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Michael Scott**

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## **THE CRUISE OF THE MIDGE.**

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "TOM CRINGLE'S LOG."

[Transcriber's note: Author is Michael Scott]

"ON LIFE'S VAST OCEAN DIVERSELY WE SAIL,  
REASON THE CARD, BUT PASSION IS THE GALE."  
ESSAY ON MAN

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH;  
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## THE CRUISE OF THE MIDGE

### CHAPTER I.

#### A HAIRBREADTH ESCAPE.

I must either have been weaker, or the opiate stronger than the doctor expected, for it was near midnight before I awoke. Although still very low and faint, I felt much refreshed and invigorated. For some time I lay enjoying the coolness of the night air, and listening to the chirping of the crickets, in the crevices of the lofty roof. There was not the smallest noise besides to be heard in the house, and every thing without was equally still. At my bedside, on the right hand, there stood a small old-fashioned ebony table, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with several phials, a bottle of wine, and glasses on it, an open book, the leaves kept down on one side by a most enticing uncut pine-apple, and a large brown wax candle, burning dimly in its tall massive silver candlestick. A chair of the same substance and antique character, and richly carved, was set beside this table, over the high perpendicular back of which hung a seaman's jacket, and a black silk neckerchief, as if the wearer had recently been reading beside me, and very possibly watching me. I listened—all continued silent; and I turned, but still with great pain, towards the open window or balcony that projected into and overhung the neighbouring thoroughfare. The moonlight streamed through the casement, and, with a sensation of ineffable pleasure, I gloated on the bright stars beyond, deep set into the dark blue sky, while the cool night breeze, charged with the odour of the pine-apple, breathed gently, and oh! how passing sweetly, on my feverish temples!

From the pain experienced in moving, I only turned half-round, and therefore lay in a position that prevented my seeing more than the upper part of the large window; but I gradually slewed myself, so as to lie more on my side. "Heaven and earth, there he is again!" My heart fluttered and beat audibly. My breathing became impeded and irregular, and large drops of ice-cold perspiration burst from my forehead and face; for *there*, with his head leaning on his hand, his arm resting on the window sill, and motionless as the timber on which he reclined, his beautiful features upturned towards the pale cold moon, and full in the stream of her mild effulgence, sat the apparition of young Henry De Walden! I tried to speak, but my breath failed, and a sudden giddiness came over me. "I am gone at last," thought I. "I know what his coming twice betokens—Henry, I will soon be with you!"

\* \* \* \* \*

I had fainted away. When I again opened my eyes, I was so dizzy and confused, that I did not know where I was. My wound was giving me great pain, and I turned with difficulty on my other side, towards where the table stood. Believing that I was fast dying, and that I should soon be "a thing immortal as itself," I did not even start when I saw the same figure, whose appearance had so agitated me before, now seated at the table, apparently reading. "The third time," thought I—"it should be so—it should be so—Heaven receive my repentant soul!"

At this moment the door opened, and some one, dressed like a seaman, slid into the room. As he approached the table, the apparition of the young midshipman slowly lifted its head, and peered into the darkness. From the dimness of the taper it appeared unable to make out what approached, for the ghost now took up the snuffers, and snuffed the candle as scientifically as if it had once inhabited the tallow-tainted carcass of a scene-shifter.

"Confound these old-fashioned snuffers, the spring is broken!"

My eyes opened at this, wider, I believe, than they had ever done before, and my ears tingled. "What a speech from an inhabitant of the other world!" thought I.

"Oh! is it you, Joe Peak?" quoth the handsome spectre; "why do you steal in and startle one so, you little villain? Hush—off with these heavy shoes of yours, and come and sit down, will ye?"

Master Joey, who, I knew, was in the body as yet at any rate, now came forward into the light, and drawing a chair, sat down fronting the apparition.

"Well, Henry, my lad, how is master Benjamin—better?"

"A good deal—if that old French medico has not poisoned him outright with laudanum. He has slept since twelve at noon—and what's the hour now, Joey?"

"Gone eight bells—so go and turn in, De Walden, and I will take my spell here."

"Thank you, and so I will. But here, take a glass of vin-de-grave;" and, to my great wonderment, the spectre and man of flesh hobbled and nobbed together with all the comfort in life. "Have you seen Lennox this afternoon?"

"Yes, I saw him about eight o'clock," said Peak; "the alcalde has given up all the money that was taken from"—here he nodded towards me—"when he was stabbed by the raggamuffin he had fleeced."

"If ever I set foot within a gambling-house again," thought I,—but finding myself their topic, I lay still, and listened attentively.

"How very extraordinary," continued Joey, "that Lennox, on his way from Mr. M——'s to the wharf, should have stumbled on the little man, with the ruffian in the very act of rifling him."

"Why, he did not rifle me," said I, faintly. They both started, and looked towards me. "He did not rob me, for I distinctly recollect his starting off when he stabbed me."

"Ay, sir, that was to see if he had been sure in his blow—for Lennox came on him after he returned, just as he struck his stiletto into you the second time, as you lay on the ground, and after having, with the speed of thought, seized the *bolsa* with the doubloons."

"Wounded me twice! Upon my honour," said I, fumbling in my bosom, "and so he has—the villain."

Mr Peak continued—"From the marine's account, he himself had a tough job of it, for if he had not got hold of the knife, that had dropped during the scuffle, *he* would have been done for, in place of having *finished* the bravo."

"*Finished* the bravo! Is the man who wounded me dead, then?"

"Not yet, sir," continued Mr Peak. "But he cannot live, I hear—Lennox made sure work of it. He told me himself, that in his desperation he passed the knife into him, until his thumb was stopped by his ribs—none of your back blows, but a straight thrust—a regular pig-butcher's *slide*, sir."

"*Pig-butcher's slide!* how classical! If he had not deserved it," said I, "I would have been sorry that a fellow-creature's blood had been shed even in my defence."

"No, no," quoth De Walden, "it was, more properly speaking, in Lennox's own defence; for the villain, not content with killing you, as he thought he had done, and robbing you besides, would most assuredly have served the poor Scotchman the same way, if he had not been beforehand with him."

"But where is Lennox?"

"The town-guard, who had heard the row, came up just as he had mastered his opponent, sir; and the poor fellow, with great discretion, made no attempt to escape, so he is now a prisoner, along with the wounded man; but he is quite cool and collected, and the moment you can give your evidence, there is not the smallest doubt but he will be instantly released."

"And yourself, De Walden—by what miracle do I see you here?"

"By next to a miracle, indeed, my dear sir," said he, smiling; then, with an altered countenance, he continued—"The worst among us, sir, is not yet a fiend—no human heart is altogether evil—and I owe my life to the very man who tried to take *yours*—to the fellow who stabbed you, sir. But I am forgetting myself altogether—you must take your draught again, sir, and to-morrow forenoon you shall know all. In the mean time I must entreat you to take some rest, if you can, and I will go and turn in."

"I say, De Walden, what is that dropping there?"

"You are always making slops, Joe," said the other, as he rose to go away; "why, what *have*

you spilt next?"

"Spilt?" rejoined Peak, "hand me the light, for, by the powers, I believe that Mr Brail himself is *spilling*,—if not quite entirely *spilt*—see here."

True enough; the wound in my breast, which, although not deep, the knife having been stopped by the bone, was lacerated, had burst out afresh, either from my motion or *emotion*, and a black stream now trickled over the sheet that covered the red-leather mattress of the quatre on which I rested, and fell tap-tap on the floor.

"Run, run, De Walden—call the doctor's assistant—he sleeps in the next room," cried little Peak.

In a moment the Spaniard was with us, without his clothes, but *with* his bandages and lint, and as the operation was a very simple one, I was soon put to rights again; but I took the hint, and asked for no more information that night. De Walden now rose and wished me good-night, saying, as little Peak took charge of the deck, "You are to call Mrs Gerard at daylight, Joey—so clap a stopper on your jaw, you little villain, and don't speak one word, *even if he desires you.*"

"Pah, you be hanged, De Walden," quoth Joey.

So, satisfied and thankful for what I now did know, and in the hope of learning *all* to-morrow, I took the draught, turned on my sound side, and slept in Elysium.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next morning, when I awoke, the sun had already risen, and shone cheerily through the open casement. Several black female domestics were busy setting the room in which I lay in order, and a middle-aged respectable-looking white woman employed in sewing, now occupied the chair in which the ghost of De Walden sat the previous night, while busied in the ethereal occupation of eating pine-apple and drinking vin-de-grave.

Seeing I was awake, she spoke—"I hope you feel yourself better this morning; you have had a very quiet night, sir, Mr Peak says."

"Thank you, I do feel wonderfully refreshed. Pray, are you one of the family?"

"No, sir, I am the wife of the captain of the American brig, whose crew you, and your friend Mr Lanyard, saved from perishing of thirst."

"What! are you the poor woman whom I found in the cabin with her child?"

"I am, sir; and I hope heaven will reward you for it. My husband has been here often, sir, to enquire after you. His vessel is consigned to Mr Duquesné, sir; how happy he will be to find you so much better, when he calls at dinner time to-day!"

"How came it that I was carried into this house? Mr Duquesné's, I believe—a Frenchman, from the name?"

"You were wounded close to it, sir, and the marine who found you, thinking you were dying, requested the guard, after they had taken the man who stabbed you, to allow you to be carried in here; and I thank Heaven that you have fallen into such good hands, and that I have had it in my power to be of some use to you, as a sick-nurse."

To let the reader behind the curtain without more palaver, I shall bring my log up to the present speaking, in three words or so:—Mr Duquesné, in whose hospitable mansion I now lay badly wounded, was a French merchant of high repute in Havanna. He was a widower, and had an only daughter, Sophie, the beautiful brunette that I had seen hanging over De Walden at the easel. The manager of his New York establishment, an American gentleman of the name of Hudson, whose son was a lieutenant in the Yankee frigate anchored in the port, was at this time, with his wife and daughter, on a visit to him, having come down in the man-of-war. Mr Hudson had a twofold object in this visit; first, to arrange some mercantile transactions with his partner; and secondly, to take possession of a large coffee property, that he had lately inherited in right of his wife.

Sophie Duquesné and Helen Hudson were bosom friends, according to the rule observed in all similar cases; and as for the gentlemen of the family, Mr Duquesné, the papa, was a stout but very handsome man, apparently about fifty. He did not, in the most remote degree, fall in with one's notions of a Frenchman; verily I would have sworn he never had eaten a frog in his life. He was punctiliously well-bred, spoke English tolerably, and Spanish perfectly well; and, under Providence, I have to thank him that I am now inditing this authentic record. Had I been his own son, he could not have had me more tenderly cared for. Mr Hudson was a tall, sallow person, with a good dash of the Yankee in his outward man, and a little flavour of the same in his accent and phraseology; but an upright merchant, well read in the literature of the day, a tolerable linguist, and more liberal in his opinions than most of his countrymen. He had travelled a good deal on the Continent, and had spent three years in England, partly for his wife's health, and partly for the education of his only daughter, Helen. But his wife was, without exception, one of

the most ladylike persons I ever beheld. She was an heiress of one of the best families in Philadelphia, and in her youth had been a beauty; even now she was an exceedingly fine woman, very tall, with fine dark hair and eyes, and a most delicate complexion. Her smile was absolutely irresistible.

"But, Master Benjie, let us have a small view of Miss Helen Hudson, whom you have taken so much pains *not* to describe."

"All in good time, *mon ami*—all in good time; but here comes De Walden."

"Good morning, Mr Brail; you seem much better. Mrs Hudson has Dr Delaville's permission to offer you some coffee and toast this morning."

"Well, do you know, I think I could eat it."

Breakfast was accordingly brought, and I made a deuced good one. Excellent coffee, bread most beautiful, all the concomitants delicate in the extreme; even the cool water in the small porous earthen jar, that flanked a magnificent red snapper, was an unspeakable luxury. The very privilege of grasping the dewy neck of the little vessel, in the act of helping yourself, was worth a Jew's eye.

"So, Master De Walden, shake hands, will ye, that I may be certain you are really flesh and blood; and tell me how came it that you were not drowned, my lad, when you fell overboard on the bar?"

"The only way that I can account for it, my dear sir," said the handsome young fellow, laughing, "is, that I suppose I am fated to a drier death."

"I would not hear thine enemy say so," quoth I.

"However, my tale is easily told:—You remember, sir, that I was standing close beside you, when you were jamming the Spanish schooner on the reef?"—I nodded—"I got a regular souse, and must have sank some way, but I never lost my recollection. When I rose amidst the breakers on the bar, I found myself in the very thick of the wreck of the schooner, and, close to me, five poor devils clinging to her mainboom, with the sea breaking over them every moment. One of them presently parted company and disappeared; and finding that the spar was anchored by the topping-lifts and boomsheet to the hull of the vessel that had swamped, part of which as yet held together, I left it, and struck put for a large piece of wreck, apparently several deck planks, kept together by part of two beams, when the deck had blown up. I reached it, and found two men already on it,—one of them a Spaniard, the other an Englishman, as he instantly addressed me in English, in answer to some sudden exclamation of mine, on first clambering on to the planks. My surprise at this was great, and so was his, I make no doubt; but the unruly surge was more surprising than all, for another sea rolled over us, and the Spaniard alone remained. The next moment I saw my countryman struggling in the water close to me, but so weak that it was clear he must instantly sink if not succoured. As I looked, a piece of a sweep, belonging to the schooner, surged against me, and nearly drove me off my perch; I caught it, and shoving the blade to the drowning man, with some danger of being unroosted myself in the attempt, it reached him: he held on, and I got him once more on the planks. He was a gruff savage, however, and scarcely seemed to relish my saving him at all at first. He had been stunned, forsooth, by a blow on the head from a piece of floating wreck when he sank, or he could *easily* have resumed his place on the spar again without my assistance; and I daresay he said true, only I did not much admire his manners in the declaration, all things considered: indeed, I soon perceived that his physical endurance and bodily strength were greatly superior to mine. Both of us saw—as for the third of the trio, he appeared almost dead from fatigue or fear, and we could get no assistance from him either by advice or labour—that unless we could get the piece of the wreck we clung to out of the broken water, we must inevitably be washed off and perish. With one accord, we therefore contrived to hold up the blade of the sweep, so as to expose the flat of it to the land-wind, and in a few minutes we had the inexpressible delight to find that we had slid into smooth water. Cold comfort, you will say, to find ourselves drifting out to sea, on so frail a conveyance; but the escape from immediate and impending death made one of us at least most thankful to Heaven for the chance of escape, however slender, thus presented to us; although my judgment told me at the same time, that it would prove, in all human likelihood, nothing more than a reprieve, and that none of the longest. When the day broke, the breeze, as you may remember, shifted and blew on shore again, where, by the aid of the sweep blade once more, we landed about noon, faint from hunger and thirst, I don't know which was most violent, and fatigue. The seaman I had saved was a large and exceedingly powerful man, with immense whiskers, and his strong but very handsome features bronzed almost black by the sun. His limbs were beautifully moulded, and he had the chest and neck of a Hercules: both he and the other poor creature, who came ashore more dead than alive, were dressed in white trowsers, and shirts made of some blue cotton stuff, and wore the long Spanish knife, stuck through red silk sashes. 'What is to be done now?' said I to my new friend; but he by this time had got his wits about him, and pretended that he did not understand me, confining himself to Spanish in his reply. 'Now, that won't do, my good sir,' I said; 'you spoke as good English on these planks there as I do, and you understood me well enough when I called to you to lay hold of the blade of the sweep, when'—"

"I was drowning, you would say, young gentleman,' interjected he of the sash and stiletto. 'It

is very true I am an Englishman, and you will find me not ungrateful, although, Heaven knows, the life you have preserved is no boon to'—He checked himself, and proceeded—'But it is lucky for you that you have made a friend of me, for otherwise, although you have escaped the perils of the sea, you could not have eschewed the certain death that would now await you, from those you must mingle with, were it not that I am here to ward it off.'

"And time it was, indeed, for him to make some demonstration in my behalf; for the half-drowned devil, that we had been the means of saving between us, by getting the piece of wreck to shore, now began, like a wasp that you have picked out of a honeypot, to revive and whet his sting, and to fumble with his long knife, looking at me all the while very ominously. My protector, noticing that I shrunk behind him, for I was altogether unarmed, immediately said something sternly to his companion in Spanish; and the other continuing to grumble, he made a sudden snatch at his knife, and cast it from him as far as he could into the sea.

"Now, young gentleman,' said my preserver, 'I don't care who you are, although I conceive I am not wrong in surmising you to be a midshipman of that infernal felucca that has been the cause of ruining me and my hopes; but, notwithstanding, if I can help it, you shall come to no harm; so lend a hand, let us have a search for water—there must be some hereabout in the crevices of the rocks above high-water mark, brackish though it may be—and I will try to pick up some sea-birds' egg's. Antonio!' shouted he, in a voice of authority, to the other man who had hung astern, 'venga el fuego.'

"By this time he had several pieces of driftwood in his hand, and having secured the flint and steel which the Spaniard had in a small bag, that he carried at his waist for lighting his cigar, by jerking them forcibly away, he put them in his pocket; and the comely personage who had taken a fancy to scour his steel in my briskeet, and I, separated to look for water. It was not long before I succeeded, and setting up a shout, my two allies were soon beside me. The Englishman, having first soaked it in fresh water, now spread the tinder on the rock, where the hot sun instantly dried it. He then struck a light, and taking half-a-dozen wild sea-fowls' eggs out of the net-bag that he usually wore his hair in, we roasted them, and found them deucedly fishy, but palatable enough, under the circumstances; and having drank of the water in the crevice, we immediately proceeded, much refreshed, towards the bank of the river, where I had so unceremoniously parted company the previous night.

"I cannot tell with what bitterness of heart I turned as we left the beach, and, shading my eyes with my hand from the intolerable glare of the glass-like sea, beheld the felucca and frigate communicating in the offing. I felt like a criminal under sentence of death, and the time of execution close at hand. But I had no alternative. Escape was utterly impracticable; and, therefore, making a merit of necessity, I endeavoured to assume an air of confidence in my fierce-looking guide, although, Heaven knows, I was inwardly shrinking from him with instinctive abhorrence.

"When we arrived at the shore of the river, we found a group of five negroes, who were apparently watching the motions of the vessels out at sea. They and my conductors communed together in bad Spanish for a minute. I could not well make out what they said, hut it evidently related to some more of the schooner's crew having been saved, and presently we did see three miserable half-drowned-looking creatures shove out from beyond a small headland of the river above us, in a canoe, and paddle into the stream, with an intention, apparently, of crossing to the other side; but the tide was by this time too strong for them, weak as they were, and was setting them fast down on the bar.

"My English companion, seeing them in doubt whether to put about or push across, hailed. This made them lie on their paddles to reconnoitre us. They seemed instantly to make him out, and, with a shout of recognition, they pulled as rapidly as their exhausted state would let them towards us, until they floated in the dead water under the bank, within pistol-shot. But the sight of me seemed to stagger them a bit.

"'Quien es, quien es el muchacho?'—(Who is he—who is the youngster?)—said one of them.

"'One of the crew of the felucca, that fell overboard when the schooner went to pieces on the bar.'

"'But are you sure there are no more of the English villains on shore, captain?'

"'Quite certain—not one;—so approach, will ye, and take us off?'—But they still hung in the wind, until my protector, losing temper, sung out, with a ferocity in his tone and manner that made me start, 'You cowardly hounds—you beasts—what do you fear? You see the coast is clear—that there is no one near us. One *cuchilado* [blow with a knife], and the boy is dead at my feet.' Still they seemed irresolute, and, finding it bad policy to threaten men he could not reach, he tried the other tack, and turned to the man beside us. 'Speak, Pedro, and tell them I say true.'

"The man, who had as much reason to dread being left alone on the shore as we had, instantly did so, and with better success, for presently they took us on board, when with our aid the canoe was safely paddled across, and subsequently up the river; so that, by the time the night fell, we were again at the ruins of the house that had been burned in the attack, and abreast of the polacre brig, lying sunk where we had left her.

"I shall remember until my dying day the fierce looks of the survivors of the polacre's crew, whom we found employed in getting up a temporary roof of palm branches over a corner of the ruined building, when they saw me, and learned who I was. I began to think that it was by no means certain that the person who had promised me protection would be able to keep his word.

"As the night fell, a large fire was lit in the centre of the open space where the fetish temple stood, soon after which several negroes and three white Spaniards joined us. I soon gathered from their conversation that they belonged to a large slaver that lay farther up, and having heard the firing on the previous day, they had descended as scouts to ascertain the cause; but seeing the polacre sunk in the stream, and the conflagration on the opposite bank to where they were, they had waited until now before venturing across, and until they had been assured by a native canoe that the British force was entirely out of the river.

"Information as to their intentions was every thing to me, so I determined to conceal my knowledge of Spanish, slight though it might be; and as I looked round the circle of white desperadoes and black savages, on whom the large fire cast a bright but flickering glare, that made their bodily proportions and wild features flit and glimmer, as if they had been a dream of gibbering demons, I endeavoured to appear calm and collected, and to avoid fixing my eyes on the speaker, whoever he might be, although, God he knows, with what breathless and palpitating eagerness I drank in every word I could make out, while my alarm fearfully construed many that I did not understand.

"By this time it was quite dark, and my new associates having made a full meal on goat's flesh and yams, a large jar of Spanish brandy was produced, and each man had a portion served to him by one of the black fellows, who walked round the circle with a small drinking cup, hollowed out of a gourd, or calabash, followed by another dingy, more than half-naked devil, carrying a larger vessel of the same kind, full of abominably bad water.

"The Englishman now stood up in the centre.

"'Jose Ribas,' said he, in a steady determined tone, gracefully yet firmly poising himself on his right leg, and stretching out his right arm, while his left hand rested easily on his hip, as he addressed a very handsome young Spaniard, who sat on the ground nearly opposite to me, 'you know, and all here know, that to give you a chance of weighing the polacre, as well as to revenge your injuries, and the loss of your comrades, I attacked the felucca, and in consequence was lost on the bar.'—He paused.—'Yes, you see the whole surviving crew of the Santa Anna before you in these four men and myself; and you need not be told, that in consequence of the wreck of my schooner, I am a ruined man—don't force me to become a *desperate* one. You are now, Jose Ribas, commanding-officer of the Maria, in consequence of poor Isidoro Ladron's death, and you also know that you have not hands left of your own to run her out to Havanna. Now, I will join you with my people here, on one condition.'

"'You must join us on any condition,' grumbled several of the white Spaniards. 'We shall not go to sea with Jose Ribas as our captain, unless you are with us. He is *uno muchacho* [a mere boy]; so name your condition, captain; he *must* and shall subscribe to it at once.'

"'Then it is simply this—this young Englishman, saved my life when I was sinking—ay, after he had fallen overboard from his own vessel, and had nothing between himself and death but the plank he clung to. He saved *my life!*—You know, since the coast now swarms with enemies, that you will need *my help!*—you know it.'

"'Si, si—es cierto, cierto.'

"'Then this young Englishman must neither be injured nor left amongst the savages here. He *must* go with us.'—(Here some of the ruffians made very unequivocal demonstrations).—'Ay, you may threaten, but *it is* the price of my services.'

"Suddenly they all appeared to acquiesce.

"'So here, give me another knife.'—He crossed them—(Hamlet, thought I)—'Swear by the blessed Mary, the patroness of your polacre, that it shall not be your fault if he be not safely landed at Havanna.'

"'But he will inform on us to the comissionados [commissioners] at Havanna, when we get there.'

"'He will not,' rejoined he fiercely,—'*He shall not.*' Then turning to me—'Young gentleman, bear me out; your life depends on it. Promise you will in no way bring them into trouble if you can help it.'

"I did so.

"'There, he promises, and I will be answerable for him that he keeps his word—so swear.'

"They took the oath, and each one of the white Spaniards, the survivors of the two crews, now reduced to twenty-three, shook hands with me, and kissed the crossed blades, and from that moment we were as cordial as pickpockets.

"Shortly after we all lay down to sleep, with the exception of one of our party, who stood sentry until relieved by another.

"About twelve at night, when I awoke, the fire had sunk to a mass of glowing embers in the centre of a circle of white ashes, rayed with charred branches; and the moon was shining clear and bright overhead, and sparkling in the clustered dewdrops that hung thickly on the laurel-like bushes around us, as they were shaken from the overhanging trees in showers of diamonds, at every swell of the passing night-wind.

"The buzz and murmur, indescribable to one who has never heard it, of the myriads of living things, crickets, and lizards, and insects, and night-flies, of innumerable varieties, blended with the moaning of the river, as it rushed in the distance; while the loud croak of the tree-toad, and the whistle of a large lizard, would for a moment gush out from the lulling monotony, clear and distinct, like a louder night-cry above the declining hum of a distant city.

"There was something touchingly melancholy in the aspect of nature, thus lying in a trance; and as I gazed on the ferocious brigands that lay around me, the mild light floating over their brawny and half-naked figures, and glancing on their knives and arms, and perceived that they all slept gently, as so many inoffensive and innocent children, could I forget they were men like myself?

"But there was one there who *did not* sleep—it was the Englishman who had taken me under his protection. He was sitting about three fathoms apart from the men, under the shadow of a wild tamarind-tree, whose small elegant leaves, shaped like those of the sensitive plant, were not sufficient to prevent the moonlight struggling through them, and falling in flickering beams on his face, which I could notice he turned upwards towards heaven. His lips moved, and he withdrew one of his hands on which he had leant, as he sat on the ground, and clasped both on his bosom; and several bright drops chased each other across his face, but whether they were dew-spangles, that the breeze had shaken from the tree above, or tears of repentance for a misspent life, can only now be known to that Almighty Being who searcheth the heart. Hush! he has knelt. Is he praying? For a minute his attitude was one of deep devotion: his hands were clasped under his chin, and his head was bent towards the ground. Presently he clasped both hands on the crown of his head, and bent forward as if there had been a weight crushing his temples to the earth. I could see his chest heave, and heard him sob audibly; and two of my senses must have deceived me, or I now heard several large tears drop with a small patter, amongst the withered leaves, and sparkle as they fell in the pure moonlight. Anon a wreath of white mist floated up from the river, and obscured the moon. The noxious exhalation was like to suffocate us, as it gradually settled down so thick, that every thing seemed magnified and dim as when seen through a winter's fog in England. 'Ay,' said he bitterly, as he raised his head, and dropped his hands by his side, 'we have had none of the fen-damp the whole night, until this moment; but what other answer to my prayers could I look for?'

"One of the men here awoke. He started like a guilty thing, and drawing his large cloak over his shoulders, cast a rapid and suspicious glance around him, and lay down once more—whether to sleep or not, I cannot tell.

"The day at length broke, the sea-breeze set in, the sun shone cheerily, even on that dreary river's brink, and rolled off the heavy fog that had overlaid us like a damp cold shroud in the night, and all was bustle again.

"Another slaver came down the river this forenoon. Her water-casks were instantly hoisted on deck, and bunged tightly, and at low water stowed away in the stranded polacre's hold, and secured just under the beams, along with the whole of her own, similarly prepared; so that when the next tide made, and flowed into her, she floated, and was towed by the boats of both vessels into one of the numberless muddy creeks, that opened like so many dirty lanes from the river on each side; at the ebb, she was hove down by the stems of two large trees, and careened. It was found that the shot fired into the hold, which had sunk her, had only damaged two planks of the garboard streak. These were soon removed, and substantially replaced; and within a week she was again at anchor in the river, with wood, water, and provisions on board, and once more all as ready, as if nothing had happened, to receive her cargo of slaves.

"The Englishman, during the whole of this period, was the prime mover. His energy and skill astonished me; and I was often surprised how the Spaniards submitted to his reckless, nay, savage way of knocking them about; but a look was always sufficient to check their grumblings. At length, every thing being ready for a start, the slaves were taken on board, and secured—and both vessels, the brig that had assisted us, and the polacre, dropped down to within two miles of the bar, ready for sea.

"I confess I did not perceive so much suffering among the poor kidnapped savages as I expected. Few of them seemed to regret leaving Africa; in fact, the bitterness of parting from home and friends had long been over with most of them, as none were natives of the coast; and as they had been badly lodged, and worse fed, on shore, with the agreeable variety of being decimated every now and then as a sacrifice to the fetish, the comparative improvement of their condition on board—so far as the supply of their animal wants, and a sound sleep, went, even although the last was taken in a crowded hold, savouring of any thing but otto of roses—seemed to render them much more joyous than I had ever seen them while cooped up in the depots on



the river's banks. It is true, that in consequence of our attack, the cargo was by no means so large as it would otherwise have been, so the poor creatures had more room.

"We sailed, and kept well away to the southward, for two reasons; first, to steer clear of you, and, secondly, to fall in with the breeze, which is stronger at this season of the year in that direction than more northerly. In both objects we succeeded, for we arrived here a week before you, and must therefore have escaped the calms and light winds that baffled you.

"We fell in with several vessels on the voyage, all of which we outsailed but one. It was an English eighteen-gun brig, that beat us fairly going free, and kept way so well with us on a wind, that the captain beat to quarters, piped the hammocks up, triced up the boarding nettings, and saw all clear for action. He had continued very kind to me throughout the voyage, giving me a cot in his own cabin; but he was, notwithstanding, morose and melancholy, seldom mixing much even with his own officers; on the occasion of our being chased, however, his eye lightened, his brow smoothed and expanded, and his whole features expressed a joy, mixed with the sternest determination, that I had never seen them wear before. And this increased as our chance of escape diminished; for when he finally saw that the sloop was forereaching on us, and most probably would weather us next tack, he became absolutely frantic with delight, and walked rapidly about the deck, laughing and rubbing his hands, to the unutterable surprise of the trembling crew, who were grouped at quarters, staring one moment in fear and dread at the enemy, who was jamming them up in the wind, and the next at their extraordinary captain.

"'What can he mean?' said they—'*he* will be hanged if we are taken—*he* runs more risk than we do—what cause of joy can *he* have?' No one could answer the question.

"The Englishman had trained, as carefully and fully as time would admit during the voyage, about fifty Corromantee negroes, the bravest race of all Central Africa, to the guns, and he now suddenly desired them to be piped on deck, and sent to quarters. Jose Ribas, the superseded mate of the polacre, demurred to this, and the grumbling amongst the crew increased. 'Why bring the negroes on deck, captain?' said he—'our game is to confine our endeavours to trying to escape, and not to fight; you must be aware, if it comes to blows, that we have no chance with that English sloop of war down to leeward there.'

"The man he spoke to, at this turned round on him with the most withering and hellish expression of countenance that I ever beheld. 'I did not *ask* to command this polacre—you know I did not—but now since I have taken that unsought-for task upon me, it is not in a moment like the present that I will resign it.'

"There was a pause, during which the captain had turned from the Spaniard, and resumed his walk on the quarterdeck. As he turned, seeing him still there, he walked close up to him, and made a dead stop.

"'Forward to your station, Jose Ribas,' he sung out loud and savagely, after having glared at him like an enraged tiger, for nearly a minute without speaking, and drawing a pistol from his belt, he cocked it, 'or, by the God that made me, I will send this bullet through your cowardly heart.'

"The man slunk away forward, holding up the palm of his hand to the side of his face, as if, expecting to be fired at, he had thought he might thereby ward off the bullet. I saw that the fiend within him was only now roused, although the demoniacal mirth, formerly exhibited, had given way to a stern composure, that seemed to awe the rough and boisterous crew over which he held control, into the most abject submission. They immediately got the trained slaves on deck, and there were the piebald groups, half-clad whites, and entirely naked blacks, clustered round the guns, more frightened apparently for their captain than the enemy down to leeward. The polacre carried two long twelves and ten eighteen-pound medium guns, a description of cannon between a carronade and long gun, much in use amongst the contraband slavers; but she was pierced for twenty. Both vessels were on the starboard tack, so it was the larboard guns that in the present instance were cast loose. After the captain had carefully taken the bearings of the brig, by a compass that he had placed on the capstan, he made one or two quick turns fore and aft on the weather side of the quarterdeck, with his hand behind his back, and his eyes fixed on the planks, as if he were finally making up his mind what course to pursue.

"'The brig has hoisted an English ensign and pennant, sir,' said one of the crew. He took no notice of the man, who immediately slunk away to his gun again.

"'Are the guns double-shotted?' at length said he, without discontinuing his walk, or raising his head.

"'No,' said Jose Ribas.

"'Then double-shot them instantly.' It was done. 'Now, get the two long twelves aft, and train them through the stern chase ports,—stand by to lower away the boat; and get two of the larboard guns over to windward, do you hear?' This order was promptly carried into effect, although the battery next the enemy was thus disarmed of three cannon, to the surprise and great dismay of the Spaniards, who did not seem to know what to make of his tactics, and, privateer fashion, began again to grumble in their gizzards. 'Silence, men;—secure the guns to

leeward there, and man the starboard broadside, do you hear—quick.' In an instant the grumbling ceased, and the command was obeyed. 'Boatswain, call away the sail trimmers, and see all clear to let go every thing by the run, when I give the word to shorten sail.'

"By this time a squall was roughening the sea to windward, and presently white crests began to break amidst the dark water. He jumped on a gun carriage, and took a long steady look in the quarter from whence he seemed to expect the wind to come, shading his eyes from the sun with his hand. The sloop at this moment fired at us, and every hand on deck but himself looked out anxiously to see where the shot dropped. He never moved. Another puff of white smoke from the brig, and this time the bullet struck the water close under our martingale, and ricocheted along the sea across our bows. Seeing we were within range, the sloop of war now let fly her whole broadside; and presently several ropes that had been taught enough before, were streaming out like pennants, but no serious damage was sustained.

"We were, if any thing, lying closer to the wind than our antagonist, but she was going faster through the water, and had forereached on us so far as to be well before our beam by this time. The squall was now very near us, and neither vessel had as yet taken in a rag, but it was evident that we must soon shorten sail, as we were lying over so as to bury our lee guns in the water, and both vessels were thrashing and tearing through it like smoke, the water flashing up as high as the foretop of the brig, and roaring at our bows like hoarse thunder.

"The captain was still standing on the gun, one moment looking at the weather, the next casting his eyes upwards, to see how the spars stood the strain, and now, at the very moment when the strength of the squall struck us, he jumped down, seized the helm, and jammed it hard to windward. 'Ease off the lee braces—round in the weather ones,' pealed through his trumpet. 'That will do—let go nothing—keep all fast!' The masts were bending forward like willow wands—the back-stays like iron rods. I expected to see the lighter sails fly out of the bolt-ropes every moment, if indeed the masts did not go over the side.

"The squall was now so thick, that we could not see our antagonist; but I noticed that the captain had carefully kept his eyes on her, so long as he could distinguish her, and glanced earnestly at the compass when she disappeared amidst the thick weather. We had now bore up dead before the wind, and were running, so far as I could judge, directly for the brig.

"In another minute, we dimly discovered, first the stern and aftersails of our antagonist, and then the whole hull, in the very thickest of the squall, but scarcely visible amongst the white spray and drift. She was now under her reefed topsails and courses, but still on the same tack. We flew down towards her like lightning, hands by the topgallant and topsail halyards, with an intention apparently of shaving her stern. 'Surely these brigands won't have the audacity to rake her,' said I to myself, 'seeing she can beat them going free.' As we approached, the brig, foreseeing our intention, kept off the wind also; but we were too quick for her, and were now, as she was in the very act of wearing, within the chuck of a biscuit of her tafferel. By this manoeuvre, it will be seen that our strongest broadside, viz. the starboard one, was now opposed to the enemy. 'Fire!' sung out the captain, in a voice that made me start again. Heaven have mercy on me! I could hear the shot smash, and rattle, and tear along the sloop's deck, and through her hull, but nothing came down as she wore round. The squall now came thundering upon us at its height. 'Let go all the halyards by the run,' was the next word, and down came every sail in the polacre on deck, leaving nothing for the gale to impinge on but the naked masts and hull, as from her rig she had neither tops nor top-hamper of any kind. By this time the brig was also before the wind, and busy clewing up and furling every thing but her foresail; but the fury of the squall struck her before the foretopsail could be got in, and, crash, the topmast went close by the cap. 'Bring the polacre to the wind now, my lads. Helm a-starboard, Jose Ribas—that's it. Set the trysail there—hoist—so, belay every inch;' and by this manoeuvre the polacre was in a minute hove to on the larboard tack, in which position the word was given to lower away the boat over the stern, in order to unmask the sternchasers; but something jammed—'Unhook her and let her go,'—neither could this be done—'then cut the tackles, and let her drop from the davits at once, you lubbers.' The boat fell into the water with a splash, and the polacre instantly began to blaze away, from her two long guns, at the brig, by this time half-a-mile to leeward, repairing damages. The weather now cleared as suddenly as it had thickened when the squall came on, and we kept close by the wind until the evening, when we lost sight of the brig, and at nightfall again bore up on our course.

"I was seized with fever two days after this, but nothing farther occurred to the polacre worth recording, until we arrived at Havanna on that day fortnight. When we anchored, I was still very weak, and unable to leave my hammock, which, as before mentioned, was slung in the captain's cabin. On the day after we arrived, the slaves were all cleaned and had on deck, and people set to purify the hold, and get every thing in order, preparatory to a sale of the poor devils, which was to take place that afternoon.

"I could hear a number of voices wrangling on deck in Spanish, French, and English; and after a while the captain came down to the cabin, followed by several of his customers, whom he had invited to take refreshments, precisely as a horsedealer treats *his* after a good day's sale. There was a Frenchman, two or three Spanish planters, and an American gentleman, in the party. The first and last, happily for me, proved to be Mr Duquesné, the master of the house we are in, and his partner, Mr Hudson, who good-naturedly enquired of the captain which of his officers it was who lay sick in the hammock. He at once told them what he knew of me; the tale was

romantic enough to engage their curiosity; and Mr Hudson, with a friendliness that I never can forget, kindled possibly more warmly in consequence of his son being of the same profession in the American navy, asked my leave to have me conveyed on shore to lodgings. I thanked him, with tears in my eyes; and by the time he returned for me at nightfall, I had contrived to get myself dressed as decently as I could—my whole apparel, by the way, consisting of my trousers and shirt, and a piece of a red silk sash bound round my waist—and to crawl on deck to await his coming.

"At length he came alongside, and enquired if I was ready. I said I was, and turned to thank the captain of the polacre; but although he had been on deck the moment before, he was now nowhere to be seen. One of the people said he had gone down to the cabin, and I accordingly asked him to give my compliments, and say that I would be happy to thank him for all his kindness before bidding him good-by; but the man came to the gangway, and told me that the companion hatch had been locked from within, and that he dared not open it. 'Very odd sort of person,' thought I; but as I had no inducement to press my attentions upon one who had given me so broad a hint to be off, I stepped into the boat, in which I encountered Mr Duquesné himself, who, on perceiving that I was so much better than he expected, and that there were no bad symptoms about me, would not hear of my going to a lodging-house, but insisted on accommodating me with an apartment in his own.

"I was a good deal perplexed when I was presented to Mrs Hudson and her daughter, and apologized for my piratical appearance, as I made my obeisance with my broad-brimmed *chapeau de paille* in my hand, and my red silk sash round my waist. 'Why, Mr De Walden,' said she, with a smile, and a most engaging motherly kindness, 'I must get my boy William (the young American officer you saw, sir, at the monte-table), 'to *rig* you, as he calls it; for you are certainly, there is no denying it, rather a suspicious-looking character at present;' but this was too near the truth to be comfortable, and I blushed deeply. 'Never mind, Mr De Walden,' continued she, with the most delicate feminine perception, seasoned with a spice of archness, however, 'it was no speech of mine—it was Mademoiselle Sophie who has already christened you the young brigand.'"

At this part of De Walden's story I looked up—"And pray, *who* is Mademoiselle Sophie, who is so ready with her *soubriquets*?"

He reddened like a rose—"Why, sir,—*that is—she is* Mr Duquesné's only daughter, sir; you may have seen her."

"I think I have, and I see something else, too," said I, significantly.

"That same evening," he continued, resuming the thread of his discourse with great celerity, as if desirous of getting me away from observing his confusion, "one of the servants, as we were drinking coffee, brought me a sealed packet, that, from its weight, seemed to contain money. I opened it—it covered ten doubloons, with these words written in a bold hand, 'From an outcast, whose heart, although seared to the world, is warm towards Henry De Walden.—From one who has been liberally rewarded by the owners of the polacre, and can spare it.'

"Very absurd and romantic,' said I.

"Nothing so absurd in ten doubloons, my good boy, I calculate,' quoth Mr Hudson, scanning my outward man scrutinizingly.

"Pray, Mr Duquesné, will you be kind enough to ask who brought this?'

"The man who brought it was dressed like a Batabano smuggler, sir,' said the servant at whom his master had made the enquiry.

"Is he below?'

"No, señor; he said it required no answer, and did not wait.'

"I did not much like receiving this alms at the hands of my fierce ally; but, under all the circumstances, I thought it prudent to pocket the affront, without giving farther offence by endeavouring to search out a man who evidently had no desire to be found; and, publish it not, I was deucedly in want of a new suit of sails, as you may guess, which I had no means of compassing otherwise, short of borrowing; from those who had been but too kind to me already. I never met the man who had befriended me afterwards, until the night you were wounded, when I saw him in the custody of the town guard, faint and bleeding. I have since been several times to see him, in prison, but he is more morose and severe even in his weak state than ever he was at the strongest; and although he cannot prevent my contributing some little comforts that his state of body, and the rules of the prison, permit him to enjoy, still he has never once thanked me; and from his total disregard of all that the surgeon enjoins, he seems to have made up his mind to die.

"I have now told you all, sir, and here comes your riotous friend, Mr Listado, to see you. I hear his laugh on the stairs;" and so saying he slid out of the room.

## CHAPTER II.

### A VISION—THE DYING BUCANIER.

And a devil of a noise did this said Mr Listado make. He rattled up the staircase, from side to side, like a grape-shot in a carronade; banging against the heavy balustrades, on one hand, and thundering against the wall on the other; and speaking and laughing and shouting to half-a-dozen persons, apparently collected below in the vestibule. At length the door was dashed open, and in swung the gentleman, with his flaunting gingham coat and potato face. "Brail, my darling, how goes it, my little man? Enough of *monte* you have had for a while, I guess. But, heaven love me, man, we must have you made fit to receive company; you are to hold a levee presently, do you know that? This will never do; the birds of the air might build in your beard—ah, I have it;" and he straightway hied him to the window that overlooked the street, which he threw open, contriving to perform all his operations with the greatest possible quantity of noise.

"I have it," said he,—"here is little Pepe Biada's shaving-shop right over against old Pierre Duquesné's domicile; there—next door to Pablo Carnero, the ham and jerked beef man, so I'll hail Pepe.—Pepe!" bawled my troublesome friend,—"Pepe Biada—trae su navaja [bring your razor, you villain] pour shavez un gentilhomme Engles;" and here he grimaced, and made believe to soap his chin and shave his beard.

My bed had this morning been moved nearer to the window, for the sake of the fresh air, and I could see, from where I lay, the little Spanish barber, who was very deaf, sitting in his little shop. He kept turning his ear first one side, and then another, in a vain attempt to make out what was said, as Listado shouted to him, straining over the balcony as far as he could, in his endeavour to make him hear.—"Navaja y jamon—navaja y jamon—para afeytar—that is, pour cortar la barba, that is, cuttibus the beardo of this young fellow."

Here the little withered anatomy of a barber seemed to comprehend him, and thereupon, with a knowing look, repeated the telegraphic motions of Monsieur Listado, rubbing his chin and going through the motion of shaving.

"Si, si," roared Listado, "that is it—navaja y jamon"—literally, a razor and a *ham*. Possibly honest Listado, who, with all his ability, never could compass Spanish, because, as he said, he had previously learned French, and thus spoke a hash of both, had mistaken the Spanish word *jamon* for *xabon*, the latter meaning soap.

Little Pepe first grinned, and then, as Listado persisted, he stepped into Carnero's shop, and seizing a ham, held it up to his face, as if he were rubbing his chin on it, and then laughed, like to fall down where he stood.

Listado at this flew into a great rage—"Abortion chicho, mas monkey que homo, yo te mataras—vous sera tué—si vous twistibus your damned ugly mug at migo"—

"Bueno—bueno," roared el barbero, seeing that nothing would do but the veritable ham and razor—"quedas quieto, yo los traere, Don Lorenzo"—(Laurence was Listado's name)—then aside, "ave Maria, que diablo quiere este loco, con navaja para cortar jamon?" (What the deuce can this madman want with a razor to cut ham?)

But as Listado was a liberal fellow, and well-known among the brown tradespeople, the little barber was in my room in a minute, made his solemn bow at the door, with a large tortoiseshell comb stuck in his grey pelucca (wig), and his little silver basin and towel under his arm—his soap-box and razors in the one hand, and, lo! a capital New York ham in the other.

"Pelukero condeñado—quevas hacer con este pierna de puerco?" (You infernal wigmaker, what are you going to do with that leg of pork?)

"What am I going to do with it? did you not tell me to fetch a ham—*jamon*?"

"Yes," replied Listado, "and there it is in your soap-box, you bothersome little periwig maker—there," striking the utensil out of his hand up into the air, and cleverly catching it again, when he seized the soap-brush and stuck it, lather and all, into Pepe's open mouth—"that is better than tooth-powder for you, Pepe, my darling."

"Ah!" cried little Pepe, laughing and sputtering—"I see—I see—tu me has pedido para *jamon*, queriendo decir *xabon*—ha, ha, ha!" (You have asked me for ham when you wanted soap.)

He at length set to work, and having shaved and trimmed me, I had my wound dressed, and Mrs Gerard acting the part of nurse, having previously got my clothes on shore, and, with womanly kindness and care, had them all washed, and nicely repaired, I had my bed made and sprinkled with Cologne water, and was soon lying on the top of it, arrayed in one of Mr Duquesné's splendid flowered nightgowns, with a silk handkerchief bound round my head, and another in my hand, moistened with fresh lavender;—the windows were then thrown open—the room thoroughly ventilated—the floor sprinkled with the aforesaid most refreshing distillation—and there I lay in state, like a grandee's wife in the straw, wonderfully refreshed, and quite fit to receive company.

At this moment, in slid my worthy medico—"Good-morning, sair—good-morning—you are make de killing preparation to massacre all de young lady, I see. Ah, Monsieur Listado, your most obsequious—how you are, Monsieur Listado?"

The latter bowed his acknowledgments, and made a hop, step, and skip towards the door, knocking chairs and tables about in his way, at a devil of a rate—"Oh dere, he makes de much noise as usual—Monsieur Listado, dis is one sheek room—you hear me?"

But the Irishman was by this time out of the room, hailing those below, with stentorian lungs, from the uppermost landing-place; the echo of his voice, and their replies, sounding loud and hollow, as they were reverberated from side to side of the lofty staircase.

"Dicky Phantom, mount and ascend, you small villain."

A tiny "Ay, ay, sir," floated up from beneath, and I heard a gradually increasing tap-tapping on the stair, as of a cat shod with walnuts, and the sound of suppressed girlish laughter. There was then a halt called, apparently, and I heard the rush of female footsteps, and the rustling of light dresses, along the passage, and presently a bustle in the boudoir already mentioned, as of the placing of music stools. The next moment, a harp was struck, and three voices, two female and one male, accompanied by the instrument, which was struck skilfully and boldly, pealed along the lofty rooms in most exquisite concord.

"Heyday—why, Listado, my lad, what is all this?" But he remained perdue without, and in came Master Dicky Phantom, with his little drawn cutlass in his hand, mounted on the sheep, followed by Serjeant Quacco, as his squire.

The music ceased; Listado again made his appearance, and I received poor Quacco's congratulations, and little Dicky's caresses.

"Oh, massa," said the little fellow, his phraseology having improved under Quacco's tuition, "Miss Hudson make me very happy; I call her mamma—does she make you happy too, massa?"

"I have not seen her, my boy," said I, with a funny sort of sensation about my brisket—how sentimental! for I rather was prepared to like her somehow; "but for her kindness to you I am very grateful."

Here Listado, who had returned, and seemed to be clumsily practising a step in the balcony, stumbled, and fell headlong over a Spanish chair, in an absurd sprawling fashion, like a large frog. I started, and he burst into a loud laugh, while the pet-lamb wheeled about so suddenly, that little Dicky was thrown with a bang on the floor, and began to cry, when in rushed two girls, and Mrs Hudson; followed by De Walden, Mr Hudson, and old Mr Duquesné himself.

"There is a scene in a play for you," said I to myself, quite bothered and confused, as I wagged my head at this one, and nodded to another, and salaam'd with my fins, with all the grace of a wounded turtle, to a third.

"You, Monsieur Listado," chirped Doctor Delaville, like to die with laughter, for the Patlander had chosen to keep his position on the floor, with his head sticking through below the arm of the chair—"you make several, many noises sometimes."

"Me!" shouted Listado. "Lord, doctor, I am noiseless as a cat. I am velvet, doctor, in all my ways, walkings, and habitudes—velvet entirely, doctor—and dumb as a humming-bird, as ye all know. Why, I have been compared to a shred of gossamer floating on the calm summer air, by Helen Hudson there."

"Oh, I forgot—de ladies never will hear nosing against Monsieur Listado; so my good manner shall make me agree wid dem, and say what dey say—dat is, you are quiet as von hooracan, and more gentle as de wild beas, bear you call. Ah, you make no sound more as de tunder—Ah ha!"

"Now you are in your senses again, mon cher medico. Miss Hudson, Mademoiselle Sophie Duquesné, give me leave to introduce you to—Master Brail, pilot of His Britannic Majesty's seventy-four gun-ship, the Midge—Benjamin Brail, Miss Hudson, and Mademoiselle Duquesné—Speak, Benjie, and let them know you've a tongue in your head, you spalpeen."

I made my acknowledgments to the kind-hearted people, who, after remaining scarcely long enough for me to get a look at them individually, withdrew, and left me alone once more with De Walden.

"She is a very pretty girl, that young French lady, De Walden."

The youth had steeled himself by this time I saw, and was not to be caught again.

"Very, sir—a beautiful figure—but you seemed to notice Miss Hudson more particularly, sir."

There was a slight smile played for an instant on the handsome fellow's countenance, and vanished again, as he resumed his reading.

"Hem, ahem—the breeze is deuced strong," said I. "Do me the favour to shut the blind, De

Walden—beg pardon for all this trouble."

He did so, and I gained the advantage I aimed at, which was, to darken the room so as to render it impossible for any change in one's beautiful complexion to be seen.

"Why, I scarcely noticed the little lady, do you know, De Walden?"—He certainly seemed not to have known it.—"She is a nice little person—rather too petite, however, for my taste, and not very sylph-like; a fine skin, certainly, and beautiful hair—but then her high nose—and her eyes are not very good either—much too small and light—besides, she is shortsighted."

De Walden's smile showed he was not, at any rate.

"And as for eyebrows, why, the superb arch of Miss Duquesné's is infinitely finer, and beats them hollow—her neck and throat tolerable, certainly; and the kindness of her manner!—why, she comports herself like a little matron beside a sick-bed; and the way she handles little Dicky!—didn't you notice it, De Walden? No wonder he called her mamma, poor little fellow."

"Did you ever hear her sing, sir?"

"No, unless it was her voice I heard but just now in the other room."

"You guess rightly. Miss Duquesné sang the second to her first. Two voices never did in this world blend so sweetly."

"Ah!" said I, fearing he was again cruising too near me, "the pipe was good enough—liquid and musical-glass like; but Miss Sophie Duquesné's—*that* was a voice indeed—so deep for a woman, so clear, so full-bodied."

"Pray, sir," said De Walden, archly, "are you speaking of the qualities of London porter, or Mademoiselle Duquesné's voice?"

I looked at the young midshipman; and, darkened as the room was, I saw the rogue laughing heartily in his sleeve.

"You seem to have noted a good many of Miss Hudson's peculiarities, however, my dear sir; considering you paid so *little attention* to her, and had so short a time to take your observation."

"I don't know," said I. "Has she been often in my room since I was wounded, for I have dreamed of such a being, I will not deny?"

A low "Hush" was here breathed from the boudoir. De Walden gave an intelligent nod, and I became suddenly afflicted with deafness, and overtaken by a fidgety fit; so I asked him to assist me to change my position, as it was becoming uneasy, and we both with one accord hauled our wind on the other tack.

"But whose was the male voice that joined so beautifully in the song?"

"Mr Listado's, sir."

"Moin—moy voice—oh, Lord!"—said some one in subdued Tipperary in the next room.

"Come," said De Walden, laughing aloud, "no eavesdropping, if you please."

"Pray, Mr De Walden," said I, "did you perceive the earthquake early this morning? How peculiar the sensation—how undefinable the mysterious noise preceding the shock!"

"I did, sir. We have had several slight shocks lately here, but no one seems to mind them. I was afraid it would disturb you, sir."

"Why, it did so, certainly; but I soon fell asleep again."—A long pause.—"No appearance of Gazelle yet, *Mister De Walden?*" borrowing the stiff formula of the quarterdeck, to rub out, as it were, any little familiarity that had passed.

"No, sir."

"Surely she might have been round, although I have no objections to her staying out, until I am up and about again. Have you heard any thing more of Lennox?"

"I went to the prison to see him last night. He is looking very ill and pale, poor devil, but does not complain. The jailer again told me, that the moment you were strong enough to make your deposition before the *Juez*, he would be discharged."

"And the desperado who wounded me?"

"Why, he has been better, and worse, several times, sir. His uncontrollable temper throws him back, while the strength of his constitution does wonders. He was not expected to live over the second day, but, to the surprise of the surgeon of the prison, he rallied astonishingly, and was in fact getting well until yesterday, when Lennox was taken into his room to endeavour to identify him, since which he has been much worse, and the scene must have had a strong effect on

Lennox himself."

"As how?" said I.

"Why, you know, he is an extraordinary creature; in fact, he is crazy now and then, as he says himself, and certainly he conducted himself last evening more like a lunatic than a sane person."

The doctor had retired with the ladies, and now returned for his hat and cane.

"My dear doctor, do you think it would do me any harm to be moved the length of the prison to-morrow in a litter? I am very desirous to see the marine who is confined there for stabbing the bravo who waylaid me."

"I know all about dat, capitain. To-morrow shall be too soon, very,—but next day, may be."

I thanked him, and determined to wait patiently until then.

The intervening period was one of great comfort and happiness to me. Old Dick had my things sent ashore, and was most assiduous in his attention, whenever he could spare time from his repairs on board. Over and over again I blessed Heaven for its mercy, in throwing me amongst such kindly people. Oh, who can appreciate the tenderness of woman's attentions like the friendless sufferer, who has languished amongst strangers in a foreign land on a bed of sickness?

Two or three days elapsed, during which I rapidly got better; so that, on the fourth, I was enabled to walk, with the support of De Walden's arm, to the prison, in place of being carried on a litter.

When we arrived, we were shown into the room where Lennox was confined: it was about five in the afternoon of a very hot, sultry day. The marine was sitting in his frock and trowsers, with his back towards us, looking out through the iron bars of the unglazed window, that commanded a long street, and fronted the west. The creaking of the rusty lock, and clanking of the chain and bolt that secured the door of the lofty apartment, did not disturb him: he merely, as he sat with his legs crossed on the small wooden chair, with his clasped hands on his knee, nodded slightly, but without turning his face, and said—"Come in."

"Well, Lennox," said De Walden, "here is Mr Brail at last. You were not beginning to lose heart, were you?"

On this the poor fellow rose and confronted us. There was a sad change in his appearance since I saw him: he was pale and wan, with an unusual anxiety and apparent feverishness about him, and an unsettled sparkling of his eye, that, from what I previously had known of his history, but too clearly indicated that his reason was more unsettled than usual.

"I am very grateful for this visit," said he at length, without directly answering Mr De Walden. "I am glad to see you so far recovered, sir; but you look thin and pale yet: this will soon disappear, I hope—I trust it will soon disappear." Here his voice sank into an unintelligible murmur, and his eye fell, as if he were repeating the words to himself, without being conscious of their meaning—as if he had been maundering, to use his own phrase.

"Well, I have no doubt it will, and I have good reason to believe that you will be soon quite well too, Lennox; so get ready. I presume you know you are to appear before the *Juez* this afternoon, where you will instantly be released, I am told. Mr De Walden and I are waiting for you."

He said nothing, but stooped down to gather some clothes that lay on a low pallet in the corner of the room; which having tied up in a bundle, he lifted his hat, and stood in the middle of the apartment ready to go. His *oddness*—it was not sullenness of manner, I knew—surprised me a good deal; but I said nothing, and the jailer now turned to conduct us into the court, where the judge was waiting to take my deposition. We had advanced ten or twelve paces along the dark stone passage, when Lennox, who was bringing up the rear, suddenly turned back, without speaking, and entered his prison-room; shutting the door very unceremoniously after him, and thereby depriving us of every particle of light where we stood.

"Hillo," said De Walden, "Master Lennox, this is not over and above civil."

"El marinero ese es loco, señor." (That sailor is mad, sir), quoth the jailer.

"Mad or not, I will see if I cannot make him mend his manners," said I, as I returned with the young midshipman, groping for the door. We found it on the latch, and pushing it open, saw our *amigo* coolly seated in his chair, looking out of the window in precisely the same attitude as when we first entered.

"Now, sir," said I, really angry, "will you favour me with a reason for this most extraordinary conduct—this indecent behaviour to your superior officer, and I may add to myself, to whom you have professed yourself beholden? I am willing to make great allowances for your *infirmity*, as you call it; but this is a little too much on the brogue, my fine fellow." I had moved round in front

of him by this time. He had dropped his eyes on the ground, with his hand pressed on his forehead; but in an instant he rose up, endeavouring to hide the tears that were rolling over his cheeks.

"Will you and Mr De Walden listen to me for five minutes, captain, before we go into court?"

"I scarcely am inclined to humour you in your absurdities, Lennox; but come, if you have any thing to say, out with it at once—make haste, my man." Seeing he hesitated, and looked earnestly at the jailer—"Oh, I perceive—will you have the kindness to leave us alone with the prisoner for five minutes?"

"Certainly," said the man—"I shall remain outside."

The moment he disappeared, Lennox dropped on his knees, and seemed to be engaged in prayer for some moments: he then suddenly rose, and retired a few paces from us. "Gentlemen, what I am going to tell you I have seen, you will very possibly ascribe to the effects of a heated imagination; nevertheless, I will speak the truth. The man who wounded you, Mr Brail, and now lies in the last extremity in the next room"—here he seemed to be suffocating for want of breath—"is no other than Mr Adderfang, the villain who through life has been my evil genius. Ay, you may smile incredulously; I expected nothing else; but it is nevertheless true, and even he shall, if he can speak when you see him, confirm what I have told you. Do you not see the palpable intervention of an overruling Providence in this, gentlemen? *Here* I encounter, against all human probability, in a strange country, with the very fiend who drove me forth, broken-hearted and deranged in mind, from my own! It is not chance, gentlemen—you will blaspheme," continued he impetuously, "if you call it chance—one from the dead has visited me, and told me it was not chance." His eye flashed fire as he proceeded with great animation and fluency—"Mr Brail, do not smile—do not smile. Believe me that I speak the words of truth and soberness, when I tell you that *she* was *here* last night; ay, as certainly as there is a God in heaven to reward the righteous and punish iniquity."

I let him go on.

"I was sitting, as you saw me, in that chair, sir, looking forth on the setting moon, as it hung above the misty hill-top, and was watching its lower limb as it seemed to flatten and lose its roundness against the outline of the land, and noticing the increasing size of the pale globe as the mist of morning rose up and floated around it,—when I heard a deep sigh close behind me. I listened, and could distinguish low moaning sobs, but I had no power to turn round to look what it was. Suddenly the window before me became gradually obscured, the dark walls thinned and grew transparent, the houses and town disappeared, and I was conscious, ay, as sensible as I am that I speak to you now, Mr Brail, that I saw before me my own mountain lake, on the moonlight bank of which I last parted from Jessy Miller before she fell.

"The waning planet seemed to linger on the hill, and shed a long sickly wake on the midnight tarn, that slept in the hollow of the mountain, bright and smooth as if the brown moss had been inlaid with polished steel, except where a wild-duck glided over the shining surface, or the wing of the slow-sailing owl flitted winnowingly across, dimming it for a moment, like a mirror breathed upon. I was sitting on the small moss-grown cairn, at the eastern end; the shadow of the black hills was cast so clearly in the water, that you could not trace the shore of the small lake, nor define the water-line beneath the hazel bushes; and the stars were reflected in another heaven scarcely less pure than their own. I heard the rushing of the burn over its rugged channel, as it blended with the loch, and the melancholy bleating of the sheep on the hill-side, and the low bark of the colleys, and the distant shout of the herds watching the circular folds, high up on the moor,—when I felt a touch on my shoulder, and, glancing down, I saw a long, pale female hand resting on it, as of a person, who was standing behind me: it was thin and wasted, and semi-transparent as alabaster, or a white cornelian stone, with the blue veins twining amongst the prominent sinews, and on the marriage-finger there was a broken ring—I saw it as clearly as I see my own hand now, for the ends of the small gold wire of which it was composed stood up and out from the fleshless finger. I kenned weel who was there, but I had no power to speak. The sigh was repeated, and then I heard a low still voice, inarticulate and scarcely audible at first, like a distant echo from the hill-side, although I had a fearful conviction that it was uttered close behind me;—presently it assumed a composed but most melancholy tone—yes, Mr Brail, so sure as there is a God above us, Jessy Miller—yea, the dead spoke in that awful moment to the living."

"Oh, nonsense, man!" I said; "really you are getting mad in earnest now, Lennox; this will never do."

He paid no attention to me, but went on—

"'Saunders,' it said, 'I have come to tell you that him ye ken o'—he wha crushed my heart until it split in twain—he wha heaped the mools on my head, and over the child I bare him—will also help you to an early grave.' The hand on my shoulder grew heavy as lead. 'He has meikle to answer for to you, Saunders, and I have mair; and to me he has—'—but *I* maun dree my weird.' Here the voice was choked in small inaudible sobs, blending with which I thought I heard the puling as of a new-born baby, when a gradually swelling sough came down the hill-side, like the rushing of the blast through the glen, and the water in the placid loch trembled in the waning



moonbeams like that in a moss-hag<sup>[1]</sup> when a waggon rolls past, and the hitherto steady reflection of the stars in it twinkled and multiplied as if each spark of living fire had become two; and although there was not a breath out of heaven, small ripples lap-lapped on the pebbly shore, and a heavy shower of dew was shaken from the leaves of the solitary auld saugh that overhung the northern bank of the wee loch, sparkling in the moonlight like diamonds; and the scathed and twisted oak stump on the opposite hill that bisected the half-vanished disk of the sinking moon, as she lingered like a dying friend looking his last at us, shook palpably to and fro, and a rotten limb of it fell;—ay, the solid earth of the cold hill-side itself trembled and heaved, as if they who slept in the grey cairn beneath had at that moment heard the summons of the Archangel;—when, lo! the dead hand was withdrawn with a faint shriek, like the distant cry of the water-hen, and I turned in desperation to see—what? a thin wreath of white mist float up the hill-side, and gradually melt into the surrounding darkness. And once more I was seated where you now see me, with that rusty stanchel clearly defined against the small segment of the moon, that still lingered above the horizon. The next moment it was gone, and I was left in darkness."

[1] The pit in a moor from whence peats or turf have been taken.

"All a dream, Lennox; all a phantasy of your heated imagination. There was a slight shock of an earthquake last night at the time you mention, just at the going down of the moon, and that was the noise you heard and the tremor you perceived, so rouse yourself, man. Adderfang, if it really be him, from all accounts, is dying, and you will soon be safe from *his* machinations, at all events."

He shook his head mournfully, but said nothing more—whether my arguments had convinced him or no, was another thing—but we all proceeded to the room where the judge was waiting for us, and my declaration immediately freed poor Lennox; after which we were requested to accompany the officers of the court, who, along with their interpreter, were proceeding to the wounded man's room, to take his dying declaration.

The daylight had entirely failed by the time we reached the cell where Adderfang lay. We were met at the door by a Carmelite priest, who appeared in great wrath, and muttered something about a "Heretico condeñado." We entered. It was an apartment of the same kind as the one in which Lennox had been confined, and had a low pallet on one side, fronting the high iron-barred window. From the darkness I could merely make out that some person lay on the bed, writhing about, apparently in great pain. A candle was brought, and we could see about us. It shone brightly on the person of a tall bushy-whiskered desperado, who lay on the bed, covered by a sheet, groaning and breathing very heavily. I approached; his features were very sharp and pale, his lips black, and his beard unshaven; his eyes were shut, and his long hair spread all over the pillow.

He appeared to be attended by a slight, most beautiful Spanish girl; apparently a fair mulatto, who was sitting at the head of the bed, brushing away the musquittoes, and other night flies, with a small bunch of peacock's feathers; while the hot tears trickled down her cheeks, and over her quivering lips, until they fell on her distracted and heaving bosom. But she was silent; her sobs were even inaudible; her grief was either too deep for utterance, or the fear of disturbing the dying moments of her lover made her dumb.

"O, Woman! in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade  
By the light quivering aspen made;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou!"

Hearing a bustle in the room, Adderfang now spoke, in a low and interrupted voice—it was in Spanish.

"Padre, do not persist—I do not want your services—you cannot smooth my pillow—do not therefore try to strew more thorns there—Heaven knows they are numerous enough, and sharp enough already."

"Can this be the villain who stabbed me?" said I, somewhat moved.

The poor girl at this stooped down, and whispered something into his ear.

"Ah!" said he, "I had forgot—I had forgot; but your tears scald me, Antonia—hot—hot;" and with a sudden effort, as if ashamed to evince how much he was suffering, and a fierce energy, he controlled the twitching of his feverish limbs, clasped his hands on his bosom, and opening his blood-shot eyes for the first time, took a steady survey of us. He then glanced to the jailer.

"This is the gentleman who was stabbed by you," said the Spaniard. He nodded. "This is the

English marine, Lennox, who came up with the guard and took you prisoner."

I could not help remarking, when Lennox was introduced to him, that the wounded man smiled bitterly, as much as to say—"I know *him* but too well, and he has fearful cause to know *me*." "Mr Brail," said he (I had to stoop to catch his words, he spoke in so low a tone), "I am aware of the object of this visit—it is all proper. Let the escribano there get his paper ready; I shall make short work of the confessional."

The man sat down. Adderfang again shut his eyes, and seemed for a few moments to be gathering his thoughts about him; at length—

"I acknowledge that I stabbed the Englishman, Mr Brail, and robbed him afterwards; and that the English marine, Lennox, acted nobly and honourably in coming to the assistance of his countryman. He was the man who wounded me. There you have it all; engross it, and I will sign it."

As if desirous of being heard distinctly, he had, as he pronounced these words with difficulty, in detached sentences, raised himself on his left arm, and now, as if exhausted, he fell back with his head on poor Antonia's lap.

"The tackle of *his* heart was cracked and burned,  
And all the shrouds wherewith *his* life should sail,  
Are turned to one poor thread, one little hair."

There was a long pause.

"But why," said the Juez at length—"why did you waylay Mr Brail?"

"For two reasons," replied the dying bravo; "first, because I harboured revenge for the destruction of my vessel by the Midge, *steered by him*, as that young gentleman afterwards told me" (here De Walden and I exchanged looks), "on the bar of the African river; secondly, because he took my last stiver from me at the gaming-table."

"Evil motives both, my son, to be entertained by any, but especially by one standing on the threshold of eternity. Let me recall the priest, that he may shrive you, and probably, with God's blessing, induce you to repent before you go hence."

I turned to look at the person who spoke. He was a tall and very dark Spaniard, his age might have been sixty, and his short and scanty hair was of a silver grey. He was plainly dressed in black, and sat at a small table, and opposite to him the escribano, or notary, with his paper before him, and pen held up between him. and the candle, and ready wet with ink.

"It is of no use, *and I will not*," said Adderfang; "besides, if I am any thing at all, I am a Protestant—and as the tree falls, so must it lie—it is a part of my creed.—*Creed!*" he here interjected to himself with great bitterness—"my *creed!* whatever it may be of yours, and I feel that all the roots that knit me to the earth have already parted, save one; therefore, let me die, if not in peace, at least in quietness."

He stopped to take breath, and when he proceeded, it was in a voice even more weak and trembling than before.

"Yes, Heaven knows, villain as I have been, that they have all snapped *but one*"—and he caught the hand of the poor girl, and tried to place it on his heart, but his strength failed him. She wept aloud at this unexpected burst of feeling, and the contagion of her tears extended even to the stony heart of the wounded man himself. The iron had at length entered into his soul, and what the retrospect of his own ill-spent life—what the intensity of his present agony, and the fearful prospect before him through eternity, could not wring from him—now flowed at the sight of the poor girl's misery, as if his bosom had been a tender woman's. He wept aloud.

"Yes—my evil courses have but too justly estranged all my kindred from me; one friend has dropped off after another, until, in the prime of life, after having squandered a handsome patrimony, and having been educated as a gentleman, with every thing around me that ought to have made me happy, to this have I come at last!" He groaned heavily. "You see before you, Mr Brail, not a *fiend*, *but an everyday villain*—a man not naturally wicked—one who did not love evil for evil's sake, but who became the willing slave of his passions, and held no law, human or divine, in reverence, when they were to be gratified. Ay, William Adderfang, here you lie on a death-bed from violence—from a wound sustained in the act of stabbing and robbing another, to gratify revenge, and the paltry desire of repossessing money squandered at the gaming-table, and with the certainty that, if a miracle interposed, and you recovered, your life would still be taken on the scaffold. Ay, here you lie," continued he with increasing energy, "without one soul in the wide world to say God bless you, or to close your eyes when you are gone, but my poor Antonia here."

Here the unhappy girl's anguish became uncontrollable, although she could not have understood what he said, and she threw herself on the bed in such a position as to give her

paramour great pain; a shudder passed over his face, and he endeavoured to turn himself round, so as to gain an easier position. In the action the wound in his side burst out afresh, and presently a dark puddle coagulated on the sheet at his right side. The doctor of the prison was in immediate attendance, and applied styptics to stanch the bleeding; all the time he seemed in a dead faint—he made no movement, and when the wound was dressed, and he was replaced on his bed, I did not know, as I bent over him, whether the spirit had fled or not.

Lennox, with the judge's permission, now took one of the candles from the table, and held it to his face—he still breathed. But in the silence within the room, I perceived that the weather without began to grow gusty and boisterous; I could hear the rain lashing against the wall of the prison, and the blast howled round the roof, and threatened to extinguish the candle. The freshness of the night wind, however, reanimated the sufferer in a wonderful degree; and when I rose, with an intention of closing the shutters, to prevent the rain beating through on his face, as he lay propped up on the poor girl's bosom, fronting the narrow aperture, he had strength enough to ask me, in a low husky voice, "to leave it open, the coolness and moisture revived him."

Lennox now spoke—"Mr Adderfang, I have come on purpose to say that I"—his voice faltered, and he leant against the wall for a brief space—"to say that *I forgive you*—ay, as freely as I hope God will forgive me at the last day. Give me your hand, Mr Adderfang, and say you forgive me also for having wounded you."

The dying man shrunk from him, and drew his hand back—"No, no, Saunders, you cannot be sincere, you cannot be sincere; you cannot have forgotten *her* injuries, you cannot have forgiven your own."

"Yes," said the poor fellow solemnly, "I have prayed for many a long year that I might be able to forgive you—even *you*; and my prayer has been heard at last. Oh, if you would even at the ninth hour appeal to the same merciful Being, might he not show his mercy to your dying soul?"

"I cannot—I cannot pray," said Adderfang, as impetuously as his weakness would let him—"I cannot pray—I have never prayed, Saunders—oh, would to God I had! would that I could redeem but one short week! But it would be of no avail," groaned he, in a low altered tone—"all has been foreordained—I have been the slave of an irrevocable destiny—I could have acted no otherwise than I have done; and if there be a hereafter and a God"—

"If there be!" said I, "Heaven have mercy on you, Mr Adderfang, and turn your heart even now in your extremity."

"Oh! Mr Brail, I know myself—I am quite conscious of my inherent wickedness—the damning conviction is burned in on my heart, that even if I were to recover, I should again fall into the same courses—I am quite certain of it; so why appeal to the Invisible"—he paused and gasped for breath—"why insult Heaven with vain promises of amendment, which I could not and would not keep were I to survive? why play the hypocrite now? why lie to God, when"—here he put his hand to his side, as if in great suffering—"when, if there be such a Being, I must, in all human probability, appear before him in half an hour, when no lie will serve me?—But let me do an act of justice—yes, call the priest"—he now spoke in Spanish—"call the priest. Rise, Antonia, and kiss me; you are another victim"—he groaned again—"I promised you marriage before I wove my web of deceit round your innocent heart; you have often prayed me to remember that solemn promise, since you were ensnared, and I have as often laughed you to scorn, or answered you with a brutal jest; I will accede to your request now; call the priest, let him be quick, or death will prevent"—He swooned again.

Presently the venerable friar, without any trace of anger at the previous rejection of his services, was at the bedside. I never shall forget the scene. It was now quite dark, and the two large brown wax tapers were flickering in the current of air that came strong through the window, and stirred the few hairs of the venerable Juez, who sat at the table. The lights cast a changeful glare on his face, and on that of the old priest, who was standing beside the pillow of the dying man, dressed in his long dark robe, with a cord round his waist, supporting a silver crucifix that glanced in the light; and on the tall form of the beautiful Spanish girl, that lay across the bed, her naked feet covered by neat grass slippers, and on her pale olive complexion, and fine features, and her hair plaited in three distinct braids, that hung down her back, intertwined with black ribbon; and sparkled in her large black swimming eye, and on the diamond-like tears that chased each other over her beautiful features and swelling and more than half-naked bosom. Lennox and myself were all this time standing at the foot of the bed; De Walden was leaning on the back of the escribano's chair, with his face so turned as to see that of the wounded man, who lay still as death, the yellow light shining by fits full on his sunburnt complexion, and unshaven chin (the flickering shadows making his features appear as if convulsed, if they really were not so), and strong muscular neck, and glancing on the auburn curls, clotted with the cold perspiration wrung from his forehead by intense suffering.

He gradually recovered. The priest signed to Antonia to rise, and I took her place on the bed; he placed her hand in that of Adderfang, who looked steadily and consciously at him, but he could not speak. The service proceeded, the gusts without increasing, and the rain lashing to a degree that almost drowned the old man's voice. Adderfang being unable to repeat the responses, merely acknowledged them by an inclination of his head, and a silent movement of his lips; at length, when it was asked of him, "Do you take this woman to be your wife?" he made an

effort, and replied distinctly, "Yes."

Ha! what is that? A flash of lightning—a piercing shriek echoed through the room, loud above the rolling thunder—and then a convulsive giggle—something fell heavily on the floor—the wind howled, the lights were blown out—"Ave Maria purissima—sancta madre—soy ciega—soy ciega!" (Holy Mother of God, I am struck blind—I am struck blind!) The unfortunate girl had, indeed, been struck by the electric fluid, and was now writhing sightless on the floor: we endeavoured to remove her, but she had got her arms twined round the foot of the bed, and resisted all our efforts. "Dexa me morir cerca mi querido—ah Dios! dexa me morir aqui." Lights were immediately procured, and the shutters closed; and there lay Adderfang, apparently quite sensible, but now glaring round him, like a dying tiger. I never can forget the bitter smile that played on his haggard features, like the lurid glare of a stormy sunset. I turned away and shuddered, but curiosity compelled me to look at him again. He shook his head, as his eye caught mine, and pointed upward, as if he had said, "You see the very heavens league against me." He then signed for some cordial that stood on the table: having drunk it, it revived him for a minute almost miraculously. He again shed a flood of tears, and, sobbing audibly, clasped his hands on his bosom and prayed aloud. Yes, the assassin, the libertine, the selfish, cold-hearted seducer, for a short minute bent meekly as a child before the storm of his sufferings!

"Oh, Almighty God, whose laws I have so fearfully contemned, hear my prayers for her—hear the prayers of one *who dare not pray for himself!*"

A low, growling thunderclap had gradually rolled on from a distance as he proceeded; but when he got this length, it roared overhead in a series of loud reports, as if a seventy-four had fired her broadside close to us, shaking the dust from the roof and walls of the room, and making the whole prison tremble, as at the upheaving of an earthquake. He ceased—when the noise gradually grumbled itself to rest in the distance, and again nothing but the howling of the tempest without was heard.

"The voice of the Almighty," at length he said, speaking in short sentences with great difficulty, and in a low, sigh-like voice,—*"yea, the sound of my condemnation. Heaven will not hear my prayers, but with its thunders drowns the voice of my supplication—rejecting my polluted sacrifice, like that of Cain. I am ruined and condemned here and hereafter—palpably condemned by the Eternal, even while yet on earth, body and soul—body and soul—condem"*—

He ceased—a strong shiver passed over his face—his jaw fell; and Lennox, stepping up to him, closed his eyes—stooped his cheek towards his mouth to perceive if he still breathed—then holding up his hand, solemnly said, "*He hath departed!*"

### CHAPTER III.

#### SCENES IN HAVANNA.

"Had you ever the luck to see Donnybrook Fair?  
An Irishman all in his glory is there.  
With his sprig of shillelah and shamrock so green."

"Now, do make less noise there, my dear Listado—you will waken the whole house with your uproarious singing."

"Waken the whole house!—that's a mighty good one, friend Benjamin—why, the whole house *is* awake—broad awake as a cat to steal cream, or the devil in a gale of wind—Awake! men, women, and children, black, brown, and white, dogs, cats, pigs, and kittens, turkeys, peafowls, and the clucking hen, have been up and astir three hours ago. Dicky Phantom is now crying for his dinner—so, blood and oons, man, gather your small legs and arms about ye, and get up and open the door—it is past twelve, man, and Mother Gerard thinks you have gone for a six months' snooze, like a bat in winter; if you don't let me in, I shall swear you are hanging from the roof by the claws."

"I can't help it, man—I am unable to get up and dress without assistance; so, like a dear boy, call up old Nariz de Niéve,<sup>[1]</sup> the black valet, and ask the favour of his stepping in to help me."

[1] Literally, *Nose of Snow*.

"Stepping in!—why, Benjie Brail, your seven senses are gone a-wool-gathering, like Father Rogerson's magpie—how the blazes can Nariz de Niéve, or any one else, get to you, through a

two-inch door, locked on the inside?—you must get up and undo it, or you will die of starvation, for no blacksmith in Havanna could force such a complication of hardwood planks and brass knobs."

Rather than be bothered in this way, up I got, with no little difficulty, to say nothing of the pain from my undressed wound, and crawled towards the door. But Listado had not patience to wait on my snail's pace, so, setting his back to it, he gave a thundering push, sufficient to have forced the gates of Gaza from their hinges, and banged the door wide open. It had only caught on the latch, not having been fastened, after all; but he had overcome the *vis inertiae* rather too fiercely, for in spun our gingham-coated friend, with the flight of a Congreve rocket, sliding across the tiled floor on his breast a couple of fathoms, like a log squirmed along ice. At length he lost *his way*, and found his tongue.

"By the piper, but I'll pay you off for this trick, Master Brail, some fine morning, take Don Lorenzo's word for it. Why the devil did you open the door so suddenly, without telling me?—see, if these cursed tiles have not ground off every button on my waistcoat, or any where else. I must go into old Pierre Duquesné's garden, and borrow some fig leaves, as I am a gentleman."

I could scarcely speak for laughing. "The door was on the latch, as you see—it was not fastened, man, at all—but you are so impetuous"—

"Himpetuous!—why, only look at the knees of my breeches—there's himpetuosity for you!—a full quarter of a yard of good duck spoiled, not to name the shreds of skin torn from my kneepans, big enough, were they dried into parchment, to hold ten credos, and—but that will grow again, so never mind." Here he gathered himself up, and, tying a red silk handkerchief round one knee, a white one round the other, and my black cravat, which he unceremoniously picked off the back of a chair, round his waist, like a bishop's apron; he rose, laughing all the while, and turned right round on me—"There, I am all right now—but I have come to tell you of a miracle, never surpassed since Father O'Shauchnessy cured aunt Katey's old pig of the hystericals—stop! I must tell you about that game—She was, as you see, an ould maid, and after the last twelve farrow, she applied to"—

I laughed—"Which was the old maid? the pig, or"—

"Hold your tongue, and give your potato-trap a holiday.—Didn't I tell you it was my maiden aunt Katey, that brought the litter of pigs to Father O'Shauchnessy?"

"The devil she did," quoth I.

"To be sure she did," quoth he.—"So said she to him, 'Father,' says she—'Daughter,' says he; and then before she could get in another word—'Whose are them pigs?' says he.—'Moin, moy pigs,' quoth my aunt Katey.—'Your pigs!—all of them?' says Father O'Shauchnessy,—'Every mother's son of them,' says my aunt Katey—'and that is my errand, indeed, Father O'Shauchnessy, for the poor mother of these beautiful little creatures is bewitched entirely."

"Now, Listado, have done, and be quiet, and tell me your errand," said I, losing patience.

"My errand—*my* errand, did you say, Benjie Brail?—by the powers, and I had all but forgotten my errand—but let me take a look at you—why, what a funny little fellow you are in your linen garment, Benjie—laconic—short, but expressive"—and he turned me round in so rough a way, that he really hurt me considerably. Seeing this, and that I had to sit down on the side of the bed for support, the worthy fellow changed his tone—

"Bless me, Brail, I shall really be very sorry if I have hurt you, so I will help you to dress—but you certainly do cut a comical figure in dishabille—however, you have not heard the other miracle I came to tell you about, man—why, Adderfang, that you saw die last night, and be d—d to him—I cannot say much for his ending, by the way, if all be true that I have heard—is not dead at all."

"Impossible!"

"Ay, but it is true—he was only kilt by his own bad conscience, the big villain, and your fantastical *flower* of sulphur—your Scotch ally, Lennox, is below, ready to vouch for it. If the rascal does recover, what a beautiful subject for the garrote he will make.—What an expressive language this Spanish is, now—garrote—gar-rote—you don't require to look your dictionary for the meaning of such a word, the very sound translates itself to any man's comprehension—when you say a fellow is *garroteado*, don't you hear the poor devil actually *throttling*?—Oh! it's a beautiful word."

Here Manuel, the black butler, entered, to assist in rigging me, as Nariz de Niéve was occupied otherwise; and time it was he did so, for Listado was, without exception, the worst and roughest groom of the bedchamber that ever I had the misfortune to cope withal; but the plaguey Irishman must still put in his oar.

"Manuel, my worthy," said he, after the negro was done with me, "do me the favour, para tomar un asiento—take a seat—chaidez votre posterioribus, si vous plait, old Snow Ball."

By this time, he had shoved Massa Manuel into an arm-chair, whether he would or no, close to one of the wooden pillars of the balcony, and, getting behind him, he, with one hand, threw a towel over his face; then twisted a handkerchief round his neck, and the pillar also, with the other, until he had nearly strangled the poor creature; holding forth all the while, "There is the real garrote for you—a thousand times more genteel than hanging.—See, Brail, you sit down on your chair thus, quite comfortable—and the Spanish Jack Ketch, after covering your face with the graceful drapery of a shawl—you may even choose your pattern, they tell me, instead of dragging a tight nightcap over your beautiful snout, through which every wry mouth you make is seen—with one turn of his arm, so!"—Here, as he suited the action to the word, the half-choked Manuel spurred with all his might with his feet, and struggled with his hands, as if he had really been in the agonies of death, and I am not sure that he was far from them. At length he made a bolt from the chair, cast off the handkerchief that had been wrung round his neck, and rushed out of the room, never once looking behind him.

"Now, there! did you ever see such an uncivil ould savage, to stop me just in the middle of my elegant illustration. However, we shall both go and see this arch scoundrel, Adderfang, *garroteadoed* yet—and there I have rigged you now complete—not a bad looking little fellow, I declare, after your togs are fittingly donned.—So, good by, Brail, I will go home and see about breakfast"—and away he tumbled with his usual reckless shamble.

He had left the room, and was drawing the door to after him, when in came honest Dick Lanyard—"Ah, Don Ricardo," shouted the Irishman—"glad to see you—now I can leave our friend with a safe conscience; but he is not quite the thing yet here"—and the villain pointed to his forehead. He vanished, but again returned suddenly, as if he had forgotten something, and banging the door open with greater noise than ever, re-entered, with all the *sang froid* imaginable, dragging at a large parcel that was stuffed into his coat pocket, which he had considerable difficulty in extricating, apparently. At last, tearing it away, lining and all, he presented it to me, still sticking in the disrupted pouch.

"Now, there, if I have not torn out the very entrails of my coat skirt with your cursed parcel—but beg pardon, Benjie, really I had forgotten it; although, if the truth must be told, it was the main object of my coming here. Ah so—and here is another packet for you too, Don Ricardo"—chucking a large letter on service to the lieutenant, who eagerly opened it. It contained, amongst others, the following from the commodore:—

"*H.M.S Gazelle, Port-Royal, Jamaica.*

"*Such a date.*

"Sir—We arrived here, all well, on such a day—but, to suit the convenience of the merchants whose vessels I am to convoy to Havanna, and of those who are shipping specie to England, the admiral has detained me for six weeks, so that I shall not be in Havanna, in all likelihood, before such a period. You will therefore remain there, taking all necessary precautions to ensure the health of the men, and you can use your discretion in making short cruises to exercise them, and to promote the same; but in no case are you to be longer than three days without communicating with the port.

"The enclosure is addressed to Corporal Lennox—it was forwarded here in the admiral's bag by last packet from England, superscribed, to be returned to his office at Portsmouth, in case we had sailed. It seems his friends, having ascertained that he was on board *Gazelle*, have made interest for his discharge, which is herewith enclosed.—I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

"OLIVER OAKPLANK, K.C.B.

"Commodore.

"To Lieutenant Lanyard, commanding the *Midge*,  
tender to *H.M.S. Gazelle*," &c. &c. &c.

On receiving this the lieutenant sent for Lennox, and communicated the intelligence contained in the commodore's letter. I could not tell from the expression of his countenance whether he was glad or sorry.

The parcel contained letters from his father, the old clergyman of the parish, Mr Bland, and several of the poor fellow's own friends, detailing how they had traced him, and requesting, in the belief that the letters would reach him in Jamaica, that he would find out a kinsman of his own, a small coffee planter there, who would be ready to assist him; and, in the mean time, for immediate expenses, the minister's letter covered a ten-pound bank of England note, with which he had been furnished by old Skelp, who, curiously enough, would not trust it in his own, as it the clergyman's envelope carried a sort of sanctity with it.

The marine consulted me as to what he ought to do; I recommended him to proceed to Jamaica immediately by way of Batabano, and to visit the relation, who had been written to, as he might be of service to him, and accordingly he made his little preparations for departure.

My packet contained long letters from my Liverpool friends, that had been forwarded to the care of our Kingston correspondent; but, to my surprise, none from my uncle, Mr Frenche, mentioned at the outset as being settled in Jamaica.

In the mean time, I continued rapidly to improve, and three days after this I found myself well enough to go on board the Midge, and visit my friends there. It was the day on which Lennox was to leave her; and as the men's dinner-time approached, I saw one of the boat sails rigged as an awning forward, and certain demonstrations making, and a degree of bustle in the galley that *prognosticated*, as Listado would have said, a treat to his messmates. However, Lanyard and I returned on shore, after the former had given Drainings, the cook, and old Dogvane the quartermaster, leave for that afternoon to go on shore with the marine.

About sunset the same evening, as I was returning from an airing into the country in Mr Duquesné's volante, who should I overtake but the trio above alluded to, two of them in a very comfortable situation as it appeared. First came Dogvane and Lennox, with little Pablo Carnero, the Spanish ham merchant and pig butcher before mentioned, who was a crony of the marine, between them, all very respectably drunk, and old Drainings bringing up the rear, not many degrees better.

The quartermaster was in his usual dress, but the little Spanish dealer in pork hams was fagged out in nankeen tights, and a flowing bright-coloured gingham coat, that fluttered in the wind behind him, and around him, as if it would have borne up his tiny corpus into the air, like a bat or a Brobdingnag butterfly; or possibly a flying-squirrel would be the better simile, as he reeled to and fro under the tyranny of the rosy god, making drunken rushes from Lennox to Dogvane, and back again; tackling to them alternately, like the nondescript spoken of in his leaps from tree to tree. As for our friend the corporal, he had changed the complexion of his outward man in a most unexampled manner;—where he had got the clothes furbished up for the nonce, heaven knows, unless, indeed, which is not unlikely, they had all along formed part of his kit on board; but there he was, dressed in a respectable suit of black broad cloth, a decent black beaver, and a white neckcloth; his chin well shaven, and in the grave expression of his countenance, I had no difficulty in discerning that idiotically serious kind of look that a man puts on who is conscious of having drunk a little more than he should have done, but who struggles to conceal it.

Dogvane, in the ramble, had killed a black snake about three feet long, which, by the writhing of its tail, still showed signs of life, and this he kept swinging backwards and forwards in one of his hands, occasionally giving the little butcher a lash with it, who answered the blow by shouts of laughter; while a small green paroquet, that he had bought, was perched on one of his broad shoulders, fastened by a string, or lanyard, round its leg to the black ribbon he wore about his hat.

The wrangle and laughter amongst them, when I overtook them, seemed to be in consequence of the little Spaniard insisting on skinning the eel, as he called it, which Dogvarie resisted, on the ground that he intended to have it preserved in spirits and sent to his wife. The idea of a snake of so common a description being a curiosity at all, seemed to entertain little Carnero astonishingly, but when the quartermaster propounded through Lennox (whose Spanish was a melange of schoolboy Latin, broad Scotch, and signs, with a stray word of the language he attempted scattered here and there, like plums in a boarding-school pudding), that he was going to send the reptile to his wife, he lost control of himself altogether, and laughed until he rolled over and over, gingham coat and all, in the dusty road.

"Culebra a su muger!—valga me dios—tabernaculo del diablo mismo a su querida!—ha ha, ha" (hiccup), "mandale papagayo, hombre—o piña conservada, o algo de dulce—algo para comer—pero serpiente!—culebra!—ha—ha—ha!"—(A snake to your wife!—heaven defend me—the tabernacle of the old one himself to your sweetheart!—send her the parrot, man—or a preserved pine-apple or some sweetmeats—something to eat—but a serpent!—a vile snake—ha—ha—ha!)

Lennox now made me out, and somewhat ashamed of the condition of his Spanish ally, he made several attempts to get him on his legs, but Dogvane, who seemed offended at little Pablo's fun, stood over him grimly with his arms folded, about which the reptile was twining, and apparently resolute in his determination not to give him any aid or assistance whatever.

"Surge, carnifex—get up, man—surge, you drunken beast," quoth Lennox, and then he dragged at the little man by the arms and coat skirts, until he got him out of the path so as to allow me to drive on.

At length he got him on his legs, and held him in his arms.

"Thank ye, Lennox," said I. He bowed.

"Hilloa," quoth Dogvane, startled at my appearance; "Mr Brail, I declare!"—and he tore off his hat with such vehemence, that the poor little paroquet, fastened by the leg to it, was dashed into Pablo Carnero's face.

"Marinero—animal—pendejo—quieres que yo pierdo mis ojos, con su paxaro intierno?"—(Sailor—animal—hangman—do you wish to knock my eyes out with your infernal bird?) and he

made at him as if he would have annihilated him on the spot. At this hostile demonstration, Dogvane very coolly caught the little man in his arms, and tossed him into the ditch, as if he had been a ball of spun-yarn; where, as the night is fine, we shall leave him to gather himself up the best way he can.

It seemed little Carnero's house was the haunt of the Batabano traders or smugglers, and that Lennox had bargained with him for a mule, and made his little arrangements for proceeding with a recua, or small caravan, across the island on the following evening.

Next morning Mr Duquesné and I, accompanied by Listado and Mr M—, rode into the country about five miles, on the Batabano road, to visit Mr D— and family at their villa. I found M— a very intelligent Scotchman; indeed, in most matters of trade he was, and I hope *is*, considered a first-rate authority in the place. He was a tall thin fair-haired man, with a good deal of the Yankee in his cut and appearance, although none whatever in his manner; and as for his kindness I never can forget it. Mr D— was an Englishman who had married a Spanish lady; and at the time I mention, he had returned from England with his children—a son, and several daughters grown up—the latter with all the polish and accomplishments of Englishwomen engrafted on the enchanting *naïveté* of Spanish girls; and even at this distance of time I can remember their beautifully pliant and most graceful Spanish figures, as things that I can dream of still, but never expect again to see; while their clear olive complexions, large dark eyes, and coal-black ringlets, were charms, within gunshot of which no disengaged heart could venture, and hope to come off scatheless. Disengaged hearts! Go on, Master Benjamin Brail, I see how it is with you, my lad.

I had previously shaken hands with Lennox, whose heart, poor fellow, between parting with me and little Dicky Phantom, was like to burst, and did not expect to have seen him again; but on our return from Mr D—'s in the evening, we met a man mounted on a strong pacing horse, dressed as usual in a gingham jacket and trowsers, with a large slouched hat of plaited grass, a cloak strapped on his saddle-bow, and a valise behind him. He carried his trabuco, or blunderbuss, in his right hand, resting on the cloak; and his heels were garnished with a pair of most persuasive silver spurs buckled over *shoes*. His trowsers, in the action of riding, had shuffled up to his knees, disclosing a formidable sample of muscle in the calf of his leg: while his gaunt brown sinewy hand, and sun-burnt moorish-looking features, evinced that he would, independently of his arms, have been a tough customer to the strongest man in the Old Gazelle.

M— and Listado both addressed this brigand-looking subject with the greatest familiarity, and enquired where his comrades were. He nodded his head backwards over his shoulder, as much as to say, "Close behind me." Indeed, we now heard the clattering of mules' feet up the path, that here ascended suddenly from the level country, and more resembled a dry river course than a road, and the shouting of the riders to their bestias and each other.

Presently about thirty odd-looking tailor-like creatures appeared on stout mules, riding with their knees up to their noses, evidently not at all at home, but held in their seats by the old-fashioned demi-piques, with which their animals were caparisoned. I directed an enquiring look at M—. He laughed.

"Batabano smugglers."

"What! this in the face of day?"

"Oh yes; those things are managed coolly enough here, Mr Brail. They are now on their way to the coast, where a vessel is doubtless lying ready to carry them over to Jamaica, and to bring them back when they have laid out their money in goods. See there, those sumpter mules are laden with their bags of doubloons; when they return to Batabano, with the assistance of my friend Juan Nocheobsuro there, and some of his gang, their goods will soon be in the tiendas, or shops of Havanna, to the great injury of the fair trader who pays duties, I will confess—and I hope the evil will soon be put down; but there it is for the present as you see it."

"But how comes Listado to know so many of the tailor-looking caballeros?"

"They are all customers of ours," said he, "who only resort to Jamaica occasionally, and are mostly shopkeepers themselves, or have partners who are so."

"And our excellent Irish friend himself, may I ask, who is he—is he your partner?"

"No, no," said M—, "he is not my partner, but he is connected with most respectable Irish correspondents of mine, who consign linens and other Irish produce largely to my establishment, and for whom I load several ships in the season with sugar and coffee; so Monsieur Listado, who is rich since his father's death (he was the head of the firm), has been sent by the Irish house to superintend the sales of the outward cargoes, under my auspices, and to take a sort of general charge of shipping the returns; but," continued he, laughing, "as you see, he does not *kill* himself by the intensity of his application to business. He is a warm-hearted and light-headed Irishman,—one who would fight *for* his friend to the last, and even with him for pastime, if no legitimate quarrel could be had. We had a little bother with him at first, but as I know him now, we get on astonishingly; and I don't think we have had one single angry word together for these six months past, indeed never since he found out from my letter-book that I had once done an essential



mercantile service to his father, in protecting a large amount of his bills drawn while he was in New York, when dishonoured by a rascally agent at that time employed by him here. But who comes?" Who indeed, thought I, as no less a personage than Lennox himself brought up the rear, on a stout mule, in his dingy suit of sables; cutting a conspicuous figure amongst the gaudily dressed Dons. He paced steadily past us, and when I bid him good-by, he merely touched his hat and rode on. Presently the whole cavalcade was out of sight, and nothing else occurred until we arrived at Havanna, and I found myself once more comfortably lodged under Mr Duquesné's hospitable roof.

About a fortnight after this I received letters from Mr Peter Brail, my uncle in Liverpool, offering me a share in the firm, and enjoining me, if I accepted it, to return immediately, without visiting Jamaica. He also stated that he had written his Kingston correspondents, with instructions as to some business that I was to have transacted, had I, as originally intended, gone thither; and mentioned to them, at the same time, the probable change in my plans.

This was too favourable an offer to be declined; I therefore made up my mind to close with it; but, as I could not wind up my Havanna transactions for some time, I determined to spend the interim as pleasantly as possible.

Two days afterwards I was invited to make one in a cruise into the country. Accordingly, the following morning we were all prepared to set off to visit Mr Hudson's estate; it was about five in the morning—we had packed up—the volantes and horses were already at the door, and Mrs Hudson, her daughter Helen, with Dicky Phantom, once more in his little kilt of a frock, in her hand; Sophie Duquesné, De Walden, Mr Hudson, and myself, all spurred and whipped, if not all booted, were ready in the vestibule, waiting by candle-light for Mr Listado, who was also to be of the party. Gradually the day broke, and as the servants were putting out the candles, in compliment to Aurora's blushes, in trundled our Hibernian friend, with his usual boisterosity.

"Hope I haven't kept you waiting, Mr Hudson?—that villain Palotinto, the black warehouseman, store *nigger*"—with a wink to me—"as you would call him in New York,"—Mr Hudson laughed good-naturedly—"got drunk, and be fiddled to him—never swear before ladies, Brail—and forgot to call me; and when he did wake me, he could not find my spurs, and the mule's bridle was amissing, and the devil knows what all had gone wrong; so I was bothered entirely—but here I am, my charmers, large as life, and as agreeable as ever—don't you think so, Miss Hudson?" She laughed; and as the blundering blockhead dragged, rather than handed her towards her volante, I felt a slight comical kind of I don't-know-what, and a bit of a tiny flutter, not a thousand miles from my heart.—"Ho, ho," thought I, Benjie. "But what an ass you were not to hand her out your—. Death and the devil, what does the mouldy potato mean?"—continued I to myself, as Listado, after fumbling to get the step of the New-York built voiture out, and knocking the Moreno, or brown driver, down on his nose for attempting to help him, desecrated the sweet little body's slender waist with his rough arms, and actually lifted her, laughing and giggling (*skirling*, to borrow from Lennox), bodily into the carriage.

Somehow I took little note for a considerable time after this how the rest of us were bestowed, until I found myself in company with Listado, De Walden, and Mr Hudson, on horseback, without well knowing how I got there, followed by a cavalcade of six negroes, on mules, with two sumpter ones with luggage, and three led small Spanish barbs, with side saddles, all curveting in the wake of the carriage with the ladies, by this time trundling through the city gate, a cable's length a-head of us.

"I say, Benjie Brail," shouted Listado, "have you become a mendicant friar, that you travel without your hat"——

"My hat?" said I, deucedly taken aback and annoyed; "true enough—how very odd and foolish—I say, Nariz de Niéve, do oblige me, and ride back for my sombrero."

## CHAPTER IV.

### A CRUISE IN THE MOUNTAINS—EL CAFETAL.[1]

[1] *Cafetal*—Coffee estate.

We arrived, at five in the afternoon, at Mr Hudson's property, having stopped, during the heat of the day, under a large deserted shed, situated in the middle of a most beautiful grass plat, and overshadowed by splendid trees. A rill of clear cold water ran past, in which we cooled our liqueurs; and the substantial lunch we made, enabled all of us to hold out gallantly until our journey was finished. The road at one time had wound along the margin of the sea; at another it diverged inland amongst tree-covered knolls, and at every turn one was refreshed by splashing

through a crystal-clear stream.

Towards the afternoon we appeared to have made a longer detour, and to have struck farther into the country than we had hitherto done. We passed several sugar estates, and then came to a large new settled coffee property, with the bushes growing amongst the fire-scathed stumps of the recently felled trees (up which the yam vines twisted luxuriantly, as if they had been hop-poles), loaded with red berries, that glanced like ripe cherries amongst the leaves, dark and green as those of the holly. We had just been greeted by the uncouth shouts of a gang of newly imported Africans, that under white superintendents were cultivating the ground, when Listado's horse suddenly started and threw him, as he rode ahead of us pioneering the way for the ladies, who were by this time mounted on their ponies, the volante having been left at the estate below. He fell amidst a heap of withered plantain suckers, which crashed under him,—in an instant a hundred vultures, hideous creatures, with heads as naked of feathers as a turkey-cock, the body being about the same size, flew up with a loud rushing noise, and a horrid concert of croaking, from the carcass of a bullock they were devouring, that lay right in the path, and which had startled the horse. We were informed by one of the superintendents that the creature had only died the night before; although by the time we saw it, there was little remaining but the bones—indeed half a dozen of the obscene birds were at work like quarrymen in the cavity of the ribs.

"Now, Listado, dear," said I, "you made an empty saddle of it very cleverly—no wax there—why you shot out like a sky-rocket—but never mind, I hope you are not hurt?"

He laughed louder than any of us, and again pricked a-head as zealously as before. The Patlander was at this time making sail past Dicky Phantom, who was strapped on to a chair, that a negro had slung at his back, knapsack fashion, and who kept way with us, go as fast as we chose, apparently without the least inconvenience.

"I tink, Mr Listado," said the child to our friend, as he pushed a-head to resume his station in the van—"I tink you wantee jomp upon de back of one of dem big crow, Mr Listado. Horse must hurt you some place, so you want ride upon big turkey, eh?"

"You *tink*, you tiny little rascal, you! who put that quip in your head?"

"Mamma Hudson, Miss Helen tell me say so."

"Bah," quoth Lorenzo, and shoved on.

"Hold hard," I shouted, as the road dipped abruptly into the recesses of the natural forest; and I pulled up, for fear of my mule stumbling or running me against a tree, or one of my companions; so sudden had the change been from the fierce blaze of the sun in the cleared ground, to the dark green twilight of the wood. However, although the trees, as we rode on, grew higher, and their intertwined branches became even more thickly woven together, and the matted leaves overhead more impervious to the light and heat, yet we all quickly became so accustomed to the dark shade that we very soon saw every thing distinctly.

"Good-morning, ladies," quoth Listado, as they dawned on him in all their loveliness; "how do you do? I have not seen you for some time—do you know, the beautiful verdure of your cheeks, in this light, is quite entirely captivating. You would be the envy of all the mermaids of the ocean if they saw you—but I believe they are not given to walk much in woods. Miss Hudson's beautiful face is of a cool refreshing pea-green, as I am a gentleman; and her fair nose of the colour of a grey parrot's bill, or an unboiled lobster's claw,—as for Mademoiselle Duquesné—may I die an ould maid, if you are not a delicate shade darker—and look if the child don't look as green as a fairy. Did ever mortal man see such a shamrock of a picanniny? But it is past meridian—stop till I take an observation."—Here our noisy friend put a bottle of vin-de-grave to his head.

"Do you know," said he, "I really require a cordial after my ground and lofty tumbling amongst those very damnable craturs, the turkey buzzards down below there."

"Very true," said Miss Hudson; "and I presume, Mr Listado, since you are dealing in nicknames, and have already ran through all the shades of your national colour, you will not fire, if we call you Mr Bottlegreen."

"Fair enough that same, Helen—Fire!—why, I have half a mind to shoot you with this bottle of soda water," taking one from his holster—"if I could only get the string loosened—Ah, Miss Hudson, would that my heart strings were as tough." And he made a most lamentable face, as if his interior was disarranged, and heaved a sigh fit to turn the sails of a windmill.

"There he goes with his mock sentimentality again," cried the sweet girl, laughing.

We rode on, the ground becoming more rugged and rocky at every step, but perfectly clear of underwood—the dry grey limestone rocks increasing and shooting up all round us, like pinnacles, or Druidical monuments: but still immense trees found nourishment enough in the black mould amongst the fissures, dry as they appeared to be, and the shade continued as deep as ever; while, as the afternoon wore on, the musquittoes increased most disagreeably.

"Look at these two guanans chasing each other up that tree," shouted Listado; "what horrid ugly things they are. I declare that large one is three feet long from stem to stern, as friend

Benjie there would have said." As we all stopped to look at the hideous lizard, it seemed to think, on the principle of fair play, that it might take a squint at us, and accordingly came to a stand-still on a branch, about three fathoms above where the negro stood with little Dicky on his back.

"What ugly beast," quoth the little fellow, as he lay back and looked up at it—a musket shot at this instant was fired close to us from the wood—the sharp report shattering from tree to rock, until it rattled to rest in tiny echoes in the distance. At first we all started, and then peered anxiously about us, but we could only see a thin white puff of smoke rise and blow off through a small break or vista in the forest, and smell the gunpowder—we could perceive no one. I looked up, the guana had been wounded, as it was now clinging to the branch with its two hind feet and its long tail, and fiercely biting and tearing its side with its fore claws, as it hung with its head downwards, and swung and struggled about in agony. I made sure this was the spot where the bullet had struck it, and just as the negro who had fired, a sort of gamekeeper of Mr Hudson's, appeared at the top of the path, the dragon-looking lizard dropped right down on poor little Dicky Phantom, as he sat lashed into his chair, unable to escape. Here was the devil to pay with a vengeance. The child shrieked, as the abominable reptile twined and twisted about him, with its snake-like tail, and formidable claws, and threatening him with its crocodile looking snout. I saw it bite him on the arm—this was the signal for the women to scream, and Listado to swear, and for me to seize the creature by the tail, and endeavour to drag him away—but I was terrified to use force, lest I should lacerate poor Dicky—while the negro, who carried the child, became frantic with fright, and jumped and yelled amongst the trees, like an ourang-outang bitten by a rattlesnake. The guana still kept his hold of the child, however, making a chattering noise between its teeth, like that of a small monkey, when Listado came up to me—"Stop, Brail, give me"—and he twitched the animal away with a jerk, and the sleeve of Dicky's frock in its teeth; but it instantly fastened on his own leg, and if the black game-keeper had not, with more presence of mind than any one of us possessed, come up, and forcibly choked the creature off with his bare hands, although he thereby got several severe scratches, he might have been seriously injured. However, it turned out that the damage was not very serious after all, little Dicky having been more frightened than hurt, as the guana's teeth had fastened in his clothes, and not in his flesh, so we all soon got into sailing condition again, and proceeded on our way.

Suddenly, the road abutted on a high white wall, the trees growing close up to it, without any previous indications of cleared ground or habitation. This was the back part of Mr Hudson's house, which stood on the very edge of the forest we had come through. It was a large stone edifice of two stories, plastered and white-washed, built in the shape of a square, with a court in the centre, and galleries on both floors all round the inside, after the pattern of the houses of the nobility in Old Spain, especially in the Moorish towns. We alighted at a large arched gateway, and having given our horses to two black servants that were in attendance, entered the court, where the taste of the American ladies shone conspicuous.

In the centre there was a deep basin, hewn roughly, I should rather say ruggedly, out of the solid rock, and filled with the purest and most limpid water. Several large plantain suckers grew on the edge of it, in artificial excavations in the stone, to the height of twenty feet, so that their tops were on a level with the piazza above; and a fountain or jet of water was forced up from the centre of the pool, in a whizzing shower, amongst their broad and jagged leaves, whereon the large drops of moisture rolled about with every motion, like silver balls on green velvet. Beneath the proverbially cool shade of these plantain suckers, a glorious living mosaic of most beautiful flowers, interspersed with myrtle and other evergreens, filled the parterre, which was divided into small lozenges by tiny hedges of young box and lime bushes; while the double jessamine absolutely covered the pillars of the piazza, as I have seen ivy clinging round the columns of a ruined temple, scattering its white leaves like snow-flakes at every gush of the breeze; yet all these glorious plants and flowers grew out of the scanty earth that filled the crevices of the rock, seemingly depending more on the element of water than on the soil. Every thing in the centre of the small square appeared so natural, so devoid of that art, largely employed, yet skilfully masked, that I never would have tired gloating on it.

"Now, Master Hudson," quoth Listado, "you have made two" [pronouncing it *tew*] "small mistakes here. First, you have the trees too near the house, which brings the plague of musquittoes upon you; secondly, this fountain, how pretty soever to look at, must make the domicile confoundedly damp, and all your capital New York cheeses prematurely mouldy. I declare," feeling his chin, "I am growing mouldy myself, or half of my beard has been left unreaped by that villanous razor of Brail's there, that I scraped with this morning—shaving I could not call it."

"Come, come," said I, "the fountain is beautiful, and don't blame the razor until you have a better of your own."

"It is, indeed, beautiful," said Mrs Hudson; "but, alas! that such a paradise should not be fenced against the demon of yellow fever!"

The supply of water to the basin of the said fountain, by the way, which came from the neighbouring hill; was so ample, that it forced the jet from a crater-like aperture in the bottom, without the aid of pipe or tube of any kind, full six feet above the surface in a solid cone, or cube, of two feet in diameter; and the spray some eight feet higher. No one who has lived in such a climate, and witnessed such a scene, can ever forget the delicious rushing, and splashing, and sparkling of the water, and the rustling, or rather pattering, of the plantain leaves, and of the

bushes, as the breeze stirred them.

The lower gallery was paved with small diamond-shaped slabs of blue and white marble, the very look of which added to the coolness. "Why, Mr Hudson, how glorious! nothing superior to this even in *ould* Ireland."

The American laughed, and nodded in the direction of his daughter. I turned my eye in the same direction, and met hers. She had apparently been observing how I was affected, at least so my vanity whispered: she blushed slightly, and looked another way.

I saw I must say something. "Indeed, Miss Hudson, I thought you had not been above two months in the island. Did you not come down in the American frigate"—

She smiled.

"I did, Mr Brail; but it was the cruise before last—we have been six months here."

"Six months! and are all these glorious plants the growth of six months?"

"Ay, that they are," quoth Listado; "most of them have not been planted more than *six weeks*."

The inside of this large mansion was laid out more for comfort than show; the rooms, that all opened into the corridors already mentioned, were large and airy, but, with the exception of a tolerable dining-room, drawing-room, and the apartments of the ladies, very indifferently furnished. They were lit from without by the usual heavy wooden unglazed balconies, common both in New and Old Spain, which appear to have been invented more for the purpose of excluding the heat than admitting the light.

In front of the house, and on each side, were large white terraced platforms, with shallow stone ledges, built in flights, like gigantic stairs on the hillside. On this the coffee was thickly strewed in the red husk, or pulp, as it is called, to dry in the sun. Little Dicky took the berries to be cherries, until the pulp stuck in his little teeth.

The opposite hill had been cleared, and was covered with coffee-bushes; and right below us, in the bottom of the deep ravine, a tree-screened rivulet murmured and brawled alternately over a rugged bed of limestone rock, as the breeze rose and fell.

In the northernmost nook of the cleared field, the negro houses, as usual surrounded with palm, star-apple, and orange trees, were clustered below an overhanging rock like eagles' nests, with blue threads of smoke rising up from them in still spiral jets, until it reached the top of the breezy cliff that sheltered them, when it suddenly blew off, and was dissipated. Beyond these lay a large field of luxuriant guinea grass, covered with bullocks and mules, like black dottings on the hillside. In every other direction one unbroken forest prevailed; the only blemish on the fair face of nature was man: for although the negroes that we saw at work appeared sleek and fat, yet, being most of them fresh from the ship, there was a savageness in the expression of their countenances, and in their half-naked bodies, that had nothing Arcadian in it.

We were all, especially the ladies, pretty well tired; so, after a comfortable dinner, we betook ourselves to rest betimes. Next morning, at seven o'clock, we again mustered in force in the breakfast room, and the instant I entered, little Dicky, to my surprise, bolted from Helen Hudson's side, dashing away her hand from him angrily, and ran to me—"Massa Brail, Miss Hudson tell lie."

"Dicky, mind what you say."

"Oh, yes; but yesterday she say—Dicky Phantom, you put on petticoat and frock—to-morrow you put on trowsers again."

"Oh, Dicky, Dicky," cried Helen, laughing.

"Well, my dear boy, Miss Hudson must be as good as her word, and restore your trowsers: she does not mean to *wear* them, does she?"

"Indeed, Dicky, Helen did quite right to dress you as you are," said Mrs Hudson, perceiving her daughter a little put out; "your little trowsers were all tar and pitch, and you are too young to leave off frocks yet."

The child, although there was no help at hand, determined to show he would not be imposed on, so, like a little snake casting his skin, he deliberately shook himself, and with a wriggle of his shoulders slid out of his clothes altogether; and there he stood like a little naked Cupidon—"Now I shall go and catch fis," said the little fellow laughing. With that he toddled away into the basin of water, that was gurgling and splashing in the court-yard. I wish there had been a painter to have caught the group. Sophie Duquesné and Helen Hudson running about the small walks of the rocky parterre, dashing the water spangles from the flowers with their light feet, and laughing loudly as they strove to catch Dicky, who kept just beyond their reach, squealing with child-like joy, and splashing them: a perfect shower of spray descending all the time on the beautiful

urchin's own curly pate; while the plantain leaves were shaking in the breeze, and checkering the blue sky overhead. At length De Walden caught him, and swung him out of the water by the arms into Helen Hudson's lap.

When breakfast was over, we again mounted our mules, to explore the neighbourhood towards the coast; for notwithstanding the tortuosity of the road we had come, we were not, Mr Hudson said, above three miles distant from the sea after all. Listado, honest gentleman, chose to mount the smallest mule that could be had; and as he was upwards of six feet high, he looked, as he paced along, more like an automaton mounted on a velocipede than any thing else.

After riding along for half an hour, in a path cut through the otherwise impervious wood, we came to a naked, storm-scathed, and sun-baked promontory of red clay and grey stone, which beetled over the sea so abruptly, that the line of vision struck the water at least a mile beyond the beach, which was thus entirely hid from our sight. The spot where we stood seemed to be the eastern headland, or cape, of a small and most beautiful bay, which opened to our view down to leeward. Beyond us, out at sea, the water was roughened by a fiery sea-breeze—to use the West Indian phrase—the blue water being thickly speckled with white crests; and from the speed with which the white sails in the offing slid along their liquid way, like feathers, or snow-flakes floating down the wind, it might be called a brisk gale. Every now and then a tiny white speck would emerge from under the bluff into sight, and skim away until lost in the misty distance; and a coaster from the offing, as she hauled in for the bay, would as suddenly vanish for a time, until she again appeared, diminished in the distance to a sea-bird, gliding slowly along the glasslike surface of the small bay, when she would fold her white wings, and become stationary at anchor near the shipping-place, or Barquedier, as it is called.

"We must go down and see that beautiful bay, Helen—Miss Hudson, I mean—beg pardon"—

"We have not time, Mr Brail, to-day; we must return, as my father wishes us to visit some beautiful scenery in the woods; but we shall ride to it another forenoon—only, why will you distress yourself about calling me Helen—why, I *am* Helen—every body calls me Helen—with your precise *Miss Hudson*, and *Mademoiselle Duquesné*. If you stick to such formalities, I will positively treat you to a few *calculations* and *guessings*." Here the laughing girl gave the true nasal twang of Jonathan himself.

"Well, well—agreed—Helen you shall be—my Helen." She looked at me, and blushing, held up her finger, and shook her head—as if she had said—"No, no,—not quite *yet*." My heart stopped a beat to gather strength, and then gave such a devil of a bounce—"Hillo," thought I—"Ha, ha, Master Benjamin!"

We therefore returned homewards, and having extended our ride in another direction, and been highly gratified by the scenery, we found ourselves seated at dinner, in the lower piazza of the court facing the east, so as to be screened from the rays of the setting sun by the roof of the house.

The water of the clear pool in the centre of the yard was led away, on the side we sat on, in a little canal, amongst the rocks, out of which it was hewn, and this was thickly planted with lotuses. We had dined, and the golden sky overhead began to be spangled with a bright silver star here and there, and the distant and scarcely perceptible buzz of a solitary scout of a musquitto, would every now and then suddenly increase to a loud singing noise, as he reconnoitred your auricle—presently you heard the hum of a whole picket of them—the advanced guard of a host of winged pests, which were thus giving token of the approach of evening.

"Master Hudson," quoth Listado again—"you have a beautiful situation here, certainly; magnificent scenery, and a good house; fine water, and pure air—but a damnable quantity of musquittoes—beg, pardon, ladies, for the lapse—yet really, just as I am expatiating, one of those devils has flown into my eye, half-a-dozen into my mouth, and—Lord, if a big fellow has not got into my ear, and is at this identical moment thundering away at the timpanum, ay, as if he were a bass drummer!" Here our friend started up, and began to dance about and shake his head, as if he would have cast it from his shoulders into the pool.

"Mr Brail," said Helen, laughing, as soon as the Irishman had subsided—"do you see how carefully those beautiful water-lilies have folded up their silver leaves before retiring to their watery pillows?—there, that one nearest your foot has already sunk below the water; and the largest, that is still gently moved by the small ripple that radiates from the splashing water in the middle of the basin, will soon follow—See, it is gone"—as, one by one, the whole of the beautiful plants gradually sank under the surface for the night.

I was struck with this, and fascinated by the tone and manner of the speaker;—when suddenly the lotuses again emerged.

"Heyday," said De Walden—"your poetry is all lost, Miss Hudson; the flowers don't seem to sleep sound on the watery pillows you spoke of—they are as gallant and complimentary as Don Lorenzo there; for see, they are all back to have another peep at you."

"Probably they found their beds were not made, De Walden," rapped out Listado.

"Very extraordinary; what can that mean?" said Sophie Duquesné.

"My dear Miss Duquesné," said Listado, "I see I must give you some lessons in pronunciation still—why will you worry your R's so in your beautiful throat?"

"It is my French accent, you know, and I cannot help it," said the lovely creature, laughing.

"But really what *is* this?" said Helen; and as she spoke, the jet gradually became weaker and weaker; the water in the pool rapidly subsided for a minute; and then, with a loud, gurgling noise, disappeared altogether, leaving the rocky bed dry, and the poor pet mountain-mullets wallowing amongst the water-plants like so many silver wedges.

"Hillo," shouted Listado, in extreme surprise—"Hillo, who has stolen our purling stream?—what the devil has become of the river, Master Hudson?" This was a thing neither Mr Hudson nor any one else could tell—that it had absolutely vanished as described was clear enough; but just as the girls and De Walden had secured the fish in a tub, the basin was again filled, as suddenly as it had been emptied, with the same loud gurgle, too, and in ten minutes one could not have told that any thing had happened.

"There must have been some subterranean convulsions to produce this phenomenon," said I.

"No doubt of it," rejoined Listado—"Old Nicholas had run short of water for his tay, and borrowed our beautiful jet for a little—but, hush! he has heard me, so sure as peas are pays in Ireland, and has turned off the water again—Hush!"

It once more disappeared in the same manner, and with the same loud, gurgling noise as before; but after the basin was dry this time, we distinctly heard several distant reports, in the bowels of the earth, like the far-off reverberations of a cannon-shot amongst the hills.

"There was no earthquake?" said Mr Hudson, looking round enquiringly, after we had a little recovered from our surprise—no one had perceived it if there had been. "I should not be surprised if this be the precursor of one, however," he continued, "after this long drought and intense heat."

\* \* \* \* \*

The following evening was the one we had fixed on, according to previous arrangement, to ride to the beautiful bay lying within the promontory already described.

The weather, as already hinted, for several weeks preceding this had been uncommonly hot, even for that climate; and the earth was parched and rent by intense drought. In many places in our rides we came upon fissures a foot wide, and several fathoms deep; and the trees had, in general, assumed the hue of our English leaves in November. There had been several "temblores de tierra," or shocks of earthquake, within this period—slight at first, but they seemed to increase in strength and frequency, as the dry weather continued; and it was therefore reasonable to refer the sudden disappearing of the jet of water to some internal convulsion of this nature.

On the day in question there was not a cloud to be seen—a hot blending blue blaze hung over the land and water, through which every object trembled as if the earth and sea had sent up a thin smoke through intensity of heat.

The sun when he rose, and until high up in heaven, had the same red magnified disk, as in a foggy winter morning in England; and a lurid purple hue pervaded all nature, as if he had been suffering a temporary eclipse; while the usual sea breeze entirely failed.

About noon every thing was deadly still,—the cattle had betaken themselves to the small river, where they stood listlessly chewing their cuds, as if overpowered by the density of the air. Not a bird was hopping in the no longer vocal trees; the very lizards were still: the negroes employed in cleaning the coffee pieces worked in silence, in place of shouting and laughing, and gabbling to each other, as is their wont—and when the driver or black superintendent gave his orders, the few words he uttered sounded loud and hollow, echoing from hill to hill. I could hear distinctly what he said on the opposite mountain side, situated above a mile off, although I was persuaded at the same time that he spoke in his natural tone, and with no greater exertion than he used in common conversation. The very clink of the negroes' hoes in the rocky soil was unaccountably distinct and sharp.

Several inexplicable noises had been heard during the forenoon from the head of the ravine; and once or twice a strong rushing sound, like the wind amongst trees, passed over our heads, although there was not a zephyr moving; a poet might have fancied it cohorts of invisible spirits charging each other in the air. At other times, a gradually increasing subterraneous grumbling noise would spring up, at first undistinguishable from distant thunder, but coming apparently nearer, it would end in a series of deadened reports, like a distant cannonade; and this again would be followed by a sharp hissing or hurtling in the sky, altogether different from the rushing noise already described; more resembling that made by streamers in a high latitude, or the flight of a congreve rocket than any thing else. But the most startling sound of all was the solitary wild cry of a crane, now and then; resembling for all the world the high note of a trumpet, blown short and quick.

We had all been puzzling ourselves with these appearances and strange noises during the

forenoon,—some arguing that a hurricane was impending, others that they betokened an earthquake; but the stillness continued without either occurring, and the day wore on very much as usual.

In the evening, the sun was again shorn of his flaming beams, as he sank in the west, and became magnified as in the morning, when he dipped in the haze near the horizon, into a broad moonlike globe.

"Come," said our excellent host, "we have had no exercise to-day, I calculate, so let us order the mules, and ride to Helen's beautiful bay, that she raves about; we shall at least breathe fresher air there."

"Oh, papa, I don't *rave* about it," said she; "it is only Sophia and Mr Listado who *rave*;" whereupon the ladies vanished, but soon reappeared all ready, when we mounted and set off.

By the time we reached the eastern cape, or headland of the small bay, the sun, near his setting, had tinged the whole calm sea, as far as the eye could reach, with a bluish purple. The stars appeared larger than usual; some of them surrounded with tiny haloes; and the planet Venus, as she struggled up in the east, loomed like a small moon.

We wound downwards along a zig-zag path, hewn out of the rock, until we arrived at the beautiful white beach, which we had admired so much from above.

The swell from the offing tumbled in towards the land, in long purple undulations, and as it broke on the rocky coast beyond the promontory, the noise was like the distant roar of a populous town, borne on the swell of the breeze. In the bay itself, however, all was still; the surface of the sea clear and calm as a mirror. The sun was still visible to us, but already every thing was in shade on the opposite side of the anchorage—here about a quarter of a mile across, where the dark trees and bushes were reflected with startling distinctness: There was no ascertaining the water line in that direction, as the bank was high and precipitous, and the foliage darkened down to the very water's edge; on our side, at the head of the bay, there was a small wooden wharf that ran into the sea, alongside of which lay a shallop with her sails hoisted, but hanging motionless in the dead calm, from the spars. A solitary negro was walking slowly up and down this erection, smoking; his shadow in the water looking like his *doppel ganger*, or a familiar spirit. There was a large schooner lying right in the centre of the bay, very heavily rigged, and apparently armed, but I could see no one on deck at first; presently, however, there was a bustle on board of her, and two boats were hoisted out.

"What schooner is that?" I asked Mr Hudson—he did not know—it must be some coaster he thought.

"It cannot be that they are startled at our appearance, surely," said Helen; "yet it looks like it."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Don Lorenzo—"a drogger waiting for coffee; a drogger, Miss Hudson, believe me."

But I was not sure of this, for all at once, under the cliff on the opposite side, we heard the sound of a hammer, and could see a forge at work, by the sparks that rose up like clouds of fire-flies, and the sudden jets of light that glanced on the water: flashing on the hairy chest and muscular arms of a swarthy-looking fellow, naked all to his trowsers, who was busily employed with his hammer, and on the dingy figure of a negro that worked the bellows for him.

"When Vulcan forged the bolts of Jove,"

sang Listado, but the sound of his own voice in the unnatural stillness, startled both himself and us, and he broke off abruptly. Next moment the flame of the forge disappeared, the clink of the hammer, and the creaking and puffing of the bellows ceased. A boat now put off from the schooner, and pulled in the direction of the forge.

From the clash and tinkling of the materials, as they were taken on board, it was evident that the whole apparatus had been hurriedly dismantled.

"I really do believe that we are the cause of all this bustle," said De Walden; "that schooner is deuced like the craft I have been accustomed to see employed as slavers."

When the people returned towards the schooner, we heard a voice from the brake close to us, as of some one weak from disease, hail them to make haste and come for him, as the person speaking "did not like the look of the weather." This made us all start—but we saw no one until the boat touched the beach, when a tall figure in the dress of a Spanish seaman, walked slowly from the wood, got on board apparently with great difficulty; and the boat pushed off.

I noticed De Walden start as the man pushed past. The instant they got on board, another anchor was let go, topmasts and yards were struck, and had down on deck, boats were hoisted in, and other precautions were doubtless taking, from the bustle we heard, which we could not see,

to ensure her riding easily through the coming night. Soon all was still again. The fire-flies now began to sparkle amongst the trees, when, as we turned to reascend the path by which we had come, De Walden whispered me, in an agitated voice,—“That was the man that stabbed you, as sure as I live.”

“The devil!” said I, turning suddenly round in my saddle, as if I had expected him to jump up behind me; “but come, don't let us alarm the party.”

Mr Hudson here said he thought the water of the bay trembled, and that the stars twinkled in it, but before I perceived any thing it was again calm as glass. Presently several fish leaped out, as if startled, shattering the surface into circling and sparkling ripples; others skimmed on the top with an arrowy rush, their heads above water, and several owls broke from the shelter of the bushes opposite with a hoarse screech, rustling among the leaves, and after a struggling and noisy flutter at the start, flitted across to us; ruffling the glass-like bay with the breezy winnowing of their wings.

“What can all this mean?” said Listado. “Did you perceive any thing, Brail?”

He was standing beside his mule as he spoke, but none of the rest of us had dismounted.

“No; did you?”

“I thought there was a slight shock of an earthquake just now; but you might not have felt it from being mounted. There, listen!”

A rushing, as of a mighty wind, the same kind of mysterious sound that we had heard from the wood in the morning, now breezed up in the distance once more; mingled with which, a report like a distant cannon shot was every now and then heard.

It was evident that some tremendous manifestation of the power of the Invisible was at hand; but none of us moved. Some unaccountable fascination held us riveted to the spot. We were all spell-bound. What, indeed, was the use of flight? Where could we have hid ourselves from Him, to whom the darkness is as the noonday, and whose power pervades all space? The water in the bay now began to ebb suddenly, until it retired about twenty paces, leaving a broad white sandy beach where before there had been but a narrow stripe of pebbles. In another moment it again rushed in with a loud *shaling* noise—I coin the word for the sound—in *bores* nearly ten feet high, and thundered against the rocks, with a violence as if it had been the swell of the everlasting deep, hove by a storm against their iron ribs; and flashing up in white smoke all round us and over us. The very next moment, a huge mass of the grey cliff above was disrupted, and thundering with increasing bounds, pitched right over our heads (distinctly visible between us and the sky), a pistol-shot into the sea, where it dashed its shadow in the water into fragments, as it fell with a flash like fire; rotten branches and sand showered down in all directions; the dew was shaken like a fall of diamonds from the trees, the schooner's crew shouted, birds and beasts screamed and bellowed, and the mules we rode started and reared as the earth quaked beneath their feet, and yelled forth the most unearthly sounds that ever issued from the throat of quadruped. The shallop at the wharf was hove bodily forward on the crest of a tremendous sea, like a moving mountain, and then dashed on the shore; the schooner first dragged her anchors by the sudden and tumultuous ebb, and then drove with inconceivable violence against the wharf, where I thought she would have been stranded; but the retiring surge again floated her back, and the next minute she was fast drifting out of the bay. She had parted both cables.

We hastened home, where we found every thing in great confusion. The house was filled with dust, the walls and roof cracked in many places, and the wooden frames of the windows in two instances forced from their embrasures by the sinking of the walls. The field negroes were crowding round in great dismay, and the house servants were no less so; but, amidst all this hubbub—lo!—the beautiful fountain was once more bubbling, and hissing, and splashing in its rocky basin, and amongst the leaves, as cheerily as if it had never intermitted at all.

“The old one has slaked his thirst. You see we have got back our purling stream again, Mr Hudson,” said Listado.

The ladies immediately retired, their nerves having been desperately shaken; and I for one was right glad to follow their example. Before we males retired, however, we had a long discussion, as to the possibility or impossibility of the suspicious chap we had seen at the bay being Adderfang; who at the moment ought to have been in prison at Havanna. De Walden continued thoroughly persuaded of his identity; but, at the same time, could not conceal his lingering kindness for him. So we finally determined to let the villain alone, if it really, against all probability, were he, so far as we were concerned.

On the following forenoon, we once more took the road to Havanna. On starting, it came to be my lot, purely by accident, of course, to assist Miss Hudson to mount her mule, and in the action it was equally natural to squeeze her hand a little. I *thought* the squeeze was returned; and “hilloa!” said I to myself again.

The evening following our return Mrs Hudson gave a small party; and, recollecting the transaction of the former day, as I took my partner's hand in the dance, for by another accident Miss Hudson was the lady, I thought I would see whether I was mistaken or not; so I tried the



telegraph again, and gave her fair hand a gentle but *significant* pressure this time. By heaven! it was now returned beyond all doubt,—and I started, and blushed, and fidgeted, as if the whole room had seen the squeeze, while a thrill of pleasure—no, not pleasure; of—of—phoo, what does it signify; but it was something very funny and delightful at any rate. I looked at the fair little woman, and, as if to make assurance doubly sure, I saw the eloquent blood mantling in her cheek, and tinging her lovely neck like the early dawn in June.

"Oh Lord! I am a done man; quite finished for ever and aye."

"Why, Brail, what the deuce are you after?" shouted Listado, as he thundered against me in a furious *poussette*. "You are in every body's way, and your own too; mind, man, mind."

With that he again floundered past me with his partner, a bouncing girl, the daughter of an American merchant of the place, contriving in their complex twirlifications not only to tread heavily on my toes with his own hoofs, but to hop his partner repeatedly over the same unfortunate members.

Nothing worth recording happened after this event for three weeks; or, rather, I thought nothing unconnected with it of any the smallest importance, until Mr Hudson one morning at breakfast asked Listado, who had just entered, and who was a very frequent visitor, if he had ever heard any thing more of Adderfang?

"Yes; De Walden and I have just heard very surprising things of him. Tell it, De Walden; I have had such a long walk this morning that I am very sharp set. Coffee, if you please; Brail, some of that fowl.—So—Now, De Walden, about Adderfang—you have nearly breakfasted, you know."

"Come, De Walden," said I; "let us hear the story, since we can get nothing out of Listado there."

"Out of me, Brail? you are mighty unreasonable; how the devil can you get any thing out of an empty vessel, which I am at this blessed"—nuzzle—nuzzle—nuzzle. Here, in his zeal to stow his cargo, he became quite unintelligible, and I again asked the midshipman to enlighten us.

"Why, sir," said he, "I know nothing regarding it, saving what Monsieur Listado *told* me."

"Well, tell what I told you, then; that's a good fellow"—mumble, mumble, munch, munch, quoth our amigo.

"Brail, some of that ham;—go on, De Walden, will ye—devil take the fellow;—bread, if you please, Monsieur Duquesné—thank you. How deucedly hungry I am, to be sure;—that claret, Brail—and the *monkey* of cool water—thank you—work along, Henry."

The handsome boy laughed. "Really, Mr Brail, I don't know that any thing I have heard can interest you—Monsieur Listado there has been frequently at the prison confabulating with the hangman."

"Bah, you be hanged yourself, Henry," shouted our uproarious friend, with his mouth full of bread and butter.

"Well, he is the jailer at the genteelest, then—and he, it seems, told him first of all that Adderfang had been unexpectedly better—then, that he grew worse—then better again, until yesterday, when he told our accomplished friend"—

"Henry, do you value your life, you villain?" said Listado, threatening him with his knife in one hand, and the bread in another, as if he would have cast it at his head, but still munching away.

"To be sure I do, Listado, so let me get on. As I was saying, when he called yesterday—lo! the prison had been broken into some weeks ago, and the villain stolen—that's all."

"All!" echoed I; "so you were really right as to the man we saw being Adderfang."

"I never had a doubt of it in my own mind," said the midshipman.

"Why," I continued, "there must have been connivance."

M. Duquesné smiled. "Ah, Monsieur Brail, de road—way you call, of dis country, and de habitants, you not know—I make no vonder not large at all—it has happen very customary."

"And so it has," said Mr Hudson; "the truth is, Mr Brail, that here in Havanna few people are inimical to the trade Adderfang was engaged in; on the contrary, it is all but openly encouraged; nor have they any great horror even to a piratical cruise now and then, *if* successful; and where could they get such a determined fellow for a leader as this same Adderfang, who, I learn, was bred a sailor in early life, although for some years after his father's death he remained at home and studied for the bar? at least so said your man Lennox."

"What a splendid specimen of the powers of the garrote we have lost!" quoth Monsieur

Listado, still busied in making a most substantial meal;—"a small cup of that excellent coffee, Miss Helen—bless your lovely fingers—But, my dear boy, flown the villain is," continued the Irishman, addressing me, "however it came about; and before long he will be on the high seas once more, I make no manner of doubt; whether as slaver or pirate, heaven knows. Of course, your friends the Midges, Master Brail, will rejoice at this, as I would at the escape of a snared fox, which might afford sport another day; but, for one, I should be deucedly loath to fall into his hands, that's all."

"And I agree with you for once, Listado, for no joy in the world have I, that a scoundrel, who obliged me with six inches of steel under my ribs, should escape."

"Pray, Miss Sophie," said he, without noticing the interruption, "have you ever seen him, this Adderfang? Fine man—square shoulders—small waist—a piece of that yam, Mrs Hudson—thank you—but a regular Don Juan—a devil among the ladies—and—oh, Lord, I declare a bone has stuck in my throat."

On that day week, the frigate arrived. I was very curious to see how the commodore would meet De Walden; but it seems the latter had written him to Jamaica, and there was no scene, although I could perceive the kind old man's eye sparkle, and a tear of joy trickle down his furrowed cheek, whenever he could steal what he thought an unobserved glance at him. However, it was not my province to pry into his secret, if secret there was.

The commodore now determined to sell the Midge all standing, and to draft her crew to Gazelle once more—and it was accordingly done.

As old Dogvane came over the side, after having given up charge of her to the Spanish sailors that came to take possession, he grumbled out—"That same wicked little Midge an't done with her buzzing or stinging either, or I mistake. She has fallen among thieves, or little better, that's sartain, judging from the sample we have here,"—eyeing the strangers,—and I'll lay a pound of baccy, she will either be put in the contraband slaving on the coast of Africay again, or to some worse purpose, among them keys and crooked channels hereaways. I say, my hearties," turning to the Spaniards, "what are your masters agoing to do with this here fellucree?"

"To rone between Jamaica and dis wid goods—passengers—one trader to be."

"One trader—no honest one, I'll venture—but all's one to old Dogvane."

Next morning, De Walden came to my room as I was dressing, with a packet from Jamaica, that had been sent to Batabano, and thence across the island to Havanna. I opened it, and had to read it twice over before I could comprehend the contents, or ascertain what the writer wanted to be at.

To understand this letter sufficiently, be it known that the author thereof was suffering at the time from gout in his hand, and in consequence had to employ a brown clerk as an amanuensis—a simple creature, as I afterwards found, when I came to know him, whose only qualification for his post was the writing, like all his cast, a most beautiful hand; but, unfortunately, in his blind zeal, he had given a little more than had been intended to stand as the text by the party whose signature was appended to it; in fact, he had written down, *verbatim et literatim*, all that his master *had said* while dictating the letter; and the effect of the patchwork was infinitely ridiculous. The reason why the superfluous dialogue in it had not been expunged was the want of time, and loss of the spectacles, as stated.

"*Ballywindle Estate, Jamaica,*

"*Such a date.*

"MY DEAR NEPHEW,—I had letters from England, although none from you—you boy of slender manners. Knowing how much I made of you when you were a little potato button, I expected other things;—but to the letters—they told me—the devil fly away with this infernal gout, that makes me employ a brown chap, who, they say, is somewhat like me about the snout, as an amanuensis—mind you spell that word now—and fortunately for you I do so employ him, as he writes as beautiful a fist as one would like to see in a long winter's morning when the fog is thick—but, as I was saying, I had letters telling me that you had gone out with your kit packed in a ready-made coffin, to the coast of Africa, with my excellent old friend Sir Oliver Oakplank; who, as a recompense for a life spent in the service, had been sent to die in the bight of Benin—that's a parenthesis, mind—to gather negroes from others who stole them—and that, according to practice, the Gazelle, that is the name of the commodore's ship, although it is probable you already know as much, having been by this time three months on board of her from all accounts—put that in a parenthesis also—was to make the round voyage by Jamaica to Havanna, and home. Judge, then, my great surprise when, after trudging to Kingston, I found that you were not there in the old frigate at all, but had chosen to go to Havanna in the tender; and what was worse, I was at the same time told by your uncle's correspondents, my excellent friends Peawweep, Snipe, and Flamingo (what a broth of a boy that same young Flamingo is!) that you were to be taken into the Liverpool House, and to return direct from Havanna, without visiting me at all, at all.

"Now, if that old villain, Peter Brail, your excellent uncle, and all the rest of it, has had the

heart to do this, may the devil burn me if he shall ever get another tierce of coffee from Lathom Frenche. He has plenty of young friends to bring on, while I have none but you, Benjie; so he *must* give you up, or I shall murder him. But stop till I tell my story properly.

"So, you see, after I heard of this change I was in such a taking, that, to drown my disappointment, I had a wet week with Sir Oliver and some Kingston friends; for it was the rainy season, you must know, and devils are those same Kingstonians, in the way of gentleman-like libations of tepid Madeira and cold claret, whereby I got another touch of my old remembrancer the gout, under which I am at this blessed moment suffering severely—I say, boy, bring me a rummer of Madeira sangaree, and a hot yam with the brown, crisp and well scraped, do you hear—well I declare the skin of it is as beautiful as a berry, and the mealy inside as fragrant as the driest potato from Ballywindle in old Ireland—so here's the 'glorious and immortal memory,' and confound the Pope; but never mind, although, you may just confound the gout too, when you are at it.—But, as I was saying, I came home with the gout brewing all the way, and got so wet one day, that I dreaded lest, it should be driven into that fortress, or rather that citadel, the stomach—there's a poetical image for you—so I took a warming, that is, I made another comfortable week of it on my return home, just to keep up the circulation, and to drive the enemy—don't be surprised at the militariness of my lingo, for I am colonel of the regiment of foot militia here—another parenthesis, Timothy—from, the interior, and compel him to develop his strength in the outworks, or rather to retreat to them, which he, the gout, viz. has done with a vengeance, let me tell you; having clapperclawed what you would call my larboard peg, and my starboard fin, zig-zagging in his approaches, as regularly as Vauban or Cohorn—fair play, you know—a sound limb on each side, which is a mercy of its kind; so I hop from table to bed, and *vice versa*, and balance myself the whole way like a rope-dancer; for I hate a crutch—what are you stopping for, Timothy—oh, I see, to mend your pen—sangaree, Tim—bless me, how thirsty I am, to be sure!—I hate a crutch, and my servants, curiously enough, for we don't often agree, are unanimous with me in that same, as somehow I break one a-day, when I am driven to it, over their woolly skulls: and that costs money—if you could pick up a cheap lot of lancewood spars, now, in Havanna, that would stand a blow—you might fetch me a hundred or so—it is tough, and bends, and doesn't break like mahogany or cedar.

"During my confinement, old Jacob Munroe, the storekeeper at Montego bay, called to see me, and get his account settled. He brought a handsome clergyman-looking man with him, dressed in black—ah, you may leave that out—he will guess as much, if I tell him he was a clerical-looking person—whom he introduced to me as *Mister* Lennox, and who had arrived in one of the Cuba smugglers some days before. Judge my surprise when this young gentleman told me, with all the appearance of truth, that he had been a corporal of marines on board the *Gazelle*, although old Jacob called him at first an *officer* of marines, forgetting to say whether *commissioned* or not, and had actually been with you in the *Midge*—how could you trust yourself in such a mussel-shell?—until he had, through the interest of his friends at home, obtained his discharge.

"He told me the whole story of your being wounded, and taken into a Frenchman's house, and being desperately in love with some young American lady—but you know, Benjie, I don't like Americans—a Yankee girl, forsooth!—put the Yankee girl in a parenthesis—and a variety of other entertaining anecdotes, which made my heart yearn towards the only son of my dear sister Jane, although you have had the misfortune to have a Scotchman to your father—but, poor boy, he can't help that; so, Timothy, out with all about the Scotchman—he was born in Ireland, anyhow—for I am getting old now, Benjamin; and although rich enough, I begin to feel desolate and lonely, being without chick or child to comfort me, excepting some yellowhammers—no, not you, Timothy—so write away, my good lad—that claim a sort of left-handed interest in me here. But I have been kind to them, and no doubt must answer for the sins of my youth; but they are not just the sort of representatives one would wish to leave behind them; although, indeed, if this blessed state of things goes on at the pace it is doing at home, we may see a woolly-headed Lord Chancellor shortly—I hope he will have a civil tongue in his head—and a flat-nosed dingy-skinned Speaker of the honourable House.

"However, so far as I see, that will be a while yet; and, in the mean time, I want you to give up old Peter, if you can do so honourably, and pin your faith on me. But as I am a reasonable man, and may not like you after all, when I do see you, I think it but fair to send you the enclosed notarial copy of a bond in your favour for L.10,000 sterling as a sort of compensation for the measure I recommend, *if you take it*; but which expresses in the body of it, as you see, that it is only to become onerous on me, when you arrive in my house here, after having made your election, as aforesaid. Now, Benjie, dear, if you are conscious that you are a gentlemanlike, pleasant, honourable young fellow, who can ride a bit, and shoot, and drink a bottle of claret now and then—alas! there are no foxhounds here—foxhounds in a parenthesis again, Tim—come to me and change your ploughshare into a pruning-hook—no, that's not it—your ploughshare into a billhook—no, and that's not it neither—your bill-hook into a pruning-hook—bah! botheration!—if you are all that I ask you, and what my nephew *ought to be* by descent, and be d—d to him—if, in one word, *you are a gentleman*—come to me, man—come and comfort the poor, desolate, old fellow, who is pining in his helpless days for the want of something to love; and who, since he made up his mind to write for you, is every moment grappling you to his Irish heart, in joyous anticipation, with hooks of steel. Write me immediately, and follow yourself as soon as you can—or you may follow yourself first, if equally convenient, and let your letter come after—and enclosed you have also a draft on Mr M— for 1000 dollars as earnest, and to clear you at

Havanna.

"Regards to Sir Oliver, who will by this time—no, write that time—*that* is, by the time when he will get this—be with you, and to young Donovan—a prime boy that same Donovan would make, with a little training, as ever carried a shamrock in his hat-band, or a shillelah in his fist—and old Sprawl, I love the rum-looking, warm-hearted creature, because he likes you—what shall I ever dislike that you love, Benjie?—so, believe me, your attached uncle,

"LATHOM FRENCHÉ.

"P.S.—The post is just going off to Montego bay, so I have no time to have this corrected; nor, indeed, could I read it over if I had, as I have mislaid my spectacles—so excuse blunders."

Here was a new vista opening up with a vengeance—so, after having read over the letter repeatedly, I determined to submit it at once to Mr Hudson, whom I knew to be a clear-headed man, notwithstanding his guessings and calculations, and friendly withal. He thought the advice given sound.

"And as a proof of it," said he, "if my son were in your position, and had such an offer made to him, I would not hesitate a moment in recommending him to accept it. Indeed, you are in a great measure in duty bound to obey a kinsman, who, by your own account, has been so kind to you; and who can be of such essential service to you, especially when he counsels you so reasonably."

I will not conceal that many a fond hope fluttered about my heart, as I reflected what this new state of things might bring about; and that very morning I struck while the iron was hot, and, like a very wise person, took Miss Helen Hudson, of all people on earth, to my councils, and asked *her* advice, forsooth.

"Helen, what would *you advise* me to do?"

"Benjamin, I cannot *advise*—I am a simple girl—but whatever you may do, or wherever you may be—heaven knows"—her voice faltered—"heaven knows your happiness will always be," &c. &c. So she burst into tears, and I caught her in my arms, and—oh Lord, what a devil of a bother this same love is!

"Now, Helen," said I, "let us compose ourselves—I am as yet in a manner unknown to you; but to convince you that I am an honourable man, all that I ask is, that you shall hold this engagement sacred, until I can communicate with my uncle. If I find my prospects as satisfactory as I expect, I will immediately return, and throw myself at your feet; if I do not, I do not say that I will not still prefer my suit; *but you shall not be bound by your promise*. So my Helen, now."

"Yes," said the darling girl, as she rose, smiling through her tears like—oh, all ye gods, for a simile! but never mind—from the sofa where we had been sitting—"yes; *your* Helen now, Benjamin."

"Heyday," quoth Mrs Hudson, as she entered the room; "here's a scene. Why, Helen, you have been weeping, I see—and Mr Brail!—Now what is wrong? Tell me, dearest?"

"Oh, not now, mother—not now. Come with me—come, and I will tell you all."

And as they passed towards the door, who should stumble in upon us but Monsieur Listado.

"Good-morning, Mrs Hudson—good-morning. Halloo—and is it off they are, without so much as a bow, or—Brail, what is the meaning of all this?—Miss Hudson is weeping, as I am a gentleman. You cannot have been uncivil to her—it is impossible. But, Benjamin Brail, much as I esteem you, if I thought"—

"Out of my way, you troublesome blockhead," said I, in the hurry and confusion of the moment; and I brushed past him and fled to my own room, with the most comical mixture of feelings possible. It was full half an hour before I could control them, and recover my composure; and I had just begun to subside into my everyday character, when I received a message from Mr Hudson, to whom his wife had communicated all that had passed between his daughter and me. I never can forget the anxiety I felt to construe the expression of his face, when I first entered the room. It was favourable, heaven be thanked.

"Mr Brail, I know what has passed between you and Helen,"—oh Lord, thought I—"I would have been better pleased, had you explained yourself either to Mrs Hudson or me, before matters had gone so far; but this cannot be helped now."—He paused a good while. "From what I know of you, Mr Brail, I have more confidence in you, I rejoice to say, than I ever had before in any young man I have known for so short a period." I bowed. "And your very prudent proposals to my daughter argue you possessed of sound discretion." Beyond my hopes, thought I. "So I calculate you had better let me see that same letter of your uncle's again that I read before; and we will also take a look at the bond."

Here shone out the Yankee; but he was using no more than common circumspection, in a

matter involving his daughter's happiness so largely. Both were submitted to him, and on the morrow we were to hold a grand palaver on the subject. He had left me, and I had just dressed for dinner, when a gentle tap was heard, and an officer of the American frigate presented himself with a grave face at the door.

"Beg pardon, Mr Brail; I am sorry our friend Listado should have pressed me into the service in this matter; but I pray you to believe that I shall be most happy, if I can be instrumental in making up the quarrel, without resorting to extreme measures."

"Here's a coil," thought I. "Mr Listado! a quarrel! I have no quarrel with Mr Listado that I am aware of."

"My dear sir, I am afraid he thinks otherwise. Here is his letter," said the American, handing it to me.

"Let me see," I opened it.

"SIR—I am as little given to take unnecessary offence as any man; but as I have good reason to believe, from what I saw, that you have affronted Miss Hudson; and as I am *quite* certain you have slighted me, I request you will either apologize to her and myself"—(her and myself, indeed, interjected I)—"or give me a meeting to-morrow morning, at any hour most convenient for you, that does not interfere with breakfast.—I remain, your humble servant,

"LAURENCE LISTADO."

"Now, Mr Crawford," said I, "this is a mighty ridiculous affair altogether. I am not aware, as I said before, of having given Listado any offence; and what he can mean by attempting to fasten this very unnecessary quarrel on me, I cannot for the life of me divine."

"So far as his own injuries are concerned," said Crawford, "I am authorized to say, that he perceived you were confused at the time, and did not well know, apparently, what you were about; so he makes no account of your conduct to himself; but the affront to Miss Hudson"—

Here William Hudson entered with a knowing face; and on being informed what had happened, he burst into a long fit of laughter. Crawford looked aghast, and was beginning to get angry, just as Hudson found his tongue.

"Now, Crawford, back out of this absurd affair altogether; why, surely *I* am the man to take up my sister's quarrel, if quarrel there must be."

"I'll be d—d if you or any man shall take up her quarrel, now since I have made it mine," quoth Listado, swinging suddenly into the room.

"What brings *you* here, in the name of all that is absurd?" said Hudson.

"Why, William, I was thinking that the loud laughing possibly portended some fresh insult; at any rate, from the time Crawford was taking to fix matters, I began to fear that the quarrel might miss fire after all."

"Be quiet now, Listado," said Hudson, still scarcely able to speak; "who ever saw a matter of this kind managed by the principals. I am Brail's second; leave me to deal with Crawford."

"Well, Brail," quoth Listado, addressing *me direct*, to my great surprise, "let you and I sit down here, until our friends there fix when and where we may shoot each other comfortably;" and he hauled me away by the button-hole as familiarly as ever.

The two lieutenants walked to the other end of the room, where Crawford's face soon became "as joyous as Hudson's had been; and both of them had to turn their backs on us, and apply their handkerchiefs to their mouths to conceal their laughter. At length they mustered sufficient command of feature to turn towards us, and approach; but every now and then there was a sudden involuntary jerk of Hudson's shoulders, and a lifting of his eyebrows, and a compression of his lips, that showed how difficult it was for him to refrain from a regular explosion.

"If I understand you rightly," began Crawford, slowly and sedately addressing his principal, "you do not press for an apology on account of any slight to yourself in this matter, whether intentional or not on the part of Mr Brail?"

"Certainly not—by no manner of means—I have a great regard for him, and I am convinced he intended none. I perceived he had been pushed off his balance, some how or other, and I can allow for it."

"Spoken like a reasonable being, and a right good fellow. Then, as I take it," continued the American lieutenant, "the whole quarrel depends on this: Mr Brail has, *according to your belief*, affronted Miss Hudson; he must therefore either apologize for what he said or did to her, or turn

out with you?"

"Do you know, Crawford," said our friend, rubbing his hands, "you are a devilish clever fellow; you have hit it to a nicety, upon my honour."

"Well, now," quoth Crawford, turning to me, "will you, Mr Brail, to save further bother, make this apology to Mr Listado?"

"No," said I, deliberately, and with a strong emphasis.

"That's right, Benjie," quoth Listado, fidgetting with delight, as if the certainty of the quarrel was now put beyond all doubt. "Didn't I tell you that he would make no apology? Now, mind you, don't interfere with the breakfast hour to-morrow, Crawford, as I am invited to come here."

Hudson could stand it no longer.—"I'll tell you what, my dear Listado, I have my sister's, Miss Helen Hudson's, commands, that nothing more be done in this matter; and farther, that so far from Mr Brail having affronted her, he really paid her the most profound compliment that a gentleman can pay to a lady."

"As how, so please you?" quoth Listado, with a most vinegar grin, although deucedly puzzled at the same time; "a lady don't weep at a compliment usually."

"In plain English, then, Laurence, Mr Brail had just, as you entered, asked my sister to—*to marry him*."

Listado's face altered—his jaw fell—"*Marry him!* I thought so; why, this is worse and worse. Now, I will pink him, by Jupiter! Marry *him*, indeed! While Laurence Listado lives she shall be *compelled* to do no such thing. I am a man of some fortune, and, as you all know, I am desperately in love with her myself; so fix time and place, and damn the hour of breakfast now entirely. I will shoot him—any time—now—across that table. Oh Brail! you incomparable hyp"—

"Hush! hush!" said Hudson, clapping his hand on Listado's mouth; "hush! he has not only had the insolence to ask her to marry him—[here Listado clenched his hand, bit his lip, and gave three or four tremendous strides to the other end of the room]—not only has he asked her to marry him, but—*but he has been accepted!*"

Poor Laurence faced right round. "Say so again, and—Poo, Hudson, you are jesting with me; but here comes Mrs Hudson. Madam, has Mr Brail had the audacity to ask your daughter in marriage? And has she had the egregious folly to accept him in preference to your servant, and her humble admirer, Laurence Listado?"

Mrs Hudson looked at me, and then at her son, and then at me again—as much as to say—"very indelicate conduct this, on *your part*, at any rate"—at length, "Mr Brail, I am thunderstruck—how came my daughter to have been made the subject of a brawl?—was this"—

"My dear mother," chimed in her son—"it is all a mistake—Brail is not to blame, and no more is Listado—say, has Helen Hudson accepted Brail, or has she not?"

"She certainly has accepted him—*on conditions*."

Listado's eyes, during this colloquy, were riveted on Mrs Hudson's face. When she uttered these words, he slowly turned them on me, and while the tears hopped over his cheek, he advanced, and took my hand.

"Brail, I wish you joy—from my soul, I do—even although I—curse it, never mind—but, man, could you not take Sophie Duquesné?—yet—even at the eleventh hour, Benjamin?—it would mightily oblige me, do you know."

I smiled.

"Well, well, I have been a fool; and I have ill-used you, Brail, but I am sorry for it—so, God bless you, my dear boy—you are a fortunate fellow"—and thereupon, he ran out of the room, without saying good-by to any one.

Next morning, I had a visit from him, before I got out of my bed. He came into my room with a most ludicrous, serio-comic expression of countenance, and drawing a long sigh, sat down on a chair by my bedside without uttering a word.

As I had not forgotten his strange conduct the day before, I thought I would let him have his own way, and leave him to break ground first. He sat still about a minute longer, and then clasping his hands together, with his Barcelona most pathetically sticking out between his fingers—he turned round, and looked at me with his great prominent goggle eyes.

"Do I look as if I had been weeping, Benjamin—are my eyes bloodshot?"

"They are certainly inflamed," said I, rather shortly.

"Ah," said he, in a small, dolorous whine—"I knew it, Benjie—my heart is as soft this morning

as a waxy potato. I was a great big fool last evening, Brail, and I don't think I am much wiser to-day, and all for a little, hook-nosed, dumpy woman. Do you know, I took the affair so deeply to heart, that I went home, and drank three bottles of claret *solus*, and afterwards topped off with hot brandy grog?"—(a very sufficing reason for your bloodshot eyes, thought I),—"and I believe I will go hang myself."

"Poo, poo—hang cats and blind puppies, man," said I. "Come, come, now, Listado—you are not here to renew our quarrel, or rather *your* quarrel, for I declare I have none with you—but why bring Miss Hudson on the carpet again? She did not deceive you, Listado—you know she never gave you any encouragement."

"*She did not deceive me*, certainly; but did she not persave that I admired her; *so why did she allow me to deceive myself?*"

I laughed outright—"Come, man, you are expecting too much at the hands of a young lady, who of course is accustomed to admiration. She was not aware you entertained any very tender regard for her; why, it was only three days ago at breakfast that you broke off in the middle of a beautiful compliment to her eyebrow—the worst feature in her face, by the way—to ask for a plate of broiled ham and eggs. You may rest assured, my dear Listado, that Miss Hudson never dreamed you were in love with her—and, in sober earnest, are you so, now?—come, out with it."

He looked at me, with the strangest twinkle of his eye, then slewing his head from side to side, he twitched up one corner of his mouth, as he said—"Will you, or will you not, take Sophie Duquesné, Brail?—Lord, man, she is the finer woman of the two, and surely you have known neither of the girls long enough to have any peculiar preference."

The idea of my *swopping* my betrothed wife, as one would do a horse, merely, forsooth, to oblige him, was exceedingly entertaining.

"Really, Listado, you are a most curious animal—I have told you No—and I reiterate, No."

"Well then, Brail, may the devil fly away with you and your dearie both, for, since you must know, I was not in love after all—I am sure I was not, although I confess being at one time very near it—so all happiness to you, my darling. Do you know, Benjie, that I have been quizzing you all this while?"

I did not know it, nor did I believe it, but, by way of letting him down gently, I said nothing; and that very day, I took an affectionate leave of my excellent old friend Sir Oliver, who was that day to drop down under the Moro, preparatory to sailing; of my worthy cousin Dick Lanyard, Mr Sprawl, and the other Gazelles and Midges, who had been kind to me; and next morning I secured my passage in a Kingston trader, that was to sail for Jamaica that day week.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MOSQUITO.

The short interval between the period when I resolved upon this step, and of putting it into execution, was passed in a state of mind little enviable—in a strange mixture of pleasure and pain, of joy and grief. At one moment both Helen and myself were buoyed up with the most joyous anticipations; at another a weight hung on our hearts, that we could not ourselves account for. With us, however, the chances of happiness seemed to preponderate; but it was far otherwise with poor De Walden and Sophie Duquesné, who, children as they both were, had also tumbled head over heels in love, before they were aware of it.

For several days the young midshipman had been kept on board attending to his duty; it was the last evening but one that I was to spend at Havanna, when, against Mrs Hudson's wish, and, I need not say, most diametrically opposed to Helen's and mine, old Mr Duquesné had invited some friends in the evening; and, having dined at the usual hour, the girls were having their hair dressed in the boudoir already described, while we, the male part of the family, were enjoying our wine in the room that had been my bedroom.

"Now, Mr Duquesné," said I, "I really am quite ashamed at the trouble I must have put you all to lately; why" (looking round me) "I seem to have actually dispossessed you of your dining saloon for some time. I was not aware of this before."

"Poo, it does not signify none at all, my dear sare—de happiness and obligation were all mine. I cannot wish you were wound again—oh *certainement*, I could not do dat sing; *mais* I happy would be, you should sprain your foot, elbow, or head, or any leetle fingare—so as you were to stay here some time less—more I mean—*assurément* you cannot maintain your resolution to leave us yesterday?—put off your depart until last week."

"Impossible, my very kind friend; I have too long trespassed on your kindness—kindness

which I am sure I shall never be able to repay."—Here we were interrupted by De Walden entering the room.—"Ah, Henry, how are you?"

Our excellent host and Mrs Hudson both rose to receive him. He looked very pale, and had a nervous unsettledness about him, that contrasted unpleasantly with the recollection of his usual quiet and naturally graceful manner.

After returning their civility, he drew his chair to the table, and I noticed he helped himself very hastily to a large bumper of Madeira, part of which was spilt from the trembling of his hand, as he carried the glass to his lips. "Gentlemen," at this juncture said Helen, from the other room, "had you not better come closer to the balcony here, and give us the benefit of your conversation, now since Master De Walden graces your board?" Here Sophie, who was under the hands of our old friend Pepe Biada, slapped Helen, as if there had been some bantering going on between them, having reference to the young fellow.

"Certainly," said William Hudson; "but come, Brail, would it not be an improvement on Helen's plan, were we to adjourn to the other room altogether—this one"—continued he, looking towards Mr Duquesné—"will be wanted soon—indeed, Nariz de Niéve and Manuel have once or twice popped in their beautiful countenances at the door as hints for us to move."

We all with one accord rose at this—the two elderly gentlemen adjourned to the counting-house, while young Hudson, De Walden, and your humble servant, repaired to the sanctum of the young ladies. When we entered we found Mrs Hudson sitting, already dressed for company, at one side of the piano, where Helen was practising some new air, with (oh, shocking to an English eye) her hair *en papillote*, while the beautiful long jet black tresses of her charming companion were still under the hands of the little monkified barber, my old ally, Pepe Biada.

"Mr Brail," said Mrs Hudson, "I thought you did not patronise this foreign free-and-easy fashion that has crept in amongst us—Helen, there, said she was sure you would not come."

I laughed—"Why, Helen is wrong for once, you see, my dear madam; but if I had any objection, any slight scruple, you must allow I have very easily surmounted it at any rate; and as for De Walden there, he seems to have none at all."

He turned as I spoke, and both he and Sophie, who had been communing together in an under tone, started and blushed, as if somewhat *caught*, to use a vulgar but expressive phrase, and I saw a tear stand in the dark beauty's eye. But De Walden seemed by this time to have got his feelings under control, although, from the altered manner of poor Sophie, it was not to be concealed from me, that some communication had just been made to her by him, that lay heavy on her young heart.

It now became necessary that we should retire to dress; and by the time I returned, the company had begun to assemble; but De Walden was nowhere to be seen—he had returned to his ship, it appeared; and although poor Sophie did the honours during the early part of the evening with her usual elegance, yet her customary sprightliness was altogether gone, and it was evident how much it cost her to control her feelings. About midnight, however—worn out, heart-crushed, and dejected, she could no longer sustain this assumed unconcern, and retired on the plea of a headach. But the rest of us, hard-hearted animals as we were, having got into the spirit of the thing, at the expense of some mental exertion, and not a little champagne, contrived to forget poor Sophie and De Walden for a time, and so carried on until daydawn.

"What is that?" said I to William Hudson.

"A gun from Gazelle, on weighing, I guess," said he.

"Ah," I rejoined—"I did not know she was to sail before Sunday."

"It stood for Sunday, I believe—at least so De Walden told me, until yesterday afternoon, when all the merchantmen having reported ready for sea, the commodore determined to be off."

"The sound of that cannon," said Helen Hudson to me, with an agitated voice, as we sat together, "will be like a knell to one we know of, Benjamin."

A short time after this the party broke up, and we retired to rest. With me it was short and troubled, and I awoke little refreshed about noon—the hour we had previously arranged for breakfast.

I was to sail the following morning, and Mrs Hudson, with matronly kindness and consideration, left her daughter and me very much alone and together that forenoon and evening. After I had made my little preparations for embarking, laid in my sea-stock, and arranged for my passage in the British brig the Ballahoo, I returned in the evening just as the night was closing in. I found Helen sitting alone in the boudoir, and I could not but perceive that she had been weeping.

"How now, dearest," said I, as gaily as the weight at my own heart would let me—"How now, Helen—why so sad—you know we have all along been aware that we must part, but I trust only temporarily. Come, now, you have had your wish gratified, by Sir Oliver leaving Dicky Phantom



with you, until his friends in England have been consulted—and take care, Helen—I shall grow jealous of the small rogue, if you don't mind. So, come now, Helen, don't be foolish—We shall soon have a happy meeting, if it pleases heaven, and"—

"I hope so—I trust so, Benjamin—but in such a climate who can promise themselves a happy or a certain meeting? Have we not ourselves met friends in the morning, who never saw the sun rise again? Oh, Benjamin, my heart is fond and foolish."

"Well, well, Helen, but cheer up, my sweet girl—our prospects are fair compared to poor De Walden's."

"True, and so they are—poor Sophie, too—but there has been no declaration on his part"—as if willing to lead the conversation from our own sorrows.—"He is the most open-hearted lad, Benjamin, I ever met. Early in the forenoon, yesterday, he told Sophie, that except Sir Oliver Oakplank, he had not one friend in the wide world who cared a straw about him; what claim he had on him he did not say—that he had nothing to look to, but getting on in the service through his own exertions; and more than once he has already told my mother, that if there had been the smallest chance of joining his frigate in Jamaica, he would instantly have left Havanna, had he even worked his passage. He said he feared it was neither prudent nor honourable his remaining here. Poor, poor Henry."

"Did he say any thing of his early life?" said I, my curiosity getting the better of my propriety of feeling.

"Not much. He had been, from his own account, the Child of Misfortune. The current of his life, from the earliest period he could recollect, had been dark and troubled. Few gleams of sunshine had ever brightened the stream; and when they did dance for a moment on a passing joyous ripple that crisped its surface, it was but to give place to heavy clouds, under whose lowering shadow it again assumed its usual leaden hue—And, oh, Benjamin, how is it to be with ourselves? You have also, from your own account, suffered much, from loss of fortune, and of near and dear friends. May not our own acquaintance prove one of those evanescent gleams in *our* lives? If—if"—and she clasped her arms round my neck—"if our meeting should prove but a sparkle on the wave, Benjamin, after all, that twinkles for a moment before it floats down the dark stream of our existence to be no more seen—Oh, my love, if we are never to meet again"—And she wept until her heart was like to burst.

"Hope for the best, my dearest Helen; hope for the best. I will soon return, Helen—I will, believe me—so be composed—we must not give way to our feelings—we have a duty to perform to ourselves, our friends, and each other; nay, more, to that all-gracious Being who has blessed us by bringing us together, and who has smiled on our prospects thus far—and here comes your mother, let us ask her blessing for—for"—

I broke off, for I durst not say out my say; but in furtherance of my determination, after parting with my friends for the night, and stealing a kiss from little Dicky as he slept like a rose bud steeped in dew; with the assistance of William Hudson, I got my small kit away without suspicion, and repaired on board the Ballahoo.

When I got on the deck of the brig it was quite dark, and every thing was in great confusion, preparatory to getting under weigh in the morning. The crew—blacks, browns, and whites, Englishmen and Spaniards—were gabbling aloft and shouting below, as some were bending sails, and others hoisting them up to the yards; while others were tumbling about bales of tobacco on deck, and lowering them down the hatchway, where a number of hired negroes were stowing the same away in the hold. Her cargo consisted of logwood, hides, and tobacco, the blending of the effluvia from the two latter being any thing but ambrosial.

When I went below I found at least a dozen Spanish passengers busily employed in stowing away their luggage in the cabin. I could not help being greatly struck with the careless way in which they chucked their bags of doubloons about, as if they had been small sacks of barley; and the recklessness they displayed in exposing such heaps of glittering pieces of apparently *untold gold*, to the eyes of the crew and myself, for I was an utter stranger to all of them. "Were I to exhibit a handful of bank-notes in England in this way!" thought I. The confidence these traders appeared to place in their negro servants, absolutely astonished me, so much greater was it than I ever could have dreamed of; but the strangest part of the affair was yet to come. The English captain of the brig, after having ordered the boats to be hoisted in, had just come down; and seeing me seated on the locker, leaning with my back against the rudder-case, and silently observing, with folded arms, the tumultuous conduct of the Dons, addressed me—

"A new scene to you, Mr Brail, I presume?"

"It is so, certainly. Are our friends there not afraid that those black fellows who are bustling about may take a fancy to some of these rouleaux of doubloons, that they are packing away into their portmanteaus, and trunks there?"

"No, no," rejoined he, smiling; "most of these poor fellows are household slaves, who have been, very probably, born and bred up in their families; not a few may even be their foster brothers, and all of that class are perfectly trustworthy; in truth, sir, as an Englishman, I am

sorry to say it, but they treat their domestic negroes infinitely better than we do. As to the field slaves, I cannot judge, but I can speak as to the fact of the others from long experience. A Spanish family look on negroes of this class as part and portion of the household; in fact, they are not bondsmen at all, except in name; for they are better cared for than servants, be they white or black, in any other countries I know. Indeed, now that I reflect, you must have noticed, they don't even suffer the humiliation of being called 'slave,'—'criado,' the common name given them by their masters, signifying literally servant. The harsher, 'esclavo,' being seldom, indeed never, applied to them, unless when they have been guilty of some default."

"Heavens!" I here exclaimed, "what, are they all going to bed, with your supper untouched on the table?—see if they be not undressing!"

He laughed. "You shall soon know the reason of their stripping, sir," said he. "It is contraband to carry off either gold or silver coin here; and you shall presently see an instance of Spanish ingenuity in defrauding their revenue laws on the one hand, and of the trust they place in their coloured servants on the other; of their *own* dishonesty, and the implicit confidence they place in the integrity of *others*, and those others negro slaves."

The operation of *peeling* was all this while going on amongst the gingham-coated gentry, who, when naked to their trowsers, presented a most absurd appearance, each of them having sewed round his waist and loins, next his skin, from four to six double bands of coarse linen or canvass, like so many eel-skins, each filled with broad gold pieces, packed on their edges, and overlapping each other, until they were fairly pistol proof, in scale armour of gold.

After loud shouts of laughter at the manner in which they had *done* the *piés de gallo*, or custom-house officers, they stowed away the specie and donned their clothes again, when lo! the black "criados," to my great astonishment, began to strip in turn. Presently Blackie was exhibited in the same state of nudity as his master had recently been; and the gold pieces were in like manner peeled off *him*.

These transactions taking place in a confined well-cabin, lit by a small skylight, with the thermometer standing at ninety-five, had no very great purifying effect on the atmosphere—the blended steam of human carcasses and tallow candles being any thing but savoury.

The captain having very civilly given up his own berth to me; after having satisfied my curiosity, I retired to steal such rest as I might expect to snatch, in so uncomfortable a fellowship; and was about toppling over into a sound snooze, when my Spanish allies, inspired by libations of bad brandy, with which they had washed down their mess of garlic and jerked beef, chose to chant in chorus, most vociferously, the popular peninsular song of the day, "A la guerra, a la guerra Españoles." This was absurd enough from a set of shopkeepers and smugglers; but being deucedly tired, I soon grew accustomed to their noise, which seemed to have no end, and fell fast asleep.

In the morning, the bustle overhead awoke me; and having got up and dressed, I went on deck, where I was glad to find that the confusion of the previous night had very much subsided.

The vessel in which I had embarked was a long low French-built brig, with very high solid bulwarks, pierced for sixteen guns, but having only six twelve-pound carronades mounted.

I was informed by the captain that she was a very fast sailer, which I found to be true; indeed her share of the trade between Kingston and Havanna very much depended on this qualification.

Her hull was beautifully moulded; a superfine run, beautiful bows, and sides as round as an apple. By the time I got on deck, the topsails and topgallant sails were sheeted home and hoisted; the cable being right up and down. After several quick clattering revolutions of the windlass, "We are a-weight," sung out the skipper, and presently all was bustle on board, securing the anchor, during which the vessel began to glide slowly along towards the harbour's mouth, and under the enormous batteries that line it on either side.

When we got to sea, the breeze failed us; and, as the sun rose, we lay roasting on the smooth swell, floating bodily away on the gulf-stream to the northward.

We were baffled in this way for three tedious days, until I began to think we should never lose sight of the Florida shore. At length a breeze from the eastward sprang up, that enabled us to stem the gulf-stream.

In the night of the fourth day, after leaving Havanna, I had come on deck. It was again nearly calm, and the sails were beginning to flap against the masts. There was no moon, but the stars shone brightly. Several large fish were playing about, and I was watching one of them, whose long sparkling wake pointed out his position, when the master of the brig, who had followed me, and now stood beside me at the gangway, remarked, that there was an uncommon appearance in the northwest quarter.

I looked, and fancied I saw a glare, as from a fire on shore, but so faint that I could not be certain. I therefore resumed my walk on deck, along with the captain. The dew now began to fall in showers at every shake of the wet sails.

"Why, we shall get soaked here, skipper, if the breeze don't freshen?"

"Indeed, sir, I wish it would, with all my heart. I have no fancy for knocking about in this neighbourhood one minute longer than I can help, I assure you. There are some hookers cruising in the channel here, that might prove unpleasant acquaintances if they overhauled us. I say, steward, hand me up my night-glass—the glare on our starboard bow, down to leeward there, increases, sir."

I looked, and saw he was right. Some clouds had risen in that direction over the land, which reflected the light of a large fire beneath in bright red masses.

"Are you sure that fire is on the land?" said I, after having taken a look at it through the nightglass.

"No. I am not," said he; "on the contrary, I have my suspicions it is at sea; however, we shall soon ascertain, for here comes the breeze at last."

We bowled along for an hour, when it again fell nearly calm; but we had approached so close as to be able distinctly to make out that the light we had seen did in very truth proceed from a vessel on fire. It was now near three o'clock in the morning, and I proposed to the skipper to keep away towards the fire, in order to lend any assistance in our power to the crew of the burning vessel, if need were.

"No, no, sir—no fear of the crew, if the vessel has taken fire accidentally, because they are well in with the land, and they could even, with this light air, run her ashore on the Florida reefs, or take to their boats; but I fear the unfortunate craft has been set fire to by one of those marauding villains I alluded to. However, be that as it may, I will stand on our course until daylight at any rate, when we shall be able to see about us. In the mean time, keep a bright look-out forward there—do you hear?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

I was too much interested by this incident to think of going below; so I remained on deck, as did the master, until the day dawned.

As the approach of sunrise drew near, the bright yellow flame faded into a glowing red. Gradually the crimson colour of the clouds overhead faded, and vanished. The morning lightened, the fire disappeared altogether, and we could only make out a dense column of smoke rising up slowly into the calm grey morning sky. The object on fire was now about four miles on the starboard beam, as near as we could judge.

"Now," said I, "there is the breeze steady at last," as it came down strong, with a hoarse rushing noise, heard long before it reached us, and roughening the blue water to windward, just as the sun rose. It was preceded by the pride of the morning, a smart shower, which pelted on our decks, and the next moment our light sails aloft filled—the topsail sheets then felt the strain of the canvass under the freshening blast. The brig lay over—the green wave curled outwards, roaring from the cutwater—the strength of the breeze struck her—and away she flew like a seabird before it.

"There it is—strong and steady to be sure," cried the captain, rubbing his hands joyously; "and with such a capful of wind I don't fear any thing here smaller than a frigate; so haul out the boom mainsail, and set the square one—run up the flying jib—come, Mr Brail, we shall keep her away, and see what is going on yonder, *now* since we have the old barkie under command."

We rapidly approached the burning vessel, which was still becalmed, and lying motionless on the silver swell, veiled from our sight by the pillar of cloud that brooded over it, which continued to ascend straight up into the clear heaven, the top of it spreading and feathering out like the drooping leaves of some noble palm; but the moment that the breeze which we brought along with us struck the column, it blew off like the tree I have likened it to, levelled before the blast, and streamed away down to leeward in a long whirling trail, disclosing to our view the black hull and lower masts of a large vessel, with the bright red flames gushing out from her hatchways, and flickering up the masts and spars.

As the veil of smoke thinned, we suddenly got a glimpse of a felucca, hitherto concealed by it, and to leeward of the vessel. When we first saw her she was edging away from the wreck, with a boat towing astern, rather an unusual thing at sea. Presently, she hoisted it up, and kept by the wind after us, as if she had taken time to reconnoitre, and had at length made up her mind to overhaul us. As the wreck was by this time burned to the water's edge, it was clear we could render no assistance; we therefore made all the sail we could, and stood once more on our course. Just as we had hauled by the wind, the after-part of the quarterdeck of the burning vessel lifted, as it were, but by no means suddenly; although the stump of the mizen-mast flew up into the sky like a javelin launched from the hands of a giant; and clouds of white smoke burst from the hull, in the midst of which a sudden spout of red flame shot up; but there was scarcely any report, at least what sound we heard was more a deadened *thud* than a sharp explosion. The unfortunate hooker immediately fell over on her side, and vanished suddenly below the green waves, in a cloud of white steam.

"There's a gallant craft come to an untimely end," said the captain.

"You may say that," I rejoined; "and that roguish-looking little fellow to leeward has had some hand in her destruction, or I am mistaken—see if the villain has not hauled his wind, and made all the sail he can pack on her after us. Had you not better keep by the wind, Mr Hause, and try if you can't shake him off on a bowline."

The hint was taken. We made all sail on the larboard tack, steadying the leeches well out, and although the felucca did the same, it was clear we were dropping her fast.

"Give me the glass," said I. "I had strong suspicions that I knew that chap before—let me see—ay, it is her, true enough. I know the new cloth in the afterleech of the mainsail there—there, about half-way up—but heyday—that sail was as good as new, notwithstanding, when I last saw it, but it seems strangely patched now—this must be meant as a mask."

"Pray, sir," said the skipper, "do you know that vessel?"

"To be sure I do—it is the Midge—my old friend the Midge, as I am a sinner, and no other—She that was tender to the Gazelle the other day—the little felucca sold out of the service at Havanna before we sailed. I cannot be deceived; but she must be strangely out of trim."

All the Spanish passengers were by this time on deck, peering out through their telescopes at the little vessel.

"What can keep her astern in that manner?" continued I; "she seems under all sail, yet you are leaving her hand-over-hand, and that is more than you should do, fast as you say you are, were she properly handled."

"Why," said the master joyously, "you don't know the qualifications of this craft, sir"—

"Probably not," said I.

"We are creeping away beautifully," continued he. "I always knew the Ballahoo had a clever pair of heels, if there was any wind at all—poo, the Midge at her best could not have touched us, take my word for it, Mr Brail—keep her full and by, my lad"—to the man at the helm—"let her walk through it—do you hear?—we shall show that felucca that she has no chance with us."

I handed the glass to the skipper again.

"Don't you see something towing astern yonder, as she falls off, and comes up to the wind again?"

"Faith I do," said he, in a hurried and somewhat disconcerted tone; a sudden light seeming to flash on him; "I see a long dark object in her wake, as she rises on the swell—what can it be?"

"What say you to its being the spanker-boom, or a spare topmast of the vessel we saw on fire, for instance?" said I; "at all events, you see it is a spar of some sort or another, and it can only be there for one purpose, to keep her astern, while she desires to appear to be carrying all sail, and going a-head as fast as she can; it is a common trick amongst these piratical craft, I know."

The man, with a melancholy shake of his head, coincided with me.

"Now," said I, "listen to me. I know that felucca well," and here I told him how, and what time I had been on board of her—"if she casts off that drag, she will be alongside of you in a crack. In light winds and a smooth sea, she is the fastest thing I ever saw; you have no chance if you trust to your heels; so, take my advice, and shorten sail boldly at once; get all your passengers on deck with their trabucos; clear away your guns and double-shot them, and see all ready for action. If you appear prepared she will not bother you—it is not her cue to fight, unless she cannot help it—at any rate, if you don't frighten her off, I see she will stick by you all day, and be alongside whether *you will or no* when the night falls; so the sooner you give him a glimpse of your charms the better, take my word for it."

My advice was so palpably prudent, that it was instantly followed.

"Valga me Dios!" exclaimed one of our Spanish passengers—"que gente hay abordo—gracias a Dios, que este felucha no puede andar; porque hombre honesto no lo es."—(Heaven help me, what a number of people there are on board—we should be thankful that that felucca can't sail, as she is not honest, that's clear.)

Another shouted out—"Tanto gente—tanto gente!" (Lord what a number of people—what a number of people!)

"People!" exclaimed the skipper, laughing, as he slammed the joints of the glass into each other; "why, it is a deck-load of cattle, or I am a Dutchman. Oh dear—oh dear—why, gentlemen, your courage has all been thrown away—she is some Montego bay trader with a cargo of dyewood, and 'ganado,' as you call them—ha—ha—ha!"

"And so it is," said I, much amused, and not a little rejoiced. "Come, gentlemen, your warlike

demonstrations have indeed been thrown away, and I suppose our friend the skipper there may secure his guns when he likes, and keep away on his course again."

This was done, and every thing subsided into its usual quietness, except the jaw of the Dons as to the astonishing feats *they never would have performed*; for they were all silent enough, and Bob Acreish enough, so long as we had suspicions of the felucca; but every man among them was braver than another the moment they saw that their fears had been groundless. They now all began singing, and shouting, and swaggering about the decks, bristling with pistols and knives, like so many porcupines, while I was taking a careless, and, what I considered, a parting squint at the vessel. When I put my head over the high bulwark, I naturally looked out astern, as we had by this time kept away, and were going along free, in expectation of seeing him still close by the wind; but, to my great surprise, no such thing—the youth although no nearer than before, in place of being by this time in our wake, had kept away also, and was now on our lee-quarter, sailing two knots for one he had been going before, and as if desirous of cutting us off. "I say, skipper, I don't like this manoeuvring on the part of the felucca—she is off the wind again."

"And so she is," said the man.

The Spaniards gathered from our countenances, I suppose, that doubts had again sprung up in our minds as to the character of the vessel, notwithstanding the improbability of a pirate carrying a deck-load of cattle;—so they stopped their exclamations in mid-volley, breaking off their patriotic songs with laughable quickness, and began to bustle with their glasses again.

My original suggestion was once more the order of the day, and after seeing all clear for the second time, the skipper manfully handed his top-gallant sails, hauled up his courses, and took a reef in his topsails. The felucca had now no alternative but to come alongside; so she gradually drew up on our lee-quarter, so that, as the breeze laid her over, we might see as little of her deck as possible. We could now perceive that she had cast off the spar she had been towing astern. Ticklish as our situation had become, my nautical enthusiasm fairly got the better of me, as the little beauty ranged alongside.

"Look, captain—look, man—how blandly she bends before the breeze, as if she would melt into the water like a snowflake, yet she never careens over an inch beyond that mark on her goldbright copper; and how gracefully she always rights again. See what an entry she has—not the smallest surge, or curl of a wave at her bows. Her sharp stem cuts into it as clean as a knife, while there is not one single drop of dead water under the counter. Mortal man never saw a cleaner run—how mildly she skims along, and yet how fast—the very gushes from the rudder *swirl* and meander away astern mellifluously.—Oh, murder, if the sweet little thing does not slide along as smoothly as if the sea were oil!"

When she came within hail, she hauled the foresheet to windward, and sent a small punt of a boat, pulled by two men, on board, with a curious sallow-complexioned little monkey of a Spaniard in the stern. He came on deck, grimacing like an ape; and although I could perceive that he was carefully noting our strength and preparations with the corner of his eye, he seemed all blandness and civility.

"What vessel is that?" said the captain.

"The Mosquito," was the answer.

Here the little fellow looked very hard at me.

"Ah!" said the skipper, "she is the English tender that was sold the other day in Havanna."

"The same," said the baboon, evidently put out by the recognition, but not venturing to deny the fact; "she was called de Midge den, dat is Anglis for Mosquito."

"Come, there is honesty in that confession at all events," thought I; but I presently was convinced that the fellow knew me, and, what was more, saw that I had recognised his vessel—so his game, if he wished to throw snuff in our eyes, was clearly to take credit for candour. However, I was as yet by no means satisfied of his quality. For instance, he gave a blundering account of the reason why they had clapped patches of old canvass on a new sail; and he positively denied having had a spar towing astern to deaden her way—thus telling a deliberate lie. As to the vessel we had seen on fire, he said they knew nothing of her; that they had fallen in with her accidentally as we had done; and that, so far as they knew, her crew had previously taken to their boats, for there was no one on board of her, when they passed her, that they could perceive. He finished the parley by saying that he was bound to Falmouth, to dispose of his cargo of Nicaragua wood and cattle, and that he had come on board for some water, as they had run short, and had little left, except some pond water for the bestias.

He got a small cask filled, and then, with a repetition of his grimaces, walked over the side. Immediately on his getting on board, the felucca hauled by the wind until she got dead in our wake, where she hung for some time; but I could see they had the greatest difficulty in keeping her astern, by luffing up in the wind one moment—then letting her fall broad off, and sheering her about every way but the right one. At length he took his departure.

"Had you not cut such a formidable appearance, Mr Hause, you would have been treated very

unceremoniously by that gentleman, take my word for it," said I.

"You may say that, sir," said the skipper; "but I hope we are now finally quit of him."

That same evening, about ten o'clock, I was sitting in the cabin with the master of the vessel. The cabin had two state-rooms, as they are called in merchantmen, opening off it, one on each side of the door, and four open berths aft, shut in with green baize curtains, that ran on brass rods. Each of the beds was tenanted by a Spanish passenger, while the master and I slept in cots slung in the main cabin. The Dons, tired with the exploits of the day, had by this time all bestowed themselves in their nests, and, so far as we could judge by the nasal chorus going on, were sound asleep. On a sudden we heard the mate, who appeared to be standing aft beside the man at the wheel, hail some one forward.

"Who is that standing on the rail at the gang-way there?"

Some one answered, but we could not make out what was said.

The mate again spoke—"whereabouts do you see it?"

"There, sir—right to windward there."

We then heard a bustle in the companion, as if some one was groping for the glass; and in a minute the mate came down to the cabin with it in his hand.

"There is a strange sail to windward of us, sir."

"What does she look like?" said the skipper; "not that infernal felucca again?"

"No, sir," said the man. "I think she is a large schooner; but it is so thick and dark, that I cannot be certain."

"I'll bet a thousand," said I, "that old Dogvane was right after all; and that this infernal little Midge, that has been buzzing round us all day, will have enacted the jackal to the lion, and brought this big fellow upon us."

We rose and went on deck, and saw the object to windward clearly enough. She appeared to be dodging us; and when we kept away, or luffed up in the wind, she instantly manoeuvred in the same fashion, so soon as she perceived we were altering our position from her.

"Come, *that* fellow is watching us, at any rate," said the captain, "whatever the felucca may have done. I wish we were fairly round Cape Antonio. I fear there is some concert between the two. Mr Crosjack," to his mate, "keep a bright look-out—keep your eye on him, until I take a look at the chart below: he seems determined to jam us on the Florida shore. Surely the current is stronger than I have allowed for, or we should have made more of it by this time than we have done."

Curiosity led me to accompany the skipper below, and we were both poring over the chart, when the mate called down—

"The schooner has bore up for us, sir, and is coming down like an arrow on our weather-quarter."

"The devil she is!" said the skipper, dashing down his compasses and parallel ruler with such vehemence, that the former were driven through the chart, and stuck quivering in the table on one-leg, like an opera-dancer; then slamming on his hat, he jumped up the ladder.

This startled the Dons. The curtains in front of the side-berths were drawn aside with a jarring rasp of the brass rings along the rods, and four half-naked Spaniards, with their-nightcaps on, and their gold or silver crucifixes, like glow-worms in moss (Lord! what a fantastical image), glancing on their hairy chests in the candle-light, sat up; while the inmates of the two state-rooms stretched their necks to look into the cabin.

"Que—que—buque a barlovento?"—(What is it?—what—a vessel to windward?)

"Yes," said I; "there is a strange sail after us, and dodging us rather suspiciously."

"Sospechoso! sospechoso!—buque sospechoso!—Ave Maria!"—and forthwith the whole lot of warriors jumped out of bed; and great was the confusion that arose while busy decorating themselves. One poor fellow, half asleep, turned his trowsers the wrong way, as if he were going to sail stern foremost, like a Dutch schuyet. Another stuck a leg into his own galligaskins right enough; while his neighbour, half asleep, had appropriated the other branch of the subject, whereby they both lost their balance, and fell down in this Irish manacle on their noses on the cabin floor; "carrajoing," and spurring each other in great wrath.

The alarm in the brig had now become general, and half-a-dozen more of our passengers came tumbling down the companion-ladder, having left their quarters in the steerage, as if their chance of safety had been greater in the cabin; and such a jumble of shouting, and cursing, and praying, I never heard before; some of them calling to the steward to open the hatch in the cabin

floor, in order to stow away their treasure in the run, others bustling with their trabucos; some fixing flints, others ramming down the bullets before the cartridges, when—crack—one of their pieces went off in the confusion, and filled the cabin with smoke, through which I could see several of my allies prostrate on the floor; having fallen down in a panic of fear.

Finding that the danger from one's friends below was, if not greater than what threatened on deck, yet sufficiently startling, I left them to shoot each other at their leisure. By this time there was neither moon nor stars to be seen, and the haze that hung on the water, although there was a fine breeze, and we were going along about seven knots, made every thing so indistinct, that it was some time before I could catch the object again. At length I saw her; but as she was stem on, edging down on us, I could not make out more than that she was a large fore-and-aft rigged vessel, decidedly not the Midge. When she had crept up within hail, she brailled up her foresail, and, under her mainsail and jib, appeared to have no difficulty in maintaining her position on our weather-quarter, although we had set every inch of canvas that would draw. There was no light on board, and it was too dark to distinguish any one on her decks. Our master was evidently puzzled what to do; at length, seizing the trumpet, he hailed the strange sail.

"What schooner is that?"

"The Julia of Baltimore," was the prompt answer.

"Where are you bound for?"

"Vera Cruz."

A long pause, during which she was gradually edging nearer and nearer. "Don't come any closer, or I will fire into you," sung out our skipper; and then, to me, "He'll be on board of us, sir, if we do not mind."

"No, no," was the laconic reply, as our persecutor luffed up in the wind; but he soon kept away again until he was right astern, and there he stuck, to our great discomfort, the whole blessed night, yawing about in our wake as if just to keep out of hail. We passed, as may well be imagined, a very anxious night of it; at length day dawned, and we could see about us, but as if to baulk us, as the light increased, the schooner shortened sail still more, and steered more steadily, so that we were prevented from seeing what was going on upon deck; at length, at eight o'clock A.M., he set his foresail, and in ten minutes was again in his old position to windward of us. We were all at quarters once more; even the Dons, finding that there was no alternative, had determined to fight, and as he gradually edged down, I asked the skipper what he thought of it. "I really don't know; I see no one on deck but the man steering, and that fellow sitting on the lee bulwark there, with his arm round the backstay, apparently watching us."

"She does not seem to have any guns," said I. By this time the schooner, a long low vessel, painted black, with a white streak, had crept up so close on our weather quarter, that by keeping away a couple of points, he could in half a minute have run his jib-boom over our taffarel.

"If you don't haul off," sung out the captain, "I will fire into you." At this, there was a rush of men from below up the schooner's hatchways, and her decks were in a trice covered with them. The next moment she kept by the wind, as if determined to bring us dead to leeward. There was now no doubt of her real character, so the captain seized the helm, and luffed up across his bows so suddenly, that I thought he had carried away his jib-boom, but he was as quick as we were, and by keeping away, cleared us, just shaving our stern; but not before he got our broadside of cannon and musketry plump into his bows. So great was his confusion, that he lost his opportunity of raking us in passing to leeward. As the brig came to the wind, the schooner shot a-head, when, by a dexterous management of the yards, the former was backed astern. "Give him the other broadside, and blaze away, you Spanish villains," shouted the Skipper; he thus got t'other dose right into his stern, and we could see his reception had been far more surprising than pleasant, for our fire was only returned by an ill-directed volley of musketry, that injured no one. The few English sailors we had on board continued to ply the carronades, as he again drew a-head, and the Dons their trabucos, the latter always cowering below the brig's bulwarks while loading, then popping up their heads and letting drive, sometimes at the enemy, at other times into the air, as if they had been shooting sea-gulls. At length, one of them was hit by a chance shot from the schooner, which was the signal for the whole lot to run below. Our friend having shot a-head out of gun-shot by this time, now hauled by the wind, and once more shortened sail; presently, as if he had gathered fresh courage, he came down again,—this time, from his preparations, with an evident intention of boarding us: and since the evaporation of our Spanish allies, there is not the least doubt but he would have carried us, when, "a sail right a-head," sung out by one of the crew at this most critical juncture, revived our spirits again. As if the schooner had seen her at the same moment, she instantly sheered off, hauled her wind, and made all sail on a bowline.

We continued on our course, under every stitch we could crowd, and in half an hour had the pleasure to see the vessel which was standing towards us hoist a British ensign and pennant—presently she hailed us, when we found she was the Spider schooner, belonging to the Jamaica station, who, on being made acquainted with the nature of the attack, and the character of the vessel on our weather beam, immediately made all sail in chase, but, unfortunately, she had no chance; and in the afternoon we had the discomfort of seeing her bear up and come down to us,

the other vessel being out of sight dead to windward.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SPIRITING AWAY—WHERE IS THE BALLAHOO?

The lieutenant commanding the Spider came on board, and finding we were bound for Kingston, strongly recommended our not attempting it alone, as he said privateers were swarming between it and the west end of Jamaica; but, on hearing that, although, the Ballahoo was bound for Kingston, my destination was the north side of the island, he politely said, that, although bound for Havanna, he would himself see us into Montego bay, where the brig might remain until the coast was clear, or she could get convoy. This was too good an offer to be rejected, and we accordingly hauled our wind, and made all sail in company.

We, the master, his mate, and myself, were sitting at dinner in the cabin on that same afternoon, the Spanish gentry preferring to eat their garlic and "bacallao" and oil on the deck.

"I was glad to see your servant out of his hammock and on deck again to-day. He is a smart chap that, and managed the small-arm party exceedingly well. He seems quite at home with the musket, I assure you, sir."

I laid down my knife and fork at this speech of the captain.

"My servant—*my* servant, did you say?"

"Yes, sir;—did you not notice how well he behaved on the forecastle, when the schooner was drawing a-head of us?"

I had noticed a black fellow, in an old red jacket, very active certainly during the brush, and especially the coolness and expertness with which he had fired; but I little dreamed who it was.

"Pray," said I to the skipper, "do me the favour to desire the man to come aft here."

Straightway, who, of all the fish in the sea, should appear before my wondering eyes, but our old friend Serjeant Quacco! There was a pause, my dingy adherent keeping his vantage ground at the cabin-door, as if unwilling to trust himself within arm's length, until he knew how the land lay, and endeavouring to look very modest and sheepish; but his assumed bashfulness was but a flimsy cloak to his native impudence.

"Quacco," said I, in anger;—but before I could get a word out—

"*Serjeant* Quacco, if massa will be so good as remember."

"You impudent rascal," continued I, "how dare you smuggle yourself on board as my servant, and without my knowledge, after having told me that you had entered on board Gazelle?"

"Massa, do hab a leetle patient, and massa shall know every ting.—You see, massa, I was mind, as massa say, to sarve on board de Commodo—massa say de trute in dat—but dat was de time when I was tink de brigand knife had top massa him promotion."

"Cool, and deliciously modest," thought I, as Quacco continued, in nowise put out,

"But when I yeerie dat massa not only was like to cover" (recover, I surmised, was meant), "but dat he was nephew to one big somebody, wid plenty money, and, beside all dat, he was to go to Jamaica—oh dat alter Quacco taught altogeder, becaase he knowed he could be much use to massa in Jamaica, from, him knowledge of de world dere."—"Indeed!" thought I, "how very disinterested!"—"Beside," seeing I twigged, "to tell de hanest trute,—one ting wery *pleasant* for do when him *profitable at de same time*,—I taught it more better to take my chance wid you as my master, den face de *sartainty* of hard work, leetle sleep, and much flag, in de frigate—so I take de small liberty of ship myself in de Ballahoo lang wid good massa—dat all, massa."

"So—and pray where have you been skulking since we sailed, may I ask?"

"To be sure," said he, with the most provoking calmness,—"to be sure."

"To be sure of what, sir?" said I, fairly savage at last.

"To be sure massa may hax where I have been since we sailed," roared Quacco, withdrawing up the ladder from the door as I rose—"Devil I don't I say, if massa will only sit down again, dat I will tell him, and satisfy him on all particular."

He uttered this with his head leant back, so as to be the only part of him visible, while his hands clutched the ropes of the companion-ladder, his feet being on the second step of it, in act



to bolt on deck if I had moved after him. I sat down, seeing there was no use in putting myself into a passion with the poor fellow.

"Well, do tell me then, you free-and-easy scoundrel you."

Here the serjeant again advanced into the cabin, where he made a variety of grimaces; and after rubbing his great blubber lips hard with the back of his hand, he proceeded:—

"You see, sir—it was no fault of I—some how, when I turn in, I hab one larsh case-bottle of rum wid me, and I could not finis him in lesser time den tree day,—so dat was de reason massa did not see me more sooner; but de moment I hear enemy was dere—dat fighting was for do—ha, ha!—Quacco sober in one moment, and I jomp up, and lef de bottle one tird full, and fight!—Massa surely see how I was fight!"

"Ay,—and, with Mr Brail's permission, you shall have a free passage for your gallantry, Quacco," said the skipper.

"Tank you, massa captain," quoth Quacco, joyously.—"Now, Massa Brail, you must forgive de leetle liberty I was take—believe me, you hab got one gooder sarvant more as you taught,"—and so I did indeed find afterwards.

Six days after this, the man-of-war schooner, having seen us safe to the end of our voyage, left us for her destination, and we ran into Montego bay as the night fell, and came to anchor.

Right above us, on the larboard hand, perched on a bold rock, stood a large and very handsome house, a very conspicuous object from the offing, and commanding the entrance to the bay, as it were, which, by half-past eight, when I was going on shore to the tavern, where I intended to sojourn for the night, began to be brilliantly lit up; I could hear preparatory strains of music, and other tokens of revelry, as if a ball or some other piece of gaiety were toward.

There is something striking in being suddenly withdrawn from prowling on the "melancholy main," and plunged into the vortex of civilized life. The very jabber of the negroes startled me more than I had allowed for, as I landed on the wharf, an old rickety wooden fabric, and accosted a tall man in white trowsers and jacket, who was walking up and down upon it, to enquire where the best tavern or lodging-house was situated. He very civilly not only gave me the desired information, but accompanied me as pilot; so that I soon found myself in the dark piazza of a large building, which had any thing but the look of a place of public resort. An open balcony ran along the front next the street, to which you ascended by five or six steps, with a common unpainted wooden rail, to prevent your toppling over into the thoroughfare. Beyond this there was a gloomy dungeon of an interior chamber, apparently wainscoted with some sort of dark-coloured hardwood, and lighted by one solitary unsnuffed tallow candle, glimmering on a long mahogany table covered with slops, and wet marks, as if glasses had recently been removed, the whole redolent of the strong smell of tobacco smoke and brandy punch. There appeared to be bedrooms opening off the hall at each end.

"Hillo!—house!" shouted I, as no one appeared when I entered;—"house!"

A tall decently-dressed brown woman—lady, beg her pardon—at this presented herself at the farther door of the large room fronting the one at which I stood—

"Hose!—hose!—what you want wid de hose?"

"I am a traveller," said I, "just landed, and want some supper and a bed."

"Supper and a bed," said the old lady,—"*sartainly*, you shall have dem. But—beg pardon, sir—I hear no noise of horse or sarvant, so I was tink you might have been *walking buccra*,<sup>[1]</sup> and I never allow dem sort of peoples to put dere nose into my hose. But here I see sailor carrying in your luggage," as the master of the brig, whom I had invited to sup with me, came up the front steps of the piazza, followed by one of his crew, and Serjeant Quacco, carrying my traps.

[1] A most opprobrious appellation in Jamaica, as nothing, in the eyes of the coloured and black population, seems so degrading to a white man as the being compelled to travel on foot.

We were now treated with abundant civility, and soon were enjoying ourselves over an excellent repast.

"Pray, Mrs—I forget your name."

"Sally Frenche, an please, massa."

"Sally Frenche!" said I;—"ho, ho, I am in soundings here, mayhap—Pray, do you know old Mr Lathom Frenche, my good lady—a rich old chap, who lives somewhere hereabout, at a place called Ballywindle?"

My simple enquiry appeared to have an electrical effect, and at the same time to have given some unaccountable and serious offence;—for my talkative hostess, a deuced buxom-looking dingy dame, of some forty years or so, now drew herself up, and crossed her arms, looking as prim as mustard at me, as she slowly grumbled out—

"Do—me—Sally Frenche—know—one—reesh—old—chap—dem call—Massa Latom Frenche—who—live—at one place somewhere hereabout—dat dem call Ballywindle?"

"Yes," said I, a good deal surprised at the tone and manner in which she drawled out her words—"I mean no offence—I ask you a plain question—Do you know Mr Lathom Frenche of Ballywindle? I am a near relation of his, and desirous of engaging horses, or some kind of conveyance, to proceed to his house in the morning."

She here came round to the side of the table where I sat, shoving the black servant who had been waiting on us away so forcibly, that he spun into the corner of the room, with an exclamation of—"Heigh, misses, wurra dat for?"—and shading her eyes from the glare of the candles with her hand, she fell to perusing my face in a way that was any thing but pleasant.

"Ha, ha—Sally Frenche know something—I see—I see—you must be de *nyung buccra*, Massa Latom is look out for so hanxious—so tell me, is you really and truly Massa Benjamin Brail, old Massa nephew?"

"I am certainly that gentleman, old lady."

"*Hold* ladee, indeed—Ah, Jacka—but never mind. You is my family, and so you is—but don't call me *hold* lady, if you please, again, *nyung massa*. Let me see—you hab him mout, and him nose, and de wery cack of him yeye. Oh dear, you is Massa Benjamin, for true you is de leetle boy dat de old man look out for so long—here, Teemoty, Peeta, Daroty—here is your cosin, Massa Benjamin—Oh, massa neger, I am so happy"—and she began to roll about the room, sprawling with her feet, and walloping her arms about, seizing hold of a chair here, and a table there, as if the excess of her joy, and the uproariousness of her laughter, had driven her beside herself.

At her call two tall, young mulatto fellows, with necks like cranes, and bushy heads like the long brooms used to clean staircases, without stockings or neckcloths, dressed in white duck trowsers, and blue coatees, and a very pretty, well-dressed brown girl, of about eighteen, presented themselves at the door of the room.

"Pray, who are those?" said I, during a lull of the matron's paroxysm.

"Who dem is? why your own cosin—your own flesh and blood—your oncle, God bless him—him children dem is, all—ay, every one on dem."

"And who is their mamma?" said I—"Not you, ma'am?"

"Me—oh dear, de poor boy don't know noting about him own relation—No—I is Sally Frenche, daughter of old Terrence Frenche, your oncle dat was die five year ago—he who leave all his money to his broder, Mr Latom Frenche. I is his only daughter, and your cosin, and kind fader he was to me."

"Well, kinswoman, I am glad to see you; but are these really my cousins? and again I ask, who is their mamma?"

"Ha, ha, ha—you really know noting, none at all. Dere mamma, as you call *him*, is dead lang time; but come here—come here—dem is Teemoty—hold up your head, you poppy dag—and Peeta, all two Massa Latom sons—bote your own cosin, I no tell you?"

"And that pretty young lady—who is she?"

"Ha, ha, ha—Oh dear, oh dear!—why, him is Miss Daroty, dere sister."

"And a devilish pretty girl she is, let me tell you. Why, Dorothy, give me a kiss, my fair cousin." And as I gave her a hearty smack, she dropped me a low curtsy.

"Tank you, cosin Benjamin."

Our friend the skipper was all this time taking his cargo on board with great industry, only stealing a passing squint at us now and then; and I was beginning to think it was high time to put in my oar also, lest I should go without my meal, when a great bustle was heard in the street—first a trampling as of a squadron of dragoons, then the rattling and grinding of carriage wheels through the sandy roads, and a loud gabbling of negroes. Presently some one whistled loud and shrill on his fingers, and a voice called out—

"Why, Sally Frenche—Sally—where the devil are you, and all your people, Sally?"

"Massa Jacob Twig, sure as can be," cried Sally, and again the hysterical laugh seemed to carry her beyond herself. "All my friend come on me at one time. What shall me Sally do?—Teemoty, tell Parot-toe for kill de kidd, and de two capon, and de wile dock, dem [*anglice*, wild-duck], and—and—and—oh, tell him for kill every ting him can lay him ogly paw upon."

"Den," quoth Timothy with a grin, "I shall keep out of de way, misses."

"Sally"—shouted the same impatient voice from the street again.

"Coming, Massa Jacob—Oh, dear!—ha, ha, ha!"—and as some one now entered the dark piazza, she ran out, and stumbled against him; and knocking his hat off, in her flourishing, she fairly clasped her arms round the person's neck for support during her violent and extraordinary cachinnations. "Oh, Massa Jacob, sweet Massa Jacob, I so glad to see you."

"Why, old lady, you appear so, certainly; but come, come, you must be bewitched," said the stranger, shaking her off. "Do gather your wits about you, and desire your people to see my horses cared for; and get us some supper, *do you hear?*"—the words in Italics pronounced with a strange emphasis, and a very peculiar accent, as if they had been twisted out angrily from between the compressed lips.

Here the speaker caught my eye: he bowed.

"Good evening, sir. I hope I am not disturbing you, gentlemen."

"Not in the least," said I. "We are strangers just landed from the brig that came in this evening; and as our hostess and I here happen, to my great surprise, to be relations, her joy has shoved her a little off her balance, as you see?"

"Balance!" said the person addressed, with a good-natured smile—"Sally Frenche was never very famous for keeping her balance."

"Oh, Massa Jacob," said the placable Sally, "how can you say so?"

"But you are her relation you say, sir," continued the stranger; and here he turned round as if recollecting himself, and stuck his head through the window that looked into the piazza. Addressing some one who was tumbling portmanteaus and luggage about there—"I say, Felix, he can't be a brown chap, eh?—he don't look like it."

"Poo, poo! what if he be?" said the person spoken to—"What if he be?—order supper, man—course this portmanteau! the straps are as stiff as iron hoops, and have broken my nails. You villain, Twister, why don't you come and help me, that I may get out my clothes?"

"Here, massa," said a blackie from the street, and the gentleman who had spoken now entered.

Sally had asked leave for the new comers to join our party, and as this might be according to rule in Jamaica, we consented of course, and they were presently seated at the same board.

The shortest of the two was a stout, sun-burned man, about thirty, with a round face, but a fine white forehead, and beautiful clustering brown hair. He was dressed in very short nankeen trowsers, very much faded, silk stockings, and shoes—rather an out-of-the-way rig for a traveller through dirty roads, as it struck me; and wore a long French-cut blue military frock or pelisse, garnished with a perfect plague of frogs.

This was largely open at the breast, displaying a magnificent whitish-blue cambric frill, while a neckcloth, with a strong dash of the same indigo shade, was twisted round his bull neck as gracefully as a collar round a mastiff's; while, above it, the peaks of his shirt stood up in such pomp of starch and stiffness, that I could not help considering his ears in some peril. When he entered, he had replaced the small, narrow-brimmed, glazed hat, that had been knocked off by Sally in her paroxysm; the oily appearance of which, in such a climate, was enough to make one perspire, and rolled in, quite at home apparently, with a hand stuck into each side-pocket. Altogether he looked like a broiled man; but when he sat down at table, I was refreshed by noticing that his hands were beautifully white; and, according to Lord Byron's maxim, I took this as a kind of voucher, for want of a better, that the nondescript was a gentleman. His companion was a tall, thin, dark, young fellow, apparently about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, with short, curly, fair hair, dressed in white jean pantaloons, with long Hessian boots drawn up over them to his knees, white waistcoat and neckcloth, and a blue coat. There was nothing peculiar about his appearance. We all carried on for some time in silence. At length the shortest of my new acquaintances asked me to drink wine with him.

"Your good health, sir. Here's to our better acquaintance."

"Massa Jacob," quoth Mammy Sally, who was superintending the attendance of her servants, with a knowing look, "you know who you drink wine wid?"

Mr Twig looked round at her with an expression efface as if he neither knew nor cared.

"Ha, I see—you tink you know every ting, Massa Jacob, but—but—oh dear, oh dear—you no know—you no know?—why it is Massa Benjamin himself—Massa Benjamin Brail, dat old Massa Latom so long for see."

Massa Jacob at this rose, with his table napkin in his hand, and first looking steadfastly at me, munching all the time, and then regarding the old lady, with his mouth full, he stretched his hand

across the table to me.

"If you be Mr Brail, I am particularly rejoiced to see you. Your uncle, young gentleman, is my most especial friend; and there is not a worthier man breathing. I knew you were expected; and as I am bound, with Mr Felix Flamingo there, on a visit to Mr Frenche—Mr Flamingo, Mr Brail—Mr Brail, Mr Flamingo, of the extensive Kingston firm of Peawweep, Snipe, and Flamingo—ahem—as I was saying, we are bound on a visit to this very identical uncle of yours. So nothing could have been more opportune than our meeting."

"Flamingo,—Peawweep, and Flamingo?" said I to myself; "My uncle Peter's agents, by all that is fortunate! Come, this will do. But whom have I the honour of addressing?" said I, turning to the red-faced man, not a little startled at such sudden cordiality on the part of a stranger.

"My name is Jacob Twig, of the Dream, in the parish of St Thomas in the East, at your service; and for your excellent uncle's sake, it will give me great pleasure to be of use to you. But, Felix, my darling, we must go and dress for the ball at Mrs Roseapple's; we shall be late, I fear."

The tall youngster, to whose intimacy I had so unexpectedly procured a passport, during all the time occupied by Mr Twig in expatiating, had been looking as grave as a judge, and making the best use of his time. Both now rose, and retired as it were to dress. Just as they had left the room, and the master of the Ballahoo and I had filled a glass of wine together, Mr Twig returned.

"I say, Mr Brail, I have just been thinking you had better come with us—Mr Roseapple will be glad to see you, I know."

"Why, I have not the honour of knowing your friend, Mr Roseapple," said I. "Besides, this gentleman is the captain of the brig that I came from Havanna in, and I invited him to supper with me; so"—

"The more the merrier, man—the more the merrier—why, *we shall take him too.*"

All this appeared to me very odd, and too free-and-easy by a great deal; but the sailor had by this time drunk more Madeira than he was accustomed to, and as he, to my great surprise, made no objection to the proposal, only stating that he had no clothes fit to appear with in a ball-room, I thought I might as well swim with the current also.

Jacob eyed him.

"Why, do you know, you are a deuced good-looking fellow."

Jack rose, and made a most awkward obeisance.

"Oh, 'pon my honour," quoth Twig, with the utmost gravity—"so *my* clothes will suit you to a nicety—ahem! Cato, tell Romulus to desire Cobbler to fetch in my portmanteau instantly. So come along, *my dear fellow*, and let us rig you." (What next, thought I—this to a man he never saw before!) And away the Jolly tar sculled between Mr Twig and his friend Flamingo.

I had never before been guilty of such a heterodox proceeding, as going unasked to a ball given by a lady I had never seen or even heard of; and although the wine I had drunk had by this created no small innovation in my brain, still I had discretion enough left to induce me to go up to Mr Twig's room door, where I again remonstrated with him on the impropriety of such an intrusion on my part.

"Poo, nonsense, my dear fellow. Just say you are old Frenche's nephew, and the whole company will hug you as an old acquaintance, man—not a Creole miss but will set her cap at you—take Jacob Twig's word for it—why, you will find that your fame has outstripped you the instant your name is mentioned, for your uncle makes no secret of his intention to make you his heir—so come along, man. Go dress—that's a good fellow."

I did so, and we were presently all in the hall of the tavern again, where friend Quacco was waiting with my cloak and hat, ready for a start.

"Thank you, Quacco; I hope you have made yourself comfortable?"

Quacco grinned. "Very, sir; find myself great man here. My story please people—better country dis dan de coast of Africa."

"Glad you find it so; but where, in heaven's name, got you that rig? you don't mean to follow me to Mr Roseapple's in such a dress?"

"Certainly I do, with massa's permission." And he snuffed the air as if his *amour propre* had been somewhat wounded by my disapproval of the mode in which it had pleased him to make his toilet.

"But you will be laughed at, and get me into some ridiculous scrape."

"No, no, massa; never fear Quacco's discretion—never fear. I have much practice in Havanna, in wait on gentlemen at table. Ah, you sall see, massa—but one ting I sall pretend, dat I is one

Spanish negro; dis will give de interest to me, you know." (*Interest!* thought I, like to laugh in his face.) "So tell de captain dere, not to peach upon Quacco—say I am one Spanish sarvant you got from de governor Señor Cien Fuegos."

I laughed heartily at this instance of barbarous puppyism, and at the figure he cut when I had leisure to look at him. First, he had powdered his black woolly cocoa-nut shaped skull with flour, until it was perfectly white, the little crispy curls making it look like a large cauliflower, or a round furze bush with a drift of snow well grained into it. To the short, well-greased wool, he had attached a long slender queue abaft, like a yard of pig-tail tobacco, that hung straight down his back, over an old faded Spanish-cut sky-blue silk coat, thickly studded with large sparkling cut-steel buttons, all too short at the wrists, and too long at the skirts; so that while the monkey-looking paws were largely uncovered, the latter reached half-way down his leg; a faded white satin embroidered waistcoat, the flaps coming down over his hips; black silk small clothes, and a pair of large old-fashioned shoes, very high in the instep—these, with a pair of great lackered buckles, completed his dress. As an ultra ornament, he sported a very flashy pink watch-ribbon, with a great bunch of brass keys and seals, but to what substitute for a horologe these gaudy ornaments were attached, the deponent sayeth not. As for his cucumber shanks, they were naked, and unless one had been particular in the inspection, so as to perceive the little tufts of black wool that covered them, like a miniken forest of fir-trees, you could not have made out whether he had silk stockings on or not. To perfect his equipment and give him the true *finish*, he had acquired a little "*sombrero de ires picas*," or old fashioned cocked hat, an amber-headed cane, and when you add one gold ear-ring and another of silver, an enormous silver brooch, with a stone in it, more like a petrified oyster than any thing else, in the breast of his gaudily befrilled shirt, with a pair of green spectacles on his nose, over which his low tatoeed forehead fell back like a monkey's, you have our friend Quacco before you, as well as I can paint him.

"Mercy on me," said Mr Felix Flamingo, "*what is this!*—who have we here?"

"My servant," said I, unable to restrain my laughter, "strangely transmogrified certainly."

By this time Mr Twig joined us, having retired with the skipper of the merchantman, whom he had dressed out in a suit of his own clothes; and as he was really a very handsome man, he looked uncommonly well, allowing for his nautical roll and salt water flavour, in his borrowed plumes.

"Now," said Flamingo, "we must be jogging. So, Quacco, lead the way."

"Stop," said Jacob; "no hurry, Felix, it an't long past ten yet, so let us crack a bottle of Sally's champagne, it *launches* one so nobly into a ball-room; it is the *grease* on the ways, my lads, if I may venture on so vulgar a simile. So, Sally—Sally, a bottle of champagne."

The wine was brought, and was really extremely good,—so unexpectedly good, that somehow we had number two, just to see whether the first had been a fair sample of the batch or no. At length, we again addressed ourselves for the start.

But the master of the brig, who was modest to bashfulness in his cool moments, had become a changed creature from the innovation wrought in his brain by the unusual potation.

"Gentlemen, had it been strong grog, I would have carried sail with most of you; but really I must—I must—in short, Mrs Sally, I must top off with some hot brandy and water before weighing."

The hot stuff was brought, and we finally started for Mr Roseapple's in earnest; Quacco in advance, carrying a small stable lantern, held aloft on the end of his cane; then Mr Felix Flamingo and I abreast, followed by Mr Twig and the skipper.

The cool night air was an astonishing assistant to the grog, as I could perceive, from the enunciation of the sailor in my wake becoming rapidly thicker and more indistinct as we advanced.

The street we passed through was quite still, the inhabitants, according to the custom of the country, having already retired to rest; but several gigs, and carriages of various descriptions, gritted past us, through the deep sand of the unpaved thoroughfares, apparently returning from setting down company.

As we were toiling up the hill, crowned with the gay domicile, which was sparkling with lights, and resounding with music, and merry voices, and laughter, we could, through the open blinds, see dark figures flitting and moving rapidly about between us and the lamps.

"Felix," quoth Mr Twig—"how vastly gay—stop, let us reconnoitre a bit"—and we, all hove to in the middle of the ascent, when, without any warning, down came a plump of rain like a waterspout, the effect of which was instantly to set us a scampering as fast as our legs could carry us, preceded by Serjeant Quacco with the lantern, who hopped and jumped about from stone to stone, like an *ignis fatuus*; nor did we stop in our red-hot haste until we had all bolted up the steps, and into the piazza, where the dancing was going on, to the dismay and great discomfiture of the performers; indeed, so great was the impetus with which we charged that we fairly broke the line, and did not bring up until we had reached the inner hall or saloon, where

several couples were drinking coffee, and taking other refreshments, at a side-board or long table, behind which stood several male and female domestics—blacks and browns—ladling out punch, and negus, and fruits, and handing sandwiches and coffee, and all manner of Creole luxuries.

We were immediately introduced to mine host and his lady, both remarkably pleasant people, who, with true West India cordiality, made all manner of allowance for the suddenness of our *entrée*, and the unexpectedness of our visit altogether. So here we were brought up all standing, as suddenly as if we had dropped from the moon.

There had been a pause in the dancing, created by our furious onset, as well there might, and now a general titter, gradually swelling into an universal laugh, ran round, and the dance broke up into a general promenade of the whole company; during which, taking Mr Flamingo's offered arm, I had not only time to recover my equanimity, but an opportunity of looking about me and making my observations.

The house was a very large airy pavilion, erected on a small limestone bluff, that overhung the sea at the easternmost point of the bay. According to the Jamaica fashion, it consisted of a brick shell two stories high, subdivided into the various apartments, public and private, composing the domicile. The first floor, comprising a very handsome dining-room, and a most elegant suite of lofty drawing-rooms, beautifully papered, and magnificently furnished, was raised on a stone pediment about eight feet high (containing cellars and other offices); and above this, I presume, the bed-rooms of the family were situated.

The whole of the surbazes and wooden work about the windows and doors were of well-polished and solid mahogany, of the most costly description. These rooms were all fitted with glass sashes, that opened into the piazzas—long galleries, about fourteen feet wide, that enclosed the whole house; with white pillars and green blinds, fitted between them like those of a tanwork, but smaller, which, when open, with the feather edges of the blades towards you, as you looked at the fabric from a distance, gave it the appearance of a Brobdingnag bird-cage; and indeed, so far as the complexion of the majority of the male figurantes on the present occasion went, it might be said to be well filled with canaries.

The roof was composed of what are called *shingles* in the United States—pieces of cypress splinters, about eighteen inches long by four broad, and half an inch thick, which are nailed on, overlapping like slates; indeed, when weatherstained, at a distance you cannot distinguish the difference, excepting as in the present case, when they are covered with brown paint to preserve them.

From this peculiarity in the covering of the roof of a West Indian house, it often happens, when the rains set in suddenly after a long drought, that the water finds its way down, in consequence of the warping of the wood, in rather uncomfortable quantities; insomuch, that when you go to bed, the rooms in the houses in the country being often unceiled, an umbrella may be as necessary as a nightcap. However, after the *seasons*, as they are called, have continued a few days, the cypress or cedar swells, and a very indifferent roof becomes perfectly water tight.

To return. No sooner did the shower abate, than a whole crowd of negroes, male and female, once more clustered round the door, and scrambled up on the trees round the house, to get a peep at the company through the open windows and blinds.

"Do you admire our West India fruits, Mr Brail?" quoth Twig, cocking his eye at the blackies aloft.

I was exceedingly struck by the profuse and tasteful display of flowers and green branches with which the rooms were decorated; many of the latter loaded with the most luxuriant bunches and clusters of fruits—oranges, star-apples, citrons, and a whole array of others, which as yet were nameless luxuries to me.

There was a golden pine-apple on a silver salver, on a side-table, eighteen inches high, by nine in diameter, that absolutely saturated the whole air of the room with perfume.

The novelty and elegant effect of the carpetless, but highly polished, mahogany floors, which at the sides of the room, where not dimmed by the feet of the dancers, reflected every thing so mirror-like, was very striking, although at first I was in terror at the shortness of the ladies' petticoats, and the reflection of the brilliant chandeliers. The dresses of the fair dames, although they might have been a little behind the London fashions of the day, were quite up to what those were when I left home, except in the instances of several natural curiosities from the inland and mountain settlements, who were distinguished by their rather antediluvian equipment and sleepy Creole drawl; but as a counterpoise to both, they had the glow of the rose of Lancaster in their cheeks.

As for the other fair creatures resident in the hot plains in the neighbourhood of the sea, and in the still hotter towns of the island, they were to a man (*woman*—oh, for Kilkenny!) so deadly pale, that when one contemplated their full, but beautiful and exquisitely managed figures, you were struck with amazement at the incongruity, if I may so speak, of their sickly complexions,

and sylphlike and most agile forms.—"So these faded lilies are really in good health after all." Between the fair mountaineers and lowlanders, since I have spoken of the *roses*, it might indeed be said, that there still existed the emulation of the two houses of York and Lancaster. As to figure, they were both exquisite—Lancaster, however, more full of health, more European looking in complexion, and a good deal more hoydenish in manner—York more languid and sentimental, to appearance at least.

But the men—"Oh, massa neger!" to borrow from Quashie—what a sallow cadaverous crew! with the exception of an officer or two from the neighbouring garrison, and one or two young chaps lately imported—what rigs!—such curious cut coats—some with the waists indicated by two little twin buttons between the shoulders, and scarcely any collar, with the long tapering skirts flapping against the calves of their legs, in shape like the feathers in the tail of a bird of Paradise—others with the aforesaid landmarks, or waist-buttons, of the size and appearance of crown-pieces, covered with verdegris, and situated over against the hip-joints, and half a yard asunder, while the capes stood up stiff and high, and the square-cut skirts that depended beneath (perfect antitheses to the former) were so very short and concise, that they ended as abruptly as a hungry judge's summing up. However, no fault could be found with the average manners of the whole party, whatever might have been objected to their equipment.

I soon noticed that the effects of our soaking were giving great entertainment to the company, for the heat of the apartments forced clouds of vapour from our wet coats, as we kept cruising about like so many smoking haycocks carried away by a flood. We could have been traced from room to room by the clouds we sent up, and the oily steam of the wool.

About the time supper was announced, which was tastefully laid out in the piazza, and just before the guzzle began, I was drawn towards the inner hall, along with my fair partner, by a general titter, as if something amusing had been going on. Just as we approached, however, the door connecting the two apartments was shut, in consequence of some preparation for supper, so that the hall where the company were now collected was rather awkwardly entered by a side-door from a sort of second drawingroom communicating with the principal saloon—to the left, and directly opposite to the side entrance, there was a large mirror reaching to the floor. The shutting of the door before mentioned, had thus the effect of altering the geography of the interior apartment very materially, to one who had been the whole evening passing and repassing, straight as an arrow, through it from the dancingroom to the piazza.

The change was especially unfortunate for poor Hause, the master of the brig, who was by this time pretty well slewed; for, as he entered by the side-door, with the recollection of another that should have been right a-head facing him, and opening into the piazza, he made directly for the large mirror that now fronted him, and beyond all question he would have walked right through it, just as we entered, had it not been guarded by brass rods, or fenders, having, according to the old jest, mistaken it for the doorway. After the fenders brought him up, still he was not undeceived, but for a minute showed his breeding by dancing from one side to another, and bowing and scraping in a vain attempt to get past his own shadow. At length he found out his mistake; but no way abashed, his laugh was the loudest in the throng, exclaiming, "Why, we must have the channel buoyed, Mr Brail. I thought the landmarks had been changed by witchcraft, and no wonder, seeing we are surrounded by enchantresses;" and here he made the most laughable wallop imaginable, intended for a bow, but more like the gambol of a porpoise. "However, Miss —, you see there are moorings laid down for us there in the piazza, so let us bear up and run for them through the other channel, before those lubberly fellows haul them on board;" and so saying, he hove ahead, with a fair scion of the aforesaid House of Lancaster in tow, until they came to where our friend Quacco was the busiest of the busy, having literally hustled the other blackies out of all countenance, and whom, as we entered, he was roundly abusing in Spanish for lazy "*pendejos*" and "*picarons*," as if he had been the master of the house, or major domo at the least—enforcing his commands with a crack over the skull every now and then, from a silver ladle that he carried in his hand as a symbol of authority.

At length the vagaries of our friend, as he waxed drunk, became too noticeable, and the master of the house asked the gentleman who was nearest him, whose servant he was, the party I could see indicated me, and I was about apologizing, when some thing or other diverted the attention of our landlord from the subject, and the black Serjeant escaped farther notice. I had before this observed a very handsome, tall, well-made man in the party, whose face somehow or other I fancied I had seen before, with an air peculiarly *distingué*, who, so far as I could judge, was a stranger to most of the visitors. He had been introduced by the landlord to one or two of the ladies, and for some time seemed to devote himself entirely to his partners, and certainly he was making himself abundantly agreeable, to judge from appearances. At length he took occasion to steal away from the side of the table he was on, and crossed in rather a marked manner to the other, where poor Hause, now three sheets in the wind, was sitting, doing the agreeable as genteely as a Norwegian bear, or a walrus, and planting himself beside him, he seemed to be endeavouring to draw him into conversation; but the skipper was too devoted an admirer of the ladies to be bothered with males, at that time at least, so the stranger appeared to fail in his attempts to engage his attention. However, he persisted, and as I passed near them I could hear him ask, "if his sails were unbent, and whether he was anchored by a chain or a hempen cable?"

"And pray," hiccuped Hause, whose heart wine had opened, "don't you know I only got in last night, so how the deuce could I have unbent any thing—and my chain cable is left to be repaired at Havana, since you must know; but do you think it's coming on to blow, friend, that you seem

so anxious to know about my ground tackle? or should I keep my sails bent, to be ready to slip, eh?"

"In '*vino veritas*,'" thought I; "but why so communicative, Master Hause?" I could not hear the stranger's reply, but I noticed that he rose at this, and dispersed among the congregating dancers in the other room.

"Pray, Mr Jones," at this juncture, said our landlord to the gentleman already mentioned, as sitting nearest him, "what is the gentleman's name that Turner brought with him?"

"Wilson, I think, he called him," said the party addressed. "He arrived yesterday morning at Falmouth, in some vessel consigned to Turner from the coast of Cuba, and I believe is bound to Kingston."

"He is a very handsome, well-bred fellow, whoever he may be, and I should like to know more of him," rejoined our host. "But, come, gentlemen, the ladies are glancing over their shoulders; they seem to think we are wasting time here, so what say you?"

This was the signal for all of us to rise, and here we had a second edition of the comical blunders of poor Captain Hause. On his return from the supper-table to the drawingroom, he was waylaid by Flamingo, and having a sort of muzzy recollection of his previous mistake, he set himself with drunken gravity to take an observation, as he said, in order to work his position on the chart more correctly this time. But the champagne he had swilled had increased his conglomeration twofold, which Master Felix perceiving, he took an opportunity of treating him to several spinning turns round the inner room, until he lost himself and his latitude entirely. He then let the bewildered sailor go, and the first thing he did was *this time* to mistake the *real* door, now open into the dancingroom, for the *mirror*; thus reversing his former blunder; and although Twig, who was standing in the other room, good naturedly beckoned him to advance, he stood rooted to the spot, as if an invisible barrier prevented his ingress. And when the young lady he had been dancing with would have led him in, he drew back like a rabid dog at water—"Avast, miss, avast—too old a cruiser to be taken in twice that way—shan't walk through a looking-glass, even to oblige you, miss—no, no—Bill Hause knows better. Here—here—this way—that's the door on your starboard beam—and the mirror—bless you, that's the mirror right a-head," and so saying, he dragged the laughing girl away from the door up to the glass once more.

"What a deuced handsome fellow that chap under bare poles is, miss."—This was himself, dressed in Mr Twig's small clothes and black silk stockings—"I should be sorry to trust *my* lower spars out of trowsers, however, I know."

There was no standing all this, especially as Flamingo followed him close, and standing behind him, a little to one side—on his starboard quarter as he himself would have said—made signs to him in the glass to advance, on which the sailor made a tipsy bolt of it, and was a second time brought up by the brass rods—nor was he convinced of his mistake until he felt the cold surface of the plate glass with his great paw. Twig now kindly interfered and got the poor skipper away, and bestowed on a sofa, and dancing recommenced with redoubled energy. The fiddlers scraped with all their might, the man who played the octave flute whistled like a curlew, and the tabor was fiercely beaten, rumpti, tumpti, while the black ballet-master sung out sharp and shrill his mongrel French directions, his *chassées* and his *balancées* to *massa dis*, and misses *dat*, indicating the parties by name; who thereupon pricked up their ears, and looking as grave as judges, pointed their toes, and did, or attempted to do, as they were bid. But, as I was overheated, I strolled into the piazza fronting the sea, where the lights by this time had either burned out, or had been removed—it was very dark. I walked to the corner farthest from the noise of the dancers, and peered through the open *jealousies*, or blinds, on the scene below.

The moon was in the second quarter, and by this time within an hour of her setting. She cast a long trembling wake of faint greenish light on the quiet harbour below, across which the land wind would occasionally shoot in catspaws, dimming and darkening the shining surface (as if from the winnowing of the wings of passing spirits of the air), until they died away again, leaving their whereabouts indicated by streaks of tiny ripples, sparkling like diamonds in the moonbeams. Clear of the bay, but in shore, the water continued as smooth as glass, although out at sea there seemed to be a light air still, the last faint breathings of the dying sea-breeze. The heavy clouds that had emptied themselves on our devoted heads in the early part of the night, had by this time settled down in a black, wool-fringed bank in the west, the fleecy margin of which the moon had gloriously lit up, and was fast approaching. The stars overhead, as the lovely planet verged towards her setting, sparkled with more intense brightness in the deep blue firmament; more profoundly dark and pure, one would have thought, from the heavy squalls we had recently had.

There was only another person in the piazza beside myself, and he was looking steadily out on the ocean. He was about ten yards from me, and in the obscurity I could not well distinguish his figure.

I looked also to seaward; a large vessel was standing in for the land, her white sails, as she glided down towards us, drifting along the calm, gently heaving swell of the smooth water, like a white wreath of mist. To leeward of her about a mile, and further in the offing, two black specks were visible, which first neared each other, and then receded; one standing out to sea, and the



other in for the land, as if they had been two small vessels beating up, and crossing and recrossing on opposite tacks, between us and the moon. If it had been war time, I would have said they were manoeuvring to cut off the ship; but as it was, I thought nothing of it. Presently the vessel approaching, fired a gun, and hoisted a light, which I presumed to be the signal for a pilot, on which two boats shoved out towards her from under the land. I watched them till they got alongside, when I heard a loud startled shout, and then voices, as if in alarm, and the sound of a scuffle, during which several musket or pistol shots went off—next minute all was quiet again, but the yards and sails of the ship were immediately braced round, as she hauled by the wind, and stood off the land.

"Curse the blockhead, why does he meddle with *her*?" said a voice near me.

I started—it could only have been the solitary person I had formerly noticed. As I turned, one of the lozenges of blinds fell down, and opened with a rattle that made me start, and disturbed him.

"What does the ship mean by manoeuvring in that incomprehensible way?" said I.

"Really can't tell, sir," said the person addressed, evidently surprised at my vicinity—"I suppose she has been disappointed in getting a pilot, and intends to lie off and on till daylight."

"But what could the noise of scuffling be? Didn't you hear it?" I continued,—*"and the pistol shots?"*

"Pistol shots! No. I heard no pistol shots," quoth he, drily.

"The devil you didn't—then you must have been deaf," thought I; and as he turned to rejoin the dancers, I made him out, the moment he came into the light, to be the stranger indicated in the conversation between the landlord and his guest at supper.

"Very odd all this," quoth I; and I should say, were he a suspicious character, that it was very shallow in this chap to let such an exclamation escape him; and I again looked earnestly at him. "Ah! I see, he has been drinking wine, like our friend the skipper."

I joined our host, but still I could not avoid again asking him who the deuce this same stranger was?

"I really cannot tell you, Mr Brail. He is a very well-bred man—you see *that* yourself,—but there is something uncommon about him, unquestionably. All the women are dying to know who he is, he dances so well."

"Ay, and talks so bewitchingly," quoth my lady-hostess—no less a person,—as she passed close to us, hanging on the very individual's arm.

"Heyday! It's my turn now—so! Confound the fellow, who *can* he be?" said my host, laughing.

"That strange gentleman *has such* a beautiful tone of voice, uncle," said a little lady—his niece, I believe,—who during our colloquy had taken hold of Mr Roseapple's hand.

"Indeed, Miss Tomboy!—Why, there again, Mr Brail. Young and old, male and female—he seems to have fascinated all of them.—But I really cannot give you more information regarding him, than that my friend Turner brought him up in his gig from Falmouth, and sent to ask leave if he might bring him to the party. It seems he came over two days ago from the opposite coast of Cuba, in a felucca, with live stock and dye woods,"—I started at this—"or something equally ungentleel, which he consigned to Turner; and, having got the value of them in advance, he is on his way to Kingston. He says that the cargo was merely to pay his expenses, and seemed desirous of insinuating, I thought, that accident alone had been the cause of his being led to deal in such vulgar articles as Spanish bullocks and Nicaragua wood."

"I verily believe him," said I.

"He does seem a high sort of fellow," continued Mr Roseapple, without noticing my interruption. "But here is Turner, let us ask him.—I say, Turner, allow me to introduce Mr Brail to you."

We bowed to each other.

"We have been speaking about your friend."

"Well," said Turner, "I believe, Roseapple, you know about as much of him as I do."

"Pray," said I, "may I ask what sort of craft this same felucca was?"

*The Falmouth gentleman described the Midge exactly.*

"Well," thought I, "the vessel *may* be owned by an honest man after all; at any rate, what does it signify to me whether she be or no?" Nevertheless, I had an itching to know more about her somehow.

"Is the felucca still at Falmouth, sir, may I ask?" continued I.

"No; she sailed yesterday morning at daylight."

"That was something of the suddenest too," said I.

"We gave her every expedition, sir."

"I don't doubt it—I don't doubt it—Was there a schooner in company, sir?"

"No; no schooner—But there is my partner waiting for me, so you'll excuse me, Mr Brail." So saying, away skipped Mr Turner, and I had no other opportunity of asking him any more questions.

As I had nothing particular to engage me among the dancers, I again strolled into the dark piazza. Mr Roseapple followed me.

"Why, you seem strangely given to the darkness, Mr Brail; it cannot be because your deeds are evil; won't you join the dancers?"

"I will presently, sir," said I laughing; "but really I have a great curiosity to know what that ship is about out there. Is there any vessel expected from England, sir?"

"Oh, a great many. The Tom Bowline from London has been becalmed in the offing the whole day; I saw her from the piazza some time ago. I fear she will not get in until the sea-breeze sets down to-morrow. There," said he, pointing at the lessening vessel, "look! she has stood out to sea yonder. She intends giving the land a good berth until daylight, I suppose."

"She does do that thing," thought I.—"Pray, Mr Roseapple, do you happen to know whether she took a pilot during the daylight?"

"To be sure she did—she is consigned to me. The pilot-canoe brought my English letters ashore."

"Indeed!" said I; "then what boats could those be that boarded her a little while ago? Besides, I heard pistol shots, and a sound as of struggling."

"Oh," quoth mine host, "the captain is a gay chap, and has a great many friends here, who are generally on the look-out to board him in the offing. Besides, he is always burning lights, and blazing away."

"Very well," thought I, "it's all one to me."

I now noticed that the ship, having got into the sea-breeze, had bore up again, and was running down towards the two small vessels to leeward. As she ran off the wind, and got between us and the moon, her sails no longer reflected the light, but became dark and cloudlike; when she reached them, they all stood out to sea, and gradually disappeared in the misty distance like dusky specks. Not wishing to appear an alarmist, I made no farther remark.

As Mr Roseapple and I walked back into the room, the first thing that struck us was the master of the Ballahoo sound asleep on a sofa, and Mr Flamingo carefully strewing the great rough seaman with roses and jessamine leaves.

"Love amongst the roses," quoth he, as he joined his partner.

"I see that same stranger, who has been puzzling us all, has succeeded in making that poor fellow helplessly drunk," said Jacob Twig.

"Bad luck to him!" quoth I.

It appeared, that he had been much with him during the evening; and had been overheard making many minute enquiries regarding the tonnage of his vessel—the number of hands on board—and as to whether the Spaniards and their money had been landed or not; but as both were strangers, and the unknown had apparently a smattering of nautical knowledge, it seemed natural enough that they should draw up together, and no one seemed to think any thing of it.

It was now three o'clock in the morning, and high time to bid our worthy host adieu; so, after I had again apologized for my intrusion, Mr Twig, Flamingo, Captain Hause, and myself, withdrew, and took the road homewards to our quarters in the town.

Mr Jacob was leading the way as steady as a judge, for he seemed quite sober, so far as his locomotion was concerned; but Flamingo and I, who, I grieve to say it, were not quite the thing ourselves, had the greatest difficulty in lugging the skipper of the brig along with us; for, on the principle that the blind should lead the blind, Twig had coolly enough left him to our care, Bacchus had fairly conquered Neptune.

Whilst we were staggering along, under the influence of the rosy god and the weight of the skipper, who should spring past, in a fast run, apparently in red-hot haste, but the mysterious Mr

Wilson!

"Hillo, my fine fellow," quoth Twig, "whither so swiftly? Slacken your pace, man, and be compani-o-n-a-ble."

I now perceived that Twig's legs were the discreetest of his members, and more to be relied on than his tongue; his potations having considerably interfered with his usually clear enunciation. The person hailed neither shortened sail nor answered him.

"Why, Mr Twig," shouted I, "if you don't heave to, we must cast off Mr Hause here. I believe he is in an apoplexy, he is so deadly heavy."

"Here, Mr Brail—here—bring him along," quoth Twig, returning from the front, and laying hold of the navigator wheelbarrow fashion, placing himself between his legs, while Flamingo and I had each a hold of an arm. As for the head, we left it to take care of itself, as it bumped on the hard path at every step, demolishing, no doubt, thousands of sand-flies at every lollop. We staggered down the zigzag road, until we came to an opening in the lime fence, through which we turned sharp off into the fields, led by Massa Twig. Here, wading through wet guinea-grass up to our hip-joints, which drenched us in a moment to the skin, we arrived at a small rocky knoll under an orange-tree, where we deposited the drunk man on his back, and then, with all the tipsy gravity in the world, sat ourselves down beside him.

We were now planted on a limestone pinnacle of the bluff, on which the house stood, from the fissures of which grew a most superb orange-tree that overshadowed us. Our perch commanded a view to seaward, as well as of the harbour, that slept under our feet in the moonlight. As soon as we came to an anchor, Flamingo ascended the tree, which was loaded with golden fruit, and sparkling with fireflies.

"Nothing like an orange with the dew on it," quoth he, stretching to reach a bunch, when he missed his footing, and shook down a whole volley of oranges, and a shower of heavy dew.

"Confound you, Felix," quoth Jacob Twig, who received a copious showerbath in his neck, as he stooped his head, busying himself in an unavailing attempt to strike fire with his pocket-flint and steel, in order to light his cigar, "what do you mean by that?"

"A volley of grapeshot from the felucca," stuttered the skipper, on whose face Flamingo had again dropped a whole hatful of fruit, sending down along with them another fall of diamonds.

"Now, don't be so pluviose, Flamingo," again sung out Twig; "come down out of that tree, Felix, or I'll shy this stone at you, as I am a gentleman."

"An't I a very pretty peacock, Jacob?" quoth his troublesome friend. "But stop, I *will* come down"—seeing Twig preparing to make his threat good—"so keep your temper, man, and haul Tarrybreeks nearer the root of the tree, that I may fall soft."

"I say, Flamingo," quoth Twig, "you don't mean to make a featherbed of the navigator's carcass, do you?"

Crash at this moment went the bough on which our friend had trusted himself, and down he came, tearing his way through the strong thorns of the tree, right upon us. However, his fall was so much broken by the other branches, that there was no great harm done, if we except the scratches that he himself received, and a rent or two in his clothes.

"Murder, how I am scratched and torn, to be sure—why, see, my clothes are all in tatters absolutely," with a long drawl.

"Serve you right, you troublesome animal," quoth Twig; "but sit down, and be quiet if you can. Look, have you no poetry in you, Felix? Is not that scene worth looking at?"

The black bank of clouds that had slid down the western sky, and had floated for some time above the horizon, now sank behind the hills, above whose dark outline the setting moon was lingering.

The pale clear luminary still cast a long stream of light on the quiet waters of the bay, which were crisping and twinkling in the land-breeze; and the wet roofs of the houses of the town beneath, whose dark masses threw their long shadows towards us, glanced in her departing beams like sheets of polished silver. The grass and bushes beside us were sparkling with dewdrops, and spangled with fireflies. The black silent hulls of the vessels at anchor floated motionless on the bosom of the calm waters; the Ballahoo being conspicuous from her low hull and tall spars. The lantern that had been hoisted to guide the skipper on his return still burned like a small red spark at the gaff end.

There were one or two lights sparkling and disappearing in the lattices of the houses on the bay, as if the inmates were already bestirring themselves, early as it was.

The moon was just disappearing, when a canoe, pulling four oars, with one solitary figure in the stern, dashed across her wake, and pushed out to sea.

We distinctly heard the hollow voices of the men, and the rumble of the rollocks, and the cheeping and splashing of the broad bladed paddles. I looked with all my eyes. "A doubloon, if you pull to please me," said a voice distinctly from the boat.

"That chap must be in a deuced hurry, whoever he may be," quoth Jacob Twig.

"It's more than you seem to be, my boy," rejoined Master Felix, "You seem to be inclined to sit here all night; so I'll e'en stump along to my lodgings, at Sally Frenche's, and leave you and the skipper *al fresco* here, to rise when it pleases you. Come, Mr Brail, will you go, or shall I send you out a nightcap and a boat-cloak?"

"Oh we shall all go together," said I; "only let us take another look at that most beautiful sky."

The moon had now disappeared behind the distant mountains, leaving their dark outlines sharply cut out against the clear greenish light of the western sky. They looked like the shore to some mysteriously transparent, self-luminous, but deadly calm ocean. Several shreds of vapour floated in this mild radiance, like small icebergs in the north sea, during the long twilight night, while the sun is circling round just below the horizon; while to windward<sup>[2]</sup> the fast reddening sky, and the rise of the morning star, gave token of the near approach of day.

[2] Once for all. In the West Indies, from the sea-breeze, or trade-winds, always blowing from the east, objects or places are universally indicated, even during a temporary calm, as being situated *to windward* or *to leeward*, according as they are to the *eastward* or *westward* of the speaker.

We got home, and tumbled into bed, and it was two o'clock in the afternoon before I rose to breakfast.

The sea-breeze was by this time blowing strong, almost half a gale of wind, making the shingles of the roof clatter like watchmen's rattles, and whistling through the house like a tornado.

I had just risen, and taken my razors out of my desk, which lay open on the dressing-table, when the wooden-blinds of the window fell down with a loud bang, from the dropping out of the pin that held them shut, and away went the letters and papers it contained, scattered by the reckless breeze east, west, north, and south; some flying up to the roof, others sticking against the walls far above my ken, as resolutely as if they had been pasted on by little Waddington the billsticker himself; while, by a sort of eddy wind, several were whisked away out of the door (that at the moment was opened by a negro boy with my coat in one hand, a beautiful pine-apple on a plate in the other, and a tin shaving-jug *full of boiling water on his head*), and disappeared amongst the branches of a large umbrageous kennip-tree, that overshadowed the back-yard, to be worked up in due time into bird's nests.

"There they go," cried I. "Why,—Sally, cousin Sally!"—she was bustling about her domestic matters—"see all my letters flying about the yard there; send some of the small fry to catch them."

I continued my shaving, until another puff whipped up the piece of paper I had been wiping my razor on, charged as it was with soap-suds, and there it ascended spirally in a tiny whirlwind, until it reached the roof, where, thinking it would stick to the rafters, after being tired of its gyrations, the room being unceiled, I shouted to Sally to bring me one of the vagrant papers to supply its place; but, as I peeped through the blinds to observe how she came on, I felt something settle down as gently as a snow-flake on the crown of my head. "Do try and secure my *love-letters*, cousin."

"Love-letter, dem?" quoth Sally, jumping up at the words, "La, Massa Benjamin, how you no say so before—love-letter—I tink dem was no more as shaving-paper."

"Shaving-paper? Oh no, all my shaving-paper is sticking to the crown of my head, Sally; see here," stooping down to show her the patch on my skull.

Sally was now all energy. "Shomp, Teemoty, Peeta, up de tree, you willains, and fetch me all dese piece of paper, dem—shomp;" and the fugitive pieces were soon secured.

When Sally, honest lady, entered with the papers, the soapy scalp still adhered to my caput. She first looked in my face, being a sort of quiz in her way, and then at it. "Dat is new fashion, Massa Benjamin. When gentlemen shave demself in England now-a-day, do dey wipe de razor on crone of dem head?"

"Assuredly they do," said I; "the universal custom, Sally, every man or woman, *willy nilly*, must wipe their razors, henceforth and for ever, on pieces of paper stuck on the crown of their heads. There is an act of Parliament for it."

"My gracious!"

"Ay, you may say that,"

And exit Sally Frenche to her household cares once more.

I had now time to give a little attention to the scenery of the yard, where Cousin Sally reigned supreme.

Three sides of the square (the house composing the fourth) were occupied by ranges of low wooden huts, containing kitchen and washing-houses, rooms for the domestic negroes, and a long open shed, fronting my window, for a stable. There was a draw-well in the centre, round which numberless fowls, turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea-birds, and pigeons, *flaffed*, and gobbled, and quacked; while several pigs were grunting and squeaking about the cookroom door, from whence a black hand, armed with an iron ladle, protruded every now and then, to give grumpy, when too intrusive, a good crack over the skull.

Below the large kennip-tree already mentioned, sat Sally Frenche, enthroned in state, in a low wicker chair, with a small table beside her, on which lay an instrument of punishment, ycleped a cowskin, a long twisted thong of leather, with a short lash of whipcord at the end of it. She was nothing loth, I saw, to apply this to the shoulders of her handmaidens when they appeared behind hand, or sluggish in their obedience; and even the free brownies of her household were not always exempt from a taste thereof.

Two nice showily-dressed negresses were speaking to her. They each balanced a large wooden bowl on their heads, full of handkerchiefs, gown-pieces, and beads, and appeared to be taking their instructions as to the prices they were to ask during the day's sale. They departed—when a black fellow, naked all to his trowsers, with a long clear knife in his hand, approached, and also took some orders that I could not hear, but apparently they had been the death-warrant of a poor little pig, which he immediately clapper-clawed; and, like a spider bolting with a fly, disappeared with it, squeaking like fury, into his den—the kitchen.

There were several little naked negro children running about Mrs Sally, but the objects of her immediate attention were a brown male child, of about eight years old, and two little mulatto girls, a year or two his seniors apparently. The children had their primers in their hands, and Sally held an open book in one of hers.

The girls appeared, with the aptness of their sex, to have said their lessons to her satisfaction, but the little cock-yellowhammer seemed a dull concern; and as I looked, she gave him a smart switch over his broadest end with her cowskin.

"Try again, you stupid *black-head*"—(his head was black enough certainly)—"now mind—what doz you do wid your eyes?"

"I sees wid dem."

"You is right for one time—what doz you do wid your yees?"—(ears.)

"I hears wid dem."

"Bery well—you sees you is not so stupid when you attends—you only lazy—so now—what doz you do wid your foots?"

"Walks wid dem."

"Bery well, indeed—now mind again—what doz you do wid your nose?"

This was a puzzler apparently—the poor little yellowhammer scratched his head, and eke his behind, and looked into the tree, and all manner of ways, when seeing Mammy Sally's fingers creeping along the table towards the cowskin,—he rapped out,

"I *picks* him."

"*Picks* him, sir!—*picks* him!"—shouted Sally threatening him.

"No"—blubbered the poor boy—"no, mammy—no, I *blows* him sometimes."

"You nassy snattary little willain—what is dat you say—you *smells* wid him, sir—you *smells* wid him." Another whack across his nether end, and a yell from yellowhammer.—"Now, sir, what you doz wid your mout?"

"*Nyam plawn*."<sup>[3]</sup>

[3] Creole for "*eat plantain*."

"Bery well—dat is not so far wrong—you does *nyam plawn* wid him—but next time be more

genteel, and say—you eats wid him. Now, sir—read your catechism, sir—begin—Mammy Juba—de toad of a boy—if him no hab de wrong side of de book turn up—ah ha—massa—you don't know de difference between de tap from de battam of de book yet?—Let me see if I can find out de difference between, for you own tap and battam."

Whack, whack, whack—and away ran the poor little fellow, followed by the two girls, so contagious was his fear; and off started the wrathful Sally after them, through the flock of living creatures; until she stumbled and fell over a stout porker; on which a turkey-cock, taking the intrusion in bad part, began stoutly to dig at Sally's face with his heels, and peck at her eyes with his beak, hobble-gobbling all the time most furiously; in which praiseworthy endeavour he was seconded by two ducks and a clucking-hen, one of whose chickens had come to an untimely end through poor Sally's *faux-pas*; while the original stumblingblock, the pig, kept poking and snoking at the fallen fair one, as if he had possessed a curiosity to know the colour of her garters. This gave little yellowhammer an opportunity of picking up the cowskin, that had dropped in the row, and of slyly dropping it into the draw-well, to the great improvement, no doubt, of the future flavour of the water.

At length Sally gathered herself up, and seeing that there was no chance of catching the urchins, who were peeping in at the back-door of the yard, that opened into the lane, she made a merit of necessity, and called out,

"So, go play now—go play,"—and away the scholars ran, and Cousin Sally returned to the house.

I was sitting at breakfast, and the gig I had ordered was already at the door, when the captain of the Ballahoo, who had been put to bed in the house, joined me. He looked rather sheepish, as if a dim recollection of the figure he had cut over night had been haunting him. Just as we had finished our meal, and I was about saying good-by to him, I found I had forgotten two boxes of cigars on board the Ballahoo; and as none of the servants of the house were at hand, I accepted his offer to go on board with him, in a canoe for them. So desiring the boy in charge of the gig to wait—that I would be back *instantly*—we sallied forth, and proceeded to the wharf, and embarked in the first shore-canoe we came to. There were three West-Indiamen taking in their cargoes close to the wharf, with their topmasts struck, and otherwise dismantled, and derricks up; and a large timbership, just arrived, whose sails were loosed to dry, was at anchor beyond them in the bay.

"Pull under the stern of that large ship with the sails loose; my brig is just beyond her," quoth Hause to the black canoe-man. "A fine burdensome craft that, sir."

"Very."

We were now rapidly approaching the large vessel—we shot past under her stern—when, lo!—*there was no brig to be seen.*

The captain, apparently bewildered, stared wildly about him—first this way, then that way, and in every direction—then at a buoy, to which we had now made fast.—He turned round to me, while with one hand he grasped the buoy-rope—"As sure as there is a Heaven above us, sir—this is our buoy, and the brig is gone."

"Gone," said I, smiling, "where can she be gone?"

"That's more than I know;"—then, after a pause, during which he became as blue as indigo, "where is the Ballahoo?" gasped the poor fellow in a fluttering tone to the canoe-men, as if terrified to learn their answer.

"Where is the Ballahoo you say, massa!!"—echoed Quashie in great surprise, that *he*, the master of her, should ask such a question.

"Yes—you black scoundrel,"—roared Hause, gathering breath, "*where* is the Ballahoo?—this is her buoy, don't you see?"

"Where is de Ballahoo!!!"—again screamed the negroes, in a volley, in utter extremity of amazement at the enquiry being *seriously* repeated.

"Yes, you ragamuffins," quoth I, Benjie Brail, excited in my turn—"Where *is* the Ballahoo?"

*Omnes.*—"WHERE IS THE BALLAHOO?"

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE DEVIL'S GULLY.

I was certainly extremely puzzled myself to conjecture what could have become of the brig—

that she had vanished was certain—and as for poor Captain Hause, he was in a truly pitiable state; quite stunned with the suddenness and severity of the blow, so as to be altogether unable to think or act for himself—"Come, Hause, my lad," said I, encouragingly, "this won't do; rouse yourself, man, and let us see what's to be done." At this he slowly rose up in the canoe, rubbing his eyes, and pressing his forehead, as if he had awakened out of some horrid dream, the effects of which he was endeavouring to shake off; but the instant he was no longer in doubt as to the reality of his misfortune, he cast the slough of his despondency, and with terrific energy tore off his jacket and neckerchief, and dashing both into the water, along with his hat, threw himself headlong after them; being only prevented from accomplishing his purpose of self-destruction by my dragging him on board again by the leg, and then holding him in the canoe by main force.

"I say, my men,"—to the black canoemen—"pull to that big timber-ship, will ye?"

"Ay, ay, massa," rejoined the poor fellows; "only hold dat poor mad buccra hand—take care him don't get at we, please, massa—white somarry when him blod up, bad enough—but when buccra beside himself, for true and true—heigh, de devil, massa."

We soon got alongside of the Quebec ship. Several of the crew, in their dirty canvass trowsers, red flannel shirts, and night-caps, were standing at the gangway, apparently observing us.

"You are the mate of this ship?" said I to a good-looking young man, who was leaning over the side, neatly dressed in a blue jacket, check shirt, duck trowsers, and straw hat.

"I am, sir—can I be of any service to you?"

"I wish you would lend a hand to get this poor fellow up the side. He is very ill, you see; and if I try to take him ashore I am persuaded he will jump overboard. He has endeavoured to do so already."

"You need not be afraid of me, Mr Brail," here chimed in the poor skipper himself, as he seated himself in the stern sheets with forced composure. "It is over now, sir, and I am quite cool; but get up if you please, and I will follow you—you are quite right, sir, the people of this ship *may* be able to give us some information."

I clambered up the high side of the vessel, and was immediately followed by Hause and three of the negroes belonging to the canoe.

"I am sorry Captain Batten is not on board, gentlemen," quoth the mate; "but is there any thing I can do for you?"

My companion was still unable to speak for himself. He had sitten down on a carronade, resting his head on his hand, the very picture of despondency.

"Why, it is a strange story altogether," said I; "but did you notice when the brig, that anchored close to you yesterday afternoon, got under weigh this morning?"

"I did, sir. I was on deck at the time."

The captain lifted up his head at this for a moment, but presently fell back into his former state of apparent stupor.

"I noticed two boats," continued the mate, "I suppose from the shore, full of people, go to her from the other side of the bay, and smart chaps they were apparently—they loosed sails, and set them in regular man-of-war fashion, and all the time you could have heard a pin drop. I will do them or the crew the credit to say that I never saw a brig got under weigh more handsomely in my life. I had no conception they could have got the anchor up so speedily."

"Anchor up!" groaned Hause; "why, *there—there* is the anchor, cable and all," pointing to the buoy. "The brig is run away with by some piratical rascals, sir," cried he, increasing his exclamation to a roar—"the cable has been slipped—oh, I am ruined, I am ruined—for ever ruined—the sweet little Ballahoo has been cut out by pirates—as sure as fate, the bloody pirates are off with her," and he burst into a passion of tears, and wept like the veriest child.

"I really cannot say," rejoined the mate of the timber-ship, most distressingly cool and composed; "but she was in sight within this half hour from the deck. Here, steward, hand me the captain's glass—I think I shall be able to make her out from the maintop still."

This seemed to rouse poor Hause, who had relapsed into his mute fit; and he was in the top in an instant. "Hand me up the glass, my good fellow," cried he impatiently to the mate, who was ascending the rigging leisurely, with the glass slung at his back by a leather strap—"the glass, if you please, the glass—here I see her down to leeward there—there, see—just over the Point." And the poor fellow took a long, anxious look towards the offing, steadying the telescope against one of the topmast shrouds, and speaking very quickly all the time, as I have seen one do in a fever, to the mate, who stood by him in the top.

"Well, captain," I sung out, "what do you see?"

He did not answer me; but the mate of the ship did. "He says he sees the brig, sir, standing under a crowd of sail to the northward and westward—two small craft, like coasters, in company."

"Ask him to take a good look at these last, will ye?"

A pause. "One is a schooner, he says, sir."

"And the other?"

"A felucca, sir."

"I thought so, by all that is unfortunate." And I turned away, walking aft very fast, when the mate's voice from the top, hailing the deck, evidently in great alarm, arrested me, and glued me to the planks.

"Johnstone, Johnstone!"—This was to one of the ship's people,—"come up here; come up into the top—quick, or he will be over!" And the next moment the telescope fell smash at my feet. I could see that Hause had cast himself down on the grating, and was grovelling convulsively on his face. At length, in his struggles, one of his legs hung over; and I thought he would have slipped through the mate's fingers, and been dashed to pieces by the fall. I looked up enquiringly.

"He's in a fit, sir," cried the mate.

"Well, well, seize him in the top, then—seize him in the top."

But it was unnecessary; the poor fellow got over this paroxysm also, to which the calmness of despair now finally succeeded, and presently he came down on deck.

"I will now give you no more trouble, Mr Brail, you may depend on it; I am in my right senses again, although ruined for ever; and all owing to my infernal folly in not sleeping on board."

"Well, my good fellow," said I, "I question very strongly if your *sleeping* on board would have made the smallest difference, at least in your favour. *If* she has been forcibly carried off,—and I am sorry to say it looks very like it,—the party must have been too strong to have allowed *your* resistance to have been of any avail. In fact, the first thing they naturally would have done must have been either to have secured you below, or given you a more effectual *quietus*—you understand me. So nothing here is so bad, but it might have been worse. You are better as you are surely, than a prisoner; or, worse still, amongst the fishes in the bay?"

But I was cramming his ear against the stomach of his sense.

"Those on deck would not have been caught in this way had I been on board, take my word for it, sir."

"Probably not, probably not. But who does the brig belong to?"

"To myself, sir—entirely."

"And she was ensured?"

"Yes, fully; but since she had arrived, of course the underwriters are not liable for her having been cut out. Besides, sir, it will be made out a deviation, as we were bound for Kingston, and had no right to touch at Montego bay; although, God knows, we did all for the best."

"These are questions that I cannot well answer. As to the deviation, I fear you are right, although, as you say, you did it for the best; and if the underwriters be liberal-minded men, this should weigh with them, and I do hope they will settle. However, cheer up, man, and let us go and make our depositions before the authorities, and send off information of the event to the admiral at Kingston, and to your agent there, as well as to the outports; let us take all the chances of informing some of the squadron of the transaction. You are bound to take every measure likely to afford a chance of the recovery of the brig and property. But the poor Dons, have they been kidnapped as well as the crew?"

"All on dem—ebery one on dem carry go along wid dat terrible pirate willain," quoth one of the negro canoemen.

"Aye, Quashie," said I, for I had forgotten the blackies altogether, "what do *you* know about it?"

"I knows dis, massa—dat Jack, and Aby, and Pico dere, was all out fis wid me in de canoe dis wery marning, jost as de moon was setting, when one buccra hail we fram de beach—'Canoe, ahoy,' him say.—'Hillo,' say we."

"Very well, my good man, get on, get on."

"So me shall, massa; so him hail again, 'Canoe, ahoy,' him say—and 'Hillo,' say me, Bill, once more."



"So, and you took him on board?" said I.

"You had better give him his own way, sir, or you will never get to the end of his yarn," chimed in the mate of the timber ship. I saw he had a better knowledge of the negro character than I had, so I resolutely held my tongue. "Go on, then, Bill, since that is your name, get along your own way."

"So him hail, we de tird time—'Canoe, ahoy,' him say. I hope massa notice dat him sing out 'Canoe, ahoy,' for de *tird* time—'Hillo,' say I for de tird time too—massa will mark I say 'Hillo,' for de tird time too."

"Yes, yes."

"Wery good. 'I wants a shove out to one wessel in de offing,' say de woice, for by dis time one cloud come over de moon, and we couldn't see nobody none at all—'We is fissing, and can't come,' say Pico."

"'Never mind your fissing—here is one golden hook for you—here is eight dollar for de put on board.'"

"Ho, ho, now we understan, taught I,—'He, he, better more as fis whole night dis is,' say Jack. So we leave de lines, at one buoy, and pull for de beach, where we find one buccra tan up dere wid portmanteau on him shoulder, and all fine dress as if for one ball. He toss in de portmanteau widout any more palaver—wery heavy him was, for de same was break Pico shin."

"To be sure him do," said Pico, here showing where the black cuticle was flayed off the cucumber shank.

"'Now you see one wessel, wid white sail out yonder?' him say when him sit down in de starn sheet—'No,' say all we, 'we see noting,' and no more we did, massa."

"'Bery well—pull right out of de bay den—*one doubloon if you pulls to please me*,' say he."

I here looked at poor Hause—forgetting he had been helplessly drunk when the canoe passed us, as we sat below the orange-tree.

"Well, massa," continued the negro, "when we reach de offing de trange buccra tood up in de starn, take off him hat, and look all about—'dere,' say he, pointing wid him tretch out hand, 'dere dey are, you see dem now, pull for dat nearest wessel.'"

"'Where, where, where?' Pico poke him head out into de dark night, and so do Jack, and so do Aby, and so do me—all tan up wid neck tretch over de gonwale like so much goose looking for de picaniny coming wid de Guinea corn. So, tink I, what good yeye dat buccra mos hab, for none of us yet no see noting; but, ha, ha, presently de moon give us one leetle shine, and, I see, I see."

"What the deuce did you see?" said I, losing all patience, and raising my hand threateningly—Quashie, thinking I was going to strike him, now tumbled out his words fast enough.

"I see one larsh ship well out in de offing—one leetle rogueish looking felucca close to, and one big topsail schooner between dis one and de larsh ship." Here, seeing it was a false alarm on my part, he relapsed into his former drawling verbosity. "Well, we pull for de smallest of de tree—see no one on deck but de man steering and two boy—de trange buccra shomp on board—'Now tank you, my lad,' him say quite shivel—'dere is de doubloon I promise—here, boy, give dem poor fellow a horn of grog a-piece.'—'Si Señor,' say de boy—fonny ting, I taught, for de boy to hanswer him in Panish—we drink de grog—'now shove off—good by—go home, and sleep,' said de trange buccra—but instead we come back to our nets, massa—before daybreak we come ashore, and when de captain dere engage de canoe, we taught it was for join de brig in de offing (for after we came back from sell our fis we hear she was gone), until we see she was too far out, and instead of being heave too, was bowl along six knots wid de first of de sea breeze."

"How came you to know Captain Hause was the master of the brig?" said I.

"Because I was in de pilot canoe dat was come aff to you yesterday—and it make me wery mosh surprise to see de captain expect to find de brig at anchor dis forenoon, for I never dream she could be go widout his leave. I was tink for true it was him send him off at gone-fire, because I see, just before day broke, what I tink was two sore boat wid peoples, as if he had sent help to up de hanker cleverly—dat all I knows, massa—will buss de book pan dat." And I believe the poor fellow spoke the truth.

It was now evident beyond all shadow of doubt that the Ballahoo had been run away with by pirates, and it was equally clear that nothing could be done with any chance of success in the way of venturing to follow her in an unarmed craft.

As for poor Hause, it would have been downright cruelty if I had left him that forenoon. So I told Cousin Teemoty to put up the gig, as I found I should be unable to leave Montego bay that day at any rate; and I hurried to Sally Frenche's in order to write to the admiral an account of the transaction.

When I got there I found Mr Twig and his friend Mr Flamingo seated at a sumptuous breakfast. "Good morning, gentlemen—melancholy news for you this morning. This poor man's brig—the vessel I came in—has been run away with in the night by pirates."

"By pirates!" said Flamingo; "impossible, Mr Brail, you are joking surely. I would as soon believe that Jacob Twig there had been stolen in the night."

"And do you mean to say I should not have been worth the stealing, Felix?"

I assured them that it was a melancholy fact, and no jest, but neither would believe that there was any piracy in the affair—"Piracy—poo, poo, impossible—barratry of the crew—barratry to a certainty."

"No," quoth Hause; "I would trust the poor fellows with all that I am worth—Heaven knows that's little enough now. The mate is my own brother-in-law, and the second mate is my nephew, my own sister's son. No barratry, sir; no, no."

"Well, well," said I, "you have shown, gentlemen, a desire to oblige me already. I now will put you to the proof."

Here they laid down their coffee-cups and rose, wiping their muzzles with their napkins most resolutely.

"Say the word, Mr Brail," quoth both in a breath, with their mouths full, and munching away all the time—"how can we be of service?—with our persons or purses? We West Indians have such a slippery tenure in this country, that one does not much grudge perilling either," continued Jacob Twig.

"Thank you. All I want at present is, that you should have the goodness to put Mr Hause and me in the way of making our depositions before your chief magistrate."

"The custos of the parish?" quoth Twig. "Certainly—and fortunately he is here in Montego bay at this moment. He was at Roseapple's last night."

"I know where to find him," said Mr Flamingo, "He is always at old Jacob Munroe's store about this time, when at the bay. So, *allons*."

And in a twinkling we were on our way to lay our troubles before the great functionary, an extensive planter in the neighbourhood."

"Pray, where is Mr Turner, the gentleman from Falmouth, who brought that ominous Mr Wilson to the ball, to be found?" said I, as we stumped along, larding the lean earth, for it was cruelly hot.

"Well thought of," said Don Felix. "He lodges usually at Judy Wade's. Why, there he is in *propria persona*, standing in the front piazza."

"How do you do, Turner? You will have heard the row on the bay?"

"Oh yes; but the Tom Bowline has been given up; she has not even been plundered, and is now working into the bay."

"No—no—not the Tom Bowline"—

"What, about the brig having been cut out? Oh yes; it has flown like wild-fire."

"Pray, is Mr Wilson still with you?"

"No, to my surprise (I will confess), he is not. It seems he came home before me from Roseapple's, packed his portmanteau, paid half of our joint bills, and bolted"—

"Honour amongst thieves," whispered Twig to me—

"But where he is gone I can't tell. He *did* intend to have started for Kingston to-day at one time, but last night he said he would put it off until to-morrow."

"There again," said I, looking at Jacob, who seemed to think it was his cue.

"He must be a bit of a rogue that same Wilson; so I hope he is no friend of yours, Turner, *my dear fellow*," quoth Twig—and here he told him of all that had occurred, and what we suspected.

Mr Turner, a most respectable man, was highly incensed at having been so grossly duped, and willingly accompanied us to the place where we expected to find the custos.

We were on our way, when the mate of the timber ship overtook us, running very fast.

"Gentlemen, piracy is not the worst of it—piracy is not the worst of it. *There has been murder committed*."

"Murder!" quoth Jacob Twig—"the deuce there has!"

"Murder!" quoth Don Felix—"worse, and more of it."

And, "murder!" quoth I Benjie. "Where, my good man?—and what proof?"

"Come with me, gentlemen," said the still breathless seaman. "The ship's boat, with Captain Batten himself in it, is lying at the wharf. Come with me, and you shall see yourselves that it is as I say."

We reached the wharf, and immediately pulled straight for the brig's buoy.

As we got between it and the sun, which was now declining in the west, we witnessed a very uncommon appearance.

The Ballahoo had let go her anchor in five fathoms water, so clear, and the sand at the bottom so white and free of weeds or rocks, that when we were about & cable's length distant from the anchor, it appeared from the refraction of the sun's rays, to be buoyed up, and to float on the surface of the gentle swell that rolled in from the offing—the shank, flukes, and stock twisting and twining, and the cable waving in its whole length, as if the solid anchor had been a living thing in the fangs of a gigantic watersnake. When we got right over the anchor, we saw a dark object, at about three fathoms to windward of it, of the size of a man's body, glimmering and changing its shape, from the jaugle of the water. At the request of the mate I shaded my eyes with my hands, and held my face close to the surface, when the indistinct appearance, as I looked steadily, settled itself into the figure of a sailor, floating, as near as I could judge, midway between the bottom and the surface; suspended in the water, as the fable alleges Mahomet's coffin to be in air.

"It has drifted," said the mate, "since I was here before, and is now much nearer the surface—see, see!"—and presently the dead corpse, as if some sudden chemical decomposition had taken place, sent up a number of bubbles, and then rose rapidly to the surface with a bob (if in so serious a matter one may use such an expression), where it floated with the breast bone and face flush with the surface of the swell, dip dipping, and driving out small concentric circles, that sparkled in the sun all round. *The throat was cut from ear to ear.*

"Great God," cried poor Hause, as he passed his arm round the neck of the dead body, and raised it out of the water—"my poor mate—my poor mate! Ay, ay—he would have the morning watch sure enough. A fearful watch has it been to him."

We carried the body to the wharf, and left it there, covered with a boatsail, and once more proceeded to wait on the custos.

The place we expected to meet him at was a sort of vendue store, the small open piazza of which, fronting the street, was lumbered with bales of Osnaburgs, open boxes of handkerchiefs, pieces of Irish linens, and several open barrels of mess beef, pork, pickled mackerel, herrings, and shads. We navigated through these shoals with some difficulty, and considerable danger to the integrity and purity of our coat skirts. At length we reached the interior.

There was a passage fronting us, that ran right through the house from front to rear, on each side of which were sparred partitions of unpainted pine boards, covered with flour and weevils, and hung with saddlery, mule harness, cattle chains, hoes, and a vast variety of other miscellaneous articles of common use on an estate.

Through the spars on the left hand side, I saw a person in a light-coloured jacket and trowsers, perched on the top of a tall mahogany tripod, at a small, dirty, hacked-and-hewn mahogany desk, with a pen behind his ear, his hands full of papers, and busy apparently with some accounts.

But there seemed to be a dark *sanctum-sanctorum* beyond him, of some kind or another, railed in separately, the partition festooned with dusty spider-webs, and raised several steps above the level of the floor. Here, in the obscurity, I could barely discern a little decrepit figure of a man, like a big parrot in a cage, dressed in a sort of dark-coloured night-gown and red night-cap.

We all sat down unconcernedly to wait for his honour, as if this had been some common lounge, or a sort of public coffee-house,—some on tops of barrels, others on bales or boxes; but neither of the two persons at the desks moved or took the smallest notice of us, as if they had been accustomed to people constantly going and coming.

"Where is your master?" said Twig at length to a negro that was tumbling goods about in the piazza.

"Dere him is," quoth Snowball—"dere in de contin hose;" indicating the direction by sticking out his chin, both paws being occupied at the time in rolling a tierce of beef.

"I say, Jacob Munroe," sung out Twig—"how are you, old boy? Nuzzling away in the old corner, I see."

"Hoo are ye? Hoo are ye the day, Mr Twig?" said a small husky voice from the sanctum.

I happened to sit a good deal farther back in the passage than the others of the party (farther *ben* I believe they would call it in Scotland), and thus could hear the two quill drivers, who were evidently unaware of my being within earshot, communing with each other, while my companions did not.

"Saunders," quoth the oldest man from the sanctum, "hae ye coonted the saydels?"

"Yes, uncle, twice over, and there is still one amissing."

"Vara extraordinar," rejoined the small husky voice from the dark corner—"Vara extraordinar."—Then after a pause—"Hae ye closed aw the accoonts, Saunders?"

"No, sir."

"Whilk o' them are open yet?"

"Mr Wanderson's."

"Ane," said the voice.

"Jolliffe and Backhouse."

"Twa."

"Skinflint and Peasemeal."

"Three."

"His honour the custos."

"Four."

"And Gabriel Juniper."

"Ay, there's five o' them. Weel-a-weel, Saunders, we maunna lose the value of the saydel at no rate—sae just clap in, 'item, *one* saydel' to ilk ane o' the five ye hae read aff the noo seriawtim—they'll no aw objeck—ane will surely stick—maybe mair."

I was a good deal amused with this, and while the others were inspecting some sets of harness, and the quality of several open boxes of soap, I could not resist drawing nearer, under the lee of the partition, to enjoy the fun of the thing. Presently Twig joined me.

The conscience of the younger of the two invisibles seemed to rebel somewhat at this national and characteristic method of balancing an account, and making gain of the loss of a saddle.

"Really, uncle, *none* of these parties got the saddle, I am positively certain of *that*."

"It's no my fawt if they didna—we canna lose the saydel, Saunders; by no mainer of means."

"Oh, but, sir," persisted the other, "Mr Wanderson, for instance, a person you always speak so highly of!"

"Haud yere tongue, sir, and do as I bid ye—it'll no be charged again *yere* conscience, and yere no the keeper o' mine."

I was amazingly tickled at this.—After a pause, "Hae ye charged the saydels yet, Saunders?"

"Yes, sir," said the clerk, doggedly; "yes, all charged, and I'm just closing the accounts."

"Close nane o' the accounts—the devil's in the lad wi' his hurry—close nane o' the accounts, sir—so noo charge twa three odd things till each o' the five, just, to smoor the saydel, ye ken—what are ye glowering at?—do ye no understaun yere mither tongue?—to mak the charge less noticeable, ye gawmarel."

"Really, sir," said the younger of the two, "I have not the courage to do so unjust an action of myself."

"Haud yere tongue, and write what I dictate, then, sir—wha's first? Ay, Mr Wanderson. Let me see—an IHL hinge, a negro lock, and a bottle of blister flies, to Mr Wanderson. He's always giving poor people help and medicine, and he'll ne'er notice them. Wha's neist?"

"The custos, sir."

"Ay, the custos," said the voice; "a jovial chiel is his honour—so, so—just clap doon, item, twa *pawtent* corkscrews. He's no very muckle gien to payin', but ne'er mind—I'll *screw* it out o' him in rum and plantains." And here the creature laughed an "eldritch laugh," sounding more like *keck*,

*keck, keck*, than any common cachinnation. "Wha's neist?"

"Jolliffe and Backhouse."

"Ay, braw English lads are they baith; leeberal chiels, and fond o' guid eating—clap a round o' Jew beef on the tap o' *their* saydel.—Keck, keck, keck. Wha's neist?"

"Skinflint and Peasemeal, sir."

"Bah—nasty Scotch bodies" (and what may you be, thought I); "and weel I wot I would be glad to saydel them—keck, keck—but they'll no be fitted that gate, I trow—they are owre gleg; sell them a loose, and if he wanted a leg or the fud—my certie, let abee findin' it oot, they wad plea it afore they payed it—sae pass them ower. But wait awee—I am loath to let Skinflint escape after aw. Hoo mony grunstones did their cart ca' for the other day?"

"Two dozen, sir."

"Twa dizzen—twa dizzen grunstones, did ye say?—herd ony mortal the like o' that—four-and-twenty grunstones! What can they do wi' sae mony? they maun surely mack soup o' them, or feed their negers wi' them, or maybe they grind their noses on them, ay, that'll be it—keck, keck—Did you send an invoice wi' the cart, Saunders?"

"No, sir; the man went away without it."

"Vera weel."

"The cart upset on the way home, sir, and broke several of the stones, I hear."

"Better and better—mak the *twa dizzen three*, Saunders; surely they'll no piece the broken anes thegither to check the tally—the extra dizzen will aboot balance a saydel, Saunders. So, if we canna fit them wi' a saydel, we'll tak a ride aff them bare-backed.—Keck, keck, keck. Wha's neist?"

"Gabriel Juniper, sir."

"Fashious, drucken neerdoweel—wash his saydel down wi' a gallon o' gin and twa o' brandy. He'll no be able to threep wi' me, for he's amaist aye drunk noo—sin' he couldna keep his ain saydel the last time I saw him on horseback, it's but richt he should pay for the lost ane—Keck, keck, keck. Noo, Saunders, ye're a decent lad, sae satisfy yere conscience, and mind ye gie up, in shape o' discoont, at the settlement, the amount o' aw the *fictitious* items, *barring* the saydels and the grunstones, though—mind that—barring the saydels and the grunstones. Noo, soom up and close, ye deevil—soom up and close."

"Ah, custos," said Mr Turner, as the gentleman we were waiting for entered, "glad to see you, glad to see you." Here, having explained how matters stood, his honour retired with us into Jacob Munroe's back store.

"Well, namesake, how are you?" said Twig to the old man who owned the small voice, and who now emerged and became visible, as he crept before us and opened the door.

"Oo, fine, Maister Twig, fine—did ye fin' the accoonts against Roaring River and Hector's Folly estates aw correct, Mr Twig?"

"Yes, all correct, all correct; only you have charged me a saddle too many."

The old withered anatomy looked with a quizzical leer of his eye at him, as much as to say, "have you overheard me, master Twig?—but I am rich and don't care."

"Saunders," cried the old man, "I say, Saunders, bring the ink and *ae* chair for the custos and the gentlemen," as if we all could have sat upon *one*; "and, Abrahaam," to one of the store negroes, "shool away that shell into a corner, and gie them room."

"Shell," said I, in some surprise; "why, is that great mass all tortoise-shell?"

"Atweel is it, young gentleman; at least it is the shell of the hawk's-bill turtle, which is the same thing. That's the last cargo of the Jenny Nettles, frae the Indian coast—she sould be up again aboot this time, if she be na *cacht* by they incarnate deevils o' peerates—but she's weel assured, she's weel assured. Why, Saunders!—whar the deevil are ye, Saunders?"

"Here, sir," said the young man whom I had seen at the desk, as he entered with writing materials in one hand, a chair for his *Honour* in the other, and a Bible (as he naturally concluded that some depositions on oath were to be taken) *in his teeth*. I paid no particular attention to him until he startled me by suddenly dropping the chair on Twig's toes, exclaiming, as he caught the Bible in his hand, "Gude hae a care o' us, Mr Brail, is this you yeersell?"—And lo, who should stand before me, but our old friend Lennox.

"Why, old shipmate, how are you?—I am glad to see you; but I thought you had turned coffee-planter by this time?"

"And so I have, sir. My uncle there sends me up the end of every week to superintend his plantation in the mountains; but I am here for the most part of my time in the store, helping him. But where are you lodging, Mr Brail? I hope you will permit me to call on you; for I see you are likely to be engaged at present."

I told him where I staid, and in few words what the reader knows already regarding my Jamaica expectations and the cause of my visit; farther, that I was about leaving town, but that I would not fail having a chat with him soon, as I should no doubt be often at the bay.

The custos, after taking our depositions, wrote to the admiral at Port-Royal, and to correspondents of his at all the outports, with an outline of the circumstances, in case any of His Majesty's ships should be there; and in the mean time it was determined that poor Hause, after giving his underwriters in Kingston notice of his calamity, should remain at Montego bay until it was seen what should turn up. Here I must do old Jacob Munroe justice. Before the meeting broke up, he in our presence invited him to stay in his house as long as it suited him. Lennox, seeing I was surprised at this, whispered in my ear, that, "Snell as his uncle was in business matters, the auld-farrant body had a warm heart still to a fellow-creature in distress."

"Come along, Mr Brail," said Flamingo—"as we cannot make a start of it this evening now, let us adjourn to our friend Sally's, and see what entertainment she can provide for us; and then hey for Ballywindle at daybreak to-morrow."

However, our troubles were not over for that day; for we had not proceeded fifty yards on our way to our lodgings, when an ugly bloated drunken-looking white man, with great flabby yellow cheeks, that shook as he walked like flannel-bags full of jelly, and in a most profuse perspiration, driven forth, I make no doubt, by a glorious rummer of grog, came up to us, and touched both of us on the shoulder—most people are rather sensitive regarding a touch thereabouts, so we faced suddenly round.

"I warn you bote, gentlemen, to attend one coroner's inquest at Jacob Munroe's wharf."

"The deuce you do?" said I. "Pray, what authority have you for this, my fine fellow?"

"De coroner's warrant, sir," producing it.

"Oh, we are nailed, Mr Brail," quoth Don Felix. "Crownor's Quest law is not to be disputed—no use in kicking. So pray, my good man, do you want any more jurors?"

"Indeed I do, sare. You are de first I have warn as yet."

"Oh, then, do you see that red-faced gentleman coming round the corner there?"

"Yesh, I do," said the man.

"Then bone him *instantly*, or he will bolt." This was no less a personage than Jacob Twig again. The man on this made a detour, and took our friend in flank, but the moment Jacob saw him he seemed to suspect his object, and began to walk down the street very fast, followed by the constable. There was a narrow turning to the right, near to where we stood, that led amongst a nest of *nanny* houses, as they are called, inhabited by brown free people, which was quite closed up by a party washing clothes and a girl milking a cow beyond them. How Jacob was to escape, if his evil genius should prompt him to try this channel, I could not conceive. As yet his sense of propriety had only allowed him to get into a very fast walk. Shamming deafness, however, all the while, to the reiterated shouts of the constable, to "stand in de Kin's name;" but the moment he opened the lane, off he started, with the long skirts of his frogged coat streaming in the wind, and his little glazed hat blazing in the sun like a meteor, or the steel headpiece of one of Bonaparte's cuirassiers.

There was an old woman stooping down over her tub, right fronting him, that is, facing him in an Irish fashion, for she looked t'other way from him, and two younger ones, similarly employed on each side of her. How he was to clear them and their tubs, and the cow beyond, was the puzzle, as the projecting eaves of the two lines of small houses, whose inmates were thus employed, nearly met overhead. However, we were not left long in suspense. Massa Twig now quickened his pace, and clapping his hands on the old lady's shoulders, cleared her and her tub cleverly by a regular leap-frog, *tipping* the heads of the two young women on each flank with his toes, and alighted at the feet of the girl who was milking the cow, which had not time to start before he followed up the fun by vaulting on her back; and then charged down the lane through the tubs and over the prostrate constable, passing us like a whirlwind, the quadruped funking up her heels, and tossing the dry sand with her horns, as if *startled* by a myriad of gad-flies. Both Flamingo and I strained our eyes to follow him, as he flew along like smoke, careering down the lane that ended in the sea.

"Why don't he throw himself off?" said I; "the frantic brute is making straight for the water—it will drown him if he don't."

"Jump off, man—jump off," roared Don Felix. But in vain; for the next moment there was Jacob Twig of the Dream, in St Thomas in the East, flashing and splashing in the sea, cow and all, an Irish illustration of the fable of Europa. Presently both biped and quadruped were in deep

water, when they parted company, and all that we could see was a glazed hat and a red face, and a redder face and a pair of horns, making for the shore again as fast as they could.

"Now, Twig is cheap of that," quoth Flamingo. "He is always aiming at something out of the way, and certainly he has accomplished it this time; but, see, there are people about him, so he is safe."

However, we were boned, and could not escape, so having lost sight of him, we waited until the poor constable, a German, had gathered himself up and joined us.—"And now, Master Constable, lead the way, if you please."

"Who is dat mans, as is mad?" quoth he, as soon as he could speak.

"Mr Purvis of Tantallon, near Lacovia," said Flamingo, as grave as a judge.

"What a thumper," thought I Benjie.

We arrived at the wharf, when the coroner immediately impanelled the jury, and we proceeded to view the body of the poor fellow who had been murdered. It was lying on the wharf, covered with the sail as we had left it; from under which, notwithstanding the short time it had been exposed, thick fetid decomposed matter crept in several horrible streams, and dripped into the clear green sea beneath, through the seams of the planking, where the curdling blue drops were eagerly gobbled up by a shoal of small fish; while a myriad of large blue-bottles rose with a loud hum from the cloth, as it was removed on our approach, but only to settle down the next moment more thickly than before, on the ghastly spectacle.—Bah.—Even in the short period that the body had been in the water, the features were nearly obliterated, and the hands much gnawed; three of the fingers were gone entirely from the left. The windpipe and gullet were both severed with a horrible gash, and there was a deep bruised indentation across the forehead, as if from the heavy blow of a crowbar, or some other blunt weapon. There was no doubt on earth but that the poor fellow had been surprised and met his death by violence, and so suddenly that he could not give the alarm; so a verdict was accordingly returned of "wilful murder, against a person or persons unknown."

By the time we returned to our lodgings we found Massa Twig fresh rigged after his exertions, and as full of frolic and oddity as ever.

"Did you ever see a female bull so well actioned before, Felix?" said he.

"Never," replied his friend,—"took the water like a spaniel too—must be accustomed to the sea—an Alderney cow, I suppose, Twig, eh?"

This evening passed on without any thing further occurring worth recording.

Next morning, Lennox came to see me off, and gave me all his news. I was exceedingly glad to learn that the poor fellow was so happily situated, and promised to call on him the first time I came to the bay.

While lounging about the piazza before breakfast, I noticed our friend Quacco busily employed cleaning a fowling-piece.

"Whose gun is that, Quacco?"

"Massa Flamingo's, sir."

"Let me see it—a nice handy affair—Purdy, I perceive—comes to my shoulder very readily, beautifully."

"Wery clever leetle gone, for sartain, massa; but all de caps dem spoil, sir. See de powder—percossion dem call—quite moist, and useless." By this time he had fitted on one of the copper caps, and snapped the piece, but it was dumb. "I am going to fill de caps wid fresh powder, massa; but really dis percossion powder too lively, massa—only see"—and he gave a few grains of it a small tip with the shank of the bullet mould, when it instantly flashed up.

"Master Quacco," said I, "mind your hand; that is dangerous stuff. Tell Mr Flamingo to be wary also, or he will be shooting people, for it is wrong mixed, I am certain."

"Wery trang, wery trang for sartain, massa—but no fear in my hand—for I is armourer, as well as waiting gentleman—oh, ebery ting is I Quacco."

"Confound your self-conceit."

Here Flamingo and Twig came in.

"Good morning, Mr Brail."

"Good morning."

"All ready for the start, I see," said Twig. "Why, Felix, what is Mr Brail's man doing with your

gun?"

"Cleaning it, and filling these caps anew with fresh percussion powder: the old has mildewed, or got damp, he tells me. Indeed, the last time I shot, it was not one in three that exploded."

"Mind how you play with those caps," said I; but before I could proceed——

"Sally, make haste and get breakfast," bawled Twig. "*Do you hear?*"

"Yes, massa," squeaked Sal from the profundities of the back premises.

"Why, Felix," continued our friend, "there has been another burglary last night: My *spleuchan*, as Rory Macgregor calls it, has been ravished of its treasures."

"How poetical you are this morning!—mounted on your Pegasus, I see," rejoined Felix.

"Better that than the horned animal that led me such a dance yesterday," quoth his friend, laughing. "But, joking apart, your man Twister must have mistaken my tobacco for his own: He has emptied my tobacco-pouch, as sure as fate, for none of my own people *eat* it; and the fellow has always that capacious hole in his ugly phiz filled with it—with my prime patent chewing tobacco, as I am a gentleman."

"Really," said Felix, who detested tobacco in all shapes, as I learned afterwards, with an accent conveying as clearly as if he had said it—"I am deuced glad to hear it." Then, "Confound it, are we never to get breakfast? But when did you miss it, Jacob?"

"Why, when we got out to ride over Mount Diablo, at the time the boys were leading the gig-horses;—don't you recollect that I had to borrow Twister's spurs, as Dare-devil always requires a persuader when a donkey is in the path, and there were half-a-dozen, you know? So, stooping to adjust them, out tumbled my *spleuchan*, it appears. I did not know it at the time, indeed not until we were getting into the gig again, when Twister handed the pouch, that was so well filled when it dropped, as lank and empty as your own carcass, Flam."

"Poo, poo! what does it signify?" said his ally. "A fair exchange, Twig—tobacco for spurs, you know—a simple *quid pro quo*."

"Shame!" said Jacob; "I thought you were above picking up such crumbs, Felix. But here is breakfast—so, come."

We finished it; and as we were getting ready, I noticed Quacco and Massa Twig in earnest confabulation, both apparently like to split with suppressed laughter. At some of the latter's suggestions, our sable ally absolutely doubled himself up, while the tears were running over his cheeks. Immediately afterwards, Quacco began to busy himself, boring some of the small hard seeds of the sand-box tree with his pricker, and filling them with something; and then to poke and pare some pieces of Jacob's patent flake tobacco with a knife, stuffing it into the latter's tobacco-pouch. However, I paid no more attention to them, and we started; my cousin Teemoty driving me in a chartered gig.

We shoved along at a brisk rate, close in the wake of Mr Twig's voiture, and followed by a *plump* of black cavaliers—a beautiful little sumpter-mule, loaded with two portmanteaus, leading the cavalcade; while Mr Flamingo's servant Twister pricked a-head, for the twofold purpose of driving the mule and clearing the road of impediments, such as a few stray jackasses, or a group of negroes going to market, neither of whom ever get out of one's way.

After proceeding about ten miles, the road wound into a cocoa-nut grove close to the beach; indeed, the beach *became* the road for a good mile, with the white surf rolling in and frothing over the beautiful hard sand, quickly obliterating all traces of the wheels. Macadam was at a discount here. One fine peculiarity of the West India seas is, independent of their crystal clearness, they are always brimfull—no steamy wastes of slush and slime, no muddy tideways. And overhead the sea-breeze was whistling through the tall trees, making their long feather-like leaves rustle and *rattle* like a thousand watchmen's alarms sprung in the midst of a torrent of rain, or a fall of *peas*.

"Hillo! what is that?" as a cocoa-nut fell bang into the bottom of my gig, and bounded out again like a foot-ball.

"Oh, only a cocoa-nut," said Twig, looking over his shoulder with the usual knowing twist of his mouth, but without pulling up.

"Only a cocoa-nut! But it would have fractured a man's skull, I presume, if it had struck him."

"A white man's certainly," quoth Flamingo, with all the coolness in life, as if it had fallen a hundred miles from me, in place of barely shaving the point of my nose: "But it *has not* hit you—a miss is as good as a mile, you know; so suppose we go and bathe until they get dinner ready yonder. Let us send the boys on to the tavern to order dinner. We are within two miles of it, Jacob—eh?"

"No, no," quoth Twig; "come along a quarter of a mile further, and I will show you a nook



within the reef where we shall be safe from John Shark, or rather the sharks will be safe from Flamingo's bones there. He would be like a sackful of wooden ladles tossed to them. The fish would find him as digestible as a bag of nutcrackers, seasoned with cocoa-nut shells—ah!—but come along, come along. Oh such a bath, Mr Brail, as I will show you!"

We left the cocoa-nut grove, and when we arrived at the spot indicated we got out to reconnoitre. There was a long reef, about musket-shot from the beach at the widest, on the outside of which the swell broke in thunder, the strong breeze blowing the spray and flakes of frothy brine back in our faces, even where we stood.

The reef, like a bow, hemmed in a most beautiful semicircular pool of green sea water, clear as crystal; its surface darkened and crisped by tiny blue sparkling wavelets, which formed a glorious and pellucid covering to the forest, if I may so speak, of coral branches and seaferns that covered the bottom, and which, even where deepest, were seen distinctly in every fibre. When you held your face close to the water, and looked steadily into its pure depths, you saw the bottom at three fathoms perfectly alive, and sparkling with shoals of fishes of the most glowing colours, gamboling in the sun, birdlike amongst the boughs, as if conscious of their safety from their ravenous comrades outside; while nothing could be more beautiful than the smooth sparkling silver sand as the water shoaled towards the beach. The last was composed of a belt of small transparent pebbles, about ten yards wide, overhung by a rotten bank of turf of the greenest and most fragrant description, that had been only sufficiently undermined by the lap lapping of the water at tempestuous spring-tides (at no time rising here above three feet), to form a continuous although rugged bench the whole way along the shore.

"Now, if one were riding incautiously here, he might break his horse's leg without much trouble," quoth Don Felix.

"Why, Jacob, speaking of horsemanship, how did you like your style of immersion yesterday?—a novel sort of bathing-machine, to be sure."

"You be hanged, Felix," quoth his ally, with a most quizzical grin, as he continued his peeling.

"Do you know I've a great mind to try an equestrian dip myself," persisted his friend. "Here, Twister—take off Monkey's saddle, and bring him here."

"Oh, I see what you would be at," said Jacob. "Romulus, bring me Dare-devil—so"—and thereupon, to my great surprise and amazement, it pleased my friends to undress under a neighbouring clump of trees, and to send the equipages and servants on to the tavern, about half a mile distant. They then mounted two led horses, bare-backed, with watering bits, and, naked as the day they were born, with the exception of a red handkerchief tied round Mr Twig's head and down his redder cheeks, they dashed right into the sea.

As cavalry was an arm I had never seen used with much effect at sea, I swam out to the reef, and there *plowtering* about in the dead water, under the lee of it, enjoyed the most glorious shower-bath from the descending spray, that flew up and curled far overhead, like a snow storm, mingled with ten thousand miniature rainbows. I had cooled myself sufficiently, and was leisurely swimming for the shore.

"Now this is what I call bathing," quoth Twig, as he kept meandering about on the snorting Dare-devil, who seemed to enjoy the dip as much as his master—"I would back this horse against Bucephalus at swimming."

Here Flamingo's steed threw him, by rearing and pawing the water with his fore legs and sinking his croup, so that his master, after an unavailing attempt to mount him again, had to strike out for the beach, the animal following, and splashing him, as if he wanted to get on *his* back by way of a change.

"And that's what I call swimming," roared Don Felix. But he scarcely had uttered the words when the horse made at him in earnest, and I thought he had struck him with the near fore-foot.

"And that's what I call drowning," thought I, "or something deuced like it."

However, he was really a good swimmer, and got to shore safe.

Master Twister had been all this time enacting groom of the stole to the two equestrian bathers, and so soon as he had arrayed them, we proceeded to the tavern, dined, and after enjoying a cool bottle of wine, continued our journey to Ballywindle, which we hoped to reach shortly after nightfall.

The sun was now fast declining; I had shot ahead of my two cronies and their outriders, I cannot now recollect why, and we were just entering a grove of magnificent trees, with their hoary trunks gilded by his setting effulgence, when Twister's head (he had changed places with Cousin Teemoty, and was driving me) suddenly, to my great alarm, gave a sharp crack, as if it had split open, and a tiny jet of smoke puffed out of his mouth—I was all wonder and amazement, but before I could gather my wits about me, he jumped from the voiture into the dirty ditch by the side of the road, and popped his head, ears and all, below the stagnant green scum, while his limbs, and all that was seen of him above water, quivered in the utmost extremity of fear.

As soon as Twig and Flamingo came up, I saw that neither they nor Serjeant Quacco could contain themselves for laughter. The latter was scarcely able to sit his mule—at length he jumped, or rather tumbled, oft, and pulled Twister out by the legs; who, the instant he could stand, and long before he could see for the mud that filled his eyes, started up the road like a demoniac, shouting, "Obeah, Obeah!" which so frightened the sumpter-mule, that he was by this time alongside of, that she turned and came down, rattling past us like a whirlwind, until she jammed between the stems of two of the cocoa-nut trees with a most furious shock, when lo! the starboard portmanteau she carried burst and blew up like a shell, and shirts, trowsers, nightcaps, and handkerchiefs, of all colours, shapes, and sizes, were shot hither and thither, upwards and downwards, this side and that, until the neighbouring trees and bushes were hung with all manner of garments and streamers, like a pawnbroker's shop.

Twig shouted, "There—that's your share of the joke, Felix—there goes your patent portmanteau with the Bramah lock—see if the very brimstones in which you gloried be not streaming like a commodore's broad pennant from the top of the orange tree. The green silk night-cap on the prickly pear—and the shirts and the vests, and the real bandanas—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ay, ay," shouted Flamingo, who had dismounted and was endeavouring to catch the mule as she careered through the wood towards the sea, kicking and flinging in a vain attempt to disentangle herself from the other portmanteau, which had now turned under her belly, and the sumpter-saddle that hung at her side; "and there goes your kit, Jacob, an offering to Neptune bodily, mule and all"—as the poor beast dashed into the surf, after having threaded through the stems of the trees without farther damage.

The cause of all this was no longer a mystery, for I had made my guess already; but presently I was enlightened, if need had been, by friend Quacco. He had, it appeared, with Mr Twig's sanction, charged certain of the pieces of patent tobacco in the *spleuchan* with several small quantities of detonating powder, enclosed in the glass-brittle seeds of the sand-box, as a trap for Master Twister, who was suspected of making free with it—the issue, so far as he was concerned, has been seen; but in the hurry of coming away and packing up, instead of placing the bottle containing the powder in Mr Flamingo's gun-case, where it should have been, he hurriedly dropped it into his portmanteau, as Twister was packing it; so that when the sumpter mule jammed between the trunks of the trees after it took fright it exploded and blew up.

"I say, Massa Twister, you never make free with my patent tobacco?"

"Oh, oh, oh!" roared poor Twister, holding his jaws with both hands—"Oh, massa, my tongue blow out—my palate blow down—de roof of my mouse blow up—and all my teets blow clean gan—Oh no, massa, never, never will touch him no more, massa—never, never no more."

"I'll answer for it you don't, my boy," quoth Jacob.

After picking up the fugitive and clambered garments as well as we could, we travelled onwards for about two miles, when we struck inland, and as the night fell entered a dark tree-shaded ravine, with a brawling brook rushing through the bottom, up which we threaded our way by a narrow road scarped out of the red earth of the hill side.

"Now, Mr Brail, give your horse the rein—let him pick his own steps, if you please; for the road is cruelly cut up by the weather and waggons hereabouts, and none of the widest either, as you may *feel*, for you can't see it."

I took his advice, and soon found the advantage of it, as we came to several groups of negroes sitting invariably on the inner side of the road, which I would certainly have been tempted to avoid at my own peril; but my horse was not so scrupulous, for he always poked his nose between them and the bank, and snorted and nuzzled until they rose and shuffled out of our way, either by creeping to the side next the ravine, or up on the bank; presently the road widened, and we got along more comfortably.

I could not but admire the thousands and tens of thousands of fire-flies that spangled the gulf below us, in a tiny galaxy; they did not twinkle promiscuously, but seemed to emit their small green lights by signal, beginning at the head of the ravine, and glancing all the way down in a wavy continuous lambent flash, every individual fly, as it were, taking the time from his neighbour ahead. Then for a moment all would be dark again, until the stream of sparkles flowed down once more from the head of the valley, and again disappeared astern of us; while the usual West India concert of lizards, beetles, crickets, and tree toads, filled the dull ear of night with their sleepy monotony.

The night soon began to be heavily overcast, and as we entered below some high wood the darkness would have become palpable, had it not been for the fire-flies,—even darkness which might have been felt.

"I must heave to until I get my bat's eyes shipped, Mr Twig," said I—"I can't see an inch before my nose."

"Then send Flamingo ahead, my dear fellow, for if he sees the *length* of *his* we shall do—his proboscis is long enough to give us warning of any impediment."

"What a clear glowworm-coloured light some of these insects do give," quoth I: "See that one creeping up the handle of my whip—it comes along with its two tiny burners, like the lights in a distant carriage rolling towards you."

"Come, you must get on, though, since we have not room to pass—no time to study natural philosophy," said Twig; and I once more fanned my horse into a gentle trot, with very much the sensation of one running through an unknown sound in the night, without either chart or pilot.

After a little, I saw a cluster of *red* fire-flies, as I thought, before us. "Oh, come along, I see now famously."

"Oh massa, massa!"—Crack!—I had got entangled with a string of mules going to fetch a last turn of canes from the field; the red sparks that I had seen ahead having proceeded from the pipes in the mouths of the drivers. However there was no great damage done.

The rain now began to descend in torrents, with a roar like a cataract.—"What uncommonly pleasant weather," thought I. "Why, Mr Twig, you see I am a bad pilot—so, do you think you have room to pass me now? for, to say the truth, I don't think I can see a yard of the road, and you know I am an utter stranger here."

He could not pass, however, and at length I had to set Master Teemoty to lead the horse. Presently I heard a splash.

"Hilloa, cousin Teemoty! where have you got to?"

"De Fairywell no tell lie, massa—De Devil's Golly,<sup>[1]</sup> dat has been dry like one bone for tree mont, hab *come down*, massa—dat all."

[1] Gully—ravine or river course.

"Come *down*," said I; "I wish it had stayed *up*!"

"Ah!" said Twig,—and we are to sleep here in the cold and damp, I suppose—the fellow's a fool, and must have got off the path into some puddle. We are a mile from the gully—let me see"—and before you could have turned, Massa Jacob was splashing up to the knees alongside of Massa Teemoty. However, he was right—it was only a streamlet—and we got across without much difficulty; but in ten minutes the roar of a large torrent, heard hoarse and loud above the sound of the rain, gave convincing proof that we were at length approaching the gully—moreover, that it was down, and that with a vengeance. We now found ourselves amongst a group of negroes, who had also been stopped by the swollen stream. There was a loud thundering noise above us on the left hand, which (we had now all alighted) absolutely shook the solid earth under our feet, as if in that direction the waters had been pitched from the mountain side headlong over a precipice. From the same quarter, although quite calm otherwise, a strong cold wind gushed in eddies and sudden gusts, as if from a nook or valley in the hill-side, charged with a thick, wetting spray, that we could feel curling and boiling about us, sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker, like the undulations of a London fog. Close to our feet we could hear the river tearing past us, with a great rushing and gurgling, occasionally intermingled with the rasping and crashing of trees and floating spars, as they were dashed along on the gushes and swirls of the stream; while every now and then the *warm* water (for so it felt in contrast with the cold damp night-breeze) surged a foot or two beyond its usual level, so as to cover us to the ankle, and make us start back; and immediately ebb again. It was some time, amidst this "groan of rock and roar of stream" before we could make out any thing that the negroes about us said.

"Hillo," cried Twig—to be heard by each other we had to shout as loud as we could—"hillo, friend Felix, here's a coil—what shall we do—sleep here, eh?"

"We shall sleep soft, then," roared his friend in reply.

"As how, my lord?"

"Why, you may have mud of all consistencies, and of any depth."

"True, *water* beds are all the fashion now, and possibly *mud* ones might be an improvement; but had we not better try back," I continued, as I really began to think it no joke remaining where we were all night.

"A good idea," said Twig.

"About ship, then," quoth Flamingo.

"Wery good plan, wery good plan," shouted Cousin Teemoty; "but"—

"But, but, but—oh, confound your *buts*," roared Twig; "*but what*, sir?"

"Oh," said Tim, whose dignity was a little hurt, "noting, noting—no reason why massa should not return—only Carrion-crow gully dat we lef behind, will, by dis time, be twenty time more *down* as dis, *dat all*."

"And so it will—the boy is right," rejoined Jacob; "What is to be done? Stop—I see, I see."

"The deuce you do! then you have good eyes," quoth Felix.

"I say, Flamingo, pick me up a stone that I can sling, and hold your tongue; do, that's a good fellow."

"Sling? where is the Goliah you mean to attack?"

"Never you mind, Flam, but pick me up a stone that I can tie a string to, will ye?—There, you absurd creature, you have given me one as round and smooth as a cricket ball; how can I fasten a string round *it*?—give me a longish one, man—one shaped like a kidney-potato or your own nose, you blundering good-for-nothing—ah, that will do. Now, some string, boys—string."

Every negro carries a string of one kind or another with him in the crown of his hat, and three or four black paws were in an instant groping for Jacob Twig's hand in the dark with pieces of twine.

"Hillo, what is that?" as an auxiliary-current, more than ankle deep, began to flow down the road with a loud ripple from behind us, thus threatening to cut off our retreat—"Mind we are not in a scrape here!" cried I.

"If we be, we can't better it," shouted Twig—"Here, gentlemen, give me your cards, will ye?"

"Cards—cards!" ejaculated Flamingo and I in a breath.

"Yes—your calling-cards; do grope for them—make haste."

He got the cards, and all was silent except the turmoil of the elements for a few seconds. At length, in a temporary lull of the rain, I thought I heard the shout of a human voice from the opposite bank, blending with the roar of the stream.

"Ay, ay," cried Jacob—"there, don't you hear people on the other side?—so here goes."

"Hillo, who the deuce has knocked off my hat?" cried Flamingo.

"Why don't you stand on one side then, or get yourself shortened by the knees? such a steeple is always in the way," bawled Twig. "Leave me scope to make my cast now, will ye—don't you *see* I want to throw the stone with the cards across amongst the people on the opposite bank—There," and he made another cast—"ah, I have caught a fish this time—more string, Teemoty—more string—or they will drag it out of my hand. Now some one has got a precious pelt on the skull with the kidney potato, Felix, as I am a gentleman; but he understands us, whoever he may be that has got hold of it—feel here—how he jerks the string without hauling on it—wait—wait!"

Presently the line was let go at the opposite side, and our friend hauled it in—it had been cut short off, and instead of the stone and cards, a negro clasp knife was now attached to it.

"There—didn't I tell you—there's a barbarian telegraph for you—there's a new invented code of signals—now you shall see how my scheme will work," cried Jacob. However, near a quarter of an hour elapsed without any thing particular occurring, during which time, we distinctly heard shouting on the other side, as if to attract our attention, but we could not make out what was said.

At length we observed a red spark, glancing and disappearing like a will-o'-the-wisp as it zigzagged amongst the dark bushes, down the hill side above. Presently we lost sight of it and all was dark again. However, just as I began to lose all hope of the success of Massa Twig's device, the light again appeared coming steadily down the road opposite us. It approached the impassable ford, and we now saw that it was a lantern carried by a negro, who was lighting the steps of a short squat figure of a man, dressed in a fustian coatee and nankeen trowsers, with an umbrella over his head. "I've caught my fish—I've caught my fish—Rory Macgregor himself, or I am a baboon," shouted Twig, as the party he spoke of came down to the water's edge, and, holding up the lantern above his head, peered across the gully with outstretched neck, apparently in a vain attempt to make us out.

By the light we saw a whole crowd of poor, drenched, stormstaid devils, in their blue pennistone greatcoats, shivering on the opposite bank. The white man appeared to be giving them instructions, as two of them immediately disappeared up the hill-side, whence he had descended; while several of the others entered a watchman's hut that we could observe close to the waterside, and fetched some wood and dry branches from it, with which they began to kindle a fire under a projecting cliff, which soon burned up brightly, and showed us whereabouts we were.

The scene was striking enough. A quantity of dry splinters of some kind of resinous wood being heaped on the fire, it now blazed up brilliantly in massive tongues of flame, that glanced as

they twined up the fissures, scorching the lichens into sudden blackness, and licking, like fiery serpents, the tortuous fretwork of naked roots depending from the trees that grew on the verge of the bank above, which spread like a net over the face of the bald grey rock; and lighting up the fringe of dry fibres depending from the narrow eave of red earth that projected over the brink of the precipice, under which the bank appeared white and dusty, but lower down, where wet by the beating of the rain, it was red, and glittering with pebbles, as if it had been the wall of a salt mine in Cheshire.

The bright glare, and luminous smoke of the fire, in which a number of birds, frightened from their perches, glanced about like sparks, blasted the figures of such of the negroes as stood beyond it into the appearance of demons—little Rory Macgregor looking, to use his own phrase, like *the deil himsell*, while those of them who intervened between us and the fire seemed magnified into giants—their dark bodies edged with red flame; while every tree, and stock, and stone appeared as if half bronze and half red-hot iron—a shaddock growing close by, looked as if hung with clusters of red-hot cannon balls.

Our own party was very noticeable. I was leaning on the neck of my gig-horse, with his eyes glancing, and the brazen ornaments of his harness flashing like burnished gold. Abreast of me were Massas Twig, Flamingo, and Cosin Teemoty, wet as *muck*, and quite as steamy, to use a genteel phrase, with our cold drenched physiognomies thrust into the light, and the sparkling rain-drops hanging at our noses; Jacob's glazed hat glancing as if his caput had been covered with a glass porringer; while the group of mounted negroes and led horses in the background, with the animals pawing and splashing in the red stream that ran rippling and twinkling down the road, and the steam of our rapid travelling rising up like smoke above them, gave one a very lively idea of a cavalry picquet on the *qui vive*.

On our larboard hand the mountain ascended precipitously, in all the glory of magnificent trees, sparkling with diamond water-drops, stupendous rocks, and all that sort of thing; with the swollen waters thundering and chafing, and foaming down a dark deep cleft over a ledge of stone about thirty feet high, in a solid mass, which in the descent took a spiral turn, as if it had been ejected from a tortuous channel above, and then sending up a thick mist, that rose boiling amongst the dark trees. From the foot of this fall the torrent roared along its overflowing channel in whirling eddies that sparkled in the firelight, towards where we stood; the red stream appearing, by some deception of the sight, to be convex, or higher in the middle than the sides, and semifluid, as if composed of earth and water; while trees, and branches, and rolling stones were launched and trundled along as if borne on a lava stream.

As we looked, the bodies of two bullocks and a mule came past, rolling over and over, legs, tails, and heads, in much admired confusion.

On the starboard hand the ravine sunk down as dark as Erebus; and now the weather clearing, disclosed in that direction, through storm-rents of the heavy clouds, shreds of translucent blue sky, sparkling with bright stars; and lo! the fair moon once more!—her cold, pale-green light struggling with the hot red glare of the fire, as she reposed on the fleecy edge of that dark—

"Confound it, what's that—what's that, Mr Twig?"

"An owl, Master Brail—an owl which the light has dazzled, and that has flown against your head by mistake—but catch, man—catch"—as he sprang into the water up to the knees to secure my hat, that the bird of Minerva had knocked off—and be hanged to it. "An owl may be a wise bird, but it is a deuced blind one to bounce against your head as unceremoniously as if it had been a pumpkin or a calabash."

Little Rory Macgregor had all this time remained at the edge of the stream, squatted on his hams like a large bull-frog, and apparently, if we could judge from his action, shouting at the top of his voice; but it was all dumb show to us, or very nearly so, as we could not make out one word that he said.

Flamingo confronted him, assuming the same attitude. "See how he has doubled up his long legs—there, now—said the grasshopper to the frog," quoth Twig to me. Here friend Felix made most energetic signs, a-la Grimaldi, that he wanted some food and drink.

Rory nodded promptly, as much as to say, "I understand you;" indeed it appeared that he had taken the hint before, for the two men that we had seen ascend the mountain-road, now returned; one carrying a joint of roast meat and a roast fowl, and the other with a bottle in each hand.

The puzzle now was, "how were the good things to be had across?" but my friends seemed up to every emergency. In a moment Flamingo had ascended a scathed stump that projected a good way over the gully, with Twig's string and stone in his hand; the latter enabling him to pitch the line at Rory's feet, who immediately made the joint of meat fast, which Don Felix swung across, and untying it, chucked it down to us who stood below; the fowl, and the rum, and the bottle of lemonade, or beverage, as it is called in Jamaica, were secured in like manner.

"So," said our ally, "we shan't starve for want of food, anyhow, whatever we may do of cold." But we were nearer being released than we thought; for suddenly, as if from the giving way of

some obstruction below that had dammed up the water in the gully, it ebbed nearly two feet, of which we promptly availed ourselves to pass over to the other side of the Devil's Gully. But, notwithstanding, this was a work of no small difficulty, and even considerable danger. Being safely landed, and having thanked Mr Macgregor, who owned a very fine coffee property in the neighbourhood, for his kindness, we mounted our vehicles once more, and drove rapidly out of the defile, now lit by the moon, and in a quarter of an hour found ourselves amongst the *Works*; that is, in the very centre of the mill-yard of Ballywindle.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MY UNCLE.

Here, late as it was, all was bustle and activity; the boiling-house was brilliantly lighted up, the clouds of white luminous vapour steaming through the apertures in the roof; while the negroes feeding the fires, sheltered under the stokehole arches from the weather, and almost smothered amongst heaps of dry cane-stalks, or trash, as it is called, from which the juice had been crushed, looked in their glancing nakedness like fiends, as their dark bodies flitted between us and the glowing mouths of the furnaces. A little farther on we came to the two cone-roofed mill-houses, one of which was put in motion by a spell of oxen, the other being worked by mules, while the shouting of the drivers, the cries of the boilermen to the firemakers to make stronger fires, the crashing of the canes as they were crushed in the mills, the groaning and squealing of the machinery, the spanking of whips, the lumbering and rattling of wains and waggons, the hot dry axles screaming for grease, and the loud laugh and song rising occasionally shrill above the Babel sounds, absolutely confounded me.

We stopped at the boiling-house door, and asked the book-keeper on duty, a tall cadaverous-looking young man, dressed in a fustian jacket and white trowsers, who appeared more than half asleep, if the overseer was at home. He said he was, and, as we intended to leave our horses at his house, we turned their heads towards it, guided by one of the negroes from the mill.

The peep I had of the boiling-house was very enlivening;—for, independently of the regular watch of boiler-negroes, who were ranged beside the large poppling and roaring coppers, each having a bright copper laddie, with a long shank like a boathook, in his hands, it was at this time filled with numbers of the estate's people, some getting hot liquor, others sitting against the wall, eating their suppers by the lamp light, and not a few quizzing and loitering about in the mist of hot vapour, as if the place had been a sort of lounge, instead of a busy sugar manufactory—a kind of sable *soirée*.

By the time we arrived in front of the overseer's house, we found the door surrounded by a group of four patriarchal-looking negroes and an old respectable-looking negro woman. The men were clad in Osnaburg frocks, like those worn by waggoners in England, with blue frieze jackets over them, and white trowsers. The old dame was rigged in a man's jacket also, over as many garments apparently as worn by the grave-digger in Hamlet. I had never seen such a round ball of a body. They were all hat-in-hand, with Madras handkerchiefs bound round their heads, and leaning on tall staffs made from peeled young hardwood trees, the roots forming very fantastical tops. Their whips were twisted round these symbols of office, like the snakes round the caduceus of their tutelary deity, Mercury. These were the drivers of the various gangs of negroes on the estate, who were waiting to receive busha's<sup>[1]</sup> orders for the morrow.

[1] The West India name for overseer, or manager of an estate; a corruption, no doubt, of bashaw.

On seeing us, the overseer hastily dismissed his levee, and ordered his people to take charge of our horses.

"Mr Frenche is at home, I hope?" said Mr Twig.

"Oh, yes, sir—all alone up at the *great* house there," pointing to a *little* shed of a place, perched on an insulated rocky eminence, to the left of the abode he himself occupied, which overlooked the works and whole neighbourhood.

This hill, rising as abruptly from the dead level of the estate as if it had been a rock recently dropped on it,—rather a huge areolite, by the way,—was seen in strong relief against the sky, now clear of clouds, and illuminated by the moon.

At the easternmost end of the solitary great house—in shape like a Chinese pavilion, with a projecting roof, on a punch bowl, that adhered to the sharp outline of the hill like a limpet to a rock—a tall solitary palm shot up and tossed its wide-spreading, fan-like leaves in the night wind

high into the pure heaven. The fabric was entirely dark—not a soul moving about it—nothing living in the neighbourhood apparently, if we except a goat or two moving slowly along the ridge of the hill. At the end of the house next the palm-tree there was a low but steep wooden stair, with a landing-place at top, surrounded by a simple wooden railing, so that it looked like a scaffold.

"There is Mr Frenche, sir," continued busha, pointing to the figure of a man lounging in a low chair on the landing place, with his feet resting on the rail before him, and far higher than his head, which leant against the wall of the house, as if he had been a carronade planted against the opposite hill. Under the guidance of one of the overseer's waiting boys, we commenced the zig-zag ascent towards my uncle's dwelling, and as we approached, the feeling of desolateness that pressed on my heart increased, from the extreme stillness of the place even when near to it. Light, or other indication of an inhabited mansion, there was none—even the goats had vanished.

"Cold comfort in prospect for me," thought I; "but *allons*, let us see,"—and we moved on until we came to a small outhouse beside a gate, which seemed to open into the enclosure, in the centre of which stood the solitary building.

"How terribly still every thing is about Mr Frenche's domicile," said I, as we paused until Flamingo undid the fastening of the gate. "And, pray, what hovel is this that we have come to?"

"This?—Oh, it is the kitchen," quoth Twig. "Stop, I will knock up the people."

"Don't do any such thing," said Flamingo, who, I saw, was after some vagary. "Here, Mr Brail, get up the stair,"—we had now reached the small platform on which the house stood,— "and creep under his legs, will ye—there, get into the house and conceal yourself, and Twig and I will rouse him, and have some fun before you make your appearance."

I gave in to the frolic of the moment, and slipped silently up the few steps of the steep stair, as I was desired. There, on the landing-place, reposed, *al fresco*, Uncle Latham, sure enough—his chair swung back, his head resting on the door-post, and his legs cocked up, as already described, on the outer railing of the stair. He was sound asleep, and snoring most harmoniously; but just as I stole up, and was in the very act of creeping beneath the yoke to get past him, I touched his limbs slightly; but the start made him lose his balance and fall back into the house, and there I was, like a shrimp in the claws of a lobster, firmly locked in the embrace of my excellent relative—for although his arms were not round my neck, *his legs were*.

"Who is that, and what is that, and what have I got hold of now?" roared Uncle Latham, in purest Tipperary.

"It is me, sir," I shouted as loud as I could bellow; for as we rolled over and over on the head of the stair, I discovered he had spurs on; but the devil a bit would he relax in his hold of my neck with his legs,— "me, your dutiful nephew, Benjamin Brail—but, for goodness sake, mind you have spurs on, uncle."

"My nephew—my nephew, Benjamin Brail, did you say?—Oh, murder, fire, and botheration of all sorts—spurs, sir?—spurs?—Hookey, but I'll find stronger fare than spurs for you—You are a robber, sir—a robber—Murphy, you villain—Murphy—Dennis—Potatoblossom—bring me a handsaw, till I cut his throat—or a gimblet—or any other deleterious eatable—Oh, you thieves of the world, why don't you come and help your master?—Lights, boys—lights—hubaboo!"

By this I had contrived to wriggle out of my Irish pillory, and to withdraw my corpus into the house, where I crept behind a leaf of the door—any thing to be out of the row. I could now hear my uncle crawling about the dark room like the aforesaid lobster, disconsolate for the loss of its prey, arguing with himself aloud whether he were awake, or whether it was not all a *drame*, as he called it;—and then shouting for his servants at one moment, and stumbling against the table, or falling rattle over a lot of chairs, that all seemed to have placed themselves most provokingly in his way, the next. During his soliloquy, I heard Twig and Flamingo's suppressed laughter at the other end of the room. At length Mr Frenche thundered in his gropings against the sideboard, when such a clash and clang of glasses arose, as if he had been literally the bull in the china shop.

"Ah," he said, "it must be all a *drame*, and looking at people drinking, has made me dry—so let me wet my whistle a bit—here's the beverage, so—now—ah, this is the rum bottle—I know it by the smell—and what the devil else should I know it by in the dark before tasting, I should like to know?—he! he!—if I could but lay my paw on a tumbler now, or a glass of any kind—not one to be found, I declare—Murphy, you villain, why don't you come when I call you, sirrah?"—There was now a concerto of coughing, and sneezing, and *oich, oiching*, and yawning, as if from beneath.—"Will these lazy rascals never make their appearance?" continued Mr Frenche, impatiently—"Well, I cannot find even a teacup to make some punch in—hard enough this in a man's own house, any how—but I have the materials—and—and—now, for the fun of the thing—I will mix it Irish fashion—deuce take me if I don't," and thereupon I heard him *gurgle, gurgle* something out of one bottle—and then a long *gurgle, gurgle, gurgle*, out of another, apparently, for the gurgling was on different keys,—both followed by a long expiration. He then gave several jumps on the floor.

He had, as I guessed, first swallowed the raw caulk from the rum decanter, and then sent down the lemonade to take care of it. "Now, that rum is very strong—stop, let me qualify it a bit with some more beverage—how thirsty I am, to be sure—murder!—confound that wide-necked decanter." Here I could hear the liquid splash all over him. "There—so much for having a beautiful small mouth—why, Rory Macgregor, with that hole in his face from ear to ear, would have drunk you the whole bottle without spilling a drop, and here am I, suffocated and drowned entirely, and as wet as if I had been dragged through the Bog of Allan—Murphy, you scoundrel?"

Anon, two negro servants, stretching and yawning, each with a candle in his hand, made their appearance, one in his shirt, with his livery coat hanging over his head, the cape projecting forward, and a sleeve hanging down on each side; the other had his coat on certainly, but stern foremost, and not another rag of any kind or description whatever, saving and excepting his Kilmarnock nightcap.

By the illumination which those ebony candlesticks furnished, I now could see about me. The room we were in was about twenty feet square, panelled, ceiled, and floored—it looked like a large box—with unpainted, but highly-polished hard-wood, of the colour of very old mahogany—handsomer than any oak panelling I had ever seen. There was a folding door that communicated with the front piazza, out of which we had scrambled—another, that opened into a kind of back dining-hall, or large porch, and two on each hand, which opened into bedrooms. A sideboard was placed by the wall to the right, between the two bedroom doors, at which stood a tall and very handsome elderly gentleman, who, if I had not instantly known to be my uncle, from his likeness to my poor mother, I might, after the adventures of the day, and the oddities of *messieurs* my friends—the Twig of the Dream, and the Flamingo of PeawEEP, Snipe, and Flamingo—have suspected some quiz or practical joke in the matter.

The gentleman, evidently not broad awake yet, was dressed in light-coloured kerseymere small-clothes, top-boots, white vest, and blue coat—he was very bald, with the exception of two tufts of jet-black hair behind his ears, blending into very bushy whiskers. His forehead was round and beetling—you would have said he was somewhat bullet-headed; had the obduracy of the feature not been redeemed by his eyebrows, which were thick, well arched, and, like his hair and whiskers, jet-black—and also by his genuine Irish sparklers, dark, flashing, and frolicsome.

His complexion was of the clearest I had seen in Jamaica—I could never have guessed that he had been above a few weeks from the "First gem of the Sea,"—and his features generally large and well formed. There was a playful opening of the lips every now and then, disclosing nice ivory teeth, and evincing, like his eyes, the native humour of his country.

"So, Master Murphy, you are there at last," said he.

"Yes, massa—yes, massa."

"Pray, can you tell me, Murphy, if any one has arrived here—any stranger come into the house while I slept;" then *aside*, as the players say, "or has it really and truly been all a *drame*?"

"No see noting, massa—nor nobody"—[*yawn.*]

"You didn't, oh—there, do you see any thing now?" said my uncle—as he took the candle out of the black paw, and put the lighted end, with all the composure in life, into Murphy's open mouth, where it shone through his cheeks like a rushlight in a winter turnip, until it burned the poor fellow, and he started back, overturning his sleepy coadjutor, Dennis, headlong on the floor. On which signal, Twig and Flamingo, who were all this time coiled up like two baboons below the sideboard, choking with laughter, caught Uncle Frenche by the legs, a limb a piece, who thereupon set up a regular howl—"ach, murder! murder! it is abducted, and ravished, and married against my will I shall be—murder!"—as *he* in turn capsized over the prostrate negroes, and all was confusion and vociferation once more—until my two travelling friends, who had cleverly slipped out of the *mêlée*, while my uncle was clapperclawing with his serving-men, returned from the pantry, whither they had betaken themselves; and now stood on the original field of battle, the landing-place of the stair, each with a lighted candle in his hand, and making believe to be in great amazement at the scene before them.

"Heyday," quoth Twig, "what's the matter, Master Frenche?—what uproar is this in the house?—we heard it at the Devil's Gully, two miles off, believe me."

"Uproar?" shouted Uncle Lathom, still sitting on the floor, scratching his poll—"uproar, were you pleased to say?—pray, who the mischief are you, gentlemen, who conceive yourselves privileged to speak of any little noise I choose to make in my own house?—tell me in an instant, or by the powers I will shoot you for a brace of robbers"—clapping the lemonade decanter, which had all this time escaped by a miracle, to his shoulder, blunderbuss fashion.

Here gradually slewing himself round on his tail, and rubbing his eyes, he at length confronted me, as I sat coiled up behind the leaf of the door—"Why, *here* is a second edition of my *drame*." The very absurd expression of face with which he said this, and regarded me, fairly upset my gravity, already heavily taxed, and losing all control, I laughed outright.

"Another of them! and who *may you be*, young gentleman?—*you* seem to find yourself at home, at any rate, I think."



"Come, come," said Flamingo—"enough of this nonsense—don't you know your friends Twig and Flamingo, Mr Frenche?"

"Twig and Flamingo, did you say?—Twig and Flamingo—Twig—oh dear, oh dear—it is no drame after all—my dear fellows, how are you?—why, what a reception I have given you—you must have thought me mad?" By this time he had got on his legs again, and was welcoming my fellow-travellers with great cordiality, which gave me time to resume the perpendicular also. "I am so glad to see you—why, Jacob, I did not look for you until Tuesday next, but you are the welcomer, my good boy—most heartily welcome—how wet you must have got, though—boys, get supper—Felix, I am so rejoiced to see you—supper, you villains—why, we shall have a night on't, my lads."

"Give me leave to introduce this young gentleman to you first," said Twig, very gravely, leading me forward into the light, "your nephew, Mr Benjamin Brail."

"My nephew!" quoth Mr Frenche—"why, there's my drame again—my nephew!—when did he arrive?"—here he held a candle close to my face, as if my nose had been a candle-wick, and he meant to light it; then fumbling in his bosom with the other hand, he drew forth a miniature of my mother—"my nephew!—my poor sister's boy, Benjie!—as like her as possible, I declare—how are you, Benjamin?—oh, Benjie, I am rejoiced to see you—my heart is full, full—how are"—And as the tear glistened in his eye, he made as if he would have taken me in his arms, when a sudden light seemed to flash on him, and he turned sharply round to Twig—"If you are playing me a trick here, Jacob; if you are trifling with the old man's feelings, and allowing his dearest wish on earth to lead his imagination to deceive him in this matter"—

Twig held out his hand; I could notice that the kind-hearted fellow's own eye was moist. "You cannot seriously believe me capable of such heartless conduct, Mr Frenche, with all my absurdities; believe me, I would sooner cut off this right hand than play with the kindly feelings or affections of any one, far less with those of my long-tried and highly-esteemed friend;" and he shook my uncle's proffered paw warmly as he spoke.

"Tol, lol, de roll—Murphy, Dennis—supper, you villains—supper—Benjie, my darling, kiss me, my boy—I am so happy—tol de roll"—here, in his joy and dancing, he struck his toe sharply against the leg of a table; and as it was the member from whence the gout had been but recently dislodged, the pain made him change his tune with a vengeance; so he caught hold of the extremity in one hand, and pirouetted, with my assistance, to an arm-chair. But we were all tired; therefore, suffice it to say, that we had an excellent meal, and a drop of capital *hot* whisky-punch—a rare luxury in Jamaica—and were soon all happy and snoozing in our comfortable beds.

The first thing I heard next morning, before I got out of bed, was Mr Rory Macgregor, the Samaritan to whom our cards had been carried the night before, squealing about the house in his strong Celtic accent, for he spoke as broad as he did the day he first left home, some twenty years before. He was too proud, I presume, to be obliged to the *Englishers*, as he called them, even for a dash of their lingo. He had come to invite us to dine with him on the following day; and the fame of my arrival having spread, a number of the neighbours also paid their respects during the forenoon, so that my levee was larger than many a German prince's.

Mr Macgregor, and the overseer of the neighbouring estate, remained that day to dinner; the latter was also a Scotchman, a Lowlander, and although I always resist first impressions when they are unfavourable, still there was something about him that I did not like. I felt a sort of innate antipathy towards him.

From what I was told, and indeed, from what I saw, I knew that he was a well-connected and a well-educated man, and both by birth and education far above the status of an overseer on a sugar estate in Jamaica; but he had bent himself, and stooped to his condition, instead of dignifying by his conduct an honest although humble calling.

His manners had grown coarse and familiar; and after dinner, when we were taking our wine, and Flamingo and Twig were drawing out little Roderick, much to our entertainment, this youth chose to bring the subject of religion on the table, in some way or other I cannot well tell how. My uncle, I think, had asked him if he had attended the consecration of the new church or chapel, and he had made a rough and indecent answer, expressing his thankfulness to *Heaven!* that he was above all bigotry, and had never been in a church, except at a funeral, since he had left Scotland. He was instantly checked by Mr Frenche, who was unexpectedly warm on the subject; but it seems this was not the first time he had offended in a similar way; so I was startled, and not a little pleased at the *dressing* he now received at the hands of my usually good-natured uncle.

"Young gentleman," said he, with a gravity that I was altogether unprepared for, "you compel me to do a thing I abhor at any time, especially in my own house, and that is to touch on sacred subjects at untimely seasons; but this is not the first time you have offended under this roof, and I therefore am driven to tell you once for all, that I never will allow any sneering at sacred subjects at my table. I just now asked you a simple and a civil question, and you have returned me a most indecent and unchristian answer."

"Christian—Christian!" exclaimed the overseer; "you believe in those things, I suppose?"

"I believe my Bible, sir," rejoined my uncle, "as I hope you do?"

"Oh!" said the overseer, "Mr Frenche has turned Methodist," and burst into a vulgar laugh.

He had gone too far, however. My uncle at this rose, and for several seconds looked so witheringly at him, that, with all his effrontery, I could perceive his self-possession evaporating rapidly.

"Methodist, sir—Methodist I am none, unless to believe in the religion of my fathers be Methodism. Heaven knows, whatever my belief may be, my practice is little akin to what theirs was; but let me tell you, once for all, although I am ever reluctant to cast national reflections, it is your young Scotchmen, who, whatever they may have been in their own country, and theirs we all know to be a highly religious and moral one, become, when left to themselves in Jamaica, beyond all comparison, the most irreligious of the whole community. How this comes about I cannot tell; but I see, young man, false modesty has overlaid your better sense, and made you ashamed of what should have been your glory to avow, as it will assuredly be one day your greatest consolation, if you are a reasonable being, when you come to die. At all events, if you do not believe what you have so improperly endeavoured to make a jest of, I *pity* you. If you do believe, and yet so speak, I *despise* you; and I recommend you hereafter, instead of blushing to avow the Christian principles that I know were early instilled into your mind, to blush at your conduct, whenever it is such as we have just witnessed; but let us change the subject. I say, Benjie, let us have a touch of politics—politics."

Here the kind-hearted old man's anxiety to smooth the downfall of the sulky young Scotchman was so apparent, that we all lent a hand to help him to gather way on the other tack; but our Scotch friend could not stomach being shown up, or put down, whichever you may call it, so peremptorily; and the first dinner I ate in mine uncle's house was any thing but a pleasant one.

According to previous arrangement, we had the whole of the next forenoon to ourselves. Many a long and kindly family yarn was spun between us; but as this is all parish news, I will not weary the reader with it, simply contenting myself with stating, that, before we began to prepare for our ride, I had more reason than ever to be grateful to my dear uncle.

At two o'clock we mounted our horses, and set out, accompanied by Messrs Twig and Flamingo, to dine with our Highland friend, Roderick Macgregor, Esq. We rode along the *interval* or passage between two large cane-pieces, the richest on the estate, which was situated in a dead level, surrounded by low limestone hills. By the way, the locality of Ballywindle was very peculiar, and merits a word or two as we scull along. Stop, and I will paint it to the comprehension of all the world, as thus—Take a punch bowl, or any other vessel you choose approaching to the same shape, and fill it half full of black mould; pop three or four lumps of sugar into the centre, so that they may stick on the surface of the mould, without sinking above a half of their diameter. They are the works, boiling-house, still-house, trash-houses, and mill-houses. Then drop a large lump a little on one side, and balance a very tiny one on the top of it, and you have the small insulated hill on which the great house stands. As for the edges of the vessel, they are the limestone hills, surrounding the small circular valley, the faces of them being covered with Guinea grass pieces, sprinkled with orange and other fruit-trees; both grass and trees finding their sustenance of black earth, as they best may, amongst the clefts of the honey-combed limestone that crops out in all directions, of which indeed the hills are entirely composed, without any continuous superstratum of earth whatever. You see the place now, I suppose? Well, but to make it plainer still—take a sheet of paper, and *crumple* it in your hand; then throw it on the table, and you have a good idea of one of those hills, and not a bad one of the general surface of the island taken as a whole.

The ridges of the hills were in this case covered with high wood. So now let us get hold of our yarn once more. The field on the right hand, from a large sink-hole, as it is called, or aperture in the centre—I love to be particular—was called "Tom's Pot," and the cane patch on the left, "Mammy Polder's Bottom."

I found that a level cane-piece, in such a situation, was always called a *Bottom*. Again, as for those sink-holes, or caverns in the rock, I can compare them, from their sinuosities, to nothing more aptly than the human ear. They generally seem to be placed in situations where they answer the purpose of natural drains to carry off the water; the one in question, for instance, always receiving the drainings of the little valley, and never filling; having a communication, beyond doubt, with some of the numberless streamlets, gullies, or small rivers (hence such natural syphons as the Fairywell), that cross one's path at every turn in this "land of streams," as the name Jamaica imports in the Charib tongue, as I have heard say.

The canes grew on each side of the interval, to the height of eighteen or twenty feet; but as they did not arch overhead, they afforded no shelter from the sun, although they prevented the breeze reaching us, and it was in consequence most consumedly hot.

"Now for a cigar to *cool* one," quoth Twig, chipping away, cigar in mouth, with his small flint and steel, as we began to ascend the narrow corkscrew path that spiralled through the rocky grass-piece bounding the cane fields.

After we had zigzagged for a quarter of an hour on the face of the hill, we attained the breezy

summit, where the guinea grass-piece ended, and entered, beneath the high wood, on a narrow bridle-path, that presently led us through a guava plantation, the trees heavily laden with the fruit, which makes a capital preserve, but is far from nice to eat raw. It is in shape and colour somewhat like a small yellow pippin, with a reddish pulp, and the flavour being rather captivating, I had demolished two or three, when Flamingo picked two very fine ones, and shortened sail until I ranged alongside of him. He then deliberately broke first the one and then the other, and held up the halves to me; they were both full of worms.

"Dangerous for cattle," quoth Don Felix, dryly.

"Come, that is rough wit, Flamingo," chimed in Twig. "But never mind, Mr Brail. Cows *do* die of bots sometimes hereabouts, after trespassing; but then you know they also die of a surfeit of wet clover. At all events, there is nothing bucolical about you."

"Bots," thought I; "how remarkably genteel and comfortable, and what an uncommonly delicate fruit for a dessert."

Leaving the guava jungle, we proceeded through a district that seemed to have once been in cultivation, as all the high timber, with the exception of a solitary mahogany or cedar here and there, was cut down, and there was nothing to be seen but a thicket of palma Christi, or castor oil bushes, on every side. There had apparently been some heavy showers on this table land during the time we had been winding up the hill, as the bushes and long grass were sparkling brilliantly with rain-drops, and the ground was heavily saturated with water.

"Hillo, Twig, my darling," sung out uncle Lathom, who was the sternmost of all, except the servants, as we *strung* along the narrow path in single file "mind you take the road to the right there—it will save us a mile."

"Ay, ay, sir," returned he of the Dream.

Master Flamingo, who was between him and me, was busy at this moment with his fowling-piece, that he carried in his hand; the fame of abundance of teal and quails in the Macgregor's neighbourhood having reached him before starting.

"What a very beautiful bird that is, Mr Brail," here he pointed with the gun to the huge branch of a cotton tree that crossed the path overhead, where a large parrot was perched, looking at us; one moment scratching its beak with its claws, and the next, peeping knowingly down, and slewing its head first to one side and then to the other—a parrot, amongst the feathered tribes, being unquestionably what a monkey is amongst quadrupeds.

"I should like to bring that chap down now," said Flam, stopping in his career, and damming us up in the narrow path, whereby we all became clustered in a group about him; then suiting the action to the word, he, without any farther warning, dropped the rein into the hollow of his arm, and taking aim, let drive—and away went the whole party helter skelter at the report, in every direction, by a beautiful centrifugal movement. If we had been rockets disposed like the spokes of a cart-wheel, with the matches converging to a centre, and fired all at once, we could scarcely have radiated more suddenly. It was quite surprising the precision with which we flew crashing through the wet bushes, some of us nearly unhorsed amongst them, if the truth were known:—and such shouting from whites and blacks, and uproarious laughter, as we all got once more into sailing order!

"Now, friend Felix," said Twig, as he and his horse emerged from the brushwood, with his pale yellow nankeens as dark with moisture as a wet sail, his shirt frill and collar as if the garment had been donned fresh from the washing-tub, and with the large silvery globules of moisture as thickly clustered on the black silk frogs of his coat as diamonds on the Dowager Lady Castlereagh's stomacher—there's a simile for you,—"now, friend Felix—give one some notice next time you begin your fusilade, if you please. Why, did you ever see a pulk of Cossacks on a forage, Mr Frenche?—I declare I am glad to find myself on the beaten path again, for my horse took so many turns that I was fairly dumfounded, and having no pocket-compass nor a sextant to take the sun by—you perceive I have been at sea, Master Brail—I thought I should have been lost entirely, until you should have been piloted to me some days hence by the John Crows. But ah, ye little fishes, what is that—what *is* that?"

It was neither more nor less than the sound of an ill-blown, yelling and grunting bagpipe. We rode on—the diabolical instrument squealing louder and louder—until the path ended in a cleared space amidst the brushwood, with a small one-story *wattled* house in the centre, having a little piazza in front, with a yard or two at each end, shut in with wooden blinds, sadly bleached by the weather. There was a group of half-naked negroes squatting before it, and a number of little naked black children, and a sprinkling of brown ones, running about, and puddling in a dirty pond, amongst innumerable ducks, fowls of many kinds, and at least a dozen pigs. "No signs of any approach to famine in the land at all events," thought I.

There was no rail or fence of any kind enclosing this building, which, to all appearance, was neither more nor less than a superior kind of negro-house. It stood on the very edge—indeed was overshadowed by some gigantic trees (beneath whose Babylonish dimensions it shrank to a dog-kennel) of the high natural forest, a magnificent vista through which opened right behind it,

overarching a broken up and deeply rutted road, the path, apparently, through which some heavy timber had been drawn, it being part of Rory's trade to prepare mill-rollers and other large pieces of hard-wood required for the estates below.

In front of this shed—full fig, in regular Highland costume, philabeg, short hose, green coatee, bonnet and feather—marched the bagpiper, whose strains had surprised us so much, blowing his instrument, and strutting and swelling like a turkey-cock, to some most barbarous mixture of "a gathering of the clans," and the negro tune of "Guinea corn, I love for nyam you."

The fellow was a negro, and as black as the ace of spades—shade of Ossian, let thy departed heroes hereafter recline on clouds of tobacco smoke—and as we approached he "loud and louder blew," to the great discomfiture of our whole party, as the animals we bestrode seemed to like the "chanter" as little as they had done the report of Flamingo's gun, one and all resolutely refusing, as if by common consent, to face the performer—so there we were, jammed, snorting, and finking, and splashing each other to the eyes with mud of the complexion and consistency of *peas brose*, in the narrow path; Twig and I, the head of the column, as it were, being the only individuals visible on the fringe of the brushwood.

"I say, Rory—Rory Macgregor," shouted Twig, "do give over—do tell your black bagpiper to have done with his most infernal noise, and be hanged to him—or we must all go home again without our dinner—none of our horses will *debouche* in the face of such a salutation, don't you see?"

"Ou ay, ou ay," rejoined Rory, emerging from the house himself, also dressed, like his man, in full Highland costume—and having desired the piper in *Gaelic*, with the air of the hundredth and fiftieth cousin to "her Grace the Tuke," to cease *her bumming*, he marshalled us into the house, evidently in no small surprise that any breathing creature whatever, biped or quadruped, should have any the smallest objections to the "music of the *cods*."

The bagpiper, we found afterwards, was his servant, whom he had taken to Scotland with him two years before, and polished him there, through the instrumentality of a Highland Serjeant, to the brilliancy we had witnessed. However, let me be honest—he received us with the most superabundant kindness; and when we had retired into the inner part of the house, which was his dining-hall, he gave the word for dinner, and, every thing considered, the set out was exceedingly good—we had a noble pea-fowl—and, as if that had not been sufficient, a young turkey also—a capital round of beef—a beautiful small joint of mutton; excellent mountain mullet; a dish of Cray-fish; and a small sort of fresh-water lobster, three or four times bigger than a large prawn, which are found in great plenty below the stones in the Jamaica mountain streams—black or land crabs, wild-duck, and wild Guinea fowl, and a parrot-pie—only fancy a parrot-pie!—wild pigeons, and I don't know what all besides—in truth, a feast for six times our number—but in the opinion of our host, there appeared to be something wanting still.

"Tuncan," this was our friend the musician, who had laid down his instrument to officiate as butler—"Tuncan, whar hae ye stowed tae hackis—whar hae ye stowed tae hackis, man?—a Heeland shentleman's tinner is nae tinner ava without tae hackis!"

"Me no know, massa," quoth the Celtic *neger*.

"You ton't know—ten you pehuvet to know, sir—Maister Frenche, shall I help you to a *spaul* of tae peacock hen?—Maister Flamingo, will you oplige me py cutting up tae turkey polt?"

"All the pleasure in life—whew!—what is this?" as a cloud of fragrant vapour gushed from the plump breast of the bird.

"As I am a shentleman, if tae prute peast of a cook has na stuffet tae turkey polt we tae hackis—as I am a shentleman!"

"And what is this, then," said Dr Tozy, a neighbouring surgeon, who was one of the party—and a most *comfortable* looking personage in every sense of the word, as a dish, containing the veritable haggis to all appearance, was handed over his shoulder and placed on the table. "A deuced good-looking affair it is, I declare," looking at it through his eyeglass—"here is the real haggis, Master Macgregor, here it is."

"Ah, so it is—so it is"—quoth Rory, rubbing his hands. "Here, poy—here, Tuncan—pring it here—let me cut it up mysell—let me cut it mysell."

It was accordingly placed before Rory, who, all impatience, plunged his knife into it—murder, what a *hautgout*, and no wonder; for it actually proved to be a guava pudding, that the drunken cook had stuffed into the sheep's stomach!

However, we had all a good laugh, doing great honour, notwithstanding, to an excellent dinner; and when we began to enjoy ourselves over our wine, Dr Tozy and Twig, aided and abetted by Flamingo, amused us exceedingly by the fun they extracted from our friend Rory.

Mr Macgregor not being quite so polished a gentleman as his Majesty George IV., had been rather particular, shortly after this, in his notice of Mr Twig's coat—the colour of which some how did not please him.

"Noo, I taresay, Maister Twick, you ca' that plue—a plue coat—put I think it mair plack tan plue."

"Why, Mac, you are not so far wrong, it is more black than blue."

"Ah, so I thought," quoth Rory.

"And I'll give you the reason, if you promise not to tell," said Twig. "It is the first trial piece of my new patent cloth."

"Your patent cloth!" whispered the last of the Goths, "have *you* a patent for cloth."

"To be sure I have—that never loses the colour, and is as impervious to wet as a lawyer's wig, or a duck's wing."

"It al no pe a Mackintosh, will it?"

"Mackintosh!" exclaimed his jovial friend—"Mackintosh!—why Charley cannot hold the candle to me—no, no, it is the first spun out of—here lend me your lugs," and he laid hold of the Highland man's ear, so as to draw his head half across the table in a most ludicrous fashion. "It is made entirely out of negro wool."

"Necroo wool?" rejoined Rory, lying back in his chair, holding up his hands, and looking to the roof, with a most absurd expression of face, half credulous, half doubting—"wool from tae veritable neger's heads, tid you say?"

"Negro-head wool, Rory, every fibre of it. The last bale I sent home was entirely composed of the autumn shearing of my own people at the Dream—I sent it to some manufacturing friends of mine in Halifax"—and, holding out his sleeve—"there, the Duke of Devonshire patronises it, I assure ye—nothing else will go down next season at Almack's."

"Allmac's?" exclaimed Rory, "to you mean to say it will shoopersede tae forty-second tartan?"

"Ay, and ninety-second too. However, I find it will not take on indigo freely, in consequence of the essential oil."

"Oil!" said Rory; "creeshy prutes."

"So, in consequence, I intend after this to confine the manufacture to *black* cloth, which will require no dye you know; if you choose to contract, Rory, I will give you half-a-crown per pound for all you can deliver during the next year—or threepence a-fleece—*head*, I mean—and that is the top of the market for Spanish wool—but it must be clean—free of—you understand?"

By this time I perceived that Dr Tozy and Flamingo were both literati in a small way, whereby one or two amusing mistakes took place on the part of Master Rory Macgregor, who, of all points of the compass, had no pretensions to any kind or description of erudition.

The conversation happened to turn on Irish politics, and Mr Frenche had just remarked that, notwithstanding all the noise and smoke of the demagogues who lived and battered on the disturbances of the country, he believed on his conscience, from what he saw, when he was last in Ireland, that there were very few influential men of respectability or property who countenanced them or their doings.

"Yet, strange as it does appear, there are some, uncle," said I.

"Oh yes, undoubtedly," exclaimed Tozy, an Irishman himself; "but very few—very few indeed—mere drops in the bucket—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*."

"Fat's tat, toctor?—is tat Creek?"

"Yes; it means capital brandy for a long drink," said Tozy, swigging off his glass of cold brandy grog as coolly as possible.

"What an expressive language!—maist as much sae as tae Gaelic. To you know, py the very soond, I guessed it was something apoot pranty and a long trink?" quoth Rory.

"You shine to-day, doctor," said Twig; but presently Flamingo flew off with the thread of the conversation, like a magpie stealing twine, and I forget the prominent topics we discussed, but we had a great deal of fun and laughter, until Don Felix once more settled down in some literary talk with Tozy, and incidentally noticed the Decameron of Boccaccio.

Rory, unfortunate Rory, once more pricked up his ears at this, and determined to show his conversational powers now, if he had been interrupted before, being by this time also a little in the wind. So, after grunting to himself, "Cameron—Cameron," he, after a moment's thought, perked himself up in his chair and swore stoutly that he knew *him* very well—"as fine a chiel as ever pore the name of Cameron, and her place was ane of tae finest in the west coast of Arkyleshire—na, am no shust shure put she may pe a farawa' cousin of Lochiel's hersell."

"The very same," quoth Twig, trotting away with the Macgregor, as if he had got him on one of his own *shelties*, and entering on a long rambling conversation, during which he took care to butter him an inch thick—"Why, you do make the shrewdest remarks, Mac; shrewd! nay, the wisest, I should say. You really know *every thing* and *every body*—you are a perfect Solon."

Flamingo here saw, and so did I, that Macgregor—whether he began to feel that Jacob was quizzing him or not, I could not tell—looked as black as thunder, so he good-humouredly struck in with—"Now, Jacob, do hold your tongue, you are such a chatterbox!"

"Chatterbox!—to be sure—I can't help it. I have dined on parrot-pie, you know, Felix."

"I wish tae hat peen hoolets for your sake, Maister Twick," said Roderick, fiercely.

"Why, Rory, why? An owl-pie would not quite suit my complexion.—But, hang it, man, what is wrong? Judging from your own physiog, one might suppose you had been making your dinner on the bird of Minerva yourself."

"Maister Twick," said Rory, with a face as sour as vinegar, "I am unwilling to pe uncivil in my own house;—but I red you no to pe sae free wi' your nicknames."

"Nicknames!" interjected Twig, in great surprise.

"Yes, sir—you have taken tae unwarrantable liperty of calling me a Solan—yes, sir, a Solan.—Tid you mean it offensively, sir?"

"No offence, Mac," shouted Twig, "none in the least.—Offence!—in likening you to Solon, the glory of Greece—the great lawgiver—the *Athenian* Solon!"

Rory grew frantic at this (as he thought) additional insult.—"Creese—Creese!—I ken o' nae Solans, sir, put tae filthy ill-faured pirds tat leeve in tae water."

"But Rory, my dear fellow"——

"Ton't tear fellow me, sir.—You may ca' them what ye like, sir, in *Creese*—but a Solan at tae Craik of Ailsa<sup>[2]</sup> is ca'd a cuse, sir, an' naething else, I ken tat, sir, I ken tat; and if ony shentlemans will tare to liken Roterick Macgregor to sic an ill-flavoured pird, sir, py"——

[2] A remarkable insulated rock in the frith of Clyde, famous for its solan geese, from which (the rock, not the geese) the Marquis of Ailsa takes his title.

"I assure you, upon my honour, I said Solon, and not Solan, Mac," quoth Twig. "There, ask Tozy.—You know I would not say an uncivil thing to you, Rory, for the world."

We were like to expire with laughter at this, but the Celt was pacified at length, through the good offices of the doctor, and we all held on in good fellowship. But as the evening wore away, the musquittoes began to be very troublesome, as we could *feel* ourselves, and *hear*, if we had not felt, from their loud buzzing, as well as from our host's sounding slaps on his bare limbs, the kilt not being just the thing for a defence against Monsieur Musquitto. Indeed, after Rory's localities had been fairly explored by these stinging pests, we suffered little, as they left us all (like reasonable animals choosing their food, where it was easiest to be had) in comparative peace, to settle in clouds on the unfortunate Highlander's naked premises.

At length he could stand it no longer.—"Tuncan!"—then a loud slap on his thigh;—"Lachlan!"—another slap;—"Macintosh, pring a prush, pring a prush!"—and a negro appeared forthwith with a bunch of green twigs with the leaves on.—"Noo, Macintosh, kang pelow tae table with your prush, and prush my leeks free from tae awful plakues. Prush, ye prute, prush!"

This scheme had the desired effect; the enemy was driven off, and Rory, in the fulness and satisfaction of his heart, now insisted on setting Tuncan to give us a regular pibroch, as he called it, on the bagpipe, whether we would or not.

I had observed Quacco, who had accompanied us, and that mischief-maker, Squire Flamingo, in close confabulation while dinner was getting ready; I therefore made sure of witnessing some comical issue of their complot before long, in which I was not disappointed—for the black serjeant now ushered in the bagpiper, whom, I could perceive, he had fuddled pretty considerably, besides adding to his rig in a most fantastical manner. He had, it seems, persuaded the poor creature that he was by no means complete without a queue, and powder in his hair; so he now appeared with his woolly poll covered with flour, and the spout of an old tin watering-pan, with a tuft of red hair from the tail of a cow stuck into the end of it, attached to the back of his head by a string. In the midst of this tuft I saw a small red spark, and when he approached there was a very perceptible burning smell, as of the smouldering of a slow match.

"Now, Mr Flamingo," said I to our friend, "I see you are about wickedness—No more percussion powder, I hope?"

He trod on my toe, and winked.—"Hush, you shall see."

When Tuncan first entered, he had, to save himself from falling, sat down on a chair close by the door, with his back to us. This was altogether out of character, for Tuncan plumed himself on his breeding.

"Is tat your mainers, you plack rascal?" cried Rory. "Ket up, sir, or"——

Quacco was at hand, and assisting the sable retainer to rise, got him on his pins; and when he had fairly planted him on his parade ground, which was the end of the piazza farthest from us, he seemed to recover himself, blew up his pipes, and began to walk mechanically backwards and forwards steadily enough. Flamingo kept his eye on him very earnestly, while a small twitch of his cheek, just below his eye, every now and then, and a slight lifting of the corner of his mouth, showed that the madcap was waiting in expectation of some fun. All conversation had been fairly swamped by the infernal pipes—Roderick's peacock hen, had she been alive, could not have made herself heard, so we had nothing else for it but to look at each other, and listen to the black bagpiper. I am sure I wished him any where but where he was, when, just as he had turned his back to us in one of his pendulum movements, a jet of sparks like those from a squib issued from his queue, which, drunk as he was, made him turn round fast enough; the instant he found that the fire proceeded from his own tail, he dashed down his bagpipes, rushed out of the house, and never stopped until he was up to the neck in the muddy duck-pond before the door, still fizzing most furiously. In a vain attempt to rid himself of the annoyance, he dipped his head below the water, and just as he disappeared, a crack—crack—crack showed that the squib had *eventuated*, as the Yankees say, in the usual manner, viz. in a zigzag, or cracker.

It turned out afterwards, as I suspected, that Quacco, who was a tolerable fireworker, amongst his other accomplishments, at Flamingo's instigation had beat up some charcoal and gunpowder, moistening the mass well, and filled the tin tube which composed poor Tuncan's queue with it; thus literally converting it into a squib.

Great was the amazement of Master Roderick at all this, and loud were his exclamations as his retainer was dragged out of the pond, more dead than alive with fear, and all but choked with mud; seeing, however, that he had been drinking, and, what was more in blackey's favour, his master having been indulging himself, he was, after much entreaty, pleased to send the poor fellow home, instead of clapping him in the stocks.

I had noticed that a little mulatto boy, also in a kilt, had been the chief agent in the extrication of poor Tuncan.

"Ah, Lachlan," said Mr Frenche to this lad, "when did you return? Why, I thought you were in Scotland!"

"So he was," said Rory. "I sent him last fall to my sister in tae Western Highlands, that is married *upon* tae minister; put she returned tae pair callant py next post, saying she was surprised that I should make no more of sending home my—I'll no say what—and *them* yellow too, than if *they* were sae mony tame monkeys—'and to a minister's hoose!'—Maype, if they hat na heard of my coffee crop having peen purned in the store, and if I hat no forgotten to say ony thing apoot tae callant's poord, tey wad na hae peen sae straitlaced."

It was now getting dark,—the horses had been some time at the door, and we were about saying good-night to Rory and Flamingo, who was to take up his quarters for the evening, in order, as previously arranged, to his having a day's shooting at wild-ducks and pigeons on the morrow, when it suddenly came on to rain, as if a waterspout had burst over head; so the animals were ordered back into the stable, as it was out of the question starting in such a *pour*.

We had coffee, and were waiting impatiently for it to clear, but it came down faster and faster, and soon began to thunder and lighten most awfully.

I am not ashamed to acknowledge that a storm of this description always moves me; and although the rest of the party carried on in the inner hall at a game at whist, while Roderick and I were having a hit at backgammon in a corner, none of them appearing to care much about it; yet one explosion was so loud, so simultaneous with the blue blinding flash, and the reverberations immediately afterwards *thundered*—I can find no stronger word—so tremendously overhead, making the whole house shake, and the glasses ring on the sideboard, that both parties suddenly, and with one accord, stopped and started to their feet, in the middle of their amusement. Where I stood, I had a full view into the long vista of the natural wood already mentioned, festooned from tree to tree with a fantastic network of withes, which, between us and the lightning, looked like an enormous spider's web. Another bright flash again lit up the recesses of the forest, showing distinctly, although but for a moment, a long string of mules, loaded with coffee bags, with a dark figure mounted on every third animal, and blasting every object, the masses of green foliage on the trees especially, into a smoky and sulphurous blue.

Before the rumbling of this thunder-clap had passed over our heads, the noise of the rain on the hollow wooden roof increased to a deafening roar, like the sound of a water-fall, or as if every drop had been a musket-bullet.

"Tat's hail!" said Rory, in great amazement at such an unusual occurrence.

"Small doubt of that," quoth Flamingo.

Here one of the negro servants came running in. "Massa—massa—sugar-plum fall from de moon—sugar-plum fall from de moon—see, see," and opening his palms, where he had caught the hail, and thought he had it safe, and finding only drops of water, he drew back as if he had seen a spirit—"Gone! gone! and *burn* my hand too; Obeah—most be Obeah!" and before another word could be said, it lightened again so vividly, even through the sparkling mist of hail, that I involuntarily put my hands to my eyes, and lay back in my chair, overcome with breathless awe.

Unlike any lightning I had ever seen before, it was as if a dart of fire had struck the large tree next us right in the cleft, and then glanced like a ray of the most intense light shot down into the centre of the back yard, where it zigzagged along, and tore up the solid ground, that appeared covered with white smoke from the bounding and hopping of the rattling hailstones. I can compare the sharpness of the report that accompanied it to nothing more fittingly than that of a long eighteen-pounder fired close to the ear. Involuntarily I repeated to myself that magnificent passage of sacred writ—"And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; so there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous."

A long tearing *rive*, as of the violent disruption of a large bough, had instantly succeeded the flash, and then a crashing and rushing heavy fall, and loud shrieks. It was nearly a minute before any of us found breath to speak, and then it was only in short half-suppressed exclamations.

"What is that?" as a smouldering yellow flame burst from the roof of the negro house that adjoined the Macgregor's habitation, and gradually illuminated the whole scene—the glistening hail-covered ground, the tall trees overhead, the cattle that had run beneath them for shelter—and showed a large limb split off from the immense cedar next us (with the white splinter-mark glancing), that still adhered to the parent tree by some strong fibres; while the outermost branches had fallen heavily on, and crushed in the roof of the cottage that was on fire.

The lurid flashes continued, contrasting most fearfully with the bright red glare of the burning cottage, the inhabitants of which, a woman and three children, were now extricating themselves, and struggling from under the fallen roof. Presently we saw them cluster round a dark object lying in the middle of the yard like a log, between us and the tree that had been struck. They stooped down, and appeared to pull it about, whatever it was, for a minute or so, and then began to toss their arms, uttering loud cries. I was puzzling myself as to what they could be after, when the word was passed amongst the black domestics of "a man kill—old Cudjoe kill." This ran like wildfire, and in a second we were all out in the midst of the storm, with the rapidly melting hail-stones crunching beneath our feet.

The body was brought into the house, and the doctor being fortunately on the spot, every thing was done that could be devised, but all in vain. When a vein was opened in the arm, the blood flowed sluggishly, but was quite fluid; and all the joints were even more than naturally pliant, the vertebrae of the neck especially. Indeed I had never seen such a general muscular relaxation; but the poor old fellow was quite dead. One spot on the cape of his Pennistone greatcoat, about the size of a dollar, was burnt black, and so completely consumed, that in carrying him into the house, which was no easy matter, from the extreme pliancy and eel-like limberness, if I may so speak, of the whole body, the tinder or burnt woollen dropped out, leaving a round hole as clean as if it had been *gouged* out.

After this unfortunate transaction we had little spirit to pursue our amusement, and accordingly, after a parting cup, we all retired to bed.

I soon fell asleep, and remembered nothing until I was awakened by the crowing of the cocks in the morning. It was still dark, and in the unceiled and low-roofed house I could hear my allies snoring most harmoniously in their several snuggeries. At length, after several long yawns, and a few preparatory snorts, and clearances of his voice, out spoke my restless acquaintance, Master Flamingo.

"Why, Rory—Rory Macgregor—how sound the body sleeps—why, Rory, I say"—

"Oich, oich, fat's tat—wha's tat—and what will she pe wantin'?"

"Wanting?—Don't you remember your promise? Didn't I tell you that I had come to spend the night here, in order to have a crack at the ducks this morning?"

"Ducks this morning," thought I—"Ducks—does the madcap mean to shoot ducks, after such a night and such a scene?"

"Tucks," grunted Rory—"tucks?" then a long snore.

"Ducks, to be sure; so get up, Mac—get up."

"Well, well," yawned the Macgregor; "I will, I will; put ton't waken tae hail hoose—ton't tisturp Mr Frenche nor Mr Prail."

"Oh, never mind, Flamingo," quoth my uncle, turning himself in his bed, and clearing his voice; "I am awake, and Dennis has brought my gun I find."



And here followed a concerto of coughing, and yawning, and groaning, and puffing, as of the pulling on of tight or damp boots, and rumblings and stumblings against the furniture of the various apartments, and all the other miscellaneous noises incidental to a party dressing in the dark.

"Romulus, a light," shouted Twig.

"Twister, a ditto," roared Flamingo; and these exclamations called forth a renewed volley of snortings and long yawns from the negro servants, who were sleeping in the inner hall.

"Twister, get me a light, you lazy villain, don't you hear?"

"Yes, yes, massa, directly"—snore.

"*Directly*, you sleepy dog!—*now*, sir—get it me *now*. Don't you hear that I have broken my shin, and capsized the basin-stand, and I can't tell what besides?"

"Yes, yes, massa"—snore again.

I heard a door open, and presently a loud tumble, and a crackling and rattling of chairs, and startled cries from the negroes.

"Murder! Twig—where's your patent lucifer match box? Here have I fallen over that rascal of yours, and I am terrified to move, lest I break my own neck, or extinguish some black fellow out and out. Gemini! if my great toe has not got into some one's mouth. Hillo, Quashie, mind that's my toe, and not a yam. Oh dear, will no one get me a candle? Jacob, you cannibal, do come and rescue me, or I shall be smothered amidst this odoriferous and flat-nosed variety of the human species."

I had never spent such a morning, and as it was quite evident that there was no more sleep to be had, I got up and dressed the best way I could. We were soon all congregated in the inner hall by candle light, with half a dozen black fellows, and as many fowling-pieces, blunderbusses, and muskets as there were buccras, ready to sally forth to attack the teal.

Quacco was here, as elsewhere, the most active of the throng, and sideling up to me, "Massa, you and de old gentleman take de blonderboosh—I hab load dem bote wid one bushel of dock hail. You shall never see so much bird as you shall knock down—take dem, massa—take dem."

After coffee, we put ourselves *en route* and sallied out of the house.

"Why, uncle," said I, "I have no great stomach for the fight after what happened last night."

"Poo, poo," said he, "never mind—people don't mind a thunder-storm here."

"But then the poor old watchman—struck down almost before one's eyes."

"Ah! that was melancholy enough—but it can't be helped, so come along, you must do as others do."

The morning was thick, dark, damp, and dreary; there should have been a moon, but she had veiled her beauties behind the steamy clouds, that seemed to be resting themselves on the tree-tops. The earth sent up its vapours, as of water poured on hot bricks; and all the herbs and grass and leaves of bushes, through which the footpath lay, seemed absolute *blobs* of water, for the instant you touched them they dissolved into a shower-bath; while I soon perceived that I was walking ankle deep in soft mud—indeed we were travelling as much by water as on terra firma. After *ploutering* through this chaos for about a mile, we entered a natural savannah, inlaid with several ponds, which looked like dark mirrors, dimmed by the films of thin grey mist that floated on their calm surfaces. Rory walked round several of these natural pieces of water, while the negro scouts were also very active; but it was all—"The tiel a tuck is tere," from Rory. "The devil a teal is here," from Flamingo. And "no teal, no dere; no duck no here; none at all," from the negroes.

"So we shall have been roused out of our warm beds, and soaked to the skin, to say nothing of a very sufficient plastering with mud, for no use after all," said I.

"No fear—no fear—only have patience a little," quoth Mr Twig.

There was a low marshy ditch that ran across the savannah, nearer the house than where we now were, that had overflowed from the rains, and which covered about six acres of the natural pasture. We had waded through it on our advance, expecting to find the teal in the ponds beyond. But being unsuccessful, we now tried back, and returned to it; and just as we faced about, the clouds lifted from the hill tops in the east, and disclosed a long clear stripe of primrose-coloured sky, the forerunner of early day-dawn. As we reapproached the flooded ground, one or two cranes sounded their trumpet notes, and taking wing with a rustling splashy flaff, glided silently past us.

"Halt," quoth Serjeant Quacco, in a whisper, "halt, gentlemen, I hear de teal on de feed."

"The deuce you do!" said I, "you must have the ears of an Indian;" and we all held our breath, and stooped and leant our ears towards the ground, in imitation of the serjeant; and to be sure we now heard distinctly enough the short quacks of the drakes, and the rustling and cackling of the feathered squadrons among the reeds. My uncle, the Macgregor, and myself, were planted at the westernmost end of the swamp; two of us armed with blunderbusses, and the Celt with his double-barrelled gun—while Messrs Twig, Flamingo, and Quacco, made a sweep towards the head of it, or eastern end.

The rustling continued, as of great numbers of large birds on the opposite side; while near at hand we heard an occasional plump, and tiny splashes, such as a large frog makes when he drops into the water, and curious crawling and crackling noises, made, according to my conception, by reptiles of some kind or another, amongst the reeds.

"Any alligators here?" whispered I to Mr Frenche, who was next me.

"Great many," was the laconic reply.

"How comfortable," thought I; "and snakes?"

"Abundance."

"Pleasant country," said I Benjie, again to myself. But all this time I could see nothing like the teal we were in pursuit of, although it was as clear as mud that the reeds all round us were alive with something or another. At length, as the morning lightened, and the clouds broke away, and the steamy sheet of water began to reflect them and our dark figures, and the trees and other objects on the margin, a line of ten or a dozen large birds emerged from the darkness and mist at the end where Flamingo was situated, and began slowly to sail towards us in regular line of battle.

"Tere tae come at last—noo—mak reaty, Maister Prail; frient Frenche, pe prepared," and Rory himself, lying down on his chest on the wet grass, and taking deliberate aim, fired both barrels—and such a squatter!—as a flock of a thousand teal, I am certain there could not have been fewer, rose into the air with a loud rushing noise like the sound of a mighty stream—a perfect *roar* of ducks. I fired my bellmouthed trabucco with the bushel of shot at random into the thickest of the flock, and so did mine uncle; whereupon *down* came a feathery shower upon our *heads*, and *down* came we both on our *tails*—the bushels of shot having told in more ways than one. This hot discharge had the effect, however, of turning the flock, and Flamingo and Twig had their own share of the spoil at the head of the swamp. The four shots had brought down four-and-thirty feathered bipeds, and two without feathers—we were as regularly smothered in ducks, as you ever saw a rabbit in onions.

"I say, uncle, how do you feel?"

"Rather chilly at tother end of me, Benjie; and I believe my shoulder is dislocated," quoth he, scratching his bald pate, as he sat on the ground, where Quacco's bushels of shot had deposited both of us.

"And my cheek is stove in," quoth I.

"My nose is bleeding like a pump," quoth he.

"And mine is blown off entirely," said I. Here we both got on our feet, the ground around us being literally covered with killed, and alive with the wounded birds.

"See if our facsimiles in the soft mud are not like two punch bowls, Benjie?" And true enough we had made a couple of holes in the spongy soil, that instantly filled with water as we rose, leaving two round pools.

"I say, uncle, your punchbowl is somewhat the biggest of the two, though, eh? mine is only the jigger."

"Bah!" quoth he, showing his white teeth.

But how came Rory on all this while, the hero who had led into action? Right in front of us, half a dozen black spots rested dead still, where his shot had just torn up the sleeping surface of the grey swamp, while as many more waterfowl of some description or another, that had been wounded, were quacking and splashing, and wheeling, half flying, and half running on the water, in a vain attempt to escape from the Macgregor, who, in the enthusiasm of the moment, had dashed in up to his waist to secure the prey.

And there he was chasing the wounded birds, all about, every now and then tripping in the weeds, and delving down, nose and ears, under water; whereby he lost his hat and dropped his gun, puffing and snorting all the time with many an outlandish exclamation, and dripping like a water-god.

"Never was such a morning's sport," roared the Highlander, "never did I see such pluidy wark in aw my porn days; stalking tae ret tear is nothing to it," as he regained terra firma, with both

hands filled with ducks' legs and necks as full as he could gripe; the wounded birds flapping and flapping, and struggling round him, as if they would have flown away with the wee Highland body up into the air.

By this time I had secured my wounded, and the daylight was fast brightening.

"Quacco, my man," said uncle Lathom to the serjeant, as he passed him, "the next time you clap a *bushel* of shot into my gun, pray don't let it be imperial measure, if you please."

"Why," said Twig, who had now joined us, "this is capital sport certainly. Never saw such a flock of teal in my life before—but, Roderick, what have you got there—what sort of game is that you have shot—let me see?" Here he deliberately counted out of the Macgregor's hands eight large *tame* Muscovy ducks, and a goose.

"As I am a sinner," said the poor Highlander, in great dismay when he saw what he had been about, "if I have not killed my own puire tucks; and the vera coose hersell that I expected to eat at Michaelmas. Hoo cam tae here—hoo tae teevil cam tae oot o' the pen?" and he turned a fierce look at his servant. Alas, on reflection, he remembered that the poor old man who was killed by the lightning had been the *henman*, and no one having taken his place, and the pen having been beaten down by the hail overnight, the sacrifice of the ducks and the poor Michaelmas goose had been the consequence and crowning misfortune.

But the absurdity of our entertainer having shown his expertness as a shot by murdering his own poultry was too much, and it was with the greatest difficulty any of us could keep his gravity.

We returned to the house—shifted, breakfasted, and that forenoon returned to Ballywindle, where we spent an exceedingly pleasant week with our friends Twig and Flamingo, who, in the mean time, prevailed on Mr Frenche to make a return visit to them in Kingston, and we accordingly prepared for our trip.

It was the Saturday before the Monday on which we meant to start. I was playing at piquet with Mr Twig; my uncle and Flamingo were lounging about the piazza, and the horses were ready saddled for an airing, at the door, when my antagonist and I were startled by a loud rushing, or rather roaring noise, that seemed to pass immediately overhead. "A flock of teal," thought I, remembering the exploit at Rory Macgregor's. Simultaneously all the shutters, which, according to the usual West India fashion, opened outwards, were banged to with great force—doors were slammed, and the whole house shook with the suddenness of the gust.

"Hillo," said Twig, "what's all this?" as his point, quint, and quatorze were whisked out of his hand, and a shower of gritting sand, with a dash of small pebbles in it, was driven against our faces through the open windows, like a discharge of peas.

My uncle and his companion had halted in their walk, and seemed as much surprised as we were. Presently the noise ceased, and all was calm again where we were. We naturally looked down into the mill-yard below us to see what would take place there.

It was as busy as usual—the negro boys and girls were shouting to the mules and steers, as they drove them round the circles of the cattle mills—the mule drivers, each with a tail of three mules loaded with canes from the hilly cane-pieces, where waggons could not work, were stringing into the yard, and spanking their whips. The wains, each with a team of six oxen, yoked two and two, built up with canes as high as a hay waggon, were rumbling and rattling on their jolty axletrees, as they were dragged through deep clayey ruts, that would have broken Macadam's heart to have looked on; the boilermen were shouting in the boiling-house, their voices, from the reverberation of the lofty roof, rising loud above the confusion, as if they had been speaking in masks, like the Greek and Roman actors of old; and the negro girls were singing cheerily in parts, their songs blending with their loud laughter, as they carried bundles of canes to be ground, or balanced their large baskets full of *trash* on their heads, while the creaking of the mill machinery, and the crashing of the canes between the rollers, added to the buzz.

The dry sun was shining down, like a burning-glass, into the centre of this ant's nest, where every thing was rolling on, as it had been doing for hours before, no one apparently anticipating any unusual occurrence; but in an instant the tornado that had passed us reached *them*, whirled the trash baskets off the negroes' heads nearest us, and up went whole bundles of canes bodily into the air, and negro hats and jackets; indeed, every thing that would rise, and ruffling the garments of the black ladies most unceremoniously, notwithstanding all their endeavours to preserve their propriety, so that they looked like large umbrellas reversed, the shanks, in most cases, being something of the stoutest.

Before it took effect in the hollow, every thing was in motion; by the time it passed over, every thing it did not take with it *was fixed to the spot*, as if by the wand of an enchanter. Negroes were clinging to the bamboos of the cattle pens; cattle and mules were standing as rigid as statues, gathered on their haunches, with their forelegs planted well and firmly out, the better to resist the effects of the wind. The mill had instantly stopped, and all was silent.

But the instant Quashie recovered his surprise, and every thing had become calm again in the mill-yard, there arose *such* a cackling, shouting, and laughter, and lowing of kine, and *skreicking* of mules, as Rory Macgregor would have said, as baffles all description.

The course of the tornado, after passing over the mill-yard, continued to be distinctly marked, by the different substances it carried up and whirled round in its vortex, keeping them suspended in the air by its violent centrifugal motion; I especially remember the effect it had on a grove of cocoa-nut trees. It took them by the tops, which it tossed fiercely with a wide circular motion, tearing their long leaves up into the sky like hair, as if some invisible spirit was trying to shake the fruit down from the tormented trees. As it neared a field where a number of people were at work, one of the house servants, rubbing his black paws, whispered to his neighbour in my hearing, "Softly, now—maybe it will whip away busha"—a thing he, to all appearance, would not have broken his heart about.

Next morning, at breakfast, I stumbled on the following announcement in the newspaper I had just taken up:—

"*Lucie—such a date.*

"Last evening the Kingston trader, the Ballahoo, anchored in Negril bay. She had been cut out by two piratical vessels, a felucca and a schooner, from Montego bay, on such a day; and after having been in possession of the pirates for a week, during which the Spanish passengers were compelled to disclose where their money (the only thing taken) was concealed, she was *politely* given up to them and the crew.

"The felucca is Spanish built, painted black outside, and red within, and sails remarkably fast; the schooner is a long, low, but very heavily armed vessel, painted black, with a red streak—no guns were seen in the felucca."—

"So, so, poor Hause has got his vessel, then; but that wicked little Midge, I fear her cruising is not over yet," said I, handing the paragraph to my uncle, who, as he already knew the story, easily comprehended the import of the newspaper announcement—"well, I am glad of it"—And I resumed my attack on the yams, ham, and coffee.

Mr Frenche put on his spectacles, and, as he began the perusal of the paper, said dryly, "I suppose you consider that the letter lying on the table there, addressed to you, will keep cool—at least you appear to be in no hurry to open it."—

I seized it—not having previously noticed it, and blushed like I don't know what, when I perceived it was in very truth her dear, delightful, and all the rest of it, *fast*—there's a sentence ending plump for you—my hand trembled as I broke the seal, or rather *drew* it open; for in such a climate wax is so soft, you cannot call it *breaking*, which always implies a short, sharp crackle, to my mind—assuming a careless swaggering look, I began to peruse it. I could with the tail of my eye, however, perceive Friend Twig and Monsieur Flamingo exchange very knowing glances. But here goes—here is *the* letter:—

"*Havanna—such a date*

"MY DEAR BENJAMIN,

"I expected to have had an opportunity of writing by a vessel for Jamaica before this, but have been disappointed.

"You will be surprised at our change of plans. A grand uncle of my father's, a very old man, has lately died, and left some money and land to us in the United Kingdom"—(a Yankyeism, thought I—*United States, United Kingdom*)—"and in consequence he is obliged to go out to England immediately"—(*out* to England). "His first determination was to send mamma and me home to New York, but as we did not like to leave him, we have persuaded him that we shall make ourselves very portable, so we all go together, in a fine London ship, to sail the day after tomorrow. Dicky Phantom, dear pet, says, 'Oh, I shall make myself more leetle small, as one busy bee dat make de honey.' I am angry at myself sometimes, but I almost dread going to the 'old country,' lest we should be obliged to restore the darling little castaway to his kinsfolk—I am sure none of them can ever love him more than his *mamma* Helen does. Any letter you may write to me, you must now send to the care of the House of Baring Brothers of London. As I have no concealments from mamma, and as you always give me credit" (*credit*, in the mouth of a young lady!) "for being a circumspect person, she has arranged for me, that at all events we shall not leave England until we hear from you in answer to this; so I have made a duplicate of it" (*duplicate* of a love letter, ye gods!), "a thing that has proved more irksome than writing ten originals, which I will send by the next opportunity, as I know you would be sadly annoyed if any confusion should take place, such as your going to New York, and finding us abroad" (*abroad*—in England); "at least, I know, my dearest Benjamin, I should be miserable at the thoughts of it." (Well you might, my lady, thought I)—"I am all impatience for another letter from you," (why, she has not acknowledged one yet); "surely your excellent uncle will enter into your feelings; indeed I have satisfied my heart that he will, and made up my mind not to distress myself, in the mean time, in the hope that all will run smooth with us. You see I have no darts, and flames, and nonsense for you—nothing *ultra*, Benjamin—no superlatives—I have studied myself as well as I can, and there is no character, I am persuaded, that suits me so well as what you gave me. I am a

quiet, prudent, unobtrusive, but warm-hearted little woman—there is a vain girl for you—and oh, Benjamin, my heart tells me, if I am spared in *His* mercy, that you will find what my father says to be true, 'Whoever marries my Helen will get a wife that will wear well, *I calculate.*'

"You will be surprised to learn that the old Gazelle is here again. After being a week out, she was forced back from bad weather, and is now repairing. Poor Mr Donovan has had to invalid; they say he never recovered his severe illness on the coast of Africa, and was always raving about some fair one with one eye, who lived in a street to which Broadway in York was a narrow lane—but it is a melancholy affair for him, poor young man, and I check my thoughts, and stop my pen, as I had a jest regarding him, that was ready to drop from it.

"And what do you think?—Henry de Walden has got an acting order as lieutenant in his stead. The ship had been a week here, before Mr Donovan could make up his mind, and all that time Master Henry never once looked near us, and poor Sophie did nothing but spoil wax flowers, and weep—but, two days ago, as she and I were returning in the volante from our evening drive, who should we meet, in charge of a party of seamen who were returning from the funeral of a comrade who had died that morning—oh, Benjamin, what a fearful climate this is—but him!—He did not see us until we were close upon him, when I desired the driver to pull up, so he could not escape us if he had tried it; poor Sophie lay back in the volante, out of sight, as she thought—I am sure I heard her heart beat. I asked him why he had not come to see us—he seemed unprepared to answer; indeed, as you used to say, he was evidently taken completely aback—and blushed, and then grew pale, and blushed again—for he saw very well who was cowering at the back of the carriage.—'I was going to call on you this very evening,' he said, at length; 'I thought you would all be glad to hear of my promotion'—Poor Sophie's rigid clasp round my waist relaxed, and she gave a sigh as if her heart had burst—but it was her pent feelings that had been relieved, —'Your promotion!' I cried, in great joy.—'Yes, I have got poor Mr Donovan's vacancy,'—'Dead? Is poor Mr Donovan dead?'—'No,' continued he, 'he is not dead, but has invalided this forenoon, and Sir Oliver has given me an acting order as lieutenant in his stead. I make no doubt it will be confirmed; indeed he said he knows it will.'

"He came in the evening according to his promise, and most happy we were to see him—but what a world of changes—the very next day the Spider arrived, when we heard of your narrow escape; to show you my composure, I have purposely kept this out of sight until this moment, nor will I say much now. I went when I heard it, and offered up my prayers to that Almighty Being who rules over all, and orders every thing for the best, although we poor shortsighted creatures may not see it, and blessed *His* holy name, that you had safely reached your destination.

"But I am getting confused, I find. The bearer of your letter, poor young man, is no more—he died this morning of yellow fever. And who do you think is appointed to the Spider?—why, Henry De Walden, once more—nothing, you see, but Henry de Walden!

"To make a long story short, Mr Duquesné has now given his consent to their union, but old Sir Oliver, who exercises a *great*, and to me unaccountable control over Henry, will not hear of it, until he is made commander, so they must both live in hope; but for the moment, they are but too happy to be extricated from the gloomy slough of despond in which they had made up their minds they were both set fast. My father, mamma, Mr Duquesné, Sophie, and Henry De Walden, all unite in kindest regards to you. And now, my dearest Benjamin, do not be alarmed at this blistered manuscript; my heart is melting, and weeping relieves me, but I am not unhappy—oh, no—but anxious—oh, *how* anxious!—I will now retire to my closet, and cast myself before the rock of my trust, and pray to my God, and your God, in whose great hand we stand, to bless us both; and speedily, *if* it be his good pleasure, to bring us once more together, never to be parted. I am fond and foolish, Benjamin—fond and foolish—but I know to whom I write. The seaman who waits for the letters is ordered on board, and I must conclude. Give my love to your uncle—I am sure I shall *love him*—tell him he *must love* me, for your sake, if not for my own. Once more adieu, and God bless you.

"Your own affectionate  
"HELEN HUDSON."

"P.S.—Dicky has scrambled up on my knee, to give me a kiss to send to his *papa*. He bids me say that 'Billy, de sheep, quite well; only him hair wont curl any more, like Dicky's, but begin to grow straight and ugly, like Mr Listado's."

## CHAPTER IX.

### OCCIDENTAL VAGARIES.

Early on the Monday, we accordingly started on our journey, and that evening arrived at very comfortable quarters in St Ann's bay.

We did not get under weigh next morning until the sun was high—it was nearly ten in the

forenoon, as we had only to go the length of Prickly Pear cottage that day, a property belonging to a crony of mine uncle's, at which we had promised to dine and spend the night on our way to St Thomas in the Vale, where we were to call a halt, to attend some military dinner or another at Bogwalk tavern.

The beauty of St Ann's, the principal grazing parish of Jamaica, surpassed any notion I had previously formed of it;—the whole district being a sea of gently undulating hill and valley, covered with the most luxuriant waving Guinea grass—across which the racking cloudlets, borne on the wings of the fresh and invigorating breeze, chased each other cheerily as if it had been one vast hay field, ready for the scythe—thickly interspersed with groves of pimento and fruit-trees, whose picturesque situations no *capability* man could possibly improve. The herds of cattle that browsed all round us, whether as to breed or condition, would have done credit to the first grazing county in England. Lord Althorp should go and take a squint at St Ann's—I daresay the worthies there might make him custos.

At length, as it drew on to three in the afternoon, we saw the cottage glittering in all the West India glory of green blinds and white paint, through the grove of fruit-trees in the centre of which it was placed. It was a long low one-story house, raised about ten feet off the ground on brick pillars, under which gamboled half-a-dozen goats, and surrounded by a cool and airy piazza, while the neighbouring thickets were peppered with a whole cluster of small white-washed buildings, comprising kitchen, gard-du-mange, houses for the domestics, pigsties, and poultry-yard.

We dismounted at one end of the piazza, where a door, kept gaping ajar by a large stone on the floor, to which access was had by a flight of steps, seemed to invite us to walk in. We ascended the stair and entered. The dark mirrorlike floors, the fragrant odour of the fresh gathered bitter oranges which had been just used in polishing them, the green shade of the trees that overshadowed the building, tossing their branches, and rushing and twittering in the sea breeze—the beautiful flowers that crept in at every open blind and crevice—(a knot in the weather boarding could not drop out but in would pop a rose, or a bud of double jessamine, as if trying to escape the ardent gaze of the sun)—the twilight of the rooms, and the glorious view of the everlasting ocean in the distance (with a tiny white winglet of a sail sliding along here and there), crisped with blue waves, as if the water had reflected the mackerel sky that glowed over all, until both were blended out at sea beneath a silvery haze—were indescribably luxurious and refreshing—their sweet and cooling influences more strongly felt, from the contrast they afforded to the heat and dust of the lowland road we had just left. Oh! I could—curse it—*there's* a mackaw—*there is* a mackaw—a bird I detest and abominate—so my poetry is all blown to the moon in a jiffy. I would rather sit and listen to the music of the setting of a saw, while enjoying the luxury of a sick headach.—But let me whistle back my fancy again, and get on with my story.

Several ladies' work-tables, with the work lying on them, tumbled as it were in haste, and chairs disarranged, showed that our approach had not been observed until we were close aboard, and that the fair members of the family had that moment fled, in order to make themselves presentable; indeed this was vouched for by the laughing, and *fistling*, and *keckling* we heard in a room, whose window opened into the piazza.

Presently a tidily-dressed brown waiting-maiden, with flowers on her gown the size of the crown of my hat, and of the gaudiest colours, popped her head in at the door, and after showing her white teeth, disappeared. She had very evidently been sent to reconnoitre, and I could not avoid overhearing her say in the inner room aforesaid, close to the open window of which our party were clustered, "Oh, nyung missis—dere are old massa Frenche—one tall town-looking buccra, wid big hook nose like one parrot bill—one leetler fat one, hab red face, and one fonny coat, all tick over wid small silk barrel, and broider wid black silk lace—And—oh, I forgot—one small slip of a boy, dat roll side to side so"—here she seemed to be suiting the action to the word—"like de sailor negro."

Now this was *me*, your honour.

At this moment we heard a noise, as if some one had been scraping the mud off his shoes at the back part of the house, and giving various orders at the same time in a loud voice to the servants; then a heavy step through the lofty hall, and enter a tall, sallow, yellow-snake of a man, in wide white jane trowsers and waistcoat,—the perspiration streaming down his face, and dripping from the point of his sun-peeled nose, while the collar of his shirt and his neckcloth were also very sudorous. He wore a threadbare blue coat, the buttons all covered with verdigris, and a hat—which he kept on, by the way—worn white at the edges, with the pasteboard frame of it visible where the silk nap had been rubbed.

"Ah, Frenche," quoth mine host, for it was no other, "how are you, my dear fellow? Paul, call your missis—and, Mr Twig, I am so glad to see you. Boys, get second breakfast—we have kept it back on purpose."

"Twang," thought I.

"Frenche, my lad, introduce me—your nephew, I presume?"

I bowed, and was shaken furiously by the hand.

"I should have known him, I declare; so like you, my old cock."

"Gammon again," thought I.

"And, Twig, I say, you must introduce me to"—Here he indicated Don Felix, and prepared to "pull his foot," as the negroes say, in that direction also—in other words, to make his bow to Monsieur Flamingo, who was accordingly made known to him in due form, and had his fingers nearly wrung off, as mine had been. Don Felix, so soon as he was released, took an opportunity of catching my eye, shaking them aside, and blowing the tips as if they had been burned.

The ladies now appeared—our hostess, really a splendid woman, and her daughter, fresh off the irons from a fashionable English boarding-school, a very pretty girl, but suffering under prickly heat (a sort of a what-do-ye-call-um, a kind of Jamaica imitation, but deucedly like 'tother thing in Scotland notwithstanding); and the plague of freckles—ods bobs, how I do hate freckles!—where was I—oh—so our lunch, or second breakfast, was really a very pleasant one. From that time until dinner, we talked, and read, and played bagatelle, and amongst other means employed to kill time, Miss Cornstick was set to play on the piano. She was, I make no doubt, a first-rate performer, and *spanged* her fingers from the keys as if they had been red hot iron, and tossed her head about as she sung, and cast her eyes towards the roof as if she had seen something rather surprising there.

"That's what I call singing with animation, at all events; oh, how I wish the pedals were mine enemies," whispered Don Felix.

"Ah, how missie *do* sing—how him do play on de pinano—wery extonishing fine," quoth the brown ladies' maid *sotto voce*, behind the open door of the anteroom, but loud enough for me to overhear.

However, allow for some few trifling peculiarities of this kind, and we had every reason to be exceedingly pleased with our entertainment; for we had a capital dinner, and some superb Madeira, and the evening passed over delightfully on the whole.

When we came to retire, I was shown to my sleeping apartment, a small room partitioned off from the end of the piazza; that is, altogether *without* the brick shell of the house itself.

I had proceeded in disrobing, and was about putting out the candle, when I heard a "cheep, cheep," overhead, as of a mouse in the paws of pussy. I looked up, and lo! an owl, perched on what seemed a shelf, that ran along the wall overhead, with mousey sure enough in his beak.

"Hillo," said I, "Master Owl, this will never do; you must make yourself scarce, my boy," and I seized a fishing-rod that happened to stand in the corner of the room—"there, take that, your owlship," and I made a blow at him with the but-end, but missed; however it had the effect of startling him off his perch, and with a loud *squake*, he took wing round the room. The first consequence of his vagary was the extinction of the light, whereby he got the weather-gage of me regularly, for although he could not see *in the light*, he saw beautifully *in the darkness*, and avoided my haphazard blows most scientifically. At length, amongst other feats of skill, and evidences of composure, I fractured the *monkey*, or earthen water-jar that garnished my toilet table, and finally capsized over the steps at the bedside, to the great loss of the skin on my shinbone, and the large effusion of my patience.

"Why, Jinker, Jinker!" I could hear a door open.

"Why, Jinker," said a man's voice,— "what noise is that in the piazza, in the name of wonder?"

*Snore—snort—yawn.* "Can't tell, massa," replied the negro domestic, who was thus roused from his lair in the piazza, "but I will go see de sound, what it is, massa."

"You will," thought I, as I heard him groping and grumbling all about—"What naise is dat?—my fader—what a knock my nose take again dat post him—mi say, what naise dat is?" quoth Quashie, more than half asleep—"Nobody hanswer? Me say de tird time, what naise, eh?"

I had gathered myself into bed the best way I could, but the owl continued his gyrations round and round the room, and here gave another *screech*. "Ha," said Jinker, "creech howl, massa—creech howl."

"Screech owl!" rejoined Mr Cornstick, for it was he who had spoken; "how the deuce can a screech owl upset chairs, smash the crockery, and make such an infernal to do as that? Get a light, sir."

All this while I was like to choke with laughter. "Jinker," said I, "bring a light here, and don't alarm the family. Tell Mr Cornstick it is only an owl that has got, I can't tell how, into my room—nothing more." I heard Mr Cornstick laugh at this, and say a word of comfort to Mrs Cornstick, as I supposed, and she again began to console a *wee skirling* Cornstick, that I concluded was their bedfellow, and then shut the door.

Creak—another door opened—"Diana!" said Miss Cornstick, in great alarm—"Good gracious! what is *all* that, Diana?"

"Noting, misses, but one fight between de leetle sailor buccra and one howl."

"So, here's a mess! The whole Cornstick family—men, women, and children—set alive and kicking in the dead of night, by me and my uninvited visitor!"

Presently Jinker appeared with a lighted candle, but by this time the owl was nowhere to be seen.

"How him get away, massa? I no see him."

No more did I. We continued our search.

"Him cannot possib have creep troo de keyhole."

"I should rather think not," said I; "but there he was, perched up in that corner, when I first saw him. He was sitting on that very shelf. Where the deuce can the creature have stowed himself?"

"Shelf!" said the negro; "shelf! What shelf, massa?"

"That one there; isn't it a shelf?"

"Shelf! O no, massa, it is de gutter dat lead de rain from de roof of de house dat come along here under de eaves of de shingle, you know, and den pour him into one larsh barrel outside; but tap"—Here Jinker got on the table, to inspect the lay of the land more perfectly. "Ah, I see; he hab come in and go out troo de guttering, sure enough"—(a square uncovered trough). "He must have nest hereabout, massa."

"But how shall we *keep* him out," said I, "now since he is out?"

"Tap, I shall show you. Give me up one on dem towel, please, massa. I will tuff him into de hole till daybroke."

"Indeed, but you shall not do *that* thing; none of your stopping the gutter. Why, only suppose it should rain in the night, Snowball—eh? Would it not overflow, my beauty? You don't want to drown me, do you?"

"Massa, no fear of dat—none at all; de moon clear and hard as one bone; and de star, dem twinkle sharp and bright as one piece broken glass when de sun shine on him. No, no, all dry, dry—no rain before morning. Rain! dere shan't be no rain for one mont."

"But I am not inclined to take your word for this, my lad; so"—

"Bery well, massa; bery good—massa know betterest; so, since massa want howl for bedfellow, Jinker can't help it—only massa had better put someting over him face to cover him nose, or him yeye—basin will do—oh, howl love piece of de nose of one nyung buccra bery mosh."

Come, thought I, sleeping with a basin on one's face is too absurd after all; but better even that than be drowned—"So, friend Jinker,"—I was now resolved—"since *that* is your name, *stop* the hole you *shall not*; therefore, jink out of the room, will ye, for I am very drowsy."

I fell asleep, but the notion of this said conduit leading through my room haunted me. At one moment I dreamed I heard the rain beating on the roof of the house, and against the blinds; and the next the rushing, and rippling, and gurgling of the water along the hollow wooden pipe; then I was wafted by the *sound*—there's a poetical image for you—to the falls of Niagara, and was standing in the cave of Eolus, with the strong damp gusts of cold wind eddying and whirling around me, as if it would have lifted me off my feet on the wings of my shirt—for mind I had no other garment on—below the Great Horseshoe fall, with the screen of living waters falling, green and foam-streaked, like a sheet of flowing-glass, past my eyes, down down, down—and boiling away into the Devil's Pot under foot. Anon the sparkling veil of water was bent towards me, until it touched the tip of my nose, and I turned to escape; but the basin on my face prevented my seeing. But this again soon became transparent, as if the coarse delf had been metamorphosed into clear crystal, and down thundered the cascade again—for it had ceased for a moment, you must know—sprinkled this time with draggle-winged owls, as thick as Bonaparte's coronation robe with bees. I was choked, suffocated, and all the rest of it. "Murder! Murder!—I am drowned—I am drowned—for ever and entirely drowned!" and in an agony of fear I struggled to escape, but in vain—in vain—

"The waters gather'd o'er me!"

when enter friend Jinker—"Massa, massa, who hurt you? Who kill you? Who *ravage* you?"

Bash; something wet, and cold, and feathery flew against my face—"Oh, gemini, what is this next! Lights—lights—lights—my kingdom for a farthing-candle!"

"Will massa only be pleased to sit down on de bed and be quiet one moment?" said my sable friend.



I did so; and beginning to breathe—for the falls of Niagara had now ceased—I rubbed my eyes, and lo! the blessed sun shone brightly through the lattice just opened by Jinker, and out flew the owl with a loud screech, more happy to escape than I was to get quit of him apparently; and flying as a drunken man walks, zig-zag, up and down, against trees and bushes, until it landed in a pimento-tree about pistol-shot from the house, where he gave a wild "Hoo, hoo, hoo," as if he had said, "Thank my stars, I have found rest to the sole of my foot at last."

But such a scene as the room presented! Notwithstanding friend Jinker's prognostication, there *had been* a heavy shower, and the bed was deluged with dirty water—the green matter from the shingles discolouring all the sheets—while from the flooded floor the water was soaking through the seams, and drip dripping on the dry ground below, like a shower-bath.—"Now, dat howl! him do it all, massa," quoth Jinker, "sure as can be."

"Don't you think the rain had somewhat to do with it too, Jinker?" But Jinker was deaf as a post.

"Here, you see, when you trike at him, he drap mouse—dere him lie dead on de table; so he come back when you sleep, and no doubt after de rain begin, for see de fedder tick on de nail in de gutter, and de howl must hab been tick in de hole, and choke de water back, and"—

Here Quashie caught a glimpse of my disconsolate physiognomy, all drenched and forlorn. It was too much for him; so, forgetting all his manners, he burst into a long and loud laugh. However, no serious damage was done; and at breakfast there was not a little fun at my expense.

\* \* \* \* \*

It turned out that our entertainer, and his wife and daughter, were bound on a visit this forenoon to some neighbour; so, as our roads lay together so far, we all started after breakfast in company. I was a good deal amused at the change in the outward *woman* of my *ladies maid*, the handsome brown girl in the gay gown already mentioned, who now appeared stripped of her plumes, without stockings or shoes, in her Osnaburg chemise, and coarse blue woollen petticoat—the latter garment shortened, like the tunic of her namesake Diana, by a handkerchief tied tightly round her waist, just over the hips, exhibiting the turn of her lower spars to considerably above the knee—with a large bandbox on her head covered with oilskin, and a good cudgel in her hand. I asked Mr Cornstick how far they were going. He answered it was a ride of fifteen miles, and, in the same breath, he called out to the brown damsel, "Say we shall be there by second breakfast time, Diana."

"Yes, massa."

"Mind we don't get there before you."

"No fear of dat, massa," said the silvan goddess, smiling, as she struck off through the woods at a pace that would have pleased Captain Barclay exceedingly. It appeared that she was to take a short cut across the hills.

"How can that girl *trust* her naked limbs in such a brake?" said I.

"Why not, don't you see she is a *chased* goddess?" said Don Felix.

"Now, Flamingo, I verily believe you will peck at a grain of mustard-seed next," quoth friend Twig.

We started; Mrs Cornstick on a stout pony, with the head servant, Mark Antony, by name, but as ugly a flat-nosed *nigger* as Christian could desire to clap eyes on by *nature*, holding on by its tail. Then came Miss Cornstick on *her* palfrey, with a similar pendant, but her page was a fine handsome mulatto boy; while we brought up the rear—the whole cavalcade being closed by the mounted servants. By and by, the road being good, although mountainous, we spanked along at a smart rate, and it was then that the two fellows pinned to the ladies' tails—the tails of their ponies, I beg pardon—showed their paces in a most absurd fashion, making great flying strides at every step, so as to keep time with the canter of the quadrupeds. They looked like two dancing-masters gone mad. I thought of Cutty Sark clutching the tail of Tam O'Shanter's grey mare Meg.

"Do you see that humming-bird?" said Jacob Twig, who was giving me a cast in his curriole—Flamingo having changed into my uncle's gig. Crack—he knocked it down on the wing with his whip, as it hovered over some flowers on the roadside. "That's what I call a good shot now."

"Ah, but a very cruel one," said I.

"Sorry for it—shan't do it again, Mr Brail."

"Safe in that," thought I.

On coming to a cross-road, the Cornsticks struck off to the left, and, saying good-by, we stood on our course.

Nothing particular occurred until we were descending the hill into St Thomas in the Vale. The sun was shining brightly without a cloud. The jocund breeze was rushing through the trees, and

dashing their masses of foliage hither and thither; turning up the silvery undersides of the leaves at one moment, and then changing their hues into all shades of green the next. The birds were glancing and chirping amongst the branches. The sleek cattle were browsing lazily and contentedly on the slope of the hill; and the merry negro gangs were shouting and laughing at their work—but the vulture was soaring over all in pride of place; eagle-like, far up in the clear blue firmament, as if the abominable bird had been the genius of the yellow fever, hovering above the fair face of nature, ready to stoop and blast it.

The sky gradually darkened—all cloudless as it was—for there was not a shred of vapour floating in its pure depths so big as the hand of the servant of the prophet. The gloom increased—not that kind of twilight that precedes the falling of the night—but a sort of lurid purple hue that began mysteriously to pervade the whole atmosphere, as if we had been looking forth on the landscape through a piece of glass stained with smoke.

"Heyday," said Felix, "what's the matter? I see no clouds, yet the sun is overcast. It increases;"—the oxen on the hill sides turned and looked over their shoulders with a puzzled look, as if they did not know what to make of it, no more than ourselves—"Can't be time to go home to take our night spell in that weary mill yet, surely?"

The large carrion crows rapidly declined in their flight, narrowing their sweeping circles gradually, until they pirouetted down, and settled, with outstretched wings, on the crags above us; startling forth half a dozen bats, and a slow sailing owl, the latter fluttering about as if scarcely awake, and then floating away steadily amongst the bushes, as if he had said—"Come, it must be the *gloaming* after all—so here goes for mousey."

The negroes suddenly intermitted the chipping and tinkling of their hoes, and the gabbling of their tongues, as they leant on the shanks of the former, and looked up. "Heigh, wurra can be come over de daylight, and no shell blow yet?"<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] The gangs are turned in at dinner-time by the sounding of a conch shell.

We now perceived the chirping of insects and reptiles that usually prevails, during the hours of night in the West Indies, begin to breeze up. First a lizard would send forth a solitary whistle, as much as to say, "It can't be night yet surely?" Then, from the opposite side of the way, another would respond, with a low startled "*wheetle wheetle*," which might be interpreted, "Indeed but it is though;" and on this, as if there had been no longer any doubt about the matter, the usual concert of crickets, beetles, lizards, and tree toads, buzzed away as regularly as if it had indeed been evening in very truth.

"An eclipse of the sun," said I, and sure enough so it was; for in half an hour it gradually lightened again, and every thing became once more as bright and cheery, and everyday-like as before.

We arrived at Bogwalk tavern to dinner, where we found a grand party of the officers of the regiment of foot militia, and also of the troop. The general commanding the district had reviewed them that morning, and was to have dined with them, but for some reason or another he had to return to Spanish Town immediately after the review. It was a formidable thing meeting so many red coats and gay laced blue jackets; and, of course, I was much gratified to learn, that the brown company fired remarkably well—how steadily the grenadiers passed in review—and how soldier-like Captain M'—, who commanded the light horse, had given the word of command.

"How thoroughly your horse is broke now, Mac.," said a tall man, with a nose like a powder-horn—"steady as a rock, and such courage!"

"Courage!" rejoined Captain Mac., "he would charge up to the mouth of a cannon."

"Ay," whispered Flamingo to me, "if a bag of corn were hung on the muzzle."

We started early, as the night fell, and arrived in Spanish Town the same evening; and next day were comfortably domiciled in Squire Flamingo's mansion in Kingston.

It was the race week, and the town had gathered all the fashion of the island—nothing could be gayer.

Our friend Twig had several running horses, and altogether the bare-legged black jockeys, with the stirrup-irons held between their toes, parrot fashion, and the slight thorough-bred things they rode, acquitted themselves extremely well; besides, we had matches amongst the officers of the garrison, and theatricals, and pig races, and I don't know what all.

Speaking of theatricals, if you will wait a moment I will tell you of an amusing playhouse row that I happened to witness, and wherein my friend Flamingo and myself bore conspicuous parts *by mistake*.

It happened to be an amateur performance, and we had just seated ourselves in the second

row of a buccra box, near the stage.

I was admiring the neatness of the house, which was great for a provincial theatre any where, and the comical appearance the division of castes produced, as thus:—The pit seemed to be almost exclusively filled with the children of Israel, as peculiar in their national features here as everywhere else; the dress boxes contained the other white inhabitants and their families; the second tier the brown *ladies*, who seemed more intent on catching the eyes of the young buccras *below*, than attending to the civil things the males of their own shade were pouring into their ears *above*; the gallery was tenanted by Bungo himself, in all his glory of black face, blubber lips, white eyes, and ivory teeth. This black parterre being powdered here and there with a sprinkling of white sailors, like snowdrops in a bed of purple anemones; Jack being, as usual on such occasions, pretty well drunk.

A very nice-looking fresh complexioned little man was sitting on the same bench along with us on the right hand—that is, next the stage—and a young stray Hebrew, having eschewed the pit, sat on our left—we were thus between them—a post of no small danger, as it turned out. There had been some wrangling between these parties before we entered, for no sooner had Flamingo and I taken our seats, than Moses said *across us*, but, as it afterwards appeared, intending to address the *gentleman already mentioned*, "If you say that again, sir, I will pull your nose."

Thereupon, up rose the *short* ruddy man, and up rose the *long* Don Felix, each appropriating the insult to himself; but Flam, who never dreamed that any nose could be spoken of when his own kidney potato was in company, was first, and levelled little Moses in an instant. This was the signal for the sea of Jews in the pit to toss its billows; and, like a great cauldron, to popple and hiss, until it boiled over into the boxes, in a roaring torrent, that speedily overthrew both Don Felix, the little ruddy man, and *I Benjie*, who had neither part nor portion in the quarrel, *into the bargain*; and such a pommelling I never got before or since.

Whatever Moses's creed might have been, he spared not my *bacon* that blessed night, as my poor ribs witnessed for many a long day.

In the midst of the uproar, a magistrate—a most excellent and sedate personage—planted his back against the pillar, immediately behind me, where a cohort of parrot bills had already turned the flank of the brave little red man, and were threatening my own rear, left uncovered by the destruction of both of my coat skirts. Here he shouted at the top of his pipe to "keep the peace;" but one of the assailants, a powerful bluebeard, speedily gagged *him*, by passing his arm round his neck, and pinning him to the post, as if he had been a culprit undergoing the Spanish punishment of the *garrote*.

At length the row became so serious and *national*, that the whole house was likely to side with one or other of the parties; the manager, therefore, fearing for the safety of his theatre, sent for the chief magistrate in town (not the mayor, who was absent), and he fortunately made his appearance very promptly, with a party of police; the row on this was fast subsiding, until a very ludicrous incident made it breeze up again with twofold violence, like flax steeped in turpentine cast on a smouldering fire. For the last ten minutes Don Felix had disappeared, having been literally trodden down, after a fall on missing his blow at the Goliah who led the assault; and when the storm abated, and he could screw himself from under the benches where he had been forced, the first thing he did, in his haste and confusion, was *to throttle the very man of authority himself*; taking him for one of the enemy. The tumult again increased on this, and we now ran some chance of being extinguished altogether; for a gigantic black-whiskered Israelite had upheaved a stick, which threatened to prove the thickness of my skull, had there been any doubt about it, when I was saved by the timely succour afforded by a powerful sailor-looking chap, who had fought his way towards us, clearing a path right and left amongst our enemies, like a walking windmill.

"Foul, foul—stick against fist—fair play is a jewel," sung out the windmill, whom, it flashed on me at the moment, I had seen before, and suiting the action to the word, he seized him of the black whisker and parrot nose, neck and croup, and pitched him down bodily into the thickest of the troubled waters of the pit, as if he had been a juvenile branch of the grunter family—not pig upon pork, however, but Jew upon Jew, where he floundered on the sea of heads for a minute, like a harpooned whale come to the surface to breathe, and then sank, to have his ribs very sufficiently kneaded by the knees and feet of his rebellious compatriots.

Having accomplished this feat, the sailor, as if desirous of escaping observation, slid out of the *mêlée*, and I lost sight of him.

The fight continued, but the police were by this time masters; and fortunately we were taken into custody, and bailed by our friends. Next day we escaped with a fine.

At breakfast Twig was comforting us. "Poo, poo—never mind—it was all a mistake—all a mistake, you know."

"Yes," quoth Don Felix, "but my ribs are not the less sore; no mistake there I assure you."

"And the skirts of my coat," said I.

But to return to the races. On one occasion, a certain Captain Jack Straw, master of one of the London ships, and the collector of the customs, were two of Flamingo's guests at dinner, and a match was made between them, to come off next morning.

It was given out to be a trial of bottom, as they were to ride six times round the race course. Now the latter was a measured mile; a six-mile heat, thought I, in such a climate, and the owners to ride! However, there was nothing more said about it, and I had forgotten it, until Mr Flamingo took me out in his Stanhope at daybreak the next morning to see the racers sweated; and there, the first thing that met our eyes was old Straw sure enough, with his hat tied under his chin by a red bandana, and his trowsers shuffled up to his knees, ambling along mighty fussily, on a great chestnut mare, as unlike a race-horse, as one could well fancy an individual of the same species to be; for although he *appeared* to be cantering along, the pace was so sluggish, that we passed him easily in a trot. Those who have seen Ducrow in the Tailor riding to Brentford, caprioling on the stage as if he were going fifteen knots an hour, while he never shoots a single fathom a-head, will form a good idea of our friend's appearance and style of locomotion.

"Well, Jack," cried Flamingo, "how come you on? who wins?"

Here the collector came rattling up astern, deucedly well mounted, standing in his stirrups, his long nose poked between his horse's ears, and riding, regular jockey fashion, without his coat, a handkerchief tied round his head, and his whip crossed in his teeth, and sawing away with his hands.

As he passed the old sailor, he pulled up—

"Now, Jack, do give in, and don't boil me to jelly; you see I have done four rounds of the course, while you have not completed two. You must be aware you have no chance; so give in, and come and breakfast with me—do, that's a good fellow."

"Give in!" roared Jack, "give in, indeed! That's a good one—why, the old mare's bottom is only beginning to tell—give in, Master Collector!—No, no—besides, I see your horse is blown—there, mind he don't bolt; give in, indeed!"

And thereupon he made a devil of a splutter; heels, arms, and head all in a fidget, and away shot his antagonist once more, leaving Jack puffing and bobbing on his asthmatic mare, up and down, up and down, in a regular hobby-horsical fashion, as like his own heavy-sterned ship digging through a head sea on a bowline, as could well be imagined.

However, the collector *did* win, which honest Jack had foreseen all along, although the six-mile gallop had put him into a rare fever; but bearing no malice, as he said, after handsomely paying the stakes, he went and breakfasted, according to invitation, with his conqueror.

That day at dinner we met both the equestrians, when Jack told us with great glee, as one does a good joke, that his mate had run three pipes of Cognac and twenty dozen of claret, during the time the coast *was clear*, but that he had satisfied his conscience by sending a case of the latter to the *friend* he had so cleverly kept in play, with his compliments, "not to ride races of six-mile heats again, before breakfast."

As we rode up to the course next evening, at four o'clock, as usual, we were somewhat late, and found the rope drawn across the ingress at the bottom of the race ground. The bugle to saddle had sounded some time before; so we had to pull up where we were, in order to see the horses pass. We were standing with our horses' heads close to the ropes, when an overseer of some neighbouring estate rode up, pretty well primed, and, to our great surprise, charged the rope, which he did not appear to see. He was only trotting his mule, however, and there was no haste or violence about him; but when the rope checked the animal, he gave a drunken pitch, but all as quiet as could be, and toppled over its head quite gently, as if he had been a sack, into the ride, where, after making one or two sprawling movements with his feet, he lay still, with the beast looking at him from the other side of the rope, and poking down its head, and snorting and snoking at him. The next bugle sounded, the horses were away, and some of the lookers-on had just time to drag the poor fellow off the course by the legs, when they passed us like a whirlwind.

"Tree to one on Moses," cried one sable amateur, for if we had not altogether the *style* of Newmarket, it was from no want of *Blacklegs*.

"Six to one on Blue Peter," quoth another ragged neger.

"Five to one on Mammy Taws."

"Slap Bang against de field." And all was anxiety about the race; but no one took any notice of the poor overseer, who lay still and motionless on the side of the dry ditch that surrounds the course.

At length, seeing the poor creature broiling in the hot sun, we dismounted to help him up.

"Massa," said a negro, taking his arm, "he must be well dronk dis buccra. See how him hand drop again when I lift him—supple like one new-kill snake."

"Supple enough," said Dr —, who now rode up, and felt his pulse first, and then his neck. "Poor fellow! supple as he is now, he will be soon stark and stiff enough. His neck is broken —*that's all.*"

"Neck broken!" said Flamingo and I in a breath, much shocked.

"Yes, and dead as Julius Cæsar. But, pray, did you notice if the White Jacket and Black Cap came in?"

*The man had, in very truth, actually broken his neck.*

Several evenings after this, I was engaged with a fishing party, in a canoe, near the top of the harbour, at a cove where the prizes of the squadron were usually moored, previous to their being sold. It was a very fine evening, and the sun was setting gloriously in the west—as where else should he have set? Our sport had been very good, and we were thinking of taking up the grapnel.

"I say, Brail," said Flamingo, "let us go and inspect the Morne Fortunee there." This was a French privateer, one of the captured vessels, that lay about a cable's length from where we were.

"Come along, then—there, string the fish, Twister. Up anchor, boys, and pull for that brig."

As we approached, we saw a man get into a small skiff that lay alongside, with two black fellows in it, rather hurriedly, and pull for the shore.

The last rays of the evening sun shone brightly on him, as he passed us, and I had a good squint at his face. He gave me a piercing look also, and then suddenly turned away.

"Eh! no, it can't be—by Mercury, but it is though! Why, there *is* the fellow that saved my *bacon* from the Jew at the theatre, I declare. And more than that, when I piece several floating notions together—why, Don Felix, there goes, as large as life, the Master Wilson of Montego bay."

"You don't say so?" quoth Flamingo. "Stop, we have four fellows in the boat besides ourselves and the servant, and here is my gun. And Quacco there is an old soldier. Boys, give way after that boat—one dollar, if you beat him."

"Hurrah! hurrah for massa!" And away we shot after the skiff, which, as yet, was proceeding very leisurely, so that we rapidly gained on it. As we came up within pistol-shot, the chase lay on his oars, and the person steering looked steadily at us. I was not so sure of him now. He had a deep scar down his left cheek, which the other had not.

"Do you want any thing with me, gentlemen?" This simple question fairly posed us.

"No—not—that is—pull the starboard oars." The last sentence I spoke to the negroes in a whisper, and the effect of the fulfilment of the order was to bring the bow of the canoe within a couple of yards of the broadside of the skiff. The stranger, at this suspicious movement, made a sign to his men, who stretched out with the thews of gladiators. This broke the ice.

"After him, my lads," cried Flamingo.

We were now within a quarter of a mile of the narrow neck of sand that divides the harbour from the sea, here about fifty yards broad, and not above three feet high; so that, although the skiff was evidently heading us, yet we had every prospect of being up in time to seize the crew before they could haul her across, and launch her through the surf on the sea-face of the bank.

"There he is ashore. Murder, how handily the black fellows walk off with the skiff, as if it were paper."

As Don Felix spoke, we also took the ground, and he and I jumped out, and pushed after the strangers. When we got within ten yards of them, the party of whom I had suspicions turned resolutely, and made a step towards us.

"I do not know to what circumstance I am indebted for the pleasure of your company, gentlemen," said he quite calmly. "Will you please to make known your desire?"

Here Flamingo, Quacco, and one of the canoe-men made as if they would pass him, and get between him and the beach, where his people were in the very act of launching the skiff through the surf. When he saw this, he smiled bitterly, and drew his belt tighter, but all with the utmost coolness. He then, as if setting about some necessary labour, walked up to Quacco, by far the most powerful of our party, and seizing him by the throat, dashed him to one side, and a black fellow to the other, as if they had been children; he then deliberately walked into the water up to his waist, clambered into the skiff, and before we could count twenty, he was pulling right out to sea, without once looking behind him.

"Heave to, or I'll fire at you, by Jupiter!" roared Don Felix.

The stranger still did not deign to look round, occupying himself in bailing out the water that the skiff had taken in the shove through the surf.

Flamingo repeated the threat, levelling his fowling-piece; at which our friend slowly held up a bright-barrelled article, that he took from the bottom of the boat, more like a swivel than a blunderbuss. At sight of this, Don Felix dropped his gun as if the barrel had burned his fingers, whipped both hands under the skirts of his coat, wheeling round on one leg at the same time, and drawing himself up to his full height, and grinning and shutting his eyes, and slewing his head on one side, as if he had been trying to present the smallest possible surface to the pelting of a hail shower. The stranger, at this, slowly replaced the weapon, and in a twinkling was out of gun-shot, pulling towards a schooner lying becalmed outside of the keys.

"I say, Brail, did you see that glancing affair in his hand? Was it a carronade, think you, or a long eighteen-pounder? Why, it might have doodled our whole party as regularly as Rory Macgregor did his own ducks."

On returning, we went on board the prize brig, from which we had startled our friend, and found the arm-chest on the poop broken open, and the contents scattered all about the deck, as if the party had been picking and choosing.

"So, so, I see what our honest man has been after," said I.

There was no prize-keeper on board; and, knowing this, the visit of the skiff had unquestionably been for the purpose of purloining arms.

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"Jackson," said a gentleman at dinner, at the house where I dined that day, "any further accounts from windward?"

"No; there are two schooners, the Humming Bird and Sparkle, on the look-out; but no tidings of the infernal little felucca."

"Felucca! felucca!" said I, looking across the table at Don Felix. "Pardon me, sir, what felucca were you speaking of?"

"Why, that is more than I can tell you, sir; but she has plundered three London ships off Morant bay within this last week; one of them belonging to me, and in my case the captain and crew were most cruelly treated; but now, when two men-of-war schooners are cruising for her, she has vanished like a spectre."

"Yes," said another of the party; "and the John Shand was boarded yesterday evening by the same vessel off Yallahs, and robbed of a chronometer; but the boarding officer, by way of *amende*, I suppose, politely handed the captain the *Kingston papers of the morning*."

"Ho, ho, Master Wilson," thought I.

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"Cockadoodle doo—doo—doo!" Never was there such a place as Kingston for the crowing of cocks. In other countries cocks sleep at night and crow in the morning, like respectable birds; but here, confound them, they crow through the whole livelong night; and, towards daydawn, it is one continuous stream of cock-crowing all over the town.

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Some days after the transaction already related, Messrs Flamingo and Twig carried me to dine at the Court-House with the officers on duty with the militia Christmas guard. It was an artillery company, in which Don Felix held a commission, that had the guard, the captain of which was a very kind, but roughspun genius. However, his senior lieutenant, Jessamy by name, was a perfect contrast to him, and a deuced handsome fellow; so he made up for it. Quite a Frenchman in his manners and dress, but, so far as I could judge, with what is vulgarly called a "bee in his bonnet." Nevertheless, he was an excellent young man at bottom, although his nonsense, which was rather entertaining at first, became a little *de trop* when the bottle began to circulate;—for instance, he insisted, after dinner, on showing us the last Parisian step, and then began to jabber French, for display, as it were,—finishing off by asking me *who made my coat*. Now, I cannot endure people noticing one's externals; so I stared, and gave him no answer at first; but he pinned me to the wall,—so I mentioned my tailor's name—Stultz.

"Ah! the only man in England who can *cut*; but the German *Schneiders* who take root in Paris eclipse him entirely. Ah! the German *exactitude* and Parisian taste combined! Nothing like it, Mr Brail—nothing like it, my dear sir. There, what think you of that fit?" jumping up and showing his back, to which his garment clung like a sign at a shop-door.

I applauded amazingly, as he wriggled himself this way and that.

"Hillo! what's that?" said the captain.

"The tocsin, the tocsin—the fire-bell, as I am a gentleman," quoth his gay sub. And sure enough the church bell was clanging away at a furious rate, and the fire-engines began to lumber and rattle past; while the buz in the streets, and the tramp of people running along the brick-paved piazzas below, told plainly enough that a fire had actually broken out somewhere.

"Guard, turn out—guard, turn out!" roared mine host, full of military ardour. And the sudden tap of the drum was followed by a bustle, and heavy trampling, and the clatter and clash of muskets from the guard room, showing that the command had been obeyed with great alacrity.

We had been boozing in the Grand-Jury Room, which was connected with the piazza in front of the Court-House, or temporary guard-house, by a long wooden gangway, so that we had to pass the principal entrance to the latter, before descending to the street, where the men were mustering. It seemed that the jovial train-bands had been making as good use of their time as we had been doing; for the long table before the bench, where in term-time the lawyers used to congregate, was profusely covered with cold meats, glasses, and wine-decanter.

We were a good deal surprised to see a large earthen pipkin, about five feet high, used to hold water, that had been taken from the drip, or filter-stone frame, where it usually stood in a corner, now planted in the middle of the floor, with (of all things in the world) a red, drunken face sticking out of it, crowned with a hat and feather. This was one of the invincibles, who had been made drunk, and then thrust into it by his comrades; and he must have found his quarters somewhat of the dampest, for the vessel was more than half full, as we could hear, from the splashing of the culprit's limbs. In his struggles, presently he upset it, and rolled about on the floor, with the water gushing and gurgling out at his neck; while he kept shouting that they had changed the liquor on him.

There could be no fault found with the zeal and promptitude with which the gallant bombardiers *fell* in; but I am sorry to say that more than one of them very speedily *fell* out, or rather tumbled out; for I cannot speak so favourably of their steadiness under arms as I could wish. It was no doubt a time of profound quietness and peace, so that some relaxation of the rules and articles of war was allowable; for the negroes were thinking of nothing but fun and dancing, and those Christmas guards were more a matter of form, or to air the young officers' gay uniforms, than any thing else. Our gallant captain himself was not quite so staid in his carriage at this time as the Archbishop of Canterbury usually is in the House of Lords, as his mode of carrying on speedily evinced; first, of all absurdities in the world, he chose to open the campaign by making a speech to his men, concluding with "England expects every man to do his duty."—"Now, men—let us proceed to *buzziness*" (what a mouthful he took of the word, to be sure). "Shoulder arms." Up went the firelocks to the shoulders of the tipsy heroes, very *promiscuously*, as Jonathan says. He then gave the word to "fix bayonets." Now, to those who understand the setting of a squadron in the field, to obey *this* was a physical impossibility to *men* who were standing with their muskets *shouldered*, whatever it might have been to *monkeys*.

The captain, *hearing* there was something wrong, from the clatter of men and muskets, for it was pitch dark, called out—"Are all your bayonets fixed?"

"The devil a one of them," said a drunken voice; "nor can be, unless you send for a ladder—or, and *it would be the cheapest plan probably*, tell us to order arms again."

Of the two alternatives, the last was chosen; the muskets were ordered, and the bayonets at length fixed; but all this, and the difficulty of getting the squad under weigh in any thing like tolerable marching order, took up time; and, from the dying away of the uproar in the distance, it seemed to me that before we got through with our manoeuvres the fire might be out, and the necessity for the display of so much skill and courage have passed over.

"Double quick time—march;—now scull along, ye devils, or the fire will be out," sung out the captain; and away we raced in single file.

The negroes are always most active on occasions of this kind, and as every householder is obliged to have a certain number of leathern fire buckets always in readiness hung in some accessible place, *pro bono publico*, with his name painted on them, they had as usual armed themselves with them on the present occasion; so we soon came to a double line of black fellows, extending from the scene of the fire to a public well, down one file of which the empty buckets were being handed, while the full ones circulated upwards to the fire engines by the other.

The poor fellows were so busy and zealous that they did not immediately make an opening for the head of our gay column. But we were not to be stopped by trifles; so—"Charge bayonets, men, and clear your own way," sung out the captain. The leading file did so; but, as the devil would have it, so did the files in the rear, whereby every man gave his file leader a most sufficing progue. A general stumble and grumble took place upon this.

"Mind your bayonet, sir."

"My eye! you have stuck me in the shoulder."

"Murder! you have piqued me, I don't know where."

At length down tumbled the brave bombardier who was leading the forlorn hope; and away

went the others helter-skelter on the top of him; Quashie giving a sly dash of his bucket over the sprawling mass of fallen militaires every now and then, just to cool their ardour. However, they soon gathered themselves up again, and Flamingo, who was the junior lieutenant, now brought up the rear, with me, Benjie, alongside of him. He was quite sober, so far as appearances went, but determined to have some fun, I could see. The fire had been in a narrow lane at the top of the town, and was by this time got under, as I expected. Notwithstanding, away we tramped, and were advancing up the lane, when we saw the glare of flambeaux, and heard all the confusion and uproar usually attendant on a fire. There was an engine planted right in front of us, at a crossing, that was still playing on the house that had been burning. It was directed by a drunken Irish carpenter, who saw us well enough, I am persuaded; for the moment he thought he had the Spartan band within the play of his pipe, he let fly; and drenched every man and officer as they came up—all but Flamingo, who had drawn me into a doorway until the shower blew over.

"Stop, sir; stop your infernal machine," roared the captain.

Whiz—whiz—whiz—splash—splash—splutter, was the only answer.

"Advance and storm the battery, men;" and, drawing his sword, he led them to the attack, like a hero as he was; receiving the fire (water, I mean) of the engine full in his face, in all its force and fury, as he advanced, which knocked off his hat, and nearly choked him.

At length the engine was captured, when the fellow in charge made a thousand apologies. "May the devil burn me," said he, "if I did not take the sparkle of the officers' gorgets, and the flash of the bayonets, for a new outbreak of the fire."

However, there was now no use for any farther military demonstration; so we countermarched, like a string of water-rats, to the Court-House, to console ourselves with hot negus and deviled biscuit. A blind man could have traced the party by the watery trail they left on the dry sandy street.

After this we spent a most jovial fortnight, but the time of our departure at length arrived. Poor Jessamy, the gay artilleryman above spoken of, was one of a party at our farewell dinner at Flamingo's, two evenings before we intended to start on our return home. He appeared out of spirits, and left the first of the whole company. Next day, it seemed, he had taken an early dinner alone, and ridden out no one could tell where. In the evening he did not return to his lodgings; but still no alarm was taken. On the morrow, however, when he did not make his appearance at his place of business, his friends became alarmed; especially as it was found that one of the pistols in his pistol-case had been taken away.

My uncle was very desirous of postponing his departure until the poor young fellow had been accounted for, as he was a favourite of his; but matters at home pressed, and we were obliged to return. Accordingly, we left our kind friends in Kingston next day at early dawn, on a most beautiful, clear, cool morning in January. No one who has not luxuriated in it, can comprehend the delights of a West India climate at this season. Except at high noon, the air was purity itself. Our road home lay through the Liguania, or rather Saint George's mountains, as we had a short visit to pay in the latter parish to an old friend of Mr Frenche.

It was about nine in the morning; we had breakfasted at the Hope tavern, and proceeded three or four miles on our homeward journey, when a Kingston gentleman of our acquaintance, accompanied by an overseer of one of the neighbouring estates, overtook us, but did not pull up, merely giving us a salute as he rode quickly past us.

"Our friend is in a hurry this morning," said mine uncle.

We rode on, and shortly after saw the same horsemen coming back again, with an addition to their party of another equestrian.

"Pray, Mr Frenche," said the Kingston gentleman, "did you see a saddle-horse without a rider as you came along?"

"Yes I did. I saw a good-looking bay cob down on the hill side, close to the gully there; but I thought his owner could not be far off, so I paid little regard to it."

"God bless me! it must be poor Jessamy's horse; where can he be?"

"Is it known what has become of Mr Jessamy?" said I.

"We can't tell, we can't tell; but he has been traced in this direction, and it must have been his horse you saw; he has not been heard of since the day before yesterday at dinner-time."

We knew this; but still had hoped he would have been accounted for by this time. My uncle was a good deal moved at this, for the poor young fellow was well known to him, as already hinted.

"I will turn back with you," said he, "and point out whereabouts the horse was seen. But I hope your fears will prove groundless after all."



The gentleman shook his head mournfully, and, after retrograding about a mile, we again caught sight of the animal we were in search of, eating his grass composedly below us, on the brink of the rocky mountain stream.

Close by, in a nook or angle of the mountain, and right below us, was a clump of noble trees, surrounding an old ruinous building, and clustered round a wild cotton one, beneath whose shadow the loftiest English oak would have shrunk to a bush. Embraced by two of the huge armlike limbs of the leafy monarch, and blending its branches gracefully, as if clinging for support, grew a wide-spreading star-apple; its leaves, of the colour of the purple beech, undulating gently in the sea-breeze, upturned their silvery undersides to the sun, contrasting beautifully with the oak-like foliage of the cotton-tree. Half a dozen turkey buzzards, the Jamaica vulture, were clustered in the star apple-tree, with a single bird perched as a sentry on the topmost branch of the giant to which it clung; while several more were soaring high overhead, diminished in the depths of the blue heaven to minute specks, as if they scented the prey afar off.

The ruin we saw had been an old Spanish chapel, and a number of the fruit-trees had no doubt been planted by the former possessors of the land. Never was there a more beautiful spot; so sequestered, no sound being heard in the vicinity but the rushing of the breeze through the highest branches of the trees; for every thing slept motionless and still down below in the cool checkering shadow and sleepy sunlight where we were—the gurgling of the stream, that sparkled past in starlike flashes, and the melancholy lowing of the kine on the hillside above. When the Kingston gentleman first saw the "John Crows," as they are called, he exchanged glances with my uncle, as much as to say, "Ah! my worst fears are about being realized." We rode down the precipitous bank by a narrow path—so narrow indeed, that the bushes through which we had to thrust ourselves met over our saddle-bows—and soon arrived in the rocky bed of the stream, where the rotten and projecting bank of the dry mould that composed the consecrated nook, overhung us, as we scrambled, rattling and sliding amongst the slippery and smooth rolled stones of the gully; while we were nearly unhorsed every now and then by the bare roots projecting from the bank, where it had been undermined when the stream had been swollen.

We had to dismount, and the first thing we saw on scrambling up the bank was a pair of vultures,<sup>[2]</sup> who jumped away, with outspread wings, a couple of yards from the edge of it, the moment we put our heads up, holding their beaks close to the short green sward, and hissing like geese.

[2] Nothing can be conceived more hideous than the whole aspect of these abominable birds. They are of the size of a large turkey, but much stronger, and of a sooty brown. Their feathers are never sleek or trimmed, but generally staring, like those of a fowl in the pip, and not unfrequently covered with filth and blood, so that their approach is made known by an appeal to more senses than one. The neck and head are entirely naked of feathers, and covered with a dingy red and wrinkled skin. They are your only West India scavengers, and are protected by a penalty of fifteen dollars for every one that is intentionally killed.

As we advanced, they retired into the small thicket, and we followed them. I never can forget the scene that here opened on our view.

The fruit-trees, amongst which I noticed the orange, lemon, lime, and shaddock, intermingled with the kennip, custard-apple, bread-fruit, and mango, relieved at intervals by a stately and minaret-looking palm, formed a circle about fifty feet in diameter; the open space being covered, with the exception hereafter mentioned, with short emerald green grass; in the very centre of this area stood the ruin, overshadowed by the two trees already described. It was scarcely distinguishable from a heap of green foliage, so completely was it overrun with the wild yam and wild fig-tree; the latter lacing and interlacing over the grey stones with its ligneous fret-work; in some places the meshes composed of boughs as thick as a man's arm, in others as minute as those of a small seine, all the links where the fibres crossed having grown into each other.

We continued our approach, following the two turkey buzzards, who at length made a stand under the star-apple tree, where the grass was long and rank, as if it had grown over a grave, hissing and stretching out their wings, nearly seven feet from tip to tip, and apparently determined to give battle, as if they had now retreated to their prey. Seeing us determined, however, they gave a sort of hop, or short flight, and gently lifted themselves on to a branch of the tree above, about four feet from the ground, where they remained observing us, and uttering hoarse, discordant croaks, sounding as if they had been gorged to the throat with carrion already, and shaking their heads, and snorting as if their nostrils had been choked with rotten flesh; polluting the air at the same time with a horrible stench, and casting wistful glances down into the tuft of rank grass beneath.

This state of suspense was horrible, so with one accord we drove the obscene creatures from their perch, and stepping forward, looked into the rank tuft. Heaven and earth! what a sight was *there*—Stretched on the ground, embedded in the quill-like guinea-grass that bristled up all around him, lay poor Jessamy on his face; his clothes soaked and soiled by the rain of the two preceding nights, and the vile poaching of the vultures now congregated in the tree above, which appeared to have been circling round and round him, from the filth and dirt, and trodden

appearance of the herbage; but as yet deterred from making an attack. The majesty of the human form, all dim and mangled though it was, like a faint, but sacred halo, had quelled the fierceness of their nature, and the body of the suicide was still unbroken, even after the lapse of two days, except by the shattering of the pistol-shot fired by his own sacrilegious hands. Had it been the carcass of an ox, twelve hours could not have run by, before the naked skeleton would have been bleaching in the sun and wind.

There was a broken halter hanging from the branch above him.

"I cannot look at him," said my uncle, shrinking back in disgust; and as he spoke, the John Crows dropped down again, and began to move warily about the body, but still afraid to attack it.

Finding that we were not retreating, however, the creatures flew up into the tree once more; and our eyes following them, we saw at least a score clustered immediately overhead, all ready, no doubt, to devour the carcass, so soon as those below should give the signal.

It seemed probable that he had tied his horse to the branch above where he lay, and that the animal had subsequently, when impelled by hunger, broken the halter. He had laid his hat on the sward close beside him, with his watch and silk handkerchief in it, and drawn off his gloves, which were placed, seemingly with some care, on the edge of it. He had then apparently knelt, shot himself through the head, and fallen on his face across the pistol. As we approached, the buzz of flies that rose up!—and the incipient decomposition that appeared on the hands! We waited to see the body turned—but the ghastly and shattered forehead—the hair clotted in black gore—the brains fermenting through the eyes—the mask of festering and putrifying and crawling matter that was left on the ground, with the print of the features in it—Horrible—most horrible!

An inquest was held that afternoon, when the poor fellow was put into a shell in his clothes, and buried where he lay;—in consecrated ground, as I have already related. Some unfortunate speculations in business, working on a very sensitive nature, had turned his brain, and in a godless hour he had made away with himself. But two days before I had seen him full of fun and gaiety, although possibly the excitement was not natural, and now!—Alas, poor Jessamy, we had at least the melancholy satisfaction of shielding your defaced remains from the awe-inspiring surse pronounced against the Israelites, if they should fall away after the sinfulness of the Heathen—"And thy carcass shall be meat unto the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them awa."

But time and tide wait for no man; so we had to leave the sad scene, and proceed on our journey.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I say, uncle," after we had talked ourselves *out* on the melancholy affair, "when shall we come into the road?"

"Road—road? why, if you go *off* the road, Benjie, you will drop some five hundred feet, or so, down that precipice, that's all."

"Oh, I see—so this *is the* road; why, I thought we were strolling along some short cut of sheep paths and river courses. Road, indeed!"

We held on, making easy stages of it from one friend's house to another, until, on the evening of the fifth day from the time we left Kingston, we were once more safe and snug under our own roof at Ballywindle.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MOONBEAM.

The morning after we arrived, we were sitting at breakfast, talking over our past expedition, and plans for the future, when two letters were laid on the table. The first was to my uncle, and ran as follows:—

"*Havanna, such a date.*

"MY DEAR FRENCHÉ,

"I sailed from this on the 15th ult., and had got pretty well to the northward, when it came on to blow like fury, and I was driven back with the loss of several of my sails, and the bowsprit badly sprung.

"Knowing that I would touch here on my way home, I had desired letters to be forwarded

from England if any thing material occurred, to the care of Mr M—; and accordingly, on my return, I received one from our mutual friend Ferrit, of Lincoln's-Inn, informing me of my brother Henry's death; and what surprised me, after all that had passed, an acknowledgment of his having been married, from the first, to that plaguy Swiss girl, Mademoiselle Heloise de Walden. This makes a serious difference in my worldly affairs, you will at once see, as the boy, whom you may remember as a child, must now be acknowledged as the head of the family. But as I have no children of my own, and have wherewithal to keep the old lady and myself comfortable, and had already left Henry my heir, having as good as adopted him, I am rather rejoiced at it than otherwise, although he does me out of a baronetcy. Why that poor dissipated brother of mine should have been so much ashamed of acknowledging his low marriage, I am sure I cannot tell; as the girl, I have heard say, was handsome, and tolerably educated. But now, of course, the murder is out, so there is no use in speculating farther on the matter; Ferrit writes me, that the documents confirmatory of the marriage are all right and properly authenticated, and he sends me a probate of poor Henry's will, to communicate to his son, who is now Sir Henry Oakplank, and must instantly drop the De Walden.

"I have sent letters for him to the admiral; but as the youngster may fall in your way in the Spider, to which I have appointed him, and in which he sailed for Jamaica a few days before my return here, I think, for the sake of your old crony, poor Henry, as well as for mine, that you will be glad to pay the boy some attention.

"Give my regards to Benjie Brail, if still with you. I have got a noble freight on board—near a million of dollars—so, in the hope of meeting you soon in England, I remain, my dear Frenche, your sincere friend and old schoolfellow,

"OLIVER OAKPLANK."

The next letter was as follows:—

"*H. M. Schooner Spider, Montego Bay—  
such a date.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have only a minute to advise you of my arrival here this morning, and of being again under weigh, in consequence of what I have just learned of the vagaries of our old acquaintance the Midge. I trust I may fall in with her. I saw your friends, the Hudsons, safe outside the Moro, on the — ulto., in the fine new ship, the Ajax. I left them stemming the gulf stream with a beautiful breeze.

"I wish you would have a letter lying in the hands of the agents, Peawweep, Snipe, and Flamingo, in Kingston for me, as I am bound to Port Royal whenever my present cruise is up. Yours sincerely,

"HENRY DE WALDEN."

"Aha, Master de Walden—not a word about Mademoiselle Sophie, eh? my *friends* the Hudsons indeed! but never mind—I rejoice in your good fortune, my lad."

That very forenoon I was taken ill with fever and ague, and became gradually worse, until I was so weak that I could scarcely stand.

Lennox had come up to see me one morning after I had been a week ill; he informed me that old Jacob Munroe was dead, having left him a heap of money; and that he was about going down to the Musquito Shore in the schooner Moonbeam, a shell trader belonging to his late uncle, and now to himself, as a preparatory step to winding up old Jacob's estate, and leaving the island for Scotland. Hearing I had been complaining, a thought had occurred to the kind-hearted creature, that "a cruise would be just the thing to set me on my legs again;" and accordingly he had come to offer me a passage in his schooner.

Dr Tozy was standing by. "Not a bad notion, Mr Lennox; do you know I had thoughts of recommending a sea voyage myself, and now since I know of such a good opportunity, I by all means recommend Mr Brail to accompany you, unless, indeed, you are to remain too long in some vile muddy creek on the Musquito Shore."

"No, no, sir, the Jenny Nettles, another vessel of ours, sailed a fortnight ago, to see that the turtleshell is all ready, so I won't be eight-and-forty hours on the coast."

"Then it is the very thing."

And so it was arranged. My uncle drove me down next day to the bay, and the following morning I was at sea, in the beautiful clipper schooner, the Moonbeam. Once more

"The waters heave around me; and on high

The winds lift up their voices."

We had been several days out, and were bowling along nine knots, with a most lovely little breeze steady on the quarter. I was lounging at mine ease under the awning, on a hencoop, reading. There was not a cloud in the sky. The sharp stem was snoring through the water, the sails were critically well set, and drawing to a wish, and the dancing blue waves were buzzing alongside, and gurgling up through the lee scuppers right cheerily, while the flying fish were sparkling out in shoals all round us like glass chips, from one swell to another. It was one of those glorious, fresh, and exhilarating mornings in which it is ecstasy for a young chap to *live*, and which are to be found in no other climate under the sun. Besides, I was in raptures with the little fairy, for she was a beauty in every respect, and with the bracing air that was hour by hour setting me up again. While I am thus luxuriating, I will tell you a story—so come along, my boy.

#### A NEGRO QUARREL.

We had several negroes amongst the Moonbeams, one of whom, a sail-maker, was occupied close to where I lay, with his palm and needle, following his vocation, and mending a sail on deck—another black diamond, a sort of half-inch carpenter, was busy with some job abaft of him. I had often noticed before, the peculiar mode in which negroes quarrel. I would say that they did so very classically, after the model of Homer's heroes, for instance, as they generally prelude their combats with long speeches—or perhaps it would be more correct to call their method the Socratic mode of fighting—as they commence and carry on with a series of questions, growing more and more stinging as they proceed, until a fight becomes the necessary consequence, indeed, unavoidable; as in the present case.

The origin of the dispute was rather complex. There was an Indian boy on board, of whom more anon; and this lad, Lennox, with a spice of his original calling, had been in the habit of teaching to read, and to learn a variety of infantile lessons, which he in turn took delight in retailing to the negroes; and there he is working away at this moment, reversing the order of things—the young teaching the old.

Palmneedle appears a very dull scholar, while Chip, I can perceive, is sharp enough, and takes delight in piquing Palmy. Chip says his lesson glibly. "Ah, daddy Chip, you shall make one parson by and by—quite cleber dis morning—so now, Palmneedle, come along;" and Palmy also acquitted himself tolerably for some time.

"What you call hanimal hab four legs?" said Indio, in continuation of the lesson, and holding up four fingers. Here I thought of my cousin Sally.

"One cow," promptly rejoined Palmneedle, working away at the sail he was mending.

"Yes—to be sure! certainly one cow hab four legs; but what is de cow call?"

"Oh, some time Nancy; some time Juba."

"Stupid—I mean what you call ebery cow."

"How de debil should I sabe, Indio?"

"Becaase," said Indio, "I tell you dis morning already, one, tre, five time; but stop, I sall find one way to make you remember. How much feets you hab yourself—surely you can tell me dat?"

"Two—I hab two feets—dere."

"Den, what is you call?"

"One quadruped. You tink I don't know dat?"

"One quadruped! ho, ho—I know you would say so—you say so yesterday—really you wery mosh blockhead indeed—*dat* is what de cow is call, man. You!—why you is call one omnivorous biped widout fedder—*dat* is what you is call; and de reason, Massa Lennox tell me, is, because you nyam as mosh as ever you can get, and don't wear no fedder like one fowl—mind dat—you is one omnivorous biped." Here Chip began, I saw, to quiz Palmy also.

"Now, Massa Indio," said the former, "let me be coolmassa one leetle piece. I say, Palmy, it is find dat you hab two feets—dat you eats all you can grab," (*aside*), "your own and your neighbours"—(*then aloud*)—"dat you hab no fedders in your tail—and derefore you is call *one somniferous tripod*" (at least what he said sounded more like *this* than any thing else). "Now, dere is dat ugly old one-foot neger cookey" (the fellow was black as a sloe himself), "wid his wooden leg, what would you call *he?* tink well now; he only hab *one* leg, you know."

"One *unicorn*," said Palmy, after a pause, and scratching his woolly skull. But my laughter here put an end to the school, and was the innocent means of stirring up Palmy's wrath, who, mortified at perceiving that I considered the others had been quizzing him, was not long of

endeavouring to work out his revenge. Slow as he might be at his learning, he was any thing but slow in this. Palmneedle now took the lead in the dialogue. "Chip," said Palmy, "enough of nonsense; so tell me how you lef de good old woman, your moder, eh?"

Chip, who was caulking his seam, at this laid down his caulking-iron and mallet, pulled up his sleeve, fidgeted with the waistband of his trowsers, turned his quid, spat in his fist, and again commenced operations, grumbling out very gruffly, "my moder is dead." He had clearly taken offence, as Palmy evidently expected he would do; but *why*, I could not divine. Palmy proceeded in his lesson of "teazing made easy."

"Nice old woman—sorry to hear dat." The rascal had known it, however, all along. "Ah, now I remember; she was mosh swell when I last see him—and face bloat—Ah, I feared, for long time, she would take to nyam dirt at last."

"Who tell you so—who say my moder eat dirt?" cried Chip, deeply stung; for the greatest affront you can put on a negro, is to cast in his teeth either that he himself, or some of his near of kin, labour under that mysterious complaint, *mal d'estomac*.

"Oh, nobody," rejoined Palmy, with a careless toss of the head; "I only tought she look wery like it—glad to hear it was not so, howsomedever—but sartain she look wery mosh like it—you mos allow dat yourself, Chip?" The carpenter made no answer, but I could see it was working. Palmy now began to sing in great glee, casting a wicked glance every now and then at his crony, who thundered away, rap, rap, rap, and thump, thump, thump, on the deck, paying the seam, as he shuffled along, with tobacco juice most copiously. At length he got up, and passed forward. Palmy sang louder and louder.

"Come, mind you don't change your tune before long, my boy," said I to myself.

Chip now returned, carrying a pot of molten pitch in his hand. As he stepped over Palmy's leg, he spilt, by accident of course, some of the hot fluid on his foot.

"Broder Palmneedle—broder Palmneedle—I am wery sorry; but it was one haxident, you know."

Palmy winced a little, but said nothing; and the master of the schooner coming on deck, sent Chip to stretch the sail in some particular way, and to hold it there, for the convenience of the sailmaker. Every thing remained quiet between them as long as the skipper was near, and I continued my reading; but very shortly, I heard symptoms of the scald operating on our sailmaker's temper, as the affront had done on the carpenter's.

Quoth Chip to Palmneedle, as he sat down on deck, and took hold of the sail, "Really hope I haven't burnt you, ater all, Palmneedle?"

"Oh, no, not at all," drawing in his scalded toe, however, as if he had got the gout in it.

"Quite glad of dat; but him do look swell a leetle, and de kin begin to peel off a bit, I am sorry to see."

"Oh, no," quoth Palmy again,—"quite cool, no pain, none at all."

A pause—Palmy tries to continue his song, but in vain, and presently gives a loud screech as Chip, in turning over the clew of the sail roughly, brought the earring down crack on the parboiled toe. "What you mean by dat?"

"What! have I hurt you? Ah, poor fellow, I see I *have burnt* you now, ater all."

"I tell you I is not *burn*," sings out Palmy, holding his toe hard with one hand; "but don't you see you have nearly *broken* my foot? Why did you hit me, sir, wid de clew of dat heavy sail, sir, as if it had been one mallet? Did you do it o' propos?"

"Do it on purpose?" rejoins Chip. "My eye! I drop it light, light—just so;" and here he thundered the iron earring down on the deck once more, missing the toe for the second time by a hairbreadth, and only through Palmy's activity in withdrawing it.

At this Palmy's pent-up wrath fairly exploded, and he smote Chip incontinently over the pate with his iron marlinspike, who returned with his wooden mallet, and the action then began in earnest—the combatants rolling over and over on the deck, kicking and spurring, and biting, and bucking each other with their heads like maniacs, or two monkeys in the hydrophobia, until the row attracted the attention of the rest of the crew, and they were separated.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had risen early the next morning, and was wearying most particularly for the breakfast hour, when Quacco, who was, as usual, head cook and captain's steward, came to me. "Massa, you never see soch an a face as Mr Lennox hab dis morning."

"Why, what is wrong with him, Quacco?"

"I tink he mos hab sleep in de moon, sir."

"Sleep in the moon! A rum sort of a lodging, Quacco. What do you mean?"

"I mean he mos hab been sleep in de moonlight on deck, widout no cover at all, massa." And so we found he had, sure enough, and the consequence was, a swelled face, very much like the moon herself in a fog, by the way, as if she had left her impress on the poor fellow's mug; "her moonstruck child;" but I have no time for poetry. It looked more like erysipelas than any thing else, and two days elapsed before the swelling subsided; during the whole of which the poor fellow appeared to me—but it might have been fancy—more excited and out of the way than I had seen him since the prison scene at Havanna.

Can it be possible that the planet really does exercise such influences as we read of, thought I? At any rate, I now for the first time knew the literal correctness of the beautiful Psalm—"The sun shall not smite thee by day, *nor the moon by night.*"

We were now a week at sea; the morning had been extremely squally, but towards noon the breeze became steadier, and we again made more sail, after which Lennox, the master of the schooner, and I, went to dinner. This skipper, by the way, was a rather remarkable personage, —*first*, he rejoiced in the euphaneous, but somewhat out of the way, appellation of Tobias Tooraloo; *secondly*, his face was not a tragic volume, but a leaf out of a farce. It was for all the world like the monkey face of a cocoa-nut; there being only three holes perceptible to the naked eye in it; that is, *one* mouth, always rounded and pursed up as if he had been whistling, and *two* eyes, such as they were, both squinting inwards so abominably, that one guessed they were looking for his nose. Now, if a person had been set to make an inventory of his physiognomy, at first sight, against this last mentioned feature, the return would certainly have been *non est inventus*. But the curious dial *had* a gnomon, such as it was, countersunk, it is true, in the phiz, and the wings so nicely bevelled away into the cheeks, that it could not well be vouched for either, unless when he sneezed; which, like the blowing of a whale, proved the reality of apertures, although you might not see them. His figure was short and squat; his arms peculiarly laconic; and as he always kept them in motion, like a pair of flappers, his presence might be likened to that of a turtle on its hind fins.

The manner and speech of El Señor Tobias were, if possible, more odd than his outward and physical man; his delivery being a curious mixture of what appeared to be a barbarous recitative, or sing-song, and suppressed laughter; although the latter was only a nervous frittering away of the fag end of his sentences, and by no means intended to express mirth; the voice sounding as if he were choke-full of new bread, or the words had been sparked off from an ill set barrel organ, revolving in his brisket.

"I hope," said I, to this beauty, "you may not be out in your reckoning about your cargo of shell being ready for you on the coast, captain?"

"Oh no, oh no,—ho, ho, ho," chuckled Tooraloo.

"What the deuce are you laughing at?" said I, a good deal surprised. Being a silent sort of fellow his peculiarity had not been so noticeable before.

"Laugh—laugh—ho, ho, he. I am not laughing, sir—quite serious—he, he, ho."

"It is a way Mr Tooraloo has got," said Lennox, smiling.

"Oh, I see it is."

"I am sure there will be no disappointment this time, sir,—*now*, since Big Claw is out of the way,—ho, ho, ho,"—quoth Toby.

"Big Claw—who is Big Claw?" said I.

"An Indian *chief*, sir, and one of our *chief* traders,—he, he, ho,—and best customer, sir,—ho, ho, he,—but turned rogue at last, sir, rogue at last—he, he, he—left my mate with him, and Tom the Indian boy, voyage before last—he, he, he—and when I came back, he had cheated them both. Oh dear, if we did not lose fifty weight of shell,—ho, ho, he."

"And was that all?" said I.

"*That was all*—ho, ho, he," replied Toby.

"Your mate was ill used, you said, by Big Claw?"

"Yes,—ho, ho, he."

"As how, may I ask?"

"Oh, Big Claw *cut* his throat, *that's all*—ho, ho, ho."

"*All?* rather uncivil, however," said I.

"Very, sir,"—quoth Toby,—"he, he, he."

"And why did he cut his throat?"

"Because he made free with one of Big Claw's wives—ho, ho."

"So—that was not the thing, certainly; and what became of the wife?"

"Cut *her* throat, too—ha, ha, ha!"—as if this had been the funniest part of the whole story.

"The devil he did!" said I. "What a broth of a boy this same Big Claw must be; and Indian Tom, I see him on board here?"

"Cut *his* throat too though—ho ho, ho—but *he* recovered."

"Why, I supposed as much, since he is waiting behind your chair there, captain. And what became of this infernal Indian bravo—this Master Big Claw, as you call him?"

"Cut his *own* throat—ha, ha, ha!—cut his own throat, the very day we arrived, by Gom, ha, ha, ha! ooro! looro! hoooro;" for this being a sort of climax, he treated us with an extra rumblification in his gizzard, at the end of it.

Here we all joined in honest Tooraloo's ha, ha, ha!—for the absurdity of the way in which the story was screwed out of him, no mortal could stand—a story that, on the face of it at first, bore simply to have *eventuated* in the paltry loss of fifty pounds' weight of turtle-shell; but which in reality involved the destruction of no fewer than three fellow creatures, and the grievous maiming of a fourth. "*That's all*, indeed!"

By this time it might have been half-past two, and the tears were still wet on my cheeks, when the vessel was suddenly laid over by a heavy puff, so that before the canvass could be taken in, or the schooner luffed up and the wind shaken out of her sails, we carried away our foretopmast, topsail and all; and, what was a more serious matter, sprung the head of the mainmast so badly, that we could not carry more than a close-reefed mainsail on it. What was to be done? It was next to impossible to secure the mast properly at sea; and as the wind had veered round to the south-east, we could not fetch the creek on the Indian coast, whither we were bound, unless we had all our after-sail. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to bear up for San Andreas, now dead under our lee; where we might get the mast comfortably fished. We accordingly did so, and anchored there about dusk, on the seventh evening after leaving Montego bay.

San Andreas, although in reality belonging to the crown of Spain, was at the time, so far as I could learn, in the sole possession, if I may so speak, of a Scotchman, a Mr \*\*\*;—at least there were no inhabitants on the island that we heard any thing about, beyond himself, family, and negroes, with the latter of whom he cultivated any cotton that was grown on it; sending it from time to time to the Kingston market.

We had come to, near his house; and when the vessel was riding safe at anchor, the captain and I went ashore in the boat to call on Mr \*\*\*, in order to make known our wants, and endeavour to get them remedied. There was not a soul on the solitary beach where we landed, but we saw lights in a long low building that was situated on a ridge on the right hand of the bay, as you stood in; and in one or two of the negro huts surrounding it, and clustered below nearer the beach. After some search, we got into a narrow gravelly path, worn in the rocky hill side, like a small river course or gully, with crumbling edges of turf, about a foot high on each hand, against which we battered our knees at every step, as we proceeded.

It was a clear starlight night, and the dark house on the summit of the ridge stood out in bold relief against the deep blue sky. "Hush—hark!" A piano was struck with some skill, and a female voice began the beautiful song set to the tune of the old Scottish melody "The Weary Fund o' Tow."

This was a startling incident, to occur thus at the world's end.

"Hey day!" said I; but before I could make any farther remark, a full rich male voice struck in at the chorus—

"He's far away, he's far away, but surely he will come;  
Ye moments fly, pass swiftly by, and send my soldier home."

We remained riveted to the spot until the music ceased.

"I say, Tooraloo, Toby, my lad; you have not sculled us to fairy land, have you?"

"Oh no, it is old Mr \*\*\*'s daughter, the only white lady in the island that I know of; and I suppose one of her brothers is accompanying her—ho, ho, he."

"Very like; but who have we here?" as a tall dark figure in jacket and trowsers, with a Spanish

cap on his head, came dancing along the ridge from the house, and singing to himself, apparently in the exuberance of his spirits.

He was soon close to, confronting us in the narrow road, bounding from side to side of the crumbling ledges of the footpath with the buoyancy of boyhood, although the frame, seen between me and the starlight sky, appeared Herculean.

"Hillo, Walpole, what has kept you so late?"

We made no answer, and the figure closed upon us.

"Pray, is Mr \*\*\* at home—he, he, he?" said our skipper to the stranger.

The party addressed stopped suddenly, and appeared a good deal startled. But he soon recovered himself, and answered—

"He is. May I ask who makes the enquiry in such a merry mood?"

"Yes; I am the master of the Moonbeam—ha, ha, ha—a Montego bay trader, bound to the Indian coast, but obliged to put in here in distress—he, he, ho—having badly sprung some of our spars—ha, ha, ha."

"Then what the h—l are you laughing at, sir?" rejoined the stranger, savagely.

"Laugh—laugh—why, I am quite serious, sir—sad as a drowned rat—why, I am put in here *in distress*, sir—ha, ha, ha."

It was time for me to strike in, I saw. "It is a peculiarity in the gentleman's manner, sir, and no offence is meant."

"Oh, very well," said the other, laughing himself, and turning to Toby once more. "And this other?" continued he, very unceremoniously indicating myself, to be sure.

"My passenger—he, he, he!"—said the man, with some discretion, as there was no use in our case of mentioning names, or being more communicative than necessary.

"Oh, I see—good-night—good-night." And away sprang my gentleman, without saying another word.

"He might have waited until we got time to ask him who *he was*, at any rate," said I.

"Why," said Toby, "that may be a question he may have no joy in answering—ha, ha, ha!"

"True for *you*, Tooraloo," said I Benjie.

We arrived in front of the low building, whose windows opened on a small terrace or esplanade, like so many port-holes.

It stood on a ridge of limestone-rock, *a saddle*, as it is called in the West Indies, or tongue of land, that from fifty or sixty feet high, where the house stood, dropped gradually, until it ended in a low, sandy spit, covered with a clump of cocoa-nut trees, with tufts of mangrove bushes here and there; forming the cape or foreland of the bay on the right hand as you stood in. This low point trended outwards like a hook, so as to shut in the entrance of a small concealed cove or natural creek, which lay beyond it, separated from the bay we lay in by the aforesaid tongue of land, so that the house commanded a view of both anchorages.

From one side, as already related, the acclivity was easy; but towards the creek the ground fell away sudden and precipitously; and on the very edge of this rugged bank the house was perched, like an eagle's nest, overhanging the little land-locked cave.

There was a group of fishermen negroes in front of the house, talking and gabbling loudly as usual, one of whom carried a net, while three others followed him with broad-bladed paddles on their shoulders, as if they had been pursuing their calling, and were now retiring to their houses for the night.

"Is Mr \*\*\* at home?" said Tooraloo—really I can no longer be bothered jotting down his absurd ho, ho, he.

"Yes, massa," said the negro addressed; and without waiting to knock, or give any sign of our approach, the skipper and I entered the hall, or centre room of the building.

By the partial light proceeding from the open door of an inner apartment, I could see that it was a desolate-looking place, with a parcel of bags of cotton piled up in a corner, and lumbered, rather than furnished, with several skranky leathern-backed Spanish chairs.

Several rooms opened off each end of the said hall, beside the one from which the light streamed. The skipper unceremoniously passed on to this apartment, motioning to me to follow him. I did so, and found an old gentleman, dressed in a gingham coat and white trowsers, and



wearing a well-worn tow wig and spectacles, seated at a small table, smoking, with a glass of spirits and water beside him, and an empty tumbler opposite, as if some one had been accompanying him in his potations; while a young lady, rather a pretty girl, seated at a piano, with some music open before her, was screening her eyes from the light, and employed, so far as I could judge, in peering down towards the cove, as if trying to make out some object in that direction.

"Well, father, I cannot see either of them; surely they have put out all the lights on purpose—not a glimmer, I declare." Turning round, she started on seeing us, and rising, left the room suddenly by another door.

"Who may *ye* be now?" quoth the old man, rather testily, as if some recent visitors had not been over and above acceptable, taking his cigar at the same time out of his mouth, and knocking the ashes off the end of it against the candlestick. "Are you any of Captain Wallace's people?"

"No," said Tooraloo. "Was that Captain Wallace we met going down the path just now?"

He gave no answer, but again enquired, in a still more sharp and querulous tone, "*who we were?* Wha the deevil are ye, I say? Wull ye no speak?"

"Toby," said I, "out with your ditty, man." So our situation was speedily explained to him—that we had bore up in distress, and wanted assistance. The issue was, after a good deal of palaver, that he promised to send his people to lend a hand with our repairs in the morning.

"But *who was* the gentleman we met?" said I, repeating Toby's question, and endeavouring to pin the crusty old gentleman to an answer.

"Indeed, sir," said he, now greatly relieved, as he began to understand our real character, and the peacefulness of our object—"indeed, sir, I cannot rightly tell. He is an American, I rather think, and commands two Buenos-Ayreal"—

Here some one coughed significantly under the open window. The old man looked dogged and angry at this, as if he had said, "What the deuce! mayn't I say what I choose in my own house?" And gulping down his grog with great fierceness, as if determined not to understand the hint, he continued, speaking emphatically through his set teeth—

"Yes, sir, he commands two privateers at anchor down in the cove there."

The signal was now twice repeated. It was clear there were eaves-droppers abroad. Our host lay back sullenly in his chair.

"Ay! and what kind of craft may they be?"

I scarcely knew what I said, as the notion of the privateers, and of having gentry of the usual stamp of their crews in such near neighbourhood, was any thing but pleasant or comfortable.

"A schooner and a felucca, sir," said Mr \*\*\* in answer.

Some one now thundered against the weather-boarding of the house, making every thing shake again, as if a drunken man had fallen against a hollow bulk-head, and I heard a low, grumbling voice, as if in suppressed anger. I could see with half an eye that *this* had aroused the old gentleman to a sense of his danger, and made him pocket his peevishness; for he now *set* himself in his chair, screwing his withered features into a most taciturn expression.

"The Midge again," thought I, "by all that is unfortunate! Oh for a glimpse of Henry de Walden and his Spider!"

It is the devil and all to be watched—to have the consciousness that the very stones are listening to you, and ready to fly at your head, and no armour, offensive or defensive, about you.

A sort of desperation was in consequence coming over me; and I rapped out, but still speaking so low, that I considered it impossible I could be overheard by any one without—

"I think I know that same Captain Wallace's voice—I have heard it before, I am persuaded."

"You have, have you?" said some one outside, with great bitterness, but also in a suppressed tone.

The exclamation was apparently involuntary. I started, and looked round, but saw no one.

"I know nothing of him, as I said before, gentlemen," continued our host.

At this moment I had turned my face from the open window towards Toby, to see how he took all this. A small glass hung on the wall above his head, in which (murder, I grew as cold as an ice-cream!) I had a momentary glimpse of a fierce, sun-burned countenance, the lips apart, and the white teeth set as if in anger, raised just above the window sill. It glanced for an instant in the yellow light, while a clenched hand was held above it, and shaken threateningly at old \*\*\*.

I turned suddenly round, but the apparition had as suddenly disappeared. It was clear that \*\*\* now wished more than ever to end the conference.

"I know nothing beyond what I have told you, gentlemen—*he* pays for every thing like a prince—for his wood, and provisions, and all, down to a nail."

I was *now* noways anxious to prolong the conversation myself.

"I don't doubt it, I don't doubt it. Well, old gentleman, good-night. You will send your people early?"

"Oh yes, you may be sure of that."

And we left the house and proceeded to the beach, as fast, you may be sure, as we decently could, without *running*. We both noticed a dark figure bustle round the corner of the house, as we stepped out on the small plateau on which it stood.

Captain Toby hailed the schooner, in no very steady tone, to send the boat ashore instantly—"instantly"—and I sat down on a smooth, blue, and apparently wave-rounded stone, that lay imbedded in the beautiful white sand.

"So, so, a leaf out of a romance—miracles will never cease," said I to Tooraloo, who was standing a short distance from me, close to the water's edge, looking out anxiously for the boat. "There is the old Midge again, Toby, and my Montego bay friend, Wilson, for a dozen—mind he don't treat us to a second

Edition of the Ballahoo,  
Dear Toby Tooraloo.

Why, captain, there is no speaking to you, except in rhyme, that name of yours is so—Hillo! where away—an earthquake? or are the stones alive here? So ho, Tobias—see where I am travelling to, Toby," as the rock on which I sat began to heave beneath me, and to make a strange clapping sort of noise, as if one had been flapping the sand with wet swabs.

"Tooraloo, see here—see here—I am bewitched, and going to sea on a shingle stone, as I am a gentleman—I hope it can *swim* as well as *walk*"—and over I floundered on my back.

I had come ashore without my jacket, and, as the skipper picked me up, I felt something warm and slimy flowing down my back.

"Why, where is my cruizer, Toby,—and what the deuce can that be so warm and wet between my shoulders?"

"A turtle nest—a turtle nest," roared Toby, in great joy,—and so indeed it proved.

Accordingly, we collected about two dozen of the eggs, and, if I had only had my senses about me when I capsized, we might have turned over the lady-fish herself, whom I had so unkindly disturbed in the straw, when she moved below me. We got on board without more ado, and having desired the steward to get a light and some food and grog in the cabin, I sent for Lennox, who was busy with the repairs going on aloft, and, as I broke ground very seriously to make my supper, communicated to him what we had seen and heard.

I had already in the course of the voyage acquainted him with the particulars of the ball at Mr Roseapple's, and of my meeting with, and suspicions of Mr Wilson, and that I verily believed I had fallen in with the same person this very night, in the captain of a Buenos-Ayrean privateer.

"A privateer!" ejaculated Lennox,—*"a privateer!—is there a privateer about the island?"*

"A privateer!" said the captain of the Moonbeam—"no—not *one*, but *two* of them, ha, ha, he—and both anchored t'other side of the bluff there, he, he, ho—within pistol-shot of us where we now lie, as the crow flies; although they might remain for a year in that cove, and no one the wiser, ho, ho, he.—In my humble opinion, they will be foul of us before morning, ho, ho, he—and most likely cut all our throats, ha, ha, ho."

Poor Saunders Skelp on this fell into a great quandary.

"What *shall* we do, Mr Brail?—we shall be plundered, as sure as fate."

"I make small doubt of that," quoth I, "and I only hope *that* may be the worst of it; but if you and the skipper think with me, I would be off this very hour, sprung mast and all."

"How unfortunate!" said Lennox—"Why, I have been working by candle-light ever since you went away, stripping the mast, and seeing all clear when the day broke to—But come, I think a couple of hours may still replace every thing where it was before I began."

Our determination was now promptly taken, so we swigged off our horns, and repaired on deck.

"Who is there?" said some one from forward, in evident alarm.

It was pitch dark, and nothing could be seen but the dim twinkle of the lantern, and the heads and arms of the men at work at the mast head.

"Who is there, aft by the companion?"

"Why, it is me, what do you want?" said Lennox.

"Nothing particular, sir, only there are people on the water close to, ahead of us—take care they do not make free with the buoy."

"Hail them then, Williams, and tell them, if they don't keep off, that we will fire at them."

"I have hailed them twice, sir, but they give no answer."

We all went forward. For some time I could neither see nor hear any thing. At length I thought I heard low voices, and the dip of an oar now and then. Presently I distinctly saw white sparkles in the dark calm water, towards the mouth of the bay, as of a boat keeping her station on guard. By and by, we heard indications of life on the larboard bow also.

"Why, we are beset, Lennox, my boy, as sure as fate," said I.

"What boats are those?"

No answer.

"If you don't speak I will fire at you."

A low suppressed laugh followed this threat, and we heard, as plain as if we had been alongside of the strangers, three or four sharp clicks, like the cocking of strong musket locks.

"Privateers-men, as sure as a gun," said Tooraloo—"oh dear, and they are going to fire at us, don't you hear?"—and he ducked his pate, as if he had seen them taking aim.

"I see two boats now as plain as can be," said Lennox.

"Well, well, if you do, we can't help it," said I—"but do take my advice and stand by to be off the moment there is a breath of wind from the land, *will ye?*"

All hands were called. We piped belay with the repairs, secured the mast as well as we could, hoisted the mainsail, and made every thing ready for a start; and just as we had hove short, a nice light air came off the land, as if on purpose; but when in the very act of tripping the anchor, lo! it fell calm again. As to our attempting to tow the schooner out of the bay with such customers right ahead of us, it would have been stark staring madness. We had therefore to let go again, and began to re-occupy ourselves in peering into the night. The roar of the surf on the coast, now came louder, as it struck me, and hoarser, as if the ground-swell had begun to roll in more heavily.

"We shall have the sea-breeze shortly, Lennox, take my word for it—it is blowing a merry capful of wind close to us out there," said I; but the *terral* again sprung up, notwithstanding my prognostication, so we hove up the anchor, ran up the jib, and the Moonbeam, after canting with her head to the eastward, began gradually to slide towards the offing through the midnight sea. Presently sparkling bubbles rippled against the stem, and mixed with white foam, buzzed past the bows, as she gathered way.

Accustomed now to the darkness, we could perceive the boats ahead separate, and take their stations one on each bow, keeping way with us, as if watching us. We had loaded the two carronades with musket-balls, and had our twelve muskets on deck. We continued gliding along, and presently the boats, as if by signal, lay on their oars, letting us shoot past them, then closed astern of us, pulling a stroke or two, as if they had an intention of coming up, on either side of us.

"If you come nearer," said Lennox through the trumpet to the boat that was pulling on the starboard side, "so help me God, I will fire at you."

No answer. The breeze at the instant took off, and they approached within pistol shot, one on each quarter, where they hung without coming any nearer.

"They are only seeing us off, they don't mean to annoy us, Lennox, after all; so hold on steadily, and don't mind them," said I.

But the zeal of Toby Tooraloo, who had by this time got much excited, and he hanged to him, had nearly got us all into a scrape.

"You villains, *I* will teach you," quoth the valiant Tobias, "to insult an armed vessel—so stand by there, men—give them two of the carronades"—as if there had been a whole broadside beside. And before Lennox could interfere, he had sung out "Fire!"

Bang went both carronades, whisking up the surface of the sea on either beam into a sparkling foam, the bullets spanking away in flakes of fire, until they dropped ashore in the distance. The same low fiendish laugh was again heard from the boat nearest us; and as if they had only waited for this very foolish act of aggression on our part, to commence an attack, one of the boats pulled ahead, and then made right for our starboard bow.

"Hillo!" said I, thinking the Rubicon was passed, and that our only chance now, after Tooraloo's absurd demonstration, was to put our best foot foremost—"Sheer off, whoever you are, or I will show you, my fine fellow, that we are not *playing* with you, any how"—and picking up a musket, I gave them a moderate time to see if my threat would have any effect. Finding it had not, I took deliberate aim at the boat, and fired.

A loud "Ah!" declared that the shot had told. This was followed by a deep groan, and some one exclaimed, in Spanish,—*"Oh dios, soy muerto!"*

"Close and board him," shouted a loud and angry voice, high above several others, from the same boat—"Close and board him—cut their throats, if they resist."

At this moment, as old Nick would have it, it fell entirely calm, and the boat began to approach rapidly; the other threatening our larboard quarter, so I thought our fate was sealed; but whether they were not quite satisfied of the kind of reception we might give them, they once more lay on their oars when close aboard of us. A clear and well-blown bugle from the boat where the man had been hit, now awoke the sleeping echoes of the bay. Gradually they died away faint and more faint amongst the hills. All was still as the grave for a minute. "Ha, that is no reverberation, that is no echo; hark, it is answered by another bugle from the cove. Now we are in a remarkably beautiful mess," said I; "see—see." A rocket was here sent up by the other boat, and instantly answered by a steady red light from beyond the clump of cocoa-nut trees, through whose hair-like stems we could perceive the little Midge, with her tall lateen sail, stealing along in the crimson glare like some monstrous centipede of the ocean, and propelled by her sweeps, that flashed up the dark water all round her into blood-like foam, as if Old Nick's state barge had floated up red hot and hissing. A loud rushing noise at the same instant growled down on us from seaward, and one could perceive a squall, without being a pig, whitening the tops of the swell, even dark as it was.

"Haul off," sung out the same voice, just as the breeze struck us,—*"Sheer off, and let the scoundrel alone, and mind yourselves—he will be on the reef close to us here bodily in a moment."*

"Thank you for the hint," thought I; "the reef is close to you, is it?" Tooraloo had caught at this also, so it was about ship on the other tack; but we soon found it was utterly impossible to work out of the bay in the darkness, with such a breeze as was now springing up, ignorant as we were besides of the localities; so it was up helm, for in order to escape the immediate danger of going ashore on the rocks, we had no earthly alternative, but the fearful one of running directly back into the lion's mouth again, and after having pretty well chafed him too;—indeed, we had the utmost difficulty in getting back to our anchorage before it came on to blow right in like thunder; and there we lay on deck through the livelong night exposed to a pitiless shower of rain, in a state of most unenviable anxiety, expecting every moment to be boarded and murdered.

Neither the felucca nor boats followed us in, however, so we concluded they had returned to the cove, as all continued quiet. But the weariest *night* must have an end, as well as the weariest *day*, and at length the long looked-for morning broke upon us.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BREAKING WAVE.

As the day lightened, the wind fell, and by sunrise, it was nearly calm in the small bay, although we could see the breeze roughening the blue waters out at sea.

Presently, Mr \*\*\*'s negroes came on board; but before determining what to do, or proceeding with our repairs, we endeavoured to get out of them some more information regarding the privateers, to give them no worse a name, and their crews; apparently, however, they knew nothing beyond what we were already acquainted with.

"Nice peoples dem—Captain Wallace! Oh, quite one gentleman—plenty money—plenty grog—Ah, very nice peoples," was all that Quashie knew or seemed to care about—at least all that he would say.

While we were yet irresolute as to the prudence of stripping the mast, with such gentry almost within earshot, a small dory, or light canoe, shoved her black snout round the headland on which the cocoa-nuts grew, paddled by a solitary figure in the stern, with an animal of some kind or another stuck up, monkey-fashion, in the bow, which, as it came nearer, I perceived to be a

most noble Spanish bloodhound. I looked earnestly at the stranger through the glass, and concluded at once that he could be no other than our friend of the preceding evening.

"I say, Lennox"—he had been standing at my elbow the minute before—"that's *my* man—there"—pointing with the telescope.

"Mr Lennox is below, sir," said Tooraloo, "but you are right; it is *him*, sure enough."

The man paddled briskly alongside, when the bloodhound caught a rope in his teeth, that was hanging over, and, setting his feet against the bowpost, held on until his master jumped on board, which he did with the most perfect *sang-froid*.

"Now for it," thought I; "he is come to tell us *civilly* that we are to have our throats cut for shooting one of his beauties last night."

Having deliberately secured his dory, by making fast the painter round one of the stanchions of the awning, he called to his dog—"Matamoro—here, boy, here," and saw him safe on board before he had the civility to make his bow. At length he turned to me, and I had *now* no difficulty whatever in making out my *amigo* Mr Wilson, in the identical Buenos Ayrean captain, although he had altered his appearance very materially from the time I had seen him in Jamaica. Awkward as our position appeared to be fast getting, I could scarcely keep my eyes off the beautiful animal that accompanied him; first, because I admired him exceedingly; and secondly, because he seemed deucedly inclined to bite me. He was as tall as a stag-hound, whose symmetry of head and figure he conjoined with the strength of the English bull-dog. His colour was a pale fawn, gradually darkening down the legs and along the neck, until the feet and muzzle were coal black. He gamboled about his master like a puppy; but the moment any of us spoke to him, he raised his back into an angry curve, with the black streak that ran down it bristling up like a wild-boar's, and set his long tail straight, as if it had been a crow-bar, or the Northumbrian lion's; and then his teeth—my wig! the laughing hyæna was a joke to him. But I must return from the dog to the man. He was dressed in very wide trowsers, of a sort of broad, yellow striped silk and cotton Indian stuff; slippers of velvet-looking, yellowish-brown Spanish leather, and no stockings; he wore a broad belt of the same sort of leather round his waist, over the ample folds of an Indian shawl of a bright yellow colour, with crimson fringes, the ends of which hung down on one side like a sash; this was fastened by a magnificent gold buckle in front, worked into the shape of a thistle. Through this cincture was stuck, on the left side, a long, crooked, ivory-handled knife, in a shark-skin sheath, richly ornamented with gold; while a beautifully worked grass purse hung from the other, containing his cigars, flint, and steel. His shirt was of dark ruby-coloured cotton, worked with a great quantity of bright red embroidery at the sleeves and throat, where it was fastened with the largest ruby stone I had ever seen; also fashioned like the head of the aforesaid Scottish thistle, with emerald leaves, and set in a broad old-fashioned silver brooch—the only silver ornament he wore—such as the ladies of the Highland chieftains in days of yore used to fasten their plaids with on the left shoulder. It was evidently an heir-loom. Vain, apparently, of the beautiful but Herculean mould of his neck, he wore his shirt collar folded back, cut broad and massive, and lined with velvet of the same colour as the shirt, and no neckcloth.

He had shaven his whiskers since I had seen him, but wore a large jet-black mustache on his upper lip; and a twisted Panama chain round his neck, supporting an instrument made of some bright yellow hardwood, highly polished, resembling a boatswain's pipe in shape; the ventiges inlaid with gold.

His cap, of the same sort of leather as his belt, was richly embroidered with a band of golden thistles above the scoop, which was of tortoiseshell hooped in with gold, coming very low down over his eyes, while the top, like a hussar's, doubled over on the left side of his head, where it ended in a massive tassel of gold bullion.

He had buff gloves stuck in his belt; and his hands, strong and muscular, but fair as a woman's, were richly decorated with several valuable rings.

There had been *one* alteration in his appearance, however, that I surmised he would have dispensed with if he could; and that was a broad, deep, and scarcely cicatrized scar down his sun-burnt cheek.

"My Kingston friend—proof positive," thought I.

I had never seen so handsome a man before, bronzed almost black though he was by wind and fierce suns—such perfect symmetry, conjoined with such muscle and strength—such magnificent bodily proportions, with so fine a face and forehead; and such pearl-white teeth—but the fiend looked forth in the withering sparkle of his hazel eye.

"The thistle!" said I to myself, as the old Scottish brooch, and the general predominance of the national emblem in his equipment attracted my attention; "alas, can love of country, pervading as it is, still linger in the bosom of a man *without* a country; of one whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him; *of the Tiger of the sea!*" Yes, like the dying lamp in the sepulchre, flickering after its fellows have long been for ever quenched, whose faint and uncertain beams seem still to sanctify, if they cannot warm, the gloomy precincts, where all beside is cold, and dark, and dead;—it was the last ray of blessed light, gleaming through the

mist of surrounding rottenness and desolation—the last pale halo of virtuous and holy feeling hovering to depart from off the obdurate and heaven-scathed heart of the God-forsaken PIRATE.

Unjust—unjust. There *was another*—a kindlier, a warmer, a steadier flame, that still burnt sun-bright in that polluted tabernacle—all worthy of a purer shrine—nor left it until, abreast of the spark of life itself, it was shattered from his riven heart by the dart of the Destroyer; and the dark and felon spirit, whirled to its tremendous account on the shriek of unutterable despair, crushed from him in his mortal agony, as the dancing waves closed, howling and hissing like water-fiends, over the murderer's grave. But let me not anticipate.

From his manner I could not say whether he knew me or not.

"So you have put in here in distress," said he to the master of the Moonbeam, glancing his eyes upwards, where the people were at work at the head of the mainmast.

"Yes, sir," said Tooraloo, but before he could get in another word, our *friend* was in the main-rigging himself, and near the masthead.

"Eigh, eigh," sung out Palmneedle and Chip, who were helping the carpenters and riggers aloft, "*what dis—who dis?*" for the dog was following his master like a monkey, *yaffing* and barking, and sprawling with his feet through the ratlines—so each of the negroes, seizing a rope, slid down on deck, and with such vehemence, that they capsized on their backs, cocking up their black trotters in the air, after a most ludicrous fashion.

"Oh, I see—I see," said Wallace or Wilson, descending, and swinging himself in on deck with the grace of an Apollo; "masthead badly sprung—and your chaps seem to be going clumsily enough about their work too"—(a truth undoubtedly)—"I will send you my carpenter's crew to lend a hand in securing it."

"Thank you, sir," said Toby, with much the sort of expression and tone of a contrite culprit thanking the hangman for adjusting the rope.

I was myself cruelly taken aback by such unlooked-for civility, I will confess.

"But won't you step down and see my owner, sir? he is in the cabin," quoth Tooraloo, in doubt what to *say* or *do—metre again*.

"Oh, certainly—no objections—but won't you go first, sir?" said he, with one hand on the companion, and politely indicating the ladder with the other; cloaking thereby his real object, which was clearly that he might not be taken at advantage.

Tooraloo and I went below on this, as one needs must go when the devil drives, and were immediately followed by the stranger.

Lennox was busy with some papers, and stooping down over his open desk, with his pen crossed in his mouth, when we entered—

"The captain of the Buenos Ayrean privateer, sir," said Tooraloo, stopping at the door and ushering him in past him—jamming himself as flat as a flounder against the door-post, as if to prevent even a fibre of his clothing from touching the other.

Lennox looked up—his eyebrows instantly contracted, his colour faded, and he became as pale as death. The pen dropped unheeded from his lips, while the large law paper that he held in his left hand, in which he had apparently been writing, trembled like an aspen leaf.—At length he ground out between his teeth—

"Hast thou found me—O mine enemy?"

"*Found you*," said the other, who had started, or rather staggered back, equally overcome with extreme surprise apparently, and nearly capsizing Tooraloo, whose breath he fairly knocked out of his body against the door-post with a grunt—"Found you, Saunders? why if I have, it has not been in consequence of *looking* for you, let me tell you *that*; for of all the unexpected meetings that ever befell me, so help me God—this is"—

"Blaspheme not, William Adderfang—take not *His* name into *your* mouth—you *have* found me, let that suffice—and am *I* wrong in calling *you* my *enemy—me!*—

"Yes, Saunders—you *are* wrong—for with little of your *profession*, and none of your *romance* and *nonsense*, my boy, I will prove you are wrong at a fitting opportunity—so there's my hand in the mean time, man—there's my hand."—Lennox sprang back, as if it had held a viper—"Heyday," said the other, drawing himself up fiercely—"why I thought you might have allowed by-gones to *be* by-gones at this time of day—and surely I may cry quits now, after your having scoured your knife against my ribs, at"—

Here he checked himself, and Lennox, making an effort to resume his composure, shook Adderfang's hand, but very much as one would shake a red-hot poker—and then with no very good grace asked him to sit down to breakfast, which the other instantly did with apparent cordiality; and a deuced good one he made too, chattering and doing the agreeable all the while,

as if he had been an old and intimate acquaintance come on board to welcome us on our arrival. As for me Benjie—I freely confess that I could not have told whether I was eating biscuit or blancmange; nay, I verily believe you might have palmed castor oil on me for coffee, and I never would have noticed it.

"Adderfang—William Adderfang—the seducer of Jessy Miller!" said I to myself; "here's a coil—the villain who stabbed and robbed me at Havanna! the master Wilson of Montego bay—the man with the blunderbuss at Kingston.—Whew! This devil of a fellow to pounce upon us so unexpectedly, in an out of the way place like San Andreas too! and with a couple of whacking privateers, to give them still their genteel name, with a hundred and fifty neat young gentlemen at the fewest, I make no question, to back him. There's a climax of agreeables for you, if he should recognise *me* now! Come, this *does* account with a vengeance for the floating notions that crossed my mind at Mr Roseapple's—I was *sure* I had seen him before."

Still, notwithstanding these *pleasant* dreams, I gave in to circumstances, better than either of my two shipmates, I fancy; for Lennox could eat but little, and was evidently ill at ease—as for the skipper he gobbled mechanically—he could not help *that*; but I noticed that he watched the stranger like a cat watching a terrier, starting at his every motion; and when he dropped his knife by accident on the floor and stooped to pick it up, he held his breath until he saw him at work at the biscuit and cold ham again; as if he had considered there was a tolerable chance of his giving him a progue with it *en passant*, just for the fun of the thing as it were.

Gradually, however, I got more at ease, and was noticing the extreme beauty of his short curling auburn hair, now that his cap was thrown aside, with a dash of premature grey here and there, like hoarfrost in early autumn; and the noble ivory forehead, paler by contrast with the bronzing of his face, and smooth as monumental alabaster while his fierce spirit was in calm, but crisping in a moment if his passions were roused, like the ripple on the calm sea before the first of the breeze; when he rose abruptly and led the way from the cabin.

When we came on deck—Adderfang, or Wilson, or Wallace, or whatever his name for the moment might be—whistled "loud as the scream of the curlew," and an armed boat immediately shoved out from under the mangroves that grew on the small point or headland near the coconut trees, and pulled towards us.

"Come," thought I, "he seems determined not to trust too much to our forbearance either."—The boat approached—it was apparently a very fast one, pulled by four splendid fellows in neat white trowsers and blue shirts, and all with cloth caps handsomely embroidered.—They had their cutlasses buckled round their waists by black belts, and there were four marines in white jackets, two in the bow and two aft, sitting with their muskets upright between their knees.—The officer commanding the boat was a tall sallow young man, very Yankee in appearance, dressed in a blue uniform coat, and one epaulette, with uniform buttons of some kind or another, so that altogether I should have taken him for an officer in the United States navy, had I accidentally met him. He came alongside.

"Mr Kerrick"—said Adderfang, who evidently, but from what motive I could not tell, was most desirous that we should be off from our anchorage as fast as possible—"send Whitaker and four of his crew from the Mosca"—this I guessed was the schooner, although I afterwards found that she was no other than the far-famed piratical Baltimore clipper, the Snowflake, the terror of those seas—"and see—it is to get all put to rights aloft there—the head of the mainmast is badly sprung, you can tell him, and he will know better than any of us what to bring."

"Ay, ay, sir,"—said his subaltern, and without more ado the boat shoved off again, not for the point, however, but direct for the beach under Mr \*\*\*'s house, where the officer landed, and the crew, leaving a boat-keeper on the beach, began to skylark about; but evidently they had their instructions never to move so far away but that they should be able to reach their boat again, *before we could*, if we had tried it. From their lingo, those youths were all of them either Americans or Englishmen, probably a mixture of both.

Presently Tooraloo, at his request or command, for although the words were civil enough, the tone sounded deuced like the latter, put Adderfang ashore in the Moonbeam's boat; and under the idea that if there was any danger toward, I ran as much risk where I was as on the land, I asked to accompany him, so that I might reconnoitre a bit by the way. Accordingly, we were walking up to Mr \*\*\*'s house, when I thought I would diverge a little, in order to have a parley with some of the boat's crew, who I had noticed converged towards their own boat whenever they saw ours put off; but before I could ask a question, the officer before mentioned interposed, and with a great deal of mock civility offered *his* services, if I wanted any thing. I had no plea to avoid him, so I followed Adderfang and Tooraloo to the house.

I now found, when I could look about me in the daylight, that it was even a narrower tongue of land on which the house stood than what I had imagined, and that divided the bay where we were, from the narrow land-locked creek where the two privateers were at anchor.

Where I stood I looked right down upon them—they lay in a beautiful little basin, with high precipitous banks on the side next me, but with a smooth, hard, and white beach on the opposite side, at the head of the creek. The entrance was very narrow, not pistol-shot across.

Close to the shore, and immediately below me, lay a large schooner, but I could only see her mastheads and part of her bowsprit and fore-rigging, as she was moored with her stern towards the high bank, so as to present her broadside to the opening of the harbour, and her bows to that of her consort, the little Midge, that lay further off and close to the shore on the other side of the creek, at right angles with the schooner, so as to rake her if she had been carried, or enfilade any boats coming in to attack her. Both vessels had the Buenos Ayrean flag and pennant flying; blue, white, and blue, horizontally.

There were sentries along the beach; one being advanced near to where I stood, who, when I made demonstrations of descending, very civilly told me to heave about, and *go back again*. I remonstrated, and said, "In the island of a friendly power I saw no right that he, or any one else, had to set bounds to my rambles."

He said he knew nought about *whose* island it *was*, but he knew what *his orders were*; "so if I ventured, he had given me fair warning." With this, he threw his musket across his body, and slapped the side of it to see that the priming was all right.

"You are very obliging," said I; "but, pray, put yourself to no inconvenience whatever on my account, as I shall return." And like the thief in the hen-roost, I did go "back again."

By sunset that night our repairs were finished, and a message came from Captain *Wallace*, that he *expected* we would weigh and be off at daylight in the morning—a hint that we were right willing to take, I assure you.

The bearer further said, that he was ordered to leave a small blue and yellow flag, that we were to hoist, if we fell in with the *Waterwraith*, a schooner-tender that he had cruising about the island, which would prevent her from molesting us.

"Murder! Are there three of them?—ho, ho, hoo,"—trundled out our friend, Toby Tooraloo.

When we tried to get the carpenter's crew to take payment as they were leaving us, they said they were positively forbidden to do so, and their captain *was not a man to be trifled with*.

"Why, so it appears," thought I.

Lennox was mute and melancholy, but we could not better ourselves, so at length we retired to rest. I could not sleep, however, so I was soon on deck again, where I found both Lennox and Tooraloo before me.

And now it was that a most striking and inexplicable incident occurred. The voice of the wilderness, every traveller knows, is many-toned and various; and how often have not mysterious sounds broken on the ear of the solitary look-out man, in the middle watch, for which he never could account? On the midnight tossing of the melancholy main, who has not fancied a "voice articulate" in the hoarse murmur, and often wolf-like howl, of the approaching wave? But listen!

"Do you hear that, sir?" said Lennox to me, so soon as I came on deck. I listened, and heard a low moaning noise that came off the land, swelling and dying away on the fitful gusts of the *terral*, like the deepest tones of an Eolian harp. It sank and sank, and was just melting away, and becoming inaudible altogether, when it seemed to blend into a ponderous and solemn sound, that floated down to us on the fitful breeze, like the midnight tolling of a deep-toned cathedral bell, or the gradually increasing tremulous boom of a large gong.

"I do," said I; "and hark—is that a bell?—no, it cannot be, yet the sound is most like." Again we all listened eagerly. But the sound had ceased, and we were about commencing our pendulum walk on the confined deck, when once more it came off, and in the very strongest of the swell, the same ringing sound swung three times over us distinctly on the night air. "Who struck the bell there?" I sung out, a good deal startled—no answer—we all then passed forward; *there was no one on deck*—"very strange," said I—"what can it be?"

"My dregy,"<sup>[1]</sup> said poor Lennox, with a faint laugh.

<sup>[1]</sup> *Anglice*, dirge.

"Davy Jones—Davy Jones—the devil—the devil—the devil—hooro, hoooro, hoooro!" quoth Tooraloo.

Whatever it was we heard neither sound again, but they had scarcely ceased when a small glow-worm coloured spark, precisely like the luminous appearance of a piece of decayed fish, flitted about the foretopgallant yard and royal-masthead, now on the truck, now on either yardarm, like a bee on the wing, during the time one might count twenty, and then vanished.

"And there goes his worship visibly; why the air must be fearfully surcharged with electricity to be sure," said I Benjie. We were all astonishment—but the plot was only thickening.



"How loud and hollow the sound of the surf is, Lennox," I continued. "And I have never seen such a strong phosphorescence of the sea as to-night. Look there, the breakers on the reef are like a ridge of pale fire. Why, here are a whole bushful of portents, more numerous than those which preceded the death of Cæsar, as I am a gentleman."

The Dominie did not relish this sort of talking, I noticed. "It may be no laughing matter to some of us before all is done, sir."

"Poo, nonsense; but there may be *bad weather brewing*, Master Lennox."

"Yes, sir," responded the poor fellow, speaking very fast, as if desirous of cloaking his weakness,—"yes, sir, we shall have a breeze soon, I fear."

"No doubt—no doubt."

"There's a squall coming—there's a squall coming—ho, ho, he"—rumbled Toby.

"Where—where?"

"There—right out there."

"Poo, poo—that's the reef—the white breakers—eh, what?—why it moves, sure enough—it *is* sliding across the mouth of the bay—there, whew!"—as a blue light was burned in the offing, disclosing distinctly enough a small schooner standing in for the land, under easy sail, plunging heavily, and kicking up a curl of white foam on the black and rapidly increasing swell. Presently all was dark again, and a night-signal was made on board of her with lanterns.

"Waterwraith, as sure as can be!" said I; "but why does he bother with blue lights and signals? would it not be easier to send in a boat at once?"

"Too much sea on—too much sea on," quoth Tooraloo; "and no one would venture to thread the reefs and run in in a night like this; so he has no way of communicating but by signal."

After a little we noticed the small white wreath steal back again like a puff of vapour, and, crossing the bay, vanish beyond the bluff opposite the cocoanut trees.

"There—she has said her say, whatever that may have been, and has hove about again, sure enough."

We saw no more of her that night, and with the early dawn, we were once more under weigh, sliding gently out of the small haven.

I am sure I could not tell how the little beauty slipt along so speedily, for the collapsed sails were hanging wet and wrinkled from the spars, so light was the air; and as we began to draw out into the offing, and to feel the heave of the swell, the motion of the vessel made them *speak* and flutter, the water dashing down in showers, at every rumbling flap of the soaked and clouded canvass.

The night had been throughout very hot and sultry, the sky as dark as pitch, and now the day broke very loweringly. Thick masses of heavy clouds rolled in from the offing, whirling overhead like the smoke from a steamer's chimney-stack. It lightened in the south east, now and then, and as we drew out from the land, the distant grumble of the thunder blended hoarsely with the increasing noise of the surf, as the swell, at one time, surged howling up the cavernous indentations on the ironbound coast, ebbing, with a loud shoaling rush, like a rapid river over shallows; at another, pitched in sullen *thuds* against the rocks, and reverberated from their iron ribs with a deafening roar, that made air and sea tremble again. As we got out of the bay, the growling of the sea increased, and came more hollow, the noise being reflected from the land in sounding echoes.

Close to, the waves rolled on in long sluggish undulations; in colour and apparent consistency as if they had been molten lead; the very divers that we disturbed on their dull grey surface, ran along, leaving dotted trails, as if it had been semi-fluid, or as if some peculiarity in the atmosphere had rendered them unable to raise themselves into the murky air.

Shoals of sea-mews, and other waterfowl, were floating lightly, and twinkling with their white wings in the cold grey dawning, as we crept through amongst them and disturbed them, like clusters of feathers scattered on the glass-like heaving of the dark water, afraid apparently to leave the vicinity of the land; every now and then the different groups would take up in succession a loud screaming, like a running fire passing along the line, when all would be still again. Birds that hovered between an English martin and Mother Cary's chickens in appearance, kept dipping, and rising, and circling all round us; and the steady flying pelican skimmed close to the tops of the swell, on poised and motionless wing, as straight as a pointblank cannon shot; while a shoal of porpoises were dappling the surface to windward, with their wheel-like gambols.

"What the deuce makes the fish jump so this morning?" said I to Lennox, as several dolphins sprang into the air ahead of the Moonbeam—"What is that?"—a puff of white vapour, with a noise for all the world like a blast of steam, rose close to us.

"The blowing of a whale, sir;" and immediately thereafter the back of the monster, like a black reef, or the bottom of a capsized launch, was hove out of the water, and then disappeared slowly with a strong eddy; his subaqueous track being indicated on the surface by a long line of bubbles, and *swirling* ripples, like the wake of a ship cleaving the water rapidly, always growing stronger and more perceptible as he neared the surface to breathe again.

"Ah! that accounts for it; there again he rises."

"Yes," rejoined he; "but see how he shoves out into the offing, although the shoals he is after are running in shore. As sure as a gun, he is conscious of the danger of being embayed if the weather becomes what I fear it will be soon."

"Lots of indications that a close-reefed topsail breeze, at all events, is not a thousand miles off, Master Lennox," said I.

Out at sea, the swell tumbled most tumultuously; the outline of the billows seen with startling clearness by the flashes of lightning, on the verge of the horizon; while nearer at hand, the waves began to break in white foam, and roll towards us with hoarse and increasing growls; although the light air that was drifting us out came off the land, and consequently blew in the precisely contrary direction from whence the swell was proceeding. Threatening as the weather looked, right off the cocoa-nut trees at the point, we perceived a boat, rising and disappearing on the ridges, and in the hollows of the sea, like a black buoy.

"So—an ominous looking morning, Toby. Still, our friends of the blue, white, and blue bunting, are determined to see us fairly off it seems; for there is their boat watching us till the last, you see."

"So I perceive, sir," said the skipper; "but if it were not for their neighbourhood, Mr Brail, I would have recommended Mr Lennox to stay where he was until the weather cleared; but there is no help for it now."

The morning wore on. We were now sliding along shore about a mile from the beach, and our view down to the westward, as we approached the southernmost point of the island, began to open.

The higher part of the land was quite clear; the outline, indeed, dangerously distinct and *near-like*, according to my conception; but the white clouds that floated over it when we first started, like a sea of wool, and which usually rise and exhale under the morning sun, had in the present case rolled off to the southward, and lay heaped up in well-defined masses, like the smoke of an engagement floating sluggishly in the thunder-calmed air, close to the surface of the water.

I was admiring this uncommon appearance, not without some awkward forebodings, when a flaw of wind off the land rent the veil in the middle, or rather opened an arch in it, at the end of whose gloomy vista rose the island as a dark background, and suddenly disclosed a small schooner lying to, so clear and model-like under the canopy of vapour, that I can compare it to nothing more aptly than a sea-scene in a theatre.

"Hillo!" said I, "what vessel is that down to leeward there? It must be our friend of last night, I take it. Hand me up the glass, if you please."

"Where's the small flag—where's the small flag?" sung out Toby.

"Here, sir," said Chip the negro, as he bent it on to the signal haulyards.

"Then hoist away," rejoined Tooraloo. "That is the Waterwraith down to leeward, sir, to a certainty."

"Sure enough," I replied; "I hope he will let us go without overhauling us. I am not at all amorous of the society of those gentry—quite enough of it in the bay yonder, Toby."

The moment she saw us, she made sail towards us, but hove about so soon as she saw the signal, which she answered with a similar flag, and then stood in for the land again.

In a minute, the mist once more boiled over her, and she disappeared.

It crept slowly on towards where we lay, for it was again nearly calm, although the threatening appearances in the sky and on the water continued to deepen, and was just reaching us, when we heard a cannon-shot from the thickest of it.

"Heyday—what does that indicate, Lennox?"

"Some signal to the other villains in the cove, sir"—and then, in a low tone as he turned away—"but to me it sounds like a knell."

Another gun—another—*and another*—"Some fun going on there at all events," said I.

The breeze now freshened, and the fog-bank blew off and vanished; when lo! our spectral

friend the Waterwraith re-appeared, but on the other tack this time, about two miles to the westward of us, with a large schooner, that had hitherto been also concealed by the fog, sticking in his skirts, and blazing away at him. In ten minutes they both tacked again. They had now the regular sea-breeze strong from the eastward, and were close-hauled, under all the sail they could carry, on the starboard tack.

"Confound it," said Lennox, who was now beside me, "we seem to have dropped into a nest of them—it will be another privateer."

"Then why is she firing at the small one?" said I.

"Oh, some make-believe manoeuvre," said he.

But I had taken a long look, and was by no means of this opinion. The smallest vessel, the schooner we had first seen, would evidently go far to windward of us, but the larger was right in our track; so avoiding her, if we stood on as we were doing, was out of the question.

"However, better take our chance with this chap out here, than run back into the lion's mouth," said I.

So we kept on our course, having now got the breeze also, and steering large, so as to go ahead of the biggest of the two, unless he stood away to intercept us. We were beginning to get over our fears, and to think he was going to take no notice of us after all, and had brought him end on, when a flash spurted from his bows, and a swirl of white smoke rolled down to leeward.

"He has fired at us," said I, as the shot hopped along the water close to us.

"Then hoist away our colours," said Lennox; "let us know the worst of it at once."

The next shot pitched over the lee quarter, and knocked one of our hencoops to pieces, unexpectedly liberating the feathered prisoners. Toby's lingo—for he was now in an ecstasy of fear—became very amusing. "Now, men, rouse aft the foresheet, and do some of you catch that duck. Clap on the topsail haulyards—mind the capon—topgallant and royal haulyards also—bless me, the turkey is overboard—why, that royal is all aback—chickens—topgallantsail is not set at all—both geese—now a small pull of the boom sheet. You blood of a black—female dog"—to Chip, the negro carpenter—"peak purchase; belay all that—murder! if both the guinea birds are not over into the sea."

"Ha!" said I, "I thought so—there goes the blue ensign and pennant. He is a man-of-war, thank Heaven!"

"Heave to, captain," cried Lennox.

But just as we had shortened sail preparatory thereto, the schooner ranged alongside, and, without a word spoken, fired a broadside of round and grape slap into us, whereby Lennox himself and other two poor devils were wounded, and our rigging considerably cut up.

"That's the Spider, for a thousand," said I; "but what the deuce can he mean by firing at us?"

"I can't tell, but I don't think it is the Spider, sir," said Lennox; "so haul in the sheets, and keep by the wind again, captain—quick man, quick." And away we staggered once more, running in for San Andreas on a bow line as fast as we could split; but the large schooner stuck close at our heels, firing away like fury, while the little Waterwraith promptly availed himself of this interlude, by tacking, and standing off the land again.

"Why, Toby, you and your owner are both mad—what better of it will you make by running back?"

Lennox had gone below to have his arm bound up by this time.

"You would not have us tack, and get another broadside, sir? Besides, look at the weather, sir? even putting the schooner out of the question," said Tooraloo.

"Ah, as to the weather, *there* indeed you have some reason."

Toby saw his advantage. "Surely you would not have us keep the sea in such a threatening morning, even without such company, sir?"

The prudence of this was becoming every moment more evident, as the dark waves were now breaking all round us, and the water was roughening and whitening to windward; it was clear we should have a sneezer before long.

Thanks to our excellent sailing, we gradually dropped the schooner, until we were out of gunshot—we were presently up with the island, and ran in, and once more came-to in our old corner; but the man-of-war kept in the offing, apparently to reconnoitre. We found a privateer's boat at our old anchorage, most like the one that had seen us off in the morning. It was coming out with Adderfang himself in it—all his gay dress thrown aside—he had neither hat nor cap on, nor shoes, but wore a simple blue shirt, and canvass trowsers; the former open at the breast,

disclosing his muscular and hairy chest, and with the sleeves rolled up to his armpits. He was covered with dust and perspiration, and had evidently been toiling fiercely at something or other with his own hands. He was armed to the teeth, as were his boat's crew.

"What brings you back, Mr Brail?" said he, his brows knit, his eyes flashing fire, his face pale as death, and his lips blue and trembling, evidently in a paroxysm of the most savage fury; "what brings you back? and what vessel is that astern of you? No concealment, sir; I am not in a mood to trifle."

"She is a man-of-war, captain," at this critical juncture sung out the tall, sallow man, who had been in command of the boat on the previous day, from the top of the cliffs, where he had perched himself like on ugly cormorant, with a glass in his hand.

"I thought so," said the pirate with great bitterness; "I thought so. Fool! to believe that any thing but treachery was to come from that whelp! Walpole—here, men, lend me a hand."

And before we could interfere, he was on board, with four desperadoes as powerful almost as himself. I had never witnessed such devilish ferocity before in any animal, human or inhuman, except in his worship's dog, who was jumping and foaming about the deck as if he had been possessed by a kindred devil, or had been suffering under hydrophobia; only waiting apparently for the holding up of his master's little finger to lunch on Toby Tooraloo, or breakfast on me Benjie.

"Here, Matamoro, here," roared our *amigo*, indicating the companion to this beautiful pet, who thereupon glanced down it like a ferret after a rat; and from the noise below it was clear he had attacked Lennox. Adderfang and two of his men instantly followed, and presently the poor dominie, bleeding from his recent wound, and torn by the dog in the shoulder, was dragged up the ladder, like a carcass in the shambles, bound hand and foot, and hove bodily into the boat. I was petrified with horror. The poor fellow, in the midst of all the misery of this his closing scene, gave me one parting look as he passed—one last concentrated look of the most intense wo. I never shall forget the expression: it seemed to say, a thousand times more forcibly than language could have expressed—"Do you believe what I told you at Havanna to have been a dream now, Mr Brail?"

The next moment he cried aloud and imploringly to the demon in human shape, into whose power he had indeed, against all probability, fallen, "Where are you going to take me, Mr Adderfang?" The only answer he gave him was a brutal kick on the mouth. "I have had no communication with the schooner in the offing. Don't you see I am wounded by her shot? I have had another blow. Mind what you do, or you shall repent this," cried the poor fellow again as they dragged him along.

"Let him go," I sung out, as they were about shoving off. "Men, stand by me. Release him, you murdering villain! Where would you take him to, you bucaniering scoundrel?"

"To hell—and mind you don't keep him company—to meet the fate of a spy! one that has brought an enemy on me, when I was willing to have forgotten and forgiven. Let go the painter, sir—let go, I say."

And he made a blow with his cutlass, that missed me, but severed the rope; and as if the action had lashed him into uncontrollable rage, he instantly drew a pistol, and fired it at my head. The bullet flew wide of its mark, however, but down dropped Toby Tooraloo; while Adderfang shouted,—

"Shove off, men—give way for your lives—pull."

And in a twinkling the boat disappeared behind the small cocoa-nut tree point.

"Good God, sir," said Toby, lying flat on his back, where I thought he had been shot, "what is to be done? They will murder Mr Lennox."

"Very like; but I thought you were killed yourself, Toby."

"No, sir—no, sir—only knocked down by the wind of the shot, sir—wind of the shot, sir—ho, ho, hoo!"

"Wind of a pistol bullet no bigger than a pea? For shame, Toby!—fright, man, fright."

But we had no time for reflection; for the schooner was now right off the mouth of the small bay, apparently clear for action. She was a man-of-war, beyond all question; and I was still convinced she was the Spider. Presently she hauled round the cocoa-nut-covered cape, and took up a position, so far as I could judge, opposite the mouth of the creek. Oh, what would I not have given to have been on board of her! But this was impossible.

The blue and yellow private signal, that Adderfang had sent us, and which had been kept flying until this moment, was now hauled down, close past my nose.

"Spider!—to be sure that is the Spider; and no wonder she should have peppered us so

beautifully, Master Toby, with such a voucher for our honesty aloft; with this same accursed signal flying, that she had seen the Waterwraith hoist. There! the murder is out. What conclusion could De Walden have come to, but that we were birds of a feather?"

"Ay, ay—true enough—hooro! hooro! hooro!" rumbled Tobias, sweating like a pig with downright fear.

Tooraloo and I now hurried ashore in the boat, without well knowing what to do, and ran to the ridge, to see, if possible, what became of Lennox. The boat wherein he was, sheered for a moment alongside the schooner, the Mosca, apparently giving orders, and then pulled directly for the Midge, where the people got out, dragging poor Lennox along with them.

"Heaven have mercy on us!" I exclaimed, shuddering. "What can they be going to do with the poor fellow?"

I was not long in doubt; for the moment they got on the deck, the barbarians cast him headlong down the main hatchway, which was immediately battened down, and then hoisted in the boat.

The crew of the schooner below me, whose deck, as already described, was hid by the high bank, were now busy, I could hear, in clearing for action; and several of them were piling up large stones, and making fast hawsers from her mastheads to trees at the top of the cliff near where I stood, that, in the event of her being carried below, it should be impossible to tow her out,—while the stones would prove formidable missiles when launched from above. I also perceived a boat at the foam-fringed sandy spit opposite the cocoa-nut trees, that formed one side of the narrow entrance, whose crew were filling bags with sand, and forming a small battery, with embrasures, for two carronades, that had been already landed, and lay like two black seeds on the white beach.

The Spider had by this time tacked, and stood out to sea again, apparently astonished at the extent of the preparations to receive her. After a brief space, she hove about, and in the very middle and thickest of a squall, accompanied by heavy thunder and vivid lightning, dashed gallantly into the harbour; but just as she came abreast of the battery, she took the ground—she had tailed on the bank, and hung. Her masts in a moment flew forward, and bent as if they would have gone over the bows, the rigging and canvass shaking and flapping convulsively; but the sound spars instantly recovered their upright position, with a violent jerk that made every thing rattle again, like the recoil of two tough yew staves when the bowstrings snap.

"Now, Master Henry, you are in for it," thought I.

This was the signal for the battery to open; but the grape from the Spider soon silenced it. However, the broadside of the schooner beneath me was raking her with terrible effect, I could see; while they were unable to get a single gun to bear. At length, by lightening her aft, her broadside was got round, so as to return the fire; and now the hellish uproar began in earnest. For several minutes the smoke, that rose boiling amongst the trees at the top of the cliff, concealed all below. I could neither see nor hear any thing but the glancing spouts of red flame, and thunder of the cannon; the bright sparkles and sharp rattle of the small arms blending with the yelling and shouting of the combatants: but the clearing away of the next squall made every thing once more comparatively clear. The battery, I perceived, was again manned, and galling the Spider most awfully; but just as I looked, a boat's crew from her stormed it, driving those who manned it along the sand-bank towards where the Midge lay; and then, having spiked the guns, returned on board. The freshening breeze now forced the Spider over the shoal, and she entered the creek. Giving the Midge a broadside in passing, in the hope of disabling her, so as to leave nothing to cope with but the Mosca; but the sting was not to be so easily taken out of the little vixen. Presently the Spider anchored by the stern, within pistol-shot of the schooner, right athwart his bows, and began to blaze away again.

The cheers from her increased, and the shouts of the pirates subsided; but the felucca, which had slipped on being fired at, and warped out between the Spider and the mouth of the cove, now dropped anchor again, with a spring on her cable; and from this vantage ground, began to dash broadside after broadside of round and grape right into her antagonist's stern, enfiling her most fearfully.

I could make nothing out of what was going on all this time on the Spider's deck; for although I now and then caught a glimpse of it, during the moments when the strength of the gale cleared away the smoke, and could dimly discern the turmoil of fighting men, and the usual confusion of a ship's deck during a hot engagement; yet the moment my optics began to *individualize*, as Jonathan says, the next discharge would whirl its feathery wreaths aloft, and hide every thing again half way up the masts, that stood out like two blasted pines piercing the mountain mists.

Hillo! my eyes deceive me, *or DOWN goes the blue ensign on board of the Spider!!!* So, fare thee well, Henry de Walden; well I wot, my noble boy, you have not lived to see it—Strike to pirates!—No! no! *How* could I be such a fool? It is but the peak haulyards that are shot away, and there goes a gallant fellow aloft to reeve or splice them again, amidst a storm of round, and grape, and musket balls. He cannot manage it, nor can the gaff be lowered, for something jams about the throat haulyards, which he struggles in vain to overhaul—then let it stick; for now he

slides down the drooping spar, to knot the peak haulyards *there*. Look how he sways about, as the gaff is violently shaken by the flapping of the loosened sail; for both vang and brails are gone. Mind you are not jerked overboard, my fine fellow—murder! he drops like lead into the pall of smoke beneath, shot dead by the enemy's marksmen. Another tries it—better luck this time, for he reaches the gaff-end, and there the peak rises slowly but steadily into the air once more, the ensign flashing out of the smoke that had concealed it, like the blue lightning from a thundercloud, and once more streaming gallantly in the wind. Whew! the unfortunate bunting clips into it again to leeward, vanishing like a dark-winged sea-bird dipping into a fogbank—the ensign haulyards are shot away—worse and more of it—down goes the maintopmast next, royal mast, pennant and all; snapped off by a cannon-ball as clean as a fishing-rod—no fun in all this, any how—Well done, my small man—a *wee* middy, in the very nick, emerges from the sulphureous cloud below, with a *red* ensign, to replace the blue one, fluttering and flaming around him, as if he were on fire. He clammers up the mainrigging, and seizes the meteor there—*seizes!* nay, he *nails* it to the mast. He descends again, and disappears, leaving the flag flaring in the storm from the masthead, as if the latter had been a blazing torch.

I began now seriously to fear that De Walden was getting too much of it between the Midge and the schooner, when I saw fire and thick smoke rise up near me, as if bursting from the afterpart of the latter vessel; and, at the moment, the increasing gale broke the Spider's spring, that a shift of wind had also compelled her to use, to keep her in her station,—so that, from being athwart his hawse, she now swung with her bows slantingly towards her opponent's broadside, and lay thus for some time, again terribly galled by a heavy raking fire, until the men in the Mosca were literally scorched from their guns by the spreading flames.

I could now see that the pirate crew were leaving her; so I slipped down near the edge of the cliff, to have a better view of what was going on beneath, but keeping as much out of the line of fire as possible.

The schooner's hull was by this time enveloped in smoke and waving red flames, and her fire silenced; while the Spider, taking advantage of the lull, was peppering the little Midge, who was returning the compliment manfully; her broadside, from the parting of the warp, being by this time opposed to hers.

The crew of the Mosca now abandoned her in two boats, one of which succeeded in reaching the Midge; while the other made for the shore on the opposite side of the creek.

Seeing me on the ridge, the rogues in the latter stopped, and faced about—"Heaven and earth, what is that?" I was cast down sprawling on my back.

"What dat is—what dat is, do massa say?" quoth honest Quacco's voice at this juncture; "Massa no was shee one whole platoon fire at him? If massa will keep walloping his arms about like one breezemill, and make grimace, and twist him body dis side and dat side, like one monkey—baboon you call—and do all sort of foolis ting for make dem notice him, massa most not be surprise if dey soot at him." And true enough, in the intensity of my excitement, the strong working of my spirit had moved my outward man as violently as that of a Johnny Raw witnessing his first prize-fight. If my contortions were of any kindred to those the sable Serjeant illustrated his speech by, I must have made rather an amusing exhibition. "Look, if two of dem bullet no tell in de tree here, just where massa was stand up, when I was take de liberty of pull him down on him battam; beg pardon for name soch unpoliteful place before massa."

"Thanks, trusty armourer," cried I Benjie. But the gale, that now "aside the shroud of battle cast," blowing almost a hurricane, again veered round a little, and the Midge was under weigh, near the mouth of the creek, standing out to sea.

The weather was, indeed, getting rapidly worse—the screaming sea-birds flew in, like drifts of snow; scarcely distinguishable from the driving foamflakes. The scud came past in soaking wreaths, like flashes of white vapour from the safety-valve of a steam boiler. Suddenly the wind fell to a dead calm; not a breath fanned us; not a leaf stirred; the rain-drops glittered on the pale-green velvet of the ragged, and ever-twittering, but now motionless leaves of the plantain, like silver globules frozen there; the reports of the guns grew sharper in the lull, the cries shriller, and the general tumult and uproar of the conflict swelled fearfully; while the white smoke rose up, shrouding the vessels and entire cove from my sight.

The clouds above us, surcharged with fire and water, formed a leaden coloured arch over the entrance to the cove, that spanned the uproar of dark white-crested waves, boiling and rolling in smoky wreaths, and lancing out ragged shreds from their lower edges, that shot down and shortened like a fringe of streamers, from which the forked lightning *crankled* out every now and then clear and bright.

To the right hand, directly over the cocoa-nut trees, these fibres, or shreds of clouds, were in the most active motion, and began to twirl and whisk round into a spinning black tube, shaped like the trunk of an elephant; the widest end blending into the thickest of the arch above, while the lower swayed about, with an irregular but ponderous oscillation; lengthening and stretching towards the trees, one moment in a dense column, as if they had *attracted* it, and the next contracting with the speed of light, as if it had as suddenly been *repelled* by them, leaving only a transparent phantom-like track of dark shreds in the air, to show where it had shrunk from.

There, it lengthens again, as if it once more felt an affinity for the sharp spiculæ of the leaves, that seem to erect themselves to meet it. It almost touched them—flash—the electric fluid sparked out and *up*, either from the cocoa-nut trees themselves, or through them as conductors from the sandy spit on which they grew. I saw it distinctly; but the next moment the pent gale, as if it had burst some invisible barrier that confined it, gushed down as suddenly as it had taken off, and stronger than before. I was blinded and almost suffocated by the heaviest shower ever dashed by wind in the face of mortal man—the *debris*, so to speak, of the vanished waterspout; I can compare it to nothing but being exposed to the jet of a fire-engine.

A column of dense black smoke, thickly starred with red sparks, now boiled up past the edge of the cliff under me—presently it became streaked with tongues of bright hissing flame, which ran up the rigging, diverging along every rope, as if it had been a galvanic wire, twisting, serpent-like, round the Mosca's masts and higher spars, and licking the wet furled sails like boa-constrictors fitting their prey to be devoured. See how the fire insinuates itself into the dry creases of the canvass, driving out the moisture from the massive folds in white steam; now the sails catch in earnest—they drop in glowing flakes of tinder from the yards—there the blue and white pennant and ensign are scorched away, and blow off in tiny flashes; while in the lulls of the gale we distinctly hear the roaring and crackling of the fire, as it rages in the hull of the doomed vessel below. "I say, Quacco, mind we don't get a hoist, my man—see we be not too near—there, don't you hear how the guns go off as the metal gets heated, for there is not a soul on board?"

"Oh dear! oh dear—see that poor little fellow, sir—ho! ho! ho!" rumbled Tobias Tooraloo, who all this time was lying flat on his stomach beside me, with his head a little raised, turtle-fashion. A poor boy belonging to the pirate schooner had been caught and cut off by the fire when aloft, and was now standing on the head of the mainmast with one arm round the topmast, and waving his cap in the most beseeching manner at us with the other hand—the rising smoke seemed to be stifling him, at least we could not hear his cries; at length the fire reached him, when after several abortive attempts to climb higher up, he became confused, and slung himself by a rope to the masthead, without seeming to know what he was about—he then gradually drooped, and drooped, the convulsive action of his head and limbs becoming more and more feeble; merciful Providence! the flames reach him—his hair is on fire, and his clothes; a last, strong, and sudden struggle for an instant, and then he hung motionless across the rope like a smirched and half-burned fleece.

It never rains but it pours. "Hark! an earthquake!" and, as if a volcano had burst forth beneath our feet, at this instant of time the pirate schooner under the cliff blew up with an explosion that shook earth, air, and water—shooting the pieces of burning wreck in every direction, that hissed like meteors through the storm, and fell thickly all around us.

The Midge, the Midge—she slides out of the smoke! See! she gains the offing.

But the Avenger of Blood is behind; for the Spider had now cleared the harbour's mouth, and was in hot pursuit. The felucca with her sails—a whole constellation of shot-holes in them—double reefed, tearing and plunging through it; her sharp stem flashing up the water into smoke, in a vain attempt to weather the sandy point.—"Won't do, my boy; you cannot, carry to it as you will, clear the land as you are standing; you *must* tack soon, unless you mean to *jump* the little beauty over it." As I spoke, she hove about and stood across the schooner, exchanging broadsides gallantly. "Well done, little one." The Spider tacked also, and stood after her—a gun!—another!—both replied to by the felucca; the musketry peppering away all the while from each vessel; the tiny white puffs instantly obliterated by the foam-drift—and now neither fired a shot.

The gale at this moment came down in thunder; all above as black as night, all below as white as wool. The Spider shortens sail just in time—the Midge not a pistol-shot ahead on the weatherbow. See, the squall strikes her—her tall lateen sail shines through the more than twilight darkness and the driving rain and spray, like a sea-bird's wing. Mercy! how she lies over! She sinks in the trough of the sea!—Now she rises again, and breasts it gallantly!—There! that's over her bodily; her sails are dark, and sea-washed three parts up. Look! how the clear green water, as she lurches, pours out of the afterleech of the sail like a cascade! Now! she is buried again; no! buoyant as cork—she dances over it like a wild-duck. See! how she tips up her round stern, and slides down the liquid hollow; once more she catches the breeze on the opposite rise of the sea; her sails tearing her along up the watery acclivity, as if they would drag the spars out of her. Now she rushes on the curl of the wave, with her bows and a third of her keel hove out into the air, as if she were going to shoot across, like a flying fish, into the swelling bosom of the next sea. Once more she is hove on her beam-ends, and hid by an intervening billow—Ha!—what a blinding flash, as the blue forked lightning glances from sky to sea, right over where I saw her last!—hark! the splitting crash and stunning reverberations of the shaking thunder, rolling through the empyrean loud as an archangel's voice, until earth and air tremble again. She rights!—she rights!—there! the narrow shred of white canvass gleams again through the mist in the very fiercest of the squall—yes, *there!*—no!—God of my fathers!

IT IS BUT A BREAKING WAVE!

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE END OF THE YARN.

"For now I stand as one upon a rock,  
Environed with a wilderness of sea;  
Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,  
Expecting ever when some envious surge  
Will in his brinish bowels swallow him."

*Titus Andronicus.*

It was half-past nine in the morning—De Walden and I were seated on the cliff where I had been shot at the day before. The only indications of the spent storm were a line of froth, intermixed with large quantities of wreck and drift-wood, on the beach, far above high water-mark; branches of trees strewed here and there, with their yesterday bright green leaves, now sun-withered and as red and sere as if they had lain a winter on the ground; and overhead, a clear, cool, luxurious air and sky. The hillsides had even become perceptibly greener in one night's time—in short, Dame Nature had got her face well washed, and every thing was clean, and fresh, and shining. The sea-breeze was roughening the water in the offing, but in the cove, on which we looked down, all was as yet as smooth as glass. The undulations flowing towards the harbour's mouth, occasioned by what I would call the echo of the ground swell, or the reverberation of the send of the sea from the rocky beach, were scarcely perceptible; except from the varying shadows of the banks, and grey clouds, as the plane from which they were reflected was gently bent by the rise and fall of the water. The whole creek was sprinkled throughout its calm surface, by masses of floating wreck from the *Mosca*, that sparkled with the motion of the water, slight as it was, in the slanting rays of the morning sun; while out to windward, near the entrance, there was a blue ripple on the sea right in his wake, that prevented us seeing distinctly what it was, but which I guessed to proceed from the rushing of fish, at some object on which they were feeding. As the sun rose, the dazzle hauled further off, and we then could plainly see three immense green skinned sharks, tearing at the floating body of a seaman; every now and then one of them would seize a limb, and drag the carcass a fathom or so under water—when the second would make a rush, and seize another limb, and there would the dead body appear suspended between them, as if it had been standing on its feet and alive; the jaugle of the water giving the limbs the appearance of struggling. Then again the third shark, like a dog walking off with a bone from two others who were quarrelling about it, would seize the trunk, and back-backing, forcibly drag it away from the others, and make sail with it across his jaws into the silvery glare, pursued by his mates, when the whole would once more disappear.

Their whereabouts, however, was still distinctly marked by the wheeling of half a dozen pelicans; an individual bird dropping every now and then into the water with a splash; while the lighter gulls and sea-mews were glancing about in all directions, whistling shrill, and twinkling with their light wings in the distance like silver butterflies, as they pounced on the fragments that were disengaged by the teeth of the monsters in the water.

Several vultures, the large carrion crows formerly described, were perched on the neighbouring trees, or stalking along the beach, on the look-out for any waifs that might be cast ashore, as their perquisites.

Sentries were placed along the hillside, with their arms glancing in the sun, to give notice of the approach of any of the crew of the *Mosca* that might have escaped and taken to the woods, should they have the hardihood to attack any stray Spider crawling about on shore. His Majesty's schooner was at anchor beneath us, right in the centre of the cove, with her sails loose to dry, and her blue ensign and pennant hoisted, but there was not a breath of wind to stir either.

There were several lines of clothes stretched from different parts of the rigging, some of the garments deeply saturated with blood.

The crew were busy overhauling the rigging, and repairing the injuries sustained in the action, their voices and loud laughter sounding hollow from the water, and echoing amongst the sails, while the long, silver-clear note, and the short merry chirrup of the boatswain's whistle, as the water-casks were hoisting in from the launch alongside, rose shrill above the confused sounds.

All this time the sea-breeze was stealing on, throwing out its cat's paws, like *tirailleurs* covering the advance of the main body, eating into and crisping away the outer edge of the polished mirror of the anchorage, as if it had been the advancing tide gradually breaking away the ice of some smooth frozen river. We could hear the rushing of the wind before a feather moved near us; by and by there was a twitter amongst the topmost leaves of the tree under which we sat, and some withered ones came whirling down, and a dry twig dropped on my hat with a tiny rattle. The highest and lightest sails of the schooner began to flap and shake.

"There comes the breeze, Mr M'Taggart," cheeped a *wee* mid on board.

"All hands furl sails," was growled along her deck by the hoarse voice of the boatswain.



"There it comes—haul down the square sail." Round swung the Spider, with her topsail, topgallant sail, and royal all aback, and her fore and aft sails undulating and rumbling in the breeze; presently she gradually dropped a fathom or two astern, as more scope was given her. "In royal—hands by the topsail, and topgallant clewlines—fore and main brails;" and the next minute she rode steadily on the surface of the blue and roughened cove, head to wind, the tiny wavelets sparkling in the sun, and laplapping against her cutwater; with every thing snugly furled, and the breeze rushing past her in half a gale of wind, driving the waves in a small surf upon the beach to leeward, and roaring through the trees where we sat; while the sound of the swell, as it pitched against the iron-bound coast, came down strong, vibrating on our ears like distant thunder.

"It is very awkward to change my name so suddenly," said De Walden, to whom I had communicated his father's death, and whatever else Sir Oliver had written to my uncle. "I believe I shall continue plain Mr De Walden, until I reach headquarters. But my poor father—alas! alas!—what misery he would have saved himself and me, had he but made this disclosure before. You know my story but in part, Mr Brail. My poor mother always said and believed she was his wife, but he showed me such proofs to the contrary that I had no alternative but to credit him. However, Heaven's will be done—peace be with him."

There was an awkward pause, when, as if willing to change the subject, he continued—"How absolutely necessary for one's comfort *here* it is to believe in a *hereafter*, Mr Brail; the misery that some people are destined to endure in this scene of our probation—my poor mother, for instance"—

"Or that most unfortunate creature, Lennox, that perished when the Midge went down," said I, willing to draw him away from brooding over his own misfortunes—"what a death."

"Miserable, miserable," said De Walden.

"By the way," continued I, in my kindly meant attempt, "it puzzles me exceedingly to conceive how Adderfang and his crew did not pillage the Moonbeam when we were so completely in his power."

"There are three reasons," replied De Walden, "any one of which was sufficient to have prevented him. First of all, he was here under the Buenos Ayrean flag; and as San Andreas must have been a convenient rendezvous, both from its seclusion and the abundance of provisions to be had in it, he might be reluctant to commit any overt act of piracy under Mr \*\*\*'s nose. Secondly, the Devil is not always so black as he is painted; and, from all we can learn, he was a fearful mixture of good and evil: and, last of all, and possibly the strongest of the three, you were scarcely worth plundering, being in ballast—had you been returning with your cargo of shell, I would have been sorry to have been your underwriter. But what an indomitable fellow this same Adderfang must have been. You saw how desperately he fought the little Midge, and how gallantly he carried on her, in his futile attempt to beat her out of the bay. I verily believe, from all I have heard, that he would have fired the magazine, and blown all hands into the air, before he would have struck. But see, there goes little Piper and his boat's crew, with the poor blind girl's body to her long home."

I looked in the direction indicated, and saw a boat leave the Spider, pulled by four men, with a midshipman in the stern, and a deal coffin lying along; the flag that covered it having been blown aside.

"Blind?" said I, "a blind girl did you say?" as the scene when I considered Adderfang on his death-bed at Havanna, suddenly rose up before me.

"Yes—she was the only thing we picked up when the felucca foundered; except that devil of a bloodhound, which we had to destroy, in consequence of his untameable ferocity, before he had been a quarter of an hour on board; nothing else whatever, animate or inanimate, floated."

"And pray how *did* she?"

"She was buckled to an oar by this belt," said he, *producing the identical cincture I had seen Adderfang wear*; "but was quite dead by the time we saw her."

"That was Adderfang's girdle," said I, greatly moved.

"I guessed as much," continued De Walden. "Bad as he was he must have loved *her* dearly, for his last thought on earth seems to have been her safety—and no wonder, for she must have been a most beautiful creature, tall, and elegantly formed, with fine Greek features—such hair!—alas! alas! what a melancholy ending she has made, poor thing. I make no doubt that she was the same female we saw in the prison at Havanna."

"Very like, very like; but I wonder how she came on board?"

"Old Mr \*\*\*, " rejoined De Walden, "who told me this morning that she was blind, for from the appearance of the body we should not have found it out, also informed me that she had shoved out in a small canoe, manned by two of her slaves, after the felucca was at sea, at least so Adderfang said; and as several guarda-costas were on the look-out for him, he had found it impossible to send her back to Havanna again. But enough of this poor girl and her misfortunes,

Mr Brail; it is time we were on board." And accordingly I that day took up my quarters in the Spider.

The following morning I was invited by Tooraloo, whose heart was like to break, to repair on board the Moonbeam, in order to be present at the opening of Lennox's papers. De Walden accompanied me.

The will was autograph, and from its tenor, the poor fellow seemed to have had a strong presentiment that his days were not to be long in the land; at least that he was never again to revisit Scotland.

It purported to have been written after he had been ill on the voyage, and, amongst other clauses, there was one, leaving my uncle and myself executors, along with his old father and the clergyman of his native parish in Scotland.

He left several legacies among his kindred and friends at home; one thousand pounds to me, a very agreeable surprise; another thousand to be funded, or *mortified*, I think he called it, to increase the salary of the parochial schoolmaster of Lincomdodie for ever; five hundred pounds to Tooraloo; and the residue to his father; failing him, to be divided in certain proportions amongst the others. It was in fact an exceedingly prudent distribution (especially with regard to the L.1000 to myself, you will say), according to my notion; although the idea was strange of a poor fellow willing away thousands, who had all his life, with a brief exception, been himself struggling with the most abject penury.

When I read out Tooraloo's legacy, the poor fellow wept and ho'hoed after his fashion. "I give and bequeath to Tobias Tooraloo, the sum of five hundred pounds."

"Ho! ho! ho!" blubbered Toby; "Currency or sterling, sir?"

"Of the current money of Jamaica."

"Hoo! hoo! hoo!" roared the skipper, whose lachrymose propensity seemed to increase in the precise ratio of the exchange; L.100 Jamaica currency being at that time only equal to about L.60 British sterling.

The following day *we* weighed for Jamaica, and the Moonbeam for the Indian coast, after having said good-by to old Mr \*\*\*, who, we found afterwards, bore an excellent character; but of course he had to yield to circumstances in his unprotected condition, whenever a privateer chose to anchor in his neighbourhood. He took the precaution, however, before we left, of arming his head negroes, in case the privateer's men, who had taken to the woods, should prove troublesome after our departure, but I never heard that they did so.

Nothing particular occurred until we made the west end of Jamaica. We had intended proceeding at once to Port Royal, but seeing a large vessel, apparently a man-of-war, at anchor in Negril bay, with a blue flag at the fore, we stood in, and on exchanging signals, were ordered to anchor, the frigate proving to be the Admiral.

We were both invited to dine on board, and during dinner were nearly suffocated, by the cook having chosen to roast a jackfruit on a spit (the vessel riding head to wind), taking it for a bread fruit, to which it bears a strong external resemblance.

I landed at Negril that same evening, after having taken a most affectionate leave of De Walden, and proceeded over land to Ballywindle, where I found my excellent uncle in good health, and getting along cheerily with his preparations for leaving the island when the season should be a little more advanced. He lent me a hand with poor Lennox's affairs, and the issue was that we presently scraped together a good round sum to remit to England on this account, there to await the distribution of the executors.

In the month of March, we left Ballywindle, and I may safely say there was not a dry eye, black or white, master or servant, that day on the estate, and proceeded to Kingston, where, after a sorrowful parting from our warmhearted friends there, we embarked in the packet, and after a prosperous voyage, arrived at Falmouth.

I found a letter lying for me from my adorable, announcing that the family were now settled in Liverpool, where it was likely Mr Hudson was to be permanently domiciled; and I shall not weary the reader with the dreams of future happiness that floated through my brain that evening, as my uncle and I, after discussing our red mullet and beef-steak, were enjoying our bottle of port in that most excellent shop, the Green Bank hotel.

Next day, we posted across the country to Liverpool, as fast as four horses could carry us; but neither will I attempt to describe the joy of our meeting. Uncle Lathom was quite pleased with my choice, lamenting over and over again, however, what a pity it was, that she had not been an *Irishman*.

Here, to while away the time, the old gentleman chartered a pair of spanking hunters, and took a day now and then with the Cheshire hounds. One fine, you may call it summer, day, the last of the season, there was a noble field, and not a scanty sprinkling of Liverpool cotton

brokers. Some time previous, a London dealer had brought down a batch of *grey* horses, that were *too good* for Tattersall's, in order to clap the leek, as the Welshman says, into the wealthy Liverpoolonians—"all real good, well-made hunters, sir." The fox at length broke cover in good style, and away we all went at a killing pace, my uncle leading with the coolness and skill of an old hand.

We came to one or two stiffish jumps, and there was nothing like the greys; aware that they were marked, from the conspicuous colour of their horses, the men of the *long* and *short staple* rode like devils, and for a time the Cheshire aristocracy were at a puzzle what to make of it.

At length we came to a post-and-rail fence, with a deep ditch beyond, which seemed to be a poser. "Hold hard," cried Mr Frenche to me, as he settled himself in his saddle, and gathered up his reins; "hold hard, Benjie, and let the greys lead." A tall military-looking personage had for some time hung on the flank of the Liverpool cavaliers, who, being strangers, kept pretty well together. He appeared to be reconnoitering their horses carefully, with that knowing sort of look as if he had recognised them to be old friends.

Having satisfied himself, apparently, he winked to a well-mounted sportsman near him, and reining in a little as they came up to the fence, he sung out, in a clear, sharp voice,

"Loud as a trumpet with a silver sound,"

"Halt!"—*Stock-still*, as if touched by an enchanter's wand, on the instant stood each gallant grey, gathering himself on his haunches, as he slid several yards with his fore-feet on the moist sward, grooving out regular ways in the blue clay, as if they had been so many boats a-launching; and away flew a shower of cotton-brokers, like a volley of stones from a catapulta, leaving each an empty horse looking at him, with one exception, where the *raw material* was accounted for, sticking on his horse's neck, with an ear in each hand, admiring his *departed* friends in the ditch, as the gay field, fifty horsemen at the fewest, flew over them in a rainbow.

It was now fixed that we were to be married in June, and I accompanied Mr Frenche to Ireland, in order to pay my duty to my dear old mother, who was comfortably settled in a nice cottage in the outskirts of Kilkenny.

It is profanation to touch on such meetings in print, so here again you must exercise your imaginations, my good people.

We were all most happy; when, two mornings after we arrived, while sitting at breakfast, the door opened, and a stout vulgar-looking little man was ushered in, dressed in plush small-clothes, top boots especially dirty, an old swansdown vest, grey upper coat, tow wig, and green spectacles.

He made himself known as *Mr Treacle*. This was the Cork grocer who had purchased the Ballywindle estate when my grandfather was reduced in his circumstances, and obliged to sell it.

My uncle and mother, the instant they heard his name, drew up with probably an excusable feeling of pride, as if they apprehended that the honour of Mr Treacle's visit had been conferred from a desire on his part to appear *patronising* to an old, although reduced family. So the meeting at first was somewhat stiff.

"Pray, Mr Treacle, be seated," said my uncle.

"Thank you kindly," said the honest tradesman, feeling very awkward, in his turn. "Thank you kindly, Mr Frenche, and, Mrs Brail, your most obedient. Welcome back to ould Ireland again, Mr Frenche." Then, as if speaking aside,—"I am sure I wish you had never left it."

"Thank you, Treacle," said my uncle; "that's kindly *said*, anyhow—and"—here he looked the grocer steadily in the face—"kindly *meant* too, I do believe—but talking of that *now* does not signify, you know—so will you have the kindness to make known to me your wishes, Mr Treacle, and the occasion of the honour of this visit?"

"Arrah," quoth Treacle, "but it *does* signify, and a great deal too, Mr Frenche, for to tell you the honest thrute, I am tired of this neighbourhood; and what most people might think equally unpleasant,—the neighbourhood is tired of me."

My uncle looked hard at him, as if he had said, "well, it may be so; but what is all this to me?"

"I don't rightly understand you, Mr Treacle. You have got a fine estate, for Ballywindle is an improving property, if one had plenty of money to lay out on it, and that I know *you* have; besides, you have a great advantage over the former possessors, in being, as I believe, a Catholic, whereas all the Frenches were Protestants, so I cannot understand why you should not make yourself popular here."

"Why, sir, I never was popular, as you call it, but I was slowly sliding into my place, as the saying is, like a cheese along a bar of soap, for both you and your brother were thought to be poor men, and lost men, and men who had no chance of ever returning to Kilkenny; and them are just the sort of articles to get mouldy and forgotten, like a box of damaged prunes in the back

shop, but—and how *they* found it out, I am sure I cannot tell"—(my mother smiled here)—"but for these two years past, I have had hints, and to spare, that although your *brother* was dead, *you* had come alive again, and had bought a large estate, which, for the honour of Ireland, you had also called Ballywindle, in Jamaica, where all the cottiers were black negers, and that you had made a power of money, and had your nephew sent out to you; he that was the sailor, young Master Brail, her ladyship's Hopeful there—and that, in fact, if I did not write out to you *my own self* (oh, murder, to be trated like a swimming pig, and made to cut my own troat),—if I did not write that you might have the estate again at prime cost, as we say in Cork, with a compliment (the devil burn them, with their compliment!) of all my improvements; that"—Here he looked in my aunt's face with the most laughable earnestness—"Now, what do you think they did say, my lady?"

"Really, Mr Treacle, I cannot form any conception."

"Why, they said that they would nail my two ears, which were long enough (at least so said the notice), *to my own hall-door*."

Mr Frenche laughed outright.

"Poo, poo, a vagary of the poor fellows. Why, you know our countrymen are fond of a joke, Treacle."

"Joke, did you say? And was it a joke to fire this sugar-plum into the small of my back last market day?" Here he rubbed a part of his body with one hand, by no means answering the description of the *small* of his back; while in the other he held out a leaden bullet. My mother drew me into the window, unable to restrain her laughter. "Oh, you need not retrate, my dear Mrs Brail, I don't mean to *descend* to particulars. But," resuming his address to my uncle, "was it a joke to plump *that* into me, Mr Frenche? But this is all foreign to the subject. One needs must go when the devil drives, so I am come here to fulfil their bidding, and to make you the *offer*; for the county is too hot to hold the ould plum-splitter, and the aristocracy too cold—so between hot and cold, I am sick of it."

Here he turned himself to one side disconsolately, and pulling out his red bandana, began to wipe the profuse perspiration from his brow.

My uncle and I exchanged looks. "Now, Mither Frenche, do think of it, will you? I am not very discrute in telling you all this, but really I am so worried, that I am half-dead with anxiety and vexation; more especially as I have this blessed day got another *hint*."

"No! have you though?" said my uncle, unable to contain himself.

"Indeed and I have, and rather a strongish one, you will allow, Mither Frenche, after what passed before—there, I got that *billy* this very blessed morning handed to me with my shaving water, by an ould villain that I hired to wait on me, and feed the pigs for an hour every marning; and who swore might the fiend fly away wid him, if he knowed from Adam how it comed beneath the jug—there"—

The *billy* ran as follows:—

"12 o'clock at night—*no moon!*

"TREACLE—You small lousy spalpeen—the *man himself*, ould Lathom Frenche, and his nevey, young Brail, and that blessed ould woman, Misthress Julia, are all, every mother's son of them, at this present spaking in Kilkenny. So turn out, you ould tief o' the world, and make room for the *rale* Ballywindles (you pitiful, mouldy *imitation*), Orangemen although they be, for *they* never lived out of Ould Ireland, when they could live in it. And show me one of the name who ever grudged the poor a bit and a sup—so out wid you, Treacle, or you shall swing as high as *hangman*" (*Haman*, I presumed) "before the mont be done; like one of your own dirty farthing candles, which a rushlight overshines like the blessed sun a pace of stinking fish.

"Your servant till death—that is, till *your* death, if you don't behave yourself like a jontleman, and do the bidding of

"CAPTAIN ROCK.

"*To the nasty little grocer, Treacle,  
(who has no right) at Ballywindle.*"

"Really," said my uncle, laughing, "this is very honest of you, Treacle, but I have no intention of buying back the old place. So, good-by—go home, and be a little kinder to your poor neighbours, and no fear of you—good-by."

"Go home, did you say?—go home?—and that's what I will do, Master Frenche, this blessed day—but to the ould shop in Cark, to my nephew Thady behind the counter *there*. But if ever I

darken a door of Ballywindle again, unless on the day of sale, with the mounted police on the lawn, and the footers in the hall, may"—Here he clapped his hand on his mouth, as if to stop the oath that trembled on his tongue.

"Why, Treacle, I *have* made some money—but if I *would*, I *could not* repay you your purchase money. So"—

The grocer caught at this.—"Ah, there I have you—if the money be the difficulty, it is a bargain already, by the powers. I will leave all the money on it if you choose, sir—and at four per cent—there, now."

To make a long story short, before that day fortnight, Ballywindle opened its once hospitable door again to a Frenche—to the last of the name, in a long line of owners.

At length the day of execution arrived, and I was happily married; after which, as if we had been guilty of something to be ashamed of, we split away the same forenoon down the north road, as fast as four horses could carry us.

Our route lay towards Mr Hudson's recently inherited estate in Scotland, which lay contiguous to the village where poor Lennox's friends resided, and I therefore took this opportunity of fulfilling my duty as executor.

We arrived at the end of our journey, as happy as people usually are in our situation, and had scarcely passed a few days in seclusion when the county folks began to call; and amongst others, old Mr Bland, the parish *minister*, and his nephew, paid their respects. I soon found that my fame had preceded me, and that I had become the lion of Lincomdodie from the intertwining of the strands of my personal history with those of the *ne'erdoweel callant* Adderfang, as he was always called, and of poor Saunders Skelp, whose father now suddenly became the richest inhabitant of the village.

I was extremely glad to see the good old clergyman after what I already knew of him from poor Lennox's "Sorrows;" besides, he, along with his nephew, were two of the Dominie's executors, and I now took the opportunity of denuding myself of the charge and devolving it on them, who were much more competent to manage it, from their intimate knowledge of the parties, and residence on the spot.

Soon after this, my dear old mother, my uncle, and the Hudsons, with Richard Phantom, Esq., whose friends, although respectable, were poor, and easily persuaded to part with him, joined us; and Mr Hudson's beautiful seat was a scene of great gaiety for the remainder of the summer. At length we all returned to Liverpool; and, some time after, our party tore themselves from their dear friends, and we removed with my uncle to our house, situated about half-a-mile from Ballywindle; for the old gentleman, as a climax to his kindness, had purchased a beautiful small estate, close to his own, with which he presented us on our wedding-day. He and my mother occupy the family-mansion of Ballywindle; and, to tell the truth, my wife and I are more there than at home. As for Dicky, the old man has corrupted him altogether, and he is his constant companion on his little Irish pony. He speaks with a stronger brogue even than my uncle—at which the latter is so delighted, that he has sunk L.1000 in the name of the little fellow; so that, when he comes of age, he will have a comfortable nest-egg to depend upon.

Sir Oliver has now his flag, and commands at —; and De Walden, Sir Henry Oakplank—I beg his pardon—soon after the action already related, was made commander, and eventually post.

He was recently ordered home, and allowed to call at Havanna, and to give Mademoiselle Sophie and Monsieur Duquesné a passage in his ship; but he somewhat infringed the letter of the admiral's license, by converting Mademoiselle Duquesné into Lady Oakplank before embarking. They paid us a visit immediately after being paid off, on his arrival in England, and are now rustivating in Switzerland, on a visit to his ill-fated mother's relations.

My excellent cousin, Dick Lanyard, after having attained the rank of commander, married a rich widow with a good piece of land in Devonshire, and as she could not dispense with him, he left the service, and now lives ashore happily, under the wing of his loving mate, who, knowing the misery and inconvenience of losing one good husband, seems determined to take mighty good care of this one.

Old Davy Doublepipe has inherited a goodly sum of money from Alderman Sprawl, a kinsman of his, and is now the master of a fine London ship in the Jamaica trade, as kind to his passengers, from all accounts, as he used to be to his brother officers and shipmates.

I frequently hear from my Jamaica friends, who are prosperous and happy, and Listado, the boisterous Listado, has, contrary to all expectation, so far subsided, and settled down, as to take Mr M\*\*\*\*'s place in the management of the business at Havanna, and from all I can learn his heart is none the worse of his disappointment. As for Massa Quacco, he at once installed himself as butler, without thinking it at all necessary to ask any questions. He certainly takes more liberty with me than any other servant, and makes his remarks very freely.—"Ah, massa, lucky for you, you touch in dat river wid de leetle felucca."

"As how, Master Quacco?"

"Oh! you would never hab know what it was to have so good a sarvant if you had not—but ater all, dis gooder countree more as Africa, if people only would speak Englis, such as one gentleman can onderstand; and de sun could be persuade to sine upon him sometime—Ah! almost more better countree as Jamaica, so I bery well content to take my rest in him."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Give me back, give me back, the wild freshness of morning,  
Its tears and its smiles are worth evening's best light."

So sang Master Thomas Moore, and so singeth Benjamin Brail; albeit the *burden* he beareth is any thing but mellow. But chant as we may, until our most sweet voices be hoarse, as that of the croaking raven, we cannot bring back one minute of our existence.

Possibly you may know this, if you are a sharp fellow, without my being so oracular; but, friend, if you are not bat-blind, it will evince to you that although the time has arrived when we *must* part company, still I am loath to belay, and coil down myself, or to let go and chuck the end of the line to you, even when I have no excuse for holding on any longer.

But let us be pathetic—so get out your bandana, and prepare to blow your nose most touchingly.

Since the last of the events recorded in the preceding pages occurred, many a long year has slid away.

The hair that was then dark and clustering, has become thin and grizzled—although, what is it to you, whether I am bald or wigged? The arm that was strongly knit and vigorous, is now weak and trembling—for which you don't care one farthing. The spirits, then so light and elastic that they danced half in air, in the merry breeze and jocund sunshine, over every happy undulation of the clear smooth swell of early life, are now dead and water-logged, like a swamped buoy that has been staved by the rough weather we all must look to meet with;—never to float again. My *Nelly* was then Miss Helen Hudson, a happy laughing girl; she is now a little sharp-visaged anxious matron; her daughters growing up around her, and budding into womanhood, and her boys (for she has brought me a whole bushful of small Brails), glorying in the exuberance of glee incidental to the spring of life, like so many young *what-do-ye-call ums*; for I am in a hurry to get done—and have no handy simile for the nonce. "Master Brail! Master Brail! you had better copy the parish register at once." Patience, my dear boy—Patience, we shall not long cross each other, for we are now about bearing up finally on our separate courses.

Many of the friends I have lived amongst and loved, and whose heartstrings were in turn wound around me, have dropped, one by one, like seared leaves in autumn, into the narrow-house, whither we are all, at sea or on shore, fast journeying.

As for me Benjie, when bowling along with all the canvass I could spread (sometimes more than I could well carry), before the cheerful breeze of prosperity, a sudden gust has, more than once, blown my swelling expectations out of the boltropes into ribbons, proving, by sore experience, that here below it is not a trade-wind; and not sudden squalls only, severe for the moment, but soon over; my strained bark has often been tossed by rough and continuous gales, so that, more than once, I have hardly escaped foundering. Periods of sickness and languishing have not been wanting, wherein the exhausted spirit has faintly exclaimed in the morning, "Would God it were evening!" and at evening, "Would God it were morning!"

For many a weary day, and restless night, Death himself—and how much more appalling his aspect *here*, than when faced manfully in open day, with the pulses strong, and the animal spirits in brisk circulation, amidst a goodly fellowship of brave companions!—yea, Death himself hath shaken his uplifted dart over his prostrate victim from out the heart-depressing twilight of a sick-room; yet the hand of the grim feature was held, that he should not smite. And, oh! who can tell the misery and crushing disappointment of the soul, awaking to the consciousness of a dangerous illness, from feverish and troubled sleep—such sleep as the overworked mariner sinks into, his lullaby the howling of the storm, and roaring of the breakers, even when his vessel is on the rocks, with the tumbling seas raging in multitudinous ebb and flow amongst their black and slippery tangle-capped pinnacles, and the yeasty foam-flakes, belched from their flinty caverns, falling thickly on his drenched garments—sleep, wherein, most like, he meets the friends of his youth, who have long gone before him to their account, and wanders in imagination with them (all his recent sufferings and actual danger, for a brief but blessed moment, utterly forgotten) through the quiet valleys and happy scenes of his boyhood, never to be by him again revisited—sleep, from which he is only roused to all the horrors of his actual situation by the gritty rasping of the shattered hull as it is thundered down with every send of the sea on the sharp rocks, the groaning of the loosened timbers, the crashing and creaking of the falling masts, the lumbering and rasping and rattling of the wreck alongside, entangled by the rigging and loose ropes, that surges up in foaming splashes, as if chafing to break adrift, and the cries of his shipmates—and thus wrenched from Elysium, to find himself "even as a man wrecked upon a sand, that looks to

be washed off next tide?" *That* can he; and although his riven vessel has for the moment been hove off the rocks, and rides clear of the reefs and broken water to leeward, it may be by the mere reverberation of the ground-swell,—yet he knows his only remaining cable is three parts chafed, and that, although he may hang on by the single strand for an anxious day or two, part it must at last.

However, it has pleased Heaven, even when the weather was at the worst and darkest, and the wind raging at the loudest, and the mountainous seas at the highest, to break away, and lance forth a beam of blessed sunshine, which, breaking on his soul, might comfort him.

But, in such a situation, when the breezing up of the first gale may be his last,—and no one can tell how long the gleam of fine weather will continue,—every man must regard his past life, if he thinks at all, as at the best but a feverish dream, and endeavour to prepare for the inevitable issue of his anxiety and dread with the calmness and self-possession of a reasonable and accountable being; keeping a bright look-out for the life-boat of our blessed Religion, which all, sooner or later, will be convinced affords the only sure means of escape, even although it be seen glancing at first but as the seamew's wing in the distance, amidst the obscurity of the horizon and dimness of the spray and mist; yet, if anxiously hailed, and earnestly watched, it will infallibly sheer alongside at last, when the fearful cry of "She parts, she parts!" gushes high above the turmoil of troubled thoughts within, and save all who have put their trust in it.

"And why this gloomy ending to a merry tale?"

Grudge it not, shipmate; but bear with me a brief moment still. We begun in jest—we have ended in earnest—fit type of human life. We have had a long cruise and many a good laugh together, and now we find leave-taking is not joyous. But call it not a gloomy ending: solemn it may be, and indeed has unwittingly become; but surely not unfitting, on that account, the close of a work that has been the chief solace of a long illness, and which, whenever it beguiles the tedium of a sick-couch to a suffering brother, shall, in attaining that end, have fully accomplished the desire of him who now bids all hands, kindly and respectfully,

FAREWELL.

END OF VOLUME TWO.

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\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CRUISE OF THE MIDGE (VOL. 2 OF 2)

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