attack and defence. "Put away, and let us get through this narrow sound at our best speed! If they pursue us we will lead them a long chase."

He was answered by a cheer from his men and a simultaneous dash of the numerous oars into the water, under the force of which the boats moved up the strait with direct and rapid motion. At the same instant a gun of heavy metal was discharged from the bows of the headmost boat of their pursuers, loaded with grape; but the leaden shower fell far short of them; while, at the same instant, with loud cheers, all the barges left the side of the ship and commenced hot pursuit of the pirate boats.

"A twelve-pounder by its report," said Kyd, "and it would have done mischief if it had been elevated half an inch higher. Pull, men! they will shoot better the next time!" he shouted, waving his sword with animation and cheering them on.

Away they flew, pursuing and pursued! At one moment the ship's boats would be almost upon them, when the pirates would shoot from the main channel into some creek or bayou intersecting the marshy shores, and re-enter the Sound far above them. At intervals the twelve-pounder broke with a loud roar upon the night, echoing among the woods of Staten Island and the Jersey shore in multiplied reverberations; and, like a hurricane, its cloud of bullets would rush along the air, or plough and skip along the surface of the water, but with little effect. On they went, pursuing and pursued, neither yielding or showing signs of fatigue. At length the moon hung low over the western horizon, and shone with a cold, watery look; in the east flakes of light spotted the sky, and the darkness began to break before the dawn. Gradually the ashy hue of the sky became clearer, and changed to a delicate pink; and then, waxing brighter, grew to vermilion, till the whole eastern sky blushed with the incipient dawn. The clouds that hung about the path of the coming sun began to turn out edges of gold, and the sky to the zenith to radiate with beams of glorious dyes. The whole heaven, even down to the low west, had changed its livery of blue for the rose, while the jealous moon, disdainful to look on a rival whose coming was so gorgeously heralded, threw a snowy veil over her brow, and sunk, scarce visible on the brow of morning, beneath the horizon! Suddenly up rose the sun and filled the world with light!

As the day approached the hostile parties became plainly visible to one another, and were able to count each other's force. At sunrise the pirate's boats entered the bay of New-York, leaving Staten Island on the right, and closely followed within a third of a mile by their pursuers, pulled directly towards the town, which, with its wall and Rondeel, was seen rising from the water a league distant. Not far from the shore, between the Governor's Island and the town, lay three or four small Dutch yachts at anchor, waiting for the change of tide to take them up to Albany. It was evident, from the course he took, that it was the intention of Kyd to throw himself on board one of these vessels, and effect the escape of himself and crew. This seemed to be the idea suggested to the mind of the leader of the pursuing boats, and he urged his men forward in the most animated and eager manner. At the stern of his launch, which took the lead, and in the bows of which was mounted a twelve-pound carronade, floated a silken flag, on which were conspicuous the initials of his name and the crest of the house of Bellamont.

"By the cross!" exclaimed Kyd, as the sunlight struck on this flag, and a passing breeze unfolded it to his eye as he turned to watch the chase, "'tis the same flag!"

"What flag?" inquired Loff, taking a pocket spyglass from his jacket.

"Ha! you have a glass! Give it me!" he cried, hastily. "By Heaven!" he cried, after a moment's surveying, "'tis the same! The very initials. Now the wind opens it. 'Tis the same with the earl's

crest! What can it mean? This youth Edwin may have become her champion since I so foolishly gave him his liberty! He, and none else, commands the barges! But there is too much skill displayed in directing the pursuit to emanate from a boy like him! Yet why this flag? Among the dense mass of heads beneath I cannot distinguish the leader's features!"

"Shall we board the nearest yacht?" asked Loff. "We shall soon be close upon them."

Kyd turned and found that he was within a mile of three sloops that lay under the guns of the Rondeel. He looked back and saw that the barges were coming with increased speed, and would be up with him by the time he could reach the vessels. He cheered on his men with every gesture and word of encouragement; but, with all their exertions, he perceived that at every dip of their sweeps his pursuers gained on him.

At length the carronade from the leading boat opened upon them for the first time since sunrise and with terrible effect upon the nearest boat, commanded by Lawrence. Nearly every bullet told in the plank or flesh; and the ill-fated boat, which seemed to have received the whole charge from the piece, instantly went down, leaving (so effectually had it been converted into their coffin) only Lawrence and one of his comrades floating wounded upon the surface.

"For the yacht—never stop to pick him up! for the yacht! Your lives depend on your reaching it!" shouted Kyd, with desperation. "Pull, ye dogs! Strong! together all! Bend to your sweeps like devils! In five minutes we'll be on board."

But the crew of the sloop, consisting of three or four men only, were already aware of their danger; and, cutting their cable, hoisted their jib and mainsail with what haste the occasion demanded, and, aided by the wind and tide, moved swiftly down the harbour beyond their reach. The other vessels followed this example as rapidly as possible; and, ere the pirates could get alongside, they were sailing away at a rate that defied pursuit.

"We are foiled by the devil's own aid!" said Kyd. He paused a moment. His pursuers were close upon him, and, save the shore, there was no avenue of escape. To delay and fight with his reduced number, even if his jaded and dispirited men would consent to it, would have been certain capture and death. For an instant he paused, and then said, in the calm, deliberate tone he was accustomed to use in times of most imminent peril,

"We must pull in shore and fight our way across the town to the East River, where we can cut out one of the vessels in the dock. There is no alternative! The town's people will scarce resist us! Will you land and let me lead you, men?"

"Ay, to the shore!" was the general cry; and swiftly the boats cut their way towards the foot of the Rondeel, which they approached on the western side, out of the range of its few remaining guns. Close in hot pursuit came the barges, pouring in upon them a constant and fatal discharge of firearms. The carronade was no longer fired, as its rebound so materially checked the speed of the boat that it soon fell behind all the others.

"Leave your oars and draw your cutlasses!" cried Kyd, as the boats struck the beach near the spot where he had landed when he attempted to convey Kate Bellamont to it. It was not far from the Rondeel, on the west of the governor's house.

With a shout the pirates bounded on shore, about forty in number, and, hastily forming in a body, headed by Kyd, with drawn sabres and pistols, were rapidly led by him around the base of the fort and across the lawn in the direction of Jost Stoll's tavern and the West Dock. The garrison in the Rondeel was so taken by surprise at the boldness of the bucaniers, that, before they could prepare to dispute their landing, they were moving at a rapid and steady pace across the grounds in front of the White Hall towards the wicket that led into the town. But here they were met with unexpected resistance. At the head of full eighty burghers, whom he had hastily armed and assembled to oppose this strange invasion from the sea, the Earl of Bellamont advanced upon them through the gate.

"Be men!" cried the earl to his command. "Remember, though unused to arms, you now fight for your homes, your wives, your children, your own lives, and all ye hold dear. Charge them ere they can form their body!"

The governor himself rushed forward, sword in hand, as he spoke, the sturdy burghers with a shout pressed on, and the two parties were immediately engaged in a sanguinary conflict. The pirates fought with demoniac fury, while the townsmen, excited by the smell of powder and the clash of steel, dealt blows that told wherever they fell. Nevertheless, the bucaniers, by long habit, discipline, and indifference to danger, got the better of them, though scarcely numbering half their force, and drove them, in spite of the cries and commands of the earl, towards the gate. Everywhere Kyd was present, and high above the sounds of conflict was heard his voice cheering and encouraging. But, though victors for the moment, they were soon confronted with a fresh and better disciplined foe. The barges had by this time landed their crews, and they now advanced upon them with loud cries and in overpowering numbers.

"Face them! Fight each man for his own life!" shouted Kyd, as, on turning from the discomfiture of the burghers, he beheld the advance of his pursuers.

The combat was now waged with terrific fury. Now the victor, now the vanquished, Kyd attacked and defended with a degree of skill and courage that, employed in a better cause, should have had a better result. At length his men, being broken into small parties, were overpowered, and

either slain or disarmed. He alone defended himself against a numerous division that had pressed him towards an oak, the branches of which grew near the window of Kate Bellamont's boudoir. They would have cut him down by mere force of numbers if they had not suddenly been restrained by the commanding voice of Fitzroy, who hitherto had been engaged in another part of the field.

"Hold, men! Back, and leave him to me!" he cried, advancing towards Kyd through the lane opened to him by his men.

"Ha! does the sea give back its dead?" cried Kyd, with horror, dropping his red cutlass and gazing upon him with mortal fear. "Can it be! Speak, I conjure thee, if thou art flesh and blood!"

"Monster, this day shall terminate thy career of crime!" replied Fitzroy, preparing to cut him down.

"By the mass! flesh or blood, I'll have a bout with thee!" cried Kyd, reassured by his voice, seizing a sabre from one of the men he had slain. "Ho! for Kate Bellamont!"

"Ha, villain! For *thyself*, then!"

A fierce broadsword combat ensued between them, and continued for a few seconds with equal skill and energy. At length the sword of Fitzroy caught in the strand of hair about Kyd's neck and severed it. Instantly the amulet it sustained dropped to the ground. Kyd's confidence and courage seemed to fail him at once, and, striking at random, he was soon disarmed by his cooler adversary, and his life placed at his mercy.

"Strike!" said the bucanier, despondingly.

The victor was about to obey, when his uplifted arm was arrested by a shriek from the balcony, and the voice of Kate Bellamont crying,

"Spare him! save him, Fitzroy!"

The point of his weapon sunk at his feet, and he bent low to her in acquiescence; then turning to his men, he said,

"Bind him. My lord, what shall be done with him? He is at your disposal."

"Bear him to the prison of the Rondeel, there to await his trial!"

Silent and desponding, yet still holding himself with a dignified and lofty bearing, the captive pirate chief was borne, with his few surviving followers, to a dungeon in the Rondeel, while the earl, Fitzroy, and Edwin (who had not participated in the contest) together entered the Hall, leaving their victorious party to clear the ensanguined field of the melancholy traces of the morning's fight.

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## CHAPTER VI.

When guilt had prospered with him, all the  
love  
She bore him faded, as the floweret fades  
Before the simoom's breath. But when the  
tide  
Of fortune turned, and on its bosom bore  
His barque, dismantled by misfortune's  
blast,  
To ruin's coast, youth's warm affections  
came  
Once more with freshened vigour, and the  
heart  
That in a happier hour deigned not to save,  
Now felt it leaned on him, and him alone,  
And broke when that support was gone."

M<sup>C</sup>LEOD.

Three weeks after the events just recorded, in a cell built within the massive wall of the Rondeel, sat the terrible pirate chief whose name had so long spread terror throughout the world. It was nearly midnight. He stood by a grated window, that looked towards the moonlit bay, in deep meditation, occasionally starting, with clanking chains, as some burning thought set his brain on fire. All at once he fancied he heard a noise, as if some one was carefully turning the lock in the door of his cell, wherein was set a grated wicket, through which the jailer could communicate with him. He started and fixed his eyes in the direction whence it proceeded, when he saw it slowly open and a muffled figure enter. The intruder then closed it carefully and threw off the mantle. It was Kate Bellamont. She was pale, and her noble features wore a sad and anxious look.

"Thou hast sent for me, Lester? so thy jailer told me."

"I have," he said, in the subdued tones of a chastened spirit. "I would kneel at thy feet and ask forgiveness for all the wrongs I have done thee!"

"Thou hast wronged thyself, not me, Lester! I forgive thee."

"Thanks—a thousand thanks, kind lady!" he said, overpowered by his feelings. "I dared not hope you would come to see me. Oh, lady, let me not presume too much. To-morrow morning I am to be led forth to receive my sentence. It will be death."

"Oh, speak not of it. I know it. Oh God, that I could stay the hand of justice!"

"Do you feel so much for me?"

"Feel I my heart bleeds for you," she cried, with eloquent pathos. "Oh, Lester, Lester, why have you brought this on yourself?"

"Will you forgive me?"

"May Heaven forgive as freely."

"Lady—Kate—dearest Kate! I am about to die. The approach of death fills my soul with wondrous thoughts, while penitence, like gentle dew, has strangely softened my heart. The thoughts of youth come over me like a last-night's pleasant dream, and I feel as I did when we were children together! Can you have forgotten our childhood?"

"Lester, no! Robert, Robert, you will drive me distracted."

"Nay, but did you not love me then?" he said, tenderly taking her hand and drawing her unresistingly to his heart.

"Oh, sustain me, my good angel!" she cried, burying her face in her hands; "my heart, my poor heart!"

"Kate, this world and I have parted, and we soon must part. I will therefore address you frankly. I love you even as I first loved you! You have for years been the spirit of my dreams, the sun of my waking thoughts. Tell me at this solemn hour—see, the dawn of the last morning I shall ever know on earth is streaking the east—speak, and let the thought of it bless my dying hour—do you love me still?"

"Oh, Robert, ask me not. I am betrothed—I—"

"Nay, I ask not for the confession of thy love for me; I look not upon you with human love; but with the feelings of a dying man, who longs for some cheering word to sweeten the draught of death. Tell me, sweet Kate, that you love me still!"

She could not resist the solemn earnestness of his appeal:

"Yes, yes!" she cried, bending her head upon his shoulder and bursting into tears.

He gazed on her fair cheek fondly, but his penitent lip sought not to profane it. His thoughts too plainly were subdued by contemplation of his approaching fate. He felt as he spoke. But a ray of grateful pleasure at her words illumined his haggard features, and, speaking softly to her, he said,

"I know not how to thank you for this, dearest lady!"

"Oh, Lester, must you die?" she cried, without heeding his words. "Your immortal spirit! Oh, I tremble for its fate!"

"I have thought much of it of late! It seems now, as I look back, as if the last five years of my life had been passed under a spell. I am penitent, it is true, but feel there is no hope for me!"

"There is, there is!"

"I know the boundless arms of your holy faith will reach even to the gates of perdition; but I am beyond their reach. Yet I die composedly, since you have told me you love me still!"

"Talk not so, Robert; I will pray with you!" she said, earnestly.

And he knelt beside her as, with impassioned fervour, she addressed to the Virgin a simple and eloquent prayer for the soul of him who was so soon to become a habitant of the world of spirits. Both remained silent a few moments after she had ceased. Their souls seemed to have blended in one by flowing upward together on the holy tide of prayer. Suddenly, prompted by the gentle feelings that filled his heart, he turned to her and said,

"Dearest Kate, one thing I would ask of you; 'tis bold, but there is no earthly feeling or human emotion united with it. Consent to unite yourself to me here—not by words of marriage—not as an earthly bride—but that our souls may be one hereafter!"

"Robert, tempt me not; the current of my young love has rushed back upon me in an irresistible flood; therefore, if you love me, tempt me not!"

"Nay, Kate, dearest, 'tis but a word, and the last request you can have the power to grant me. Let me take your hand; 'twill be a spiritual union only."

He gently took her passive hand in his as he spoke, and said in a voice of love, that vibrated along every chord of her heart,

"Will you be mine?"

"Yes, yes!" she replied, with great agitation.

He kissed her cheek as she answered, and at the same instant a deep voice said,

*"I pronounce you man and wife! Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder!"*

The maiden shrieked and would have fallen to the floor but for the support of *her husband's* arm, who, turning in the utmost surprise, beheld Father Nanfan standing without and looking upon them through the grated window of the cell.

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## CONCLUSION.

The morning sun shone brightly into the court-chamber in the White Hall where the Earl of Bellamont was wont to administer justice. It communicated with his library, and occupied the whole of the western wing. Its windows opened to the ground on two sides, while on the other two doors communicated both with the library and chapel. Surrounded by the chief citizens and dignitaries of the law sat the governor at a table, on which lay the papers relating to the piracies of Kyd. Before him stood the pirate chief in chains, silent, composed, and dignified, if not somewhat haughty in his bearing before his foes. He was there to receive his sentence. The lawn was crowded with curious spectators, and the windows filled with those most anxious to be close to the scene. In the back part of the room, whither she had silently stolen through the window, stood Elpsy, gazing on the proceedings with folded arms and lowering brows. Through the half open door that led to the chapel was a tall dark lady of majestic person, dressed in widow's weeds, her countenance marked with the deep lines of long-continued sorrow. It was "the Dark Lady of the Rock." Not far removed from her, within the hall and near where the earl was seated, stood Fitzroy, and by his side Edwin his secretary. At a small desk covered with black velvet, on the right of the earl, sat the priest Nanfan.

At length everything was prepared, and the prisoner was commanded to stand forth and receive his sentence. The noble judge addressed him briefly, recapitulating the numerous crimes that had made his name a by-word of terror throughout the world, and which had been proved upon him, and then proceeded to execute the death-warrant. By accident, there was no pen within his reach. The bonnet of the bucanier lay on the desk before him, and caught his eye as he turned for one.

"Ha," said he, "I will pluck one from this sable feather, which has been the terrible pennon under which his dark crimes have been perpetrated. 'Tis a fit instrument to seal his doom."

He drew from the bonnet a falcon's plume, and with a few rapid strokes of the knife prepared it for use. He was about to sign the paper, when a solemnly prophetic voice, whence no one could tell, said,

*"Beware of the black plume!"*

The earl arrested his hand, and every eye turned in the supposed direction of the voice; but, discovering no one, they turned again towards the earl. A second time he bent his head to sign the paper; but, ere he had touched the sheet, a wild scream curdled the blood in every man's veins, and Kate Bellamont rushed from the library into the hall, and cast herself upon the shoulder of the prisoner.

"Father, hold!" she cried, lifting her face and fixing her wild eyes upon him with a terrible gaze, "hold! you shall not murder him! He is my husband!"

"*Thy* husband!" repeated Fitzroy, springing forward to release her from the affectionate embrace of Kyd.

"*Her* husband, earl!" said the priest, rising and speaking with triumphant malice.

"Woman," said Fitzroy, with forced calmness, "art thou his wife?"

"Who speaks?" she cried, wildly, putting her hair back from her face and staring at him as if she recognised him not. "Ha, Fitzroy, is it thou? Oh, I thought I loved thee! Yet I would have been thy bride if Heaven had not made me his! Yes, Robert, I am thine—thine!" she added, with wild passion.

"My child wedded to a pirate—"

"Who calls him a pirate? He is Lester's earl!" cried the poor maiden.

"Lester's earl!" cried the countess, rushing forward. "'Tis my son, then—my son!"

"Nay—back. Listen, all of ye!" said the sorceress, striding into the midst. "I can tell ye a mystery and solve it, my lord! This pirate was the Earl of Lester; but, being convinced that he was a bastard and the son of a fisherman, fled from home and became what you see him!"

"This young Robert of Lester?" exclaimed the earl; "now do I recognise his features!"

"Interrupt me not!" she said, harshly. "The true Lord of Lester was a lad called Mark Meredith, and there he stands, a third time risen from the sea to thwart my schemes! Countess of Lester, in him behold your son!"

The lady looked a moment and scanned his features with increasing amazement.

"*My lord—himself!* The mother's heart owns her son!"

And Fitzroy, to his surprise, found himself clasped for the first time in a mother's embrace.

In a few brief words the sorceress explained everything that has already been unfolded in the preceding pages in reference to the characters, save her own relation to two that were present.

"And who art thou, woman?" asked the wondering earl.

"The fisher's daughter, and the leman of Hurltel of the Red-Hand, and the mother of Robert Kyd!"

"My mother?" repeated the pirate.

"The fisher's daughter?" exclaimed the priest, rising with astonishment.

"Ay, Hurltel of the Red-Hand! I was thy leman! This pirate is the fruit of my illicit love and of your guilt. Ha, ha! do you not know me? Earl of Lester, behold before you, in Father Nanfan, Hurltel of the Red-Hand! Ho, ho! when I told thee yesterday that Kyd was thy son, and that thou must join me to make him wed the noble heiress of Bellamont (as the devil has given thee an opportunity of doing), I did not tell thee that I was the mother of him. So, so, thou wilt swing for it!"

"And thou shalt die for it!" he cried, snatching the sword from its sheath at Fitzroy's side and rushing upon her. Ere his hand could be arrested the point entered her bosom.

"If I hang I am well avenged on thee for it!" he cried, drawing forth the reeking blade as she fell, with a curse upon her lips, and expired.

A few words will bring the story to a close. Kyd was sent to England and executed; but Kate Bellamont died of a broken heart ere the vessel that bore him had half crossed the Atlantic.

Fitzroy was not long in discovering in Edwin his secretary no less a personage than Grace Fitzgerald; and, his affection for Kate Bellamont being chilled by her singular marriage with Kyd, he the following year, as Earl of Lester, made her his bride. Thus her true love was rewarded; and it cannot be denied that, although she loved him very much as lowborn, yet she was by no means sorry that he had proved noble.

## THE END.

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# Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation corrected without notes.

The following misprints have been corrected:

Page 140, "ita" changed to "its" (Till it fulfil its destiny?)

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