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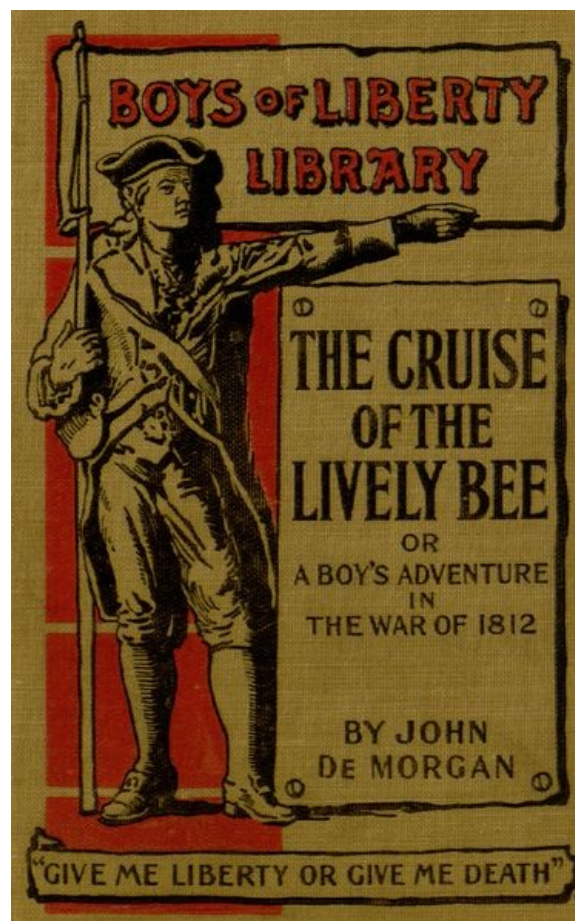
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THE CRUISE OF THE "LIVELY BEE"

OR

A BOY'S ADVENTURE IN THE

WAR OF 1812

BY

JOHN DE MORGAN

AUTHOR OF

"Paul Revere," "The Young Ambassador," "The First
Shot for Liberty," "The Young Guardsman," etc.



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The Cruise of the "Lively Bee"

THE CRUISE OF THE "LIVELY BEE."

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CHAPTER I.

DECLARATION OF WAR.

There was a large crowd on the Battery in New York City one hot day in June in the year eighteen-hundred-and-twelve.

Every one was talking and every one was looking out across the waters of the harbor.

There were pale, anxious faces in that crowd, and side by side with them were the flushed cheeks of men and boys whose hearts were fired with patriotic zeal.

Women were looking at their husbands, and young girls' hearts were throbbing with painful excitement as they saw the enthusiasm of their sweethearts.

"War, did you say?"

"Ay, ay, the President has aroused at last, and old England shall be taught another and a final lesson."

It was true.

President James Madison had signed the Declaration of War against Great Britain.

War!

There were many in that crowd who remembered 1783; there stood the man who, in his boyhood's days, had climbed the flagpole and torn down the Union Jack of England, and in its place had hoisted the Star Spangled Banner.

Many whose hair was now turning gray had shouldered the musket and had marched with Washington from victory to victory. [Pg 6]

The war had ended when the British evacuated the city, but America was not free and independent.

England held the supremacy of the seas.

English vessels entered American ports, and men were impressed as seamen on the technical ground that they had never abjured allegiance.

American vessels were boarded on the high seas, and some of the best men taken away and forced to serve under the English flag.

There is a limit to forbearance, and the young nation, whose infancy had scarcely been passed, resolved that it would be better to die than endure such insults.

War was declared.

It looked like madness.

It was so, if judged by the ordinary rules of national conduct.

Great Britain was the mistress of the seas.

On the roll of her navy were over a thousand ships, and eighty-five of the largest were actually in American ports.

President Madison and his Cabinet did not, however, intend that the war should be waged on the high seas.

The American ships-of-war were to remain in the harbors as so many floating batteries for defensive purposes.

In New York Harbor was a small squadron under the command of Commodore Rodgers.

He heard the rumor that he was not to go out to sea, and dispatched Captains Bainbridge and Stewart to Washington to confer with the Secretary of the Navy.

Secretary Paul Hamilton listened attentively to the two captains, and they thought they had won their case; but with great courtesy he thanked them, and said that the President had, with the consent of his Cabinet, decided to order the ships to remain in the harbors. [Pg 7]

Captain Stewart stamped his foot, and with almost anger, exclaimed:

"Sir, you are going to ruin the country; I'll have you impeached!"

Paul Hamilton smiled.

Off went Stewart to the White House and argued his case so well that the President put the unsigned order in his desk, and told the captain he would consider the matter.

War was declared a few days after that consultation.

Commodore Rodgers was ready to sail, and only awaited official knowledge of the declaration.

The crowd at the Battery held divergent sentiments.

"It's all very well for Rodgers to take his ships out, but kin he bring 'em back," asked an old sailor whose face was tanned by many a summer sun and winter wind; "kin he bring 'em back? That's what I want to know!"

"You're afraid, Sam Buller, that's what's the matter."

"Durn it! I afraid, younker? I hate John Bull like pizen, and but that's no reason why I should go an' get killed and do no good."

"Take no notice of the old grumbler, men. Our commodore will not only come back, but will bring lots of British ships as prizes."

The speaker was a boy—a mere child—for he had only just passed his eleventh birthday; but he was dressed in the full uniform of the United States navy, and ranked as a midshipman.

"Hark to the baby!"

"Baby! I'd have you know I got my commission two years ago, and if you doubt it, I ask these gallant men to attest it. I'm proud of my ship. I'm proud of her captain, and I'm an officer there. Is it not so?"

The boy appealed to the crew of a boat which had just reached the wooden dock.

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"Ay, ay, sir, and as brave an officer as ever carried a sword."

The midshipman stepped into the boat, the men dipped their oars, and the crowd watched the boat glide over the water until the *Essex*, a thirty-two gun frigate, was reached.

"What did I tell you?" asked the old salt who was known as Sam Buller, "what did I tell you? Going to war with chits of boys, not old enough to be a cook's slavey, as officers."

"Say what you like, that boy may not be as strong, but he is as brave as any man in the service."

"Perhaps you know him, sir?"

"I do. That boy's name is David Glasgow Farragut, and he has been on the *Essex* for four years. He is the adopted son of Captain Porter, and whoever says one word against that young midshipman will have to answer to me."

"And who may you be, my hearty?" asked Sam Buller

"I am Captain Stewart of the United States navy; who are you?"

Captain Stewart did not wait for a reply, but entered the boat which awaited him and was soon rowed across to his ship.

Every one knew Charles Stewart's character for bravery, for in the year 1800, when in command of the schooner *Experiment*, he captured the French privateers *Deux Amis* and the *Diana*. In 1804 he commanded the *Siren*, and went with the American squadron against Tripoli, and achieved several victories.

"I only wish I could get on board the *Essex*. I'd be pleased to call Farragut my superior," said a young man, whose build and manner were those of an educated sailor.

"Why don't you?" asked one of the crowd.

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"I have tried, but they told me they were full."

"Do you want to fight?"

The inquirer was one whose appearance invited confidence. He was well dressed, and had a good honest face.

"Fight? Yes, sir; if it be the British I fight against."

"Why are you anxious to fight the British?"

"My grandfather, sir, was with Washington, and was killed fighting for his country; my father was wounded, and my elder brother killed. I have been told of those days, and I have a debt to pay."

"But you do not remember that time."

"No, sir. I am only nineteen years old, and the British evacuated New York twelve years before I was born."

"Then it is only as you have been educated? You blush! You need not make me your confidant unless you like——"

"I will tell you, sir, for I know you can feel for me."

The two young men had separated from the crowd, and had walked along the water's edge until they came to where the Barge Office now stands.

They were alone, or nearly so, as the crowds were watching the war vessels.

"I had a dear friend who was taken from his home and impressed."

"Ah! never mind the story now. What say you to shipping with me?"

"I—I would like to be on a man-of-war."

"I see; and you think I cannot ship you on a war vessel. But if it is fighting you want, I can promise you as much as you desire. If it is prize money you seek, my boy, don't go on a warship,

but ship with me."

"And, sir, what may be your ship's name?"

The elder man led his companion a little farther up the dock and pointed out a schooner.

"See! there is the ship for you, my boy; look at her! Isn't she a model?"

[Pg 10]

She was certainly a beautiful sight as she hoisted her mainsail and jib and glided off under a breeze so light that the large ships hardly stirred, with all their sails set.

"She has started."

"Ay, ay; but we can catch her at the Narrows. I like you, and I want you to ship with me. Will you do so?"

"I—don't know—I——"

"Come along; you shall have a warm welcome on board the *Lively Bee*."

"Is that schooner the famed privateer?"

"Yes; I have a *lettre de marque* from the government. We shall fight, but if we are taken prisoners we shall be hanged. On the one hand I promise you plenty of fighting and lots of prize money, on the other there is the risk of being hanged."

"I will go with you."

"I knew you would. I came ashore purposely to meet you."

"To meet me? You do not know me."

"Don't I? Then perhaps I have made a mistake. I thought you were John Tempest——"

"That is my name; but how did you know me, and why did you want me?"

"You will ship with me?"

"I will."

"Give me your hand. We shall be comrades in many a fight. I am Captain Harry Vernon of the *Lively Bee*."

CHAPTER II.

[Pg 11]

THE DEPARTURE.

Out in the bay the American fleet was preparing to depart.

Commodore Rodgers had just heard of the declaration of war, and he was afraid that the order to detain him in the harbor would be signed and delivered to him before he could start.

He called Captains Bainbridge and Stewart and Porter to the flagship and asked abruptly:

"How long before you can sail?"

"Ready now, sir," was Stewart's answer.

Rodgers was blunt and always spared himself words.

"Do you want to fight on the high seas or skulk like old hulks in the harbor?" he asked, and added quickly: "You need not answer. I know you well. Go back, get ready; we will start within an hour, and once outside the Narrows, no President's order can reach us."

The captains swung themselves over the side and were rowed back to their vessels.

It was a pretty sight. Those "wooden walls" of Columbia, in all the bravery of trimly taut rigging, yards crossed in mathematically precise order, hulls newly painted, ports open to reveal the lines of frowning guns, presented a sight which was enough to rouse the enthusiasm of every patriot on land.

The fleet under the command of Commodore Rodgers consisted of the flagship *President*, carrying forty-four guns; the *Essex*, thirty-two, and the *Hornet*, eighteen.

These three vessels were anchored off the Battery, but they did not comprise the entire fleet, for over against what is now Liberty Island were three more, the *United States*, mounting forty-four guns, a sister-ship to the *President*; the *Congress*, thirty-eight, and the *Argus*, sixteen.

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Fifty minutes only elapsed after the conference on the flagship before the entire fleet was under sail.

"Come, my boys," said Captain Vernon, "we have to overtake the *Lively Bee* before she reaches the Narrows, and it is a long pull."

Vernon took the helm, young Tempest the bow oar, and a tough old salt the oar next him.

It was not until they were seated that Tempest saw the face of the sailor next him, and at once took a fancy to him.

Captain Vernon gave the command in a loud, ringing voice:

"Oars down! Give way!"

The oars fell into the water with splendid precision, and the boat made a spurt forward.

"You will find, Mr. Tempest, that on board the *Lively Bee* we have such discipline that we move like machines."

All the rowers bent to their work, and the captain cheered them with words of praise.

At times he would pretend to be angry.

"You lazy lubbers, are you asleep? Come, rouse up, or we'll never reach the *Lively Bee*."

The men did pull with more spirit after every outburst of grumbling or reprimand.

Governor's Island was passed, the little boat was saluted by the captain of the *Essex*, and Vernon felt proud.

"Tom Mullen, start us a good rousing chorus—that one you sang when we chased the French."

Tempest was surprised, for he had not known that the new sailor was known to the captain, or had sailed with him against the French.

The rough old salt, in a voice which had more of the nature of a fog horn than a human being, started singing: [Pg 13]

"Americans, then fly to arms,
And learn the way to use 'em;
If each man fights to 'fend his rights,
The English can't abuse 'em.
Yankee Doodle—mind the tune—
Yankee Doodle Dandy;
For Britons there's trouble brewin'—
We'll spank 'em, hard and handy."

All joined in the chorus, and Tempest looked surprised, for he had all the prejudices of the navy against the lax discipline of a privateer or merchantman.

"I changed my gaff a little, cap'n, for we ain't a-fightin' Johnny Crapaud any more, but the redcoats," said Mullen, well pleased with himself for having inserted the word English for French in the doggerel.

"You did right, Tom, and if we all fight as well as you sing we'll come back with our pockets full of chinks and a lot of British prizes in tow."

The *Lively Bee* was still a long way ahead, and Captain Vernon shouted to the rowers:

"Now my hearties, don't get stiff-backed. Crack the oars! Now, then, bend away!"

The day was hot. Those on shore were bathed in perspiration.

Had thermometers been so plentiful in the streets then as they are now they would have told the sweating crowd that ninety degrees in the shade had been reached.

But if standing still, watching the great war vessels sail lazily out of the harbor, was hot work, what must those sailors in the captain's boat have experienced as they rowed through the waters of the bay at racing speed.

"You lazy lubbers, I guess you think you're in church with your wives, and can go to sleep. Rouse up, will you, and land me on the *Lively Bee*." [Pg 14]

Tempest thought he had never been so hot before. He was not afraid of work, he expected it.

He had entered as a man before the mast, and he knew a dog's life was one to be envied when compared with that of a common seaman.

The most barbarous cruelties were practiced on sailors; they were not treated to any consideration, and therefore John Tempest was not surprised at the hard work he had to endure.

He was ready to drop with the heat and fatigue, but he would not allow the captain to see he was tired.

The Narrows were reached before the boat overtook the *Lively Bee*, and the waters of the Lower Bay were entered before the captain and his men stood on the deck of the famous schooner.

The crew saluted the captain, who responded warmly, and then bade Tempest follow him to the cabin.

CHAPTER III.

[Pg 15]

THE LIEUTENANT'S STORY.

"I know you, John Tempest, better than you know me," commenced Captain Vernon, "and before you sign the ship's log I want to have a talk with you."

Tempest followed, wondering much at the manner and deference shown to him by the captain of the privateer.

"Sit down, and place yourself outside a stiff glass of that brandy," said Vernon, helping himself at the same time to a similar dose.

"You possess a time-honored name, young man, and have spunk to maintain it. Have you forgotten that you were on the *Essex* when the British boarded her and demanded the surrender of a deserter?"

"Your captain ordered the alleged deserter to prove his citizenship, and he couldn't!"

"But he gave his word," said Tempest.

"Yes, but who believes a man's word in such a case?"

"How do you know all this? Who are you?"

"Captain Vernon, of the good privateer *Lively Bee*."

"Yes, but how did you know——"

"Let me finish. Your captain agreed to give up the sailor, whose name was——"

Vernon hesitated as though he would have liked Tempest to have finished the sentence.

Tempest remained silent, and his captain continued:

"His name was Vincent Decatur."

"You are right, captain, though that was not the name in the ship's books."

"No, he was known on board as James Vincent. He had good reasons for changing his name: Decatur went below to get his kit. The British officer and squad of marines waited him on deck. [Pg 16]

"Decatur saw an ax on the carpenter's bench as he passed. With only a moment's hesitation he seized it in his right hand, and with one blow cut off the left. It was then that you, John Tempest, junior officer on board the U. S. frigate *Essex*, saw the deed, and congratulated the man on his bravery.

"Decatur went on deck carrying the severed hand with him. He presented himself before the British officer, maimed and useless as a sailor for life.

"He showed his bleeding wrist to the officer, and, almost faint with loss of blood, he managed to say:

"'Sir, I swore I would never serve under the English flag, or recognize it except as the flag of an enemy. My own captain has deserted me. I am an American born, and my severed hand will show how I have kept my oath.' Then you, Ensign Tempest, called for three cheers for the brave American sailor. The crew and marines on the *Essex* responded to the call, and the cheers ascended through the rigging. Captain Porter intimated that your influence in the service would not be good, and—to put it mildly—asked you to resign your commission. The men would have stood by you, but you knew disobedience to the captain's will was mutiny, and you offered your resignation, which was accepted. There was one who did plead for you—Cadet Midshipman Farragut. But Porter was inexorable, and you became a landsman."

"How do you know all this?"

"I have not yet finished; hear me through and we shall better understand each other."

The *Lively Bee* was skimming through the water at the rate of four knots an hour, but so well proportioned was she that the motion was almost imperceptible.

"Take another glass of brandy, Tempest." [Pg 17]

"No, captain, I have sea legs, but a landsman's head, and cannot stand much grog."

"You had not been on shore long before you again met Vincent Decatur. He was crippled for life, but was happier than had he been compelled to sail under the British flag.

"You visited him—ah, your face tells me that I am right—you felt a strange desire to distinguish yourself, not because of patriotism altogether, but the bright eyes of Bertha Decatur shone into your very soul. She would marry none who deserted his country in the hour of need. The man she would honor was one who fought for his country. You heard this and——"

"Shipped on a privateer," added Tempest, almost sarcastically.

"Yes, shipped on the neatest, trimmest, fastest schooner afloat, on the *Lively Bee*, which shall sting so often and so deeply that all America shall respect its crew."

"How did you learn all you have told me?"

Captain Vernon laughed merrily, and looked at the young ensign almost quizzically.

"You would like to know?"

"I am burning with curiosity."

"Then I will tell you. I heard the story partly from Midshipman Farragut——"

"You know him?"

"Of course I do."

"And yet when Buller was reviling him at the Battery you did not defend him."

"No! It would have been an impertinence for a privateer captain to defend a naval officer."

"But young Farragut did not know——"

"Bertha Decatur, no; but I do, and she sang your praises so often that I wanted to find you. Farragut quietly pointed you out in the crowd at the Battery, and—well, here you are." [Pg 18]

"A man before the mast."

"No. You were ensign in the navy, where promotion is slow; you shall be first officer on the *Lively Bee*. Will you accept?"

"How can I thank you?"

"By doing your duty. I am proud to have you, Tempest, and I don't think you will ever rue the day you became first officer on the *Lively Bee*."

"I accept your generous offer."

"You have done well. I am a good skipper, I can steer a vessel as well as any man, and I can fight, but sometimes a little science which you naval fellows have is very useful. I shall expect you to be as ardent an enemy of the British as I am. Show no quarter, have no mercy, send every British ship to Davy Jones' locker if you can't take it captive. Let your motto be, as mine is, eternal hatred to British rule."

"I will swear it if necessary."

"No, Tempest, the word of an honest man is all I need. Be watchful."

"I will make no boast, captain, but I think you will find I can do without food or sleep as long as any man, and my vigilance shall never give you a moment's uneasiness."

"I know it. Now, there is another thing. Although the *Lively Bee* is a privateer, we are most punctilious about dress. We are uniformed when at sea."

"But——"

"In yonder room, which will be yours, you will find a first officer's uniform, which, if I mistake not, will be a fair fit for you. If it wants altering, we have an excellent tailor on board."

"How thoughtful you are, captain." [Pg 19]

"Thank you for the compliment. Now go and dress, and I will introduce you to your brother officers."

John Tempest was surprised at the size and comfort of his stateroom.

It was far superior to the one he occupied on the *Essex*.

He thought it was fit for a lady's bower, and as he thought it he remembered Bertha, and his love for her.

"What will she say of my becoming a privateer?" he asked himself. "Surely the risk is enough. If I am captured, I shall be hanged. If I am shot, I shall die for my country. If Farragut recognizes my captain, why should I be ashamed of him? I will do my duty, and will win Bertha."

He dressed in the uniform, and looked as handsome a privateer as ever walked a deck.

When he stepped up the companionway to the deck, he was met by the captain.

"Welcome, Lieutenant Tempest," he said, grasping the young officer's hand.

Turning to the officers, he said in his usual hearty manner:

"Gentlemen, this is Lieutenant Tempest, my first officer, an able seaman, as I can vouch, an honest man, and an inveterate hater of England. For ten generations his family has been noted for its patriotism, and the *Lively Bee* will have the advantage of his name, fame and honor. Lieutenant Tempest, Mr. Scarron and Mr. Webster. I hope you will all be good friends."

Scarron and Webster were typical sailors.

Blunt almost to uncouthness, they looked just what they were—able seamen, good fighters and not overburdened with education or politeness.

"I was first officer on a whaler," said Scarron as he further introduced himself. [Pg 20]

"And I was a merchant skipper till the French seized my ship and I paid away every cent I had as ransom. Now I'm a privateer and ready to fight."

CHAPTER IV.

[Pg 21]

THE CHALLENGE.

Captain Vernon was one of the most uneasy men living.

He could not keep still.

Action was the watchword of his life.

He was a handsome man, young—that is, he had not reached his fortieth year—straight as an arrow, with firmness imprinted on every feature.

He could not have lived on a slow boat. He would have gone crazy.

Had he been on a man-of-war crawling along at two knots an hour, he would most likely have deserted.

On the *Lively Bee* he was the most active man.

He owned the vessel, and was proud of it.

When there was a rumor of war, he hurried to Washington and applied for a *lettre de marque*.

For those of our readers who do not understand the expression, we explain that a letter of marque gave permission to the owner of a private vessel to make war on another nation. Without this letter of authority, such war would be piracy. All nations, at the time of the war of 1812, issued letters of marque, and recognized the privateers as belligerents, often however ignoring the authority in the case of prisoners, and hanging the officers as pirates.

Captain Vernon had two objects to serve in his war on the English. He hated the British, and he wanted to enrich himself by prize money.

The *Lively Bee* was outside Sandy Hook, and was making nearly five knots an hour.

Every man on board had to work at racehorse speed, for the captain was always on the alert. [Pg 22]
Everything and everybody about him must be the fastest and best possible.

Although the war ships had started almost as soon as the privateer, they were nowhere in sight.

"Sail ho!"

The alarm was given by Scarron.

"Whereaway?"

"I see it, captain," said Tempest, pointing to a white speck on the horizon.

The captain took the glass and looked long and earnestly in the direction.

"She is in cruising canvas only. Most probably a merchantman," he said, as he handed the glass to Tempest.

"No, captain, she is a war ship, and British at that."

"Think so?"

"I'll bet my last dollar she's British, but she's too big for us to tackle."

Tempest paced the deck uneasily.

Here was a British war ship almost within fighting distance, and she was to be allowed to escape.

"Captain, a word with you."

"What is it, Tempest?"

"Have you a long-range gun on board?"

"A thirty-four pounder. Why?"

"Because I would like to draw closer to that Britisher and give her a shot."

"Is not that a dangerous game?"

"It is a risk. I think she only carries light-weight guns, perhaps twelve-pounders."

"Why do you think so?"

"Instinct. But apart from that feeling, you will find she is a French-rigged frigate, and they seldom carry anything above a twelve-pounder."

"You can take the risk if you like, Tempest."

"May I?"

"Yes, but you will be responsible for the *Lively Bee*."

It was a terrible responsibility for the young man to take, but there was something about him which inspired confidence, and Captain Vernon wanted to see of what mettle the man was made.

Orders were given, and the little schooner sailed direct for the big wars-man.

"Captain, we are within gunshot distance. What shall we do?"

Vernon walked aft, saying as he did so:

"You took the responsibility; do the best you can."

"Very well, captain."

On went the schooner until it was so close that the big Britisher seemed to shut out all view of the horizon.

"Scarron! we are going to beat to quarters."

"Sir! Mr. Tempest, sir!"

"I said we were going to beat to quarters. Have you any objections?"

"Seems to me we'll die within sight of New York anyway," muttered Scarron.

"Very likely," Tempest calmly replied. "All the same, we shall fight that vessel."

Instead of waiting for Scarron to give the order to the drummer, Tempest did it himself.

No sooner had the roll of the drum been wafted across the waters than there was a change manifest in the attitude of the cruiser.

The crew were now on the alert, and an answering roll of the drum told the little schooner that the Britisher accepted the challenge.

It was perfectly safe to do so.

What chance had a little privateer against a trim, well-built war cruiser?

Tempest had the long gun loaded, and he took sight himself.

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The Britisher ran up the Union Jack as a defiance, an act answered by the raising of the Stars and Stripes.

No one on board the cruiser had any idea that the privateer could carry so heavy a gun as a thirty-four-pounder.

The gun was ready, the match applied.

The *Lively Bee* quivered and shook, but that was all.

The shot tore through the rigging, plowing along the deck of the cruiser, and disabling or killing a dozen men.

A broadside was fired, but the shots fell short of the *Lively Bee*.

It was as Tempest thought—she had only light guns.

One more shot was fired by the young lieutenant, and a hole was bored in the bow of the cruiser.

"We have taught her a lesson, captain, but we cannot fight her."

"No; what do you intend doing?"

"The fleet is near."

"I see; I think I understand."

Captain Vernon walked down to his cabin, leaving all command in the hands of his young officer.

"He has spunk, and I like him; he has grit and will pull through," he said, as he threw himself down on the seat.

Tempest lowered the Stars and Stripes, and the Britisher took it, as he intended, as a sign of surrender.

The cruiser now showed itself plainly, and its name, the *Belvidera*, was discernible through the glass.

"I thought she was French," said Tempest.

"What are you going to do, sir?" asked Scarron. "Surrender?"

"No, sir. I shall never surrender until it is to Death. Give orders; let the *Lively Bee* show her heels to the Britisher, quick, or we may get raked with shot."

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On sped the privateer, and the cruiser followed quickly after her.

Then the *Lively Bee* tacked, and the *Belvidera* saw, when almost too late, that she had been led nearly within gunshot of Commodore Rodgers' flagship, the *President*.

Both vessels began preparing for a test of skillful marksmanship, and for that most interesting of all engagements—a naval duel.

On the *Belvidera* the English sailors were busily engaged in shifting long eighteens and carronades to the stern, making a battery of stern-chasers mounting four guns.

The *Lively Bee* watched the preparations, and occasionally sent a shot tearing across the *Belvidera's* deck, throwing the crew into confusion.

CHAPTER V.

[Pg 26]

THE CHASE.

A fresh breeze was blowing when the American fleet began the chase after the *Belvidera*.

In a few hours the *President* had drawn away from the fleet, and was forging ahead.

Then the little *Wasp*, as lively as the insect after which it was named, came closely after.

The big *United States* followed next, with the *Essex* in good position.

Then commenced a contest of speed between the representative vessels of the two greatest nations on earth.

The English ship was trying to get away, the American endeavoring to catch her.

The *Belvidera* was a swift vessel, but it had to maneuver considerably, for the *Wasp* was trying to get into the offing to prevent escape, and the *Lively Bee* was keeping up the excitement by

sending a shot at intervals, whenever the Britisher got within safe distance.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when Commodore Rodgers leaped into the rigging to take another view of his adversary.

He was well satisfied.

His heart beat with enthusiasm.

War had been declared, and he was to be the one to fire the first shot at the British power on the seas.

For although the privateer had done effectual work, the navy did not give it credit.

Rodgers went to the bow of the *President* and sighted the gun himself.

His shot was a good one, hulling the enemy.

Captain Vernon saw it through his glass and he cried out loudly:

"Bravo, Rodgers! Give him another!"

A second shot followed before the *Belvidera* could reply.

The American was superior in gunning, and every shot told.

A third shot from the *President* broke off the muzzle of one of the *Belvidera's* stern-chasers, while another shot crashed into the stern of the chase, killing two men and wounding several others.

The men on the *Belvidera* were now all excitement.

Captain Byron bit his lips in anger.

He had sighted the guns himself, but had done no damage to the American.

He ordered two long eighteen-pounders on the main deck to the stern, and two thirty-two-pound carronades on the quarter deck.

With these he kept up an incessant fire, many shots being effective.

The rigging of the *President* was cut in many places, and one midshipman was killed.

While the excitement was at its height a young midshipman on the *President*, a boy whose years could not have exceeded ten, performed a most daring feat.

A gun was sighted at the *Belvidera*, but the gunner was stricken down as he was in the act of firing.

The boy saw it and with patriotic fervor, shouted:

"I'll have one shot at the rascals anyway."

But he could find no match with which to fire the gun.

Not to be daunted, he rushed to the galley and picking up a live coal in his fingers, he hurried with it, regardless of the intense pain, and placed it on the priming.

Instantly the report showed that he had fulfilled his threat, and had fired one shot at the enemy.

His thumb and finger were burned to the bones, but he was happy.

And the shot was an effective one.

A lieutenant and two marines were killed by it as it tore its way along the deck.

The chase continued for another hour, the flagship leading all the others, the *Lively Bee* watching the chase, but taking no part just then.

It was only a question of a few hours when the *President* would overtake the English ship.

But just when victory was in sight a loud explosion startled everybody, and directed the attention of the whole fleet to the *President*.

Commodore Rodgers had again sighted his heavy gun, which was getting so hot that he almost deemed it unsafe to load it.

"One more shot," he cried, as he applied the match.

A cloud of smoke hung over the *President* as the noise of the report cleared away.

In firing that shot the gun had burst with a terrific report, the flying fragments killing or wounding sixteen men.

The commodore was thrown high into the air, and fell heavily on the deck, suffering a severe fracture of his leg.

Panic set in.

Some of the sailors were for hauling down the flag, but they were only raw recruits, and were quickly overpowered by the older men.

The accident caused a cessation of the firing for a time, and the *Belvidera* took advantage of it to show her heels.

"Follow her! Rake her with shot and shell!" shouted the wounded commodore. "Don't let her escape!"

But the Britisher had lightened herself.

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Her anchors and boats were cut away and fourteen tons of water were thrown overboard.

Thus lightened, she began to draw away from the *President*.

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The latter yawed several times, and let fly full broadsides at the escaping cruiser.

The shot rattled among the spars of the *Belvidera*, but the nimble topmen quickly repaired all damages; and the British ship increased the distance between herself and the American fleet.

The *Lively Bee* followed at a safe distance.

"What do you think now, Tempest?" asked Captain Vernon.

"I'd humble that proud Briton if I had my way," answered the young lieutenant.

"Can we do it?"

"I'd like to try."

"Do as you please; the *Lively Bee* shall be under your orders," answered Captain Vernon, and young Tempest raised his hand to heaven, while from his lips there arose a cry, which was like the registering of a solemn oath.

"Before heaven I swear my hand shall know no rest, my life no pleasure, until the British acknowledge our right to liberty!"

"Amen!" responded Vernon.

And the *Lively Bee* started in the darkness of night in the wake of the *Belvidera*.

But in the night a storm arose; the thunder shook the schooner, making every timber creak and groan like a living thing in anguish.

The lightning played about the rigging, and Captain Vernon wrung his hands in despair.

"Can she live through it?" he asked.

"Ay, ay, captain, for the *Lively Bee* has a glorious work to do."

"Heaven grant you are right, Tempest, for she is the pride of my heart."

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The waves dashed over her deck; the thunders roared like ten thousand parks of artillery; and men who had only used the name of the Creator in blasphemy prayed to Him for succor and safety.

CHAPTER VI.

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STORM AT SEA.

"The wind
Increased at night until it blew a gale;
And though 'twas not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have looked a little pale.
The wind blew still more fresh; as it grew late
A squall came on, and some guns broke loose;
A gust—which all descriptive power transcends,
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam-ends."

There was something sublime in Harry Vernon's declaration:

"She must weather the gale, for the *Lively Bee* has work to do."

But what a storm she encountered! Captain Vernon thought of the big war ships, and feared for them.

He strained his ears to listen for the solemn booming of the signal gun of some vessel in distress.

His fears were more for the others than for his own tight little craft.

"The water is coming fast in the hold," said Scarron.

"All hands to the pumps, then!"

The men worked with a will.

They were accustomed to danger, and they did not magnify their trouble.

But it was an anxious night.

Not a star illumined the sky.

Not one glimmer of light could be seen.

Angry waves broke over the deck of the *Lively Bee*, and the boards creaked and groaned like living things.

The masts bent beneath the weight of rigging, and every moment it was feared that they would go over.

"Tempest, are you afraid?" asked the captain.

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"No, sir; but if I have to die soon, I'd rather it be in a struggle with an English ship."

"Ay, ay; so would I. But we must be ready, for death won't wait our pleasure."

"You do not think," and Tempest paused; he did not like to shape his thoughts in words.

"I think the *Lively Bee* will weather the storm, but I may not."

"You are low-spirited. Oh!"

The exclamation was natural. A sudden gust had swept across the deck, the waves had broken with terrific force, and not one but thought his last hour had come.

The calm which followed saw the captain at the tiller.

"All's well, sir," asserted the steersman.

"We can stand it here, if the water does not gain on us."

"The *Lively Bee* can stand it, I think."

"Ay, ay, sir; she's the tautest boat I ever sailed in. But we're in for dirty weather afore morn."

Captain Vernon walked forward and again spoke to Tempest.

"Mr. Tempest, I want you to take an oath."

"Captain!"

"Yes, a solemn oath. We are engaged in fighting an enemy which claims to be empress of the seas. Will you swear that, whatever happens to me, you will stay by the *Lively Bee* as long as her timbers hold together, or until our flag is acknowledged on the ocean as well as on land?"

"I swear it, Vernon!"

"I thought you would. I have made my will; the *Lively Bee* will be under your command if anything happens to me."

"Why so despondent? You do not think we shall go down in the gale?"

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"No, but ours is a venturesome life, and I like to get things in order."

"Captain, the water is gaining on us."

"Pump away, lads; the back of the storm is broken."

Tempest went to the pumps, and saw one of the men whose arms were tired, and whose whole body showed exhaustion.

"Stand away, Mike; let me have a turn for a few minutes."

"You, sir? You're a gentleman."

"I am a sailor, Mike, and can work as well as fight or give orders."

The rough seaman looked at the lieutenant and could scarcely believe his senses.

"No, no, sir; this 'ere work is not for the likes of you."

"Stand aside and rest a bit; I'll call you when I'm tired."

"Which'll be precious soon, I'll warrant me," growled Zeke Patten, a surly, discontented man.

"You hold your tongue unless you can be civil, Zeke," said Mullen, "or I'll make you."

Tempest heard both remarks, but did not let it be seen.

He took Mike's place and worked with an energy they had not counted on.

"Why don't you sing, boys?" he asked; "the work is so much easier."

"Can't get our breath then."

"Well, I'll try."

And Lieutenant Tempest began singing an impromptu doggerel, which the sailors thought the most perfect poetry ever written.

"The *Lively Bee* will weather the storm,
Yoho! my boys! yoho!
For she's taut and trim and spick and span,
Yoho! my boys! yoho!
She'll make the British lower their rag,
And make them honor our own dear flag,
Then, boys, let not your spirits lag,
Yoho! my boys! yoho!"

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With what zest they worked! The water was diminished in the hold, and the *Lively Bee* was weathering the storm splendidly.

But the storm was not over. It seemed as though the elements were tired and had need of a short respite, for there was a lull and the men breathed again, glad that they would get a rest.

Mike had again taken his place at the pump, Zeke and Mullen had been replaced by others, and the pumps gained on the water splendidly.

Suddenly a flash of lightning darted along the sky, making the green billows as bright as in

daytime.

Like a glittering serpent it flashed across, and simultaneously the air was rent with a report so loud that the *Lively Bee* quivered and shook as though it had been an animate being and was afraid of the storm.

There was such a lull and awful stillness that the helmsman had no control of the *Lively Bee*.

"Hard-a-weather——" shouted the captain; "hard-up, for your life!"

He sprang to the helm, but the head of the schooner remained immovable in the same direction.

Vernon watched the approaching hurricane.

His experience told him that it was coming again with redoubled fury.

The lightning flashes showed them a glimpse of the storm.

Everything was done to save the schooner which experienced seamanship could suggest.

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"Head her off," cried the captain, "or we shall capsize!"

Onward came the hurricane, ploughing up the sea, which boiled and foamed and roared before it, a moving spasm of awful surge.

"Look to yourself, captain!" shouted Tempest, and the words died away on the wind just as the wild waters leaped over the deck with the thunderous roar and fury of a cataract.

The weather main-chains were wrenched like threads, with all their rigging, from the sides of the vessel; and the main mast, bending like a cane, broke off with a loud crash close to the deck.

It was an awful moment.

A wild cry arose from the sailors, but it was drowned in the roar of the waters and the thunder of the gale.

The lightning flashed and leaped about like phantasmagoric demons, as if mocking the sailors in their frantic dread.

"Cut away the foremast—look lively, men!"

Lieutenant Tempest had been prepared for this order, and with an ax severed the distended shrouds, which flew wildly in the air, lashing the sea as they fell.

The remaining straps parted with sharp reports before the ax descended, and the unsustained mast, after a few vigorous blows by the daring hand of the young officer, snapped off a few feet from the deck.

A large wave lifted it like a straw and bore it away to leeward.

The *Lively Bee*—a wreck—drifted about on the billows.

Captain Vernon almost sobbed as he thought of her.

The heavens were as black as raven wings, the lightning played across them in streams of fire, the water was phosphorescently illuminated, while great masses of water, swollen into gigantic billows, burst into glittering foam over the deck.

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"We are lost," cried Mike. "Holy Mary, have mercy," Zeke blasphemed, and then with all the superstition of his class declared that there was a Jonah aboard.

The captain heard him.

"What of it?" he cried. "We can't find the Jonah in this storm."

"I kin," answered the man.

"Perhaps it is yourself, Zeke; I remember we were nearly wrecked off Cape Cod the last time you were with me."

Vernon had turned the tables on the man, who now shivered with fear.

"Doan't say that, cap'n, or they'll throw me overboard."

Zeke had no more to say about Jonahs, and while he blasphemed the others prayed.

The storm ceased its anger, the winds were calmed down, the furious billows gradually subsided, and the *Lively Bee* drifted along as steadily as on a river.

When morning came all eyes were strained for a sail.

Signals of distress were made, and soon in the far distance an answer was made.

A brave-looking ship was seen, and soon a boat was lowered to go to the assistance of the *Lively Bee*.

"What flag?" asked the captain.

Tempest was looking through his glass at the distant ship.

"I cannot see, but she is a war ship."

Captain Vernon folded his arms and waited.

"If she floats the British flag I accept no aid. If she wants to take us prisoners, those of you who are willing, can go, but for myself, I shall fire the magazine and blow up the *Lively Bee* and myself as well."

"I shall stay by your side, captain," said Tempest.

"So say all of us," shouted Mullen.

"Captain!" said Tempest.

It was a sudden shout, and almost startled Vernon.

"What is it, Mr. Tempest?"

"The flag——"

"Yes?"

"Is ours."

"God be praised! Are you sure?"

"Yes; and—the boat—is commanded by—Mr. Farragut."

"Then the ship is the *Essex*."

"Yes!"

"Thank Heaven!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE ESSEX.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Midshipman David Farragut.

The answer was given by Captain Vernon.

"What ship?" asked Farragut.

"The *Lively Bee* of Boston."

"Captain Harry Vernon?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

The boat was too far away as yet for the men to be recognized by the eye, unaided by a glass, and the questions were given in a loud voice through the speaking horn.

Soon the boat was alongside, and young Farragut swung himself up the chains to the deck.

David Farragut—the naval hero of the century—was at that time a bright lad eleven years old.

But, boy as he was, he ordered the old tars about, and was efficient as an officer.

"We feared it might be a British vessel which sighted us," said Captain Vernon.

But Farragut did not notice, his eyes were fixed forward where Tempest was standing.

"Blow me! but isn't that young man Ensign Tempest?" he asked.

"It is Lieutenant John Tempest," answered Vernon.

"Blow me! but it seems promotion is rapid on a privateer. Tempest!"

As Farragut shouted the name, the young man turned, his face crimson, for he remembered that the last time he had met the midshipman both were officers of the same ship.

"Mr. Farragut."

"Hoity-toity! How long have I been mister? Am I not still David to you?"

"I hope so?"

"Zounds, man! But your new dignity has made you proud. Don't you ever think of the capers we used to cut up on the *Essex*? But that was before I was a midshipman."

"Yes, I remember. Those were happy days. I fear me, though, I am a Jonah."

Farragut laughed and gave Tempest a hearty smack on the back, making him wince.

"How did you weather the storm?" asked Vernon.

"We were on the fringe of it. Quite local, you know, so we did not suffer much."

"Did you fall in with the enemy?"

"Not yet, but we are ready;" and young Farragut had started on a theme of which he never grew tired.

"Every day," he said, "the crew exercise at the great guns, small arms, and single stick. Then, they have been so thoroughly trained as boarders that every man is prepared for such an emergency, with his cutlass as sharp as a razor, his dirk made out of a file, and a good pistol. Zounds, Tempest, and you, too, captain, but I hope we shall whet our blades soon."

Vernon sighed.

"What do you want us to do? Is the *Lively Bee* a castaway?"

"No, sir. If we can get to port, a week will make her as good as ever."

"Then you want to be towed back?"

"Anywhere will do."

"Captain, come back with me to the *Essex*, and Captain Porter will arrange with you."

In less than two hours the *Lively Bee* was being towed by the *Essex*.

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Captain Vernon looked to his guns and ammunition, and to his great satisfaction found that everything was safe and his powder dry.

He rigged up a mast, and before the end of the next day told Captain Porter he was in no particular hurry about making port, that a few days would make but little difference.

"I am glad to hear you say that, Vernon, for I believe we shall have a chance to smell powder within the next forty-eight hours."

"Then I would not think of taking you out of your way."

The *Essex* was intended for a victor.

Its commander was a fighter, and as good a tactician as ever walked the deck of a man-of-war.

During the calm he ordered the *Essex* to be disguised.

The top-gallant masts were housed, the ports of the gun deck closed in, and her usually trim cordage and nicely-squared yards were set in a way that only the most shiftless of merchant skippers would tolerate.

Captain Vernon paced the deck of the *Lively Bee* impatiently.

He did not understand Porter's tactics, and there was nothing jarred more upon his seaman instincts than a slovenly-set ship.

"Wait a bit," said Tempest. "Porter has set a trap for the British, and we shall have some hard fighting before long."

And the young officer was right.

Porter sent for Vernon.

"Can you stand alone for a few days?"

"Yes, if need be."

"It will be better. Have your guns ready, but concealed; we will play the part of merchantmen and give the enemy fits."

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"Sail ho!" exclaimed the *Bee's* lookout.

"Where away?"

"To windward."

The news was signaled to the *Essex*, and it was soon known that a British war ship was bearing down on the *Essex*.

Commander Porter carried his acting still further.

Instead of the crowd of agile sailors that spring into the rigging of a man-of-war at the order to make sail, only a mere handful were ordered by the captain to set with the greatest awkwardness all the sail the *Essex* could carry.

Then two long heavy cables were quietly lowered over the stern, and dragging through the water, retarded the ship's progress.

The Britisher thought he had fallen in with a heavy merchantman which was making frantic efforts to escape.

When the man-of-war was near enough to perceive the signals, the *Essex* warned the *Lively Bee* to fly before the wind out of the way of the enemy.

Vernon entered into the spirit of the thing, and instead of escaping, caused the schooner to drag along as though heavily freighted.

On the deck of the *Essex* the few sailors seemed excited and flurried, and the Britisher did not know that every action was assumed.

Had the commander of the English ship been gifted with second sight he would have seen behind those closed ports a roomy gun deck glistening with that whiteness seen only on the decks of a well-ordered war ship.

Down either side of the deck stretched a row of heavy carronades, each with its crew of gunners grouped about the breach, and each shotted and primed ready for the opening volley.

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On a man-of-war in time of action no one can be idle.

Hence on this occasion, from the magazine amidships to the gun deck, there reached a line of stewards, cooks, waiters and extra deck hands, ready to pass up cartridges.

Bare-footed boys, stripped naked to the waist, were skurrying about the deck.

These were the "powder-monkeys," whose duty it would be, when the firing began, to take the cartridges from the line of powder passers and carry them to the guns.

On the spar deck only a few sailors and officers were visible to the enemy.

But under the taffrail lay crouched scores of jackies, wearing blue uniforms, and smooth-faced middies and veteran lieutenants, ready at the word of command to spring into the rigging, or to swarm over the side and board the enemy should the gunwales of the vessels touch.

The English man-of-war knew nothing of all this preparation.

The British captain was exultant and hoisted a flag bearing a large figure "7," meaning that his ship had captured that number of American merchantmen.

In a few minutes the signal, "Haul too," was raised, but perhaps the Americans did not understand it, so the Britisher fired a gun.

Still no notice was taken, but the *Essex* gave the appearance of renewed exertion to escape, while the *Lively Bee* kept signaling for assistance. The two vessels were near enough for the most minute signals to be understood, and the Britisher declared that he would add two more prizes to his conquests before the day was out, meaning the *Essex* and the *Bee*.

Three ringing cheers were given by the British crew, and the Union Jack was run up the mast.

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At the same time a broadside was fired at the *Essex*.

In an instant the ports of the sham merchantman were knocked out; and, with warlike thunder, the heavy carronades hurled their ponderous shots against the side of the war ship. Before the Britisher could reply the *Lively Bee* had sent a shot careening over the enemy's deck, killing the first lieutenant and two of the men. The English ship replied but feebly. The men of the *Essex* and *Lively Bee* fired too quickly and too accurately for much resistance, and in less than eight minutes after the engagement opened the British hauled down their flag.

The captured ship proved to be the sloop-of-war *Alert*, mounting twenty eighteen-pound carronades.

The boarding officer found her badly cut up, and seven feet of water in the hold. The officers were sent on board the *Essex*, and the *Alert* taken in tow.

The victory was complete, but hardly one to be exultant over, as the *Essex* was superior both in size and armaments to the *Alert*. However, the *Essex* has the honor of having the first British war ship.

CHAPTER VIII.

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SCENTING MUTINY.

The *Essex* did not keep the *Alert* long.

It was troublesome to tow such a vessel any distance, and the *Lively Bee* had the first claim, as it was not quite seaworthy.

But while Captain Porter was deliberating what to do with his capture, an event occurred to hasten his resolve.

The crew of the *Lively Bee* were very friendly with the men of the *Essex*, and the same feeling was entertained by the officers.

With one exception. For reasons we have already given, John Tempest was not welcomed on board the *Essex*.

The crew would have lionized him, but Captain Porter could not well receive him.

Middie Farragut was always finding excuses for visiting the *Lively Bee*, for he was fond of the company of Tempest.

On the third day after the capture of the *Alert*, the two young men—for man we must call Farragut, though not one in years—were seated in the *Bee's* cabin when Tempest whispered suddenly:

"You ought to be careful of those prisoners."

"What do you mean?"

"They are numerous, and you give them free run of the ship."

"Where is the danger?"

"Suppose they were to mutiny?"

Farragut laughed, but there was a little uneasiness in the laugh, for he had thought of the same thing.

When he returned to the *Essex* that night he hesitated whether to tell the captain of his fears or not, but he decided that he would only be laughed at, so he held his peace.

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It so happened that Captain Vernon was to stay all night on board the *Essex*, as the guest of Captain Porter, and Farragut was glad, for he thought that even one extra man on board would be of use in case of mutiny.

With these thoughts on his mind he threw himself in his hammock and was soon asleep.

But he dreamed of mutiny.

His brain would not rest.

Several times he listened, but all was still, save for the regular tramp of the men on duty.

Once a strange feeling of fear came over him.

He opened his eyes cautiously and saw the coxswain of the captain's gig of the *Alert* standing over him, with a pistol in one hand and a big knife in the other.

Farragut knew the man was a prisoner, and, seeing him armed, was positive something was wrong.

"I shall be killed now," he thought, and closed his eyes again, lying very still.

He dare not move.

Expecting to feel the knife pierce to his heart every instant, he yet had sufficient control over himself to restrain his desire to call out.

He opened his eyes slightly and saw the man move away.

He was muttering to himself, and Farragut heard him say:

"To-night! All are sleeping. Then for merry England."

Farragut slipped out of his hammock and crept cautiously to the captain's cabin.

Porter had dined well, and had drunk pretty deeply with his officers and guest.

It was the custom in those days, and no one was considered a gentleman unless he could drink his two or three bottles of wine. [Pg 46]

Farragut shook the captain.

"Hello! what is it?"

"Hush! on your life, hush!"

"What is it? David, what is the matter?"

"Hush, captain; don't speak aloud. The men of the *Alert* have got to the armory, and to-night are to mutiny!"

"How do you know?"

"Never mind now; but act at once, or it may be too late."

Captain Porter did not like being aroused out of his sleep.

Who does?

But Porter was a man of action, and was awake in an instant.

The captain was very strict about "fire drill," and was accustomed, so that his men might be ready for any emergency, to raise the cry of "Fire!" at all hours of the day or night, and often he caused a slight smoke to be created in the hold to try the nerves of his men.

At the cry of "Fire!" every man seized his cutlass and blanket and went to quarters as though the ship were about to go into action.

When he realized the import of Farragut's information, he ran on the deck and shouted:

"Fire! fire!"

In an instant the crew were at their quarters in perfect order, every man armed.

The mutineers thought that a bad time for their project, and waited.

But the captain was not satisfied.

He paraded all the prisoners and ordered them searched.

Nearly every man had some weapon concealed on his person.

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When these were taken away, the prisoners were ordered back to their quarters.

And early on the following morning they were put on the *Alert*, and that vessel was sent to St. Johns as a cartel.

The *Essex* was saved by the vigilance of young Middie Farragut, and the records at Washington bear proof to the fact.

When off the Maine coast the *Lively Bee* bade adieu to the *Essex*, and started for the Penobscot, where she could be put in fighting trim again.

"I wish you were going with us, Tempest," said Farragut.

"So do I; but I cannot say I wish you were going with us."

"Why not?"

"The *Essex* is a war ship, the *Lively Bee* but a privateer," answered Tempest, sadly; for he still thought there was something of disgrace in being a privateer.

David Farragut, with a wisdom beyond his age, answered his friend:

"If I were not on the *Essex*, I would prefer to be on a privateer. Both are fighting for the same flag, and while we are bound by strict discipline, you can go where you like and fight when you please. Yours is a glorious life, and I almost wish for it myself."

"Then you are not ashamed of me?"

"Ashamed? I am proud, and so will the country be when this war is over. We shall meet again—of that I am sure."

And so the two friends parted. They did meet again; they met when civil war had rent the country in twain, for John Tempest was with Admiral Farragut when New Orleans was surrendered, and again was on his ship in 1863, when in passing Port Hudson on the Mississippi, held by the Confederates, Farragut's son, then a boy of twelve, asked his father to let him go to West Point. [Pg 48]

"He has your grit," said Tempest, and then turning to the boy he added: "I served with your father when he was younger than you are."

"Times have changed," said the admiral.

"In what way?" asked the son.

"You could not stand fire, my boy."

"Try me, father."

Then came that magnificent test of courage which ought to be depicted on the walls of the Capitol by the greatest artist of the day.

"Come up here with me, my boy," said the admiral.

Farragut and his son went up together into the maintop; the old man had himself and boy lashed to it, and in this way they passed Port Hudson.

The Confederates saw the daring act. Sharpshooters took aim at the admiral; a heavy gun was trained on that target, and the ball tore away some of the rigging, but neither father nor son flinched.

"My boy, you have the right pluck, you shall go to West Point," said the admiral when again he descended to the deck, and old John Tempest, then seventy years of age, exclaimed:

"God bless you, David! you are just like what your father was when I knew him first."

CHAPTER IX.

[Pg 49]

A BRUSH WITH THE ENEMY.

When the *Lively Bee* parted company with the *Essex*, Captain Vernon began to put her in fighting trim.

"Always be ready, is my maxim," he said to Tempest.

"But surely you do not expect——"

"To meet the enemy? I never expect anything else."

"But we are disabled."

"All the more reason why we may be attacked by the enemy. Our disabled condition invites it."

So the preparations proceeded, and there was not a man on the *Lively Bee* but hoped a chance of a fight would be offered.

And their wish was gratified.

On the morning of the second day a frigate flying the British flag hove in sight.

"She is too big for us to tackle," said Tempest.

"Yes, but——" and Captain Vernon walked to and fro for a few minutes without finishing his sentence.

Tempest knew him well now, and awaited his pleasure.

"But it is a question of take or be taken. We can't run from that frigate, with our present rig, and I don't want to be taken prisoner."

"Neither do I. But what can we do?"

"Prove that we have spunk."

"I am with you, sir—ay, to the death."

"Well spoken, Tempest. I'd rather have a man like you on board than a whole regiment of other men."

The *Lively Bee* was lying much closer to the wind than the Britisher.

The frigate, when first seen, was about two miles off, and had the *Lively Bee* been in as good trim as when she left New York, no vessel afloat could have overtaken her. [Pg 50]

"I know her, captain."

"Do you? Well, who and what is she?" asked Vernon.

"The *Peacock*, a thirty-two gunner," answered Tempest.

"Then we have no chance but in flight."

"None whatever."

"And we cannot outsail her," continued Vernon perversely.

"No, sir."

"Yet we will not be taken—at least not alive."

There was a determination in the conduct of the privateersman which endeared him to his crew.

Had he ordered each man to shoot himself, no one would have hesitated.

They gave their captain the most explicit obedience.

The *Peacock* drew nearer and challenged the *Lively Bee* to show its colors.

"You shall have them. Up with the flag of the free, boys!"

And the Stars and Stripes was run up the halliards, while a ringing cheer burst from the crew of the privateer.

The Union Jack of England was soon run up in answer, and followed by a shot.

The cannon ball fell wide of the mark and a sarcastic cheer was borne over the water to the *Peacock*.

A broadside was fired at the *Lively Bee*, but again only an upheaval of the water was the result.

"Can you cripple her, Tempest?" asked the captain.

"I think so, sir."

The *Lively Bee* suddenly threw her bow up into the wind, and after a short pause, fired her long gun.

The captain of the privateer watched, through his glass, and saw the shot skim over the water and strike the *Peacock* square in the hull, entering near the bow and raking the deck diagonally. [Pg 51]

The Britisher did not answer, but kept on, crowding all sail, and hoping to overtake the *Lively Bee* and blow her out of the water.

Once again the long gun was fired, but little damage was done, and the British ship answered with a broadside.

"Captain, I can cripple her next time, I think."

"Do so, at all hazards."

The Britisher was nearing her prey.

The privateer could not hold her own under the circumstances.

The frigate sailed faster than the *Lively Bee*, but, not keeping a course so close to the wind, was constantly obliged to tack, in order to keep near enough to use her guns on the smaller vessel.

Tempest walked up to Vernon and put out his hand.

The captain grasped it.

There was a meaning in that handshake.

Each knew that if the next shot did not strike the *Peacock* there was but little chance for the *Lively Bee*.

Lieutenant John Tempest saw that the gun was loaded.

The little privateer luffed, and the long gun was fired.

The shot struck just where it was intended it should.

That shot brought down the foretopmast of the *Peacock* with the immediate result of throwing her up into the wind to repair damages.

"Now, clap on all sail, for it is our only chance," cried Vernon, and the *Lively Bee* began to make better headway.

They could see the *Peacock* black with men, and saw that the wreck of the foretopmast was cleared away in a comparatively short space of time. [Pg 52]

"Now, boys," said Vernon, "the chase has commenced. Hurrah for the *Lively Bee*!"

The men cheered lustily, and feared not the British frigate, for they had obtained a good start.

Suddenly the heavy boom of a gun startled the crew of the *Lively Bee*.

On the starboard side loomed up a man-of-war, from whose gaff there floated the Stars and Stripes.

The *Peacock* shivered from bow to stern as the shot raked her deck, and she knew she was powerless, for her guns would not reach as far.

"Who is she?" asked Tempest.

Captain Vernon looked through his glass at the newcomer, and a loud, ringing cheer burst from the crew of the *Lively Bee*, as he spelled out the word:

"*C-o-n-s-t-i-t-u-t-i-o-n.*"

"The *Peacock* will lose its tail," said Scarron.

"We shall see some fun," added Mr. Webster.

And the *Lively Bee* saluted the big war ship, and awaited further developments.

The *Peacock*, finding itself too far away from the *Constitution*, fired a broadside at the privateer, which had allowed itself to get within range.

The shots tore up a portion of the deck, and a splinter struck Vernon on the shoulder, ploughing a furrow through his flesh.

Tempest applied the match to his long gun again, and as the shot flew through the air, he prayed it might disable the Britisher.

A cry of distress was plainly heard from the *Peacock*, and later it was known that the captain and four of his men had been killed by that shot. [Pg 53]

The senior officer turned the ship about, and instead of being the pursuer was now the pursued.

The men on the *Constitution* cheered the little privateer, and the salute was warmly responded to by our friends.

CHAPTER X.

[Pg 54]

PREPARING FOR ACTION.

The *Lively Bee*, privateer, had won the laurels of war, though she had not shared in the prizes, and Captain Vernon saw that the crew were getting somewhat dissatisfied. He called all hands on deck.

"Men, under the shadow of the U. S. frigate *Constitution* I offer you terms," he said.

All listened attentively, for all were in wonder as to his meaning.

"You are all fighters, and I believe desire to see the Stars and Stripes honored on the sea as well as on land. Is not that so?"

"It is. I can speak for all hands, captain," said Mr. Scarron.

"I knew it. I don't think there is one on board the *Lively Bee* who would value his life above liberty, but all are ready to die fighting for our flag."

"That is true as gospel, captain."

"The commander of the *Constitution* will take you all on board, and you can have your fill of fighting the enemy. You will be regular men then, with no risks other than all who engage in war will share with you.

"You can join the United States navy, or can remain on the *Lively Bee*. Which shall it be?"

"We will stick to you, captain."

"Ay, ay, the *Lively Bee* is a good enough craft for us."

"I thought you would say so, and I am well pleased it is so. But we must put into port and get rigged up. We have done a lot of fighting, but it has all been for others. Now, I propose taking some prizes for ourselves. What say you?" [Pg 55]

There was no need to await a reply.

Every man on the *Lively Bee* was a privateer from choice and inclination.

He loved fighting, but wanted prize money as well as glory.

"I will then, in your name, decline the offer made by Captain Hull of the *Constitution*, and will make all sail to the nearest port."

Captain Vernon boarded the *Constitution*, and was well received.

Captain Hull, after he had seen the *Peacock* disabled, had consulted the captain of the privateer, and had agreed that it was not worth the trouble to overtake the *Peacock*, as she would not be worth much as a prize, and as the British vessel made full sail when the *Constitution* appeared, he deemed it advisable to let it go.

It was then that the captain made the offer to Vernon, which he had submitted to his men.

"I see what it is, Vernon. Your answer is one declining to join the navy. Well, mayhap you are right. And we shall meet, it may be, again. I did hear that the *Guerriere* was in these waters, and I am in search of her."

"She is a formidable war ship."

"I know, and a strange thing occurs to my mind. I have a bet with the captain on the result of our first engagement."

"A wager?"

"Yes, over a year ago our two vessels were lying in the Delaware. We exchanged calls. Captain Dacres of the *Guerriere* is a rattling good fellow—for an Englishman. 'Well, Dacres,' I said I one day, 'you may just take care of that ship of yours, if ever I catch her with the *Constitution*.' Captain Dacres laughed good humoredly, and offered to bet me a sum of money that, in case of a conflict, I should be the loser. 'No,' said I, 'I'll bet no money on it; but I will stake you a hat that the *Constitution* comes out victorious.' 'Done!' cried Dacres, and so the bet was made."

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"I wish you luck, captain," said Vernon, "and I wish you may tow the *Guerriere* into Boston as a prize."

"Thanks, Vernon. And I need scarcely say I return the complimentary wish."

"I have a favor to ask you," said Vernon.

"Name it, and it is granted."

"Don't be too positive. I shall be in port a couple of weeks for repairs. I should like to send my first officer with you for that time. Land him at any port you are near. He shall have full directions how to find me."

"I should be delighted. What is his name?"

"John Tempest."

For a moment Captain Hull's face clouded, but a smile soon suffused itself over his countenance.

"He was on the *Essex*," said Vernon.

"I know it; he resigned. I shall be pleased to have him. He is a rattling good officer."

And so it came to pass that Lieutenant John Tempest was to spend a week or two on the U. S. frigate *Constitution*.

Vernon had a deep motive in this.

He had taken a great liking to the young lieutenant, and would like to have him reinstated in the navy.

Not that he wished to lose him, but he knew that Tempest would be happier in the regular service than on board a privateer.

Tempest was overjoyed.

Not that he wished to part from the *Lively Bee*, for he had learned to love every board in her deck, and believed no guns were better than hers; but he wanted once more to tread the deck of a large war ship, to see active service conducted openly and honorably, and so he thanked Vernon for his consideration and leave of absence.

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The *Constitution* sailed away, and the *Lively Bee* entered port.

It was not long after the naval vessel had parted from the privateer, when the lookout aloft gave the long-drawn out hail:

"Ship ho-o-o!"

"Whereaway?"

"Nor'-nor'east."

Instantly the course of the *Constitution* was shaped toward the stranger.

In half an hour the glass was brought to bear upon the distant vessel, and she was declared to be a frigate and to be sailing toward the American.

Captain Hull began to make preparations for the meeting.

He acted with deliberation.

The *Constitution* was a valuable ship, and he dare not expose her to unnecessary risks.

The topgallant sails were furled, and the lighter spars lowered to the decks.

"The enemy is preparing also," said Tempest, who stood looking through the glass.

"I am glad to hear it," answered Captain Hull. "The better prepared she is the greater our victory will be."

It was near five o'clock when the two war ships were near enough to commence active work.

"The *Guerriere*!" shouted Tempest, as he read the name of the Britisher.

Captain Hull almost forgot his dignity.

He wanted to dance, so delighted was he to meet that vessel above all others.

"Beat to quarters!"

Then followed a rush of barefooted men along the deck.

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There was no confusion; all ran in perfect order to their stations.

As the roll of drums died away the midshipmen, in boyish soprano, began calling off the quarter-bills, while the men, in gruff and deep bass voices, responded.

Every man knew his place.

The cook, as well as the captain, knew just what was expected of him.

The surgeon, with his assistants, descended to the cockpit and got ready his instruments and bandages, his splints and antiseptics.

The line of powder-passers was formed, the powder-monkeys looking serious as they thought of the business on hand.

While all these preparations were being made on the *Constitution*, the crew of the *Guerriere* were not resting quietly.

So many mean things have had to be recorded against England in its struggles that it is pleasant to be able to say a good word for Captain Dacres, of the British ship *Guerriere*, thirty-eight guns.

He had on board a Marblehead sailor, Captain William Orne, who had been captured some days before.

"Orne, tell me," said the captain of the man-of-war, when the American was first sighted, "what think you of yon ship?"

"An American frigate, sir."

"Do you think so? It seems to me she is too bold."

"No, sir. No American can be anything else but bold in this contest," replied Orne.

"I am glad you stick up for your country."

"I am right, sir; the vessel is armed."

"So much the better. The better he behaves the greater credit for us in taking him."

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"Or *vice versa*, captain," Orne quietly added.

"My dear sir, I admire your patriotism, but England is empress of the seas, and no vessel America can build can make the *Guerriere* lower her flag. See, I will show defiance!"

The captain ordered the English flag to be set at each masthead, and the crew cheered lustily as the Union Jack rose up the halliards.

The *Guerriere* backed her maintopsail and waited for the American to commence the action.

"Captain Orne, as I suppose you will not wish to fight against your countrymen, you are at liberty to retire below the water line. And, stay—there are ten of my crew who are American sailors who have been impressed; they can go to the cockpit with you."

"I thank you for your generosity, Captain Dacres."

"Generosity—fiddle-de-dee, it is humanity. I should not like to be made to fight against my own country."

In this way Captain Dacres won the respect of his enemies, for he was both gallant and generous.

The order to beat to quarters was given, and the two vessels were ready for a fierce fight.

Both captains were experienced officers, and both were backed up by crews of undaunted valor.

The men were brave and equally patriotic.

The *Guerriere* was fighting for British supremacy, the *Constitution* for American independence.

CHAPTER XI.

[Pg 60]

THE FIGHT AT SEA

"Ah! then
Could you have seen our men,
How they sprung
To their work of toil and clamor!
How the boarders, with sponge and rammer,
And their captains, with cord and hammer,
Kept every muzzle ablaze."

Each ship was waiting for the other to make the first move.

Both captains were cautious and anxious for victory.

After several movements, the *Guerriere* opened fire with her weather broadside.

The shots fell short.

The British wore around, and let fly her port broadside.

Most of the shot tore through the American's rigging, but two shots took effect in the hull.

The *Constitution* yawed a little, and fired three of her bow guns.

Another broadside from the *Guerriere* answered the shots.

Lieutenant Tempest walked up and down the deck of the *Constitution* uneasily.

Why such inaction?

He knew Hull to be capable, but his action was not quick enough to suit the warm blood of the younger man.

Only occasionally was a shot fired from the American.

More care was exercised in dodging the fire from the Britisher than in answering.

An hour had passed and only the American had been injured, though but slightly.

The crew of the *Constitution* were becoming restive.

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Captain Hull paced the quarterdeck with short, quick steps.

Although outwardly calm, his whole body was burning with checked excitement.

Lieutenant Morris, the second in command, bit his lips and moved his hands about nervously and uneasily.

"What does he mean?" he asked Tempest.

"That I have been wondering," was the answer.

"Shall I give them a broadside?" asked Morris, saluting his chief.

"Not yet," was the reply.

Lieutenant Morris paced the deck, almost angry at his captain.

The *Guerriere* fired another broadside, and as the shots tore away some of the rigging, the officer muttered to himself:

"There will be mutiny if we don't take action."

Low as he spoke, Tempest heard him.

"Do you think so?"

"Did you hear? I am sorry I uttered my thoughts aloud. I am afraid; the gunners are getting very impatient."

Tempest saw the captain pacing the deck, and the vessels were getting so close together that it looked as if the American intended to board the Britisher.

Again Morris asked if he should fire a broadside, and again came the answer:

"Not yet."

The *Guerriere* was only about half a pistol shot away.

Captain Hull had restrained his excitement as long as he could.

He saw how close the enemy really was.

Then he was ready.

The moment for which he had waited had arrived.

He had drawn the Britisher into a trap by leading him to believe the American would not fight.

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"Now, boys, pour it into them!" he shouted with all the lung power he possessed.

He stooped almost to the deck and threw his body up again, cheering the men.

"Pour it into them!" he shouted again. "Hull her, boys! Hull her!" And the crew, catching up the shout, made the decks ring with the cry of "Hull her!" as they loaded and let fly again.

Captain Hull gesticulated with such violence that the tight breeches of his naval uniform split from hip to knee.

The effect of the broadside on the *Guerriere* was terrific.

The Britisher reeled and trembled as though in the throes of a mighty earthquake.

With a tremendous crash the mizzen-mast was shot away.

In a few moments Captain Dacres was told that the cockpit was filled with wounded men.

The conflict was furious.

There was no more delay.

The firing was incessant.

Stripped to the waist, and covered with the stains of powder and of blood, the gunners pulled fiercely at the gun-tackle, and wielded the rammers with frantic energy.

Then the match was applied.

The death-dealing bolt crashed into the hull of the enemy only a few yards distant.

The ships were broadside to broadside, when the mizzen-mast of the English ship was shot away.

The force of the great spar falling upon the deck made a great breach in the quarter of the ship.

The Americans cheered lustily when they saw the damage done.

The *Constitution* poured in several effective broadsides, and luffed slowly, until she lay right athwart the *Guerriere's* bow.

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The long bowsprit of the Englishman stretched far across the *Constitution's* quarterdeck and was soon fouled in the mizzen-rigging of the latter vessel.

The two ships swung helplessly around.

The bow of the Englishman lay snugly against the port-quarter of the American.

"We could board her now," said Lieutenant Morris.

"I wish the captain would give the order," responded Tempest, who was acting as second lieutenant.

"By Washington, but you shall see some fighting!" exclaimed Captain Hull, as he saw that the Englishman was preparing to board the *Constitution*.

The bugle blared from the quarterdeck of the *Guerriere*, and the boarders sprang from their guns and seized their heavy cutlasses and boarding-caps.

But Hull had ordered the boarding-bugle to sound, and by the side of his vessel there appeared an equal number of well-armed men.

Captain Dacres saw the kind of reception he would meet with, and so ordered his men back to their guns.

The vessels were so close together that pistols were freely used.

The topmen fired down at the deck of the opposing ship and picked off many a brave man.

Captain Dacres was slightly wounded by a pistol shot fired by John Tempest.

The thunder of the big guns could not drown the cries of pain and anger which arose from the throats of the wounded men.

The air was filled with the ceaseless rattle of musketry, the roar of cannon, the cracking of pistol shots, and the cries of the injured.

Often the protruding muzzles of the guns touched the side of the opposing ship. And when the guns were run in for loading the sailors would rush to the open ports with muskets and pistols, and try to pick off some of the enemy. [Pg 64]

Suddenly there was an alarming cry, which rose above all others and entirely overpowered them.

"Fire! Fire!"

Every one was horrified.

A sailor is more horrified at that cry than any other which can be heard at sea.

He would rather be clinging to a mast in the open ocean than stand on the deck of a staunch ship, if her hold was on fire!

Flames were seen coming from the windows of the cabin, which lay directly beneath the *Guerriere's* bow guns.

While the shots were raking the decks, and every moment the crew anticipated having to fight hand-to-hand, man to man, not one felt any fear.

But when that cry of fire was raised, and the flames seen, there was not a sailor or marine but trembled.

The flash of the enemy's guns had caused the fire, so close were the vessels together.

Captain Hull did not lose his presence of mind.

With splendid discipline he soon had the flames extinguished and the danger from fire averted.

Tempest had gone to the gun deck.

He pointed to the *Guerriere* and said:

"It was the flash from that gun which fired our cabin. I will silence it."

He ordered a gun loaded, and sighted it himself.

The puff of smoke, followed by the roar of the cannon, told of the passage of the shot, but it was not until the smoke had cleared away that it was seen that Tempest's shot had disabled the enemy's gun. [Pg 65]

But while the men were extinguishing the flames the brave Lieutenant Morris was attempting, with his own hands, to lash the two ships together.

He saw that he should fail, and leaping upon the taffrail called on his men to follow him.

Instantly Lieutenant Bush of the marines and Mr. Alwyn were by his side, when a volley from the British caused all three to fall back.

Bush was killed instantly and the other two were badly wounded.

The ships drifted asunder.

Lieutenant Tempest went to the long gun and with a hurried request for permission to fire it, sighted with deliberation.

A ringing cheer told of the result.

The *Guerriere's* foremast had been shot away and had dragged down the mainmast with it in its

fall.

The proud, trim-built and rigged Britisher was now a shapeless hulk, tossing on the waters without chance to retrieve its fallen fortunes.

CHAPTER XII.

[Pg 66]

ON THE VERGE OF SUCCESS.

"Why, here's a blow,'
Said Dacres, as he hauled his flag below."

Although the *Guerriere* was a hopeless wreck, her captain, with true bulldog courage, kept the British ensign floating from the stump of her fallen mizzen-mast.

The blow must have been severe to the gallant English officer, for he had fully believed the *Guerriere* to be invulnerable.

The *Constitution* drew away, but kept firing continuously, and soon secured a raking position.

Dacres' eyes filled with tears.

"It is no use," he exclaimed to his first officer. "Haul down the flag."

"Must we surrender?" asked the officer.

"If I had only myself to consult I should say no. I would rather sink with the *Guerriere* than live dishonored."

"There is no dishonor in our defeat, captain; but we are all ready to fight until not a man lives."

"I know it; but that would be murder on my part. Haul down the flag."

The captain went below.

He could not see the flag for which he had fought so bravely lowered in defeat.

"Captain Orne, your compatriots have humbled me to-day," he said when he saw the American prisoner. "You are free."

Orne could not express the jubilation he felt, for there was something pitiful in the anguish shown by the brave English captain. [Pg 67]

Lieutenant Read was dispatched by Captain Hull to board the prize.

He saw Orne, whom he recognized, and clasped his hand in silence.

Captain Dacres staggered to the deck.

"Captain Hull presents his compliments," said the American lieutenant, "and wishes to know if you have struck your flag."

Captain Dacres looked at the ship, its decks strewn with dead, and slippery with human blood, its shattered masts, and he answered dryly:

"Well, sir, I don't know what to say. Our mizzen-mast is gone; our mainmast is gone; and I think, on the whole, you had better report that we have struck our flag."

Read saluted the captain, and stepped to the side of the ship, but turned back.

"Would you like the assistance of a surgeon, or surgeon's mate, in caring for your wounded?" he asked the captain.

"Well, sir, I should suppose you had on your own ship business enough for all your medical officers."

"Oh, no," responded the American. "We have only seven wounded, and their wounds have been dressed some time ago."

Captain Dacres dare not attempt to answer, for had he done so his voice would have been choked with sobs.

"Only seven wounded," he murmured, and remembered that on the deck he had twenty-three dead or mortally wounded, while his surgeons were busy attending to fifty-six who were desperately injured.

Captain Orne returned with Lieutenant Read to the *Constitution*.

He reported to Captain Hull, and was asked to describe the state of the *Guerriere*. [Pg 68]

"I came on deck about half-past seven," he said, "and beheld a scene it would be impossible ever to forget.

"All the ship's masts were gone, and as she had no sails to steady her, she was rolling like a log in the trough of the sea."

"Were many killed and wounded?" asked Captain Hull.

"The crew were busy throwing the dead overboard," answered Orne; "the decks were covered with blood, and looked more like a ship's slaughter house. The cockpit is filled with wounded

men."

It was hard to feel pleasure at such a report, and yet the patriotism of Hull could scarcely repress a cheer. But he asked Orne one other question:

"How are the survivors acting?"

"Badly—utterly demoralized. Some of the petty officers got at the liquor and gave it out to the men. Many are drunk, and what with their ribald songs, the noise and confusion, the groans of the dying, it is like a perfect hell, sir."

"Were such a thing as defeat to happen to the *Constitution*," said Hull, "I would with my own hand shoot the first man who touched liquor."

The captain walked the deck uneasily for a few moments.

"Tempest!" he called, and there being no answer, he turned to one of his boys. "Tell Mr. Tempest I want to speak with him."

In a few moments the young officer of the *Lively Bee* appeared.

"I want you to undertake a most difficult duty."

"I am prepared, sir."

"I knew it. Are you ready?"

"Quite, sir."

"I want you to board the *Guerriere*—she is sinking fast—and transfer all her officers and crew to our ship." [Pg 69]

"Yes, captain; it shall be done."

"But—the men have got to the grog, you may have difficulty. You have authority to shoot any one who disregards your orders."

"The wounded shall be removed first."

"That is right. But stay; the officers must have precedence, even over the wounded."

When Tempest left the captain's cabin, Orne remarked, *sotto voce*:

"That young man will never return alive."

"Perhaps not; but I want to try his mettle."

"He is brave."

"Ay, as brave as any man who ever trod a deck."

In the first boatload Tempest sent from the British ship was Captain Dacres.

As the defeated captain entered the victor's cabin he unclasped his sword from his hip and handed it silently to Captain Hull.

The American put it gently back.

"No, no, captain; I'll not take a sword from one who knows so well how to use it. But I will trouble you for that hat."

Captain Dacres looked perplexed.

Hull laughed, as he added:

"Have you forgotten our bet made a year ago on the Delaware?"

"No, sir; I now recall it. That hat is yours; but it seems to me you want a new pair of breeches more than a hat," and the Englishman pointed to the torn breeches worn by Hull.

"Ah, you have noticed my personal casualty; but, Dacres, it was my own doing. Don't write to England and say you inflicted the damage."

Tempest, as was expected, had a hard time with the prisoners, who had taken more grog than allowed by the rules of the service. [Pg 70]

One of the petty officers staggered up to the young officer.

"By Jove, younker, I'll have you thrown overboard," he said.

A lot of drunken gunners, naked to the waist and armed with cutlasses, cheered him and crowded around Tempest to carry out the threat.

The young man never moved!

He raised his pistol and leveling it at the head of the officer said:

"Give me your sword."

The man meekly obeyed.

With a sword in one hand, a pistol in the other, he faced the drunken gunners.

"The first man who attempts to touch me, dies. Lay down your weapons on the deck."

"By St. George, hark to the child!" said one of the men. "Are you afraid? See, I'll take his plaything from him."

The man stepped forward, but Tempest was too quick for him, and a well-aimed thrust with the

sword placed the man *hors de combat*.

"Lay down your weapons," he shouted, as he drew his sword from the dead man's body.

The men obeyed sullenly.

They had met their master, and knew it.

Tempest knew that the prisoners were not to be trusted while any of them were armed.

He, however, did not show his distrust, but walked about, giving orders for the removal of all on board the *Guerriere*, together with their effects.

A drunken officer, a mere petty official, crept up behind the young privateer, pistol in hand.

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Tempest suddenly turned, and with a sweep of his sword cut the pistol from the man's hand.

But he had struck deeper than he knew at that moment, for with the pistol went the fellow's hand as well.

The sword cut had severed his wrist.

There was no more opposition, and the last man was in the boat.

Only Tempest remained on board the once proud war vessel.

He searched every deck, he descended to the cockpit, and when satisfied that not a living creature remained on board he fired the ship in a dozen places.

Then he returned to the deck, to see that the boat was several fathoms away.

He called, but there was no response; evidently he had not been heard.

He signaled for help.

In a few moments the flames would reach the magazine.

Once more he called, but his voice was drowned in the noise of the crackling of the timbers and the roar of the flames.

He had secured an English flag and waved it, hoping to attract attention.

Just on the verge of success he seemed doomed to a terrible death.

He saw the boat stop. Had the crew seen him?

He shouted.

He waved the flag, but again he saw the oars dip the water, and he gave up all hope. With a cry of despair he flung himself into the water, and at the same moment a terrific explosion told him that the fire had reached the magazine, and that the *Guerriere* was destroyed.

Showers of timber and ropes, pieces of sails and ship's stores fell around him, and a dead body was hurled with frantic force against him, sickening him even more than the terrible strain and exhaustion.

[Pg 72]

With a cry to Heaven for help, he buffeted the waves in one last despairing effort.

CHAPTER XIII.

[Pg 73]

THE RETURN OF THE CONQUEROR.

"Where is that brave man who, at the risk of his life, rescued our wounded and our men?" asked Captain Dacres, as he paced the deck of the *Constitution* with Captain Hull.

"Is he not in the boat?" asked Hull.

"I see him not. I should feel that a great calamity had happened were he not to return," responded the British officer.

Captain Hull took the glass and looked at the approaching boat.

He knew Tempest so well that he was sure he would be the last to leave the sinking ship.

Tempest was not in the boat.

"Boat ahoy!" he shouted.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Is Mr. Tempest with you?"

The answer came back clear and distinct.

"No, sir; he fell overboard and we could not find him."

Captain Dacres seemed more affected than did the American commander.

"If you will order a boat lowered I will go with a crew to find him," he said, and there was a deep earnestness in his voice.

"Lower a boat!" ordered Captain Hull.

The davits were swung around and the boat lowered.

Dacres pleaded so earnestly that he was permitted to go with the small crew in search of the missing man.

It was a generous act, and the name of Dacres was just as much honored in Faneuil Hall, a few days later, as that of Cornwallis was execrated. [Pg 74]

The little boat skimmed over the waves toward the wreck, portions of which were still burning.

The hull of the *Guerriere* was floating about, a mass of flame, for, although a wreck, the stout vessel seemed too proud to give in.

Another explosion lifted the little boat out of the water, and sent its crew into the waves.

They speedily righted it and climbed in.

"See! there he is," cried Midshipman Eagle, pointing to a human head which was just discernible on the water.

"Pull for your lives, men!" shouted Dacres, and the men obeyed with a hearty good will.

"Steady there! Look to the starboard side, right! Now, then, boys, for a strong pull."

The little boat shot forward, and Dacres stretched forth his hand toward the floating object.

He caught Tempest's shoulder and held it in an iron grip until young Eagle saw him, and then he, too, reached over and helped to pull the young privateer into the boat.

Tempest had lost consciousness, but, as Dacres said, "while there is life there is hope."

"Pull hard, you lazy fellows," shouted the English captain. "A few minutes' delay, and one of the bravest men I have known will be dead."

The men bent their backs, and the oars dipped the water. Never had boat sped along so fast.

Eagle was rubbing Tempest's stomach and chest as he lay in the boat.

A loud cheer greeted the little crew as the boat was made fast alongside the *Constitution*, and when Lieutenant John Tempest of the *Lively Bee*, privateer, was lifted on deck, another cheer rent the air.

Middie Eagle reported to the captain, and his praise of Dacres was just and generous. [Pg 75]

"Dang me, captain!" he exclaimed in an off-hand manner, almost forgetting that he was addressing his superior officer, "dang me, but the English captain ordered the men about as though they were English, and the boys obeyed. Only think, a few hours ago we were trying to blow Dacres into kingdom come, and now we are obeying his commands."

Captain Hull grasped the Englishman's hand with a vigorous grip.

"Thank you, Captain Dacres. If all Englishmen were like you, there would be no need of war, and you would help us sing 'Yankee Doodle,' while we would join in singing 'God Save the King.'"

"That is how it ought to be, Captain Hull, and God grant it may come soon. We are one people, even if we do run on different routes."

"Ay, ay, there is room for us both, and some day we shall join hands as brothers."

While the two captains were talking, the men on deck were rolling Tempest over a barrel to eject the water.

The young man was strong and healthy, and was not fated to be drowned that time.

A good stiff glass of grog seemed to revive him wonderfully, and after a sleep he awoke just as the good ship *Constitution*, all decked out with bunting, was entering Boston harbor.

The bells of King's Chapel and the Old South Church were ringing out merrily, and crowds were gathered on the wharves.

For the display of bunting on the war ship betokened victory.

The city gave itself up to a joyousness almost unprecedented.

There was no time for much preparation, for the *Constitution* had been sighted only just outside the harbor, but the city did what it could. [Pg 76]

A signal was fired for the war ship to anchor until a boat could put off for the news.

At first Captain Hull was inclined to disregard it.

When war had been declared against England, the flags were all hoisted in the city, but at half mast; funeral dirges were played through the streets, and a meeting was held in Faneuil Hall to express mourning and humiliation.

Hull remembered this, and chafed at the thought that Boston was the nearest port.

But he remembered his country, and if Boston wanted to rejoice with the victors, it might be of advantage nationally.

So he ordered the salute to be answered, and he anchored until the boat could reach him.

The worthy mayor of the city came off in the boat, wearing all the trappings of his office.

He clambered on deck with the usual awkwardness of a landsman, and bowed very low as he saluted Captain Hull.

The naval officer was blunt and honest.

He spoke to the point, and never weighed his words long.

He hated obsequiousness, and hesitated whether to deal with the mayor courteously or brusquely.

But his sense of good manners conquered, and he greeted the citizen with the greatest courtesy.

"How long wilt thou wait outside the harbor?" asked the mayor.

"One hour. The tide forbids me further delay," was the answer.

The mayor descended to the boat, and was rowed back to the city.

[Pg 77]

Every few minutes he forgot his dignity and shouted to fishermen, lightermen and crafts of all kinds:

"Get out your flags, England has been beaten."

It was surprising how soon the ships in the harbor were decked with bunting.

Every flag was flying, and all sorts of things pressed into service.

One man tore up his red shirt to make a pennon; women gave up red and blue shawls; children contributed clothing; anything of bright color was utilized, and the scene was almost instantly transformed from the somberness of everyday life to the brilliancy of festival attire.

A great flotilla of gayly decorated boats went out to meet and surround the *Constitution*.

The flags of surrounding vessels were dipped in salutation as the war-scarred veteran ship made her way to the wharf.

The Boston Artillery Company, that organization whose deeds will never be forgotten, assembled on the dock and fired a national salute.

As the guns of the *Constitution* responded, Captain Hull remarked that he fired them with more pleasure than when another vessel was the target.

The people needed cheering, for all the news had been of disaster.

The British had gained victories on land.

The Canadian frontier, near Detroit, had been the scene of American reverses, and the people were beginning to despair.

The victory gained by Captain Hull raised the people into an elysium of excitement.

England had been empress of the seas, but on her own domain she had been beaten.

It was no use for any English apologist to declare the *Guerriere* to be an inferior ship, for she had been lauded to the skies, and her invulnerability praised by poet and statesman.

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When the British squadron left the English coast, the London *Naval Chronicle* took for its motto the distich:

"The winds and seas are Britain's domain,
And not a sail but by permission spreads."

And the *Guerriere* was praised in the most fulsome language.

The people of Boston were almost frantic with joy.

When Captain Hull landed he found the city decked with bunting, and the streets crowded with people.

In front of Faneuil Hall was a large white banner, on which the words had been hastily painted:

"The *Constitution*, a bunch of pine boards under a bit of striped bunting."

The paint was not dry; how could it be?

It ran over the white canvas; but, blurred as it was, it did its work.

With all the enthusiasm, Captain Hull was still the calm naval officer, not spoiled by praise or injured by flattery.

The mayor had given orders for a grand banquet to be prepared to be given the officers of the ship.

Six hundred sat down, and the first toast, after that of the President, was to the "Bunch of pine boards under a bit of striped bunting."

At the banquet, trying to escape unnoticed, was Captain Harry Vernon, of the *Lively Bee*, privateer.

He wondered whether the people would hail him with the same joy as they did Captain Hull, were he to return a victor.

But one saw him, and hastened to his side.

"Captain, how is the *Lively Bee*?" asked John Tempest.

"She sails to-morrow, Tempest."

[Pg 79]

"Is my place still vacant, for I want to sign."

"Your place should be in the regular navy."

"My place, captain, is with the *Lively Bee*."

There was no moving Tempest when he had made up his mind, and, to tell the truth, Vernon was right glad to have him back.

CHAPTER XIV.

[Pg 80]

THE LIVELY BEE'S PLUCK.

"Now coil up y'r nonsense
'Bout England's great navy,
And take in y'r slack
About oak-hearted tars."

Sang the crew of the *Lively Bee* as they worked hard getting ready to proceed to sea.

Mr. Scarron, who led the song, stopped suddenly, and with a Yankee exclamation, more forcible than polite, declared that he hoped he might go to Davy Jones' locker if his eyes didn't see "Lieutenant Tempest a-coming aboard the *Lively Bee*."

"Shiver my timbers, but you are right, sir," answered Mr. Watson, "and it is a right good day for the *Lively Bee*."

It was true.

In the captain's boat, seated by the side of Vernon, was John Tempest, who had declined the offers made by Captain Hull, and had thrown in his fate with that of the privateer.

A hearty ringing cheer from the crew welcomed the young man on board, and Scarron led off with the chorus, which was then so popular in the navy:

"Charge the can cheerily,
Send it round merrily;
Here's to our country and captains commanding."

"Thank you, boys! I am glad to be with you again," responded Tempest.

"But you've seen some good fighting, sir."

"Ay, ay, Scarron, and nearly got drowned," answered the young officer.

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"So I heard, sir, so I heard! That was a brave Englishman, that same captain."

"Brave, yes; but do you know, Scarron, he is now saying that the *Guerriere* was not in fighting trim."

"Ha, ha, ha! That is a good 'un. Why, when Rodgers' fleet was outside New York, didn't that same Dacres send word that the *Guerriere* could fight and sink the whole of Uncle Sam's navy?"

"So he did, Scarron, so he did. But the *Guerriere* is at the bottom of the sea now."

"Now, boys!" shouted the captain, "bid good-by to your sweethearts, for we're off to the Indies, and shall not return until we can tow some prizes into port, and then won't we make the dollars jingle? Let us have a rousing good chorus, Mr. Scarron, before we settle down to duty."

"Charge the can cheerily,
Send it round merrily;
Here's to our country and captains commanding."

Again and again did the crew of the *Lively Bee* repeat the chorus, and as they sang the anchor was weighed, the sails all set, and the privateer was skimming the water as proud and trim as ever.

"She is a taut little craft," said Vernon exultingly as he looked from deck to rigging.

"Indeed she is, captain, and she deserves to be successful."

"As she must be."

"Whither are you bound?" asked Tempest after a long pause.

"I was thinking of the Indies. What say you?"

"I think you are right. If we want prizes we must get away from the fleet. Any prize taken will be so much glory for the navy, so we must work alone. Now, if we can get to Jamaica, we shall be sure to find some rich prizes."

[Pg 82]

"Yes, all the way from a seventy-four to a big merchantman with coffee and sugar, worth——"

"Anywhere between thirty and a hundred thousand dollars."

"The risk is great."

"That is just what we like."

The two men were well agreed, and Tempest knew that the captain of the privateer was as

stanch as ever.

For many days the *Lively Bee* sailed over the waters without meeting with any hostile ship, and only taking a few small prizes.

One morning Lieutenant Tempest called out suddenly:

"All hands! make sail!"

Vernon was in his cabin, but heard the order and thought his watchful lieutenant saw a storm brewing. He hurried on deck and saw three war vessels in the distance, with their bows pointed in the direction of the *Lively Bee*.

"Who are they?"

"British, sir, without a doubt."

"Then we must run."

"I am afraid so, sir; we could not fight three frigates at once."

"No, no. Well, we are safe."

And he spoke rightly.

The *Lively Bee* was in no danger. With her fine lines and great speed of canvas, she could take advantage of every change of the wind, and pursue it to the uttermost.

The *Lively Bee* would fly with a puff of wind, while the big ships would scarcely move.

Before noon the sharp eyes of the first officer had made out the *Frolic* and the *Poietiers*, both heavily manned frigates. [Pg 83]

"It is no good tackling them," said the captain.

"No, but they may attack us."

"We will keep out of range."

"They are getting ready to lower the boats, and will board us."

"That is what I was afraid of," answered Captain Vernon.

"Get out the sweeps, boys, and pull with all your might."

Slowly, but with a quicker motion than was possible for the war ships, the *Lively Bee* got out of the range of the *Frolic* and *Poietiers*.

But there was the third Britisher, a brig, which Tempest had not taken much notice of.

Suddenly the young officer shouted to the captain:

"A merchantman!"

"Where away?"

"Being convoyed by the war ships."

It was true. The third vessel was a rich merchantman, which had been traveling under the protection of the men-of-war.

By some miscalculation she had drifted away from her escort, and was practically defenseless.

"If we can't take her we can make her valueless," said Tempest.

"Do you think so?"

"Let me try."

"The *Lively Bee* is at your service."

Lieutenant Tempest stepped forward.

"Clear away the long gun. We'll fire one shot, anyway."

The men were delighted, although it looked like a piece of impudence and folly.

"Load carefully. I will sight the gun myself," said Tempest. [Pg 84]

The men in the sweeps watched the action and awaited commands.

"Avast pulling!"

The oars rested. The *Lively Bee* drifted over the smooth water.

Tempest took very deliberate sights. Then, when satisfied, he stepped back from the breech.

"Fire!"

The shot went skimming through the air, and struck the merchantman in the waist.

The British warships heard the report, and seemed astounded at the sauciness of the little *Lively Bee*.

Such impudence could not be allowed to go unpunished.

But Tempest had no intention of being caught just then.

"Give way, boys, in those sweeps! Make all you can."

The crew did pull with all their might, and the *Lively Bee* seemed to fly over the water.

The *Frolic* fired a broadside at the privateer, but all the ammunition was wasted, as the *Lively Bee* was out of range.

Another shot was fired at the merchantman, and her mainmast went over with an awful crash.

"Now we must run for it, but it does seem a pity," said Captain Vernon.

"Do not be in too great a hurry."

The long gun was loaded again, and a third shot went raking the deck of the unfortunate vessel.

"Look out; we are in for squalls now!" shouted Vernon.

And almost within a pistol shot was the *Frolic's* long boat, with a crew of boarders.

"Beat to quarters!" shouted Vernon.

He was only just in time.

The daring Britishers clambered up the chains, they swung themselves into the rigging, and gained the deck of the *Lively Bee* with astonishing alertness. [Pg 85]

Headed by their officers, the crew of the privateer clutched their cutlasses with firm grip, and met the invaders.

It was a terrible fight.

Confined within the small space of the deck of the schooner, four dozen men were cutting and slashing at each other with savage fury.

Lieutenant Smith of the *Frolic* was wounded dangerously almost the minute he landed.

The deck was covered with blood.

So many men were killed that their bodies became a menace and a danger to the living, who fell over them and endangered their lives.

Tempest had struck terrifically at one of the British, but missed because the man stepped back, and the privateer's way was blocked by a dead body.

With wonderful celerity Tempest picked up the corpse and threw it overboard.

His example was instantly followed, and every dead body was given to the waves, and alas! some of the wounded met the same watery grave.

The fight did not last long.

The British were beaten so thoroughly that the few survivors begged for mercy.

It was only after the fight that Vernon discovered that the two men-of-war had escaped.

The merchantman drifted about helplessly, and was soon boarded by the crew of the privateer.

She proved to be a rich prize, and her captain could not help admiring the courage of the privateer who had taken his vessel away from two of the most noted war ships of the British navy.

It was not cowardice which caused the two vessels to escape. [Pg 86]

Just on the verge of the horizon they saw some American men-of-war, and they determined to give chase, leaving the merchantman a prize in the hands of the privateer.

The boarding crew had been deserted only when it was found that they stood no chance of capturing the *Lively Bee*.

Although the captain of the merchantman admired the privateer's courage, he was none the less grieved over the loss of his vessel and her rich cargo.

Five of the English boarders had been taken prisoners, and to these he went.

He made them liberal offers if they would but break loose and aid him in retaking his ship.

They were not averse to the project, if they saw the slightest chance of success.

Circumstances favored them.

Captain Vernon sent the prisoners on board the merchant prize, and placed Tempest in command.

The prisoner-captain was permitted his freedom on parole.

He gave his sacred word that he would not try to escape, and yet his heart was full of treachery, his brain occupied in hatching schemes of mutiny.

That night a heavy fog sprang up, and the two vessels dare not stay too close together.

That was the opportunity.

With cat-like tread the captain descended to the cabin, where the English sailors were imprisoned.

Lieutenant Tempest had grave suspicions about the man's honesty, and set himself to watch him.

From a point of vantage he heard every word, and formed his plans.

The prisoners were not placed in irons, and so only the slight barrier of a door stood between them and the freedom of the deck. [Pg 87]

The night was dark and the fog more dense.

It was at three bells, or half-past one in the morning, that the attempt was to be made. Tempest arranged his plans, and to all appearance everything went on as usual. A few minutes before the striking of three bells, three of the crew of the *Lively Bee* might have been seen creeping cautiously to the top of the companionway. Had any one been there to watch most minutely, he would have seen that each of the three was armed with pistol and marlin-spike. The bells struck, and a man felt his way cautiously up the companionway. He had only just slipped on the deck when a terrific blow from a marlin spike held by Tempest felled him to the deck. Another man crept up just as quietly to meet the same fate, while a third, thinking something was wrong, saved his life by hesitating. Tempest turned a flash from his lantern down the steps and saw the merchant captain handing a pistol to the hesitating sailor. A quick shot pierced the traitor's heart, and the sailor fell on his knees and begged for mercy. Thus ended the attempt to recapture the prize. In the morning the *Lively Bee* towed the merchant prize into port and placed her in the hands of a reliable agent for sale.

CHAPTER XV.

[Pg 88]

THE WASP'S STING.

"Like the fierce bird of Jove the Wasp darted forth,
And he the tale told, with amazement and wonder.
She hurled on the foe from her flame-spreading arms
The firebands of death and the red bolts of thunder."

Captain Jacob Jones was one of the proudest men in the American navy; his pride had good foundation, for he had served in the war with Tripoli and had been a captive among the barbarians of Northern Africa.

When he left the Delaware in command of the U. S. ship *Wasp*, to fight the British, he determined that his vessel should be as great a torment to the enemy as the insect after which she was named was to people on shore.

After a few days' cruising he fell in with the *Lively Bee*, and learned that the *Frolic* and *Poietiers* were cruising about in the waters nearby.

Not long after a bunch of sails was sighted at some distance.

The most careful examination failed to reveal the character of the strangers.

Jones was filled with curiosity.

He drew nearer the strange ships and reconnoitered.

The wind was blowing great guns, and a heavy sea was running.

Only the day before, the *Wasp* had lost her jibboom, with two sailors who were upon it.

The American seemed thoroughly at home in a storm.

His whole soul was in his work, and he cared not for wind or hurricane.

As he drew near, he saw that the strangers were merchantmen, under the protection of an English man-of-war. [Pg 89]

The merchantmen were well armed, some carrying as many as twelve guns.

Jones knew it would be suicidal folly to attack all at once, so he kept on a course parallel with the Englishman all that day and through the night.

Early the next morning the Britisher saw the American, and showed his teeth.

The Jackies were at work on both vessels, repairing the damages caused by the storm.

The *Wasp* ran up the Stars and Stripes.

It was a defiance.

But the Englishman answered by running a Spanish flag up the halliards.

Jones was not deceived, for he knew the frigate to be the *Frolic*, and the foe was worthy of his steel.

The ships drew near each other.

The sea was rough, the wind high, and both captains were confident that before an hour had passed one ship would have to strike its flag.

When less than sixty yards away, and both running on the starboard tack, the action commenced. Broad­sides were exchanged, the *Frolic* firing three to the *Wasp's* two.

Great clouds of spray washed over the bows; waves, each one seeming higher than the last, swept over the fore­castle, drenching the sailors as they stood at their quarters.

As the broadsides thundered forth the sailors cheered as they saw the damage done by the fire.

The vessels were tossed about like corks, now wallowing in the trough of the sea, now and again tossed high on the crest of some gigantic wave. [Pg 90]

It seemed marvelous that any damage could be done by the broadsides, for at one moment the guns would be pointed at the clouds, and the next submerged beneath the billowy waves.

The two boats were well matched, the gunners equally accurate.

Before five minutes had passed the main topmast of the *Wasp* was shot away and hung tangled in the rigging.

The topmen, commanded by skillful middies, tried in vain to clear away the wreck.

The Britishers cheered, and sang "God Save the King!"

The Americans, though getting the worst of the fight, shouted out the chorus of "Yankee Doodle."

But when the third broadside fired by the *Frolic* tore away the *Wasp's* gaff and main topgallant mast, it looked as though Jones would lose the battle, and have to strike his flag.

Not far away the *Lively Bee* was watching the encounter.

The privateer did not wish to interfere unless the *Wasp* was in actual danger, for Captain Vernon had his eyes on one of the merchantmen, which he hoped to secure as a prize.

To an onlooker it appeared that the British had received no damage.

The *Frolic* fired when on the crest of the wave and thus tore away its adversary's rigging, while the *Wasp* waited until in the trough of the sea.

The American's shot was aimed at the hull instead of the rigging.

While the fight was raging the two vessels got close together and fouled.

Yardarm laid to yardarm, and at that very moment the Americans poured in a terrific broadside. [Pg 91]

The guns were not half loaded, for so close were the vessels that in loading the rammers were shoved right against the side of the *Frolic*.

The men grew almost frantic with excitement.

They shouted and sang, they cursed the Britishers, and reviled the Union Jack.

The gunners of the *Frolic* had no time to return the last broadside, for their ship swung around so that her bow lay against the *Wasp's* quarter.

"Give 'em a volley!" cried Captain Jones as he just escaped losing his head from the swinging of the *Frolic's* bowsprit over the quarterdeck.

Not only one, but a second volley was fired, and the deck of the enemy seemed to be swept clean.

Then the Americans shouted and cheered.

"Let us board her!" they cried.

The order was given, and the men swarmed aboard.

It was by no means a bloodless encounter, for the contestants fought like demons, and many a brave sailor breathed his last on that heaving deck.

But the Britishers could not stem the onrush of Americans, and before long the Union Jack was struck and the *Frolic* captured.

Hardly had a prize crew in charge of Lieutenant Biddle been placed aboard of her, when the man on the lookout sang out:

"The *Poietiers* is close at hand, and she is heavily armed."

And even as he spoke the heavy boom of a gun was heard.

The *Poietiers* had signaled the *Wasp* to lay to.

The *Poietiers* carried seventy-four guns, and was a formidable enemy. [Pg 92]

Her great hull seemed to cast a shadow over the water, and the jubilation of the Americans was hushed in the solemnity of the coming contest.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MERCHANT CAPTAIN'S CARGO.

"In with your canvas high,
We shall want no sail to fly!"

Topsail, foresail, spanker and jib—
With the heart of oak in the oaken rib—
Shall serve us to win or die."

Lieutenant Biddle saw the English war vessel bearing down upon the *Frolic*.

He had hoped to take her into port, but his hopes were rudely shattered by the appearance of the English frigate.

For he recognized her as the *Poietiers*, a British seventy-four gun ship.

To fight was impossible, and to escape seemed equally so.

Both the *Frolic's* masts had gone by the board within a few minutes after the flag was struck.

At the very moment the man in the crow's-nest sighted the *Poietiers*, the prize crew was working hard to clear from her decks the dead bodies, wreckage, and tangled mass of rigging, which made navigation impossible.

The sea was rough, the wind heavy.

The *Frolic* was tossed about in the trough of the sea, a helpless mass.

The lieutenant looked over the billowy waters to see if any help was at hand.

The *Wasp* had seen the *Poietiers* almost as soon as she had been sighted by the *Frolic*.

Captain Jones examined his guns, and found that he had no chance to fight successfully with the new enemy.

Even had the *Wasp* been fresh and ready for battle, the chances would have been slight, for the British frigate was in every way the superior of the American sloop. [Pg 94]

Jones sighed as he ordered the sails to be set for retreat.

It was better to run away than fight under such disadvantages.

But the sails, when shaken out, were found to have been cut to pieces by the *Frolic's* shot.

"Beat to quarters!" shouted the captain.

The men understood that the *Wasp* would sting as long as possible.

"Clear the deck for action!"

The Stars and Stripes was run up the halliards, and the crew gave a hearty and lusty cheer, though they knew their defeat and death were near.

The *Poietiers* sailed down upon the almost helpless *Wasp*, and fired a broadside.

Captain Jones answered with another broadside. It was plucky, and the Britishers were surprised.

They thought bulldog courage was only found under the Union Jack.

The plucky commander of the *Wasp* tried hard to get close to the *Poietiers*, so that he might board her.

He had resolved that it would be better for every one of his men to die fighting than that they should be taken prisoners.

But fate was against him.

The Britishers saw his object, and took every means to prevent him achieving it.

Broadside followed broadside in rapid succession, and further resistance was useless.

The triumph of the *Wasp* was short-lived, but the *Poietiers* did not feel much elated over its victory, for the *Wasp* had made a gallant fight. [Pg 95]

The *Lively Bee* had watched the fight, unable to render any effective assistance.

Captain Vernon had seen the merchantman, and as he was cruising for revenue, as well as patriotism, he coveted the rich prize.

"What do you make of her?" asked Vernon, as he watched Tempest examine the brig.

"She is a rich prize, but armed."

"You think so?"

"Yes, and there are at least a dozen fighting men in the crew."

"Can you see her name?"

"I—wait a moment—yes, she is the *Caroline*, of Bristol."

"The *Caroline*, of Bristol? Are you sure?"

"Yes, quite so. Why?"

"She is worth two hundred thousand dollars to us. I know her cargo well. We must capture her."

"Can we?"

"We must. The *Frolic* is useless; the *Poietiers* has all she can do to look after her prisoners. Our opportunity will come."

"Captain, don't think me weak, but my heart beats most violently when I look at that brig; why, I

know not."

"It is not weakness. You are as brave as a lion, Tempest; I know the feeling. The risk is great, the odds against us, but I have a presentiment we shall win."

"God grant it."

Soon all was activity on board the *Lively Bee*.

Every preparation was made, but so secretly that not even the strongest glass could discern much out of the ordinary going on.

To the merchant captain the *Lively Bee* appeared to be a schooner waiting about for any chance wreckage; or merely with a desire to see the naval fight; for, as we know, the privateer had a most innocent look. [Pg 96]

"One broadside from the *Poietiers* will sink us," remarked Tempest.

"Certainly, therefore I would not risk a fight until night," answered Vernon.

Leaving the privateer, let us look at the merchantman, whose fate was trembling in the balance.

As Vernon had said, the *Caroline* was one of the richest prizes in American waters.

She was a stanch, trim brig, and as beautiful as any picture.

In fact, so clean was her hull, so bright her deck, the rigging was so new and perfect, that it was really hard to believe she had buffeted the waves or encountered any storms.

The captain, knowing the value of his cargo, had induced the *Poietiers* to give him three small cannon and half a dozen men.

"We may get parted, and then—I don't want to feel I can make no resistance," he pleaded; and his plea was graciously acknowledged.

But the *Caroline* carried a cargo that was not entered on the manifest.

The captain had indulged in a little speculation of his own, and, in his eyes, that one little bit of cargo, though its weight could not have been more than a hundred and twenty pounds, was more valuable than all the merchandise put together.

As night approached, the *Poietiers* signaled the *Caroline* to keep close, or no protection could be afforded.

Captain Carter of the good ship *Caroline* had been cogitating for an hour or two as to whether he should not try to make his trip alone. [Pg 97]

He wanted to reach Jamaica, and he had been already so much delayed that he was chafing at his slow progress.

So when the *Poietiers* ordered him to keep close, and perhaps even follow the war ship for a few days longer, Carter put his thumb to his nose and extended his fingers in a most vulgar manner.

But then, the captain of the *Caroline* was not a refined man.

He was young, and was a member of a good family, but he had always been a black sheep, and his own friends wondered that he had not turned pirate instead of merchant skipper.

He was possessed of a very hot and ungovernable temper, but would go to the extreme of kindness to those he had bullied and ill-used when his temper subsided.

The captain of the *Poietiers* did not see the contemptuous action of his merchant brother, and so signaled again.

This time the flags were run up in reply:

"All right."

It so happened that, dark as the night was naturally, it was made worse and more unpleasant by a thick, damp fog.

This was just what the *Lively Bee* wanted, but it reminded Captain Carter so much of England that he cursed the fog, and muttered some imprecation on the weather and things in general.

Then he felt easier.

He descended to his cabin, but did not stay there long.

He wanted to see that his own special cargo was safe, and for half an hour he was engaged in that occupation.

He was like a raving lunatic when he resought his own cabin. [Pg 98]

His cargo was human.

And a pretty piece of humanity it was.

With skin as pure as alabaster, with eyes brighter than diamonds, and lips whose color would shame the rubies, the girl stood defiantly in the center of the cabin.

She was a prisoner.

Carter had never seen so beautiful a woman before, or at least had never seen one whose charms had so smitten his heart.

He had met her on land, and at once laid siege to her affections.

She was ladylike in her refusal of his affections; he was persistent.

She had at last to threaten him with the vengeance of her family if he did not leave her in peace.

He was exasperated.

Desperation made him determine to have her, by fair means or foul.

When he saw she was firm in her refusal to listen to him, he awaited his opportunity, and by means of a bribe induced two fellows to abduct her and take her on board his vessel.

She had been kept a prisoner for nearly a month, and Carter wanted to hasten to Jamaica, where he could find some clergyman who would perform the ceremony of marriage, even though the bride was opposed.

The young lady had been particularly strong in her language on the night of the fog.

"Captain Carter, I have told you I will never be your wife. Touch me, dare to come within a yard of me, and I will kill you as I would a snake. Force me to the altar, and, Heaven be my witness, I will kill myself before the sacred shrine!"

[Pg 99]

There was so much earnestness in her manner that Carter recoiled, muttering curses on her and womankind in general.

CHAPTER XVII.

[Pg 100]

A RICH PRIZE.

"Under the night's dark-blue,
Steering steady and true,
The *Lively Bee* went through.
And the starry ensign leaped above,
Round which the wind, like a fluttering dove,
Cooed low."

Captain Carter was mad. He had coveted the fair woman and had stained his soul with crime's dark flood to abduct her from her home and to his ship, and had hoped that, when she saw how hopeless was her chance of escape, she would forget her antipathy and consent to be his wife.

He had tried every form of persuasion, had even promised to leave the sea and settle on land, and as an extra inducement had offered to abjure his country and become an American citizen.

But only the more determined was the fair one to withstand his wooing.

All this passed in review across his mind as he paced his cabin uneasily.

He was wretched. Perhaps the constant blowing of the fog horn added to his wretchedness, for there is nothing more melancholy than the sound made by the human breath when it passes through one of those instruments of torture known as a fog horn.

"What now?" he asked angrily as the officer in charge entered the captain's cabin.

"A boat is coming alongside, sir."

"A boat? Then it must be from the *Poietiers*."

"Ay, ay, sir, doubtless it is, unless it be from some Yankee——"

[Pg 101]

An angry scowl on the captain's face led his officer to believe a hasty exit would be advisable.

Captain Carter was soon on deck.

The fog lay over the water with a darkness which could almost be felt.

Only the slightest wind stirred the waves, and the captain almost laughed at the thought of any enemy approaching.

He listened, but no sound smote upon his ear.

"I hear no boat, Gordon," he said. "Yet there is something like the sound of oars, though there is no noise of the rowlocks."

Gordon placed his partly closed hand before his mouth, trumpet-fashion, and whispered the one word:

"Sweeps!"

Carter laughed harshly.

It was not a good sign when he indulged in a laugh, and Gordon knew it.

"What do you mean by sweeps?" he asked.

"Why, cap'n, as to that, I saw a Yankee schooner lying about all day a-watching us."

"You did? So did I. But you don't think any Yankee would venture to touch us in the dark, and the *Poietiers* so near?"

"As to that, cap'n, them Yanks can see in a fog, or the dark, as well as in daylight, but I'm blessed

if there isn't a boat nearby."

Carter put his hands to his lips, and in a voice louder than any fog horn, cried:

"Boat ahoy! where are you?"

There was a slight cessation of the sound of oars, but no further notice was taken.

And again, with the fullest force of his lungs, the captain shouted:

"Boat ahoy! where are you going?"

An indistinct voice replied:

"What ship hails? Ahoy there!"

"Give me your name," cried Carter, "or I'll fire!"

A long laugh was distinctly heard by those on the deck of the *Caroline*, followed by the question:

"What ship hails?"

"The *Caroline*, of Bristol," answered the captain. "Your name?"

"The *Lively Bee*, privateer!" was the daring answer.

The merchant captain saw now that he was in danger.

His coolness forsook him, and he cursed his officers as though they were to blame.

"On deck, all of you!" he shouted.

"Make ready to repel boarders!"

Gordon took up the cry and repeated it, in tones loud and stentorian, down the hatchway, adding various expletives by way of emphasis.

The men came hurrying up the ladders, all excited and angry at being disturbed.

They heard the regular dip of the oars, but the fog was too dense for the *Lively Bee* to be seen.

The crew of the *Caroline*, armed with pistols and cutlasses, awaited the enemy.

The cannon were of little or no use, for it was only a waste of effort to fire at random, and the *Lively Bee* was hidden from view.

Captain Vernon knew that the *Poietiers* was very close, and so the less noise made the better.

He had said: "Use no pistols if you can help." And the men answered in their cheery way: "Ay, ay, sir!"

When the privateer was within a few yards of the English brig her tall spars were for the first time visible.

A fusillade of pistol shots rattled through the rigging, but did no serious damage.

The privateersmen crouched below the bulwarks of their taut little schooner until her bow passed over the waist of the brig.

Then, with a ringing cheer, these daring men sprang up and made a simultaneous leap into the *Caroline's* rigging.

They swarmed to her deck like a crowd of wasps, bent on stinging their victims to death.

Cutlasses were vigorously used.

The sharp clang of steel was drowned at times by the groans of the wounded, the quick crack of the pistols only seemed like an accompaniment to the clashing of the cutlasses.

The Englishmen were driven back, not by weight of numbers, but partly because they were taken unawares, and most of them aroused from slumber.

But in prowess the crew of the privateer had also the advantage.

They were born fighters, and every blow was given with intent to kill.

Captain Carter had fought furiously, but had been wounded fatally by a cutlass blow from John Tempest.

Nearly all the crew of the *Caroline* lay on the deck, with wounds great or small.

It was a dismal sight, as the privateersmen moved around with lanterns looking at the faces of the dead and dying.

"Can there be any one below?" asked Tempest.

"I thought I heard a cry, sir," answered Scarron.

"Ay, a woman's cry."

"Not likely that same, sir, asking your pardon for being so bold, but women don't go to sea at times like these."

"We must search the ship and report."

"Ay, ay, sir; it is a great prize we have made."

"Can we get it to port, think you?"

"That's what I'd like to know, sir; it will be hard work, for she must be a hundred and fifty ton

heavier than the *Lively Bee*."

"Double that, Scarron."

Mr. Tempest took a lantern and went down the companionway.

The captain's cabin was untenanted; but on the other side of the gangway was another cabin, the door of which was locked.

"Is any one in there?" shouted the young officer, but received no answer.

"Open the door!" he shouted again, but still his command was unheeded.

"Mr. Scarron, I feel sure there is some one in that room. Can you break open the door?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Mr. Scarron's foot was sent against the door with such force that the panels were splintered, and even the frame split asunder.

Tempest held up the lantern to look around the little cabin.

"Great Heaven! A woman," he exclaimed.

And there, huddled upon the floor insensible, lay a female form.

"Captain's wife!" muttered Scarron. "Poor woman, she does not know she is a widow."

"She is too young to be his wife," said Tempest. "Come, help me move her."

"Perhaps she is dead."

"No, no, sir; I saw her hand move, and blow me, sir, but she has a pretty hand; if only her face ___"

"Stop that, Scarron; show me a light here. This is no time for talk like that. We have all our work before us, and but little time to do it." [Pg 105]

While Mr. Scarron held the lantern, Lieutenant Tempest raised the prostrate girl in his arms.

The light streamed across her face, and Tempest almost dropped his burden.

A shriek-like exclamation burst from him.

"Bertha!"

He raised her still more, so that he could look closer into her features.

"My God, am I dreaming?" he exclaimed, and then, seeing Scarron's surprised face, he continued:

"This lady is my betrothed; but how she came here I cannot say."

Scarron turned his head away, and muttered to himself:

"Poor fellow! He has been deceived. Why will men trust woman? She was false, as they all are."

Although Tempest recognized his betrothed, and his heart naturally wished for her recovery, he dare not stay.

She had swooned, and nature would work her recovery.

He would not neglect his duty, and there was much to be done, or the rich prize would be taken from them.

He returned to the *Lively Bee*, and after converse with the captain it was resolved to run back to the nearest port and take in the *Caroline*.

Already the fog was lifting, and the first rays of dawn breaking through the night clouds.

The *Caroline* and *Lively Bee* must be many miles away before morning came.

The crew was a small one, but to Tempest's great joy, he found among the sailors of the *Caroline* five Americans who had been impressed, and who were delighted at the thought of sailing under the starry flag.

The sails were set, and though the risk of running landward in such a fog was great, the two vessels attempted it, and when the sun made its morning obeisance to nature, and the beautiful rays of jeweled fire illumined the ocean, Captain Vernon congratulated Tempest on his capture, and rejoiced to think that the *Poietiers* was not in sight. [Pg 106]

CHAPTER XVIII.

[Pg 107]

A STRANGE SAIL.

"And there, while thread shall hang to thread,
Oh, let our ensign fly!
The noblest constellation set
Against our northern sky."

The *Caroline* was one of the best ships in the British merchant service.

She was as strongly built as a man-of-war, and in fact could easily be transformed into a vessel of war.

The Union Jack of England still floated from her peak, and Tempest had deemed it prudent not to lower it until out of sight of the British squadron.

But now that the sun was shining, and no war ship appeared above the horizon, he changed his mind.

"Haul down that flag, boys!" he shouted, and a dozen willing hands were at the halliards.

The flag seemed endowed with life or reason.

For one moment it floated proudly and, as it seemed, defiantly, then fell limp and dejected to the rope, never once fluttering or showing sensibility to the breeze.

It lay on the deck, a prisoner of war, and in its place there gradually arose that ensign of the free—the Stars and Stripes.

The men cheered the rising flag, and Tempest, who was in command of the *Caroline*, addressed the men most eloquently:

"The flag of our nation is committed to your care," he said. "Never let it be lowered by the hands of slaves or of enemies. Let it float there, as long as one arm can hold a cutlass to defend it."

And all the crew responded by giving a hearty cheer.

[Pg 108]

Tempest repaired to the cabin wherein he had left Bertha Decatur.

She had aroused from her swoon, only to fall into a deep slumber again.

She knew not whether the whole events of the night had been but a dream, for her brain was confused.

She thought of the noise on deck, the shuffling of feet, the clashing of steel, the muttered curses, the cries of the wounded, and then all had become hushed. She had fainted.

Was it a dream, or was it a terrible reality? If so, what would be her fate?

She knew that Captain Carter would use no violence other than forcing her to be his wife, and that she could effectually resist by death.

And she was resolved to die rather than submit to such a life.

Tempest knocked at the cabin door, which he had roughly boarded up after Scarron's foot had done its work so effectually.

But there was no response, and a message that Captain Vernon was coming on board caused him to hasten to the deck.

"The shock of your presence might be too much for her," said Vernon. "Let me prepare Miss Decatur."

The captain of the *Lively Bee* had only seen Bertha once, and he did not think she would recognize him.

He knocked at the cabin door, and she bade him enter.

She started as she saw a stranger.

"Well, sir?"

"Miss Decatur, I am a stranger to you, but I would like permission to say a few words to you."

"Proceed, sir; only, if you are here to plead his cause, your words will be in vain."

"Whose cause?"

[Pg 109]

There was a disdainful curve of the beauty's lips as Vernon asked the question.

"Sir! there surely is no need of such assumed ignorance. I am a prisoner——"

"A prisoner—yes, but your captors mean you well."

Vernon misunderstood her meaning.

She smiled.

"Wish me well—ay, perhaps so. The bird taken from the wild freedom of the forest is cared for in its gilded cage, but it prefers freedom, even with all its dangers."

"You are free, Miss Decatur—free as any one under our flag can be."

"Under your flag, sir—yes! But your flag is one which covers traitors and oppressors. Its every fold is dyed in the blood of true patriots who have fought against it."

"You do not know——" interrupted Vernon.

"Do I not? Have I not a brother who maimed himself for life rather than fight under your flag?"

"You are wrong. The Stars and Stripes float from the peak of this ship."

"Since when?" she asked, contemptuously, and, before he could answer: "Since when have you learned to lie and cheat for your captain's sake?"

"I am captain."

Bertha turned her back on the captain for a moment. She was trying to quell the anger rising in her breast, for she fully believed that Vernon had been sent as an emissary from Carter.

"I have already given my answer to the captain," she said. "Now leave me to my misery."

"What is the captain's name?" asked Vernon.

"Carter; if you insist on your catechetical insults."

"He is dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes; do you not know that this ship was captured by the Americans, and is now on her way to the nearest port?" [Pg 110]

"Are you speaking the truth?"

"As Heaven is my judge! Come on deck and you will see the Stars and Stripes floating from the peak."

"If what you say is true, who are you?"

"I am Harry Vernon of the *Lively Bee*, privateer, and this vessel is under the command of my first officer——"

"Oh!"

"You have met him before. He knows your brother well."

"Does he?"

Bertha was still incredulous, and Vernon was more than ever puzzled what to do with her.

She saw that he hesitated, and all her doubts returned.

"When shall we reach port?" she asked.

"Within twenty hours, if the winds are favorable."

"And how long would it take to reach Jamaica?"

"Forty-eight hours, or even more."

"Thank you."

"Miss Decatur, I see you do not trust me. I will send for one who may perhaps have more influence with you than I have."

"If you do I shall kill myself," she exclaimed angrily.

"Shall you? We shall see."

He hastily wrote a line on a slip of paper and gave it to a deckhand to deliver.

"I have sent for him," said Vernon.

"He will not see me alive."

Vernon saw she was desperate, and to prevent her carrying out her threat he seized her hands.

"Unhand me! I am your prisoner, but I am a woman. Let me die, for death would be better than a life such as he proposes."

"Don't be stupid, Miss Decatur, the man I sent for is John Tempest——"

"It is false!"

But as she uttered the words Tempest entered the cabin.

"Bertha!"

"John! What does it all mean?"

Tempest had heard the last words uttered by Bertha, and he was trembling violently.

"Do you hate me so much?" he asked.

"Hate you? No, I spoke of Captain Carter——"

"Of this ship?"

"Yes."

"What was he to you?"

"How can you ask? Do you not know that he visited my home and professed to love me—that when I told him I was engaged to another he declared I should never marry any one but himself? My brother ordered him to leave the house, and then, late that night, two men overtook me as I was returning home; they gagged me and carried me to a boat, from which I was taken to this ship, which was in the offing."

"I thank Heaven I killed that captain! My friend, here, is captain of the *Lively Bee*, privateer, and he has captured this vessel——"

"No, no, Tempest. I did nothing of the kind. You made the capture, for you led the assault, and you ran up the Stars and Stripes."

"Let me see it," said Bertha, still almost doubting.

She walked up the companionway and stood on the deck, the first time in nearly a month.

When her eyes looked upward and saw the American flag proudly floating from the mast, she fell on her knees, and in a loud voice thanked Heaven for her deliverance.

But her strength was overtaxed, and she fell back on the deck in a fainting condition.

Tenderly Tempest carried her below and placed her on the cabin lounge.

[Pg 112]

How he wished that there had been another woman on board to attend to her wants; but wishes would not bring one, and so he had to enact the *rôle* of nurse.

Mr. Scarron found three guns on board the *Caroline*, but very little ammunition.

"Ask Captain Vernon to give you a few charges," said Tempest, "for we may have to defend ourselves before we reach port. And tell Captain Vernon that I shall not desert the *Caroline* while there is the least chance of saving her."

The day wore on apace, and all had good hopes that by the morrow's morn an American port would be entered.

But the sun was just setting, its golden rays were dancing on the green waters of the Atlantic, when Mr. Scarron rushed unceremoniously into the cabin where Tempest sat holding Bertha's hand in his own, and praying for her return to consciousness.

"A sail! A strange sail, sir, and I believe she flies the British flag. If so, she is armed. Come on deck, Mr. Tempest, for, blow me, but I think we are in for a fight!"

The words fell so fast from Mr. Scarron's lips that he was scarcely distinct, but Tempest's face paled, not with fear for himself, but a precious life was now at stake, and he feared everything for her sake.

Scarron reached the deck in a couple of bounds, and again shouted:

"We are signaled to lay to, sir. What shall we do?"

CHAPTER XIX.

[Pg 113]

BOB, THE POWDER-MONKEY.

"Their flag is but a rag,
Ours is the true one;
Up with the Stars and Stripes!
Down with the old one!"

Tempest tore himself away from the side of Bertha and leaped on deck.

He saw a sloop of war, flying the English ensign, between the *Caroline* and the shore.

Quickly exchanging signals with the *Lively Bee*, a course of action was agreed upon.

They must put out to sea.

The flight was attended with danger, for they might fall in with larger war ships; the only chance they had was to escape in the darkness of night.

"Stand by to get under way!" shouted John Tempest. "The wind is rising, and methinks the *Caroline* can show her heels as well as the *Lively Bee*."

The order was obeyed with alacrity, for the men loved a fight, even though the odds were against them, and they believed ere morning dawned they would smell powder.

The breeze ruffled the surface of the water around the *Caroline*, breaking into myriads of little waves, which leaped and danced and sparkled as the last rays of the sun fell upon the ocean.

The sloop-of-war had signaled the *Caroline* and *Lively Bee* to lay to, but no notice was taken.

Then the Britisher fired a gun, and Tempest ordered the starry ensign to be dipped three times by way of salute.

It was galling to the Englishman, and our young Yankee intended it should be.

[Pg 114]

The sails were spread to the breeze; the jib which extended along the bowsprit was hoisted, and the good ship *Caroline*, bending low before the wind, moved along with increasing velocity.

The sloop gained upon them.

"Set the gaff-topsails, and hoist away the spencer!" shouted Tempest, and the men answered with a ready obedience.

The spencer, with three small, triangular sails stretched from the topmast, were now spread to the wind, giving additional speed to the vessel.

Straining through every joint, the *Caroline* parted the green waves before her, flinging the foam in feathery showers around her bows.

The sloop was gaining even then, and Tempest saw that they were in for a fight, unless darkness came on suddenly.

He heard his name called, and knew that Bertha was awake.

He hastened down the companionway.

"What was that report, John?" she asked.

"A gun was fired."

"At this ship?"

"No, it was a signal."

"What for?"

"Bertha, it is as well that you should know. We are putting out to sea."

"Then you deceived me?"

"No, Bertha; but a man-of-war is chasing us."

"And we shall all be killed."

"I hope not. We shall have to fight."

"Not with me on board?" she asked, with a little frightened scream.

"Seeing, my dear Bertha, that if you get off you will be drowned, I am afraid you will have to endure the annoyance." [Pg 115]

"But why go out to sea? Have I not had enough sea?"

"My dear Bertha——"

"Don't dear Bertha me!" and the little beauty stamped her foot. "You ought to get to land as quickly as you can, and not fly into greater danger."

The heavy boom of a gun startled her.

"Take me back to America, won't you, Mr. Tempest?"

"I would like to; but there is some fighting before us, I am afraid."

He went on deck, not waiting to hear what new objection she would raise, or fresh obstacle interpose.

To his great joy he found that there was a likelihood of a very dark night, and neither British nor American would care about a night engagement at sea.

"Shall we reply, sir?" asked Scarron.

"No; we cannot reach the sloop, and we cannot afford to waste powder and shot."

"I found twenty kegs of powder in the hold, sir."

"You did? That is great!"

"So I thought, sir, and there are more shots than powder on the *Lively Bee*, and we have a lot of nails on board."

"I see; if you get at close quarters you would fire nails?"

"Why not, sir? They would kill a man just as well as lead."

"You are right, but I don't want to fight at all if I can help it."

"I understand, sir. I guess we shan't do much until morning."

"Have everything in readiness."

"Yes, sir."

The darkness increased so rapidly that it was impossible to do any effective fighting, and as the *Lively Bee* and *Caroline* would have to contend against a well-equipped man-of-war, it seemed the height of imprudence to attempt a surprise. [Pg 116]

A boat was lowered from the *Caroline*, but no sooner did it strike the water than a gun was fired from the English vessel.

This was warning so significant that the boat did not proceed on its trip, and yet Tempest wanted to communicate with the *Lively Bee*.

"I tell you, sir, only a good swimmer could reach the privateer safely," said Scarron.

"But who could swim that distance?" asked Tempest.

"There is Bob, the powder-monkey."

"Do you think——"

"That he would go? Why, sir, Bob would let his head be used as a rammer for a cannon if he thought he could serve the Republic."

"Send him to me."

"Ay, ay, sir."

A few minutes and a boy some fifteen years of age stood before Lieutenant Tempest.

"Bob, are you a good swimmer?" asked the officer.

Bob's face lighted up with a smile, a smile which quickly developed into a grin, which threatened to extend from ear to ear.

He did not answer, but pulled his forelock.

Bob had no other name, for he was a foundling. One night Scarron had discovered a wee might of humanity on the doorstep of a deserted house in New York.

He picked up the child, told the constables of his find, and they very good-naturedly declared that "those who find should keep," so Scarron kept the boy, called him Bob, and educated him in all the learning of the gutter.

Bob profited so well that before he was ten years old he could swear like a trooper, fight like a pugilist, climb a flagpole with the smartest, swim like a fish, and do a very great many other physical feats. [Pg 117]

He could not read. He had never tried to write except in his own peculiar manner, which no one else could understand.

His moral faculties were not overbright, but he believed in some power; he had been taught that unless he told the truth and acted honestly, God would take him to some dungeon where the light of day never entered.

He was as faithful as any dog, and had an intense love for Scarron, and secondarily for the starry banner, which he fancied had some magic power for good.

Bob was not handsome; in fact, it would be very difficult to find a plainer, or, to use very expressive language, uglier, boy in a week's search.

Tempest looked at him, and asked again:

"Can you swim a mile?"

Had the officer said a knot, or so many fathoms, he would have understood, but a mile was very vague.

"Is it a mile from York to Staten Island?" asked Bob.

"Yes, over five miles."

"Then I can do it, for I've swum to the island and back without stopping."

"Bob, listen to me. I want to send a message to the *Lively Bee*; I dare not send a boat, for the English gunners would sink it. Could you carry it to Captain Vernon?"

"Is it heavy?"

"What?"

"The thing you want me to carry."

Tempest laughed.

"It is a letter."

"Yah, I can do it."

"I wish you would."

"Are we going to fight in the morning?" [Pg 118]

"Perhaps so. I'd like to know how many guns that vessel has."

Tempest spoke to himself, and had no idea that Bob heard him.

The letter to Vernon was written and placed in a well-corked bottle to prevent its destruction.

This was tied around Bob's waist, and the boy lowered himself noiselessly into the water.

The *Lively Bee* was about half a mile from the *Caroline*, and Bob was not many minutes in covering the distance, for he was an expert swimmer.

The letter was read, and an answer prepared and placed in the bottle.

Once more Bob was in the water, but not swimming.

He lay on his back and floated, for he wanted to think.

Thinking, with him, was a difficult operation and required considerable scratching of his head.

To do this in the water was not the easiest thing, and Bob took longer than usual to think.

"He'd like to know how many guns that skunk has, would he? Well, I guess I can find out."

Bob arrived at this conclusion after five minutes' thought.

The Britisher was distant a mile, the three vessels forming a triangle.

Bob swam to the war ship, and waited to make sure he was not discovered.

He caught hold of the chains and climbed up until he could see the deck.

So silently did he move that not one of the men on deck heard him.

He crawled along in the shadows, waited in hiding until the watch passed, and then moved on again.

Bob knew more about a man-of-war than many a commodore, and his steps were guided by his [Pg 119]

instinctive knowledge.

He stood examining a gun which was longer than any he had ever seen, and his curiosity betrayed him.

One of the officers of the watch saw him.

Bob knew it, but was not afraid.

He turned quickly and seized the astonished officer by the throat.

The fingers were like iron. They closed tightly on the Englishman's throat, preventing him from crying out.

Two minutes and the officer was dead. Bob knew that by his weight. Letting the man down gently, he pulled a tarpaulin over him, and resumed his search as calmly as though nothing had disturbed him.

He was lowering himself into the water when he accidentally saw the English flag still flying at the stern.

"That ain't the right flag," he muttered, as he looked at the Union Jack. "Blow me crazy, but if I'd got the Stars and Stripes I'd put it there. Anyhow, that thing shan't stay."

Bob could move about with the silence of a mouse. He was barefooted, and so no footfall was heard.

Quietly he drew the halliards and lowered the flag.

The darkness aided him, or he would have failed.

He unfastened the flag and wound it around his body.

A piece of the halliard was cut off to tie the flag securely.

Bob was not yet satisfied.

He knew the direction of the captain's cabin, and he must pay his respects.

Placing his thumb to his nose, he extended his fingers and muttered:

"That's for you, cap'n."

One of the seamen was approaching, and Bob must escape.

He clambered over the bulwarks and reached for the chains, but missed them.

[Pg 120]

He fell into the water with a loud splash.

"Man overboard!"

The cry was taken up by the deck watch.

Lanterns were lowered over the side, and an object could be seen floating on the water a few yards away.

"Fire!"

Three muskets were leveled at the swimmer, but Bob was not going to be in the track of the shot.

He dived, and when he arose again to the surface he was a good many points to the east, and was out of range of their vision.

A new sensation diverted the attention of the crew.

"Murder!" shouted one of the watch, as he stumbled over the dead body of the murdered officer.

The crew gathered around.

Captain Scott looked at the lieutenant's body and asked:

"Who has done it?"

"I found him there, sir," answered the man.

"I'll find out who has done this, and he shall pay for it. Beat to quarters and let the roll be called."

The drums were beaten, and the men tumbled out of their hammocks, expecting to be called upon to fight.

The middies called the rolls, and every man answered.

When this was reported to the captain, he glared with savage wrath.

"Who, then, was that who leaped overboard?"

The mystery was greater than ever. Every man on board believed the lieutenant to have been murdered by one of the crew, who, to save himself from death by hanging, had trusted himself to the waves, hoping to reach one of the American vessels and be received as a deserter.

"What now, fellow?" roared the captain, as one of the deck watch spoke excitedly to his officer.

"Captain, this man tells me," said the middy, "that the flag has been lowered and the halliards cut." [Pg 121]

"Death and fury! I'll give every man of the night watch a dozen lashes at the triangle in the morning. Zounds! who could have lowered our flag?"

"Find out, sir!" addressing the chief officer, "or I'll report you as well. Fury! Has some Yankee

boarded the *Monarch*, and none know of it?"

Captain Scott, of his majesty's sloop-of-war *Monarch*, was the angriest man in those waters that night.

CHAPTER XX.

[Pg 122]

THE MONARCH'S DOOM.

"He has failed, Scarron."

Lieutenant Tempest had repeated that assertion several times during the two hours that Bob was away.

"I fear so, and yet I never knew Bob to fail afore."

"But he has been gone so long."

"I guess he'll have a good showing when he does come. Hello! what's that?"

Going to the bulwark, Scarron looked over, and in a low voice uttered the nautical expression:

"Ahoy, there!"

Back came the answer:

"Toss me a rope."

"It is Bob!" cried Scarron. "A rope there, quick—the boy's tired."

"Where away, sir?"

"Nor—nor'west."

The rope was thrown, and the direction was right, for almost immediately it was grasped, and the men began to haul it in.

A few moments and Bob, the powder-monkey, stood on deck.

He was bewildered and faint with his great exertion.

Scarron gave him a good stiff glass of grog, and asked for the message sent by the captain of the *Lively Bee*.

Bob laughed.

"Not likely. It's the cap'n as will get it, not you."

"What have you got on?" asked Scarron, for the first time noticing the flag wrapped around the boy's body.

Bob grinned, but did not reply. But when Tempest approached, the boy pulled his forelock and began to untie the rope. [Pg 123]

When he had unwound several yards of it, and unfolded the flag, Tempest asked:

"Where did you get it?"

Again Bob grinned, and that delayed the answer.

"You said you'd like to know how many barkers that there Britisher had got, so I went and counted."

"You were on board the man-of-war?"

"Certain I was, or else how could I count?"

"Tell me all about it."

Tempest spoke almost angrily, for he had an idea that Bob had acted treacherously, else how would it have been possible for him to have wandered about the gun deck of a well-ordered war ship?

The boy told of his adventures, and described the long stern-chasing gun, and the death of the officer.

"It was this way," he said. "I'd got to kill him, or he'd have killed me, and then who'd fight for the Stars?"

"But the flag?"

"I seen it flying," said Bob, more emphatically than correct, "and, thought I, it's only a rag anyway, and I'll take it to keep me dry. If I'd had a Starry flag, I'd have put it up, but I hadn't, so they have to do without one."

The flag was examined and the name *Monarch* was found on it.

The information given by Bob bore out the fact that the sloop was his majesty's ship *Monarch*, carrying eight guns, one of which was a stern-chaser capable of carrying a long distance.

"Bob, you are a true hero."

"Am I?"

"You are, and when we get back to America I shall see that the President hears of what you have done."

"Blow me, cap'n, but a great man like he won't care about a boy's swim; why should he?"

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The letter from Vernon was read, and he agreed with his lieutenant.

When morning dawned the British ship *Monarch* was within half a mile of the *Caroline* and *Lively Bee*.

The Britisher swung around so that she could bring her long gun in line with the *Caroline*.

Tempest saw his danger, and swung around at the same time, while the *Lively Bee's* long gun was aimed straight at the *Monarch's* mainmast.

The stern-chaser belched forth, and the shot tore across the water, but missed the *Caroline*.

At the same time a return shot was fired, much to the Britisher's surprise, by the *Lively Bee*, and a good-sized splinter was taken off the mast.

The battle had now commenced in good earnest, although it was all on one side, for the guns possessed by the *Caroline* were of too short a range to do any damage at such a distance.

The *Lively Bee* was bent on disabling the *Monarch*, and a second time the long gun was sighted for the mainmast.

A loud cheer arose from the *Caroline's* crew, as they saw the mainmast cut in two by the shot and go crashing over the side.

The privateer was keeping the war ship active, and diverting attention from the *Caroline*.

This was just what Tempest had planned. It gave him an opportunity to get in close alongside the *Monarch*.

Then his voice rang out:

"Give her a broadside!"

The guns belched forth, and the shots tore up the deck of the enemy's forecastle, killing two men, breaking a midddy's arm, and slightly injuring the bowsprit.

Another broadside quickly followed, and before the smoke had cleared away, Tempest ordered the men to seize their grapnels and board.

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Cutlasses and boarding-pikes were passed from hand to hand along the deck, and Tempest, drawing his sword, waved it above his head, shouting to his men to follow him.

"Have at them, boys," he shouted, "to the death!"

He rained blows right and left, which no one could parry.

Captain Scott sought out the brave lieutenant, and with eyes flashing like those of a snake he struck at the young officer with a savageness amounting to fury.

But Tempest was on his guard.

With a fierce and determined energy he met the British captain, and sent his sword twice through his arm, rendering it entirely useless.

"Do you surrender?" asked Tempest as the sword fell from the captain's hand.

"No, you Yankee dog, a Briton never surrenders except to death!"

With his left hand Scott drew a pistol and leveled it, but with a swinging blow from Tempest's sword, which severed the captain's wrist, the pistol and hand dropped to the deck.

"Surrender!"

"Never!" Then, turning to his crew, he shouted: "Boys, never give in! Fight till you die. Whip the Yankees or die in the attempt!"

But, though thus encouraged, the men could not hold out.

The ship was so badly injured that it rolled about unmanageable, and when the captain died, as he did a few minutes later, the men surrendered, and the *Caroline* claimed the *Monarch* as a prize.

The ship was too much disabled to take into port, so, under the direction of Scarron, the guns were removed to the *Caroline*, together with a good portion of the ammunition.

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When this was accomplished and the prisoners transferred, the order was given to blow up the war ship.

A terrific report which caused the waters to be troubled as though by an earthquake, and all was over with his majesty's sloop-of-war *Monarch*.

"Now to port!" shouted Tempest, obeying the signal of the *Lively Bee*, and the men joyously spread the sails and cheered as they filled out with the wind, for they knew they were bound for home.

[Pg 127]

CHAPTER XXI.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

"Do not undress; be ready at any moment to go to quarters."

Such was the command given the men who were sent below to sleep, after the watch was set for the night.

Tempest was not anxious for sleep, although he had been up all the previous night.

He had sent word to Bertha that if she liked to walk the deck with him, he should be pleased to have her company.

The lady was delighted.

She could not sleep, and the air of the little cabin was stifling.

She had been too much afraid to go on deck during the day, and had no real knowledge of the great events which had transpired.

Flushed as Tempest was with victory, he yet hesitated to tell Bertha all that had transpired, for war is no fit subject for feminine ears.

But she was fit to be a soldier's wife. Full of patriotic zeal, the overthrow of the British was a subject she rejoiced to hear spoken of; and when her own lover was the hero, her delight was beyond all computation.

The sails of the *Caroline* filled at the first puff of wind, and she kept at hailing distance with the *Lively Bee*.

"Where are we bound now?" asked Bertha as she paced the deck, her hand on Tempest's arm.

"Home!" was the answer.

"To stay?"

Instead of answering, Tempest said:

"We are at war with England. That country has destroyed some of our cities and is devastating our land. She has claimed the supremacy of the ocean, as you know. We have disputed her right. Now what is my duty? My great ancestor left England in the *Mayflower*; he founded a family unexcelled for its patriotism. His descendants, by marriage, united the great tribes of the Indians with the white people. My father fought with Greene at Bunker Hill and with Washington at Valley Forge. What is my duty?"

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Bertha Decatur did not hesitate in her answer.

"My brave boy, you must fight—until the end."

"I thought you would say so. But do you know what you told me when I asked for this little hand?" asked Tempest, placing his hard hand on her soft one.

"I said I would only marry a hero."

"And now——"

"I say the same."

"What constitutes a hero in your estimation?"

"I don't know, but I can tell you the name of one; he is my ideal——"

She turned away her head to hide her crimson blushes.

"What is his name, and I will try to imitate him."

Her hand trembled on his arm.

"Is it your uncle, the captain?" he asked.

She murmured so low that he almost thought he misunderstood her, for the name he heard was his own.

"Do you mean it?" he asked eagerly.

"You know I do. Have you not known it long, long ago?"

"I hoped, and yet I feared——"

"You should not fear."

"Then, Bertha, dear, will you——" he hesitated for a few moments. Her hand trembled, her face was turned away. "Will you become my wife as soon as we land?"

"I am your prisoner, sir, and prisoners are not usually consulted about their future," she answered mischievously.

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"But I heard a lady say that if, as a prisoner, she was taken to the altar, she would kill herself."

"But her captor was English."

"Then any American who might capture you——"

"You have taken me prisoner, and if you cannot keep me, why—why, the bravest man shall have me. So there!"

"I do not fear now; and, Bertha, the first thing we will do when we reach land will be to get married."

"What noise is that?" she suddenly asked. "Is it not horrible?"

"Hush! you must not say that. It is the men below who are singing. If the hatchways were open you could hear the words."

As though one of the watch had heard the officer's words, the hatches were thrown back, and the gruff voices of the men, who were too excited to speak, were heard singing:

"Ye tars of our country, who seek on the main
The cause for the wrongs your country sustain,
Rejoice and be merry, for bragging John Bull
Has got a sound drubbing from brave Captain Hull.
Then charge the can cheerily,
Send it round merrily!
Here's to our country and captains commanding;
To all who inherit
Of Vernon the spirit
Disdaining to strike while a stick is left standing."

"Who is Vernon?" asked Bertha.

"The bravest and truest man who ever wore a blue jacket. The captain of the *Lively Bee*."

"But he is a privateer."

"So am I. I entered his crew as a man before the mast. He made me first officer. He searched me out, because your brother knew me. Vincent told him my story, and Vernon has given me a chance to win you, my darling." [Pg 130]

"Hem! Ha! Ugh! Beg parding, sir, but my mate on the lookout says as how he sees a strange sail, which is kinder suspicious."

The man had crept up quietly behind the lovers and had tried to attract their attention by his coughing and strange noises.

"I will go forward, Smithson."

"Ay, ay, sir!" Then to himself he muttered: "He's a good sort, too good for a privateer; he ought to be on a reg'lar man-o'-war, or better'n that, a whaler away down in the Suthern seas. Blow me, but I like whalin' better'n fightin', I do."

"Go below, Bertha, and try and get some sleep. No one shall disturb your solitude, and I want some rose-bloom on your cheeks when you reach land, you know."

Bertha Decatur went to her cabin, for the first time wishing that her lover was anything but a fighting man. The danger was so great.

"I can pray for him," she said, "and who knows, mayhap prayers will save his life."

"A sail, did you say?"

"Ay ay, sir, and suspicious, too. She has a narrow head to her topsails, and looks like a Frenchman."

"Where away?"

Far away on the horizon, where the light was fast waning, a little white speck appeared, hardly visible to the naked eye, but quite plain through a glass, was a large ship on the port tack in cruising canvas only.

"What do you think—is she too big for us to tackle?" asked Tempest.

"I am afraid so, sir."

"Where is the *Lively Bee*?"

The privateer was nowhere to be seen.

How had they missed her?

Surely no accident had happened to her; if so, signals would have been fired.

"There she is, sir, far away to the west'ard."

The *Lively Bee* had outdistanced the *Caroline*, and was only dimly visible in the twilight.

"Spread all sails! Let us overtake the *Lively Bee*."

"Ay, ay, sir—but the vessel yonder?"

It was evident the man was in favor of stopping to fight, and the *Caroline* was in good fettle as regards guns, for she had transferred those from the *Monarch*.

But Tempest never forgot that he was sailing under Captain Vernon, and whatever his own inclination, he would take no action without consultation with his chief.

"Haul your fore-sheet to windward!" he shouted to the men in the forecabin. "Right your helm, quartermaster. We must show our heels to the enemy for once."

On went the *Caroline*, as fast as the wind would carry her.

All was bustle on her deck, for all knew that unless they could outdistance the ship which was looming up in the fast darkening twilight, larger than ever, there would be no escaping a fight.

"That is the *Macedonian*, sir," said Scarron, touching his cap as he spoke.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir, and we stand no chance if she gets within gunshot. The *Caroline* and *Lively Bee* will change flags, and one and all our men will get sent to Dartmoor prison."

"Then we must fly."

"Ay, sir, fly like the wind, or faster than the wind. See, the *Lively Bee* is coming back."

"Bless you, Vernon!" exclaimed Tempest aloud, "you never deserted a friend yet."

"No, Mr. Tempest, and Harry Vernon never will. I can answer for that," said Scarron, thinking that his officer had spoken to him. [Pg 132]

The night was coming on apace, and Tempest hoped that he might get near enough the shore before morning to make attack dangerous.

An hour passed, and the *Lively Bee* was within hailing distance.

"Is that the *Macedonian*?" asked Vernon.

"I think so, captain."

"Then we must show our heels, or go to Davy Jones' locker."

"That is just what I had ordered, sir. We must save the rich prize."

A light was seen to the westward, and Vernon muttered something like a curse, for he knew the signal to be from a man-of-war.

"Between two fires, Tempest. Only Heaven can save us!" he shouted.

And the brave lieutenant replied:

"In God we'll trust, sir."

But all the same, Tempest felt very anxious, for he had on board the one he loved better than life.

CHAPTER XXII.

[Pg 133]

JACK'S REQUEST.

"And, oh; it was glorious and strange to behold,
What torrents of fire from her red mouth she threw;
And how from her broad wings and sulphurous sides,
Hot showers of grapeshot and rifle balls flew."

"In God we'll trust!" said Tempest, and Bertha Decatur drew nearer to him, as she whispered lovingly:

"He will protect us!"

Then, with a feminine fear, she asked:

"Do you think we shall have to fight?"

"I am afraid so; but if we do—can you be brave, my darling—can you bear to hear the truth?"

"Tell me what it is you fear."

"If we fight we shall be beaten. Against such as yon ship we have no chance. And if the other is a Britisher, we are doomed."

"Let me die with you."

"We may not be killed."

Bertha looked at her betrothed, her lips quivering and her body trembling, not with fear, but rather with the thought that her life might be so short, now that she had begun to realize how well it was worth living.

"But—you will never surrender?" she asked proudly.

"What would you wish, Bertha?"

"Wish? Why, better die than be a prisoner; better give your life for your flag, than live dishonored. We can die together—it would be better."

The man at the masthead shouted:

"Sail, ho!"

Tempest left Bertha, and exclaimed:

"Masthead, there!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

[Pg 134]

"Where away is the sail?"

The direction was given. It was the sail seen between the *Caroline* and the shore.

"What does she look like?"

"A square-rigged vessel, sir."

After a few minutes Tempest again shouted:

"Masthead, there!"

"Sir?"

"What flag does she fly?"

There was a silence deep and profound as the answer was awaited.

"She shows no colors, sir! She is a large ship and bearing down upon us. The Britisher is gaining on us as well."

For a moment only did the brave young officer hesitate.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning and the air was clear.

"Run up the starry banner!" he shouted.

It was a defiance, and the crew cheered heartily as the flag ran up the halliards.

But the cheering suddenly ceased at a word from the commander.

"Masthead, what do you see?"

Scarcely a minute elapsed before the answer came.

"She has run up the American flag, sir!"

What cheering!

What joy filled the breasts of the crew!

Orders were given to stand toward the American.

"What name does she bear?" asked Tempest.

"The *United States*," came the answer after a few minutes.

"How strange! What will Bertha say?" thought Tempest, for the *United States* frigate was commanded by her uncle, Captain Decatur. [Pg 135]

On board the *United States* everything was being put in order for a naval battle.

Decatur called his officers together.

"Gentlemen, we have to fight this Sabbath morning instead of worshiping. I want you to tell all your men that the conflict will be severe; but that the flag of my country on the ship I command shall never leave the staff on which it waves as long as there is a hull to support it."

The officers saluted as became men of their rank, but one midddy was far too excited to merely salute.

He threw up his cap and shouted:

"Hurrah for Captain Decatur!"

Thus challenged, the officers responded, and never did men give more hearty cheers than those officers of the U. S. frigate *United States*.

There were a number of youths on board the American ship whose ages were from twelve to fourteen.

Many a lad, at that time, received his warrant as a midshipman while still in his tenth year.

If he was tall and well formed no questions were asked, but if below the ordinary stature he was interrogated closely.

It was illegal to enroll any boy's name on the roster, unless he had passed his twelfth birthday.

Jack Creamer wanted two weeks to be ten years old, but he was allowed to stay on board.

When Jack saw the English frigate approaching he looked troubled.

No one would have thought he was so young, for his face looked pinched and wan.

"Cowardly, cowardly, custard!" sneered one of the middies who had managed to get enrolled, though only eleven years old.

"I am no coward," said Jack.

"Of course not," responded another midddy; "not a coward, only a little bit scared like. No wonder, you are only a child."

"I'm nearly as old as you," retorted Jack.

"Are you? I'm an officer in the United States navy, while you are too young to be enrolled."

So they rallied Jack, and he became indignant.

Something worried him.

No one imagined in his heart that Jack was afraid, but boys like to tease each other, and even middies are no exception to the rule.

An old quartermaster watched Jack closely.

"What is the matter, Jack?" he asked kindly.

"I would like to see the captain before going into action."

"You shall, my boy. Come now."

He took Jack Creamer up to the quarterdeck, and there waited for Captain Decatur's attention.

The captain turned and saw the two, and in his cheery voice asked:

"What is wanting now, Jack?"

The boy saluted, and in a quivering voice replied:

"Commodore, will you please to have my name put down on the muster roll?"

"Why, what for, my lad? You are far better as you are."

Jack had grown bold.

He pointed to the British ship, which was almost within gunshot range, and replied:

"So that I can draw my share of the prize money, commodore, when we take that Britisher."

"Your name shall be entered, Jack."

The lines left the boy's face, a brightness came to his eyes, and he left the captain's presence far from decorously, for it was with a hop, skip and a jump. [Pg 137]

Decatur directed the attention of the masthead man to the strange sails to the leeward.

"She flies the American flag," was the answer.

"And the other to the north of her?"

"I'd know her anywhere."

"Well?"

"She's all right. As tight a little boat as ever sailed. The *Lively Bee*, privateer."

"We shall have friends, then."

"Ay, ay, sir. Cap'n Vernon is as stanch as his boat, an' that's sayin' a lot."

"Beat to quarters."

How willingly the men obeyed! How quickly each man was at his post!

The surgeon in the cockpit got his instruments and bandages ready, the powder-monkeys were in line, the middies strutted about every bit as proud as peacocks, and all the officers waited for the action to commence.

The first gun fired was from the American ship.

The ships were rolling in a manner fatal to good aim.

Half an hour was devoted to throwing away good ammunition, for no other object was gained.

A terrific shout went up from the Yankees as they saw that the Englishman's mizzen topmast was shot away.

Captain Carden soon saw that his men could not cope with the Americans at such long range, so, with that bulldog courage which Britishers possess, he disdained all maneuvering and bore straight down on the enemy.

Both began to fire broadsides, and the firing from the American was so rapid that the *Macedonian's* crew shouted:

"She's on fire! Hurrah for England and her hearts of oak!"

But they had shouted too soon.

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A well-aimed shot cut away the mizzenmast, which fell alongside, suspended by the cordage.

"Hurrah, Jack Creamer!" shouted a captain of a gun to the lad, whose face was as black as the ace of spades, from the powder and smoke.

"Huzza, cap'n!" responded Jack. "You've made a brig of her."

Captain Decatur heard the boy's remark and added cheerily:

"Ay, ay, my lad! Now let the next shot make a sloop of her."

Decatur was everywhere.

His activity was almost marvelous.

It seemed almost impossible that one man could accomplish so much and continue to be so cheerful.

"Ay, I guess it would do her good," he said, as he saw a gunner look along his gun.

"Did you speak to me, cap'n?"

"If you like; I saw you point your gun at the yellow streak. Aim just there, let us hull her."

The order was passed along the gun deck, and each gunner strove to see that his gun did the most damage.

The great missiles tore cruel holes in the *Macedonian's* wooden walls, and so rapid was the firing that the Britisher had no chance.

The flag was hauled down, and a ringing cheer from the Americans crowned the victory of that Sunday.

CHAPTER XXIII.

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THE STORY OF THE FIGHT.

Lieutenant Allen was sent on board the prize.

He found the decks in a fearful condition.

The hauling down of the flag had turned the survivors into veritable demons.

They broke open the hatches and got to the rum.

Some of the crew were already drunk, others nearly so.

Some were throwing the dead overboard, and with a heartlessness which was horrible were even serving the wounded the same way.

Lieutenant Allen was examining the muster rolls of the *Macedonian* when a sailor pushed his way toward the quarterdeck.

"I am an American, sir! 'Pressed against my wishes, and there were seven more of us."

"Where are the others?"

"Three are dead, sir, the others want to be taken into your crew."

"And you fought against your country?"

"We had to do it, sir."

"You should have begged to go below."

"We did, and were ordered to the guns or to be treated as mutineers."

"I will see what can be done."

"Thank you, sir. We shall be happier fighting for our own flag."

When the first boat was filled the first lieutenant of the *Macedonian* insultingly asked Lieutenant Allen if he was to lose his baggage.

"We are not privateersmen," answered Allen.

"I do not know what you are," sneered the Englishman.

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A powder-monkey on board the *Macedonian* told the story of the fight so graphically that Decatur sent for him and begged him to recount it once again.

"What is your name?"

"Samuel Leach, sir, as good a Briton as ever carried powder to a gun."

"I do not doubt it. Will you tell me what you know of the battle?"

"If your honor would like to hear it."

"I am waiting."

"Well, sir, I don't know as how you would care about hearing about what we thought of you when we saw you bearing down on us."

"Of course you were confident of victory?"

"That's true. And many a bet we made as to the amount of prize money we'd receive. You see, your honor, the men who gets most of the fighting, and who have to work the hardest, gets the least of the prize money. But when your boat fired I heard such a strange noise. It was like the tearing of sails just above our heads. That's the Yankee wind, said I, and so it was.

"My, how the cannon did roar! Both sides were hard at it, and made a most hideous noise.

"Then I heard the shots strike the sides of our ship, and the timbers flew in pieces like kindling wood.

"It was my first battle, and I trembled at the noise.

"Presently I saw the blood fly suddenly from the arm of a man serving at my gun. I don't know what hit him, but there was the blood.

"I hadn't much time to look around, for the boys belonging to the guns next to mine were all wounded, and I had to serve four guns. And that was hard work.

"My chum, Harry Lanyon, was serving at the next gun to me, and I saw a great ball strike him on

the leg.

"Before he could be moved, the boy at the next gun had some canister sent through his ankle.

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"A stout Yorkshireman lifted the boys, one after the other, and carried them to the cockpit. Each had to lose a leg.

"Then I rushed on deck. I was made frantic with what I had seen.

"I ran up to Tom Smithers—your honor didn't know Tom, but he was one of the bravest men that ever lived. Tom sprang forward to bid me go back to my duty, but before he could finish what he was saying he was cut clean in two by a terrible shot.

"Then I saw Middy Davis. Oh, sir, he was a bright boy—not as old as I am by a year or so. How his mother cried when we left Bristol, and how he tried to comfort her by saying he would bring back lots of prize money.

"Well, sir—captain, I mean—the young middy ordered us about just like an old man. He was so brave, and knew his duty.

"What did he do but jump on a gun and shout: 'Are we not Englishmen? Doesn't Britain rule the waves? Are we going to be beaten by a pack of Yankees?' Them's his words, sir, or I wouldn't repeat them, for you can't help being Yankees. Well, sir, as true as I'm a living sinner, he had scarcely said the words when a cannon ball took off his head just as clean as a sword cut. Poor chap, you wouldn't have thought he was good-looking, but he was. Then the lieutenant seeing me, shouts:

"'Leach, throw that thing overboard!' and he pushes the head along the deck as though it was a ball.

"A point abreast of the mainmast we called the slaughter house, 'cause so many were killed just there.

"There, sir, a ball entered a port and killed five men at one lick. It was horrible.

"I got so as I didn't mind slipping about in the blood, but I was glad when I heard the order given to stop firing, and I knew we were licked.

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"I'd rather be alive and a prisoner than be dead, sir, so I would; but I've had enough fighting, and Sam Leech will never fight again if he knows what he's about."

Close behind Sam Leech stood Jack Creamer, who had come to the captain's cabin with a message, but had been so interested in the English boy's story that he had forgotten where he was, and only knew that he was listening to a good story.

"And you won't fight again?" he asked, giving Sam a friendly slap on the back.

"No, I'm blessed if I will!"

"Do you know why?" asked Jack, not noticing Lieutenant Allen, who was motioning him to be silent.

"I've had enough of it," answered Sam.

"You're on the wrong side, that's what's the matter. Why, Sam, if you were on this ship you wouldn't be tired."

"It seems you didn't get any damage done."

"Not much; only—"

"Jack, what can I do for you?" interrupted the captain.

The boy was so elated that, instead of answering Captain Decatur's question, he grinned, showing all his teeth, and said:

"We did take her, sir."

"Yes, my boy."

"I knew we should before we gave her the first broadside."

"Did you? Well, you will get your share of prize money. What will you do with it?"

"How much will it be, your honor?"

"It may be two hundred dollars."

Jack's face lighted up with joy, for such a sum seemed great wealth to him.

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"Please, sir, I'd send half of it to my mother, and the rest will get me a bit of schooling when the war is over."

"Bravely said, Jack," responded the captain, warmly.

The interview ended abruptly, for the officer of the watch reported that a strange vessel was signaling.

"What does she want?"

"To speak with us."

"Well, find out what it is about."

Presently the report came that a boat was being put off from the *Caroline*.

"Lay to," ordered the captain.

It was true.

Tempest had sent a boat to the gun ship, and with it a message which sounded strange to Captain Decatur.

"Will Captain Decatur of the U. S. man-of-war *United States* accept an invitation to visit the *Caroline*, which was captured from the British by the *Lively Bee*, privateer? The reason is too important to be intrusted to paper."

Captain Decatur, like many sea dogs, and man-of-warsmen in particular, was very expressive in his language when excited.

In fact, it seemed that the uttering of anathemas formed a safety valve for his temper.

It was noticed that after such an outburst he was as gentle as a lamb.

When he read the unsigned letter he was furious.

"Am I captain? Am I sub-acting commodore? And should a privateersman order me about, and not even give his name? No, no, sir. Go back to your captain and tell him that an insult to me is an insult to the flag. I'll not see him. I'll not take any notice of him. It may be all a plot to capture me."

We have transcribed the substance of the message sent back to the *Caroline*; the real message would not look well in print, and certainly would not read well in a refined assembly. [Pg 144]

The boat started back to the *Caroline*, and Decatur shouted another volley of anathemas at the receding crew.

Had the men sent by Tempest known the captain better, they would have waited until the explosion had passed off, and then they would have had another message to take back.

"Lower a boat!" he cried, when the *Caroline's* boat was nearly back. "Row me over to that vessel. I'll show them that I cannot be insulted with impunity."

Tempest had no intention of insulting so gallant an officer, but he was afraid to use his own name, for fear the captain would think it unbecoming to acknowledge a man who had resigned from the navy.

At the same time that the boat put off from the *United States*, one left the *Lively Bee*, and the distance being shorter, the latter reached the *Caroline* first.

"Merry Christmas to you, Tempest!" exclaimed Harry Vernon, as he leaped on deck.

"I had forgotten what day it was, but the same compliment to you, sir."

Tempest soon explained the awkward situation to Vernon, who undertook to pacify the angry naval officer.

CHAPTER XXIV.

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MARRIAGE AT SEA.

To Vernon's astonishment, he recognized Decatur in the boat.

No sooner did he recognize the honor than he ordered a salute to be fired, and the flag dipped.

The naval officer swung himself on deck, and eyed Vernon for a moment before speaking.

"Who are you, sir?"

"Harry Vernon, Captain Decatur, and I welcome you to as fine a prize as was ever taken from an enemy."

"My stars! And did your little schooner capture this?"

"Yes, captain, and these guns bear the name of his Britannic majesty's *Monarch* on them. That made prize number two."

"I congratulate you. Your crew will be rich. But why did you want to see me? Why, zounds, sir, did you neglect to sign your name?"

Vernon, instead of replying, said, calmly:

"Captain Decatur, we captured more than you see. The captain of the *Caroline* had abducted one of the most beautiful American girls I have ever seen. He tried to force her to marry him, but she stood out against his threats, saying she would kill herself rather than be his wife."

"Brave girl!"

"Her abductor was killed——"

"Good thing, for if he had been alive I would have strung him up to the yardarm."

Naval commanders had the power to execute any criminal, and they often took advantage of that, as they did of another power vested in them—that of marrying. On the high seas a marriage ceremony performed by a captain, and duly entered on the ship's log, is as legal as if the [Pg 146]

presiding official was a clergyman or judge.

"Yes, he was killed in the engagement, but his prisoner is here. She loves most earnestly one of my officers——"

Captain Decatur laughed.

"You sly dog," he said. "I see; you want me to marry you. Ah, well, if she is worthy—but that is your lookout. It is your risk."

"You do not understand me, captain."

"Don't I? Well, speak up and tell me what you mean."

"Do you remember John Tempest? The man who blighted his career in our navy by expressing sympathy with James Vincent?"

"Vincent Decatur, you mean. My nephew, sir, as brave a man as ever walked, and brother of a girl—why, bless me, sir, that girl would charm the heart of an anchorite. She is the dearest, sweetest little doll that ever walked——"

"A ship's deck, uncle."

Bertha had heard her uncle's voice, and could not be restrained.

She had crept quietly up the companionway, and when she heard herself so warmly praised she was unable to resist longer.

"Bertha! Zounds! Where did you come from?"

"The cabin, uncle. I did not know my worth until you rehearsed it; then I could not resist. So, you dear old nunkey, you've come to see me. I made him send. You'll not be cross with him—now will you?"

"Were you the prisoner this gentleman spoke about?"

"Yes, uncle, and if it had not been for the *Lively Bee*, of which Mr. Vernon is captain, I should have been dead before this."

"And so you want to marry him?"

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"Yes, please, uncle."

"So you shall. Join hands—— What's the matter with you, sir?"

Vernon had stepped back, and the captain was at a loss to understand his meaning.

"I am not the happy man."

"Zounds! didn't you hear Bertha, my niece, say she wanted to marry you? And, by Jove! she shall have her way, or I'm not a captain in the United States navy."

Bertha scarcely understood what it all meant, but laying her hand on her uncle's arm, said:

"We do not want to marry until we reach land."

"Stuff and nonsense! I can tie you as tightly as any landlubber. Join hands, I say."

"I'll send for him, uncle, and see what he says."

"Send for him! Can't you see him standing there?"

"No, uncle, John is below."

"Who is John?"

"I am, sir. John Tempest, first lieutenant of the *Lively Bee*, and at present commanding officer of the *Caroline*."

Captain Decatur did not speak.

"I sent the message to you. It was on Bertha's account; I thought you might wish her to go back with you."

"So you are here, John Tempest, are you? Well, well, my dignity says I ought not to recognize you, but my manhood says you're a brick, John Tempest, and if Bertha wants you, why, let her take you, and I'll give you my blessing."

"But, sir——"

"Join hands, I say, and I'll make you one. It is the law, sir. I am the holder of Uncle Sam's commission, and I can marry you as tightly as any one. Join hands, I say."

Bertha put out her hand toward Tempest.

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What could he do but accept it?

No sooner were the two hands joined than Captain Decatur commenced:

"I call you all to witness that this man—what's your name, sir?—ah, yes, John Tempest, takes this woman—it is better than saying lady, my dear—Bertha Decatur, to be his wife. Now therefore I, being the lawful commander of the naval ship *United States*, do declare them to be legally married. And may the Lord have mercy on their souls!—I mean, may the Lord bless them;" and Decatur kissed the bride.

"Where is your log, sir?" asked Tempest. "I have only the one on the *Lively Bee*; the log of the

Caroline is British."

"Dear me, that's a pretty how d'ye do! I married you on a British ship, where I have no jurisdiction."

"No, Captain Decatur. The *Caroline* has been renamed the *Bertha*, and two days ago the alteration was made in the log."

"Glad to hear it. But I'd like you to come over to my ship, and I'd marry you over again. Nay, no excuses; I insist."

"If you really insist, uncle, I shall appeal to my husband."

"Come, the boat is ready, and I want you tied so tight to this fellow that he cannot run away if he wanted to."

To humor the captain, Tempest and Bertha were taken on board the *United States*, where they were again married according to the laws governing the navy.

CHAPTER XXV.

[Pg 149]

THE BALL AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

The Capital had gathered there
Her beauty and her chivalry; and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell.

—BYRON.

December was within three days of its close, and the people of Washington had chosen the night of the twenty-eighth for a grand ball and reception to the naval officers, whose victories had made their names historic.

Specially was Captain Stewart of the *Constellation* to be honored.

A brilliant company was gathered, and the White House never looked more lovely.

"Dolly" Madison was the mistress of the executive mansion, and we have all heard our fathers say how beautiful she was, and how charming as an entertainer.

Captain Hull of the victorious *Constitution* was present, and to add to the *éclat* of the occasion the captured colors of the *Alert* and *Guerriere* were draped on the wall.

Then there was a representation of the *Constitution*, rudely drawn, 'tis true, but it served the purpose.

Beneath it were the words:

"A bunch of pine boards, under a strip of striped bunting."

It wanted only a few minutes of midnight. The revelry was at its height.

A more brilliant scene could not be imagined.

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The elegant toilets of the ladies, the gorgeous uniforms of the representatives of the army and navy, the bright court dresses of the diplomatic corps, looked dazzlingly beautiful beneath the light of a thousand wax candles held by multitudinous sconces.

An old-fashioned minuet was being danced, when a murmur passed through the room.

How it originated no one could have told, but all seemed to know that news of another victory had been brought.

The Secretary of the Navy left the room, and in a few minutes re-entered, accompanied by two officers wearing lieutenants' uniforms.

Men clapped their hands, women waved their handkerchiefs, and the scene was changed from one of terpsichorean pleasure to that of patriotic delight.

Then one of the lieutenants handed a document to the Secretary of the Navy, who read it in silence.

His face wore an expression of pleasure as he finished, and turning to the people he said in a voice husky with patriotic emotion:

"I have the proud privilege of introducing Lieutenant Hamilton of the good ship *United States*, who will tell you of an engagement on Christmas Day whereby the English lost their warship *Macedonian*, forty-nine guns."

If the cabinet officer had intended saying anything more, he was doomed to disappointment, for the people's cheers drowned all utterance.

When silence had been obtained, the secretary led another lieutenant forward.

"This, ladies and gentlemen, is Lieutenant Tempest, of the *Lively Bee*, privateer. He has to tell of the sinking of his Britannic majesty's ship *Monarch*, and the capture of the armed merchantman, the *Caroline*."

Again the cheers resounded, and Tempest saw himself reflected in the mirrors as the recipient of a glorious ovation. [Pg 151]

But when it was known that the two heroes had brought with them the colors of the captured vessels, the enthusiasm exceeded everything imaginable.

Captains Hull and Stewart were commissioned by the President to bring in the captured trophies.

When they re-entered the hall, Captain Hull and Lieutenant Hamilton carried the flag taken from the *Macedonian*, while Captain Stewart and Tempest performed the same act with the *Monarch's* colors.

Amid the plaudits of the people the flags were laid before Mrs. Madison, who allowed the young officers to kiss her hand.

The order was given to proceed to the banquet hall, and the people were moving that way when Dolly Madison, catching sight of two boys waiting outside, asked who they were.

"Jack Creamer of the *United States*, and Bob of the *Lively Bee*. It was Bob, Mrs. Madison, who captured the colors of the *Monarch*—"

"Is that really true?"

The incident was told by Tempest, and when the guests had taken their seats Mrs. Madison made room on her right hand for Bob, the powder-monkey.

"The health of Commodore Decatur and the officers and crew of the *United States*," proposed the toastmaster, and our friend Bob, who thought the *Lively Bee* should have taken precedence, added in a loud voice:

"And don't forget the *Lively Bee*, privateer."

CHAPTER XXVI.

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THE MARRIAGE AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

One can easily imagine the consternation in that brilliant assembly when Bob, the powder-monkey of the privateer, took upon himself the duties of toastmaster, and asked that distinguished gathering of banqueters to drink to the officers and crew of the *Lively Bee*.

The diplomatic corps looked aghast.

There wasn't one of the nations they represented but would employ privateers if at war, but they would not just then acknowledge it.

As one quaint old sea dog put it.

"A privateer is a man who does all the dirty work in a naval war, receives all the kicks, and watches others enjoy the glories."

So, while all nations employed privateers, they never recognized the officers and crews as being other than patriotic pirates.

The gathering was, however, full of enthusiasm, and Dolly Madison herself led the drinking of the toast.

Secretary of the Navy, Paul Hamilton, responded for the government, and complimented the *Lively Bee* on attacking and capturing a war vessel.

"That was a brave act, and even though she sailed under a letter of marque, we must acknowledge that she did the State great service."

Then Lieutenant Tempest acknowledged the toast, while Lieutenant Hamilton merely bowed.

Bob was close to Mrs. Madison, and was particularly pleased with himself.

He heard the President's wife say:

"What a handsome man that young privateer is!"

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Bob leaned over the lady's shoulder and whispered:

"But you should see his wife; she's a stunner—A1 anywhere; she is a beauty!"

A young lady, who had not long made her *début*, and had been looking at Tempest with eyes which were full of love, now blushed slightly and in a low whisper said:

"What a pity he is married; he is so very handsome."

Bob might have heard what was said, but he took no notice except to remark to Mrs. Madison that the lieutenant captured his bride at the same time he did the vessel.

Seeing that the two boys were drinking rather freely, and getting far more talkative, their officers ordered them from the room, much to Bob's annoyance. Jack Creamer took it good-naturedly, and when he and Bob found such good things in store for them in the kitchen, they began to feel more

thoroughly at home.

During the evening Dolly managed to ask Tempest about his wife.

"You have heard?" he asked in surprise.

"Ah! you little think how such news travels," she answered teasingly.

"Surely, the commodore did not tell you?"

"Is it a secret, then?"

"No, dear madam; but the circumstances were so strange that——"

"I would like to know all about it," interjected the mistress of the White House, who loved to hear a love romance quite as much as she did when wooed and won as a wife.

Tempest needed no pressing, for he was in love with Bertha, and nothing was so gratifying to him as to talk of her.

He told his story, and Mrs. Madison was delighted.

Her eyes flashed with the fire of youth, her face flushed with pleasure, and she had to call her husband to tell him of the brave privateer's love story. [Pg 154]

President Madison listened.

"Decatur's niece the wife of a privateer! Sir, what magic did you use?"

The President spoke as though he were angry, but a smile flitted over his face as his wife answered him:

"The same magic you used, James, when you said you loved me."

"Well, well! and so Decatur acted as celebrant! Are you thinking of having the ceremony performed in Washington?"

"I—had not thought—but it would be as well."

Tempest hesitated and stammered.

A new complexion was put upon his marriage.

He knew Decatur had the right to perform the ceremony, but there were some who would doubt.

Dorothea Madison saw his perplexity.

"Of course, and the wedding shall be from the White House. Oh, yes, I insist, James, and do not say no, for I am mistress of the White House, you know."

"My dear Dolly, I am not objecting, but what will the world say about a privateer being married from the executive mansion?"

"That the President of the United States dares to do right, even though the world might frown," answered his wife earnestly.

"My dear, you shall do as you please."

Then the sweet woman made a curtsy, and answered with a pretty little pout:

"I know that, James, even though you are President of the Republic."

The evening passed pleasantly, and the guests departed long before midnight, happy in their patriotic love.

In those days night was not turned into day; the revels ended at an early hour, for all believed in the good old idea that an hour's beauty sleep before midnight was worth two afterward. [Pg 155]

On the following day John Tempest introduced his wife to the White House circle, and Dorothea Madison at once fell in love with Bertha.

The wedding was conducted on a splendid scale; no expense was spared, for Tempest was considered a naval hero, and no one dared to even speak slightly of the privateer.

In fact, in the East Room of the White House the captured flags were draped on the wall, and underneath were the names of the victorious vessels:

The Wasp, Constitution, United States and Lively Bee.

The President took no part in the exercises, but was present.

The clergyman who performed the ceremony explained that John Tempest and Bertha Decatur had been legally married at sea by the gallant commander of the man-of-war *United States*, but the contracting parties desired the blessing of the Church upon their union.

So, on New Year's Day, in the eventful year Eighteen hundred and thirteen, John Tempest was again married to the object of his choice, and this time not on the high seas, but with all the grandeur and *éclat* of marriage in the residence of the chief magistrate of a great nation.

The sun shone brightly as the bride and groom left the house and walked across the park.

"It is an omen," said Tempest.

"Yes, the sun shines on us, and may it shine on our country's cause."

"Amen!"

Even as he made the response he trembled, for in a few days he was to part with his wife and rejoin the *Lively Bee*. [Pg 156]

He dreaded that moment, not because he was afraid, but he had formed a sweet binding tie, and he disliked breaking that tie, even to obey his country's call.

CHAPTER XXVII.

[Pg 157]

AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE.

"To-morrow, Bertha, I must leave the city to rejoin the *Lively Bee*," said Tempest to his bride, on the evening of the fifth day of January.

"Alas! that it should be so," responded Bertha.

"You would not wish me to neglect my duty?"

"No, dear, a thousand times, no. I have loved you because you were so true. Your country is your first love, and were you false to your flag I should even doubt your love for me." She had spoken bravely, but her heart was full of grief.

She knew too well what dangers he would have to encounter, and the *Lively Bee*, though almost invincible, was so small to grapple with such an enemy as the British.

While yet they talked, Lieutenant Hamilton of the *United States*, with face all beaming, interrupted their tearful talk.

"I have sold the prizes. Everything is adjusted," he said.

"That is good news."

"Indeed it is, for I must rejoin at once and you——"

"Shall journey with you."

"That is good news, though I am sorry you have to leave your young wife."

And the young naval officer bowed most courteously to Bertha Tempest.

"I would not wish my husband to fail in his duty," she answered, blushing as she mentioned the word "husband," it sounded so new and strange to her.

"Bertha will be in good hands," said Tempest. "She has made such lots of friends, and Mrs. Madison declares she will have her as a frequent visitor at the White House." [Pg 158]

"I am very glad."

"So am I."

The words were not spoken by either of the three.

It was a new voice which chimed in, and one that all three easily recognized, for no one could be deceived who had ever heard Harry Vernon of the *Lively Bee* speak.

But how came he in Washington?

What new business had brought him there?

He must have followed quickly on their heels, for traveling was slow work in those days.

"Well, Hamilton, how have you succeeded?"

"Well, passing well; that cargo of the *Caroline* was a rich one."

"I know it. The manifests proved its worth. What did you get for ship and cargo?"

"Guess."

"I know its worth. A quarter of a million would not build and equip a better vessel than the *Caroline* and stock her with such a cargo."

"You are right, but of course you could not expect full value."

"No, I do not."

"I obtained two hundred thousand dollars and another four thousand from the government for the *Monarch's* guns and ammunition."

"Is it possible?"

"You have not heard all."

"What other news in store?"

"You are offered the command of the *Caroline*."

"I?"

"Yes; you, Harry Vernon, of the *Lively Bee*, privateer."

"I don't understand."

"The purchasers intend fitting the *Caroline* up as a privateer, carrying four or six long guns, and [Pg 159]

you are offered the command."

"My dear sir, not all the wealth of the Indies could purchase my consent."

"Why?"

"The *Caroline* is a fine boat. She would make a good war ship, but she has not the lines of a privateer. It would be impossible to fly from pursuers, or even to pursue. No, no, the *Lively Bee* is my home."

"I told the factor as much, and I was then commissioned to offer the command to Mr. Tempest. What say you, sir?"

"That I am flattered, Hamilton, but I am lieutenant of the *Lively Bee*, and for this war I shall tread her deck."

"Bravo, Tempest! But what do you think brought me here?"

"We have wondered, but our wonderment could not be satisfied."

"Then wonder no longer. I received some news. I have just paid my respects to the President and his lady. I heard what a furore you created there, Mistress Tempest."

"But the news?"

"Was brought to land by an old friend and chum of mine. He was taken sick with ague as soon as he landed. The news was so very urgent that I accepted the mission, and here I am."

"But the news?"

"Has electrified the President and his Cabinet. But I am hungry. Join me at the dining table, and afterward I will a tale unfold, as the story-books say, and make your hair stand on end, as you hear of the glorious victory."

"Victory?"

"Ay, man. The *Constitution* has won a glorious victory, capturing the British frigate *Java* off San Salvador." [Pg 160]

"When was that?"

"On the twenty-ninth of December," answered Vernon, "just after the *Lively Bee* ran down the *Gamecock*."

"What do you mean?" asked Tempest, his eyes filled with wonder.

"Do you think the *Lively Bee* could remain idle while you were enjoying yourselves? No, sir. We started off on a coasting cruise, hoping to find some West Indiaman bound to or from San Salvador."

"And you did?"

"It was not much, nothing worth talking about. It happened on the twenty-eighth that we sighted a nice, trim little schooner laden with sugar.

"We naturally ordered it to 'lay to,' but the saucy Britisher treated us contemptuously and hoisted her sails to outsail us. The *Lively Bee* can fly with the wind, and so the saucy *Gamecock* did not gain very much.

"Scarron asked permission to fire our long gun, and, of course, I granted it. He did not appear to take proper aim; but he had charge of the gun, not I. To my astonishment the shot went tearing across the deck of the *Gamecock*, splintering her mainmast and killing the first officer.

"Its name would lead you to expect a great fight, but at the very first shot down came the flag, and the *Gamecock* became ours.

"It was but a small prize, but one quickly sold, for the very day I reached land I sold vessel and cargo for thirty-eight thousand."

"Do you call that a small matter?"

"Of course, the *Lively Bee* likes to run into the hundreds of thousands. But come, let us dine, and then the story of the *Constitution*." [Pg 161]

Tempest was glad to see his friend; and more so, perhaps, because his departure would be delayed a few days.

Bertha did show her appreciation by pinching her husband's arm, a sure indication that she was pleased.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

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THE CONSTITUTION'S GREAT VICTORY.

"Now coil up y'r nonsense 'bout England's great navy,
And take in y'r slack about oak-hearted tars;
For frigates as stout, and as gallant crews have we,
Or how came their *Macedon* decked with our stars?"

Yes, how came her *Guerriere*, her *Peacock*, and *Java*,
All sent broken-ribbed to old Davy of late?
How came it? Why, split me, than Britons we're braver;
And that too they shall feel, whenever we meet?"

Captain Harry Vernon sang the above lines as a sort of introduction to his story.

He felt particularly elated.

Jack either is boisterously happy, when on land, or else excessively melancholy.

Harry Vernon was very jolly—no other word aptly describes his state of mind.

Perhaps the generous dinner of which he had just partaken, or it may be the fact that he was the bearer of such good news, affected him; whatever the cause, the fact was unaltered, he was lively and merry, and sang the song with the fervor of a man before the mast.

"You will remember," commenced Vernon, "that Captain Hull resigned his command of the *Constitution* in order that some other officer might win laurels with the noble frigate.

"In his place, Bainbridge was appointed, and of course you know, Tempest, that there is not a better or braver man in the entire navy than that same Bainbridge."

"I have heard of his gallant conduct in the wars against France and Tripoli," answered Hamilton.

"Was the *Hornet* with the *Constitution* when the fight took place?" asked Tempest, almost impatiently. [Pg 163]

"No. It appears not. The *Hornet* was blockading the *Bonne Citoyenne*, but I must go back or you will not understand.

"Fill up, men, and let one night at least be devoted to patriotism and King Bacchus. Bertha—I beg pardon, Mistress Tempest—will excuse you for one night," and Vernon laughed heartily, as though he had perpetrated a joke.

"The *Hornet* and *Constitution* were to cruise in company, while Porter was to waylay West Indiamen, and after a certain time proceed southward, calling at several South American ports, with a view to join Bainbridge.

"When the two vessels reached the port of Praya in the island of St. Jago, it became necessary to practice a little deception.

"The two vessels floated the British flag, and the officers took off every eagle button from their uniform.

"Then, with the greatest audacity, the officers next prepared to land.

"They called on the governor, and paid their respects to his family, and asked permission to leave letters for Sir James Yeo, one of his Britannic majesty's naval commanders.

"The request was granted, and Bainbridge wrote the letters.

"But what had they to do with an English captain?" asked Hamilton.

"Ha, ha, ha! They had to find an excuse for landing."

"But—?"

"Oh, I know what you would say, but the fact remains, they left the letters, and daring productions they were.

"But the best part of the whole thing was that, had Porter visited Praya, he would have called on the governor and asked for letters for Yeo. [Pg 164]

"Then Bainbridge's letters would be handed to him. He would read them in the solitude of his own cabin, for he knew that between the lines another letter was written in sympathetic ink, and it was this letter which would most interest him."

"But what if the governor knew Yeo?" asked Tempest.

"That Porter would have to find out, and should the British captain be known, then Porter would take his cue and be an ambassador from the gallant Sir James Yeo.

"It was a daring plan, but succeeded. Then the Americans sailed away and reached San Salvador.

"As Brazil is at peace with us, there was no need for deception, and Captain Lawrence of the *Hornet* was sent in to see the American Consul.

"Lawrence returned greatly excited.

"In the harbor was the English ship *Bonne Citoyenne*, of twenty guns, and just about to sail for England.

"The *Hornet* carries eighteen guns, so what did Lawrence do but send an officer to the *Bonne Citoyenne*, with a formal challenge to the captain to come out of the harbor and try conclusions with the *Hornet*.

"Every assurance was given that the *Constitution* would lay in the offing, and take no part in the fight.

"The English captain answered the challenge most courteously, but declined to accept it."

"What reason did he give?" asked Tempest.

"Of course he was afraid," exclaimed Hamilton.

"But would never acknowledge it."

"No, but I suppose he pleaded that it might compromise Brazil."

"You are both wrong," answered Vernon. "He said he had on board five hundred pounds sterling, which he was conveying to England, and that to meet the *Hornet* would be unwise, as it would place the money in jeopardy."

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"Don't you wish the *Lively Bee* was on the *Bonne Citoyenne's* track?" asked Tempest.

"Yes, but what could the *Bee* do against twenty guns?"

"The *Lively Bee* would find a way to sting."

"I am glad you have such a strong faith in the *Bee*, but to proceed with my story: The *Hornet*, when it found the *Bonne Citoyenne* would not fight, remained outside the harbor, as a blockader, while the *Constitution* continued to cruise alone.

"Three days only elapsed before she sighted two vessels, well into the shore.

"Bainbridge's heart beat with hope.

"His great chance had come, for he felt sure that the two vessels were British war ships.

"One of them seemed to make for the shore, while the other made her course boldly for the *Constitution*.

"Bainbridge now clearly saw that the approaching vessel was a man-of-war of formidable build.

"The crew of the American ship waited orders.

"They were all anxiety, for they dearly loved a fight.

"To their horror and disgust, their captain ordered the vessel put to sea.

"Murmurings were heard, but Bainbridge laughed quietly to himself, for he saw clearly the coastline, dark and low, of Brazil, and he knew that the Englishman could easily retreat into neutral waters if pressed too hard.

"So he made all sail, as though in flight.

"The Englishman so understood it, and crowded on sail in pursuit.

"By noon the two ships were near enough for their flags to be visible.

"'Run up the ensign!' ordered Bainbridge.

"The colors were set, and answered by the Englishman.

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"Bainbridge continued his retreat for another hour.

"Fast and yet faster flew the British war ship.

"It was something new for a Yankee to fly from an Englishman, and the latter enjoyed it.

"Suddenly Bainbridge gave the order:

"'Take in the mainsails and royals.'

"The order was obeyed, though the crew wondered at the reason for it.

"But when the *Constitution* tacked toward the enemy a ringing cheer went up from the crew.

"Their captain was no coward.

"The coastline of Brazil was below the horizon, and Bainbridge was confident he could prevent the enemy retreating.

"The drum beat to quarters, and quietly the veterans got to work to meet the foe.

"The *Java*, for such the enemy proved to be, hauled down her colors, leaving only a jack flying.

"This action puzzled Bainbridge, who ordered a shot to be fired, which should mean that the ensigns be raised again.

"This challenge was answered by a broadside.

"The battle was now on in dead earnest. The *Java* was the better sailer, and both ships were well manned.

"The firing was rapid, the aim good.

"It looked bad for the American, after an hour's fighting, for a round shot carried away her wheel, and the captain was wounded by a small copper bolt, which was driven into his thigh.

"For a few minutes it looked as though our boat was lost, for she would not answer to the rudder, her head fell off, and her sails flapped idly against the spars.

"Though suffering excruciating agony, Bainbridge directed every movement. Tackle was rigged upon the rudder-post between decks, and a crew of jackies worked the improvised helm.

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"Then a new difficulty arose. The helmsmen were out of earshot of the quarterdeck.

"A young middy suggested the remedy, and a line of middies was formed from the quarterdeck to the sailors who were tugging at the steering apparatus."

"Bravo, Bainbridge!" shouted Hamilton.

"I would like to have been there," added Tempest.

"So would I," assented Harry Vernon. "It makes a man's blood run quicker when he hears of such things, and I can scarcely have patience to tell of the glorious deeds, I am so warm and excited.

"The gunners had not been idle; they kept continuously firing, and the *Java's* jibboom and bowsprit were so shattered that, when the ships met, the mizzen-mast fell, crashing through fore-castle and main deck, and killing several of the officers."

"Pardon me, Vernon, but you say, 'when the ships met.'"

"Yes, the Englishman, seeing that the Yankee was getting the best of the fight, despite her crippled condition, determined to close and board. It was a mad thing to do, but English sailors are always daring.

"The ships met and lay yardarm to yardarm.

"The men could not see each other, for a dense sulphurous smoke hid the two vessels. It was only at rare intervals that the cloud of powder smoke arose, and then the faces of the gunners showed how determined they were.

"When the British made ready to board the Yankee a new surprise awaited them.

"In the *Constitution's* tops were two small howitzers, and suddenly the topmen began to pour into the midst of the would-be boarders a perfect shower of grape and canister.

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"A daring young midshipman in the tops seized a musket and aimed at the *Java's* captain.

"The brave officer fell to the deck dead, but Lieutenant Chads, although badly wounded, continued the fight, and every British tar seemed to fight with greater determination.

"The fight continued until the *Java* was a helpless wreck.

"Her flag was shot away, and only the Jack remained. This was hauled down, and the *Java* was added to the rich prizes of the war."

"I don't know much about the *Java*," said Hamilton.

"She is new to me, and I thought I was pretty well posted about the enemy," Tempest added.

"I never heard her name before," continued Vernon, "but I learned that she had just been fitted up for the accommodation of the governor-general of Bombay and his staff, all of whom were on board."

"And they are prisoners?" asked Tempest.

"They are."

"What a ransom they would have had to pay the *Lively Bee*!"

"Yes," laughed Vernon; "they are better off on the *Constitution*."

"You have brought great, good news."

"Indeed I have."

"What became of the *Java*?"

"She was fired, and only bits of charred wreckage remain of one of the best English frigates."

"What did Scarron think?" asked Tempest.

"Scarron was like a wild Indian. He danced and shouted, and when that did not satisfy him, he started singing 'Yankee Doodle,' but finally got on to his favorite chorus:

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"Charge the can cheerily,
Send it round merrily;
Here's to our country and captains commanding;
To all who inherit
Of Bainbridge the spirit,
Disdaining to strike while a stick is left standing."

"That Scarron must be quite a poet, or *pote*, as Bob calls him," said Hamilton, "for Bob is always singing, and when I ask him where he learned the words, he always answers in the one word 'Scarron.'"

"Did he tell you the verse Scarron declares the men on the *Guerriere* sang when going into action?"

"No; what was it?"

"You remember the words, Tempest, don't you?"

"I think so," answered Tempest; "they ran something after this fashion:

"Brave Dacres waved his sword,
And he cried: "Now, lads, aboard;
We'll soon stop their singing,
Yankee Doodle Dandy, O!"

"Yes, those were the words, and I remember Scarron singing a song giving our side of the story:

"Ye tars of our country, who seek on the main,
The cause for the wrongs your country sustain,
Rejoice and be merry, for bragging John Bull,
Has got a sound drubbing from brave Captain Hull."

The evening was far advanced before our friends thought of parting.

Tempest was the first to rise; he had not forgotten that his bride was alone.

Hamilton and Vernon had another bottle of wine, and were swearing eternal friendship when a constable, or watchman, as he was then called, entered, and looking at the two seamen, asked:

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"Do either of you gentlemen know a sea dog called Bob?"

"Bob! yes; what of him?"

"He is in trouble and wants to see you—not that you can do him any good."

"What is the matter?" asked Vernon.

"Oh, sir, as to that, it is a hanging matter. He is likely to die in a lofty position, 'twixt heaven and earth."

"What mean you, fellow?"

"Don't follow me; I am the watch."

"Are you? Then lead on, that I may see Bob, who at least will talk sense."

"Poor young boy, he'll be hanged, oh, yes, he will, and even your honors cannot save him."

CHAPTER XXIX.

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A LESSON IN MILITARY LAW.

Even the charms of Bertha Tempest's company did not cause her husband to neglect his duty.

When he was told that Bob was in trouble, he at once deemed it to be his duty and a privilege to go with Vernon and see in what the boy's danger consisted.

Bob was one of nature's rough gems, and Tempest believed there was a future for him which would repay Scarron for his kindness in adopting the waif.

"Lead on!" commanded Vernon, as the watchman seemed to hesitate.

Perhaps it was the hope of receiving something a little warmer than the cold air of the night which made the officer of the law linger over the blazing logs of wood on the massive andirons.

But Vernon, though he liked the fire's warmth as much as did the watchman, was eager to find Bob.

"Lead on. I must see the powder-monkey without delay."

"Powder-monkey! ha, ha, ha, that's good, it just suits. Eh?"

"What were you saying?" asked Vernon.

"Nothing, your honor."

"But you laughed——"

"Yes, your honor, I laughed—ha, ha, ha!—but at my thoughts."

"If your thoughts were so interesting I would like to laugh with you."

Vernon was in an unusually pleasant humor; perhaps the genial influence of the wine and the sharpness of the winter air combined made him feel bright and cheerful.

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"Come now, your thoughts, watchman; what were they like?" added Tempest.

"But your honor may be thinking I'm presuming——"

"No, no. Come, let us hear them."

"Well, your honor did call that harum-scarum boy, whose neck is likely to be lengthened, unless the good Lord forbid, a powder-monkey—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha! So he is a powder-monkey," laughed Vernon, "and I have several more of them on my ship."

"Audacious monkeys!" said the watchman.

"No, powder-monkeys. Perhaps you do not understand——"

"Never mind, sir. I'd like to remember that name, and have a laugh at it many a time."

It was no use trying to explain to the watchman, so Vernon desisted and walked along by the side of the officer, threading the streets, which were but sparsely built up in those days, to the place where Bob was confined.

The lockup was near the Potomac, and not far from the then new navy yard.

Bob was so great a criminal in the eyes of the watchman that, to prevent his escape, he had been placed in the stocks.

He was seated on a hard bench, his ankles fastened securely through holes in a movable board in front of him.

It was impossible for him to stand up, and as his seat was loose, if he wriggled about much the bench would be overturned, and he would fall on his back, with his feet, still imprisoned, above his head.

"Bob, what means this?" asked Vernon.

"I'm glad your honor came; but, sir, the watch tells me I'm to be hanged at daybreak. Not that I mind death—a powder-monkey ought not to be afeared—but I'd like to meet it on the deck of the *Lively Bee*, sir, and I'd like an English bullet to take me off rather than American rope."

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"What are you talking about? What have you been doing?"

"Nothing, sir. Nothing."

Now this was a strange thing. Here was a boy in the stocks, told he was to die at daybreak, and yet declaring that he was guiltless of all crime.

"But with what are you charged?" asked Tempest.

"Lor', your honor, they didn't charge me anything. I'd have paid if they'd let me, but they said I must die."

"But you must have done something wrong."

"If I did I'm tarnation sorry, but I ain't sure I did wrong."

"Tell us all."

"Well, your honor, I was expecting to leave the city to-morrow with the captain"—meaning Tempest—"and I kind o' thought that I'd see the big guns in the yard down there, so as I could tell the boys and Mr. Scarron all about them. So I went, and found the gates all locked; but I climbed the wall and got over. Then, you know, I walked about, looking at the guns, and I didn't see one as good as ours. A man came up to me and looked at my face for a long time before he spoke, and then he said: 'Who are you?' and I said, 'Bob.' 'Bob what?' says he, and I answered kind o' proud-like, 'No, I ain't Bob Watt; I'd more likely be Bob Decatur, or Bob Porter, or Bob Vernon, or Bob Hull,' I answered all in a breath, for I was mad; I thought Watt was English, and I didn't want to be thought anything but American. So he says, 'What's your other name?' and I thought he meant again that my name was Watt, so I swore, asking your honor's pardon——"

"Tell your story shortly," interrupted Vernon.

"It isn't a story, your honor, it's the truth, every word of it."

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"Go on."

"With that he struck at me, and I picked up a lanyard and knocked him on the head. He said he'd have me locked up, and I told him to do so, and if he did, Dolly Madison would look after me——"

"Dolly Madison—who is that?"

"Lor', your honor, it's the lady as lives at the White House—the President's wife—they all call her Dolly, and she's a friend of mine."

"You should speak more respectfully of the first lady in the land, Bob," Tempest remarked warmly.

"Now, Bob, that is all, is it?"

"No, your honor."

"What other crime did you commit?"

"The man asked me what I was doing there, and I told him, and I said that the gun on the *Lively Bee* was better than any they'd got. Then he showed how ignorant he was, for he said as how the *Lively Bee* was English, or if not, then she was only a private craft. With that I hit him again with the lanyard—I'd been busy while I was a-talking, and had put a good knot in the end, and, oh, my, you should ha' seen him fall! He went kersplash through a window and smashed it all to pieces. Then a chap came out with a gun, and I asked him what the window would cost, for I'd pay for it. He put up his gun, and I said, 'Don't shoot, I'll pay for all the damage.' But some more came running up, and I was tied up with a rope, and brought here, and the chaps talked about treason and murder, though I didn't know what it meant. And that's all."

"Quite enough, too, Bob; I am afraid you are in Queer Street."

"Is that the name of this street, your honor?"

"Don't be a fool, Bob. You've killed a man——"

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"Is that wrong, your honor?"

"Wrong? Why, it's murder!"

"But we killed a lot on the *Caroline* and the *Monarch* and——"

"But that was different, that was war."

"War? Well, and can't I kill a man as calls me a pirate?"

"No, Bob, or you will get hanged for it. Then you did wrong in going into the navy yard. That was treason; you might have been an enemy."

"I don't understand all your fine lingo, your honor. When I swam to the *Monarch* and climbed on deck and brought away the flag, you said I was a hero, for you wanted to know the size of the guns and all about the *Monarch*; now, when I climb a wall to look at our own guns—for they are American guns, aren't they?—then I'm to die, for that's wrong."

It was hard to make Bob see the difference between murder and lawful killing. As the poet Young wrote a hundred and fifty years before, Bob philosophized:

"One to destroy is murder by the law;
And gibbets keep the lifted hand in awe.
To murder thousands, takes a specious name
War's glorious art, and gives immortal fame."

No wonder that the poor illiterate powder-monkey was unable to see the difference in the degree of guilt.

"I will see what can be done, Bob, but I am afraid you are in a bad fix."

"See Dolly—I ask pardon, Mrs. Madison—and she will see to me."

"What can we do?" asked Tempest.

"I don't see my way clear. If I were on the deck of my own vessel I could adjudicate, but the laws on land are so confoundedly strange," answered Vernon. [Pg 176]

"But no murder was intended——"

"No, but what right had Bob in the place at all?"

"A boyish trick."

"Granted, but he had no right to use force. What does he mean by referring to Mrs. Madison?"

Tempest told him of the scene at the banquet, and though the captain of the *Lively Bee* was feeling far from cheerful, he was compelled to laugh at the comical adventures of the powder-monkey at the White House.

"We must find out whether the man is alive or dead," said Vernon, as the story of Bob's danger was again thought of.

"How?"

"We must go to the navy yard."

"Will not the morning do?"

"No. Why delay? I am sure Mistress Tempest will excuse you."

"I was not thinking of myself," answered Tempest; "but shall we not appear overanxious?"

"Zounds, man! I'd drag the President from his bed if I could save Bob."

And Tempest could well believe his captain capable of doing so.

The two visited the navy yard, and the officer on duty received them courteously.

He, however, declined to answer the question respecting the man who had been struck by Bob.

"You see, it really makes no difference whether he is alive or dead."

"It does, though."

"To the man and his family, yes, but to 'Bob' as you call him, no."

"How do you reason that out?" asked Tempest.

The man was evidently fond of talking, and crossed his legs with an assumption of comfort as he spoke. [Pg 177]

"We are at war, you admit that?"

"Certainly."

"Then, by the military code, for any one to enter an arsenal or navy yard without permission is to incur the fate of a spy. You know what that is?"

"Death."

"Just so; then Bob, climbing the wall and examining our guns, is a spy, and therefore must die."

"But he is a good American, though an ignorant one."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then in that case it is a pity, but we must expect to lose some good Americans in war times."

"But he is not a spy."

"Not now; no, he is in the stocks, but according to the laws of war he was a spy."

"The court must decide that."

"Yes; but it will be after his death."

"After his death?"

"Certainly. He will die at sunrise."

"Explain yourself. Who has adjudged him worthy of death?" asked Vernon earnestly.

"We are at war?"

"Certainly. This is admitted, or I should not have been thanked by the President for the captures I have made on the high seas."

Ignoring the latter part of Vernon's speech, the officer continued:

"Then being at war, an assault on an officer while on duty is an assault on the nation, and that is treason, and the punishment of treason is death."

"But the courts——"

"May say Bob was innocent, and his family will have that gratification, but he will be dead."

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"Why so?"

"We are at war—you are impatient—well, you admit that. Now, the officer who was assaulted was a sentry; an attack on a sentry during war time is an offense punishable by death, and the colonel commanding orders it within twenty-four hours."

"Who is the officer in command?"

"I am."

"But you have not ordered Bob's execution?"

"No, fortunately my superior happened to be here at the time. He gave the order, I shall carry it out."

"Where can he be found?"

"That I know not, for he left no word where he was going; but he is not expected home until the morning."

"What is the use of our staying here?" asked Tempest, *sotto voce*.

The officer heard the question, however, and took it upon himself to answer.

"Nothing, unless you like to sit by the fire and await the execution."

"Zounds, man, what do you take us for?" asked Vernon, indignantly.

"Most worthy gentlemen, who have had a most wholesome lesson in military law."

CHAPTER XXX.

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BOB'S GOOD ANGEL.

Our friends walked away, thoroughly mad with the officer, who had, however, only done his duty.

That Bob was condemned to death on such short notice and poor evidence may appear strange to our readers, but they must remember that the country was at war.

England had invaded the States, and had boldly declared that Washington should be reduced to ashes.

The republic was only a few years old, and there were many of the old tories who believed that England would subjugate the new nation, and reduce it to a principality or dependency of Britain.

These tories, while professedly loyal to the government, were more the friends of England.

They loved the glare and glitter of a court, and yearned for a native aristocracy. A king could confer titles, and these superficial creatures felt that a title was something worth having.

The government knew all this—knew that there was a vast amount of veiled treason in Washington and all the cities; and therefore in all the forts, arsenals and navy yards military law prevailed.

Trivial offenses were treated as though they had taken place before the enemy; the death penalty was meted out, without compunction, for breaches of discipline which at other times would have only received the punishment of solitary confinement.

Harry Vernon knew that such law was maintained on a man-of-war, but he could not understand why it should be applied on land.

He was the more puzzled because Bob was handed over to the civil authorities, and was placed in the city stocks.

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"What shall you do next?" asked Tempest.

The answer was given with such emphasis that Tempest never forgot and never could forget it.

"Do? Go to Paul Hamilton, and if he does not release Bob then I'll go to the President. If he

refuses, dang me if I don't bring the *Lively Bee* up the Potomac and fire its guns until—"

"Hush! that is treason!"

"Call it what you like. If hanging is in order, why, let them hang me; but I'll make them dance before they get the chance."

Paul Hamilton was in bed.

He thought Vernon and Tempest some drunken roysterers, and took no notice of their demand to see him.

The woman who answered the door of the secretary's modest house was alarmed.

Well she might be, for the men both wore swords and looked angry.

"Tell Secretary Hamilton that unless he comes down we will force our way to his chamber and ___"

"Sirs, he will see you, I am sure he will! please let me go and ask him again."

"Go, my good girl, and hurry, for time is pressing."

The girl had not waited to hear the whole of the speech; she had flown upstairs, and with sobs and tears had impressed the secretary with the necessity for prompt action.

Dressed in a very unbecoming *déshabille*, consisting of a long bathrobe, tied around the waist with a piece of red bellcord, and old-fashioned nightcap on his head, and a pair of slippers very much down at the heel, the popular statesman and cabinet minister descended the stairs.

"Well, sirs, what affair of great moment made you arouse me from my bed at this unseemly hour?"

Then, as a glimmer of light from the candle fell upon Tempest's face, the secretary exclaimed:

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"You are Lieutenant Tempest, are you not?"

"Yes, sir, and this is Captain Vernon of the *Lively Bee*."

"Ah! the bearer of the news which hath so charmed us. Forgive me for my *brusquerie*, but why call so late?"

Paul Hamilton was the very pink of gentlemanly courtesy, and after overcoming his first outburst of anger at being aroused from his warm bed, he was most cordial.

Tempest explained the object of his visit.

"There must be something wrong," he said; "if the boy, as you say, is condemned to die, why is he not in the military keeping?"

"That passes comprehension."

"Wait, gentlemen, until I dress, and I will see what can be done."

The secretary was not long in making his appearance, and went at once with Vernon and Tempest to the White House.

"Only the President can stay an execution," he explained.

It was no pleasanter for a president to be aroused from his slumbers than for an ordinary private citizen, and James Madison obeyed the summons with some little reluctance.

An order was signed, granting a stay until further inquiry could be made.

With this document our friends again went to the lockup, and found Bob sleeping as peacefully as he could, considering his unpleasant seat.

When told he was not to die quite as soon as he had been led to anticipate, he evinced so much exuberant joy that his bench fell over, and he sat down on the floor with a force far from pleasant.

Knowing that Bob was in no further danger of losing his life, our friends returned to their hotel, but not before learning that it was the commandant's daughter who had been the cause of Bob's transmission to the civil authorities.

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Miss Jones had thought the civil courts would not allow the military execution, at least until after Bob had been duly tried.

Her father, wishing to find an excuse for saving the powder-monkey's life, had acceded to her request, and thus given an opportunity for Bob's friends to raise a point on constitutional law.

Early next morning our friends, accompanied this time by Bertha Tempest, paid another visit to Bob.

To their delight he had been released from the stocks, and was walking up and down the little room.

"Who released me?" he repeated in answer to an inquiry made by his captain. "Oh, Lor', it was an angel from heaven, no one else could be so beautiful, saving Miss Bertha—I ask pardon, Mistress Tempest—and we all know she is an angel."

"I do not understand," interrupted Vernon.

"Lor', sir, she came here an hour ago, and I was still sitting like a trussed fowl, and she says, 'Let the poor boy walk about a bit;' and the watchman says, 'To please you, miss, I'd do anything, for

your smile is like a streak of sunshine on a cloudy day,' them's his words, and they were true, too, and I says, 'My cap'n, miss, is the bravest man as ever walked a deck, and if you want a good husband, why he is the man you could love.'"

"For shame, Bob, insulting a lady like that."

"She wasn't insulted, for her face showed she was pleased, it went so red, and she said as how she loved all brave men, but did not want a husband."

"Who is she, do you know?" asked Tempest.

"Yes, she gave the watchman her name, quite proud like, she says to him 'Let the poor boy,' that's me, cap'n, 'out of those stocks,' that's what they calls them things"—pointing to the instrument of torture—"and she says, 'if any one wants to know why you did it, tell them that Miss Pauline Jones asked you.' But, cap'n, there she is—miss, this is the brave cap'n I told you about."

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Captain Vernon turned and saw the blushing face of the commandant's daughter.

She knew that Bob's silly speech had been repeated to Vernon, and her face flushed, making her look far more beautiful, if that were possible.

She, however, possessed that easy grace which gave her control over her feelings, and mutual interest in the powder-monkey made her feel more at ease in talking with the captain of the *Lively Bee*.

Bertha seemed to cotton to her at once, and before many minutes were passed the two ladies felt that they would be fast friends for life.

The man who had been assaulted by Bob did not die; in fact, was scarcely injured, and as the powder-monkey had said, Dolly Madison did intercede and secured the young rascal's release.

Three days later Vernon, Tempest and Bob bade farewell to Washington and hastened to rejoin the privateer.

Bertha had made many friends in the Capital City, and though she found the parting from her husband hard to bear, she knew she would be well cared for, and that loving friends would try to cheer her in her solitude.

CHAPTER XXXI.

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THE REGINA, OF TORQUAY.

No one ever got a more royal welcome than did Bob, the powder-monkey, on his return to the *Lively Bee*.

He was, in the eyes of the crew, a gallant hero.

Not only had he been rescued from death in a most marvelous manner, but he had dined at the White House and had been praised by the President's wife.

His stories of Washington were so colored that they equaled those of the Arabian Nights or Baron Munchausen.

On the night after leaving port, Captain Vernon called all the crew to the quarterdeck.

"Men, our prizes were rich ones. The prize money is here and will be divided. I did not give it to you while in port, for I know what temptations there are, and many of you have wives and families who have a better claim on you than the harpies who prey on Jackies at every port. Have I done right?"

"Yes, you always do right, cap'n," was the general response.

"But some of you have no wives, but only sweethearts, and for their sakes I have kept back the money. Did I do right?"

The single men were just as well pleased as had been the married ones.

The crew had thought the prizes had not been sold, and were perfectly content to wait.

Had the money been distributed while in port, the best part of it would have disappeared and perhaps some of the best men deserted.

Not willfully, but Jack on shore is as innocent as a baby, and soon loses his money.

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Each man was surprised at the amount he had to receive, for even Bob's share was equal to two hundred dollars, while Mr. Scarron received four thousand.

The prize money is distributed according to rank, and as Bob once told a friend:

"The more fighting you do, the less prize money; the less hard work, the more money you get."

But they expected no exception to be made, and each received more than was expected.

Each man counted his share and jingled the coins and examined the bank notes with just as much interest as would a child.

When that little matter was settled, and the men again at their posts of duty, Tempest tapped the captain's shoulder.

"What ails thee, Master Captain?" he asked.

"What eyes!" murmured Vernon; but as he suddenly aroused from his reverie, he stammered like a schoolgirl.

Tempest could read the signs of the times, for he had experienced all the bliss of young love.

"Whose eyes?" he asked, smiling as he spoke.

"Whose? As if there were any other eyes on earth. I know you can sympathize with me, Tempest—I am in love."

"I know that."

"Could I help it? Did you ever see any one in your whole life more beautiful than——"

"Bertha," added Tempest softly.

"No—Pauline!"

"She is pretty, and I have no doubt she is as good as her face is lovely."

"Thank you, Tempest, for that. I don't want you to think I disparage Bertha, for I have no wish; but when compared to Pauline——" [Pg 186]

"Stay, captain. Let us be just. To me, my wife is the most beautiful, the most peerless woman on earth. To me she is perfection. I know of nothing which could be compared to her beauty, to the flash of her eye, to the sweetness of her smile. But what she is to me, Pauline Jones may be to you. Let us not make comparisons. We each judge from our own standpoint."

"But you are prejudiced——"

"Stay, captain, I have not finished. If you thought of my wife as I do—if she was to you the perfection of heaven transferred to earth, you would hate me for being her husband, for you would want her. If Pauline was to me what you think her, I should hate you, for I should wish to claim such beauty and perfection for myself. No, no, old fellow! Our loves are all they should be. And I pray Heaven to strike me dead that moment I first begin to think any woman more beautiful or more perfect than my Bertha."

"Sail, ho!"

That cry put a stop to all love talk.

From love-sick swains the officers were speedily transformed into warriors.

"Where away?" asked Vernon.

"Due east."

"What ensign does she fly?"

"I cannot see. She is a schooner, and evidently armed."

"Bear down upon her, that we may know her value."

All was excitement and flurry.

The crew were anxious for a brush with the enemy, and had come to think the *Lively Bee* invincible.

No United States war ship was near, and so the field was open to the little privateer.

To the great disgust of the crew, however, the distant craft flew the Stars and Stripes, and so, was not an enemy. [Pg 187]

For several days the *Lively Bee* flew over the water without seeing the sail of an enemy's ship.

The men were getting weary and disheartened.

Amusements palled on them, and they were fast settling into a state of chronic grumbling.

Then it was that the masthead shouted:

"Sail, ho!"

And the very words sent a thrill through the crew, for they knew that unless there was a doubt about the nationality of the vessel, no cry would have been raised.

"Where away?"

"South, southwest," was the reply.

"What is she like?"

"A schooner."

"Good, and her ensign?"

"She flies the English colors."

Vernon ordered the Union Jack of England to be run up, and all appearances of war to be obliterated.

He gave orders to the helmsman to run the *Lively Bee* close to the stranger.

When within gun range, Vernon fired a shot across the Englishman's bow.

This was answered, and the stranger slackened sail.

The two vessels were now only a musket-shot away, and Vernon saw that the stranger was the *Regina*, of Torquay.

"Whither bound?" asked Vernon through the speaking trumpet.

"To Baltimore."

"What cargo?"

"Tin, and tinplates."

"Have you met with any Yankee men-of-war?"

"No. But two English ships are eastward ten degrees."

"Can we reach Jamaica without molestation?" asked Vernon.

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"Easily, if your ship can fly as she ought."

The vessels had now got within pistol-shot, and Vernon could see that the *Regina* carried two guns.

He began to be suspicious.

Perhaps the ship was not a merchantman at all, but a regularly equipped man-of-war, with a good fighting crew below deck.

However, "faint heart never won fair lady," and Vernon determined to take the initiative.

He gave his orders to Scarron, and instantly the English flag was lowered, while the Stars and Stripes ran proudly up the halliards.

But the change was noticed quickly by the *Regina*, and almost as quick as a lightning flash, a large crew burst upon the deck, armed with cutlasses and boarding irons.

CHAPTER XXXII.

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HOW BOB KEPT HIS OATH.

All doubt had ended. The *Regina*, of Torquay, professedly laden with tin, was as well armed as a war vessel, and was either a British privateer or a man-of-war of the second class.

The captain of the *Lively Bee* was not afraid of a hand-to-hand encounter.

But with all his courage, he almost trembled when he saw that he was outnumbered almost two to one.

He looked at his own men to see how they felt, and to his great joy their faces were radiant with happiness.

The men were wishing for a fight, and saw a foe worthy of their steel.

The two vessels were so close that a seaman could easily jump from one to the other.

The *Regina* took the initiative, and commenced lashing the two vessels together.

But though the Britons were eager to fight, the Americans were equally so, and, headed by Vernon, the crew of the *Lively Bee* leaped on the *Regina's* deck, much to the surprise of the latter's crew.

The two vessels grated against each other, and as they did so the British fired their pistols right in the faces of the Americans.

Through the powder smoke the flash of steel could be seen, and like Trojans the two crews fought.

The men cut and slashed with their cutlasses, and fired off their pistols with deadly earnestness.

Marksmen posted in the tops of each vessel picked off men from the enemy's decks whenever an opportunity offered.

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The captain of the *Regina* saw his men driven back, and sprang into the thickest of the fight to rally them.

As he did so it was seen that the blood was streaming from a wound in his thigh.

While every one felt sympathy with the brave man, yet that did not deter any from continuing the fight.

Harry Vernon sprang forward to meet his rival.

Their swords crossed, and the crews seemed to involuntarily fall back, as though to give the men a chance to fight a duel.

Vernon was in full vigor, and had not received a scratch.

Blow was met by blow, and the two men fought as though the whole issue of the war depended upon their prowess.

Presently one of the topmen, thinking that Vernon was in danger, fired, and a bullet crashed into the British captain's brain.

But when the *Regina's* crew saw their captain fall they fought more like demons than men.

The battle was one of the fiercest waged during the war.

The deck of the *Regina* looked like a slaughterhouse, the dead bodies lay scattered in piles and singly.

Every officer of the British ship was killed, and one of the crew, at last tired of the fight, took upon himself to strike the flag.

His action was received with an uproarious shout of joy, in which some of the British joined.

Both sides had suffered.

The British lost three-fourths of her crew, while the *Lively Bee* mourned the loss of Mr. Webster, the wounding of Scarron and four of the crew.

Poor Webster had fought like a giant, and several times his sword had been whetted with British blood before he received his fatal wound. [Pg 191]

Scarron was badly wounded in the right thigh, and the surgeon of the *Regina* declared that nothing but amputation could save his life.

Beyond a little surface wound in his arm, Vernon escaped, while Tempest lost his little finger, which was shot away early in the strife.

But very few thought of their wounds, for the prize was a rich one.

The *Regina* had on its manifest an entry for a cargo of tin plates.

Now, at that time, tin was a valuable commodity, and the crew of the *Lively Bee* felt that their fortunes were made.

It was impossible to transfer such a heavy cargo, and so the *Regina* had to be towed back to port.

A small crew was placed in charge, commanded by Tempest, and included the powder-monkey, our old friend Bob.

As Bob would not go without Scarron, and that old salt was in the hospital, otherwise the cockpit, of the *Regina*, Captain Vernon with very good grace allowed the powder-monkey to form part of the prize crew.

Among the prisoners was a West Indian, who had been 'pressed, and had been a very reluctant sailor.

He was a good seaman, an able pilot, and as clever a navigator as any that sailed the seas.

In fact, he had at one time been master of a brig, but grog had been his ruin, and he was reduced to the ranks, and as man before the mast earned his living.

Luiga, for such was the name he chose to go by, more, perhaps, because so few could pronounce it correctly, took a great fancy to Bob, and told him such yarns of the Southern seas as fairly turned his head.

"When this war is over, I shall turn pirate," said Bob, "for I want to be rich." [Pg 192]

In Bob's experience, which was all obtained second-hand from yarns spun by the seamen, pirates were all wealthy.

The prizes they captured were all rich ones, and the dangers of a pirate's life were but few.

Luiga loved a wild life, and so stirred Bob's blood that the two became, not only fast friends, but prospective partners in a piratical cruise to be undertaken when the war with England was at an end.

Every leisure hour of the day and night the two were together, and Luiga gained such power over the powder-monkey that he felt he could do as he liked with him.

"How are we to get a fast schooner?" asked Bob one evening.

Luiga looked mysteriously wise as he whispered:

"Take the one that suits us best."

"But that would be stealing," suggested Bob, whereupon Luiga winked his eye and laughed.

Bob's face turned crimson, for he was not yet quite so hardened as to contemplate deliberate theft, though he was prepared to devote his life to it as a pirate.

"I know a vessel which would just suit," suggested Luiga.

"Do you? Where?"

"Can you keep a secret?"

"I swear I can."

"Then I will tell you. This is the very boat."

"But——"

"I know. You stole it from the English; why not let us steal it from the Americans? We would fight the English until the war was over, and then the vessel would be our own."

"I don't understand," said Bob half-hesitatingly, for he did not wish to be considered anything but smart. [Pg 193]

Luiga proposed a grand scheme of mutiny.

The *Regina* could be easily seized, with its cargo, and taken to the West Indies, where the tin could be disposed of and the cruise of the piratical craft commenced.

Bob listened attentively, and really appeared to agree to every particular.

"What is the tin worth?" asked Bob.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Luiga. "Tin is valuable, but there isn't so much of it."

"Not much?"

"No; there might be bullets underneath the tin."

And Luiga winked mysteriously.

"When could we seize the ship?" asked Bob.

"The very first dark or foggy night. I have spoken to four of the crew of the *Regina* and they have agreed to join."

Tempest, with that generosity which characterized his every action, had given the prisoners their freedom, and they had made use of it to plan a mutiny.

As far as was known, Bob was the only American in the secret.

Bob had sworn not to reveal the scheme, and he wanted to keep his oath, but he was equally determined to frustrate the mutineers, even if he had to forswear himself.

He could write a little, and made up his mind to reveal the plot to Tempest in that way.

But when he thought of all he would be compelled to write he grew despondent, for it would take too long.

Bob stole a piece of paper from the captain's desk, and a pencil.

Writing was pretty hard work. He sat down at the desk, and found it necessary to rest his head on his arm, so that his mouth would be on a line with the point of the pencil.

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Then his tongue had to be between his lips, else how could he write?

Bob, as we know, had another peculiar habit; he could not think without scratching his head.

So, taken altogether, writing was an arduous undertaking.

After several attempts, Bob declared himself satisfied with his effusion.

It was as peculiar as the writer himself. Some of the letters were printed, and gave the missive a very strange appearance, especially when the printed letter came in the middle of a word.

"He made me swear not to tell," the letter commenced, "or your hair would stand on end."

Bob scratched his head as he read it.

"That's good!" he murmured. "I ain't splitting."

His spelling was as bad as his writing, but those little mistakes we have rectified, as it is with the subject matter, not the correctness of the orthography or chirography, that we have to deal.

"But if I dare tell you, you'd put all the prisoners in irons before the night got dark, and there may be bullets underneath the tin. Your boy, Bob."

When perfectly satisfied with the epistle, Bob began to wonder how he could give it to Tempest without the act being seen.

After considerable head scratching, he put the paper on Tempest's plate, the dinner table being set.

Then he stood outside the cabin to watch whether the letter reached its proper destination.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

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THE MUTINY QUELLED.

Lieutenant Tempest saw the paper as soon as he entered the cabin, and was very much inclined to resent the placing of dirty paper on his dinner plate.

But when he saw Bob's signature, he became amused.

He was about to throw the document away, when Bob shouted from the outside:

"Read it, sir."

"Ah! You there, Bob? What is it? Want more grog, or extra biscuits, or is it something you want for Mr. Scarron?"

Bob happened to see Luiga nearby, and knew that the West Indian was listening.

"Yes, cap'n," he answered, "the doctor sent me for some, and I didn't see you, so I wrote it down."

Tempest glanced over the paper, and saw at once that Bob was acting very diplomatically.

"Will you ask the doctor to see me about it? He had better come at once."

Luiga heard Tempest's remark and felt easier.

"Thought he had split. If he had I would have slit his throat for him before he was an hour older."

Tempest was alone.

"What does he mean?" he asked himself.

"'He made me swear.' Who did? 'Make my hair stand on end,' 'put prisoners in irons before night got dark'—really, Bob, your composition is an enigma. 'Bullets may be under the tin.' It is a conundrum hard to read."

The doctor entered at that moment.

Bob had sense enough to see that he was suspected by Luiga, and so he must remove that suspicion and trust to Tempest to find an excuse for the English doctor. [Pg 196]

Luiga was close to the cabin when the doctor entered, and all his suspicions vanished when he heard Tempest say:

"Ah, doctor! Bob has been trying to make me understand what you want for poor Scarron. A doctor's prescription is usually hard to read, but Bob's is worse."

It so happened that the doctor had really commissioned Bob to ask Tempest for an extra allowance of grog for Scarron.

The English doctor was one of the garrulous kind, who gloried in the sound of his own voice.

"Smart boy, that Bob. I should say he is a real good fellow."

"Yes, as true as steel, though no great friend of your nation, doctor."

Luiga stayed no longer.

He was satisfied that Bob had not betrayed him.

The doctor stayed and chatted for half an hour, and Tempest enjoyed the change, for it was a pleasure to have an educated man as companion out on the open seas.

But all the time that the disciple of Esculapius was talking the lieutenant was puzzling his brain to know what Bob really meant.

"Place all the prisoners in irons. That seems harsh. Shall I do it, or shall I question Bob first?"

The latter course was resolved upon, and Bob was duly cross-examined; but he was true to his oath, although he evaded the strict spirit by saying:

"If I hadn't sworn not to tell you, cap'n, I should say that there would be mutiny the first dark night; but I did swear not to tell you, so cannot say it."

No diplomat ever got around a difficult problem easier than did Bob, and Tempest saw that the powder-monkey had some secret information which he could not make public. [Pg 197]

The day passed on as most days do when the sea is calm and the sky unruffled by even a cloud, and Tempest hesitated on his course of action.

If the *Lively Bee* had been nearer he would have sought advice from his captain, but that meant delay, and action must be taken at once.

It was better to be on the safe side, and he had resolved to imprison the men, when a sail was sighted.

That gave him the excuse he wanted.

The prisoners were ordered on deck, and, as they stood in line, Tempest saw an ominous scowl on more than one face.

"Men, I have sent for you to thank you for your behavior during the time you have been prisoners of war," he began, and the men wondered at such a novel introduction. "I have always believed in human nature, and still do so, but there are times when prudence demands certain precautions to be taken. A sail appears on the horizon, and we may have to fight; therefore, it becomes necessary to order you below until all danger has passed."

Luiga scowled and looked threateningly at Tempest.

"You'll place us in irons next, eh?"

"If it is necessary, yes," answered Tempest without a quiver in his voice.

"Then you'll get no chance with me. I'm a free man, and so are we all—eh, men?"

"Ay, ay, Luiga!"

"Then I say I'll be your cap'n, and there ain't men enough on this ship to say me nay. Will you stand by me?"

"Ay, ay, Luiga, we will."

"Seize him," cried Luiga, pointing to Tempest, who had stood calmly and stoically during the mutinous language. [Pg 198]

But as soon as Luiga gave the order, he quietly raised his pistol and shot the West Indian dead.

Drawing his sword, he challenged the mutineers to come on and he would meet them single

handed.

"No, no, we were wrong. We ain't murderers nor mutineers, we're fighters," said one, and his speech was echoed by the others.

"Tell me Luiga's plot and I will believe your honesty."

The spokesman told of the intended mutiny, and, to Tempest's surprise, told him that Luiga was always hinting that the boxes of tin contained bullets as well as that valuable commodity.

Although Tempest appeared to trust the men, he kept them under close surveillance.

Curiosity led him to have one of the boxes of tin opened, and, to his great surprise and joy, he found that under the sheets of tin there were hundreds of sovereigns, doubtless intended for the British paymaster-general.

Such a discovery was too important to be concealed from the *Lively Bee*, and early the next morning Captain Vernon was signaled, and put off in a boat for the *Regina*.

Tempest told Vernon of his suspicion, and a general overhauling of the cargo resulted in the finding of over a hundred thousand pounds sterling.

The cargo was consigned to Thomas Arbuthnot, and Vernon remembered that the paymaster of the English army bore that name.

It was the richest prize taken during the war, and Vernon declared that if he was allowed to keep the prize he would quit privateering, and settle down on shore.

All speed was made to land, and Vernon reported his capture to the government.

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He was allowed to keep his prize, and so all the crew of the *Lively Bee* shared in the prize money, the amount of which almost took away their breath.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

[Pg 200]

VERNON'S SUCCESS.

Intoxicated with success, the crew of the *Lively Bee* urged Vernon to make one more voyage.

But he had given his word that he would retire, and though only to himself, it was binding.

"I would like the *Lively Bee* to make another cruise," he said, "and if Lieutenant Tempest will take command I shall be delighted."

Tempest was still thirsting for glory, and accepted the offer.

"Go, my friend!" said Vernon, as the new captain of the *Lively Bee* was leaving Baltimore to join the famous privateer—"go, bring back prizes if you can, act with honor, as I know you will, but above all remember that I would rather hear that the *Lively Bee* was at the bottom of the sea than that she was captured by the British."

A number of privateers were in the Chesapeake Bay at the time, and many friends of the crews had assembled on the docks.

Those who heard the speech of Vernon cheered lustily.

"Never give up the ship!" cried one old salt.

"No, that I swear!" assented Tempest, solemnly.

Among those who watched the departure of the gallant privateersman stood Bertha Tempest and Pauline Jones.

Bertha's eyes were red, for she had parted again with the husband she so loved, while a glad light shone from the flashing orbs of Pauline.

Perhaps it was caused by the fact that Captain Harry Vernon—"Handsome Harry," as he was called in Washington—was to return to the Capital City with them.

Vernon was wealthy.

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Not according to our ideas of wealth to-day, for we reckon riches to mean away up in the millions, whereas a man with two hundred thousand dollars in those days was looked upon as a veritable prodigy of wealth.

Harry Vernon had considerably over a hundred thousand dollars, and was well content with his fortune.

The *Lively Bee* had left the city, and was far out of sight.

In her track followed the *True-blooded Yankee* of Boston and the *Lovely Lass* of Salem, both first-class privateers, and both with records hard to beat.

Then came that fast-cruising schooner, *Jack's Favorite*, specially commissioned to search for the *Essex*, which had not been heard from for some time.

As Vernon saw them leave with all their wealth of canvas, a sigh escaped him.

Already he was secretly planning again for life on the ocean wave.

But when he looked at the sweet face of Pauline Jones, he felt that there was a harbor in which he would like to rest—a haven of peace if she did but share it with him.

Intrepid in war, fearless in the angriest storm, he yet was a very coward in her presence; for, although he loved her with an ardor amounting almost to worship, he was too bashful to tell of his love.

Perhaps the story would never have been told had not Bertha helped him.

And when, with blushing face and almost stammering tongue, Pauline admitted that Vernon was her ideal of bravery and courage, and that she admired him, he was so elated that Washington did not seem large enough for him to call his home.

But before the secret was known and Vernon's suspense ended, several weeks had passed, and the year had ripened into spring, and the buds and blossoms had developed into summer fruit and flowers.

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No tidings had been received of the *Lively Bee*, and Bertha was beginning to feel uneasy; her face was getting wan, her eyes were losing their luster.

Great excitement was of daily experience; sometimes the news making the people hilarious with joy, and at others plunging them into the depths of despair.

Washington was in mourning for the loss of Lawrence, who, though wounded, had shouted to his men:

"Never give up the ship!"

The *Chesapeake* had been captured by the *Shannon*, and brave Lawrence's dead body reposed in Canadian soil.

Then came the news of disasters on land, and the prospects were dark for the young Republic.

The patriotic soul of Harry Vernon was chafing at idleness, and he had almost resolved to fit out another privateer, but was persuaded to wait a little longer for news of the *Lively Bee*.

Then came news of the *Essex*, and all the country was filled with the praises of Captain Porter, who had captured so many British vessels.

But while according so much praise to Porter, they did not fail to mete out their approbation of the courage of the young midshipman, Farragut, who, though a boy in years, had been given the command of the captured ship, *Barclay*.

All Washington was reading Farragut's letter home.

"I was sent as prize-master to the *Barclay*," he wrote. "This was an important event in my life; and when it was decided that I was to take the ship to Valparaiso, I felt no little pride at finding myself in command, at twelve years of age. The *Barclay* had been recaptured from a Spanish *guarda costa*. The captain and his mate were on board; and I was to control the men sent from our frigate, while the captain was to navigate the vessel. When Captain Porter ordered us to proceed to Valparaiso, the captain of the *Barclay*, a violent-tempered old fellow, was furious.

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"He told me that he should take the *Barclay* where he pleased, but never to Valparaiso.

"I considered that my day of trial had come, for I was a little afraid of the old fellow, as every one else was. But the time had come for me at least to play the man, so I mustered up courage and informed the captain that I desired the topsail filled away.

"He replied that he would shoot any man who dared to touch a rope without his orders; he 'would go his own course, and had no idea of trusting himself with a nut-shell'—meaning me. And then he went below for his pistols.

"I called my right-hand man of the crew, and told him my situation; I also informed him that I wanted the main topsail filled.

"He answered with a clear 'Ay, ay, sir!' in a manner which was not to be misunderstood, and my confidence was perfectly restored.

"From that moment I became master of the vessel, and immediately gave all necessary orders for making sail, notifying the captain not to come on deck with his pistols unless he wished to go overboard; for I would really have had little trouble in having such an order obeyed."

We can readily understand how such a letter would arouse the people to a frenzy of excitement.

And thus, in alternate enthusiasm and depression, the months passed away.

The people had not realized what war meant, they had not yet faced the dread monster, as in a few months they were destined to do—when the British marched into their city and burned the Capitol and the White House.

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That was not dreamed of then, and the people feasted only on the news of distant conflict.

"If the war does not end by the New Year," said Vernon to Bertha Tempest, "I shall fit out another privateer."

"What would Pauline say?"

"Would she care?"

"Ask her."

"Bertha, you raise my hopes—why do you speak like that? You know something—does she care

for me?"

"Why not ask her?"

"If I did and was repulsed——"

"But if you were not!"

"I will ask her. I will be bold. I will go on my knees and say: 'Pauline, I love you, will you be my wife?' and then if she repulses me, I shall—shall go to the war and not care what becomes of me."

"But if she says yes?"

Vernon was startled, for the question was asked by Pauline, who had entered unobserved.

"You heard?" asked Vernon, half idiotically, for unless she had heard she could not have asked him the question.

"Of course I heard what you said, you silly, conceited fellow!"

"And your answer?"

"Any one but you knew what it would be months ago."

"You mean it—you do love me?"

It is needless saying what answers were given to Vernon's questions.

Bertha had withdrawn and left the young people together, and the hours slipped by, to them uncounted and unheeded. [Pg 205]

When Bertha did re-enter the room, Vernon exclaimed, with all the enthusiasm of a schoolboy:

"Bertha, we are to be married in two weeks; isn't it too bad that Pauline wants to wait so long?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

[Pg 206]

THE END OF THE LIVELY BEE.

The marriage of Harry Vernon with the daughter of Colonel Jones was an event of note in Washington society. No matter how quiet the contracting parties wished it to be, the people said, "No."

Vernon was a public man. He belonged to the public, and his marriage must be a public one.

Such was the verdict of society, and to its edict he had to bow.

The ceremony was but halfway through when a man, wan and weary looking, entered the church and took a seat in the rear pew.

None seemed to recognize him until the bride, leaning on her husband's arm, was nearly opposite him.

Then the groom turned, and with a glad shout left his wife and clasped the stranger's hand.

"Tempest! My dear fellow, you don't know how glad I am to see you."

But there was another equally—nay, if possible more—glad, and that was the loving Bertha.

She did not faint.

She was made of heroic stuff, and while she rested her head on her husband's shoulder she whispered her congratulations on his return.

"But you are ill. You look so poorly."

"Yes, dear, but I am alive, and to be with you will be better than medicine or physician's skill."

At the wedding feast the honored guest was John Tempest.

All were waiting for his story, all knew that there would be sadness in its recital. [Pg 207]

Only one question had Vernon asked.

"What of the *Lively Bee*?"

And Tempest had answered:

"At the bottom of the sea. All lost save honor."

Then the story was told.

"The *Lively Bee* had reached the roadstead of Fayal. The neutral flag of Portugal floated from its citadel, and I thought we were safe.

"But while we were lying in the port, getting fresh provisions and repainting, a British squadron, composed of the *Plantagenet*, seventy-four guns; the *Rota*, thirty-eight, and *Carnation*, eighteen, hove in sight.

"The governor of Fayal sent for me and said he was too weak in military forces to protect me, so I must take my chance.

"At night four barges, let fall from the enemy's ships, each manned by forty men, made toward

us.

"I ordered to beat to quarters, and when my men were at their posts I shouted:

"What boat is that? Answer or I'll fire."

"You know I had four guns, as well as the long one, and when the British refused to answer I ordered a broadside to be fired.

"The carnage was terrible, for my gunners kept loading and firing with astonishing rapidity.

"So hot was the reception they got that the barges returned to the ships.

"But another barge had come up on the leeward, and we were boarded almost before we knew anything about it.

"Come on, my lads," I shouted, "and we'll drive them into the sea."

"My men fought so desperately that we did drive them into the sea, and the remaining boats put back.

"It was not to be expected that we should escape.

[Pg 208]

"I ordered the long gun to be loaded and pointed down the hatch.

"When morning came the enemy had closed in upon us and the time had come when we must either destroy the *Lively Bee* or give her up to the English.

"Haul down that rag," shouted the captain of the *Plantagenet*, pointing to the Stars and Stripes.

"Never," I answered, and my men cheered lustily.

"I saw the boats put off, manned with boarders, and I knew the hour had come.

"With my own hand I applied the match, and a ball went crashing through the bottom of the *Lively Bee*.

"Then I applied the torch, and a column of flame rose up to the clouds, and told the British that we could die but never surrender.

"We leaped into the water and all the crew reached the island, where we were safe under the neutral flag.

"We could not get any vessel to bear us away, for the British would have pursued and captured the vessel in order to secure us.

"So we stayed there, almost in a starving condition, for three months, until the coast was clear and we managed to get away.

"We have all returned—all save Mullen—he too rests at the bottom of the sea with the vessel he loved so much.

"We have lost all, but we did what we could."

Tempest's eyes were moist with tears as he finished his story.

Vernon clasped his hand.

"No, you have not lost all. A nation thanks you for your work. A nation places the laurel crown on your brow, for you saved the flag; you lost your ship but you saved your honor—your country's honor, and in that defeat you are greater than if you had gained a victory."

"You have not lost all," exclaimed Bertha. "You have a loving wife and faithful friends."

[Pg 209]

"And I thank Heaven that I have fought for my country and never surrendered its flag," added Tempest, as he resumed his seat.

Congress thanked Vernon and Tempest for their patriotic work, and on the archives of the nation was ordered written a true account of the "Cruise of the *Lively Bee*."

THE END.

THE CREAM OF JUVENILE FICTION

[Pg i]

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Transcriber's Note:

This story was first serialized in *Golden Hours* from November 19, 1892 to January 28, 1893. This electronic edition is derived from a later hardcover reprint.

The transcriber added the table of contents.

Images may be clicked to view larger versions.

The use of italics for ship names was made consistent.

Some inconsistent hyphenation (e.g. "overburdened" vs. "over-burdened") was retained.

Some inconsistent capitalization (e.g. "jackie" vs. "Jackie") was retained.

Inconsistent spellings of the name "Leech"/"Leach" were retained, as both spellings appear an equal number of times.

Page 27, changed "fufilled" to "fulfilled."

Page 57, changed "answerd" to "answered."

Page 116, removed unnecessary quote at end of third paragraph.

Page 124, removed unnecessary quote at end of third paragraph.

Page 125, changed "usless" to "useless."

Page 132, removed unnecessary quote at start of last paragraph.

Page 140, removed unnecessary quote at end of second paragraph.

Page 145, added missing quote after "prize number two."

Page 159, added missing quote at beginning of page.

Page 165, added missing quote before "Murmurings."

Page 174, added missing quote at end of first paragraph.

Page 190, removed duplicate "the" from "the thickest."

Page 192, changed "seamean" to "seamen."

Page v, changed "cutivate" to "cultivate" and "wholsome" to "wholesome."

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