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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE YOUNG DELIVERERS OF PLEASANT COVE ***



THE PLEASANT COVE SERIES.

THE YOUNG DELIVERERS OF PLEASANT COVE.

BY ELIJAH KELLOGG,

**AUTHOR OF "LION BEN OF ELM ISLAND," "CHARLIE BELL, THE WAIF OF ELM
ISLAND," "THE ARK OF ELM ISLAND," "THE BOY-FARMERS OF ELM
ISLAND," "THE YOUNG SHIP-BUILDERS OF ELM ISLAND,"
"THE HARD-SCRABBLE OF ELM ISLAND," "ARTHUR
BROWN, THE YOUNG CAPTAIN."**

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The Pleasant Cove Series.

TO BE COMPLETED IN SIX VOLS.

1. ARTHUR BROWN, *The Young Captain*.
 2. THE YOUNG DELIVERERS.
(Others in Preparation.)
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PREFACE.

Courage to dare, fortitude to endure, enterprise to accumulate, and prudence to retain, are qualities that, however valuable in themselves, when in excess impart to character a coloring dry, hard, and even render it repulsive. But if beneath the exuberance of young life we detect the germs of those sympathies that, travelling beyond the limits of self, recognizing the common bond that links all humanity, holds fellowship with the joys and sorrows of others; that true nobility of soul, not derived from without, but existing within, and ennobling whatever it touches, —it is then that youth becomes most attractive, its efforts win sympathy, its example is contagious. With ability to accumulate, pluck to dare, and under the influence of the principles referred to, these young deliverers consecrate themselves to a high purpose, encounter peril and fatigue to break the fetters of their humble friend, and restore him to his country and friends.

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THE YOUNG DELIVERERS OF PLEASANT COVE.

CHAPTER I. THE OVEN.

In courtesy to those who have not read the preceding volume of this series, it is proper to observe that Arthur Brown, the principal character of it, is a young man, twenty-one years of age, rescued, in circumstances of peculiar peril, by Captain Rhines, who (in the discharge of obligations incurred to the young man's father), together with others, puts him in command of

the brigantine "Arthur Brown," named for the young man's father, who perished at sea.

The vessel, built by Charlie Bell at Pleasant Cove, modelled for speed, with a numerous crew of able seamen, having already made a successful voyage to Marseilles, a blockaded port, is now ready to sail again. Walter Griffin is a Pleasant Cove boy,—belonging to a very athletic, resolute family,—who began active life in a store, but, finding that mode of life ill adapted to his inclinations and capacities, became a sailor, shipped in the brigantine before the mast, and is now first mate.

Ned Gates is a Salem boy, in his nineteenth year, rather small of his age, was rescued at the same time with Arthur Brown by Captain Rhines (the details of which occurrence will be found in the previous volume), being a townie and at school with Arthur, was an excellent boy, and much beloved by him.

On the former voyage, Walter and Ned were before the mast together, in the same watch, and slept in the same berth, till, on the home passage, Walter was promoted; their friendship still continues, although with fewer opportunities of intercourse.

Jacques Bernoux is a Frenchman, native of Marseilles, fisherman by occupation, and thoroughly acquainted with the coast.

James Peterson is a negro, born of slave parents in Martinique, but sold in boyhood to an American captain, residing near Pleasant Cove, and obtained freedom when slavery was abolished in New England. Although ignorant and much addicted to intemperance at particular times, he was very much liked (especially by two families, Captain Rhines's and Edmund Griffin's), and by all the boys, because of other sterling qualities. He was possessed of great personal strength, an excellent seaman and pilot, first-rate calker, perfectly honest, and of a most affectionate disposition. The boys idolized him, because he taught them to wrestle, tie sailor knots, and, when at leisure, was ever ready to make playthings for them. On stormy days, when it was known he could not work, his house would be thronged with boys, coaxing him to make one thing or another. Luce, his wife, was a splendid cook, and nothing suited them better than to be asked to stop to dinner; victuals tasted a great deal better there than at home. Ben, his oldest son, was as great a favorite with the young fry as his father,—excelling in all sports that required strength and agility, always good-natured, never presuming, and full of queer, witty sayings. Ben Peterson was (in boy language and estimation) a bully fellow.

Thus it fell out that the cross-path which led to his house was deeply worn by young feet. Going to Peterson's, and having a good time, were convertible terms.

By the efforts of his young friends, he was persuaded to abandon his cups, and taught to read and write; the result of which was, that he immediately began to acquire property, became a freeholder, and was universally respected and beloved.

Captain Murch, of the mast ship Casco, coming home sick, a new captain, of the name of Aldrich, was put in to go the voyage. It was very difficult to get a crew for her, as he was generally disliked. Captain Rhines, anxious to get the ship away, persuaded Peterson and another by the name of Danforth Eaton to ship first, in consequence of which a crew was obtained.

One evening, while the ship was lying in Martinique, Peterson (then acting as cook, the cook having gone to the hospital, sick) was sent ashore by the captain with letters. In the morning he was missing. Search being made, it was evident that he returned on board, as a fire was burning and breakfast partly prepared; at length his kerchief was discovered on the fender, and the dock was dragged, but without finding the body. The captain concluded that he had met with some old shipmates the evening before, and was prevailed upon to take a friendly glass, which waked up the old appetite, and the next morning he had turned out early, obtained more liquor, fallen from the gangway plank, and the tide had swept the body to sea. The crew, on the contrary, refused to believe he drank, but thought he went ashore to get something to season his stew, made, in his haste, a misstep, and fell overboard.

Captain Rhines and the community at large inclined to the opinion of the crew. His death was universally lamented; the boys sadly missed their colored friend, and the grass grows over the well-worn path that leads to his dwelling.

Captain Murch resuming the command, Aldrich went to England. Percival, the mate, becoming intemperate, was reduced to the position of lumper around the wharves in Boston.

There was, however, something quite mysterious about the disappearance of Peterson: his family refused to believe he was dead, and opinions were divided. It long formed a topic of dispute and discussion at the winter firesides; some contending that a man so athletic and agile as Peterson would have caught hold of something, and never would have been drowned between the vessel and the wharf; at least, he would have made an outcry; to which it was replied, that he might have struck his head on the wharf or fender, and stunned himself. In reply to this, it was urged that a negro's head is too thick to be affected in that manner. After a while, other topics of interest came up, and the vexed subject was gradually dropped. Before the arrival of the Casco, bringing that sad news, the brigantine had sailed for Marseilles. Thus Walter and Ned went away ignorant of the whole matter.

Walter and Ned had made their preparations for this voyage to Marseilles with feelings quite different from that blithesome, buoyant mood in which they weighed anchor before.

The death of Uncle Isaac, as he was fondly called by the young people, had blighted anticipations of pleasure to be derived from going into the woods during the holidays; and the loss of one who united in his single person the characters of parent, counsellor, and most genial companion,

weighed heavily upon their hearts. Having been called to his bedside, his last words of affectionate counsel to them were fresh in their remembrance.

Ned Gates—Little Ned, as he was called at sea to distinguish him from a man by the name of Edward—had grown remarkably, in both size and strength, since his recovery from wounds received in running the broadside of an English ship on the last voyage, and no longer merited that appellation.

It is customary on shipboard for the boys and ordinary seamen to furl the light sails. The royal, therefore, on board the Arthur Brown, during the last voyage, pertained to Ned; but, in a vessel that spread so much canvas as the brigantine, it was by no means a small sail. When the wind blew fresh, and especially if the canvas was wet, all the way he could manage it was to furl the yard-arms first, which, however, was not seaman-like. In very bad weather he could not furl it at all, although he sometimes exerted himself till his finger nails were torn to the quick, and the blood spun from his nostrils.

It was a great mortification to him when a man was sent aloft to help him. He would look as meeching as a dog caught in the act of sheep-killing, and not get over it for a week.

After Walter, on the homeward voyage, was promoted to a chief mate's berth, he, in order to save Ned's feelings, and enable him to handle it, had a royal buntline rove, the legs of which, led through thimbles on each leech, which spilled the sail, that is, threw the wind out of it, gathered it up, and enabled him to handle it in all weathers.

Even this chafed the proud-spirited boy, because he thought everybody knew what it was done for, and felt that it was a tacit acknowledgment of incompetence.

Walter and Ned went on board the vessel in Boston some days before the crew came up from Pleasant Cove. Ned goes aloft in the night, unreeves the royal buntline, takes the thimbles from the sail, the block from the eyes of the rigging, and the thimbles from the tie, and stows them all away.

"Ned," said Walter, the next day, as he was looking over the running-rigging, preparatory to bending sails, "where is the royal buntline?"

"I thought, sir, it wouldn't be needed," replied Ned, slightly coloring; "so I unrove and stowed it away."

"All right. I missed it, and thought some dock thief had stolen it."

The shrewd course of Captain Brown, in making Jacques Bernoux a handsome present for his past services, and thus attaching him to his interests, was now evident. Jacques was not merely a fisherman, but also a pilot, and thoroughly acquainted with the coast all along the shores of the Gulf of Lyons, and especially between Toulon and Marseilles. Along some portions of the gulf the land is low, and there are many lagoons, separated by narrow portions of land, into which the sea is forced by storms; but towards Toulon the shores are bolder, and the land broken into many rocky heights and promontories, intersected by creeks and coves. With every one of these Jacques was thoroughly acquainted, as he had been a smuggler before his marriage.

All the passage Captain Brown was studying the charts of the French coast, and obtaining information from Jacques in respect to it.

Arthur Brown had no ordinary foes to deal with. Lord Hood was in command of the Mediterranean fleet, with orders to take all vessels, of whatever nation, attempting to enter Marseilles or Toulon, and under him was Nelson, in the Agamemnon, sixty-four guns—a very fast ship, that is, for an English ship. It was merely a question of shrewdness and seamanship, as the Arthur Brown was unarmed, and could not resist.

In order to pass the time at sea, Jacques frequently told stories in relation to his expeditions with the smugglers, and, among other things, described a cove where he had often aided to land cargoes of smuggled goods, and which was singularly adapted for concealment.

The captain listened attentively, but, at the conclusion of the story, merely remarked that it must be a curious place.

It was the middle of an afternoon, and the vessel well in with the land, when they made a sail, which Jacques, after looking at it a long time with the glass, declared to be Nelson's ship.

"I don't care who she is," said the captain; "she's dead to leeward. She can't catch us, and we can dodge her in the night."

The wind was blowing a wholesale breeze, and fair.

"Jacques," said the captain, laying his hand on the pilot's shoulder, "do you remember that singular cove you were telling about a fortnight ago?"

"The oven, sir?"

"That's it. Could you take a vessel in there in the night?"

"Yes, captain, night or day. I know it as well as I know the way to my berth."

"It is bright starlight; the wind is fair, and plenty of it. Put this vessel in there before daylight, and I'll make it the best night's work you ever did in your life."

"I can take you in, captain; but remember it is an oven. If any of the fleet see you, you are gone."

"I'll take the risk."

With a spanking breeze, and every inch of canvas spread that would draw, the swift vessel sped on her way, and long before daybreak was under the shadow of the land, with her studding-sails and all her square-sails taken in.

The entrance was so narrow that two vessels could not have gone in abreast, while high bluffs and overhanging foliage made it as black as a wolf's mouth. The ship's company held their breath. The vessel seemed rushing on to certain destruction; but, as she rounded a high bluff, the wind was left behind, and, after running twice her length into a calm basin, Jacques ordered the anchor let go, and she was brought up.

"There, captain," said Jacques, "I've put you into a harbor where no wind can touch you, and about half way between Marseilles and Toulon. The rest is your affair."

"How much of this vessel, lying here, could be seen from a passing ship?"

"A vessel of this size, nothing below the top-mast-head. Besides, men-of-war don't care to come in here. There are batteries on the shore a mile from this, each way. If they thought of looking, they couldn't see so small a spar as this vessel's topgallant-mast without a glass."

The morning light revealed a most singular place. On the starboard hand, a rugged promontory, covered with a thick growth of pine and fir, mixed with oak and ash, rose perpendicularly from the sea. The other, and port side of the entrance, was formed by a small island, its extremity, like that of the other point, terminating in a long, rocky, and wooded bluff, but of less height. (Perhaps some of our young readers may have noticed, and thought strange, that seamen never say, "Put the helm to larboard," or speak of the larboard side of a vessel, but say, "Port the helm," "Hard a-port," or, "Hard down." *Port* is a military term borrowed from the French, an abbreviation of "*Porta la timone*," meaning, "Carry the helm to the left," because soldiers, when they port arms, carry the pieces to the left.)

The inner extremity of this island, where it approached the main land, "locked by" (as the seamen say) another wooded point of the main shore, affording between them only a shallow and tortuous passage for small boats. The position of these two points completely intercepted the view of the harbor from the sea. It was only from the main shore that it was possible to look into it through the passage between the points.

It must be evident to our young readers that the captain of the brigantine could only hope to escape capture, or at least the loss of vessel and cargo, by concealment. In entering this oven, he had completely cut himself off from all chance of flight, since, should the enemy discover him, a man-o'-war's crew might easily enter, and tow the vessel out or set her on fire.

On the other hand, if undiscovered, he was in a safe harbor; the cargo, in case of necessity, could be landed, and transported to Marseilles or Toulon by land; and it was sufficiently valuable to leave a handsome profit, even if the vessel was lost.

"It is best," said the captain, "to be on the safe side, especially if you have to do with English sailors, commanded by Nelson, who hates a Yankee as much as he does a Frenchman. If we had to do with Frenchmen and Spaniards, it would be another matter."

He instantly set the crew at work to send down the foretopgallant-mast and maintop-mast, with the yards. He then run a hawser to a tree, and, paying out on the cable, hauled the vessel in close under the high cliffs on the starboard hand, and, not satisfied even with this, cut branches from the trees, and lashed them to the head of the mainmast and also of the foretop-mast. It was now impossible to see the vessel from sea; and even a boat pulling along shore could not perceive her without actually entering the mouth of the oven. This was next to impossible, as man-o'-war boats, liable to be fired upon with small arms and field-pieces, were not inclined to venture near the shore without some special object, or information of some valuable prize, which might repay them for the risk. Jacques, having received a very handsome reward from the captain, went to Marseilles to see his family, and bore a message from the captain to merchants there, to whom he sold his former cargo.

CHAPTER II.

NED PROPOSES TO IMPROVE THE DIVINE PLAN.

It was the intention of Captain Brown to wait till a gale of wind scattered the blockading fleet, and, taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded, run into Marseilles, as the distance was short, and the course along shore.

The crew, having little or nothing to do, except that they hauled the brigantine ashore, cleaned her bottom, and covered it with a fresh coat of soap and tallow, mended the sails, and overhauled the rigging, spent the time in the manner most agreeable to their own inclinations, mended and made clothes and hats, lounged, bathed, or slept. Boys so well conditioned and full of life as Walter and Ned, could not pass their time in any such way as that.

The first thing they set themselves about after the vessel's bottom was cleaned, was to make a rope ladder and fasten it to one of the lower limbs of a large, evergreen oak, that stood on the highest part of the bluff; the ladder was made in this manner: they fastened three parts of a rope to a large branch near the body of the tree; a studding-sail boom was placed upon the ground and lashed to the roots of other trees; to this they fastened three old bull's eyes, rove the rigging

through them, and set up their shrouds by the end taut with a Spanish windlass—an extemporaneous machine, but of considerable power, made by sailors with two levers and a piece of small rope; they then rattled the shrouds down (fastened small ropes across to step on), and were provided with an excellent method of ascent.

They next made fast a single block to the top of the tree, rigged a whip, with it hoisted up poles and planks, laid a platform, and railed it in with poles lashed to the limbs of the tree. It was a project of Ned's, Walter having told him about Charlie Bell and his boy companions constructing one somewhat similar in the top of the big maple, on Elm Island. This, however, far exceeded that, inasmuch as they were possessed of rigging and all requisite materials to work with.

Walter, who at first did not feel much interested in the effort, but engaged in it to gratify Ned, soon became very much so in consequence of working on it, and proposed a great many additions to the original conception of Ned, which was merely to construct a lookout, from which, with the excellent glass of the captain, they might see a great distance, and watch the motions of the blockading fleet.

"Ned," said he, "let us make some chairs to sit in; we don't want to sit down flat on the platform."

"Well, that will be nice; but what shall we make them of?"

"Empty bread barrels," replied Walter, who, a Griffin, inherited all the mechanical ingenuity of his race. Forthwith they "roused" the grindstone out of the long-boat, the rusty tools from the tool chest, ground a chisel, draw-shave, and plane-irons, and Walter filed the handsaw.

The tools in order, Ned set to work planing some pieces of boards on one side. Walter took a barrel, and after nailing well the hoops, sawed it across, just above the second hoops, to a depth which left sufficient wood to form the back, being careful to stop at a joint in the staves. He then made a cut of the same depth and height from the ground on the other end and the other side.

All that held the barrel together now was the bilge hoops of each end; these he cut through, when the barrel dropped apart, making two chairs, as far as backs and legs were concerned, but minus the seat. He now took a flat hoop, bent it round the inside of the barrel to the height of the saw-cut, fastened the ends together with a nail, and gave it to Ned. "There, Ned, is the measure of your bottom."

He then by a mark which he had made along the edge of the hoop, proceeded to nail on supports for the seat; Ned, in the mean while, putting the pieces of board side by side, laid the hoop on them, marked out and sawed off the pieces he had planed, trimmed the edge with a draw-shave, fayed in the bottom, and nailed it, while Walter was at work upon another barrel; he then nailed a piece of hoop around the top edge of the back to keep the staves in place, and cut a hole for the hand to move it by. When they had made four they hoisted them to the platform, and sat down with the greatest satisfaction imaginable. The backs were rather low, and perfectly straight; but so were all the chairs of that period; and there was not the least danger of the legs of their chairs coming out. People in those days had not time to loll; there were not so many inventions for the comfort of lazy folks as at the present.

They were soon convinced that their labors possessed a practical value, and were appreciated: the captain, finding the platform an excellent lookout, easy of access, the chairs convenient, took his telescope up, and would sit there and smoke. Walter, noticing this, made a box and fastened it to the railing to keep the telescope in, and protect it from the weather. The crew also went up there; so they made four more chairs to accommodate their company. Mr. Hadlock, the second mate, was very partial to the tree.

"O, Walter," said Ned, as they sat conversing after dinner, "I wish James Peterson was here."

"So do I; he is such a good man, and could tell us so many things, for he knows so much more than Bernoux, and is well acquainted in this country."

"O, isn't he good, Walter! How much he did for me when I was sick!"

"Do you know, Ned, one of the first things I can remember is going down to Peterson's with mother or grandsir (when he was able to walk about), and Luce baking me turnovers, and Peterson making playthings for me. I tell you there wasn't a spear of grass in the path that ran across lots from our house to James's. I used to eat half my meals there; victuals tasted better there than anywhere else. I tell you, Ned, it takes Luce to cook. I heard Lion Ben tell father that if Peterson had received an education, there wouldn't be many ahead of him."

"He thinks a great deal of you, Walter. Don't you remember, the night you was going to be landed on that rock right in the ocean, and left there all alone, how he came forward and insisted on going in your room?"

"There's another I wish was here," said Walter, in a subdued tone, "and who will not be there to shake hands with us when we get home from this voyage."

"Uncle Isaac," said Ned, his eyes filling.

Walter made no answer, and the conversation dropped. After sitting a while in silence, the boys, saddened by the tender and touching associations invoked, left the spot, went on board the vessel, and set to work stopping a leak in the coating of the mainmast. The next day a peasant brought along a straw hive of honey to sell. The boys bought some, and, on going to the tree to eat it, found there the captain and second mate, with whom they shared, as they had purchased no small quantity.

While they were talking and eating, wishing for a gale of wind—a real Gulf of Lyons gale—to

scatter the fleet, they saw a man-o'-war get under way, evidently for England, convoying two supply-ships.

The captain ascertained her name through Jacques; and it afterwards appeared that Nelson wrote to his brother by the man-o'-war that the inhabitants of Marseilles and Toulon were starving; that the blockade had been so strict, not even a boat could get into either place or on the coast with provisions. While this brave seaman was battling with the furious gales, heavy seas, thunder, lightning, and squalls of the Mediterranean, Captain Brown, Walter Griffin, Ned Gates, and Sam Hadlock were lying among the foliage of the oak, eating honey and soft bread, or watching him through the glass, and counting the very buttons on his coat, as he stood back and forth along the coast, patient, resolute, faithful to his weary, harassing task, and congratulating himself upon the strictness of the blockade.

"For nineteen weeks," writes he, "my crew have not had a morsel of fresh meat or vegetables; only salt junk, hard bread, and lime-juice."

During all this time, a Yankee brigantine, loaded to the bends with wheat and good yellow corn raised by Captain Rhines, Uncle Isaac, Lion Ben, Charlie Bell, and their neighbors, and pork, beef, saltpetre, and arms bought in England or the British provinces, was lying, almost within gunshot, in a *cul-de-sac*, where she could not escape if discovered, and coining money for her officers, crew, and owners.

While thus eating and chatting, they were joined by Jacques, who had returned from a visit to his family.

"Pilot," said the captain, "is there any good place near here where we can fill water?"

"Yes, captain; never a better."

The next morning, the water-casks were put into a boat, and Jacques piloted them to the place. It was a lovely spot. Over the edge of a precipice crowned with pines poured, in one broad sheet, a swift mountain torrent into a rocky basin, from which the white froth floated off into the cove. The water was of sufficient depth to enable them to approach with the boat to the edge of the basin, from which they dipped the clear, cool water—every instant renewed, and through which the white pebbles were gleaming—in buckets, and, passing them from hand to hand, filled the casks without taking them from the boat.

"We must be lively, boys," said Walter, "and get it in before the tide falls. O, I forgot; there is no tide here; so we can take our time."

Our young readers will recollect there is no tide in the Mediterranean, or but very little, except as influenced by storms.

As they were returning, Ned said, "Wouldn't it be nice if it was so at home, Mr. Griffin?" (putting on the Mr. before the crew.) "There's Captain Rhines's Cove: the water ebbs way out, quarter of a mile of mud. If you want to go out at low water, you must shove off a skiff, and wade in the mud. Only think how nice it would be to be able to go just when you pleased! no bother about the tide, and having to work in the night to save it; and only think what an everlasting sight of work and expense it would save in building those great long wharves, that vessels may lie afloat at low water!"

"I don't know about that, Ned. I think there's something to be said in favor of the tide. Just call to mind what an abominable dirty hole the port of Marseilles is; all the filth of the city pouring into it; no motion only in a gale of wind, and not much then; all that foul stuff stewing and simmering under a southern sun. If there was a tide to make a current, bring in a fresh supply of water, and carry off this slime every six hours, how much better it would be!"

"I never thought of that, Mr. Griffin."

"There's another thing I should think you would have thought of, Ned," said Mr. Hadlock.

"What is that, sir?"

"Why, in respect to cleaning, calking, or graving a vessel's bottom, repairing, or stopping a leak. See what a fuss we had here the other day, cleaning and putting tallow on this vessel's bottom; had to heave her out, and work and wade in the water at that. Now, if we had been at home, all we need to have done would have been to haul her on to the beach in Captain Rhines's Cove that you despise so much, at high water, ground her, and have eight or ten hours to work, on a good sand beach, too."

"I guess," said Ned, "I should have done better to have held my tongue."

Our readers will bear in mind that there were no railways in those days by which vessels are hauled out of the water, or dry docks into which they are floated at high water, and the water pumped out; but our forefathers grounded them across logs or blocks, or, if they wanted to get at the keel, hove them down on one side, by means of tackles made fast to the mast-heads, till the keel was out of water.

"That is not all, either, Ned," said the second mate. "If the tide didn't ebb, there wouldn't be any clams; and that would be a very serious affair indeed to the fishermen who want bait. Once it would have caused starvation in some cases, and might again."

"How could that be, sir?"

"I'll tell you, my boy. You were born and have grown up in Salem, and don't, perhaps, realize the value of clams; but I do. I've heard old Mr. Griffin, the mate's grandfather, say, that when he was

cutting down the trees on his place, before he could raise anything, and met with bad luck in hunting, he had been, the first summer or two, so put to it for food, that he had to boil beech leaves, the ends of the branches and the tops of the pine trees (that are very tender in June, when they are growing fast), to preserve life, and that if it had not been for clams, he and his family must have starved. I'm sure they were a great help to us after my father died, for we were very poor. I was young, not strong enough to do much work; but I could dig clams, and my little sister picked them up. I could, with them for bait, catch fish and lobsters, and with a little rye and Indian bread and some bean broth, mother got along, and kept us all together. Had it not been for the clam flats, I don't know what we should have done."

"I can say amen to that," said Willard Lancaster; "and I know that when Peterson used to drink so bad, and brought little or nothing home to his family, that Luce and the children got most of their living out of the clam flats."

"It is not only the value of the clams as food," said Walter, "but a good part of the fish that are cured and exported to all parts of the world to feed thousands, are caught with clam bait."

"That, indeed," said the captain. "What vast quantities of fish are exported from Salem to the West Indies and other places! and that is but a trifle compared with the whole amount."

"Yes, indeed, sir. I didn't think of all these uses for the tide. I was thinking only how convenient it would be to have it always high water for a few things."

"There are many other things," said Walter, "that the ebb and flow of the tide are very convenient for. Three years ago, father was building a wharf in our cove: the logs were master great ones; it would have taken twenty men to place them where we wanted them; but father and I cut the scores in the other logs to receive them, rolled them into the water with the oxen, then tied a rope to them, floated them at high water to the spot, held them till the tide ebbed, and they settled into the grooves just as easy as a cat would lick her ear. We didn't lift an ounce; the tide lifted all those big logs for us. Did you ever see the Casco, Ned?"

"No, sir; she was always away when I was at Pleasant Cove, but I've heard say she is a monster."

"So she is—seven hundred tons; you may judge what her anchors must be. Well, I can tell you what they are: the best bower is 3000, and the small bower 2700."

"O, my! What a junk of iron that must be!"

"We rode out a gale of wind in Cadiz, with both anchors ahead and all the scope out. It blew a gale, I tell you, and the anchors were well bedded. When we came to get under way for home, we hove up the small anchor; but the other we hove, and hove, and hove, and couldn't start it. At last the captain said, 'Avast heaving; let the tide take it out.' We waited till low water, hove her down as long as we could catch a pawl on the windlass, and made all fast. At length the tide began to flow, the ship began to bury forward; down she went, till the water was coming into the hawse-holes, the cable sung, and the tar began to stand in drops on it with the strain, when all at once the anchor let go with a surge that threw every man from his feet. The tide was very convenient then; if it had not been for it, we must have gone ashore, got a grappling, and grappled to the fluke of the anchor, or left it. Again the tide is very convenient for a timepiece; if you keep the run of the tide, you have the time of day."

"It is about as well to take things as the Lord has arranged them," said the captain, "and be contented and thankful."

"That," said Ned, "brings to my mind a piece mother read to me once, about a man who thought, if the disposition of affairs had been committed to him, he could have arranged them a great deal better than they now are; that it was not at all proper that so large and noble a thing as a pumpkin should be attached to a vine lying upon the ground, while so insignificant a thing as an acorn or beech-nut grew upon a lofty tree: but falling asleep one day under an oak, an acorn falling on his nose awoke him, when he exclaimed, 'Wretch that I am! Had it been a pumpkin it would have dashed my brains out.' I don't know as I recollect it aright, but that was the amount of it."

"It is certainly better, Ned, to be in the hands of a wise and good Providence, than to be left to plan for ourselves. If the disposal of events had been committed to you or me, we never should have suffered the Madras to spring a leak, and endured what we did upon the raft; yet it carried us to Pleasant Cove, to Captain Rhines and Charlie Bell, and was the best thing that could have happened to either of us. Way enough, men; fend off, Jacques."

CHAPTER III.

THE BOYS CONSCIOUS OF HIGHER AIMS.

Those luxurious boys, not satisfied with eating soft bread, lolling in their new chairs, bathing and frisking in the blue waters of the Mediterranean, resolved to sleep in the Bird's Nest, as they had christened the structure in the tree. This was a plan of Ned, who proposed taking their beds up into the tree and sleeping there.

"Don't let us sleep on that old straw, but throw it away and get some fresh," said Walter; "though, upon second thoughts, I don't know where we should get it. These peasants only raise rye, and

rye straw is too hard, only fit for stuffing horse collars. Let us get moss and beech leaves, Ned; the old leaves that have fallen off will be just the thing, only dry them."

"So we will."

"I'll tell you what I've been thinking of. Wonder I didn't think of it before."

"Let's hear."

"We've been here some time, little or nothing to do, and have not been fifty rods from the beach. Suppose before two days there should come a gale of wind, a real snorter, set the blockading fleet a flying, everything head over heels, and it is, up topgallant-mast, send up topgallant and royal yards, mast-head the topsail, man the windlass, up anchor and away for Marseilles. By and by we get home. Charlie Bell and Captain Rhines say (as I know they will), 'Well, boys, have you seen any place you like better than home? What kind of land is it? What crops do they grow? Did the people seem happy, and do they live any better or know any more than we do? Do they live by farming, fishing, lumbering, or manufacturing? Are they any better off since they killed their king and a good part of their aristocracy than they were before?' We should have to scratch our heads, and say, 'We don't know; had plenty of time, but didn't go anywhere.' 'What did you do with yourselves,' they will ask. 'We made a nest in the top of a tree, took our beds up, and slept there; made chairs, sat there, talked, and went a fishing.'"

"Don't say any more, Walter. I'm sure you've made it out bad enough."

"Then, perhaps, they would think, if they didn't say it, that it was rather small business for a mate of a vessel who wanted to be master, and a young fellow who wanted to be mate, and had run the broadside of a hundred gun ship, and been twice wounded, to be spending all their time building birds' nests: better leave that to the birds, and set about the business they were made for."

"Come, grandfather," replied Ned, patting Walter's cheek, "just leave that alone; this nest is not without its use. We must have some place for a lookout to watch the fleet: and, were it not for this, the captain would have to go the best part of a mile to a hill. These chairs are a real comfort to him, as well as to us. I'm sure it is our duty to do anything we can for him, who is so good to us, and puts us ahead. A fellow must have some fun to oil the wheels and make everything run smooth; besides, *grandpa*, you will be obliged to allow, that if I first thought of making the nest, you have put ten times the work in it I ever intended doing; and I'm sure the chairs were all your own getting up; and now you want to get moss to fill beds with."

"There, you've said enough, you little monkey."

"I think this nice warm climate, just like May, makes anybody feel lazy and shiftless. Only think, Wal, at home, now, they are all covered up in snow, icicles hanging from the cattle's noses, and big roaring fires in the houses; and here I saw yesterday, right on the side of that little knoll, strawberries in blossom."

"I guess you're right, Ned," said Walter, stretching himself; "and that is just as our Joe is always saying—the frost puts the grit in."

"I guess so, for there don't seem to be much grit in the folks here; it seems as though the women did half the work."

"Let us ask the captain, Ned, for liberty to go and take a look at the country; then we can get information, and something to fill our beds with, besides having a good time—pleasure and profit, youngster."

"Where shall we sleep; out doors?"

"Yes; take a blanket (the weather is warm), just to keep the dew off."

"And we can carry provisions?"

"Yes, and fireworks."

"I should like that; it would be something like what we were going to do at Pleasant Cove, when uncle Isaac was hurt. I never was in the woods; always have been either at school or at sea."

"I don't think you'll find much woods, I can't see from the tree any that I should call woods. There seems to be as much about this oven as anywhere, and I suppose that was left to shelter and conceal the harbor for the smugglers."

"I tell you, Walter, 'twill seem real nice, after being penned up aboard ship, to lie down under a tree, stretch out, loll about, no 'anchor watch,' don't care whether school keeps or not, even if you don't do any more than that."

"There's a roll of canvas under my berth. I'll ask the captain to give us enough to make a couple of packs."

Having obtained the canvas, needles, and twine, they were soon in the Bird's Nest, sewing and talking over their proposed tramp. They invited Jacques to make one of the party; but he was about to return and resume his employment of fishing, and in the mean time keep watch of the English fleet, and pick up any information that was valuable, until his services should be again required as pilot.

Walter sent Ned to the captain for liberty, which he not only gave cheerfully, but added, "There's nothing to be done; you may stay as long as you like; only be sure, if you see any change in the weather, to hurry aboard."

Ned, delighted, thanked the captain most enthusiastically.

"You know, Ned," said he, "you have not enjoyed much for a boy. You've never had a great deal of boyhood, you were kept at school very closely by your parents, then went to sea, was cast away. When you got over that, went right off again, was wounded, suffered a great deal, and then was disappointed in respect to the good time you were reckoning upon at Pleasant Cove with Mr. Murch and Walter. Now you are a right down good boy, Ned, and I hope you will enjoy yourself, for nobody can tell what will befall us next."

Having set out at sunrise, they travelled till noon, and after gaining the summit of a high hill, lay down beneath a tree to rest. Their life on shipboard had entirely unfitted them for walking; the strap of the packs cut their shoulders, and they were thirsty, for the dry, barren plains of Provence afforded no water: they were extremely fatigued.

After stretching themselves at full length upon the ground to rest, not caring whether school kept or not, they went in quest of water, and at last came to a place where a very little trickled from a seam in the ledge, but was evaporated by the hot sun, nearly as fast as it ran, barely moistening the rock.

"What shall we do, Walter?"

"I'll show you."

He broke some branches from a clump of pine bushes, set them against the rock, then sat down with Ned under them. The bushes kept off the sun, and the water, no longer evaporating, collected in a little cavity of the rock, and they were bountifully supplied. Opening their packs, they began to eat with the greatest relish.

"We're all right now, Wal!" said Ned.

"I shall be when I get this junk of beef down. It came from Elm Island—Lion Ben's old brindled ox. Only see the fat on it!—that goes to the right place, Ned. I call this rather a poor, mean country; the soil seems to be a hungry gravel, all burnt up; scarcely any wood."

"I suppose they don't need a great deal, only a little to cook with, the weather is so warm."

"The captain says they have cold winds in the spring, from the mountains, and hail and snow—hail enough sometimes to kill sheep and destroy the whole crop."

They now resumed their packs and went on, chatting and making their observations in respect to the land and the peasants whom they saw at work in the fields.

"Where do these people live?" asked Ned. "I don't see a house, although there are plenty of fields, and people at work in them. Only see the women shovelling sand and picking up rocks! As I live, if there ain't a horse and jackass working together!"

"Look over there," said Walter; "see those oxen, the yoke lashed to their horns."

"Wonder where they cut any hay!" said Ned; "don't see any mowing-fields."

"I don't suppose they need much; they have no snow to lie, and the cattle graze all winter."

"I should think so, by the looks of them."

"O, Ned, what kind of a tree is that, with those rough things on the branches? Let's go and see. Why, it's a chestnut! Here are some just such as they sell in the stores."

"Why, Walter, didn't you ever see a chestnut tree before?"

"No; they don't grow our way; only walnuts and butternuts."

"There's plenty of them in Massachusetts. But what are all these stone walls built round the sides of the hills for? and what is that growing on them?"

"Vines; I've seen those in Spain."

"But how do they ever get any manure up there?"

"Lug it on their backs in baskets."

"I guess this land must all belong to one man, for I don't see any division fences; only once in a while a ditch, or a little pile of stones. He must have an everlasting sight of land, for I can't see any house. What kind of a tree is that with pale green leaves?"

"An olive."

"Is that what they make oil from, Walter?"

"Yes."

"And that one next to it?"

"A fig tree."

"How do you know?"

"Jacques showed me one at Marseilles, last voyage, in a garden."

"And these others?"

"I don't know what they are."

"I think it's queer. Here are pines, beeches, and ash, just such as we have at home, and olives and figs growing right among them. I don't see, when we get all the rest, why we can't have the olives and figs."

They now ascended a hill, and, upon reaching the summit, looked down upon a vale, which presented so striking a contrast to the dry and barren soil they had passed over as to cause them to exclaim, "How beautiful!"

It was indeed a lovely spot. The place itself, the productions of the earth, and surrounding scenery, were so entirely different from anything the boys had ever witnessed, that they remained for some moments lost in silent wonder. It was sheltered from the mountain blasts by hills, whose sides were terraced and covered with vines. Skirting the base of the hills, on the north side, flowed a broad, deep brook, from which the water, conducted in canals in all directions, watered the whole vale. Not a fence, ditch, or hedge marred the beautiful harmony of the picture, where the soil, abundantly watered, sheltered, and beneath a fervid sun, manifested an exuberance unknown in more northern climes.

"Look, Walter. I see the spire of a church, or something that looks like it, between those two hills."

"Yes; I see it. Those people seem very kind. Let us go and have a talk with that old man who is at work at the foot of that tree with such a lot round him; all the family, I guess. You speak to him, Ned."

Walter knew that the French he had learned from the exiles at Salem was quite different from the patois of Provence, being the language of cultivated society, whereas Ned had picked his up from Peterson, Jacques, and Mr. Bell, and it was the very dialect of this locality,—the dialects, in different parts of France, differing almost as much as the climate. Walter had also learned many words from the same source as Ned.

"I'll speak to him; I can talk their lingo first rate now; but let us sit down and rest a while."

"I'm real tired; where shall we sleep to-night?"

"Under that high cliff, the other side of the valley; and we can drink from the brook. I see some trees there, and we can make our fire right under them, drive a stake into some crevice, hang our kettle, and have a cup of tea."

"Think we couldn't get some milk of those folks, Wal?"

"I expect it would be goat's milk, if we did."

"Goat's milk is first rate, I tell you. We had two goats aboard the Madras."

"Perhaps it is; but it always seemed to me that it must taste just as a goat smells."

"O, Wal, what a boy you are! Who ever heard of tasting a smell?"

"I don't care. There's a mighty difference between a cow and a goat. A cow's breath is as sweet as a rose."

CHAPTER IV. GABRIEL QUESNARD.

As they lay with heads pillowed on their packs, "Ned," said Walter, "I wish we could imitate Charlie Bell, John Rhines, and Fred Williams in something besides building a platform in a tree-top, or getting coral and sponge to take home with us, or even obtaining information about the people and country we are in."

"I think this is first rate," said Ned, sticking his legs, which were stiff and swollen with walking, up in the air. "What would you have, Wal? I think we've both done pretty well. I made a hundred dollars a month clear, last voyage; you, twice that; which is more than they all did when they started."

"But we have been hired, and have only done what other people laid out for us; whereas they struck out for themselves, planned, worked, and built a vessel, as you may say, out of nothing, owned and loaded her to boot."

"There were four of them, and they had good advisers; but, when left on that rock alone, didn't you get hold of Jacques, and wasn't it due to your resolution and contrivance that the vessel got into Marseilles, and made all she did make?"

"Ned, do you think getting money or being smart is to be put before everything else?"

"I guess I don't," said Ned, rolling over, and putting his arm round Walter. "I think having friends to love who love you, and to do what is right, is to be put ever so much before that."

"Is there nothing else?"

"You mean," said Ned, in a subdued tone, "being what my mother calls pious."

"No. I never talk of that; I know nothing about it; wish I did."

"What *do* you mean, then?"

"I'll tell you. I don't suppose it is boasting to say that we have been smart, trusty, and filled the places we were put in, perhaps, as well, in our way, as they in theirs; but they have done other things that we have not."

"What are they?"

"They have done good. Isaac Murch persuaded Peterson to leave liquor alone, and taught him to read. How Charlie, John, and Fred helped old Mrs. Yelf after her husband died! and she, with her old fingers, wove the royal of the Hard-scrabble, and luck has followed that vessel from the day she was launched. Isaac Murch said he left his luck behind him when he left the Hard-scrabble; for Seth Warren has made double, in proportion to the cost of the two vessels, in her to what he has in the great ship. She has never lost a spar or a man; and it's my belief she never will be cast away, but die a natural death in the head of Captain Rhines's Cove, where the squirrels will make nests in her cabin, and hoard their acorns, the robins will build on her spars, the little children have her for a play-house, and the big boys to dive from. Uncle Isaac said he knew just as well before she sailed that she would be lucky as he did afterwards."

"Why?"

"Because a robin built her nest on the gammon-knee, under the bowsprit; and Captain Rhines put off rigging her a week, that the nest might not be disturbed."

"I never heard of that before, Walter; but Charlie Bell told me how much Captain Rhines and Uncle Isaac did for the widow Hadlock."

"There's one thing he never told you, I'll warrant: that Fred Williams was once one of the worst boys in town; and he and John reformed him, took all the money they had earned, and set him up in business."

"No, he never told me that. At home they praise us, and call us smart. We risked our lives last voyage, and are ready to risk them again, to make money."

"But Captain Rhines, Uncle Isaac, Lion Ben, our Joe, and Charlie Bell risked their lives to save yours and the captain's."

"Yes; and see what Captain Rhines has done since for our captain and his mother's family."

"You know what Uncle Isaac's last words were, Ned. I shall never forget them; they keep coming up. 'What I now like most to think about, boys, ain't what I've done for *myself*, but to help others.'"

"I'm sure, Walter, I feel just so; but I don't know what we can do like them. If Uncle Isaac was alive, he could tell us."

"Nor I, either; but I don't mean to wait to do some great thing to make a sound, but take hold of the first thing that comes up."

"I'm bound to do what you do, Wal. But come, I'm rested; let's go on."

Descending the hill to the valley, they beheld a most lively scene. Men, women, and children were busily employed gathering olives, which were now ripe, and looked similar to a ripe damson. Some were in the trees, shaking them from the branches, others beating them off with poles, and still others picking up and loading upon mules and asses, which stood near, with wicker panniers across their backs. They were also loading into the queerest-looking carts imaginable—the wheels solid, made of two layers of planks, with a short piece on each side to increase the thickness and the bearing, and take the place of a hub. To some of these carts oxen were attached, yoked by the horns; and every time these wheels turned they made a doleful screeching.

"I should think," said Ned, "if they are making oil, they might afford enough to grease their wheels."

"So should I. Look at those women, Ned," pointing to three who were bearing off sacks on their shoulders, filled with olives. "What a way that is, lading women, and letting asses and mules stand still!"

Great were the surprise and delight of the boys, upon approaching, to recognize in the peasant who had first attracted their attention Gabriel Quesnard, with whom they had become quite familiar, as he had often been to the vessel with eggs, poultry, and vegetables, and the captain had always invited him to eat with him. It was also from him they had bought the honey a few days before.

Gabriel welcomed them most warmly. He could speak English fluently, having had constant intercourse with English and American captains for many years of his youth, when he was a porter at Marseilles; nevertheless, he seemed highly gratified when Ned addressed him in the peculiar dialect of Provence.

"I am most happy to see you, citizens," said he. Quesnard was a thorough radical, a believer in fraternity and equality, and an ardent member of the very party that had pulled down convents, levelled distinctions, destroyed the Bastille, executed the king, guillotined nobles, and turned France upside down. But, for all that, he possessed a kind and generous nature, and was a most excellent husband and father. Though without education, he was a shrewd, discerning man, thoroughly versed in all the local politics and traditions of his country. If he could neither read nor write, he had nevertheless thought much, listened well, and observed closely, been a constant attendant at the assemblies of the people, and an actor in all the terrible scenes of the first years of the revolution. Like many others of the more reflective and intelligent portion of the inhabitants of the southern provinces, he was satisfied when those abominable extortions, levied upon the peasantry both by clergy and nobles under the name of "seigniorial rights," or, as it was sometimes called, "the servitude of the soil," were swept away, joined the more moderate party,

who thought blood enough had been shed, and were opposed to the savage fanatics, who, in the name of liberty, slew all whom they either hated or feared.

"You find us busy, citizens," he said; "for it is the olive-harvest, and we are later about it than common; but it is now nearly time to leave work. You will go with me to my poor house, and pass the night."

"We thank you kindly," said Ned; "but we are sailors, accustomed to being out of doors, and all kinds of exposure. After being so long penned up on shipboard, we wish to stretch our limbs, see the country, and crops, how the people live, and have made up our minds to sleep on the side of yonder hill, in this sweet air."

"It is winter-time, and the nights are long and cool."

"This weather is summer to us. We came from a country where the winters are severe. We have blankets, and are used to sleeping on the soft side of a plank."

"But your food, citizens."

"We have plenty of provision in our packs."

Gabriel not seeming at all reconciled to this, and still urging the claims of hospitality, Walter told him they wished to go farther to see the face of the country, productions, and manner in which the people lived.

"And how can you see in what fashion the people live if you don't go into their homes, and eat and drink with them?"

"We couldn't see the country in the house," replied Walter. "We will sleep on the hill-side to-night, to-morrow travel farther to please ourselves, and, on our return, stop at your house to gratify you."

"By that time," said Gabriel, "we hope to be more at leisure for sociability and a good time."

"I've seen olives before," said Walter, "in Spain, and eaten them; but they were green. These are violet."

"That was because they were unripe. These are ripe. I used to sell the greater part of mine green before the blockade."

"What do you do to them when you sell them in that way?"

"Soak them ten hours in lye, afterwards a week in cold water, then put them in brine, with some sweet herbs. That is all. Some only put them in brine."

"What are you going to do with these?"

"Press them for oil."

"What a great tree this is that you are gathering now!" said Ned. "Let's see if we can clasp it, Walter."

Putting their arms around the tree, they were barely able to touch the tips of their fingers.

"I didn't know olive trees grew so large," said Walter. "None of the others here are half as large as this. How brown the bark looks! and great furrows in it, just like an old willow, and the leaves look like willow leaves. It is hollow, too, and covered with warts."

"Yes, because it is so old."

"How old is it?"

"God only knows; perhaps as old as the world."

"As old as the world?"

"Yes, citizens, it might have been the first one made."

"The first one made!"

"Well, nobody ever knew one to die, except it was burnt, cut down, or killed by the frost. They can't bear the frost. A few years ago, most of the trees in the low ground were hurt by the frost, but this, being on higher ground, escaped. I don't believe they ever die of their own accord."

"How long is it," asked Walter, "after they are planted, before they bear?"

"They bear a few olives in ten or twelve years, but not much of a crop till they are twenty-five or thirty."

"Don't they lose their leaves?"

"A part of the leaves turn yellow, as you see, in the fall, but they are never bare; and in the spring the new ones push off the old ones."

"Do they bear every year?"

"No, every other: they work one year for themselves, and one for the owner."

"Do they yield much oil?"

"A hundred weight of clean olives makes about thirty or thirty-two pounds of oil."

"How much oil will a big tree, like that we have clasped, make?"

"This year that tree has about one hundred and forty livres (pounds)."

"How much oil will they make?"

"About a barrel—twenty of your gallons."

"What is it worth?"

"Three francs (sixty cents) a gallon; but then we raise other crops among the olives."

"But I suppose they are like our crops that we raise in the orchards—rather light?"

"Yes; but the olive will grow on poor land, endure the drought, and don't require much care."

"What do you dress them with?"

"The skins and stones that are left after pressing, are as good as anything."

"How much do the other trees average? There are no others near as large as this."

"About two gallons, take one year with another. The olives, however, come off after the grain harvest and the vintage are over, when there is not much else to do."

"Taking out the big tree, that wouldn't be more than fifteen dollars to an acre every other year, according to the number of trees you've got here, making no allowance for blight and bad years. Then you've no straw, nothing left but the oil, and that won't keep a great while; if you don't sell it, cattle can't eat it. I'd rather raise corn on a burn, where I can get a crop worth five times as much, that I can eat, sell, or that my cattle will fat on, will keep, and then have a crop of fodder left after all is done. Do they ever fail of a crop in the bearing years?"

"Yes, they sometimes blight and cast their fruit."

"I should call it rather small business to wait twelve years for a tree to bear at all, then twenty-five or thirty more for it to bear full; after all, to bear only every other year; sometimes blight, and then get only six dollars from the very largest trees. I shouldn't think they'd be worth the picking up."

"Not worth the picking up!" cried Gabriel in astonishment; "*olives not worth picking up?* They bring much money to the poor man."

"How much are a man's wages here?"

"Twenty sous (cents) a day, a woman's, ten, to work in the field."

"Why, in America a man working on the land in harvest gets six or nine francs, and found."

"Mon Dieu!" screamed Gabriel; "my wife, my children, hear that. Felix Bertault, my neighbor," he shouted to a peasant, who was a short distance away pruning vines, but, having heard the loud talking and witnessed the excited gestures caused by Walter's words, stood gaping with open mouth, and pruning-hook in hand.

"Step this way," said Gabriel, "and listen to what this young citizen is saying—that in America a laboring man gets nine francs, and his victuals besides."

The new comer expressing equal surprise, they talked and gesticulated with such fury, that Ned whispered to Walter,—

"Do you believe, Wal, that a Frenchman could talk if you tied his hands?"

"I guess not; Captain Rhines says they couldn't."

"What kind of trees are those with such crooked limbs?" asked Ned.

"Mulberries."

"The bark and body look some like a maple; what are they good for?"

"We use the leaves to feed silkworms."

"Silkworms," said Walter,—"*the worms that make silk?*"

"Yes; they can't live on anything but mulberry leaves."

"I want to see them make silk cloth and ribbons."

Gabriel replied by explaining to Walter that the silk-worm only spun the threads of silk (which were almost as fine as a spider's thread) to form a nest or cocoon (as they were called) for itself, and that a number of these minute threads must be put together to make what is called a thread of silk, which was then woven in looms, like any other yarn. As it came from the worm the silk was of two colors,—white and yellow; the other colors being given by dyeing.

"We have spiders," said Ned, "that make nests. I have found them on trees; they look like an egg, but more peaked; they were not silk, though."

"If," said Walter, "it is the nature of these caterpillars to live in trees and make houses for themselves, what is the need of bringing them into the house, as you spoke of, and picking leaves for them? Why can't you leave them on the trees to take care of themselves, and, when they have made their houses, go and pick them off?"

Gabriel then explained to the boys that the silk-worm and the mulberry tree were both natives of a warmer climate than France, where the worm could live and hatch out of doors, like other worms; and that, although the mulberry tree had become acclimated, and could live and grow out of doors, and even sustain a severe winter, the worm couldn't, and therefore they kept them in the house, and brought the leaves to them; and when they came to see him, he would take them over to the house of Felix Bertault, who raised them, show them the cocoons and silk, and tell

them all about it.

Our young readers must not be surprised that Walter thought the worms made silk ready for use. How should he know anything about it? A good many boys who read these books may not know any more; those who do, have obtained their knowledge by reading, and perhaps never saw a silk-worm in all their lives, although they are raised in Connecticut, and a few in Massachusetts; but Walter had not access to books that treated of such matters. Walter now asked the peasant to what the fragrance of the air was owing; to which he replied that, on the hills from which the wind then blew, a great many fragrant plants were growing wild, and also in the fields of his neighbors; they were cultivated for the purpose of the perfumer; but there was not so much of that business here as at Nismes, Nice, and Cannes; but still a good many plants were cultivated and sent to those and other places to be sold.

"Does anybody own land here, except the nobility? or are the laboring people all tenants?"

"We have been delivered from all that trash by the revolution; cut off their heads, or they have fled; we're all nobles now. To answer your question, citizens, it used to be so in a good measure here. Although the people owned land, more or less, all over France, yet the most of it was in the hands of the grand seigniors; and that which the common people held was so burdened with taxes to be paid the aristocracy, clergy, and government, that it was better to be without it; but since the revolution, in consequence of the confiscation of the estates of the seigniors and priests who were guillotined or emigrated, all that land was thrown into the market by the National Assembly, divided into lots, from one to ten acres, sold to the citizens, and five years allowed to pay for it in."

"Do you own this land?" asked Walter.

"What, all this valley?"

"Yes."

"Citizens, are you mad? No peasant owns so much as that."

"Why not? A great many persons in my country own more than this whole valley."

"A great part of this land," said Gabriel, "belonged to a grand seignior, some small portions being owned by citizens; but he was guillotined, his property confiscated, the land parcelled out and sold, so that it has passed into the hands of the people. Before the revolution," said he, "the land, at the death of the parent, went to the oldest son; but that law is abolished, and it is now equally divided; for which reason, in respect to some small properties, the children possess only a few rods; sometimes an olive tree, or mulberry, standing in ten rods of land; and this is the homestead of a whole family—their farm."

CHAPTER V.

THE YANKEE BOYS' HOLIDAY IN PROVENCE.

The peasants now began to return to the village, while the boys prepared to camp out. Walter, at a hasty glance along the side of the mountain, perceiving many trees, took it for granted, without further examination, that they were forest trees, and would furnish material for a fire; but as they approached, to his great chagrin, he noticed that they were mulberry, olive, and figs, and that there was not even a bush or a bramble that could be taken to feed a fire. This at once reversed the whole train of his ideas, and threw him into a state of mind entirely foreign to his usual cheerful, buoyant frame, and a mood not to be pleased with anything, which communicated itself, though with less intensity, to Ned, who, never having experienced those peculiar emotions begotten of the free wild life in the woods, was not peculiarly touched by the disappointment.

"I think it is a great way for people who live by their labor to be so far from their work. I should think it would take half of their time to go and come."

"They don't know how to put things ahead with a rush, as we do," said Walter.

"How can a man think much of his time when it's worth only twenty cents a day?"

"It ain't worth that, for a sou ain't quite a cent. They will work all day in a half bushel, and don't know how to take advantage of work. I've heard the captain say that they were once little better than slaves to the aristocracy, and have been so long used to working at a slave jog that they keep it up, and always want to huddle together like a nest of rats."

While talking they had gained the declivity of the hill, and sat down.

"Only look at that troop, Wal."

It was, indeed, a curious spectacle, that peasant train,—some driving asses, others mules, and still others oxen attached to their queer-looking carts heaped with olives, and all making for the gap between the hills, through which the boys had seen the church spire.

Spreading their blankets beneath a shelving rock, they rolled themselves in them, and began to converse.

"How sweet this air smells!" said Ned, snuffing the odor of the wild thyme, lavender, marjoram, absinthe, and other fragrant plants among which they lay.

"I don't think much of it," said Walter, who was not in a humor to be pleased with anything. "I call it a God-forsaken country, all dried up, no water to drink without travelling ten miles, and then sucking it out of the rocks. Here we've passed two or three beds of brooks all dried up; plenty of water when you don't want it, none when you do; and not a stick of wood to build a camp fire. This smell is not to be mentioned in the same day with the fragrance of good pine woods, and I know it isn't half so wholesome. Give me a good apple orchard in bloom, and you may have all these miserable herbs."

"I'm sure," said Ned, "I'd rather have a tumbler of cider than all their sour wine; and what is an olive to an apple?"

"Yes, Ned, to the cat-heads that grow down behind our pig-sty. They may talk about the juice of the grape; give me the good maple sirup, and sap, and a country where a man can earn enough to afford to eat meat."

"I know it, Walter; and where the women don't have to shovel dirt, hoe, reap, and work just like an Indian squaw. I twigged that. And then brag about their politeness!"

"I never heard there was any politeness among the Griffins; but I wonder what my father would say to see mother shovelling sand, or lugging manure on her back up the side of a mountain. Guess he'd roar some; guess she'd have to scud into the house quicker."

"Did you ever see such pigs?" said Ned, who was now thoroughly imbued with the fault-finding humor of his companion. "Guess they have to boil their pork; for I don't believe there's grease enough in it to fry itself."

"Did you ever see such oxen? They ain't bigger than rats—nasty, scraggly-looking things, cow-horned and cat-hammed, no necks or quarters, every hair sticking up straight. Don't believe they could twitch a spruce bush. I'll bet our old Star and Golding (just let father speak to 'em) would drag six such, tail foremost. They're welcome to their silks; I'd rather have mother's fulled cloth than all their spider's web. They're welcome to their warm weather, vines, figs, cockroaches, garlic, and all their herbs; give me three feet of snow, a good log camp, a roaring fire, and game in plenty, and they are welcome to the almond trees and pot herbs. Goodness! to call three olive trees, on a bit of ground that I could straddle, a farm. One good fat bear would make more and better grease than an acre of 'em."

"What do you suppose they would say, Walter, to see Lion Ben's acres? and what to the Lion himself?"

"Jerusalem!" said Walter, borrowing one of his brother Joe's by-words; "only let him get into one of his rages, and he would slay the whole country with the jaw-bone of an ass."

"Well," said Ned, who felt that a good part of Walter's spleen arose from the lack of the camp fire he had anticipated. "They all seemed very kind, you know; and Gabriel asked and urged us to go to his house."

"Yes; to be eaten up with fleas and ten thousand bugs and stinging concerns they have here."

Thus growling and grumbling, Walter fell asleep. The last words distinguishable were, "God-forsaken country; no wood for a camp fire."

In the morning, as the result of a consultation held while eating, they determined first to ascend the hill, and afterwards to explore the country. Here they found a long moss on the rocks, which they concluded would be just the thing with which to fill their beds, and resolved to take some of it with them when they returned.

"O, Wal, we'll dry some of these fragrant plants, and mix with the moss."

"Yes; that will be nice."

Following a cart track through a gap in the hills, they came upon a highway in most excellent order, and bordered with trees, and saw, a little upon their left, the village of the peasants, consisting of houses built of mud and stone huddled together, many without glass, and no entrance for light except the door, the roofs covered with tiles, and not a tree near them.

Their attention was attracted by the towers of a large castle, evidently in ruins, upon the summit of an eminence that commanded the village. With curiosity greatly excited, they were about to climb the hill to view it more closely, when Ned said, "Let us go ahead, see the country, come back here to-night, and camp in the ruins."

Skirting the base of the hill upon which the castle stood, they came again upon the stream that watered the vale,—now increased in volume by affluents from the mountains,—falling over a cliff upon which were the remnants of a dam, and just below it a mass of half-burned timber and large stones, that Walter, more familiar than Ned with such matters, declared to be the ruins of some kind of a mill. These large circular stones lay embedded in a mass of coals and brands, the shafts burned out of them, white from the action of fire, and every one split in two. It seemed probable this had been accomplished by flinging water upon them while red hot.

There was no water, at this time, within several rods of the stones; but, from the appearance of the banks, it was evident that the stream, since the destruction of the dam, had changed its channel, and had once flowed near to the stones, to which it had been brought in a flume, the remains being still visible. After inspecting these stones with the greatest curiosity, Walter said,

"I don't see what they could grind with such stones as these; they certainly couldn't grind grain;

they couldn't *grind* anything; they are not 'picked,' like a millstone, but as smooth as my hand; they could only squat. If they raised apples here, I should think they were made to squat them."

Our young readers will bear in mind that mill-stones are "picked," or cut in sweeping furrows, which leave sharp edges to catch and grind the grain.

Still farther from the bank of the stream, on some high and level ground, were two more pairs of stones. These, it was evident, had not been enclosed in any building, as the only cinders lying around were those resulting from the burning of the shafts that had once been used to operate them. The lower stones were raised about two feet from the ground, and dishing nearly ten feet in diameter, with holes drilled through them, around a central one. Upon these lay two smaller stones, with square holes in their centres, in one of which was a half-burned shaft. These were all, save one upper stone, split in halves.

"How did they split these?" asked Ned. "They have not been heated."

"With powder," said Walter, pointing to holes drilled in the stones.

"Then why didn't they split this one?"

"They tried to, but the charge blew out; there are the holes."

"Perhaps their powder gave out."

"I guess I know how this went."

"How?"

"This stone ran on its edge round the other; there was an upright shaft in the middle; and that hole in the centre was made to receive a pintle, to hold the foot of it, and it was turned by a horse, or by hand, just like a cider mill."

Walter began to hunt in the long grass around the stone, and soon exclaimed,—

"Here it is! here is the track worn into the ground, where somebody or something travelled."

"It was a horse or mule," said Ned, holding up a rusty shoe.

"That is too big for the foot of an ass."

"What is the stone trough underneath for, Wal?"

"To catch whatever ran from the mill. It must have been liquid, for nothing else could go through these holes."

"It is very strange," said Ned, "that these people should set to work and plant trees along the highways, and not put so much as one tree, rosebush, or even a lilac, around their own houses."

Although not aware of it, they were now among a people to whom those peculiar feelings which in the mind of the Anglo-Saxon are connected with home and the domestic hearth, are unknown. Had they been aware that these splendid roads, ornamented with magnificent trees, and so skilfully laid out as to present the most picturesque and imposing scenery to the eye of the traveller, were all constructed and kept in order by means of the dreaded "*corvée*,"—compulsory labor, which signified that the poor peasant might be taken from his work to labor on the public roads, and, should he chance to offend a capricious master, even in time of harvest, to leave the bread of his household to waste in the field,—they would have ceased to wonder that the wretched peasant, burdened with a thousand exactions and goaded to despair, should be rather disposed to brood over his wrongs, and nurse the hope of vengeance, than to embellish a dwelling which, in the great majority of instances, was not his own.

Determining to follow the course of the stream, rather than the highway, they had proceeded but a short distance, when they reached a spot, where, divided by a mass of rock, it encircled a level island of about three acres, entirely covered with a growth of rods as smooth and pointed as a bulrush. They were planted in regular rows, with great care, were eight or ten feet in height, perfectly straight, and entirely destitute of leaves or limbs, except that in some instances there was a fork at the top.

"What can these be?" asked Ned.

"I don't know; let's see if we can't find a place where we can wade across."

Following the stream till abreast the middle of the island, they espied a row of stepping-stones, upon which they crossed, and, finding a peasant at work, he informed them that they were "osiers," anglice *sallows*, and were used to make hampers for wine, cover bottles and demijohns, and tie vines to the stakes, were made into chairs and playthings for children, and that a great many, after being divested of their bark, were exported to New York.

"Why, Walter," said Ned, "these are the very things Mr. Bell made baskets of, that he and Charlie called *sallies*. I heard him ask the captain to get him some rods, and tell him that if he put them in earth or wet moss in the vessel's hold, they would grow by being stuck down, when the vessel got home."

"Then we will get a lot for him."

They asked the peasant, who told them the rods must be cut into pieces, seven or eight inches long, that in two years they would yield something, and in three a good crop of rods.

"Charlie has a splendid place to plant them on," said Ned, "right on a little flat by the mouth of the brook."

"Yes," said Walter, "but here are willows ten feet high. Mr. Bell carried no willows like these."

The peasant told him the reason that these grew so remarkably, was, that in the spring and fall the stream overflowed its banks, leaving a rich slime, which fertilized the soil, and the island, being surrounded by water, was moist throughout the year, and that the largest he was then cutting were used to hoop wine casks.

On the other side of the little isle was a rude bridge, upon which they crossed to the opposite shore. Following the course of the stream over heaps of gravel mixed with stones, brought down by streams from the mountains in the spring floods, they proceeded for miles through the most monotonous, dreary scenery imaginable; not a tree, bush, or scarcely a blade of grass to relieve the eye, Walter often repeating his favorite expression, "a God-forsaken country."

At length, as the sun attained its meridian, the face of the country became more diversified, breaking into gentle swells, and even hills of moderate elevation. Here they met with a little brook, which wound among the hills, and fell into the stream with a grateful murmur. Its banks were margined with a broad belt of green grass, and fringed with bushes and small trees, many of them evergreens.

"This is excellent water," said Ned, as he stooped and drank. "Suppose we eat here."

"I wouldn't; let us follow the stream into the valley I see yonder, eat, and rest there, and then go back."

They were led to a glen, the banks of which, broken into irregular, gentle slopes, were clothed with groves of large trees entirely clear of underbrush. Flinging themselves at the roots of a massive tree standing by itself at the extremity of a slight elevation, around which the brook wound, and where the sun shone warm and pleasantly, they began leisurely to eat, till the demands of appetite appeased, they stretched themselves upon the grass.

"Wonder what kind of trees these are," said Ned; "guess they are walnuts."

"They look more like oaks," said Walter.

"Well, so they are," said Ned, who, lying on his back, was looking up through the branches, "for I see an acorn."

"Here is another I've found on the ground. What a funny acorn! The cup comes half way over it."

Near by them was a rude building open at the sides, and with thatched roof.

"I'm going to see what is in that building, Wal." And going to it, he cried out, "Come here; it is half full of great sheets of cork."

"So it is, Ned; and these are cork trees, you may depend." Trying the bark with their knives, they found it to be the fact.

"O, my! I'm so glad we came! Only think how much we have learned to-day; and we've got the old castle to see when we go back."

"I never thought before," said Walter, "that a cork tree was an oak, and bore acorns."

Returning, they re-crossed the island.

"How old," asked Walter of the peasant, "must a cork tree be, before they can take off the cork?"

"Twenty years; after that, they take it every ten years, but the cork is not of the best quality till the third stripping."

"Don't it injure the tree?"

"No more than it does you to peel the dead skin from your hands; only the live bark beneath must not be injured."

"What time of year do they peel it?"

"July and August."

"How do they get it off?"

"They first pound the tree to loosen the dead bark from the live, then make two up and down cuts the whole length of the body of the tree, then cross-cuts about three feet apart, and remove the bark with a wedge."

"That," said Walter, "is the way we peel hemlock bark in America; only we cut the trees down, and don't beat the bark."

"What else do they do to it?" asked Ned.

"They scorch it to close the grain, and warp it straight, then put on rocks to keep it so till it gets set (like that you saw in the hovel), when it is ready to sell."

As they went on, Walter said, "I shouldn't think a man in this country would ever have courage enough to commence farming."

"Why not?"

"Because you must wait twelve years for an olive tree, twenty for a cork, and forty before the bark is first rate. Give me New England, where, with nothing under heavens but his rifle and narrow axe, a man can raise his bread on a burn the first year, knock up a log hut, and have his meat for the killing."

"And wood enough for a camp fire," said Ned, laughing.

CHAPTER VI.

THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION.

As the boys returned by the same road, which presented no new objects to excite their curiosity, much less time was consumed in measuring the same distance; and they ascended the eminence upon which the castle was situated, and stood before its principal entrance long before night.

It was one of the few old feudal strongholds still remaining in France that had not been suffered to go to decay by its possessors. It had been the property of a grand seignior (derived from his ancestors), who, having built a modern chateau near it, with extensive stables and other out-buildings, kept the old castle in complete repair, till sacked by a mob during the reign of terror.

It had evidently been a place of great strength, but occupying so much space that a large garrison would be required to man its exterior fortifications. It was beautifully situated upon a noble swell of land, falling away in natural terraces to the stream upon whose banks were clustered the dwellings of the peasants. The hand of violence had swept away all but the relics of its former magnificence and beauty. The axe had levelled the vast groves and long avenues of oak, chestnut, beech, and massive pines,—which had for ages delighted the eye and gratified the taste, and beneath whose hoary limbs generations had lived and died,—except one clump of large pines, at some distance in the rear of the fortress.

Everything without the walls that would burn had been consumed by fire, while the tall chimney of the chateau, and other buildings standing amid heaps of rubbish, the wild weeds springing from the joints of the hearth-stones, imparted a peculiarly desolate appearance to the scene.

Gunpowder had been freely used to obtain an entrance into the fortress, and afterwards to destroy it; but such was the enormous thickness of the walls that but comparatively little impression had been produced upon them, although single apartments had been blown up and whole floors had fallen, the pillars which supported them having been mined. Entire floors, supported at one end by the beams, which still remained in the walls, and a few pillars, while the remaining portion lay upon heaps of rubbish, bricks, mortar, fragments of clothes, domestic utensils, curved frames, broken china and glass ware of the rarest patterns and the richest colors, presented an inclined plane, up which the boys clambered to the apartments above, passing through chambers once the abode of luxury, but from whose walls the rich tapestry hung in tatters, exposed to sun and wind, that found free entrance through shattered casements and demolished doors. The boys gazed with wonder upon the relics of a magnificence of which they had before no conception.

The most singular spectacle awaited them in the great hall of the castle, which they now entered. Nothing remained undisfigured here except the lofty arches of the roof, with its beautiful fret-work, the carving on the capitals and some portions of the windows, by reason of their height difficult to reach.

The walls had been adorned with ancestral portraits of the former inhabitants of the castle and the old French nobility, with banners and suits of armor, statues in marble and bronze, paintings and copies of paintings by the greatest masters; but they were now torn from their places, pierced with bullets, and battered with rocks and clubs; for, in consequence of one of those caprices which sometimes influence the conduct of a mob even in the midst of the wildest excitement, they had abstained from using fire *within* the walls, while they had burned everything combustible *outside*, although many of the timbers and much of the panel-work bore traces of the peasants' axes, undoubtedly cut for fire-wood.

In the midst of this spacious hall was a vast collection of articles which appeared to have been brought from all parts of the castle and flung here in indiscriminate confusion; marble statues, paintings, ancient armor, antlers of stags, hunting implements, and flags from old battle-fields.

Walter sat down upon a marble statue of a chieftain in armor, from which the left arm and shield had been broken, and the face flattened.

Ned placed himself on a pile of gilded frames of large paintings he had thrown together, and thus seated they surveyed at leisure the fretted roof, and whatever of interest and beauty had escaped the fury of the assailants.

The nearest approach to ornamental carving Walter had ever seen before was the plain panel-work with which Uncle Isaac ceiled up the rooms he finished, the cornice round the tops of the rooms, beneath the mantel-piece, and on the front stairs; but these consisted of only four little flutings with a gouge, a simple bead with a moulding-plane, or a succession of little squares made with a saw and finished up with a jack-knife. He had also seen faces of cats on the cat-heads of vessels, sheaves of wheat and vine-leaves carved on their sterns. Ned had also seen these, and in addition some more ambitious efforts, in the old meeting-house at Salem, on the sounding-board, the base, and surroundings of the pulpit. But here they gazed upon oaken panels, displaying the most beautiful designs in the highest style of ancient or modern art; upon tapestry most beautifully wrought, fitted to adorn regal halls, bleaching in the wind, rent and disfigured; picked from the rubbish fragments of porcelain vases, bowls, and drinking-cups, of elaborate design and rare finish.

"I mean to carry these home," said Ned, culling from the heap a portion of a broken vase, and a large pane from one of the windows, upon which was represented the Saviour in the act of healing the withered hand.

"And I this," said Walter, holding up a panel upon which were carved Laocoon and his sons, writhing in the folds of the snakes.

"Look at that window," said Ned; "only six panes of glass left, and two thirds of the sash gone."

"This sight," said Walter, "reminds me of stories I have heard Monsieur Vimont, my French teacher at Salem, tell. He said the mob attacked the chateaux and castles of the nobles, murdered their possessors, or dragged them to prison, except such as were able to save themselves by flight."

Walter, who sympathized with the refugees, and listened to his recital of the terrible scenes through which they had passed, was much prejudiced in favor of the nobility and against their assailants.

As they followed along the walls, noticing the shattered windows and the positions from which the paintings and statuary had been torn, they came to a place from which a very large painting of a knight templar in full armor had been thrown, and lay defaced upon the floor. Lying upon this, grinding up the gilded frame, and breaking the canvas, was one of the large stones of the wall. This stone had once been hung upon massive hinges, now broken.

Through the opening it had once closed a flight of stairs was visible, constructed in the thickness of the wall by an arrangement of the stones at the time of building, and which led to the foundation of the castle.

Ned was burning with impatience to enter the opening and see whither the stairs led; but Walter, naturally interested in everything of a mechanical nature, would not proceed till he had ascertained the method by which an entrance was effected. He found the whole painting had been raised by hidden weights, and, by the pressure of a spring adroitly concealed in the frame, was elevated sufficiently to permit of passing under it, when by the pressure of another spring the stone was set free and sprung outwards, affording an entrance, after which, by concealed mechanism, the whole was restored as before. When he had mastered the principle of the machinery, they descended the stairs, from the bottom of which a winding passage led to a corridor from which several doors opened into vaulted chambers dimly lighted by slits in the walls. Some of them appeared to have been used as dungeons, ring-bolts, with chains attached, being secured to the walls.

As they proceeded they came to another door admitting to a winding passage-way, entirely dark; but, their curiosity being excited, they continued to grope their way, carefully placing one foot in advance, and dragging the other after, lest they might stumble into some pit.

At length Ned, who led the way, suddenly stopped and gave back.

"What is the matter, Ned? What are you stopping for?"

"Walter," he exclaimed in a half whisper, "there's something here, under my feet. I've put my hand on it, and I believe it's some dead man; there's something feels like clothes and buttons."

"Drag it out to where it's lighter; or let me, if you don't like to."

"Do you think I'm afraid?"

Ned began to step backward, dragging the object after him, while Walter threw open the doors leading to the vaults. By the glimmering of light thus obtained, they beheld the skeleton of a human body, held together by the articulations of the joints, the clothes, dried gristle, and sinews, being partially mummified.

Neither of the boys had ever seen the human skeleton before, or even so much as a bone, and this was to them a fearful sight—the teeth white and prominent, the eyeless sockets, and the remaining portion of the skull black with decayed flesh that still adhered to it (for the air was cool and dry, ventilation being in some way provided). The right hand had dropped off, the stump of the wrist projecting from the sleeve, while the blackened bones and shrivelled sinews of the left remained in place.

"It was a boy," said Ned; "you can see by the clothes."

"Poor fellow, he was about your size."

"His hair," said Ned, pointing to some brown locks that had lodged in the breast of the coat, "was just the color of yours. Think he was murdered?"

"I expect so, for it don't seem likely that a place as strong as this was given up without a struggle, unless it was occupied only by a family, or was surprised."

"Then, perhaps, there's more in there."

"Let us try to make some kind of a torch. I want to see all there is, and to find where this secret passage leads to that so much pains was taken to make and conceal."

Returning, the boys hunted over the great heap of rubbish in the hall, and searched every nook and corner in order to find a lamp or wax candle (which they knew were much used in that country), but in vain.

"O, if we were only at home," said Walter, "instead of being in this wretched country, how quick I could get a piece of pitch wood, or strip the bark from a birch tree, and make a first-rate torch;

but there are no birches here, and no old pines with any pitch wood in 'em."

"But we shouldn't have any castles there to see," said Ned.

At last they found an iron pot, and resolved to build a fire in that, and carry it as a torch.

While they were breaking up pieces of dry wood for that purpose, Ned exclaimed, "Who knows but olive wood will burn well. I should think it would be full of oil."

"Perhaps it will."

They broke some branches from the trees, and put them in the pot with pine slivers from old panels. Walter took a horn full of tinder from his pack, and, holding it between his knees, with an old file and flint-stone struck the sparks into the horn till he ignited the tinder sufficiently to light a brimstone match, and kindled his fire in the pot, when they found that the olive wood burned freely, lasted longer, and afforded a better light, than the pine or oak; therefore they procured more of it.

"Now for something to carry it with," said Ned; "and here it is," pulling a long iron rod from the pile of miscellaneous articles that strewed the floor.

"And here is something to hold a supply of wood," said Walter, picking up a steel helmet and filling it with the chips.

With the kettle of blazing brands between them, they proceeded to explore the passage.

The first object that arrested their attention (and almost touching a door, through the grates of which a fresh current of air, fragrant with the scent of the earth and fields, was blowing) was the skeleton of an aged man. The skull had been cleft by some sharp weapon; long locks of gray hair strewed the floor, and across the breast of the skeleton lay that of a dog, the fore paws outstretched, and the nose thrust among the clothes that covered the breast.

"O, Walter," cried Ned, the tears springing to his eyes, "what a sight!"

"The saddest sight I ever saw. That dog starved to death because he would not leave his master."

"I shall always love a dog after this."

"They are noble creatures. Did you ever see what was on Tige Rhines's collar?"

"About his taking the little girl from the mill pond?"

"Yes; and that is not all he did; he saved the lives of John, Charlie Bell, and Fred Williams, by waking them up when they were asleep in a cave into which the tide was flowing."

"This must be that boy's father," said Ned. "Or his grandfather," replied Walter. "He was murdered, at any rate," pointing to the cloven skull.

"See here, Wal," holding a brand close to the floor; "see the blood all dried on the stones."

"Poor old man, cut down with his hand almost on the door! That door leads out, for I can smell the fresh air, and feel it warm on my cheek. Let's see if we can open it, Wal."

The upper part of the door was grated. They shook it, and exerted themselves to the utmost to wrench it open, but without success.

"Hold up a brand, Ned; perhaps I can find a fastening."

Walter searched carefully, but in vain, for any lock, bolt, or other fastening.

"If I only had a sledge, or hammer, and cold chisel, I'd cut these grates off, short notice."

"I saw a crowbar outside, among some garden tools," said Ned.

"Get it; that's the thing."

Walter plied the bar upon the grates till the sparks flew from the iron, and the sweat dropped from his forehead; but it resisted his efforts.

"Let me spell you, Wal."

"Try the wood below, Ned."

"It is oak, and studded with iron; but I'll try it."

After a few blows, the door flew open of its own accord. Ned, by a random stroke, had moved the spring.

"That's good luck, Ned. Go ahead."

They soon encountered another similar door.

"Now, Ned, I'm just going back to look at that spring."

By the knowledge thus obtained, Walter was enabled to detect a similar spring in this door, though in a different place.

They now began to perceive the light, and came to a horizontal grate, which was unfastened, and reached by only two steps. Walter flung it back, and they crawled out on their hands and knees beneath an overhanging cliff (through which the passage was cut), and into a tangle of wild vines that clung to the cliffs, weeds, brambles, and shrubs, effectually concealing the passage from casual observation.

"Whoever built this," said Ned, "knew how to make secret passages. One might pass this place all his lifetime, and never suspect it."

"It didn't do them much good," said Walter. "I'd rather live in a country where they are not needed. Ned, don't you think we ought to put this father and son in the ground?"

"I was thinking of that."

"What can we find to dig a grave with?"

"When I went after the crowbar, I found it among a lot of garden tools; there were shovels, rakes, and hoes, but the handles were all burnt away."

"No matter; we'll bury them in the old garden, where the ground is mellow; we can make a hole with the bar, and throw out the loose earth with the shovel-blades, if they *have* no handles."

A shallow grave was soon dug in the soft mould.

"We buried a man from the Madras," said Ned; "he was sewed up in canvas."

"We lost the second mate when I was in the Casco," said Walter; "he was buried ashore, and we put the American flag on the coffin for a pall. Suppose we should wrap their bones in these flags taken from the walls; they are their country's flags."

"I suppose they would like it if they could know it, and would rather lie here, where the nightingales will sing in the summer, than in that dark alley."

They carefully gathered the bones, wrapped them in the tattered banners, and committed them to the earth.

"What shall we do with the dog, Walter?"

"Do with him? Bury him with them."

"In the same grave?"

"To be sure; at their feet. He was the best and only friend they had, and died on his master's breast; he is worthy to sleep in marble."

"Well, I feel just so; but I didn't know."

The sun was just sinking behind the horizon, and his last lingering rays fell, as it were, in benediction upon the boys, as, feeling the necessity of instant preparation for the night, they hastened from the spot. Admonished by the approaching twilight, they went rapidly from room to room, in order to select one suited to their purpose.

"Let us go out of this hall," said Ned, "into God's air, and get clear of rubbish, musty walls, and dead men's bones."

"Yes, into that clump of pines. I had rather lug the wood, and be out of doors."

It was not long before they heaped together a great pile of oaken beams, boards, picture-frames, broken furniture, and panels, and, seated by the ruddy blaze, were enjoying a hearty meal, till, full even to repletion, they seated themselves with their backs against a tree to enjoy the grateful warmth of the fire.

The rising moon began to silver the lofty towers of the ancient castle, and quivered on the stream, visible at different points between the cottages of the peasants, while the rush of water, pouring through the rents of the broken dam, rose on the air. Not a breath of wind stirred the foliage. The only sounds, contesting with the murmur of waters the empire of the night, were the crackling of the fire and the occasional bleat of a sheep on the mountain. It is singular to what an extent peculiar states of feeling impart a tinge, sombre or otherwise, to impressions produced by surrounding objects and events.

As Walter sat thus, with the crackling of the fire in his ear, and the ruddy blaze playing on his cheek, he said,—

"I think this is a nice country, after all; rather dry, to be sure; a good deal of waste land, covered with gravel and stones brought down from the mountains. We have seen some beautiful valleys of most excellent land. The people are kind and hospitable, and, if they were not so shiftless, might, with their climate and soil, raise two crops a year. What are you thinking about, Ned?"

"About what my mother would say, if she knew I was making a fire of mahogany chairs, looking-glass frames, harpsichords, and carved work. I wonder if any boy ever did that before."

"Perhaps some soldiers have."

After this they sat some time, hand clasped in hand, and each occupied with his own thoughts.

"I should like to know what you are thinking about, Wal."

"You see that little cove the river has eaten out of the bank?"

"You mean where the moonlight is shining on that large rock, and beside which a tree is growing?"

"That is the spot. Well, the Saturday afternoon before I was going to sea for the first time, in the Madras, I went to the catechising, because I knew that I should find all the boys and girls there, and I wanted to bid them good by. After that I kept on to Charlie Bell's. It was a moonlight evening, just like this; and after supper we went to the head of Pleasant Cove, sat down, and leaned our backs against an oak, just as you and I are leaning against this pine. We could hear the brook that runs through his field, behind us, just as we can hear this stream below, and the ripple of the tide as it crept along the beach. I felt tender that night, for I loved Charlie Bull dearly. You know, Ned, how a boy feels, if he does want to go, when the time comes."

"*That I do.* When he's thinking about going, longing to be off, and his folks trying to put him off the notion, then he's all stirred up, and only thinks about getting away; but, when they've given their consent, he has signed the articles, packed his chest, got his protection at the Custom house, is sure of going, and all is settled, then, if he has a good home, and any soul in him, it will give him the heartache to say good by. There never was a boy more crazy to go to sea than I was—counting the days till the vessel was ready. She lay in the stream, ready to sail in the morning. After supper the second mate took me and three men whom he could trust, and went ashore. We were ordered to be down to the boat at nine o'clock. It was seven when I reached home. Didn't those two hours go quick as I sat on the sofa in the parlor, between father and mother, and my sisters before me. When the bell rang for nine, and I got up to start for the beach, I didn't feel altogether so keen for going as I did the week before."

"That was what I meant. I felt just so that night, while Charlie and I sat together at the head of Pleasant Cove, beneath the oak, and he talked to me."

"What did he say?"

"A great many things. He wanted me to love God and pray to him; he said there would be nights at sea when the moon would be shining on the ocean, just as it was then upon the waters of that cove; that he should look at it and think of me; hoped I would look at it and think of him and his words; and that as the same planets were above us, so the same God was around our daily paths; that perhaps when I thought that some dear friend I loved much was thinking of and praying for me, I should feel I ought to pray for myself."

"Have you never thought of it before to-night?"

"Thought of it? Yes, truly. On many a bright moonlight night, when you and I have been pacing the deck together, have I been occupied with those memories. You may think it strange, but they were in my mind when the shot from that English ship of the line was flying round us; but the moon shining on the water in that little bight, the sound of the stream, as we sit against this pine, and perhaps what we have just been doing, bring it home as never before."

"I love you, Wal," said Ned, laying his head in his friend's lap.

"Tell me some news; I knew that before," said Walter, patting his cheek.

"I have thought a good many times, lately, that you didn't seem as you used to. I never heard you say anything about doing good till this voyage; before, it was always getting rich and rushing things. I suppose it was because he talked with you, made you have this feeling."

"I don't know; I always had something of it; always admired it in Charlie Bell and Uncle Isaac, and longed to do something—I didn't know what—that was not altogether for myself."

"Have you ever done what Charlie asked you to that night?"

"What? Pray to God?"

"Yes."

"No; I only say my prayers when I turn in; don't you?"

"No, I never was brought up to. Will you say the Lord's prayer with me, Ned?"

"Shall we kneel?"

They knelt together between the roots of the pine, after which they replenished the fire, rolled themselves in their blankets, and were soon asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

YANKEE INGENUITY AMONG THE PEASANTS.

In the morning, after eating and still further exploring the different apartments of the castle, they bent their steps towards the village of the peasants.

"Would you mention to Gabriel what we found in the secret passage?" asked Ned.

"I don't think I should. I expect he knows more about it than we do."

They found Gabriel and his neighbors all busily engaged. Some were bruising the olives in large mortars; others were treading them in tubs. There was oil everywhere, and the odor was anything but agreeable. Others, after placing the bruised pulp in sacks made of grass or rushes, carried them to the second story of a building, and, placing the sacks in the middle of the floor, piled great stones upon them, which pressed the oil through holes bored in the floor, and it was received in vessels beneath. In consequence of this slow method of procedure, a large portion of the olives was likely to decay before they could be pressed, while not more than half the oil was extracted. As the weight of the stones did not sufficiently compress the pulp, much of it was wasted on the floor, and still more was lost in being soaked up by the multitude of different vessels in which the olives were trampled. This did not, however, obtain in respect to those bruised in the mortars, which were stone.

Gabriel conducted the boys from one building to another, and showed them the olives, belonging to different peasants, which were spread over the floors, where women and little children were

picking out the leaves, stones, and decayed ones.

"Why don't you have a mill to grind these olives?" asked Walter, "and screws to press the pulp? A great part of them will rot before you can bruise them in this way; besides, you don't get half the oil, to say nothing of what is wasted, or of the time lost."

Gabriel told them that before the revolution there were mills and presses—the property of the grand seignior—in which all the olives of the peasants were ground and pressed; but they were destroyed at that time.

"Then that was what those stones were used for that we saw on the bank of the river?"

"Yes."

"But what were those for that lie so far from the stream, on the high ground?"

"They were turned by a horse or mule, or by a number of men. We used those before the rains came to raise the stream so the mill could work. It is often very dry here in the autumn."

"Why don't you all turn to and build them up again, and use them in company?"

"We have no workmen; they have been conscripted, and are in the army, except a blacksmith, who was left to shoe the cattle and sharpen the plough-irons."

"Is there no stone-cutter? Why don't you make some mill-stones? I'm sure there are rocks enough. All turn to together, and at least set the smaller mills a-going, instead of working in this childish fashion."

The peasant scratched his head, and said, "The stone-cutter has been conscripted."

"Did you have a carpenter?"

"Yes."

"Was he drafted?"

"What is that?"

"Conscripted."

"Yes."

"What became of his tools?"

"He sold them in Marseilles to get bread for his children."

"In my country we are not tied to mechanics, because it is a new country, and they are scarce; but when a man wants a thing, he must set his brains at work and make it, or do without it. How did that concern on the high ground work?"

"The smaller stone, lying on top, went round the other, and was turned by a mule."

"Guess I know. It was rigged just like Uncle John Godsoe's mill that he ground bark with. A stone ran edgeways on a plank floor, and they shoved the pieces of bark under the stone. Who do the castle and the land round it belong to now?"

"It was confiscated and sold by the National Assembly. Felix Bertault owns the land where the mill stood, and two other peasants, Tonnelot and Bernard, the castle and the rest of the land."

"Then it was their wood we burned last night. I will pay them for it."

"That is nothing."

"Look here, old friend," said Walter, slapping Gabriel on the shoulder. "I am not a mechanic, but all my breed of people can handle tools. I can set that old affair going again, and better than ever it went before; the upper stone is whole, and though the lower one is gone, I can lay a wooden platform. There's timber enough, and the best of timber, in the old castle, and though not equal to a water-mill, it will be an everlasting sight better than your mules, and you can use them while I am doing it, if you like. I can fix a press, too, that will get about all the oil from the pulp."

"But, citizen, you have no tools."

"There are tools enough on board the vessel, and I ground them a few days ago. Go among your neighbors, and see what they say to it."

Gabriel was in raptures, and ran to tell the peasants. He soon returned, saying that every man, woman, and child were overjoyed, would do all they could to aid; that the carpenter's apprentice was left, and proffered his services.

"That is first rate," said Walter. "Now, Ned, you must go to the vessel and get the tools. Be sure you get a cross-cut saw, and ask the captain to lend us the tackle and fall we get the anchors on to the bows with."

Ned was soon mounted on a cart with Gosset (Gabriel's son), as Ned didn't know how to drive a mule that might take a notion to stop when half way there, and they set off.

Nimble hands and plenty of carts soon transported the old floor beams and oak plank (which Walter selected) to the spot. The gate posts made capital sills, upon which he laid his platform at the same height from the ground as the bottom stone of the old mill, in order that the trough for receiving the oil might go under it.

The apprentice, Raffard, proved to be a good workman, and Gosset also evinced a decided mechanical ability. Ned, too, could use tools quite well.

"That boy," said Walter to Gabriel, "only wants instruction and practice to make a first-rate mechanic."

There was no lack of iron bolts in the strong-hold, and the blacksmith made all the iron-work necessary. An upright shaft was prepared, to be placed in the centre of the platform, which, supported by cross-beams attached to posts set in the ground, revolved on iron pintles, which entered the platform and the cross-beam above.

Walter now took a narrow strip of board, seven feet long, bored a hole in one end, and slipped it over an iron pin placed in the hole in the centre of the platform, which was jointed together perfectly tight, and somewhat dishing, with holes to permit the drainage to escape into the trough; in the other end he drove a pointed nail, and with it swept a circle on the platform; around this scratch he fayed pieces of plank to confine the pulp. The diameter of the horse-track was eighteen feet.

It was wonderful, and excited the surprise of Walter and Ned, to witness the instantaneous change wrought in the appearance of the peasants. They were now all energy and activity, seemed completely to have laid aside their listless, lounging attitudes, and manifested a fertility of resource that the boys never supposed pertained to them.

"All these people want," said Walter to Ned, "is opportunity. They are smart, only give them a chance."

It was night by the time Walter had made a horizontal shaft, which was to run through a square hole in the centre of the edge-stone.

The boys took supper at the house of Gabriel, but notwithstanding his entreaties to pass the night with him, preferred their camp fire, although they gladly accepted the present of a pair of chickens, a dozen eggs from Felix Bertault, honey from Tonnelot, and potatoes from Leroux. Indeed, the entire community were ready to place their all at the disposal of these young republicans, in whose energy, ingenuity, and self-reliance, they flattered themselves they beheld mirrored the future of their own children under the operation of the principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality they had so recently inaugurated. As they separated, Walter told Gabriel that all except Raffard, Gosset, and Felix, had better keep at work among the olives after their old fashion, as, the stuff being all on the spot, they were as many as could work to advantage on the mill, and the others could be called for a hard lift. They now set out for the castle.

"Won't we have a tuck-out to-morrow morning?" said Ned. "I guess there's no lack of pots and kettles among the ruins of the chateau. That one we carried the brands in will be first rate; it's all burnt out clean."

While Ned was making a fire, Walter was walking round among the woods on the side of the hill, apparently searching for something. When he returned, he found a blazing fire at the old spot, but Ned nowhere visible.

"Ned, where are you?"

"Here, Wal; only come here."

Following the direction of the voice, he found Ned on his knees before the kitchen fireplace of the chateau, the chimney of which was still standing. He was surrounded by old pots and kettles, one of which he was busily engaged in scouring. He had also placed the wood on the old andirons, ready to light in the morning.

"O, Wal, just you see; here's a crane, pots, and kettles. I've found the well, and a tin pail to draw water in, but some bruised; a pitcher, with the nose broken off; six plates, three of 'em whole; four cups; only one of them is broken, and a little piece is broken out of the side of another; a couple of linen towels, but one of them is scorched a little. I can't find any soap; but I've washed them out in lye. I've found lots of knives, forks, and spoons; only they are black and rusty, and the handles burnt off. Ain't it great, Wal?"

"Yes, we are all provided for. Ain't you glad we didn't stop with Gabriel?"

"I guess I am."

"Let us get everything ready to-night, because in the morning we shall want to start early, and it will take some time to get breakfast, we're going to have such a famous one."

After helping Ned scour the kettles, Walter went to the castle, and soon returned with some cord, which he wound around the knives, affording a very good substitute for handles. He then ran them into the ground, and rubbed them with brick and ashes, till he made them clean and somewhat bright.

"Let's have a table, Wal. That will put the touch on."

"Agreed."

Ned drove four stakes into the ground with the crowbar, and Walter brought a large panel from the hall, which he placed on them.

"I'll put the finishing stroke to it," said Ned; and, running back, he came with a piece of splendid tapestry, which he flung over it; and now they set the table.

"There," said Ned, "who can beat that—a carved table, tapestry table-cloth, and Sevres china dishes? Now for getting into the blankets. Walter," said Ned, after they lay down, "what were you hunting so long in the woods after?"

"I was trying to find a tree that had an elbow at the root."

"What do you want of that?"

"I'll tell you. In Godsoe's bark-mill the stone had a round hole in it, and turned around the shaft; and it wobbled, though that didn't make much difference in grinding bark, which was dry, and worth but little; so that waste was of no consequence. In this stone the hole is square. The shaft must turn with the stone on a pintle going into the upright shaft; and if I don't have something to make it pull inwards and run true, it will be all the time grinding against the curb I have made to keep the pulp in, and slatting off and on."

"How can you help it?"

"I've found a tree with an elbow at the root; and I'm going to dig it up, frame one end into the upright shaft, bring the elbow down over the stone wheel, put a pintle in the end of the shaft, bore a hole through the elbow, and have it turn in that, letting the elbow run down far enough for the beast to pull level; and then the stone *must run true*."

Next morning, after a glorious breakfast, the boys repaired to the village. With the aid of a strong force, the tree was cut out by the roots, the stick hewed on the spot, and transported on their shoulders to the mill. By means of the vessel's purchase, planks laid, and plenty of help, the great stone was parbuckled on to the platform, and put in place.

"Now, fellow-citizens," said Ned, flinging up his hat, "hurrah for a Yankee bark-mill! Bring on your mules and olives."

A mule was attached to the sweep, amid the cheers of the whole village. The mill was found to work excellently well, and ground the olives so fast that it required the efforts of all who had been employed bruising them in mortars to carry the pulp to the chamber and press it.

"Now," said Walter, "for the press. How did you use to press them, Gabriel?"

"There were presses belonging to the grand seignior, with wooden screws; but they were burnt."

"I don't know but I could cut the thread of a wooden screw, if I had time enough. However, that is not here nor there. I know what I *can* do: I can make a press with a lever, that will give you as much again oil as you can get by piling on stones, and make it right beside this mill, where you can shovel the pulp on to it, and save all portage and waste."

The next day, Walter, Ned, and their fellow-workmen—who had become quite expert in the use of tools—laid another platform within two feet of the mill, and on a level with it, in order that the pulp could be easily transferred from one to the other, and the oil from each run into different ends of the same trough, and be dipped out between them. He then cut a deep channel around the edge of the platform, leading to the trough, to conduct the oil. After this he built up, with the aid of the peasants, two abutments of stone, several feet above the platform, leaving in the middle, near the top, an opening eighteen inches square.

"Are you a stone-mason?" asked Gabriel, in surprise.

"No: but I've been used to building stone wall. I've worked on rocks till my fingers were worn so thin I couldn't take up a cup of hot coffee."

Now with the cattle they hauled three halves of the mill-stones that had been split to the spot, and, with skids and the tackle, placed them on the abutments, one upon the other, composing an enormous aggregate of weight.

"I calculate it will take some strength to lift those," said Walter, viewing his work with great complacency. "Now, Gabriel, for the biggest beam in the old castle! If I was at home, I could get one big enough."

"There is plenty of timber and large forests in France, my brother, although, since the revolution, it has been cut away in this part. Before that, the forests were very strictly guarded; but the National Assembly have sold a great deal. There are great beams in the castle that grew in the olden time."

After much labor, they obtained from beneath one of the floors an oak beam fifty feet in length and a foot square. One end of this was placed in the opening left in the stone-work; at the other Walter built what he called a "gin," which was a tripod of timber, fourteen feet in height, with a bolt at the top to fasten the tackle, and a windlass between two of the legs, by which the timber could be raised or lowered. When all was prepared, Gabriel and his friends put the sacks filled with pulp on the press, piling them up four feet in height, then poured on hot water, placed planks on the sacks, then blocks crosswise, and one large one lengthwise. The mere weight of the planks and blocks caused the oil to run merrily from the pulp, and pour into the trough.

The delighted peasants danced round the press, and Gabriel told the boys it was better not to let the beam down, as the oil which ran from the mill while the olives were grinding, and from the press, under that light pressure, was of the best quality.

When it ceased to run, the oil in the trough was dipped out, and the beam let down, when it began to run freely again. They stood upon the beam, and put on rocks, till they pressed the cake dry.

"It will be difficult," said Gabriel, "to get this beam up; and your 'gin' will be of no use without the tackle."

"We have got another tackle. The captain will sell this, and take his pay in oil, I know. Contribute among yourselves, and buy it."

"That we will gladly do."

"I've got some old wine," said Felix, "that came out of the cellars of the aristocrats; he can have that."

It was about four o'clock of an afternoon when the boys arrived at this successful termination of their philanthropic labors.

"This," said Gabriel, "has been a great day, a good day, one long to be remembered. Let us do no more to-day, but enjoy ourselves with these good citizens; we can soon press the olives now."

As they sat conversing, after supper, Walter said to the peasants,—

"People in our country—when a person has done a foolish thing; injured himself in trying to hurt another—have a fashion of saying 'that he has bitten off his nose to spite his face.' It seems to me that you did a very silly thing when you broke the mill-stones and burnt up the oil and wine presses of the aristocrats. The stone never harmed you. Didn't you know that your crops were coming off, and that you would need all these things yourselves? Why did you destroy those beautiful avenues and groves? Now that the aristocrats are gone, you would be right glad to have those noble trees yourselves."

In the course of their talk, Walter related to Gabriel some of the conversations he had held with the refugees at Salem, and observed that a great proportion of the American people, though ready to sympathize with any nation desirous of self-government, were struck with horror at the cruelties of which they had heard, and the wholesale massacres perpetrated, especially by the execution of the king and queen.

The peasant leaped to his feet; his eyes shot fire, his lips were drawn apart, and his face assumed an expression so demoniacal as to leave upon the minds of the boys no doubt of the part he had taken in these terrible scenes.

"*Execution of a king!*" he hissed between his teeth: "what better is the blood of a king than that of any other creature God has made?"

Controlling himself, he said more calmly,—

"Young citizens, you have been deceived. You have heard but one story—that of the aristocrats, of the oppressors. Listen now to that of the oppressed—to me, Gabriel Quesnard, a peasant born and bred on the soil of France, as were all my ancestors. I am not about to relate to you the cruelties practised in the days of my forefathers, when a noble has been known to kill a peasant, that he might warm his feet by thrusting them into his body on a cold day."

"Horrible!" exclaimed both the boys in a breath. "Was that ever done?"

"Indeed, and it would be difficult to tell what cruelties were not practised; neither shall I speak of such things as the peasants being compelled to beat the water in the marshes with poles to keep the frogs from croaking, when the wife of their lord was sick, lest they should disturb her. But I shall tell you of those miseries, which are of yesterday, which myself, my neighbors, and children of your ages, have endured. Let me tell you of the '*lettres de cachet*,'—issued by the king you pity so much,—by which a person was seized, perhaps in the street, and, without any form of trial, hurried to the Bastille, while his friends could only guess what had become of him. Any one who had money enough could buy one.

"When we levelled that accursed dungeon, we found citizens who had grown gray there, unconscious of crime and utterly ignorant of what they were accused.

"In the spring the peasant is trying to get in his seed to raise bread for his family. He, perhaps,—by some inadvertent word, wrung from him by the bitterness of oppression,—has given offence to the *intendant*; the *subdélégué* comes along and says, 'Go do your *corvée*' (compulsory labor) at such a place. The poor man must loose his cattle from the plough, and work on the roads; or perhaps, in the midst of harvest, must leave his grain to spoil, and go and carry convicts to the galleys, haul ship-timber to the navy-yard, or supplies to some garrison, while the soldiers prick his cattle with their swords, and insult their driver. More than three hundred peasants, who owned their land, were made beggars by the filling up of one valley in Lorraine. Every peasant was compelled to buy, and pay a tax on, seven pounds of salt a year, whether he used it or not.

"The *capitaineries*—"

"What were those?"

"The right to preserve the game, which meant that they might keep whole herds of deer and boars, and flocks of partridges, to overrun the peasant's land and eat up his crops. Did he presume to kill one, to save the bread of his family, he was sent to the galleys; and this right was not confined to their own lands, but extended to all the lands of the district. Yes, and the peasant was forbidden to weed or hoe his own grain, lest he should disturb the young partridges that were devouring his substance. Neither was he allowed to cut or plough under his own stubble, lest they should be deprived of shelter. This was a right granted by the king to princes of the blood. All these exactions came directly from the king, whom you pity so much. In addition to this were countless seigniorial rights. There were perpetual dues. A seignior could sell his land, and still draw rent from the very peasant who had bought it of him in the shape of seigniorial dues. They, too, had their '*corvées*,' and the peasant was forced to labor for them a certain number of days in each year. On everything that he owned must he pay dues to them. Yes, he must pay them for the right of selling his own produce in the market. Though in my time this custom of stilling the frogs was abolished, we were compelled to pay a fine instead of it. When, amid all these

impositions, the peasant has raised his grain, he can't have a hand-mill to grind it in. He must grind in the mill of the lord, bake his bread in the oven, and press his grapes and olives in the press of his master, and pay for the privilege, and, if unmarried, was subject to conscription; while from this and taxes the nobles were exempt, and so were thousands of others—petty clerks, government officers, and all worth over so much property. Thus all the burden of taxation was thrown upon the peasant because he was poor, and taken from the noble because he was not. To this it must be added that the clergy, with their tithes, took what little was left. Now, consider that I have omitted almost as much as I have mentioned, and you will be able to see the poor man's condition under the tyranny we have destroyed. That was the 'servitude of the soil.' Marvel not that we were frantic, and only thought of destroying everything that was an instrument of oppression while we had the power. Did you never see a dog bite the stone that had been flung at him?"

"Yes," replied Ned.

"So it was with us. We hated those mills; those presses, where we had been forced to work; those ovens, where we had been compelled to yield up a portion of our scanty loaf; broad avenues of trees that we and our folks had been forced to plant; those roads, adorned with trees so beautiful to others, were watered with the tears of the oppressed, and appeared frightful to us. In our delirium we thought only of destroying all that could remind us of those detested tyrants and those bitter days."

"I have understood," said Walter, "that, for these many years past, the peasants had been less hardly dealt with; that, although the laws remained unchanged upon the statute-books, they had not been rigidly enforced."

"That is true, citizens, and was the very reason of our rising."

"That is strange, that people should rise just when their condition was improving."

"Had you fallen into a deep pit, from which you could see no possible way of escape, you would resign yourself to your fate; but, did you perceive some projection upon which you might clamber and escape, would it not cause you to strain every nerve?"

"To be sure."

"Thus it was with us. When we were less hardly dealt with, we knew it was from lack of power; that it was not from charity, but fear. When we felt that the clutch of the oppressor was loosening on the peasant's throat, we were no longer resigned. Then came the news of what had been done in your country. Our children who had fought in your armies had returned. They brought with them these noble words, which were read to us by the few who could read: 'that all men are created free, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' As we listened, tears flowed from our eyes, our hearts grew hot, we trembled with a feeling altogether new. We felt we also were men—struggled, broke our letters, were *free!* Then we put to their lips the bitter cup of which they had made us drink so long, avenged the wrongs of our ancestors, and our own, and gave them blood for blood."

As the boys listened, their sentiments underwent a change. They felt that the greatest excesses of an ignorant people, in the paroxysm of their fury, made frantic by oppression, were in a great measure to be laid to the account of their oppressors.

"We," continued Gabriel, perceiving the impression he had made, "are called bloodthirsty, and viewed with horror, because we have shed much blood in a short time; but they have been shedding it all the time. Which, my brother, carries the most water to the sea, the river that waters the valley, and whose stream is always full, or the mountain torrent that floods the vale in the spring, and then leaves a dry channel?"

"The river, to be sure," replied Walter.

"Such is the difference between them and us. For hundreds of years there has not been a day when the peasant's blood has nor flowed at the will of his master. We guillotine a noble, or a priest; the news flies over all lands. Who knows, or cares to know, the misery he had inflicted upon the poor, and by which he had deserved a thousand deaths? Our banished aristocrats are scattered over Europe and America. They are learned men, of noble blood; tell their story at every court, among all peoples, and write it in books for all to read; while the peasant has suffered in silence, perished in prisons by starvation, and in the galleys, as unregarded as the dead leaves that strew yonder vineyard."

"I never thought of all these things before," said Walter, when Gabriel concluded; "this is indeed a story of fearful oppression."

"It is a true story, citizen. For ages the blood of the oppressed has been crying from the ground, and, at last, vengeance has come."

CHAPTER VIII. THE LAST DAY WITH THE PEASANTS.

That night, as the boys sat around their fire, Ned observed, "Walter, it appears to me that you

have done the very thing you have been talking about so long."

"I don't understand you, Ned."

"In making that mill and press for the peasants, you have certainly done some good."

"If so, I am surely glad of it; but I thought it was a shame for people to work after such a fashion as they were doing, and, since I have heard Gabriel, I wish I could do more."

"Do you know what was running in my head all the time he was talking?"

"What?"

"That it was a blessed thing to live in a free country. If Captain Rhines asks me if I've seen any better place than home, I think I shall know what to say."

"Ned, I'm glad," glancing at the new-made grave on which the moon was shining, "that we buried those people before we heard Gabriel talk; for I am afraid we shouldn't have done it afterwards."

"Perhaps not."

"We ought to be thinking about going back."

"The captain told us we might stay as long as we liked, except it looked like a gale of wind."

"We don't want to be like old sailors—stay till the last minute; besides, our provision is almost gone."

"Then we *must* go; for I can't live as these people do."

"Nor I, either. I was thinking how different they live from us—no tea or coffee; a little thin wine, about as strong as cider: a few olives; and soup made of bread, garlic, and potatoes; not a bit of meat; and oil instead of butter."

"Then their bread," said Ned, "as black as your hat—what do you suppose it is made of?"

"Rye and barley, I guess, or rye and buckwheat."

"But they have some nice things—fruits and preserves."

"I should think, now they've got clear of the seigniors, they might have everything if they would only put in and work—might raise two crops a year. Leroux said those potatoes he gave me were planted after the wheat came off. Now, we don't have any niceties at our house. We are plain, rough people; but, *heavens!* there's *enough*. I couldn't help thinking of the difference between their dinner and ours. We have a great pewter platter as big over as half a bushel on the table, with great junks of pork and beef on it. Father will stick the great knife up to the handle into five or six inches of clear pork or a junk of beef all yellow with fat. For vegetables, we had about a peck of potatoes, cabbages, onions, beets, and carrots; hot biscuit, tea and coffee, a great loaf of rye and Indian bread—as much better than their black stuff as white is better than Indian; and then mother will come walking along just as careful with a brimming pan of milk, and say, 'Now, boys, help yourselves.'"

"And butter," said Ned, "good, yellow butter, instead of oil."

"And then, in the fall, when we kill an ox, such soups as are soups; ain't made of bread, water, and garlicks. Father'll take a great shin, crack it up with the axe, and great junks of marrow will drop out of it. That's the stuff in a cold day, I tell you. Give a boy plenty of that, and it will make him stretch out and grow; give him strength to put the axe in. We waste more in our family than they eat. I've looked in all their houses; they don't have any swill-pail at the door; eat the swill themselves."

"I'll tell you what I'd like, Wal, and, if I ever get home, I mean to have mother make it—a chicken pie, with real flaky crust, rings all round it, and apple dumplings, with lots of sauce."

"But about going back, Ned—shall we start in the morning?"

"We *can't*, Wal. We want to get the moss to fill our beds, and the willow sets for Mr. Bell; then, you know, we want to go over to Felix Bertault's, and see the silkworms."

"Well, get ready to-morrow, and start bright and early in the morning."

The next day they went over to the house of Felix. He told the boys he could not show them the silkworms, as it was not the time of year at which they were hatched. However, he showed them the eggs, which were about as large as a mustard seed, and gray. He informed them that the worm was like a common caterpillar, three or four inches long, lived upon mulberry leaves, could not bear the cold, and, when spring came, and it was most time for the mulberry to leaf, they put the eggs in a warm room, in the kitchen, or wore them on their bodies, and the heat hatched them. As soon as they were hatched, they put them on mulberry leaves, which must be dry and tender. This made them grow so fast, that in six days they were too large for their skin, when it cracked, and they shed it, coming out with a new one; in six days more, shed that, till they passed through five changes, and had four new skins.

"What do they do then?" asked Ned.

"After shedding their last skin, they seem kind of miserable for a week or more, and then they begin to eat very greedily, grow, and fill up with the stuff they make the silk of."

"What kind of stuff is it?" asked Walter. "I've torn open the bag, and it looks like gum."

"But they do something to it that makes it silk."

"What next?"

"We know now that they want to spin; so we fasten upon the shelves where we keep them little twigs, willow, bulrushes, and sprigs of lavender, which they crawl upon, and begin to spin."

"I should think they would crawl all over the room, and get trod on."

"They won't go from the leaves."

"How do they spin?" asked Ned.

"They throw out little threads of silk, the same as a spider, from two little holes in their noses, fasten them to the twigs, and make a rough kind of covering to keep off the weather; then they spin a finer thread, till they make a ball around themselves as large as a pigeon's egg; gum the inside all but one end: then they have a real warm, water-proof house, that will keep out the weather."

"Is that the end of it?" asked Walter.

"No. In this house the caterpillar turns into a moth."

"*Into a moth!*"

"Yes, and eats its way out of the end that was not gummed, leaving its old skin behind, just as a chicken does its shell. The female now begins to lay eggs just such as I showed you."

"What do they do then?"

"They die, the males in eight days, the females in four; and we have the eggs to begin again. There is one of their nests," showing him a cocoon.

"There's a hole in one end."

"Yes; that is where the moth gnawed out."

"What do you do with the eggs?"

"We wrap them in a cloth, and put them in a cool, dry place; but we kill all the worms that we do not want to become moths, and lay eggs, as soon as they are done spinning, by baking them in a hot oven."

"What for?"

"If we didn't, they would become moths, eat out, cut the silk off, and break the thread so that it could not be reeled."

"What is done with this rough silk that is on the outside?"

"It is carded and spun like wool; so are those cocoons that the moths hatch in."

"I don't understand how the worm makes the silk all in one thread. Does he roll over and over like a shaft, and wind it round him?"

"No; he puts it on, back and forth, moving his head from side to side in crooked patches, but all one thread, because he keeps the end of it in his mouth, and never breaks it."

"But if they don't wind it round them, what keeps it in place?"

"The gum."

"How do you get it off the cocoon?"

Felix called his wife, who took ten of the cocoons, and put them into warm water to loosen the gum; then she stirred them with a little broom of straw; the threads of the silk stuck to the broom so she was able to take hold of them with her fingers; she then joined five of the threads together, making two compound threads of the ten, and put those two through holes in a thin piece of iron that lay across the kettle, brought them together, wound them on a hand reel, and made a skein of silk, which she divided, giving one half to Ned, and the other to Walter.

Felix told the boys that they sold the cocoons at the mills where they reeled it, as it required machinery to do it properly, and his wife had only reeled that just to let them see how it could be done.

"Suppose the thread should break," said Ned.

"Then all you have to do is to lay the end on to the main thread, and the gum will stick it."

He said the reason his wife stood so far from the kettle was, that the gum might cool and the threads not stick together. He then gave them some eggs and cocoons to take home with them.

"Gabriel," said Walter, when they met again, "I've changed my mind since I came here. I thought at first it was the last place for a man to live by farming; but if ever you get a good government, under which a man can receive the fruits of his labor, and not be beggared by imposition, I will engage to come here and get rich in ten years."

"How could you do that, citizen?"

"In the first place I would make every day of the year tell. I'd raise two crops in a year, where you raise one. I would build a mill to grind and press these olives in a quarter of the time it takes you, and get a third more oil than you can get from the press I made you. I would build my house in the midst of my land, and not lose a great part of my time walking back and forth, carting stuff, and wearing out both cattle and carts. I would make a cart that would run so much easier than yours, that one mule would haul as much as two do in yours. Then, in the winter, when there was

leisure, I would make a good road; that would make half as much difference more. Then, instead of making what you call a fallow (which is letting the ground, after a crop is taken off, grow up to weeds, then ploughing them in, putting back no more than you have taken out), I would keep cattle, raise corn, and have manure. It takes, according to your statement, about thirty-five days to raise a crop of silkworms; that pays first rate, and your children could do nearly all that is to be done; it also comes at a time when there's not much else to do. Now only see how much can be raised. Here's a crop of wheat, potatoes, and buckwheat; after them (at any rate every other year), vines and olives, that will grow on the mountains where nothing else will, and come off late, after the other crops are out of the way; then silk in the latter part of winter and the early spring, before work is driving."

Gabriel scratched his head, and replied, "Citizen, so much work would make a man a slave."

"You are a slave now, and get nothing for it, either. I'd rather put things through, and get something, then, when I'm old, lay back and take the good of it, than to be forever a mulling, and eat up as fast as I get. If you would only raise corn instead of this miserable rye, you could have bread, pork, beef, fodder for your cattle, and dressing for your land."

The boys now began to prepare for departure, collecting moss, lavender, and other herbs for their beds, getting willow sets from the island for Mr. Bell, and some pieces of carved panel and broken china, on which were beautiful designs, from the old castle.

When they returned, Gabriel said, "Don't take these broken things to America;" and he gave them a bowl and goblet most elaborately ornamented, while Raffard gave them a panel that had never been injured, on which was the figure of a deer with an arrow in its flank. Leroux gave Walter a pistol inlaid with silver, Tonnelot presented Ned with a rapier richly ornamented; indeed, all were sorry to part with them, and anxious to give them something as a token of affection and remembrance. Julien, François, and Beaupré (sons of Bernard and Bertault), brought from their houses pears preserved in honey, almonds, figs, pickled olives, and preserved quinces.

Early the next morning they took leave of the peasants, and set out with Gabriel for the vessel, having with them, in the cart, their presents and the wine and oil contributed by the peasants for the purchase of the tackle from the captain.

They arrived just before dinner, and the captain not only sold Gabriel the tackle, but offered to buy all the oil he and his neighbors had to dispose of at a much higher price than they could sell it for at Marseilles, and also their honey.

After feeding his mules and eating a hearty dinner himself, Gabriel went home in high spirits to carry the news to his neighbors.

CHAPTER IX. THE MISTRAL.

As they were riding along on their way to the vessel, the boys amused themselves by imagining the astonishment they would create at home by telling all they had learned in regard to affairs in France, and especially concerning silkworms, but were quite crestfallen upon finding that the captain was as familiar with the subject as themselves, who informed them that they had been, and were then, raised at home.

"*At home!*" cried both the boys, in surprise. "Where?"

"They were raised in Virginia and Georgia when the country was first settled. I have read about it in books in the Salem library. I read in an old newspaper that President Stiles wore at Commencement, in 1788, a gown of silk made and woven in Connecticut. Two years ago my mother had a pair of silk stockings sent her from Northampton by a cousin of ours, who raised the worms, reeled the silk, and made the stockings."

"I never knew all that before," said Ned.

"Ah, my boy, you *might* have known it," replied the captain; "for you had better privileges than Walter. There were books in the library that told about it; but half the time, even in school, while your eyes were on your book, you were dreaming of going to sea, and, the moment school was out, were sailing boats, climbing on vessels' rigging, helping bend sails; and you know you would work all Saturday afternoons for Frank Hall, the rigger, hold a turn at the windlass, run of errands to the blacksmith shop, in short, do anything if he would only let you furl a royal when it came night, send up a royal yard, or reeve running-rigging. Didn't Deacon Chase tell your mother that you would certainly break your neck: for he saw you, only the day before, astride the end of a royal-yard? You never found time to read about silkworms or anything else."

"That is true, sir. However, what I learned of the riggers all came into play when I got on shipboard."

After sleeping by a camp fire in the fresh air, the boys felt so reluctant to get into their berths in the vessel, even for a night, that they lost no time in filling their beds, and placing them in the tree, where they enjoyed a most delightful night's repose.

"I declare, Ned," said Walter, as he woke in the morning, "if we were on wages, instead of shares, and were not eating our own grub, I shouldn't care much though we had a few more lazy days."

During the forenoon they were occupied in making rough coops for some hens the captain had engaged of Gabriel; but, being at leisure after dinner, they hastened to the platform to talk over the past, lay plans, and cherish expectations for the future.

About three o'clock in the afternoon,—which was beautiful, with a very light breeze that barely stirred the leaves on the evergreen oak,—Walter said, "How clear the sky looks! and the water in the cove—I can see the bottom from here. I can see those sea-fowl that are diving when they are on the bottom."

"Only hear the crows," said Ned; "what a yelling! Look in these pines; they are black with them. They are having a meeting just as they do at home."

"Then I guess the sheep are having a meeting, too. Look under the side of that ledge of rocks. What a lot of 'em! and their heads all one way! There's one cloud, a real mare's tail" (cirrus), "creeping up in the north."

"Here comes Jacques, running as hard as he can. Look at him. He's hallooing, and making signals. I can't hear a word he says; but it must be something about the fleet."

The boys, occupied with the singular conduct of Jacques, had ceased to take note of the sky, or they would have perceived that the cirrus cloud had spread out, covering a great extent of sky, while below it was another, of darker hue, and, while striving to catch Jacques' words, attributed his signals to something connected with the fleet; and so did the captain, who, having observed his motions, was hastening to the tree in order to see if there was any man-o'-war in sight.

But Jacques was shouting, "Mistral, mistral!" with all his might. There was a sharp flash, followed by a terrific peal of thunder, a roar among the tree-tops, and instantly the air was filled with broken limbs, leaves, both green and dry, torn from the trees, and raised from the ground, mixed with clouds of gravel. A large pine near by was torn up; the platform, with everything on it, sent whirling in the air, the oak bent, groaned, and seemed ready to follow the pine. Walter caught hold of a limb forming one side of a crotch; the branch split down four or five feet, when the limb to which he clung came in contact with another cross limb; the tough fibres of the oak, aided by the spring of the cross limb, held on, and there he hung, blown out like a streamer. Ned caught by a larger branch, clasping it with his legs. The captain's spy-glass, falling into the cleft of the fork, stuck there; three of the chairs went over the land to sea; another lodged in the thick top of a pine; the rest went across the cove, and were blown up against the bank. Ned's blanket was twisted round the main-topmast rigging; Walter's sailed for parts unknown. Ned's bed, lavender and all, went to sea; Walter's was jammed between two rocks, on the end of the high bluff.

Hail, mixed with snow, began to fall, and everything wore the garb of winter. When the squall struck, the captain was half way up the tree; the rope-ladder being on the weather-side, the lashings that held the bull's eyes to the ground were parted, and the shrouds, with the captain clinging to them, blew out at an acute angle with the tree.

"Ned!" shouted Walter.

"All right, Wal, I am now," was the reply, as he succeeded in getting hold of the limb over which that to which he clung was chafing.

"This beautiful climate of Provence," said Ned—"see the snow!"

"This wind is right from the Alps," said Walter. "Cuts like a knife."

It was indeed the terrible mistral, the scourge of Provence.

Sliding down the trunk of the tree, they found one of the lashings dangling. Catching hold of it, aided by Jacques, who had now arrived, they pulled down the shrouds, and relieved the captain.

There was not a hat on the head of any one save the pilot, and their hair was plastered with snow, and faces cut by the hail.

"Where were the blockaders when you left, Jacques?" asked the captain the moment he could get breath.

"Some of them were cruising, some at anchor."

"Two frigates went by here with a cutter yesterday. Where was Nelson?"

"Yesterday he chased a French ship, cut her off from Marseilles, and she ran under the guns of a very heavy battery, an earth-work, half way between here and Marseilles; and he is watching her."

"Can they hold on?"

"No, except the Agamemnon. She is more under the lee. Nothing can hold against this except they are under a lee, and strongly-moored with anchors well bedded. They generally lie at a single anchor, and the topsail yards swayed up, so as to be ready to get under way in a moment."

"We will hold on a while, to let the 'fiery edge' get off the wind, and give them a chance to get out of the way."

In the mean time the mainsail was balance-reefed, the scope hove in, the fore topmast and main staysails loosed, ready to set, which was all the sail the brigantine would bear, so great was the violence of the wind.

Jacques now said to the boys, "Why didn't you come down when I was making signs to you, hallooing 'mistral' enough to split my throat?"

"We couldn't hear you."

"Couldn't you hear the crows, and see the sheep all huddled together?"

"We didn't know what it meant."

"I rather think you know now."

They lay thus for an hour, when an order was given to man the windlass. The crew, all young, athletic men, having enjoyed a long repose,—stimulated by the strongest motives, self-interest, pride of seamanship, and manly emulation,—sprang like tigers to their work, and "catted" the anchor by hand.

"There's your bed, Mr. Griffin," said Ned, as they shot by the high bluff.

"Never mind; I've had one good night's sleep in it."

"There's Nelson," said Jacques, as they rounded the first prominent headland; "he means to hold on. I had a good look at him yesterday with a glass. He has sent his top hamper down; his yards are pointed to the wind, and, I've no doubt, two anchors ahead."

"Nelson hates the Yankees," said the captain. "How he would grit his teeth if he knew who we are!"

Nelson's dislike for the Yankees was based upon very solid grounds.

After the war of independence, the United States were prohibited by Great Britain from all trade with her West India colonies. Before the war that trade had been exceedingly profitable, and the Americans were loath to relinquish it. It had been no less so to the inhabitants of the islands, custom-house officers, and all holding office under the crown, since that shrewd and persistent people, fully appreciating the importance of the principle illustrated by the old saw of "throwing a sprat to catch a herring," had never shown themselves ungrateful. With a shrewd suspicion of this, the home government sent out a fleet to look after matters in general, and enforce prohibition.

But the naval officers, from the admiral to his midshipmen, dearly loved dinner-parties given by the civil magistrates and wealthy merchants, and were much influenced by them. The officers of his majesty's customs—governor, generals, and presidents of council—missed many a box of spermaceti candles, and were often feelingly reminded of their old friends by their empty pockets. When, therefore, a down-east brig, displaying the stars and stripes, and laden scuppers to with lumber, spermaceti candles, codfish, butter, hoops, apples, and live stock, entered the harbor of a British island, and the boarding officer saw the sharp face of some Yankee friend peering over the rail, with an expression, "It's *me*, and no mistake," it was certainly natural that he should greet him cordially; and when the captain presented a protest, setting forth that he had sprung his mast, or sprung a leak, was in distress, and wished to discharge enough of his cargo to enable him to get at the leak, and sell enough to pay his repairs, the official could not refuse so reasonable a request. Thus it happened that a great many American vessels sprung a leak; and whatever number of vessels went in loaded, they always came out light, and the Yankee master, with his pocket full of British gold, then sailed for Martinico to buy molasses.

There were vessels in the States, built before the war, having British registers. These were run out there, under their old registers, and no questions asked.

A still more audacious evasion was practised. Captains took the oath of allegiance, hoisted British colors, and the custom-house officials gave them British registers, although American built, owned by Americans, and with American captains and crews.

But in 1784, when Nelson—who cared nought for dinner-parties, and whose ruling nature was love of glory and duty—was sent out to the West Indies, under Admiral Hughes, and found the British ports full of these illicit traders, he pounced upon them like a falcon upon a flock of herons. Adhering to the words of the statute, that all trade to and from the British West Indies and America must be in British bottoms, navigated by British captains, three fourths of the crew British seamen, and owned by Englishmen, inhabitants of Great Britain or her colonies, he seized at once four American vessels under English colors, with English registers, but with American captains and crews, owned and built in America. But the American captains, so far from submitting, prosecuted him in the civil court for assault and imprisonment, laying their damages at the enormous sum of four thousand pounds sterling, while Nelson, knowing he could not obtain a fair trial in the islands, dared not leave his ship for eight weeks, for fear of being arrested on a civil suit; and, as he continued to seize vessels, the captains, after his return to England to avoid prosecution, served a writ on his wife, laying the damages at twenty thousand pounds sterling.

The admiral was disposed to wink at these proceedings, and, in reply to a representation from Nelson, said it was an affair of the custom-house officers, and ordered him not to interfere with their decisions.

In this dilemma he petitioned to the king, who came to the rescue, and ordered him to be defended by *his* lawyers. The Yankees, however, were an overmatch for him, aided as they were by unprincipled officials.

American captains would clear for some of the Dutch or French islands, then go to Trinidad, put the vessel under Spanish colors, ship a few creoles, to put a better face on the matter, take some live stock on deck, and go to the British islands.

The custom-house officers, despite the efforts of Nelson, would admit them, under an old order

from the Board of Treasury, 1763, declaring British ports open to Spanish vessels bringing bullion and live stock, although all the bullion they brought was a hold full of Yankee lumber.

Our young readers will now perceive why Nelson disliked the Yankees, and how much good it would have done him to have closed his jaws upon the "Arthur Brown."

"Suppose we should run up the colors, captain," said Walter, "and stir them up a little."

"We are dead to leeward. If too much provoked, he might slip his cables and come down on us."

"No provocation," said Jacques, "could make him leave the vessel he is watching; for he knows as soon as he makes sail she is away."

It was evident the brigantine had already been the subject of close scrutiny; for, while Ned was bending the flag to the halyards, a flash was seen from the stern of the ship, followed by the report, and a ball sank harmless into the water, a long distance to windward; for the guns of that day were of short range, compared with those of the present time.

As the flag streamed out on the wind, shot followed shot in quick succession, attesting the galling nature of this taunt.

"Let her luff, Lancaster," said the captain to the seaman at the helm.

"Luff, sir."

"That will do; steady."

"Steady, sir."

"He likes the looks of us so well, Mr. Griffin, we'll give him a chance to see more of us."

The firing now suddenly ceased.

"He knows by our springing our luff," said Jacques, "that he's throwing away his powder and shot."

"I see a boat," said the second mate; "he's going to board us."

The captain, getting into the companion-way, where he could brace himself, as it was impossible to stand without holding on to something, put the glass to his eye.

"There's a man overboard," he cried.

"God help him," said Walter; "he can't live long in this sea."

"He's got hold of something that has been flung over,—a spar or plank,—and they are after him."

In a few moments he could be seen with the naked eye whenever he rose on the crest of a wave. They continued silently to watch him, approaching fast before the wind and sea.

"They don't see the man," shouted the captain; "the boat's crew don't see him, the vapor is so thick, and he so low in the water; they are lying on their oars, and the cockswain is standing up, looking round. We must save him, or he's a dead man. Hard down the helm."

Instantly Walter, followed by Ned and two more of the crew, one of whom was Henry Merrithew (the strongest man in the ship's company), sprang to cut the lashings of the boat. It was no child's play to launch a boat, get clear of the vessel, and pull to windward against that wind and sea; but with the exception of Ned, who made up in resolution and quickness of apprehension for lack of strength and practice, these men had from childhood been brought up in boats, accustomed to fishing among shoals in the edge of the surf, and pursuing sea-fowls among breaking rocks. Enveloped in spray, they forced the boat to windward with long, steady strokes, while the captain, with his eye on the man, pointed out the direction in which they were to pull, which, as they were back to, was a most effectual aid.

"Keep cool, Merrithew," said Walter, who pulled the after oar, as he heard the crack of a thole-pin behind him; "keep cool; if you break that oar or thole-pin, we are dished."

"Here he is, close aboard," said Ned, looking over his shoulder.

Walter, flinging his oar out of the row-lock into the scull-hole, steered the boat directly for the man, who was clinging by the jack-stay to a royal yard.

"Ship your oar, Ned, and stand by."

Ned caught the end of the spar as it came broadside on, when it drifted alongside of the boat, bringing the man abreast of Merrithew, who caught him by the hair and collar of his coat. Notwithstanding the great strength of the seaman, he could not break the death-grip of the drowning man. In a moment Blaisdell drew his knife across the jack-stay, and he was taken on board.

"A midshipman, by his dress, and dead—dead enough, too, poor boy," said Merrithew, as he laid him in the stern-sheets.

"There's life in him yet," said Walter. "I saw him treading water with his feet to keep the spar from rolling over, while you were pulling up."

"His mouth is shut," said Blaisdell, "which shows he knew how to take care of himself in the water. If he was dead, his mouth would be partly open, and his tongue between his teeth."

"There's a big sea coming; round with her before it gets along; pull, boys, pull, and don't let him die in the boat. The air is colder than the water, and taking him out of the water has chilled him."

When the boat came alongside, and the apparently lifeless body was conveyed to the cabin of the brigantine, every heart was touched.

"Dear little fellow! He can't be more than eighteen; and what a noble face!" said the captain, while they were stripping off his wet clothing, rubbing the body, and wrapping him in blankets. "There's life," said he after he was placed in the captain's own berth. "I can just see that he breathes, and there's a faint fluttering of the heart."

As the readiest and most efficacious means in their power, they put bags filled with hot salt to his feet and other parts of his body. His cheeks were pale, flesh cold, muscles relaxed, and eyes half closed. The crew of the man-o'-war's boat, after witnessing the rescue, endeavored to return; but they could no longer perceive the ship, and, as the only course left them by which to save their own lives, pulled for the brigantine.

A rope was thrown to them as they came under her stern, the "gig" hoisted on board, and the brigantine kept on her course.

"Make yourselves at home, boys," said the captain, "here's plenty to eat, and not much to do."

"You picked up the young gentleman, sir," said the cockswain of the gig, addressing the captain.

"Yes; he's in my berth below."

"Will he win through it, sir?"

"I think so; but there's just the breath of life in him."

"God be thanked! he's a fine young gentleman, and much thought of by all the ship's company; there's not a man but would risk his life to save him. He was very poorly when we were in Leghorn, but has been getting quite stout latterly."

"How did he get overboard?"

"I don't know; the boat was hanging at the cranes, and we were sitting in her, when there was a shout, 'Man overboard!' While they were lowering us away, the boatswain sung out that it was Mr. Reed. I suppose he slipped. The ship was rolling very heavy, and everything covered with sleet. We never got sight of him at all, but pulled the way we thought he must drift."

The young man lay for three hours in the condition we have described, breathing regularly, but faintly, and manifesting no other signs of returning consciousness than a convulsive twitching of the eyelids. The captain hung over him with the greatest anxiety, making such outward application as he thought of use.

In three hours more, to his great delight, his patient was able to swallow; but it was not till nine o'clock the next morning, twelve hours after he was taken from the water, that he could speak, or reply to questions. Ascertaining where he was, and by whom rescued, he seemed greatly moved, and expressed the wish that he had perished rather than be carried to Marseilles, and become a French prisoner of war.

"Make yourself easy, sir," replied the captain. "I will cut my right hand off before I will deliver those who have come on board my vessel in distress into the hands of their enemies. I'll put you and your men into an English man-o'-war."

This frank declaration proved more efficacious than all the other remedies that had been administered. His pale cheeks flushed in a moment, the light of youth and vigor returned to his eyes, and, after eating, he got up, and put on his uniform, which the seamen had dried for him, and scoured the buttons. He then went on deck, and met the boat's crew, who manifested great pleasure at seeing him. He shook hands with them all, calling each man by name.

The weather now began to moderate fast. The reefs were shaken out, yards sent up, and all sail made upon the vessel. When, at length, the high lands of Marseilles, and Planier Island, ten miles from the city, came into view, and it was evident the coast was clear of blockaders, the brigantine was hove to. A very strict watch was kept during the night; and, just as the sun rose, the lookout at the mast-head sung out, "A sail to leeward!" The mate went aloft with the glass, and reported that it was an English man-o'-war.

"She is beating back to her station," said the captain. "We'll get our breakfast while she is working up."

The midshipman, somewhat surprised at the coolness of the captain, said, "You have great confidence in the sailing qualities of your vessel, captain."

"I have reason for it, Mr. Reed," was the reply. "Indeed, if assured this wind would hold, I should not fear to lie here till she came nearly within gunshot."

After the meal was concluded, which was not at all hurried, the man-o'-war was near enough to be distinguished with the naked eye.

"Do you recognize that frigate, Mr. Reed?"

"Yes, sir. It is the Leda, Captain Campbell."

"One of your blockading fleet?"

"Yes, sir."

The frigate, with every sail set, now came up fast.

"I am about as near to her as is prudent," said the captain, and gave orders to launch the gig.

He then said, "Now, Mr. Reed, there is one of your own fleet. You are at liberty to depart with a fair wind and a fresh crew. Your captain, I believe, don't like us Yankees; but give my respects to him, and add whatever you think proper."

All sail was made on the brigantine, and, by the time the boat reached the frigate, she was nearing the harbor of Marseilles.

Notwithstanding Nelson's prejudices (certainly not groundless), the Arthur Brown had not been a week in Marseilles when a flag of truce came in, and by it came a letter to the captain from the midshipman, enclosing a note from Nelson, thanking him for the rescue of his officer, and the kindness manifested to both him and his crew.

CHAPTER X. THE INFERNAL.

The midshipman, at the close of his letter, written in the most affectionate spirit, particular reference being made to his rescuers, Walter, Ned, and their companions in the boat, on that occasion, said,—

"You will recollect, my dear sir, that when you first hove in sight, on the day of the gale, it was not so thick as afterwards, and then a person in either vessel could, with a glass, easily make out the other; but, shortly after I fell overboard, it shut down thick of snow. During that time, our captain and first luff (lieutenant) recognized the Arthur Brown, knew her to be the same vessel that was almost under the guns of the Lowestaff in a fog, some months ago, and that she gave chase to. The officers and crews of all the other vessels had a good chance to look at her, when you lay so long under the guns of the castle, after running the fire of the flag-ship. Her masts rake so much, she carries such a cloud of canvas and is such a beautiful model, that there is no mistaking her, although you have altered her paint since the last trip. The fleet has taken scarcely any prizes, so that all are hungry for prize-money. Every one of us from the admiral to the powder-monkeys, feel chagrined at being thus bearded; that our reputation as seamen will suffer if you should again escape us. There's another motive. We all know if we could take the Arthur Brown, and put a few light guns on board of her, she would catch everything on the coast, and fill our pockets with prize-money. Add to this, your slapping our captain in the face with your flag, the other day, and you will perceive how matters stand between us. In short, while your noble treatment of myself and shipmates has gained you the respect and good will of every one,—and you would experience the utmost kindness, should you fall into our hands,—believe me, you have a difficult task, and one which will tax your resources to the utmost, for the fleet are determined to have the brigantine, or sink her. I could not do less than put those, to whom I owe my life, on their guard. But, from what I have seen of yourself, the character of your crew, and the capacity of the brigantine, I should not be so much surprised as my shipmates, should you, by some of those chances which always seem to turn up in favor of your people, escape us, though it by no means becomes me, as a British officer, to express any such desire."

The ship's company of the brigantine being, with the exception of Jacques, all Americans, most of them having grown up together from childhood, and a good part of them shipmates on the last voyage, the relation between officers and crew was very different from that usually existing on shipboard.

The communion was also more intimate from the fact that no one was hired, each having a share in the risk and profits of the voyage, and that they were bound together by a sense of common danger, cherished a personal attachment to each other, and reposed perfect confidence in the ability of the captain, insomuch that Quesnard, who marked with curious interest the manner in which things went on board the brigantine, said that he "would vote for a king in France if they could have a government like the government of that vessel."

Upon receiving the letter, Captain Brown, calling his officers and crew together, read it to them, remarking, "You see, boys, what they are preparing for us."

They received the communication without much emotion of any kind. Henry Merrithew observed, in his drawling way,—

"Yes, cap'n, I see what they calc'late; but they say 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' Me and George here, and Elwell, was figerin' up on our chists, with chalk, what each man's share of this cargo of silks and other truck that we are taking in will come to. If it comes to as much as the one we've just discharged,—and Elwell, who's been in the trade afore, judges it will come pretty well up, cause sich stuff is high now on account of the blockade,—why, I, for one, think the game's worth the candle."

"It's my opinion, captain," said Sewall Lancaster, squirting the tobacco-juice through his teeth over the rail, "that it's a good thing for us these English are making the blockade so close, as long as we kin run it; and I reckon we kin, because, as Henry says, it makes both the cargo we fetch and the one we take away worth double; and I guess, as that youngster says,—not wishing any harm to him howsomever,—that something'll turn up on our side."

This cool preference of greater risk, with the prospect of greater profit, was received with a universal murmur of assent.

"Well, boys," said the captain, folding up the letter, "I wanted to know your minds, because we can't wait here a great while for a gale of wind to drive the fleet from their anchors. We have sold our cargo, and shall soon be short of provisions, and there are none to be had here. We must take our chance, the first suitable night, to run their battery, unless I can contrive some other way."

While the vessel was completing her lading, the captain seemed quite thoughtful, and spent the greater portion of his time alone on a high hill, called Viste, over which led the road to Paris, and commanding a good view of the fleet.

The port of Marseilles is completely land-locked, being a salt water lake, of the shape of an egg, half a mile in length, and a quarter of a mile in breadth. The entrance into it is not more than a hundred yards in width, and defended by strong fortifications.

From his situation on the hill, the captain soon had ocular evidence of the accuracy of the statements contained in the letter he had received. He saw that not only had the number of vessels cruising outside been reduced to two, but they had formed a complete cordon across the road, effectually stopping all egress, except by encountering their broadsides at short range. The increased number of vessels also made it evident to him that the night patrols would be doubled.

As the young captain—after a careful scrutiny of the disposition of the vessels—sat with the glass lying across his knees, an idea presented itself, which, on his way to dinner, he more fully matured.

"Jacques," said he, while eating, "what was it you were saying the other day to a countryman of yours about a fire-ship? I can only catch a word or two, here and there, of your dialect."

"I was telling him, captain, that there were two condemned vessels lying here, one a privateer, and the other a Guineaman (slaver), and the government was going to make fire-ships of them both, and send them down among the blockading fleet, now that they are moored in such close order."

"Indeed," replied the captain; but, making no further allusion to the topic, he asked, "How is the water along the shore, from the outlet of the port, as you go to the westward?"

"The shore is quite bold, captain, with a few shoal spots, for some miles."

"Could you carry this vessel along shore, in the night, for two miles without getting aground?"

"Yes, captain. I can feel my way with the lead, or I can carry you through narrow passages, between islands and the main shore, where no man-o'-war can follow."

The captain said no more, but, rising from the table, sought his merchants, who went with him to wait upon the authorities. From them he learned that the privateer only was to be fitted for a fire-ship; that the magazine was already made, and the powder would be put on board directly.

Captain Brown bought the slaver for a trifle, as she was fit only to break up for her iron. He also bought some old sails, and then hauled her alongside his own vessel. She was not far from the tonnage of the Arthur Brown; and there was so much resemblance between them, that, in the night, one might easily be mistaken for the other. They were both brigantines, but the difference was this: the main boom of the slaver was shorter, she had no royal-mast, and was painted differently.

The young captain now communicated his plans to his crew, who set to work with a will to execute them. The main-boom was lengthened, a royal-mast, royal-yard, and flying-jib-boom added, and she was painted precisely like the Arthur. The old sails were limed to make them conspicuous in the night, as, in this case, no concealment was intended; ballast was put in, to give her the appearance of being loaded; in short, even a close observer would not have distinguished one from the other in the night. The two were now hauled near to the entrance of the harbor, awaiting the motions of the fire-ship.

The moment the captain told his plans to his officers and crew, Walter and Ned volunteered to take charge of the slaver.

"I don't believe," said the captain, "they will accomplish anything with their fire-ship, except a scare."

"Why so?" asked the second mate.

"Because they must have a northerly wind to get down to the fleet, and, with the wind that way, will not be likely to have a very dark night. The guard-boats will probably see them before they get very near, and give warning. It cannot be very hard work to get out of the way of a vessel steering herself."

"I should like very well," said Walter, "to have the fleet scattered, but have no desire that the young midshipman, whose life we labored so hard to save, should be blown to pieces."

"He won't be," said Jacques.

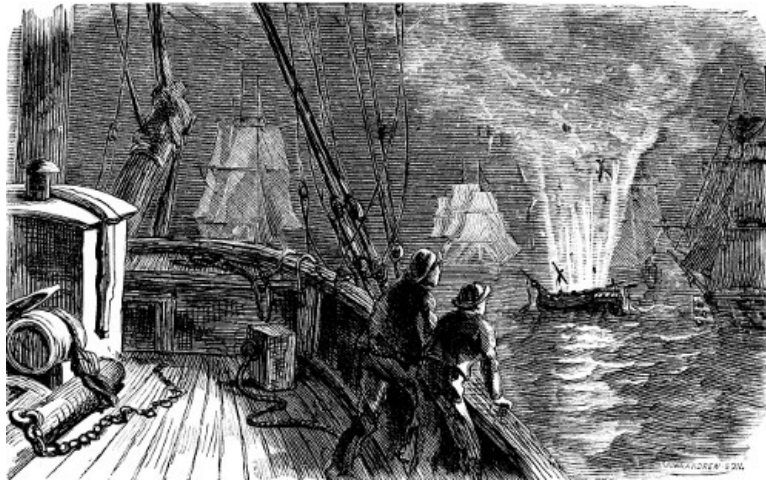
"Why not he as liable as another?"

"Because the Agamemnon, the vessel he belongs to, is the fastest vessel they have, and is most always cruising."

In the hold of the old privateer, near the foot of the mainmast, was constructed a square room for a magazine, in which were placed eight hundred barrels of powder. From this to the stern a fire-proof passage-way or trunk was made, in which the train was laid, that it might not explode prematurely. The train was ignited by a port-fire, arranged to burn long enough to give those

firing the train time to escape.

The deck was filled with barrels of tar, dry wood, shavings, live shells, pieces of pot-metal, spikes, broken glass, and links of chains, to act as missiles when the explosion took place, and the guns were loaded with grape shot.



The Explosion.

Men who had volunteered for the duty were to fire the mass of combustibles on deck in three places, and the train leading to the magazine, all at the same moment, whenever the approach of the fire-ship was discovered by the enemy. Then, the fire being applied, and the helm lashed, she was to be left to make her own way.

The night, so anxiously expected, came at last, hazy, with here and there a star just visible; the wind moderate, but fair, and enough of it to give the vessels good headway. It was half an hour past midnight when this infernal contrivance glided silently from the harbor and passed the forts,—having the appearance of a blockade runner,—and steered for the centre of the English fleet, followed by the slaver with all her sails set. She, however, hove to, when a short distance from the port, leaving the infernal to proceed alone.

Moments seemed lengthened to hours, as the boys, hanging over the rail, gazed upon the dim outlines of the receding vessel, around which dark shadows were closing fast. Although the distance was not great which separated them from the fire-ship or the fleet, a thin haze, which obscured the light of the stars, completely obstructed the view. With bated breath they listened for some token from the bosom of that misty shroud, which they strove in vain to penetrate.

No sound, save the occasional surge of the helm in the lee becket, or the quiver of a sail, as the vessel came up to or fell off from the wind, disturbed the repose of the night.

"Walter," whispered Ned, "this silence is fearful; they must be almost there."

A pressure of his arm was the mute response. A few moments more of suspense, when a stern hail broke the ominous silence so suddenly that, with a convulsive start, the boys sprang to their feet. There was no reply. Again the summons rose louder on the air, instantly followed by a shot.

"They are discovered," said Ned. But even while the words were issuing from his lips three spirals of bright flame, shooting up from the fire-ship, revealed to the boys—who were looking from darkness towards the light—a scene combining every element, both of the sublime and terrible, and which thrilled them to the heart's core.

The period of French history, during which the events here narrated occurred, abounded in the most startling contrasts. Acts of utter selfishness and the most fiendish cruelty were relieved by others manifesting the purest philanthropy and noble self-sacrifice. The crew of the fire-ship, finding they were discovered, and foreseeing that if they left the vessel to drift down by herself no damage would probably be inflicted upon the enemy, after saying to each other, "We will cover ourselves with glory, lay her alongside an English ship, blow her to atoms, and die for France," kindled the mass of inflammable material on deck in three places, and by this light, which constantly increased in intensity, the boys beheld the black hulls of the English ships, every shroud and rat-line standing out in bold relief against the dark sky, and the boats' crews, who, supposing the vessel a blockade-runner, were pulling from different directions to "board" her; but, when the flames revealed her true character, there was an instinctive pause; they lay upon their oars.

"Give way, my hearts of oak," shouted the officer of the leading boat; "we'll put out their fire and their slow-match."

With an answering shout they dashed the oars into the water again; but the flames burst from the port-holes and over the rail into their very faces, rendering useless all attempts to board, the very purpose for which this mass of material had been prepared and ignited. As, expecting explosion,

they pulled rapidly away, a volley from the fire-ship killed the midshipman in charge and two men. The stern of that vessel, where stood the four men, was as yet clear of flame, the wind carrying the fire and smoke forward.

"Why, in the name of Heaven, don't they leave? There's a boat towing astern," cried Ned; "she must blow up soon."

"Ned, those men don't mean to leave."

"Don't mean to leave!"

"No; they know if that vessel is left to steer herself, ten to one if she strikes an English ship. They're going to sacrifice themselves."

Right ahead of the infernal, as near as they could swing at their anchors, lay an eighty-gun ship and a sixty-four. It was evidently the intention of these desperate men to lay her between them, apply the match, and blow both themselves and their enemies into eternity together. It seemed most probable that they would accomplish their purpose; the breeze was light, and scarcely felt by the men-of-war, whose crews had cut the cables and made sail, while the infernal, by reason of momentum previously acquired, was coming down fast, bearing destruction and death.

Now ensued an uproar impossible to describe. Blazing cinders and sparks from the fire-ship blew on to the main-topsail of the eighty, which was instantly in flames; but with that cool courage and perfect discipline so characteristic of British seamen, the topmen cut the sail from the yard, and passed water in buckets; the boats' crews were towing the ship ahead, while at the same time a hot fire was kept up upon the fire-ship from every gun that could be brought to bear; the other ships, that were out of her path, also poured in whole broadsides, in the hope of either blowing up or sinking her before she should get near enough to do execution.

"That ship is gone for't," said Ned, as the helmsman of the infernal, seeing the two ships were separating, and that he could hope to destroy but one, altered his course, and steered direct for the eighty. At this moment a well-directed broadside cut off the foremast of the fire-ship, that, with all the head sails, went over the side. This brought the vessel to the wind, and arrested her progress, the man-o'-war improving the fortunate moment to escape.

The scene now grew appalling. The air was filled with the roar of hundreds of cannon, while, as the now unmanageable vessel came head to wind, the flames ran up the rigging of the mainmast and swept over the place where those self-devoted men stood.

In the midst of this horrid din, a shell exploded on her deck, a flash of blue flame illumined with its ghastly light the whole horizon, followed by an explosion that made every vessel quiver as though racked by the throes of an earthquake. The blazing mast shot up to the sky like a rocket, followed by jets of water and torrents of flame, bearing before them countless missiles, legs, arms, and other portions of the dismembered bodies of that ill-fated crew, to which succeeded a darkness made more intense by clouds of smoke, and a stillness as of death.

As the smoke gradually lifted and drifted away to leeward before the wind, the eyes of all in the fleet were naturally directed to the scene of the explosion and the spot from which the infernal had disappeared, when they beheld what they supposed to be the Arthur Brown coming rapidly down before the wind, her snow-white canvas conspicuous against the frowning sky. Instantly concluding that the shrewd Yankees had improved this moment of confusion and alarm to escape, "The brigantine! The brigantine!" rang out from many a boat's crew; and the water was white with the foam of oars, as from all directions they dashed upon their prey.

The boys, excited by the roar of artillery, the smell of gunpowder, and the examples of daring they had witnessed, were now perfectly reckless.

"This is glorious, Wal," cried Ned. "I'm going to stick her for sea, and give them a pull for it."

Notwithstanding a shot across their bows from the sixty-four, and a volley of small arms from the boats, they refused to heave to; and it was not till the man-o'-war's men were climbing over the side, that, sliding down the painter, they cut the rope and pulled away with might and main, the captors being too much occupied with their prize to concern themselves about them.

Having put a good distance between themselves and the boats, they lay upon their oars to breathe.

"Won't there be some swearing, Ned," said Walter, "when they come to look over their prize, and find her a condemned slaver, full of rocks?"

"Yes; but I guess there will be more when they find what I have written on the companion-way."

In the afternoon, while waiting for the fire-ship, Ned had written with chalk on the slide of the companion-way the value of the Arthur Brown's cargo, showing the man-o'-war's men what a rich prize they had lost, closing with some reflections upon the disappointments to which mankind are liable, and leaving the best respects of himself and Walter.

In the mean time the Arthur Brown, without a single sail set to attract attention, propelled by muffled sweeps, and skilfully piloted by Jacques, was creeping along under the shadow of the land in calm water, till, entirely beyond the reach of observation, a kedge was silently lowered to the bottom, and she waited for her boat. Upon the arrival of the boys, with every inch of canvas spread, the swift vessel, now swifter than ever (for she had been coppered in Marseilles—a recent practice, and at that time scarcely known in the States), turned her prow homeward.

Just as the sun rose above the horizon in the morning, the lookout at the mast-head of the

Agamemnon, sung out, "Sail, O!"

"Where away?"

"Right ahead, sir."

Mr. Reed beheld through the glass the well-known form of the Arthur Brown, bathed in sunlight, studding sails, aloft and aloft, with the wind on her quarter making for the Straits of Gibraltar at a rate that defied pursuit. A smile of satisfaction—which he walked forward to conceal—passed over the fine features of the midshipman, as he took the glass from his eye.

When, having composed his features, he reported to his superiors that he knew the vessel, and that it was the brigantine, it was considered useless to chase her; and long before eight bells struck, she had faded from their view.

CHAPTER XI. A STARTLING DISCLOSURE.

By reason of the tarry of the Arthur Brown in the oven, her voyage was so lengthened, that much uneasiness was felt respecting her at Pleasant Cove, and in Salem, by the parents of the captain and Ned.

A great many consultations were held between Lion Ben, Captain Rhines, Fred Williams, John Rhines, and Charlie Bell, her owners.

"Father," said Ben, "I'm afraid they have been taken by the English, or foundered in a levanter. Only consider how much longer they have been gone than they were on the other trip!"

"They say," replied Fred, "that people there are killing each other—half of them drunk, the rest crazy; perhaps they've been murdered."

Charlie Bell thought, that as affairs there were in a very unsettled state, the people had but a scanty supply of food, and the vessel being loaded with provision, the mob might have boarded her, and helped themselves.

"I don't see any particular cause for so much concern, boys," said the old captain. "If it was peaceable times, and the Arthur Brown was a regular trader, it would be another matter, and there might be some reason for anxiety; but there are a thousand things that might delay a blockade-runner. We have heard the blockade is very strict now that Nelson is there, and we all know what he is. She may have had bad land falls, been chased off the coast half a dozen times, had her sails blown away, or lost some spars, and had to go to Leghorn to repair, or have been crippled by a broadside, as she came near being before. I've been there a good deal in past days, sometimes for a long time. In December and January they have most delightful weather, and no storms to scatter blockaders; and then, when it gets into February, they'll come."

"Well, father," said Ben, "we are out of the world; can't hear anything. I wish you would start off up to Boston and see Mr. Welch; perhaps you may get some information there."

This request being seconded by the others, the captain said, "I don't know but I will; I shall have to go up before long to see him on some other business, and the coaster is going up the last of the week."

He obtained no information in Boston or Salem, but determined to remain there a while. On going through a portion of the town very much occupied with sailor boarding-houses, he made a short cut through "Black Dog Alley," when his progress was stopped by a crowd of sailors, all more or less under the influence of liquor. One old tar had taken it into his head to hire a truckman's horse for a ride up and down the street. Drunk as he was, he sat the horse well; for, as he boasted, he had been brought up among horses, and was half horse himself. He would not have the harness taken off the horse, which was a leader, but mounted, taking the trace-chains on his shoulder, with the rattling of which he and all seemed to be delighted; and, as he was flush of money, his vest pockets being crammed with bills, besides some silver in a purse which he frequently shook in the truckman's face, exclaiming, "Rich owners, my old boy!" the latter seemed inclined to submit to all his whims. He was surrounded by an admiring crowd of shipmates, who, like himself, had just been paid off, all gloriously drunk, but good-natured, and bent on having a merry time of it. In addition to these was a crowd of loafers and loungers, such as are generally abundant when sailors are paid off and liquor is plenty.

The dress of this horseman was comical enough. He had on a pair of Turkish trousers, an India shawl round his waist for a sash, a shirt made of fine grass-cloth also of East India manufacture, exceedingly fine and beautiful; on his head a Greek cap, which made his large, flushed features appear most prominent; his cue was wound with red ribbon, the two ends streaming down his back, and red slippers on his feet. Over the beautiful shirt were the rusty trace-chains, the hooks of which chafed against the shawl at every motion of the horse.

After shaking his purse in the truckman's face, and boasting of his riches, he next took it into his head to beg, and, pulling off his cap, he knocked the top in, causing it to resemble a bowl.

"Christian people, one and all," cried he, in doleful accents, holding out the cap, "pity a poor, disabled sailor, who's lost his legs fighting for his country, whose father and mother are frying eggs in a wooden saucepan on the rock of Gibraltar; pity him, good people, and drop a shot in the

lee locker."

As he concluded, cheers arose from the crowd, and his shipmates flung a shower of small coin into the cap, when, whirling it around his head, the silver was scattered among the crowd, creating a universal scramble.

The truckman now wanted his horse.

"Your horse! You're drunk, old boy, and don't know what you're talking about. I've chartered this 'ere horse for the vige, and the vige ain't up yet. Ain't that so, shipmates?"

This declaration was followed by a cheer of assent. Captain Rhines, meanwhile, was making strenuous efforts to get through the crowd, for he had recognized in the sailor on horseback Dick Cameron, who had been a great many voyages with him. Dick was an especial favorite with Captain Rhines, for he was a splendid seaman when at sea and away from liquors, and the captain would have been right glad to have met and shaken hands with his old shipmate when sober, or to have entertained him at his house; but he dreaded recognition by him in his present state, and was striving to avoid it. Dick, however, caught sight of him; for he was too conspicuous, by his size and noble physique, to escape notice in a crowd.

Dick hailed him with shout and gesture that drew the eyes of all upon him in an instant.

"Shipmates," he cried, "as I'm alive and a sinner, if here ain't my old cap'n, Cap'n Ben Rhines, the best man that ever sailed salt water; as knows how to carry sail, and how to take in sail; none of your kid-glove gentry! Ah, my boys, he's sailed for it! None of your ship's cousins; a man as knows when a man does his duty, and how to keep good *dis-cip*-line on board ship" (emphasizing the second syllable of "discipline," as seamen generally do). "No humbugging, nor calling men out of their watch or out of their names, on board his ship. God bless you, cap'n! I thought you was dead and gone to heaven long ago. Ah, cap'n, we've sailed the salt seas together round the Hook of Holland, round Cape Horn, through the Straits of Gibraltar, and on the Spanish Main. Haven't we had some tough ones on the coast? How are you, cap'n?"

"First rate, Dick. How are you, and where have you been all these years since you disappeared in Calcutta? I thought you was overboard, or knocked on the head with a slung shot; for I never believed you would run away from me."

"Run away from *you*, cap'n? I would run to you as I would to my mother if she was alive, God bless her! I got a dose of sheet lightning, and, when I waked up, I was aboard an English ship bound to Australia. What become of my clothes? I had a good chistful."

"I kept them aboard till I gave them all away to sailors that had been robbed by the land-sharks."

"Jest right, cap'n, jest like you. Now, shipmates, give me a fist. I want to go ashore, and shake the cap'n's flippers."

With their aid he dismounted, and, getting hold of the captain's hand, which he extended most cordially, he continued to pour forth his protestations of respect and affection.

"How is the wife, cap'n, and the pickaninnies, and that leetle boy of yours, what's got Bunker Hill on his shoulders? Ah, shipmates, that's the bully boy can bend a crowbar over his knee, and mast-head a topsail alone."

"They are all well. But where are you from, Dick?"

"Messina."

"Have you spoke any American vessels on the coast?"

"Yes; two."

"What were they?"

"West Indiamen from Antigua, bound into New London."

"How long have you been ashore?"

"Since eight o'clock this morning—jest long enough to moisten the clay a little."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the truckman attempting to lead off the horse, having received his pay in advance; but this Dick's shipmates would by no means permit. One shook his fist in the truckman's face, threatening to drive his teeth down his throat; another seized the horse by the bridle, while two others caught hold of his long tail.

"Catch a turn, Bill, round that timber-head."

Bill caught a turn with the tail round a barber's pole that was set in the ground before the door of a grog-shop, the barber occupying rooms overhead. But the horse, not accustomed to being thus dealt with, began to kick and jump, amid the cheers and laughter of the crowd, till he pulled the pole over amongst them.

In order to restore good feeling, Dick now proposed to the truckman to take some bitters.

"I say, Dick," said Bill Matthews, "it seems to me as how you ought to treat this 'ere horse."

"So I will, shipmates, bless me if I don't," said Dick, who had meantime been trying to persuade the captain to drink with him. "If the cap'n *won't* drink, the horse *shall*;" and, mounting, he intended to ride him into the bar-room. The horse protested, and so did his owner, but both alike without success. Despite his struggles, the beast was pushed up three steps, into the bar-room.

"Mix him a good stiff glass, Tom," said Dick. "He needs it."

The bar-keeper, nothing loath, as he calculated to get his pay for all the liquor poured out, whether drank or not, obeyed. The room was crammed, all crowding in to see the fun and share the drinking, as Dick had invited all hands; no change out of a dollar.

Captain Rhines might have escaped now; but he wished to make some further inquiries of Dick. He was interrupted by the truckman calling for his horse, and the disturbance that followed; so he remained on the sidewalk.

Just as they were attempting to turn the liquor down the beast's throat, the floor broke through with the great weight, and both horse and crowd went into the cellar. None, however, were seriously injured. Some were cut with broken glass of tumblers and bottles, some bruised by the struggles of the horse: but, as usual, those drunkest fared the best. Dick escaped unharmed, and the horse was not injured.

The captain now got hold of Dick again.

"Were those two West Indiamen all the vessels you saw or spoke?"

"All we spoke, cap'n; but there was one went by us, beating up the bay yesterday arternoon, like as we had been lying at anchor."

"What kind of a vessel?"

"A brigantine; a raal sharp-shooter," said Matthews.

"How painted?"

"All one color, spars and all, betwixt black and a lead color. I says to Dick (we was on the fore-topsail-yard, freshening the sarvice on the topgallant-sheet), 'Dick,' says I, 'that's some kind of a smuggler, or slaver, or something. So handsome a clipper as that's not painted such a color for nothing.'"

"Was she heavy sparred? Did she carry a press of sail?"

"She was all sail; long yards, and plenty of staysails and savealls, a whacking mainsail, and a ringtail at the end of it. I noticed it," said Dick, "and spoke of it then, what a spread she had to her fore-rigging and long spreaders on the cross-trees to spread the topgallant and royal back-stays."

"That must be the vessel I'm looking for; but if she passed you, beating up, why ain't she here?"

"She went into Salem."

"O, ho! went into Salem! Then it's her. The captain belongs in Salem; and, as he had a head wind and tide, he went in there, and will be up to-day."

Captain Rhines had proceeded but a little way after leaving Dick, when, just before him, a man was pushed out of the door of a sailor boarding-house, and fell his whole length on the sidewalk. He rose with difficulty to his feet as the captain came along, and addressed him by name. He was covered with filth, his face bruised and bloody, a battered tarpaulin on his head, a beard of three weeks' growth, clothed in a red shirt, canvas trousers, and barefoot. He trembled like a man with the fever and ague, evidently being in that state expressively termed by sailors the "horrors," and could scarcely stand.

"Cap'n," he cried, "don't you know me?"

"No," he replied, after looking at him a moment, "and don't want to."

"I'm Percival, William Percival, that went mate of your ship with Captain Aldrich."

"Your own mother wouldn't know you, Percival. How came you in this condition?"

"I've had hard luck, cap'n: been cast away; lost everything but what I stood in."

The captain was the last man to be imposed upon. He had always believed that Percival and Aldrich both were two precious rascals, saw in an instant what had reduced him to his present state, and that the story of shipwreck was manufactured at the spur of the moment.

"You've cast yourself away," was the reply. "You might have been master of a ship if you had behaved yourself, and had any principle. Don't lie to me. You've got the shakes on you this blessed minute."

"That's so, cap'n," said the poor wretch, making a virtue of necessity; "but I only drank to drown misery. O, cap'n," he cried, stretching out his hands, which trembled like an aspen leaf, "give me a quarter, just to get a little rum to taper off with."

"Not a cent. You've had too much now."

"O, cap'n, dear cap'n, do," cried the miserable wretch; "only a fourpence ha'pp'ny, cap'n."

"No."

"Three cents, then, just to get one glass to taper off with."

"Why don't you go and ship?"

"No cap'n will have me as I look now, when men are plenty."

"I will give you victuals."

"I can't eat, nor I can't sleep."

"If I give you clothes, you'll sell them for rum."

The captain was turning to leave him, when he said, "I could tell you something that would make you shell out the chink."

The captain, paying no attention, kept on, when he cried, "I can tell you what became of that nigger you thought so much of."

The captain whirled on his heel in an instant. "What nigger?"

"Why, that was pilot in the Casco."

"James Peterson?"

"Ay."

"I *know* what became of him. He was drowned between the vessel and the wharf, in Martinique."

"No, he wasn't."

"What *did* become of him?"

"I can tell you what became of him if I like?"

"I believe you lie."

"Well, have it your own way, then."

The captain mused a moment. He knew Aldrich and Percival well; that there was no principle in either of them; had never believed the story that Peterson was in liquor, and fell overboard, but always mistrusted there had been some foul play. His suspicions were now thoroughly aroused, and he determined to sift the matter to the bottom.

"Come along with me," he said.

The seaman followed the captain to a sailor boarding-house, kept by an old acquaintance, with whom the latter had boarded when mate of a ship.

"Mr. Washburn," said he, "I want you to oblige me by taking this man in. He's got the 'horrors.' Give him liquor enough to taper off with, clothes to make him decent, and look to me for pay."

"I will, captain."

He then said to Percival, "Clean yourself up, and get a night's sleep. I will come here to-morrow at ten o'clock; and, if I have reason to think there's any truth in your statements, I'll do more for you."

In the course of the afternoon the Arthur Brown came up with the flood tide. It was a joyful meeting between Captain Rhines, Arthur Brown, Walter, Ned, and the whole crew, who were all his neighbors. They spent the evening talking over the events of the voyage, while the captain made them acquainted with all that had taken place at home.

Seeing Captain Rhines was next to seeing their own parents, especially to Ned, whose life he, with others, had saved. Ned got on one side and Walter the other, and plied him with questions about everybody and everything at home.

After retiring that night, the captain strove to recall all he had ever heard said by any one of the crew who were in the Casco at the time of the mysterious disappearance of Peterson, and recollected that Eaton, who was a great friend to Peterson, said there had been some difficulty between him and the captain on the passage out. He was sorely puzzled; for, from the time he first heard of the occurrence, he had cherished an opinion that somehow or other Aldrich was concerned in the matter; still he could not help feeling that there was not the least evidence of it, and that this opinion was based more upon his prejudice against the captain than upon anything else; while he had no better opinion of Percival than to believe he would trump up any kind of a story, if there was the least possibility of its being believed, in order to obtain money. At ten o'clock he was at Washburn's, where he found Percival arrayed in a decent suit of seaman's clothes, clean, shaved, his nerves steadied by liquor and a night's rest, and altogether another man.

It is even now a mooted question among physicians whether, in delirium tremens, to give moderate doses of liquor to "taper off" with, as it is called, or not; but in those days there was but one opinion and one mode of practice—to give the individual a hair of the dog that bit him, which the captain had done.

"Now, Percival," said he, "I am ready to hear what you have to say."

"You see, Captain Aldrich was down on that nigger from the day he came aboard the vessel."

"What for?"

"I'm sure I don't know, except because everybody else liked him. He was the best cook I ever see on board a vessel, and the best seaman; always ready to lend a hand, night or day; knew his place, and kept it."

"You've told the truth there, Percival."

"I intend to tell the truth all the way through. There was a good deal of hard feeling. The cap'n was overbearing. The men wouldn't stand it, because there was no occasion for it. He came near having a row with Eaton, but thought better of it, and one day he picked a quarrel with the nigger."

"And how did he come out with that?"

"Out of the little end of the horn, as they say. Peterson said some pretty hard things about him and his folks, which the men said afterwards was all true, and set out to fling him overboard. He run aft, scared half to death."

"I wish he had. He would have been no more in James Peterson's hands than a peck of wheat bran."

"Well, Aldrich was a very proud man, and it gravelled him terribly to be put down by a nigger, and he was out with me, because I wouldn't take his part. He laid it up. I heard him swear a hundred times that he would be square with that nigger before he left Martinique, and he was as good as his word."

"He murdered him?"

"No, he sold him."

"*Sold him!* What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that he sold him into slavery."

"The villain! I never should have thought of that. And was you a party to it?"

"No."

"Well, how was it managed?"

"It came about after this fashion. I don't think the cap'n thought himself about selling him, but it was kind of flung in his way, and he jumped at it like a dolphin at a flying-fish. Perhaps you know Peterson was a first-rate calker?"

"Yes."

"Well, there was a planter that lived on the other side of the island, somewhere, who had a lot of drogers that brought sugar and coffee. One day he was lying with his droger right under our stern, and Peterson was on a stage, over the stem, calking. After that the planter came on board, and I heard him say to Aldrich, 'Cap'n, I'll give you two thousand in gold for that nigger.' The cap'n laughed, but said nothing."

"The planter was joking," said Captain Rhines; "I have had planters in Cuba and Antigua say so to me a hundred times, when I've had Peterson and other darkies with me."

"I've no doubt he was, when he first spoke; but it put an idea into Aldrich's head, and he carried it out. For some days after that, I saw him and the planter Henri Lemaire always with their heads together on the piles of boards, and saw them look at Peterson. Then they would be together a long time in the cabin of his droger; and they had no business with each other, for we hauled in to the government wharf, because we sold our lumber to the government. This set me on the lookout. I tried to listen, but couldn't get a chance to hear anything. One night the cap'n sent Peterson ashore with letters, and he never came back. Then I know he had sold him."

"But he did come back. Danforth Eaton and all the crew told me that there was a good fire in the fireplace; that he had got breakfast well under way the next morning when they turned out, and had gone ashore, as they supposed, to get something for his 'lobscouse,' and fell overboard."

"Peterson never made that fire, nor peeled the potatoes and onions, or cut the pork and put it in the frying-pan; but he pounded the coffee and chopped the beef the night before, for I saw him do it."

"Who did the rest?"

"The cap'n did it himself."

"The *captain*?"

"Ay. I had a tooth that grumbled, and didn't sleep well. I heard the cap'n get out of his berth, like a cat crawling after a squirrel, and, having my suspicions, I followed him, and saw what he was up to—saw him kindle the fire, put on the tea-kettle, and do all the other things."

"But his boy, Ben, told me that they found his handkerchief on the fender."

"True; but it was a handkerchief that he wore on his head when he was cooking, and kept it on a nail before the fire, and the cap'n put it on the fender himself. Besides, what did he want to send Peterson to the office with letters that were blank, if it was not to make an errand to get him ashore in the night, that he might be kidnapped?"

"*Blank letters?*"

"Ay. I peeked through the skylight, and saw him fold and direct them, and there was not a word written in them."

The captain rose and took a turn or two across the room. He was a shrewd judge of men, had watched Percival closely during the conversation, and was strongly inclined to believe all he said.

His account of the captain's relations with the ship's company tallied precisely with what he had previously heard from the men, and it seemed altogether improbable, if not impossible, that he could have originated some of the statements.

"I have always suspected," said the captain, sitting down again, "that there was foul play of some kind. I have known Ezra Aldrich from the egg, and knew he was capable of any kind of villany; never wanted him to go in the ship, but was overruled by others. If what you say is true, it certainly looks like it. But how do you know that he was sold? You have no proof. He might have

been, and probably was, murdered. There are plenty of renegade Spaniards in Martinique, and Frenchmen, too, that would stab a man in the back in the night for two dollars. There was Enoch Freeman, of North Yarmouth, a cooper, had a shop there for years, used to go out in the fall and come back after it began to be hot (he went out with me a good many times), had some difficulty with a Frenchman about coopering a cargo of sugar. He saw a nigger hanging around his shop, and one of his men said to him, 'Mr. Freeman, that nigger means to kill you.' Freeman walks right up to the fellow, and says, 'What did that Frenchman offer you to kill me?' 'Two dollars.' 'Go and kill him, and I'll give you four.' The nigger went and killed him."

"But I know he sold him."

"How do you know?"

"Because he owned to me he did it."

"How came he to be fool enough to do that?"

"We had some difficulty in Martinique."

"How was that?"

"We were all discharged, and lay in the stream. The cap'n went ashore in the morning, and left orders with me to send the boat for him at four o'clock. He came on board drunk and ugly enough. As soon as he got his head over the rail, he sings out, 'Why wasn't that boat sent ashore, as I ordered?'

"It was, sir.'

"No, it wasn't. I ordered the boat to be on the beach at four; it was five minutes after.'

"He then began to blow round deck, growl, curse, and find fault.

"Why ain't those skids got ready,' he roared, 'to take in sugar? The lighter will be alongside in the morning.'

"They are ready, sir.'

"The skids were over the hatchway and blocked up.

"Well, they ain't right.'

"Yes, they are right, sir. I know how to rig skids to take in molasses and sugar, and how to stow it afterwards, as well as you, or any other man.'

"You *do*—do you?'

"Yes, sir. I do.'

"Why ain't those head-stays set up, as I ordered, and chafing gear put on the forestay in the wake of the topsail?'

"There was not time, sir; the hold had to be cleared up, and the dunnage piled up fore and aft, ready for taking in cargo.'

"Why didn't you do it yourself, then?'

"I didn't come here to work, sir.'

"What did you come for?'

"To see other folks work.'

"I now left him, and went below; but he came down into the cabin, and began upon me again.

"If you come here to see other folks work, why don't you do it? Why didn't you send that foretopsail down, and have it mended? The duty of the ship can't go on, if I am ashore seeing to my business.'

"I couldn't bear no more, but walked straight up to him, and, looking him right in the eye, said, 'How about that nigger, Cap'n Aldrich? How about those blank letters, those onions and potatoes I saw you peeling, that handkerchief you put on the fender?' He changed countenance in a moment, became as pale as a corpse, staggered, and caught hold of the pantry door for support. I said no more, but went on deck."

"What did he say afterwards. Did he ask you what you meant?"

"Never a word, but was as agreeable as could be, though he didn't make much talk with me; but I was afraid he would poison me; didn't drink any liquor all the passage for fear he might give me a dose, and watched him as a cat would a mouse."

"Pity you couldn't always have sailed with him. It might have made a sober man of you."

"One night, after we got in the edge of the gulf, he got crooking his elbow again, and began to use bad language to me because I shortened sail in my watch without consulting him. I just held up my fore-finger, and said, 'Look here, my fine fellow: we are in the edge of the gulf. I will hang you when we get in.' I then told him that I knew all about his selling that nigger to Lemaire, that he had abused me in Martinique, and on the passage thus far home, and I would have my revenge; that the moment we made land, I would tell the crew, put him in irons, and appear against him in court."

"What did he say to that?"

"He was terribly frightened; said he was sorry he did it, but he couldn't bear to be put down

before the crew by a nigger; and that he never should have thought of that way of getting revenge, if the planter hadn't put it into his head; and wound up by telling me that he would give me five hundred dollars to say nothing about it, when we got in."

"Then Peterson's alive, and a slave to this Lemaire?"

"Ay. The cap'n said, the moment he proposed to take him up, Lemaire, was fierce for it; said that he owned a great many drogers and launches that carried sugar, coffee, tortoise-shell, and other truck, and he wanted him because he saw that he was a first-rate calker, and calculated to keep him calking all the time."

"Did you ever get your five hundred dollars?"

"No, sir; he put me off once or twice, and then cleared out while I was on a spree."

The captain now believed the story of Percival, for he had heard from the crew that he and the captain had quarrelled, and of his coming on board drunk in Martinique, and saying and doing just as Percival said he did; he knew, also, that he disappeared suddenly and left the country, although (through the influence of Isaac Murch) he was offered the command of a vessel in Wiscasset. "I think that your story seems probable. At any rate, I'll do this much. I'll make arrangements with the landlord in respect to your board for two weeks from to-day (no rum, mind, for you are through with the horrors), and your outfit when you go aboard some vessel. If I ever get hold of Peterson, or if he dies there, and I find that you have told me the truth, there will be time enough to do something more."

CHAPTER XII. THE NOBLE VOLUNTEERS.

Captain Rhines was occupied with business the remainder of the day, and in the evening went aboard of the brigantine. The Arthur left before the arrival of the Casco bringing tidings of the disappearance of Peterson; consequently the ship's company had not heard of it till informed by the captain, on the evening of their arrival. It therefore excited no little astonishment and interest when they were informed that he was sold for a slave in Martinique. After the affair had been thoroughly discussed in all its bearings, the captain said, "I am getting somewhat the worse for wear, and when I went to Cuba on the raft, I took leave of the sea, as I thought, forever; but James Peterson saved my life once; and before a man like him (born a slave, now an American citizen, and as noble-hearted a creature as ever drew the breath of life) shall live and die a slave, perhaps feel the lash, I'll risk these old bones once more, and spend the last dollar I've got in the world."

"Captain Rhines," cried Walter, leaping to his feet, "you shan't go. You ought not to go. I'll go. I, too, loved Peterson dearly. He carried me in his arms when a child. I have spent weeks at his house. He made all my playthings, and would do anything for our folks. I'll go, and something tells me I shall succeed."

"Count me in, too," cried Ned. "I love everybody that Walter loves. James was just like a father to me when I was wounded—sat up nights, and did everything for me."

"It is a great undertaking for persons of your age, and without much experience; but, ever since you went from home, you have been put in places where boys ripen fast, and always shown yourselves capable of accomplishing whatever you undertook. You are going, too, upon a good, I may say holy, errand, and may certainly expect aid and wisdom from aloft. Have you thought of any plan, Walter?"

"No, sir; we are only boys, and must leave the direction of affairs with you, who know everything."

"I am a great ways from knowing everything," said the captain, smiling. "We have been talking this matter over amongst ourselves the better part of an hour and a half, and I don't think you made the offer you have without some plan in your head upon which it was built."

The captain made these remarks, wishing to draw Walter out.

"As I sat listening to your account," said Walter, "it appeared to me that, as Ned and myself had quite a little pile of money for boys of our age, we could not spend part of it in any better manner than by using it to restore Peterson to his family; that we might ship in some vessel, before the mast, to Martinique, for low wages, to leave when we got there. If we couldn't do that, work our passage; and, if no captain would take us on that lay, pay our passage. As we both speak French well, we should have no difficulty in finding the place where he is, if alive."

"How would you get him off, if you found him?"

"I suppose we must be governed by circumstances, when on the spot."

"But you have probably thought of some way, if you should succeed in getting hold of him, to get him and yourselves home?"

"I have heard Uncle John say," said Walter, "that he has come out of the West Indies in yellow fever time, when there was only one man besides himself and his first and second mates fit for duty, and all he could do was to sit in a chair and steer, and the crews of other American vessels

hove up the anchor and mast-headed the topsails for them; and, as soon as they got to sea, they all began to come right up. So, as it will be right in the sickly time of year, if we don't die ourselves, there will be plenty of vessels short-handed that will be glad enough to ship us."

The captain, perceiving by the looks of Ned that he had some ideas in respect to the matter in hand, but was too modest to speak, asked his companion.

"Please, sir, I don't think my opinion would be of any value; but if you will plan for us, sir, it will all go right."

"I know you have some ideas, Ned, and I want to hear them. Speak up, like a man. If you are going to risk your life, and spend hard-earned money, you certainly are entitled to your opinions."

Thus exhorted and encouraged, Ned, after some hesitation, said,—

"You know, sir, after you took us from the raft I was a long time at Charlie Bell's, very weak and miserable—could only sit in a chair, and walk about the room."

"Yes."

"Well, Charlie, in order to amuse me and pass the time, told me about your going to Havana in the Ark; of the ventures you carried for him and others. He told me what a lot of money was made on such simple things as beets, onions, carrots, and potatoes, that are worth next to nothing at home; that you made a lot on some hens, butter, candles, and on beef—more, according to, than even on the lumber."

"That is all so."

"I hope you and Captain Brown will excuse me, sir, for presuming to plan for people who know all about it. I was thinking that perhaps by and by Walter and I might put our money together, build part of a vessel, and go in her,—he master, and I mate; and that we ought, if it is right, to keep our money, and get all we can to put with it. Not but I am willing to spend the last dollar for James, if it is necessary; but it seems to me it would be better to make money than to spend money."

"But how are you going to get James?"

"I was thinking, sir, if we could get a fore-and-after, a sloop, or some kind of a vessel that we could handle, load her with something that wouldn't be so bulky as lumber,—like those things you carried for ventures,—so that a small vessel could carry a good deal of value, we might get Peterson clear, and make money for ourselves likewise."

"Bravo, my boy! That's a plan just as full of sense as it can be."

"Then, you know, sir, we should have the vessel to get home with and bring James in."

"To be sure you would, and make a lot on your return cargo. What do you think of that plan, Walter?"

"I think it is a first-rate plan, sir."

"This little chap that you and all of us have been petting, and calling little Ned so long, is outgrowing his teachers. He'll be taking the wind out of your sails by and by."

"There's nothing lost that a good friend gets," said Walter, putting his arm round Ned.

"Well said. It's a principle I have always acted upon."

"It struck me, while Ned was speaking, that if we carried such kind of freight as he suggests, why not go and peddle it out at some of the small ports. What is to hinder going to the plantation of this very Lemaire, and swap our truck for his, get the right side of him, and that would give us a first-rate opportunity to get at Peterson."

"So you could. Nobody but a Yankee would have thought of that; whereas, if you should go hanging round there without any business, you would be suspected in a moment, watched, and perhaps shot or stabbed."

"Allow me to make a suggestion," said Captain Brown.

"Certainly; the more heads the better."

"Does that Lemaire *own* those drogers, or only go in them?"

"Owns them! Man alive, he owns three estates and four or five hundred niggers. I've sold him lumber, bought sugar and coffee of him, and they say he treats his slaves well, and gives them a chance to earn money for themselves, and buy their freedom."

"Then he must have to buy a great many spars for drogers' masts. Why not take a deck-load of spars and the other stuff in the hold? Then he would be sure to trade with you, especially if you gave him a good bargain. If he didn't want all the spars at once, he could pile them up."

"Those drogers are large, and require quite a large stick for masts. It would take a larger vessel than the boys could handle. You can't keep them on hand in that climate. If you pile them up, they rot; if you put them in the salt water, the worms will eat them up in sixty days."

"Captain," said Sewall Lancaster, "may I speak in meeting?"

"Free your mind, brother."

"Wal, what's the matter they couldn't take frames all ready to put up for nigger quarters, small timbers not very bulky, sell 'em, not by the foot, but for so much right out? I was out there three

years ago in the John and Frederick, with old Cap'n Treadwell. No! How time runs away! 'Twas four years ago this very month, because it was three days before we sailed, that Lion Ben sarved Joe Bradish such a rinctum."

"What was that?" asked Captain Brown; "let us hear it, Lancaster."

"Wal, you see the Lion, besides being so all-fired strong, is a great teamster; they say the greatest in town (now Uncle Isaac Murch is gone). He won't abuse an ox, neither, nor let anybody else; but Joe (he's no teamster at all, nor much else; when he gits stuck, he takes off the forrard cattle), he can't make four oxen pull together; he's real cruel, too. I've seen him stand with one foot on the tongue, and the other on an ox's back, and beat him with a stake. Wal, he got to the foot of Merrithew's Hill with a heavy load and four oxen; the cattle wouldn't haul for him; he licked his goad up about 'em, and hollered, and screeched, and cursed. They wouldn't haul; he looked round for a stake, but it was stone wall both sides of the road, and he had to go a good ways down, over the first little rise, to get one. Lion Ben comes to the top of the hill; he'd heard the screeching; saw the team standing there. Frank Chase told me this; he was picking rocks in their field, and saw the whole of it. He said the Lion came along, went to the cattle, patted 'em, lifted up the yokes, pulled up a last year's mullein stalk, flourished that over 'em a few times, put his pretty little shoulders to the wheel, and spoke to the cattle. Frank said he didn't speak loud enough for him to hear; and they went right up the hill with it; then Ben squats down behind the log fence. Joe came back with his stake to whale 'em, and there was no team there. Frank said it was comical enough to see him rub his eyes and stare round. Bime by he went up the hill. There was his team. Frank said he looked under the load, on the top of the load, and everywhere. Frank held his tongue, and Joe allers thought that the cattle started for fear of the licking they would get when he come back."

"Did he ever find out?" asked Walter.

"Yes; the Lion met him one night at the store, and told him, before all hands, that if ever he saw him beat cattle with a stake, or heard tell on't, he'd pay his respects to him. I reckon you kin guess what Lion Ben's respects would be."

"All the satisfaction," said the captain, "I wish of the villain that sold and the villain that bought Peterson is, that Ben might get his mud-hooks on them both. If the blood and brains wouldn't fly when he smashed their heads together, I'll never guess again. But about the frames, Sewall?"

"Wal, the upshot was, the planters almost quarrelled to see who should git 'em, they were so taken with 'em, and gave him his own price. The old man said he wished he'd loaded with 'em."

"Just the things for us, Sewall," said the captain. "I've heard people speak in meeting, when I thought they had better have held their tongues, but you have spoken to the purpose."

"The old cap'n," continued Lancaster, "said he might have made his jack if he had only brought bolts, locks, and cheap hinges for doors, cause sometimes they want to lock the darkies up; and also if he had brought handsome ones for the planters' houses, and nails, he might have thribbled his money; but that his wits allers come afterwards he seemed quite in a passion about it, cause he hadn't made more, when he'd made enough a'ready to satisfy any reasonable person."

"Thank you, Sewall; we'll try and not have our wits come afterwards."

"The greatest difficulty with me at the outset," said Walter, "is, where to find a vessel."

"I'll settle that matter at once—charter the Perseverance of Ben. I can rig her so that nothing of her size can catch her; and a better sea-boat never swam. No matter how hard it blows; she'll lay to like a duck, go dry, and work to windward all the time."

"She may do well in the bays and along shore, bit she is old, and must be rotten."

"Last fall Ben took her over to Pleasant Cove. He, John, and Charlie overhauled her thoroughly, made a winter's job of it, put in new ceiling, drove a lot of fastening into her, laid a new deck, and put in a new mainmast and bowsprit. All the rot they found was under the bowsprit and two timbers in the counter. While I am here, I am going to get new rigging and sails for her. Ben would have her name put on in gold leaf. I thought it was nonsense for a fisherman; but he sets his life by that craft because she belonged to his nearest friend, John Strout, who was drowned."

"But will Mr. Ben let us have her?"

"Tell him that James Peterson is a slave in Martinique, and that you want the schooner to go out there and rescue him, and see whether he won't let you have her."

"Don't it seem a pity, Captain Rhines," said Ned, "when such awful things are done as Aldrich did, that there couldn't be somebody like Lion Ben around, to give them just what they deserve?"

"There is somebody round."

"Yes, sir; but he don't interfere."

"Not all the time, perhaps. He has no occasion to be in haste, but can lay his hand on a villain next year, or a hundred years from now, as well as to-day. Depend upon it, my boy, Aldrich will get his broth as hot as he can sup it, and, perhaps, a good deal of it as he goes along."

"O, I am so glad we are going to have the Perseverance, not only because she is fast and a good sea-boat, but it was her that you took us off the raft with."

"Yes, my brave sailor-boy," said the captain, taking Ned on his knee (for his jovial, sanguine temperament was stirred to its depths by the safe arrival of the brigantine, the prospect of liberating Peterson, and the noble sentiments and practical ability manifested by the boys), "had

not the schooner been just where I could lay my hand upon her, you must have perished; nor do I know of another vessel, that, in such a sea and wind, would have towed the raft clear of the breakers; indeed, it was touch and go. Had the foremast gone overboard three minutes before it did, you would not be sitting on my knee to-night. I was frightened myself, after I was safe on shore, and the pressure was taken off."

"A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Griffin," observed Captain Brown, noticing that Walter was preoccupied.

"Out with it, my boy," said Captain Rhines.

"I was thinking over something Sewall's conversation put in my head, not clear to me. I have not got it shaped as yet. But if we can get to Martinique with the kind of cargo Sewall speaks of, and Peterson is alive, I feel sure that I know what to do when there."

"What is that?" asked Captain Rhines, pointing to the companion-way.

"It's daylight," said Ned; "we've talked all night; it is break of day."

CHAPTER XIII. CAPTAIN RHINES AND DICK CAMERON.

During the day they were occupied in discharging cargo, were tired at night, and turned in early to make up their sleep. But the night following the same company assembled again in the cabin of the Arthur.

"Now," said Captain Rhines, "for the crew."

"Ned and I are officers and crew," said Walter; "we can handle her."

"You could handle her in good weather, or in a gale of wind, if it gave you time, but you might lose your masts in a sudden squall; besides, you must have more than one in a watch. You must have a lookout, and you might have a scuffle to get Peterson. You must have two men, and a boy for a cook: one stout, reliable man, an able seaman, and an ordinary, or stout, smart boy, eighteen or nineteen. One of you may be sick, or washed overboard. However, there's time enough for that. I think I know where to find the able seaman."

A week after this Captain Rhines takes a walk to "Black Dog Alley."

"Where is Dick Cameron?" he inquired of the bar-keeper.

"On that bench," pointing to a wooden settee, on which lay Dick, drunk and sound asleep.

"Been out all night?"

"Ay."

"Got the 'horrors'?"

"Never has 'em; head's too hard."

"I suppose you had his advance."

"Yes."

"How much money has he left?"

"When his board is paid, Saturday night, he'll have three dollars and some cents left."

"Has he sold or pawned his clothes?"

"No. He has boarded with me, off and on, a good many years, and I never knew him to do that."

"Well, will you ask him to meet me at Washburn's at four o'clock this afternoon?"

"I will."

At the appointed time the captain found Dick on the spot.

"Dick, how many times, since we have been acquainted, have I told you that you was an out-and-out fool?"

"Shiver my limbs if I know, cap'n; mayhap as many times as there are yarns in the best bower cable."

"It has done a great deal of good. You are just the same old sixpence you were when you sailed with me, fifteen years ago."

"Well, cap'n, you take a little something when you have a mind. Why shouldn't an old sailor—that nobody cares anything about, and that's going to be thrown overboard when he's worn out, just like the cook's hot water and ashes—take his comfort while he can? I tell you, cap'n, you don't know anything about it. It ain't so easy to get clear of your shipmates. Here's mayhap half a dozen, or mayhap twenty-five of us, been on a long vige or a short vige. We come ashore; go to a boarding house. They treats me. Of course I must treat them. One glass brings on another, till we are all blind drunk."

"*Don't* I know all about it? Haven't I been through it all? Wasn't I a sailor, before the mast, years and years?"

"Not such a sailor as Dick Cameron, poor, God-forsaken devil. When you got into port, you had something ahead. You had a good home, father, mother, brothers and sisters, way back in the bush, that you carried to sea with you in your heart. When you turned in, and when you turned out, they turned in and turned out with you. They were close by you all the while. When you was at the wheel, on the lookout, or walking the deck in the middle watch, they were there. When you got farther along you thought of that young wife, dutiful woman, the little children, the trees you had planted; and though, mayhap, your body was in Trieste, Antigua, or Calcutta, your heart was at home with the wife and the little ones. You could see their faces, hear the fire snap. The moment you got in, and the vessel was made fast, the grass didn't grow under your feet till you was at home. You didn't see anything else. You looked right over everything else to that home."

"That is true, Dick, every word of it."

"You see, cap'n, with all these shrouds, and head-stays, and back-stays to hold you up, you could take your liquor in moderation, and stop when you had enough. But here's old Dick comes ashore. He's no parents, no home; nothing but his shipmates. They go to a rum mill. He's a drunkard, they are drunkards, and you know the rest. I drew up a strong resolution this time. Before I come ashore, says I to myself, 'I'll take my glass in moderation, just as my old cap'n, Ben Rhines, used to, and not make a beast of myself.' But it all ended in smoke."

"I don't take my glass in moderation, Dick. I've knocked off; flung it all overboard. Ben has done the same. We don't drink, nor keep it in the house."

"That's a go, now! Slipped the cable, and let the end run out the hawse-hole?"

"Yes, Dick; and haven't buoyed the cable, neither."

"But what was the need of that? You never abused yourself with liquor. You could stop at the score."

"Ben begun it. You know John Strout, who was such a great friend of his."

"Was mate of the Leonidas?"

"The same. Well, he fell overboard drunk, after getting his liquor at Ben's house. Ben swore then that he'd never drink another drop, and he never has. I held out a good while; but at length I found I was making drunkards of the young folks by the wholesale. They had no idea of imitating old Uncle Yelf, who died drunk among the pigs; but they were going to do like Captain Rhines, who drank in moderation; and three fourths of them ended in becoming drunkards."

"This is all very fine for you, cap'n; but here's poor Dick comes ashore, goes into a boarding-house. If he don't drink, his shipmates tell him he's no part of a man. The landlord tells him, says he, 'Dick, you're a disgrace to the place. You're taking the shingles off the house, the shoes off my children's feet. You must drink for the good of the house.' I've no home to go to, no place to be decent in."

Our readers must recollect this was long before the era of "sailors' homes."

"Look here, my old web-foot," said the captain, bringing down his hand on Dick's shoulder with a force that would have made a less stalwart man wince; "you shall have a place to be decent in. You shall go home with me."

"*Go home with you*, cap'n! What could you do with such a rough customer as me? I should scare your family. You wouldn't try to make a farmer of an old shell-back. I might, perhaps, do something with horses, for my father carried the king's mail from Greenock; and, since I was knee high to a toad, I have been used to horses; but it's little old Dick knows about your horned cattle."

"I'll tell you what I want of you. Have you forgotten James Peterson, that used to go with me?"

"I never had any shipmate of that name that I knows of."

"Yes, you had. He was a negro. I used to hire him of his master. He was with us in the James Welch to Cadiz the time I had the big dog."

"I don't mind any nigger, only Flour."

"Well, it's *Flour* I mean. His real name is Peterson."

"Ay, I mind him well, and liked him well."

"You know the blacks are free here at the north since the war."

"I've heard so. Then they are a mighty sight better off than the sailors."

"He went out of here to Martinique, with a great villain, in one of our vessels. I coaxed him to go, because it was hard to get a crew; and the rascal has sold him to a planter there. I am going to have him back."

"If you can get him."

"I shall get him."

"Why don't you get your government to demand him of the French government, if he's a citizen, and save the expense and trouble?"

"They have no government that amounts to anything. They don't like us because we won't go into a war with England on their account. Peterson might die of old age, and I likewise, before they could be got to move in the matter. Ben has got a vessel that sails like a witch; she has been

repaired this winter past; we are going to put new rigging and a new suit of sails on her; and two of our boys have volunteered to take charge, and go after Peterson, and get him back by hook or by crook."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to go home with me. You, myself, and Ben will cut and make the sails, rig and load her. You will live in my family, get all the salt junk and bad rum out of you, be amongst steady people, away from temptation, go out in the vessel with the boys, and, perhaps, a couple more of our young men; no rum, no landlords, no drunken shipmates. I'll give you better wages than you ever had in your life, because you shall have a share of the profits when the voyage is up. I'll build you a vessel; and, as you are no navigator, you shall coast along the shore in her, Captain Richard Cameron, marry some one of our good girls, and be a man. Is not there a chance to be decent? and do as I have done—let the liquor alone."

"God bless you, cap'n; will you do all that for old Dick?"

"I will, and there's my hand on it."

The seaman grasped the extended hand of his benefactor, exclaiming, "I'll do it, cap'n. Don't think the manhood is all so leached out of me by rum and bad company that I can't rally with such a motive as that."

"I don't want you to feel that the obligation is all on one side. It is not so. I know you, Richard Cameron, through and through; you are a cool, resolute, powerful, noble-hearted man. I never expected to meet you again; but I have always said, that, in a real trying time, you were worth any two men I ever had. I can't help thinking you have been sent to help me at this present time. You have had experience, and are seasoned to all climates and all kind of hardships, and you may have to throttle somebody."

"I don't profess to be much of a saint, cap'n; but, if there's any throttling to do, I am as good as the next one."

"Well, take your dunnage, and come right on board the brigantine. There's room enough and grub enough. You'll get acquainted with the boys, and be out of harm's way."

After listening to the story of Percival, the captain had written to his wife, recounting all the particulars. Such a commotion as it created in the quiet community of Pleasant Cove has rarely been seen. Peterson was known and liked by every one. The story, with all manner of additions and exaggerations, flew from mouth to mouth, increasing as it went, formed the staple of conversation at every fireside, and excited universal concern and indignation. It was asserted that he was compelled to work every day with a ball and chain fastened to his leg, and flogged till the blood ran. Persons who would hardly have spoken to him if they had met him on the street before his misfortune were outrageous at this violation of the rights of an American citizen. Any number of plans were devised; some were for bringing the matter before President Washington at once; others proposed to raise money to ransom him; but it was finally concluded to wait till Captain Rhines came home, who, no one doubted, would stir at once in the matter.

Sewall Lancaster expressed his willingness to go, and Captain Rhines gladly accepted him, as he was well acquainted in Martinique and with their trade; and, two days after the Arthur Brown was discharged, the captain, with the boys and seamen, started in a coaster for Pleasant Cove.

They found everything ripe and ready for their purpose. Lion Ben told the boys they were welcome to the schooner, and refused to receive a cent of remuneration.

The whole community rose up as one man to load her. Every household contributed its supply of butter, candles, and vegetables.

Captain Rhines said if they were going round to the plantations it was no use to carry fowl, as there were enough there; but they took a few to sell in St. Pierre, as everybody was eager to contribute something, and some who had nothing else could furnish fowls.

Twenty-five young men, with Charlie Bell at their head, went into his woods, cut down the trees, rolled them into the pond, floated them to the saw-mill, sawed them into joist, and framed the small houses. Others contributed money to buy locks, hinges, and nails.

The boys were not permitted to contribute a cent, it being agreed on all sides that whatever was made should be divided between the rescuers and Peterson's family. Captain Rhines had also brought with him in the coaster from Boston a large lot of spermaceti candles, which Arthur Brown, Mr. Welch, and the crew of the brigantine contributed.

I trust you will not think that Captain Rhines, Lion Ben, and the boys were idle amid all this commotion. You may believe this experienced seaman, and the boys, full of enthusiasm, made the *Perseverance* look saucy enough. Dick Cameron was in the right place now. As they sewed on the sails, he told yarns that excited as much laughter as wonder; for Dick, as our readers may suspect, was a jolly soul, and, as he was in agreeable company, had a clear conscience, was full of good resolutions and new-born hopes, a happier fellow you never saw. They grafted, hitched, and pointed every rope on board of her that admitted of it, even to the bucket-rope, and holy-stoned the deck till it was white as snow. Didn't they put the muslin on her—a bonnet on her jib for light winds, a lug foresail that trimmed way aft to the tiller-head, a squaresail that travelled on an up-and-down stay, and two gaff-topsails that set from the deck? These were all kites for light winds, and could be set or taken in very quick. I wish you could have seen her boat. The readers of the *Elm Island Stories* know very well that Charlie Bell was by no means slow as respected boat-building, and was a complete epitome of progress.

Just after they began to repair the Perseverance, his old father said to him one day, as they sat before the fire,—

"Charlie, they have a new fashion of building boats in France."

"How is that, father?"

"Why, instead of doing as you do, and getting natural crooks for timbers, they saw them out of a white-oak plank, or whatever kind of wood they make them of, put them into a steam-box, and bend them. They generally get natural crooks for stem, stern-post, and floor-timbers; but often they saw them out of plank, because timber is not so plenty there as here, and necessity has driven them to it."

"I see, father," said Charlie, "you could build two boats in that way while you were building one in our fashion."

Charlie instantly set to work, at odd jobs, to build a boat for the Perseverance that should take the fly off of everything. It was a labor of love, because he meant to make a present of it to Lion Ben, and felt all the enthusiasm naturally connected with new ideas.

He made the stem, stern-post, sharp-risers, and floor-timbers of apple tree, which takes a very good polish, and the other timbers from plank sawed out of small, second-growth white-oak butts, tough enough for ox-goads, and as blue as a whet-stone. The excellent quality of the wood enabled him to secure sufficient strength, and yet make them quite small and neat. She was planked with the best of cedar.

He then made a fancy rudder, fancy oars, mast, and boom, and painted her white to correspond. As she was small, Lion Ben made a shoulder-of-mutton sail for her, which shape brought the body of the sail low in the boat, enabling her to carry it much longer. She was just the prettiest, lightest thing imaginable; and she would streak it with a good breeze. After work at night, the boys did enjoy sailing in her. Pleasantly and swiftly did these days pass away. They hardly ate two meals in the same house; for they were universal favorites, and all wanted to have the boys at their houses, and it was only on Sabbath days that Walter spent the day at home.

Again he sat beside Charlie Bell in the old church, and had many a pleasant talk with him; but Walter was obliged to tell Charlie, that, although he had often thought of that moonlight talk by the brook, and how vividly, among the crumbling ruins of the old castle, the power of association recalled that conversation, he had complied with his request no farther than to repeat the Lord's Prayer with Ned then, and ever after when he retired to rest.

The Perseverance was now ready for sea; as Dick Cameron said, everything about her was ship-shape and Bristol fashion. Never did more good wishes and fervent prayers follow a craft than followed her, as, with a wholesale breeze, she weighed anchor, and went down the bay like a race-horse. Reluctantly the crowd of spectators left the heights from which they had watched her as she faded from view, and slowly sought their different places of abode.

CHAPTER XIV. WALTER AND HENRI LEMAIRE.

To make a quick passage was the great desire of all on board the schooner from various motives, the most prominent of which was to break the fetters of Peterson at the earliest opportunity; but they also burned to show themselves equal to the occasion, and justify the expectations formed of them, well aware that the attention of the whole community, and those whom they loved best, was fixed upon them. Time was also precious, as they could not tell how much time might be occupied in the search and rescue at Martinique, and it was of the greatest importance to get away from there before the hurricane months.

With new rigging and masts, new sails, and plenty of them, a clean bottom, and a wholesale breeze, the gallant little craft, that had been employed on so many errands of mercy, and with which so many pleasant associations were connected, nobly seconded the eager wishes of her young navigators, and sustained her previous reputation.

"Don't them 'ere sails set like a board, and don't she travel, the jade?" shouted Dick, in ecstasy, as Agamenticus grew dim in the distance, and the stars came out one by one; "we shall have to heave to for the wind. That's the time o' day, shipmate," he cried, as a rooster, sticking his head between the slats of a coop, uttered a shrill note of defiance. "Doctor" (cook), "don't kill that chap. We'll keep him to crow when we get the nigger."

It was the intention of Captain Rhines to have taken one of Peterson's boys for cook; but Ben was in the Casco, with Isaac Murch, and the boy next in age had sailed for Berbice, in a Kennebunk ship, the day before Captain Rhines returned from Boston. They, therefore, shipped a black, who, like Peterson, had been a slave, and was formerly owned by Henry Merrithew's father. His name being Neptune, they called him Nep for short.

Captain Griffin (though, for convenience, we shall continue to call him Walter) and Dick were in one watch, Mr. Gates (little Ned) and Sewall Lancaster in the other. It was not a very aristocratic arrangement; for the captain and mate worked ship, and took their tricks at the helm, although Dick and Sewall were very particular in addressing them by their titles; and, when the captain

was on deck, Ned was as scrupulous about taking the weather-side of the quarter-deck as though he had been aboard the largest ship.

At daybreak of the ninth day, they made Mount Pelee in the distance, and soon after sighted the north-western part of Martinique, and saw a big rock, and a flat point, with a plantation on it.

"This," said Lancaster, "is Point Precheur, and the rock Pearl Rock."

It was not long before they made the white awnings of the vessels in the harbor of St. Pierre, the principal commercial port of Martinique. This island belongs to France, is about thirty-five miles long, and of irregular shape, rocky, somewhat mountainous, abounding in intricate coves and creeks of difficult navigation, but affording excellent sheltered harbors for vessels both of large and small burdens. The soil is fertile, and water abundant; the population ninety-nine thousand, of whom seventy-eight thousand are negroes. It is subject to earthquakes and hurricanes at certain seasons of the year.

Captain Rhines had given Walter particular directions about taking care of the vessel at St. Pierre, which is an open roadstead. The town is built on the side of a hill which falls off towards the water, forming a circular beach. The shore being bold, vessels moor head and stern, with anchors carried out to the south-east and north-west. Lumber is rafted to the eastern portion of the harbor, where the water is shoaler, and merchandise from the shore is brought off in launches. For special reasons, the boys were in no haste to sell, and went ashore to look at the place.

The town presented a singular appearance, being built in such a manner upon the declivity of the hill, that from the vessel you saw a good part of one house over the roof of the one in front, while steeper hills behind seemed to overhang the houses.

The roofs of their houses were covered with tiles, which excited Walter's curiosity to see how they were made, as he was always interested in everything of a mechanical nature. So he clambered up on to the roofs, and found the tiles were of two kinds: some were shaped like a gouge, or half of an earthen pot. A row of these were laid, hollow side up, the length of the roof, and two or three inches apart, to economize stock; then others laid hollow side down to cover the space between the others, and direct the water into the hollow of those first laid; and so on, till the roof was covered.

Multitudes of bats find a lodgment under the tiles covering the joints, and come out as twilight comes on.

Other tiles were made the shape of the letter S, the extremity of one lapping the hollow of the other. These tiles were made of strong, coarse pottery, of different colors, red predominating, and were laid in mortar.

The houses of the negroes and the poorer class of whites were merely four bamboo posts, stuck in the earth, the walls formed of wicker-work, and plastered with mud, and the roofs thatched with cane leaves.

There had been a rain the day before, and the water was running in streams from the hills, in paved gutters, through the middle of the streets. The next morning presented a curious spectacle. It seemed as though the entire population had been seized with a desire to wash. Negro nurses were bringing children of all ages and colors down to the beach, and washing them; infants in arms, and those who could just go alone; while men were washing horses, asses, and mules. Hosts of boys, black, white, and mulatto, were swimming with a facility and grace quite wonderful. Whenever they could obtain permission, they would dive from the masts, and even top-gallant-yards, of the vessels, in some seventy feet in height, going down feet foremost, with their hands close to their sides.

Going to the market, the boys witnessed a singular sight. The market-men were not allowed to kill any animal before five o'clock in the afternoon, nor sell any fresh meat after ten in the morning. Whatever was left at that time they were obliged to rub with salt, and dry in the shade. Near to a butcher's stall a bullock was tied. The butcher, finding he was likely to fall short of meat that morning, runs out, and thrusts a sharp-pointed knife into the marrow of the bullock's neck, just back of the horns. The creature dropped in a moment.

The butcher and his assistants instantly began to skin him, cutting the flesh from the ribs, thighs, and brisket as fast as they skinned, and selling it hot from the bones, the skin and flesh being stripped from the bones before the entrails were removed. Then the bones were cut up in short pieces, tied in little bunches, and sold for a few sous, or a bit (twelve cents), to poor people, for soups. All sorts of coin were current there.

Walter went to the market to buy some fruit; there were twenty-five cents in change due him, and the negro gave him a triangular piece of silver.

"What is this?" asked Walter.

"Makkatena," replied the black; "he be two bit."

Upon examination, he found a Spanish dollar had been cut into four equal parts, and, upon inquiry, ascertained that one way they procured small change was to cut dollars, half dollars, and quarters into four pieces, which they called "makkatena."

"Sewall," said Walter, when he returned on board the vessel, "the story, at first, was, that Peterson fell between the vessel and the wharf. I don't see a wharf here."

"They sold their lumber to the government, and there was a breastwork belonging to them. Joe

Elwell said it was torn to pieces by the sea. Nothing of that kind will stand here after the middle of July, when the hurricanes come."

They were now surrounded by bumboat-men, wanting to buy vegetables; and the captain, who was much ashore, had several offers for his lumber; but he seemed in no haste to sell; thought he should go round to some of the plantations and small villages along the coast; didn't know but he should go to Precheur, Case Pilote, or Case de Navire; might go to Port Royal, Trinity Bay, or to the plantations near Carvel (Caravelle); meant to try the market; guessed he had the right sort of things; shouldn't wonder at all if he went to Guadaloupe; rather thought he should; guessed that was the best market. In the mean time, he retailed a few hens, some vegetables, and a little butter.

The captain was also very liberal to the blacks, especially to those belonging to launches and drogers, giving them beef and biscuit, which they carried off in the top of their high-crowned hats. The whole ship's company were very sociable, particularly with the free negroes. The result of this was, that the vessel was thronged with negroes. One old black, a bumboat-man, terribly pock-marked, and his wool white with age, was very intimate with Nep, in consequence of which he got many a fritter and cup of coffee, and bought the cook's slush.

He also did a great many errands for the captain, was half the time on board the vessel, and often invited Nep to his house on Sundays. He was constantly telling about going to Point Solomon, where he had a good many negro acquaintances; so Lancaster christened him Solomon, to which name he answered as readily as to his own.

Lion Ben told Walter, the day they sailed, that he might sell the boat, buy some cheap affair that would answer to come home with, and divide the money between himself, Ned, and the crew. Many were the offers he had for this boat: he refused them all.

"Why don't you sell her?" asked Dick Cameron.

"I have good reasons for not doing it," was the reply.

"Solomon," said the captain one afternoon, as the old negro sat on the heel of the bowsprit, enjoying a cigar, "how old are you?"

"Golly, massa, dunno. How much be two hunder?"

"As much again as one hundred."

"Den s'pose I be two hunder."

"No, you ain't two hundred, or one hundred. What makes you think you are so old?"

"'Cause eberybody say, when come to de vessel, 'Dere come de old bumboat-man.' I go 'long de street: dey say, 'Dere go ole Quambo.' Eberybody gone I knowed; cap'ns all dead, vessels all dead, too; one, two, tree massas—all be dead. Last massa, he be sick; he say, 'Gib old Quambo his freedom; he ole nigger, all wear out; only fit eat plantin.' Dat one die; his chillen all die. Ole Quambo live yet, run de bumboat, buy de slush, sell plantin, bananas, eat fish Sunday. Yah, yah, yah! S'pose Gorra mighty forget all about ole Quambo. Yah, yah, yah!"

"How long have you been a bumboat-man?"

"Dunno, massa cap'n. S'pose half hunder year."

"O, pshaw! no, you haven't half of it. Captains that follow this trade don't live long, and perhaps the vessels you used to know are not worn out, but have gone to some other island. Do you board all the vessels that come here?"

"Yes, massa, ebery one. Dey lets me hab de slush. All de cap'n know ole Quambo."

"Do you remember an American vessel, the Casco, that, came here last year?"

"Bery big ship, massa. Nebber so big ship here, only men-o'-war."

"Yes; do you remember her?"

"Yes, massa. Bring great pile o' boards; goberment buy it all. Me hab her slush. Sell many tings to de crew; dey hab plenty ob money."

"Did you know the cook?"

"He black man; bery large; white on his hair. Me buy de slush ob him."

"What was his name?"

"Dunno, massa; old man no 'member. He lose part ob de small finger on de right hand."

"Just so. He was drowned. Do you remember their trying to find him on the bottom?"

"Dat man nebber drowned, massa; he libe now."

"How do you know that?"

"Sometime, when hurricane months come, no vessel. Me go to de houses, sell de candles me buy ob de 'Merican sailors; me go to Pierre Lallemond's house; hear him tell de wife dat man no dead; he sold to de Frenchman on de plantation."

"What Frenchman?"

"Dunno, massa; no 'member."

"Who is Pierre Lallemond?"

"He free nigger; cooper; make much money; hab niggers hisself. Eberybody know Pierre."

"I guess that's a story, Solomon, that somebody got up to hear themselves talk. The captain and crew all said he was drowned. It is likely they knew best."

"S'pose so, massa."

Here ended Walter's questioning of Solomon, who certainly did not resemble his namesake in wisdom. Walter told Nep to give Solomon half a dozen biscuit, and send him ashore. After the old man had been gone a while, he said to Cameron,—

"Dick, take the cook's axe, and stave in the head of that empty water-cask that stands on end abreast the main batch."

"It's a good cask, sir," amazed at the order from so prudent a man as Walter.

"No matter; do as I tell you."

"Obey orders if you break owners," said Dick; and in went the head of the cask.

"Cut the upper hoops off that beef-barrel."

Dick did as he was ordered.

"Take Sewall with you, go ashore, and inquire for a black cooper by the name of Pierre Lallemon, and ask him to come aboard, and put a head in a water-cask, cooper some barrels, and bring the stock to do it with. I want it done aboard."

Walter gave Dick the measure of the head.

"That beats all my going to sea," said Dick, as they pulled ashore—"to stave in the head of a good water-cask, cut the hoops of a new beef-barrel, and then send ashore for a cooper to mend 'em, as high wages as the coopers charge here."

"It's none of our consarn. We don't find the water-casks or pay the cooper."

"I guess Lion Ben would think it was his consarn to let us have the vessel for nothing, and then have water-casks stove up for the fun of the thing. There must be something the matter with his head. I hope the poor lad ain't got a sun-stroke. He was sitting there a long time in the sun, talking with the bumboat-man."

"I reckon his head is well enough," said Sewall. "I wish mine had as much in it."

At noon the boat came back, and, in company, a shore boat, in which was Pierre Lallemon, with his stock and tools, rowed by a negro boy. He was quite a contrast to Solomon, being a strong, tall, intelligent-looking man, pretty well bleached, and in the prime of life. He went to work directly, with his boy, on the water-cask. When the job was finished, Walter took him into the cabin alone, and, after paying him, said to him in French, "Did you do any work for Captain Aldrich, of the Casco, when he was here?"

"Yes, sir; I coopered his molasses."

"He lost his cook here, it is said."

"So I heard at the time."

"Old Quambo, the bumboat-man, told me you said he was kidnapped, and sold to a planter."

"He lies!" replied Pierre, quickly. "I never spoke a word to him about any such thing."

"He never said you did, but that he overheard you tell your wife that man was sold to a planter."

"He's an old fool, and lost what sense he ever had."

"Will one hundred dollars in gold help your recollection?"

This offer made no impression upon the negro.

"Cooper, was you born of free parents, or was you ever a slave?"

"I never was a field-hand, cap'n. I was a slave, but kept about my master, and learned to read, write, and cast accounts, and learned the cooper's trade."

"How did you get your freedom?"

"By working holidays, Sundays, and extra hours, often in the night."

"I know you can tell me what became of that man, if you will. I see it in your face. Now take the matter home to yourself. Suppose, after you had worked hard, obtaining your liberty by many long years of hard toil, and had gone on business to Guadaloupe, leaving wife and children behind; there been seized, and sold into slavery; what would you think of a person of your own color, who, having been a slave, and knowing from experience how bitter that bondage was, would not contribute in so small a degree towards your deliverance as to tell your friends, your wife, your children, where you was. Pierre Lallemon, you are that man."

"Is that all you want me to do, cap'n?"

"Yes, to give such information as may enable me to act."

"If I aid you, and it is known, I am a dead man."

"I don't want you to lift a finger, or commit yourself in any way. All the information I ask you can give me on this spot, where there are no witnesses except the God above us; and I never will breathe a word you utter."

"Put your questions, captain."

"Did Aldrich sell Peterson to Henri Lemaire for two thousand dollars?"

"He did."

"Is he alive?"

"He is."

"Where?"

"On Lemaire's plantation."

"Where is that?"

"On the north-eastern side, at Vauclin. He has plantations at the northern part of the island; but this is his home place, where he lives, and where he keeps the most slaves, and stores the greatest part of his coffee till he sells it."

"What does he put Peterson to doing?"

"Calking. He has so many drogers, there's work enough for him and others all the time."

"Does he treat him well?"

"Yes; feeds him well, and hires him holidays; does all he can to make him contented, for fear he will get away, but locks him up every night. Haven't you obtained information enough?"

"A few more questions. Does he often come to St. Pierre in his droger?"

"Once a fortnight."

"Does he have any particular one for his own use?"

"Yes."

"Is she any different from the rest?"

"She has a white streak, a red bead, and H. L. in her mainsail; the others are all black."

"Here is your money."

"I didn't give you this information for money, cap'n. I've been a slave to Henri Lemaire. If he should find out that any information had gone from me, he would have me assassinated. I have put my life in your hands."

"You may trust in me. I am equally in your power. You can secure yourself and destroy me at any moment by telling him my business here. Have you any objection to inform me of another thing?"

"No, now that we have gone so far."

"How came you by this knowledge?"

"His overseer told me."

"He was a very powerful man; how did they take him?"



The Capture of Peterson.

"He had to pass through a narrow alley on his way back to the vessel. The overseer and four more stretched a wire across it; he couldn't see the wire in the night, and fell over it. They leaped on him while he was down, handcuffed, gagged him, and put him into a droger. It was nothing uncommon to see Lemaire's overseer taking a runaway slave home, and no one paid any attention to it."

"When will he probably be here again?"

"To-day is Saturday; next Tuesday will be his day."

Walter did not communicate his information to any one, not even to Ned. In the mean time, they were all very much puzzled to divine why he did not get under way, if he was going from one plantation to another, and not lose any more time.

Sunday night, without giving the source of his information, he told them he had ascertained where Lemaire's plantation was; that he would probably be at St. Pierre the next Tuesday, or thereabouts; and to look sharp for a droger with a white waist, a red bead round her, and H. L. in the middle cloth of her mainsail.

Tuesday afternoon, about three o'clock, Ned, whose curiosity had led him to go to the mast-head, reported that there was a sail in sight, which proved to be the droger they were expecting, followed at different distances by several others, also belonging to Lemaire.

"Mr. Gates," said the captain, "let us take the boat when he gets along, and have a look at him."

They put the sail in the boat, shipped the fancy rudder, which had not been used since they left Pleasant Cove, and started just as the droger came to anchor at a cable's length from the beach.

They were passing the droger, on their way to the beach, while her negro crew were furling the sails. The planter, who was seated on deck, smoking, hailed and invited them to come on board. They gladly accepted an invitation which afforded a personal interview with the very man they were so anxious to see.

Quite contrary to their expectations, they found Henri Lemaire, in appearance at least, an affable, frank, puffy little Frenchman, of about sixty years of age, and very neatly dressed. It was evidently the boat that had attracted his attention; for the first question he asked, after the usual salutations had been exchanged, was, "Will you sell that boat, captain?" instantly adding, with a smile, "Of course you will. Your countrymen will sell anything; for it was in this very harbor that one of your American captains sold all the masts he had for a thousand dollars, and went home with a jury-mast."

Walter did not tell the Frenchman that the captain who did that was one of his schoolmates, but replied, "This is all the boat I have, and she answers my purpose well. I should be loath to part with her."

"What are you loaded with, captain?"

"Frames for small houses, shingles, nails, locks and hinges, spermaceti candles, and knickknacks."

"How large are the frames?"

Walter gave him the dimensions.

"How many have you got?"

"Twenty-five, or thereabouts."

"I think they would be what I should like to store different qualities of coffee in, and for other purposes. I want a house for my overseer. They are not large enough for that."

"Put two of them together."

"What do you ask for them?"

"I haven't fixed any price yet. I don't know as I shall sell here."

"Do you think you can do better at Guadaloupe?"

"I didn't know but I should go up to the northern part of the island, and call at the plantations. My vessel is light draught. I can run into any of the coves and creeks, and barter with the planters."

"What do you want for your lumber?"

"My vessel is small to take sugar or cotton; therefore prefer coffee, indigo, cloves, or cocoa."

"But that boat—of course you'll sell her; you are only holding off for price."

"Well, I don't know. You see yourself, if I go calling round into the creeks, this boat is just what I want, and I could not get along without it."

Walter then invited him to get into her, and take a sail, which he did, and they parted on the best of terms.

CHAPTER XV. VAUCLIN.

If the crew of the *Perseverance* thought their young captain somewhat dilatory, they soon had reason to modify that opinion, since he turned them out at three o'clock the next morning to raft one of the frames ashore, and raise it on the beach.

A large crowd of buyers came to look at it, and among the first Lemaire. All were anxious to buy, not merely the frames, but the hardware, some edge-tools that were in the vessel, and, in short,

the whole cargo; but Lemaire outbid the rest, and made a bargain with Walter to go to his plantation at Vauclin, and there exchange his frames and other cargo for coffee, indigo, tortoise-shell, and cloves, at certain prices agreed upon between them. Walter, for the sake of going to the spot where Peterson was, would have closed with the planter at almost any price; but the rates now agreed upon left him a very large profit. The frame on the beach was taken down, and put on board of one of the drogers that had discharged her cargo of sugar, and she immediately made sail for the plantation.

That night, when the crew of the *Perseverance* assembled in the cuddy,—for, like all pink sterns, she had her accommodations forward, and the salt-room aft,—Walter told them that in two days, during which time Lemaire would get through with his business, they were to set sail for his plantation. The announcement gave rise to a most animated discussion as to the course to be pursued after they arrived there. It was much nearer morning than midnight when they turned in.

French and Spanish vessels are all well modelled, and, in general, sail well. The West India drogers, being constantly obliged to work out in creeks and coves, and contend with head winds, are generally fast vessels; but although, during the war of Independence, the Americans had been brought by necessity to build sharp vessels to prey upon British commerce, and escape from their men-of-war, the great majority of the American vessels employed in the West India trade were of the old English model, built after the fashion of the colonial period. Beauty and speed were sacrificed to capacity, and the vessel that could carry the most lumber and molasses, with the least tonnage on the custom-house books, was considered the best, since in that trade, at that period, capacity was more profitable than speed. But the inventive genius of the people, always equal to the situation, was manifested in their fishermen. In respect to this class of vessels, always on a lee shore, and navigating among shoals and breakers, where both life and property depended upon their weatherly qualities, speed paid. Thus it came to pass that occasionally, in the winter, after the fishing season was over, an Ipswich chebacco boat or Marblehead pink-stern would take a cargo of onions, codfish, or small lumber, and go to the West Indies, when those who confounded her with the common lumber drogers, and supposed they could sail two feet to her one, caught a Tartar. It was so in the present instance. Lemaire prided himself upon the sailing qualities of his droger, and thought nothing on the coast could hold way with her.

He came alongside of the *Perseverance*, the morning of the day appointed, and said,—

"Captain, I shall be ready in about two hours. I must go ashore again. You had better get your anchor and make sail."

"But I don't know the way."

"No matter; you can be jogging along the coast. I'll overtake you, and then you can follow me."

"Very well," was the reply.

It was a good working breeze, the wind for a portion of the way nearly ahead—a direction well adapted to show the weatherly qualities of a vessel.

"Make sail," said Walter; "we'll be *jogging*."

With only her fore, mainsail, and jibs set, the *Perseverance* soon left the harbor astern. Hour after hour passed, and nothing was seen of Lemaire; but as they knew the general direction, and that there were no reefs or shoals, they kept on till they made Diamond Rock, on the port hand, when they must round the southern extremity of the island, and a pilot was needed. They accordingly hove to abreast of this singular rock, rising perpendicularly between five and six hundred feet above the sea, except on the western side, which is accessible, and where are a few small trees and bushes.

Lemaire was astonished, when, after getting his anchor, he looked in vain for the Yankee schooner, and knew not what to make of it, as she was hidden from his view by the island. After waiting till the droger came up, and passed ahead for nearly a mile, they put the bonnet on the jib, set the gaff-topsails, came up with and passed her, as Dick Cameron said, "hand over fist," then hove to, and waited for her to come up.

"I guess," said Walter, "we can spare him the gaff-topsails, the bonnet off the jib, and the flying-jib, and then keep jogging."

Having thus shortened sail, they fell into the wake of the droger.

Lemaire was excessively annoyed at being beaten so outrageously by a lumber carrier, and internally resolved to buy the American schooner, as he had not the least doubt but a Yankee would sell anything, only give him his price; and if she would sail like that loaded, what wouldn't she do in a set of pig-iron ballast, and with copper on her bottom!

Rounding Cape Ferre, they entered the *Passe Vauclin*, where the navigation was most intricate. Sewall Lancaster was one of those who seem by nature constituted for pilots. If he went to a place once, he could go again. In the woods, or on the water, Sewall could find his way. Though an uncouth, awkward being, caring little whom he pleased or displeased, he was a good navigator, had been mate several voyages, and only went before the mast in the brigantine because of the profits, and volunteered to go in the *Perseverance* because he was a relative of Walter, and greatly attached to Captain Rhines. When Walter saw the nature of the navigation, he said,—

"Sewall, I must calculate on you to bring us out again; this is a crooked place."

"Never fear, cap'n; I'll take my landmarks, crooked as it is."

The plantation of Lemaire was of great extent, comprising two coves, separated by a point of moderate height, rocky at its extremity. The cove on the southern side being appropriated to the house and offices connected with it, and the northerly one, where was a greater depth of water, was the site of the mill, the house of the overseer, negro quarters, hospital, and other buildings. Here were a wharf, and facilities for repairing vessels, work-shop, and so on, and here the drogers were moored. The great wealth of this planter was evident from the character of the buildings, which were to a great extent of stone or timber, and the roofs covered with tiles, instead of thatch and palm-leaf, as is generally the case. Many of the work-shops were built of timber framed together, the walls covered with narrow pine boards lapped one over the other to shed rain, and the roofs either tiled or shingled after the fashion in America—constant intercourse with the States having taught the French planters many of the methods of building in use there; and, as in that climate timber decayed rapidly, there was a steady demand for lumber.

As they slowly entered the harbor, the sound of hammers, axes, and calking mallets was heard from the northern cove. With eager curiosity the boys strove to make out the form of Peterson among some negroes driving oakum into the gar-board seams of a droger that lay aground upon the beach.

"There is no man there large enough for him," said Walter.

The schooner dropped her anchor in the cove, and the ship's company had the rest of the day—it being two hours before night—at their own disposal, as nothing could be done towards discharging till the negroes moved some sugar that occupied the wharf.

After supper they went ashore, and took a stroll over the plantation, hoping they might get some inkling of Peterson, but without making any inquiries, or manifesting any undue curiosity to excite suspicion, for all felt that they were treading on dangerous ground. They went among slaves employed in all sorts of work, calkers, coopers, carpenters, not daring to inquire, and, without obtaining any information, returned on board.

"Where do you suppose he can be?" said Ned. "We've looked everywhere."

"Perhaps they've carried him to some of his other plantations," said Lancaster.

"No, he's here," said Walter.

"Where is he, then?"

"Locked up. That was what that droger was sent off in such a hurry for,—that we put the frame aboard of, that was on the beach,—to tell the overseer that an American vessel was coming into the creek. Lemaire is not such a fool as not to know that a fellow as smart as Peterson would do his best to get aboard of her. He will probably be kept out of sight as long as we are here, and we must find where he's confined, and get at him."

"What puzzles me," said Dick, "is why so smart a nigger as you say he is hasn't got away before, and got aboard some vessel."

"That is what puzzles me, too," said Walter.

"What kind of a vessel do you call that, captain?" said the planter, when he came down in the morning.

"We call them pink-sterns."

"Why don't you build larger vessels of the same model?"

"They would draw too much water, and would not carry enough."

"What are they made for?"

"Fishing. They will carry all the fish necessary, and are excellent sea-boats."

"She sails like the wind. Will you sell her?"

"She doesn't belong to me."

"Your captains are always allowed discretionary powers. Your owners would not object to a round price."

"She is owned by one man, who would not part with her, as she once belonged to a dear friend of his."

Every effort was made by Walter and his crew, by prowling round in the night, to discover the place of Peterson's confinement.

They cultivated the acquaintance of the negroes, who for their long residence on the estate, and supposed devotion to their master's interests, were promoted to the office of night watchmen, in hopes something might drop from them to throw light on the matter, while, at the same time, they dared not commit themselves by inquiry. The captain also became more and more intimate with Lemaire and the overseer, but all to no purpose, till at length the matter grew serious. The vessel was discharged, would soon begin to load, and there would be no longer any excuse for remaining.

One night, as Walter lay feverish and wakeful in his berth, his mechanical turn furnished him with an excuse for prolonging his stay.

"Monsieur," said he the next day to Lemaire, "I thought you wanted a new house for your

overseer."

"So I do; but these frames are not large enough."

"Put three of them together, one on top of the other, and the third for a porch."

"That would be a great deal of work."

"I'll do it for you with my crew, if you will find us, and pay us moderate wages, cover the outside, lay the floors, and shingle the roofs."

To this the planter agreed, and forthwith all hands went to work, but in a manner very much resembling that of the negroes, as they desired to prolong the time.

For some time the attention of Walter had been attracted by a stone building of moderate size, of which no use seemed to be made as a storehouse, the windows of which were some feet from the ground and grated. He noticed a negro, a body servant of the planter, go in there about meal times with something in a basket, and thought it must be the place where Peterson was confined.

Access was difficult, even to the outside, in the night, as a negro called Jean Baptiste, and in whom great confidence was placed, kept the night watch before it. Walter made the acquaintance of Jean, which was not at all difficult, as the negro was delighted with the notice of both him and Ned. Nothing, however, came of it for some days.

At length Walter, being at work with Ned on the frame of the overseer's house, and thus brought above the level of the grates in the building which had been so long the object of intense curiosity, thought, as he looked towards it, he perceived something moving behind the grates, although the distance was too great to determine its character.

But the very possibility that Peterson was confined there made Walter's heart leap to his throat. He looked around. Below were Sewall, Dick, and three negro assistants. He made a signal to Ned, and directed his attention to the place, and received a nod of intelligence.

Every few moments that afternoon their eyes were fastened on those grates. As the sun declined, the rays, falling on the apertures, made them quite confident that they saw a human figure pacing back and forth. It seemed to Walter and Ned as though the sun would never, never set that night.

The moment they reached the vessel the announcement was made. Walter, Ned, and Dick began to devise methods to ascertain whether their suspicions were well founded.

"If you want to know, and can't see," said Lancaster, who stood listening in silence, "why don't you take the glass? That's what they have 'em for."

"What precious fools we are," said Walter, "looking and longing all the afternoon, and couldn't think of that!"

Within a short distance of the frame they had been at work upon, rose the high ground, forming the point that separated the two coves. In the evening, Walter hid the glass among some bushes on the side of the ascent, and while the rest were at breakfast the next morning, he and Ned repaired to the spot.

Walter put the glass to his eye, and was rewarded by seeing the well-known features of his black friend pressed against the grates.

"It's he," whispered Walter, trembling with suppressed delight, as he passed the glass to Ned. The boys sat and looked at each other in silent ecstasy, with hand clasped in hand for a few moments, and then, creeping stealthily from the place, by a look and gesture conveyed the intelligence to their shipmates as they joined them at the building. How to establish communication with Peterson was the subject that occupied the thoughts of Walter during the entire day.

Having made the habits of Jean a study for some time, he ascertained that he, like most negroes, kept a very poor watch. An old log lay beside the wall of the pig-yard, several rods from Peterson's window; upon this the negro would often sit, lean his back against the wall, and get sound asleep. During this time a good opportunity offered to attract the attention of Peterson, and communicate with him; but as it was not until late at night that Jean fell asleep, Peterson would be asleep also, and it would be impossible to arouse him within those thick walls without making noise enough to wake Jean likewise. They therefore determined to do it in the daytime, as exposing them to the least chance of detection, there being no watch kept then, the building not situated in any common thoroughfare, and the risk of observation from any transient passer very little. There is a great difference in the treatment of slaves by different planters, some being of a cruel, others of a more mild disposition, and disposed not to aggravate the hardships of their slaves by savage treatment; and there are some in whose hands the institution assumes somewhat of a patriarchal character. Lemaire was one of this latter class; whether it sprang from kindness of natural disposition or calculation, as thinking they would last longer and accomplish more in the end, his slaves were well fed, lightly worked, and seldom flogged. He kept a strict watch over his overseers, and the negro drivers especially, and has been known, when he heard the lash too frequently, to go to the spot, take the whip from the negro driver, and giving him three or four severe cuts, say, "See how you like that yourself!" The chief business of the day was over at three o'clock; then came the dinner hour at the mansion, after which Lemaire took his afternoon nap. The overseer did the same; the negroes improved the opportunity to shirk and sleep, and while work went on in the field and at the cane mill more leisurely, all was repose in the vicinity of the dwelling.

The boys had succeeded so well in gaining the confidence of all on the plantation, that they went everywhere without question, both night and day, sat down and gossiped with the children and worn-out darkies who were employed in picking over coffee and cloves, strolled into the fields, and among the carpenters and calkers, at work upon the drogers, for Lemaire built his own vessels.

This hour of napping was the time of the day selected by the boys as most favorable for their purpose. It was a little after four in the afternoon of the day succeeding that on which they had obtained a glimpse of Peterson, when they strolled leisurely towards the lock-up to reconnoitre.

A superannuated negro, partially blind and wholly deaf, sat half asleep on the steps; a parcel of negro children were burrowing in the sand beneath the walls of the adjoining stable, and teasing a turkey-cock by holding up before him a tattered red handkerchief.

With these exceptions, no person was seen around the premises. "We need not fear that old negro, nor these little children," said Walter, "and we never shall have a better opportunity than at this very time."

In the yard was a small building used for storing the coarse cloth of which coffee-bags were made; a cart was tipped up against it, by clambering on which it was not difficult to reach the roof.

"I will get up to the roof of that shed," said Ned, "where I can see all around, and make a signal if any one is coming."

No sooner had Ned gained the roof of the shed, than Walter placed himself directly beneath the grated window, at which they had seen Peterson the morning previous. The blacks possess a wonderful ability for singing those songs of labor used by both black and white seamen to lighten their toil. Negroes in general possess a great facility for remembering tunes, and even the words of songs. In the West Indies you will hear negroes who cannot speak a word of English (to know what it means), sing a song which they have caught from white sailors, all through, without knowing the meaning of one word.

Peterson had a large stock of these songs, which he had picked up in the course of his sea life from sailors of different nations, with whom he had been shipmate. It had been a favorite recreation of Walter, in years past, to sit on Peterson's knee, and coax him to sing those songs, while the little fellow would clap his hands, join in the chorus, and applaud most lustily at the close, always winding up with an entreaty for just one more. Sometimes on a rainy Saturday afternoon, when the weather prevented Peterson from working, half a dozen of the boys would get round him, and, together with his own children, make the old house ring with their screams, while Luce, Peterson's wife, would take her hands out of the suds and join the merry company.

Walter stood some minutes leaning against the wall, striving to recall some favorite song that had often served them upon those occasions. At length, suddenly exclaiming, "I have it," he began in a low tone to sing,—

"Where have you been all this day,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
From your hills so far away,
My bonny Highland laddie?"

Instantly, in the same cautious tone, came through the grates the succeeding stanza,—

"Donald's been to Aberdeen,
Bonnie lassie, Highland lassie,
To see de duke in his Highland green,
My bonnie Highland lassie."

"Peterson," said Walter.

"Here I is. Who is you?"

"Walter—Walter Griffin."

"Bress de Lord! Who is wid you?"

"Little Ned, Sewall Lancaster, and Dick Cameron, your shipmate in the Leonidas, and old Neptune as cook. We are here in the Perseverance, and have come after you. Luce and the children, Captain Rhines, Lion Ben, and all our folks are well."

"Bress de Lord. He's too good; O, bress de Lord."

"Here, Peterson, take this;" and Walter took from his pocket a long piece of tarred twine, with a nail at the end of it, and fastening the string to a piece of rattan, thrust it through the grates.

"What dis for?"

"I dare not stay any longer now. When it is dark, tie this string round your wrist, and drop the nail out of the window. I'll come here at twelve o'clock to-night, when Jean is asleep, pull it to wake you up, and then we can talk more, and lay our plans."

At the appointed time Walter was on the spot. After telling Peterson how they ascertained he was sold and where he was, he asked,—

"Could you get out of that window, if we take the bars out?"

"No, sonny; it no large enough."

"Then we must break the door."

"Dat make too much noise. You bring strong string, piece of spun-yarn, and crowbar; tie de bar to de spun-yarn; I pull him up, hide him in my bed; den, when time come, pull de staple out de stone what hold de bolt. De stones of dis island bery soft, Peterson bery strong; pull him out; make no noise."

The plantation at Vauclin abounded in domestic animals and fowls of all kinds. Hogs were not suffered to run at large, but were kept in a yard surrounded by a high stone wall, laid in lime mortar; here were hogs, sucking pigs, and shotes of all ages. The fowls run at large. There were ducks, geese, guinea-fowl, turkeys, and hens in abundance. These were all under the supervision of an old negro, assisted by several boys. Philip was a Guinea negro, uncommonly stupid and indolent, although his office was no sinecure, as the other slaves stole all the fowls and pigs they could lay their hands on. But the depredations of the negroes upon their master's poultry and pigs were few indeed compared with those of Dick Cameron. From the time Dick was ten years old, and held horses for a baubee in the streets of Greenock, he had been flung upon his own resources, was an old forager, and his miscellaneous life was not favorable to the cultivation of very accurate distinctions in respect to the rights of individuals in such things as fruit, fowl, and other outlying property.

Dick would have cut his right hand off sooner than have cheated his landlord, backed out after signing the ship's articles, or run away after taking his advance wages; but he would not hesitate an instant in helping himself to a pair of trousers, or a frock, from any piece of canvas that was lying about decks, or to any rope, small line, twine, or worming he wanted for becketts to his chest, hammock lashings, or strings to a clothes-bag. Entertaining such sentiments, it was not wonderful that, since the arrival of the Perseverance, turkeys, ducks, and guinea-fowl should disappear with astonishing rapidity, especially turkeys. At length Walter objected to the process by which he had good reason to suppose the table of the Perseverance was supplied; but all the difference this made was, that, although he and Ned fared less sumptuously, Sewall, Dick, and old Nep lived none the worse, taking their meals at extra hours by themselves; and what they were unable to consume there were plenty of invited guests to finish.

At length the disappearance of some very fine turkeys attracted the attention of the cook, who told his master. He threatened to flog Phil if the matter went on.

"It is these white sailors," said the planter. "They steal them in the night. There's never a vessel comes here but the fowl and pigs are stolen. You must set a watch while this vessel is here,—there's enough of you,—or shut them up."

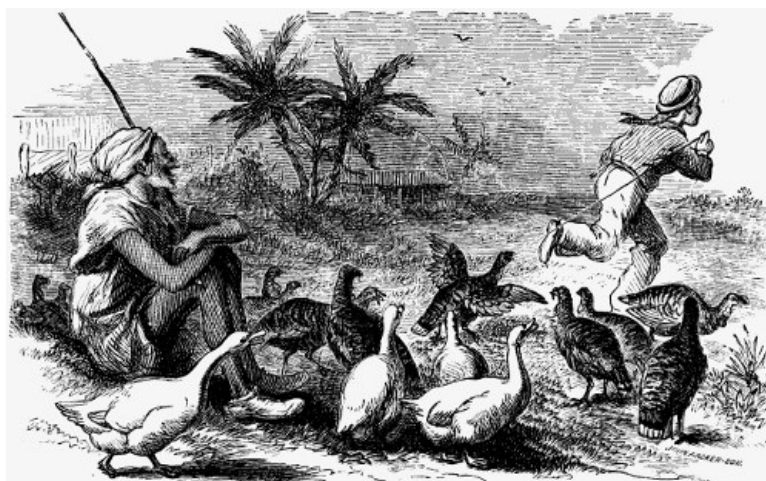
As the easiest method, Phil and his understrappers shut up the fowl; but every night, when Phil drove them in, some of the turkeys were missing.

"You lazy rascal," said Lemaire, "can't you keep them from stealing them in broad daylight? They don't take the geese; why don't you keep them from taking the turkeys as well?"

"Wharra fur you flog poor nigga, massa? How I help it, massa? When buckra man come, goose he say, 'Sailor man, sailor man.' Den Phil he look sharp. Buckra man go 'way; no git him. Turkey he big fool; go round all de day long, head one side, hollerin, 'Quit, quit, quit.' Wharra poor nigga do? He no tell when sailor man dere, 'cause turkey holler, 'Quit, quit,' all de time."

A few days after this conversation with his master, Phil was asleep in the sun, in the midst of his feathered charge, when he was aroused by a great outcry among the turkeys. Rousing up, he heard all the turkeys crying, "Quit, quit," and saw Dick running for dear life, with the gobbler after him, his neck outstretched, and his wings flapping.

"Yah, yah!" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes; "wharra fur you run so, buckra man? Turkey no bite you."



"Wharra fur you run so, buckra man? Turkey no bite you."

It is said "a stern chase is a long chase." It proved so in this instance; for the gobbler never returned. The simple truth was, Dick had baited a hook with corn, and was dragging the old gobbler after him.

Ned was quite fond of going up and sitting among the negroes Sundays, listening to their queer expressions, and watching the frolics of the little darkies. One Sunday morning, there were many of them in a large yard near the house, one part of which was a garden, separated by an open fence of bamboo from the pig-yard. On the other side of the pig-yard was a smaller place, set apart for hens with young chickens.

The children were playing in the dirt and among the hogs, the older negroes sitting in the sun on a bench, in their holiday clothes, chatting and laughing. In the yard was a sow, with twelve pigs almost weaned. Ned sat next to Phil, who, as usual, was half asleep, and saw a pollock-line, which was not far from the color of the wall, flung over, attached to which was a hook, baited with a piece of bread. In a few moments a great squealing drew the attention of all, and one of the pigs was seen going right up the wall as fast as he could move his legs, and in a moment disappeared over the summit.

"Je hay, buckra man!" cried Phil, in amazement, and, turning to Ned, said, "Eighteen year dis nigga been in Martinique; nebber see pig run ober dat wall 'fore dis morning."

It may strike some of our young readers as rather singular, since we have spoken of a garden, that vegetables should be salable in the West Indies, where the soil and climate are so favorable to vegetation, and even bring high prices, especially in Martinique, which is well watered. One great reason of this, undoubtedly, was neglect, since most of the garden vegetables are raised in Martinique now. It must be recollected that many vegetables used on the table are not palatable when grown in a hot climate. Peas ripen so fast that you can only have them just for one picking. It is the same with corn, which, instead of being a long time in the milk, as with us at the north, ripens as it grows. Potatoes are not half as good as those of cold climates; beets and carrots soon grow tough and stringy, running up to seed the first year; cabbages won't form a close head, and are now exported by tons to Cuba. Add to this, that so many fruits grow spontaneously, and attention is all directed to sugar, coffee, and cotton.

CHAPTER XVI.

"O, MASSA, BUCKRA CALKER!"

The vessel was now nearly loaded. The boys began to consult with the crew in regard to getting Peterson out of the prison, and aboard the vessel. As there were quite a number of watchmen to pass besides Jean, and who were rather more wakeful than that worthy, Dick advised getting them drunk. Sewall favored that plan. Neptune, on the other hand, proposed taking the watchmen with them. He said every one of them would go in a minute for the sake of getting their liberty. But neither Walter nor Ned approved of either of these ways.

"I don't believe in getting persons drunk," said Walter; "nor do I want to steal his negroes."

"Didn't he steal 'em?" said Dick.

"No; he bought 'em."

"Wal," said Sewall, "he bought 'em of those that did steal 'em; and the receiver is as bad as the thief."

"Well, I won't do that," was the reply.

In a few days there would be a double-cross holiday, when the negroes would be frolicking and dancing night and day. It was, therefore, resolved to make the attempt the night after the frolic, when the negroes, being completely tired out, would be sure to sleep soundly on their posts.

Lemaire was notified of the time of sailing, and requested to furnish a pilot to take the vessel out of the creek. Meanwhile, Sewall Lancaster, under pretence of fishing, had sounded the passe, and made himself familiar with the channel; and the vessel was towed out some distance from the wharf, to a place where she was hidden from view by a sharp turn of the creek around a wooded point, and lay at a single anchor.

Walter sold the boat to Lemaire for one hundred and fifteen dollars and another boat, that, for a vessel's use, was worth more than the one he sold, being longer, stronger, and more burdensome, though clumsy and homely. Having ascertained when the vessel was going, the planter said to his overseer,—

"The schooner is going two days after the holiday. They have made a great deal of the servants, and perhaps may take off some of them, or some may stow themselves away. You must keep a good watch the last night they are here."

"The watchmen," said the overseer, "will all be sleepy after the holiday. I will keep watch with my son. They might take some fowl or pigs, if nothing else. They've got an old sailor on board that would steal a man's boots off his feet while he slept."

This arrangement would have interfered most seriously with the designs of the boys, as it was

their intention to sail the night before the appointed time, and would probably have frustrated the entire plan. But, the day before the holiday, a planter from Sans-Souci rode over to Vauclin. He had seen the frames, and wanted to make arrangements with Walter to bring him some of the same dimensions, and also frames for a house, sugar mill, and out-buildings, inviting Walter so cordially to come over to his plantation the next morning, offering to send a horse and servant for him, that he consented. The next morning a servant came on horseback, and leading another horse for Walter, who told the crew that he should be back in the evening to start. Walter dearly loved to ride on horseback. Edmund Griffin, his father, owned a vast deal of land, and raised a great many colts. The travelling in those days, in that portion of the country where Walter was reared, being almost exclusively on horseback, he had been early accustomed to horses. Many a spanking gallop he had enjoyed, riding a half-broken colt to pasture, bareback, without shoes or stockings, and clinging with his great toes to the animal's sides, with no better bridle than a rope halter, and a half hitch over the colt's nose.

With a splendid, well-bitted horse under him, riding through wild and beautiful scenery, and amid a vegetation entirely new, he enjoyed the most exquisite pleasure. Uneasy and perplexing thoughts would have flung their sombre shadow over those pleasant scenes, and marred all their beauty, had Walter been aware that the overseer and his son, both strong, resolute men, armed to the teeth, were intending to share the watch that night, and rouse any sleeping darkies by blows on the skull from the butt of a pistol.

In blissful ignorance of impending danger, he surrendered himself to the pleasures of the hour, and enjoyed a most delightful ride, succeeded by a day of equal enjoyment at the hospitable mansion of the planter.

Deliverance came, however, from a quarter whence it was least to be expected, and thus the circumstance which threatened to render the effort abortive, and involved a desperate conflict, proved the very means of its success.

Old Nep had been invited by the negroes to share in the amusements of the holiday, and, arrayed in white pants, waistcoat, and jacket, proceeded to the great house to pay his respects to the ladies in the kitchen. When he arrived old Phil was engaged in a wordy contest with Juan Baptiste. It seems Phil had been whipped at last, for the loss of so many turkeys and pigs, and Juan had been twitting him of it.

"You Guinea nigga youself," retorted Phil. "Nobody sleep more'n youself. Oberseer and Massa Peter gwine to hold watch to-night. You set down on de log, go sleep, see what you git youself; yah, yah."

"How you know dat?"

"Dinah hear massa say so—tell oberseer, kase Yankee vessel gwine away."

Nep, in great alarm, hastened back with the tidings, upon which Dick Cameron instantly goes up to the house, pulls off his hat, and tells Lemaire that the captain has gone to Sans-Souci, to be gone he didn't know how many days, and the vessel wouldn't sail the next day; therefore there was no need of the negro pilot.

After Dick had gone, Lemaire sent for the overseer,—who was a Spaniard named Juan Romero,—and said to him,—

"The vessel is not going the day set. The captain's gone to Sans-Souci. I'm sorry, for I want the calker to go to work on the new droger. It's no use to set those stupid creatures to work on new work without him; neither do I understand it. These Yankees make the most of their time, and he seems as sharp as any of them. However, there it is; she won't go, and you need not watch."

"I can explain it," replied the overseer. "Monsieur Renault has been here, and wants to make a contract with him for timber. He has gone over to see about it, what kind of a place it is to get to, and the depth of water, because, if he brings large timber, he will need a bigger vessel, and, as I understand it, he's to bring, not only timber, but boards, shingles, nails, lattices, and all the materials for the buildings."

The next afternoon Renault sent Walter back to Vauclin by water, arriving at the vessel about eight o'clock.

It was very important for them to set out at the earliest moment, in order to place the greatest possible distance between themselves and the island before daybreak. So, at ten o'clock in the evening, they went ashore, scattered themselves among the different sentinels, and found nearly all of them asleep. During the whole of the holiday, and for most of the night, they had been engaged in frolicking, drinking, and dancing fandango, had been kept at work during all the next day, and were now so utterly exhausted that they dropped asleep the moment they sat down, and were so overcome with drowsiness as to stagger as they walked.

Walter and Ned went to the yard, where they found Juan fast asleep. Walter gave a light tap on the door of the lock-up, when it was instantly opened, and they entered. Peterson had drawn the staple. The black grasped the hands of his young deliverers, and sobbed for joy. They left immediately, closing the door silently after them, and sought the beach, soon coming to a watchman fast asleep, with Dick standing by, ready to throttle him if he stirred. They passed on till they came to another, whom Lancaster was watching, in the same situation. All were now safely passed but the last, whom they saw at a distance, pacing along the beach.

"I'll take care of him," said Ned.

As they must cross his beat directly to reach the boat, the others lay flat upon the ground, while

Ned went whistling along.

"Who dere?" cried the sentinel.

Ned, giving his name, walked directly up to him, and they entered into conversation about the holiday. Ned, giving him a cigar, persuaded him to sit down on an old boat and smoke.

The poor darky had drawn but a few whiffs, when he began to nod; for nature was exhausted by the sports of the holiday, want of sleep, and subsequent labor. He fell over upon Ned, who was sitting beside him, and the cigar dropped from his lips. Ned put his arm round the negro, and gently laid him at full length upon the boat. In a few moments he was sound asleep, and Ned ran to join his companions.

At the boat they found Neptune, who, having had his share of the holiday, was asleep on the thwarts.

Swiftly and silently they pulled for the schooner.

"O, you bressed ole craft," said Peterson, kissing the gunwale; "you ole friend, you is; many the good time Peterson had in you."

It was now dead calm, and they were on board a loaded vessel. The prospect was by no means encouraging, for they well knew that, when the absence of Peterson and the departure of the schooner were discovered, a vengeful pursuit would take place.

Peterson, who had been many years a slave on this same island in his youth,—as many of our readers are aware,—and was well acquainted with the peculiarities of the climate, encouraged his shipmates.

"Nebber fear, Massa Walter. If it be calm here under de land in de night, if we get out five, six miles, den we take trabe wind; sea breeze, he blow all de time; plenty wind; much you carry, too."

They hove up the anchor. There were two sweeps on board the schooner. Dick and Peterson manned one, Walter and Lancaster the other, while Ned and Nep took the boat and towed ahead. Matters soon began to assume a brighter complexion. Cameron and Peterson were men of vast strength. Lancaster was also a very strong man, and Walter belonged to a family renowned for strength and endurance. They had, while lying at the plantation, taken the precaution to clean the vessel's bottom, and, as they could procure no tallow there, gave her bottom a coat of tar and brimstone, which rendered it smooth, and added greatly to her sailing. They were also excited to the utmost by their previous good fortune, dread of being overtaken, and losing their hard-earned prize. Not a word was spoken. No sound was heard but that of the oars, the deep breathing of the rowers, as they exerted themselves to the utmost, and at times a slight patter, as the sweat dropping from nose and chin struck the deck. But when they had cleared the pass, were in the open sea, no signs of daybreak, and the lessening shore assured them they were making good progress, their efforts, though unremitting, became less severe. In the course of another hour they had made such progress that the long silence was broken by Peterson.

"Nebber fear, Massa Walter," he said; "keep you heart up; dey no ketch us dis time; we soon come to de wind; land air so hot he kill de wind in shore. I tell you, you'se hab wind enough."

"Only give me wind," said Walter, "I'll risk their catching us."

"The wind has got to come off the water," said Dick; "if we've got no wind to flee, they've got none to follow; it's as broad as 'tis long."

"I take it, Peterson," said Lancaster, "that we are somewhat nearer to the wind than it is from us to the land."

"Sartin; we not near so fur to go to git de sea-breeze as we hab come."

"What time in the morning," asked Walter, "did they bring your breakfast?"

"About eight o'clock."

"They won't know that you are gone till Peter comes to bring your breakfast. The vessel was hidden by the woods; except by mere chance some one should happen to go up on the hill, or down the creek in a boat, she could not be seen."

The day now began to break, and by the increasing light they saw with the glass the line of blue water ahead rolling before the wind, while between them and it extended a space of calm surface as smooth as glass. A joyous shout burst from the weary, anxious crew at the sight.

"Come aboard, Mr. Gates," said the captain; "we'll tow no more."

Ned went to one of the sweeps, while Nep busied himself in preparing breakfast. The line that separated the broken water from the calm was now quite near. Peterson, unable to contain himself longer, gave vent to his emotions in a favorite negro song, to which the rest contributed a rousing chorus.

"My name is Johnny Jump-roun',
And ebery person knock down.

Chorus.

Ho, ho, high-land-a,
Roun' de corner Sally.

"My breast is made ob steel-plate,

My arms dey made ob crow-bars.

Chorus. Ho, ho, &c.

"And if you don't beliebe me,
I gib you leabe to try me.

Chorus. Ho, ho," &c.

Under this new impulse the vessel went through the water faster than ever before, when the song was interrupted by the order, "Make sail."

"Gib dis chile room, 'cordin to his streff," shouted Peterson, flinging the great sweep on board with a jerk, as though it had been the oar of a yawl boat, and springing for the main throat-halyards. Nothing now was heard but the creaking of pulley-blocks and the rattle of the jib-hanks, as sail after sail went rapidly aloft. The *Perseverance* had now lost the headway given by the oars, and lay motionless upon the glassy surface of the ocean, her canvas hanging in idle folds; but as the sun came up, the line of dark-blue water ahead came nearer and nearer, little dimples flecked the smooth surface, a light cool air fanned the cheeks of the expectant crew, the sails gave a slight flutter, then slap came a heavy puff, the sheets strained and surged, the lee rail was in the water; Lancaster sprang to the helm, and put it hard up; the gallant craft shot ahead, the sunbeams glancing on her sails, and the white foam flashing under her forefoot.

"Glory to God!" shouted Peterson.

"O, Wal, we've done it," cried Ned; and utterly oblivious of the distinctions of office, which he had heretofore so carefully observed, flung his arms round Walter's neck.

"Shipmates," said Walter, as he returned the embrace, "I have been for more than two years trying to do my duty and pray to my Maker; but though I have had courage for everything else, I have not had for that. Let us thank God for bringing us safely through."

Lancaster bent over the tiller, the rest, even to old Dick, knelt on the deck, while in a few broken words Walter gave vent to his emotions, and expressed the common sentiment. Charlie Bell's words had borne fruit, but not by the light of the moon or beneath the stars in some lone midnight watch, but in the bright glow of the morning sunbeams. In the midst of his crew, while his brow was moistened with sweat, and his hand outstretched to deliver the oppressed, the blessing of Him whose ways are not our ways came.

Lemaire was at breakfast, when, with eyes starting from their sockets, Peter entered the dining-hall (followed by Juan, old Phil, and all the house servants), exclaiming, "O, massa, de buckra calker no dere; he gwine away."

"Gone!" cried Lemaire, leaping from his chair.

"Yes, massa. I go wid de breakfast, de door open, buckra man no dere."

The negroes gave Peterson the name of buckra calker to distinguish him, and on account of his superiority, although there was not a blacker negro on the estate.

Without another word Lemaire ran to a cupola on the house-top, which commanded a view of the sea. The schooner was nowhere to be seen; not a sail was visible in the offing.

CHAPTER XVII. DELIVERED.

Notwithstanding the *Perseverance* might bring a cargo that must be discharged in Boston or Salem, it was considered a settled fact by all at home, that she would, when arriving on the coast, steer first for Pleasant Cove, and Captain Rhines was expecting her daily. The interest felt there in respect to her coming was not a little increased by the return of Ben (Peterson's oldest son) in the *Casco*.

Ben brought home considerable money, having been fortunate in a "venture." The first thing he did was to clothe his mother and the three youngest boys, one eleven, one thirteen, and the oldest fifteen; the next, to clapboard the house which, Peterson having lately built it, was still unfinished. While Ben's hands were busy driving the nails, his thoughts were on the stretch respecting the best place from which to watch for the arrival of the *Perseverance*. He well knew there was no place to compare, in that respect, with the big maple on the heights of Elm Island. To Elm Island he hurried (when he had driven the last nail), and repaired the platform in the top of the tree and the ladder leading to it, both having become somewhat decayed since the boy-days of John Rhines and Charlie Bell. He erected a signal staff on the point of the island, from which to display a white cloth to give notice to the people on the main land when the vessel hove in sight. For the first few days he flattered himself that every vessel sighted was the one so anxiously sought; but there were many fore-and-afters, at that season of the year, making their way to the Bay of Chaleur, Labrador, the Penobscot, or bound from the eastern ports and Nova Scotia, to the westward. At last the poor boy, becoming quite discouraged, said to Lion Ben at the supper table,—

"I believe I shall go home. If I was there I might be earning something. I am spending time to no purpose, and shall wear out my welcome."

"Don't go, Ben," replied Sally; "we love to have you here."

"Don't go," said the Lion; "I'll hire you to hoe corn, and then you can earn something, and watch for the vessel, too."

Two mornings after this conversation Ben was in the tree just as the day was breaking, in order that he might make his observations before it was time to go to hoeing. There were plenty of schooners, but none of them *the schooner*. At length he espied one that seemed to be steering in a different direction from the rest.

Long and patiently he watched her progress.

"She is heading directly up the bay; a pink-stern I guess, and about the right size. It ain't her, after all," he exclaimed; "this vessel is rigged different; and yet how much she looks like her!"

At this he caught sight of Lion Ben, who was turning the cows into the pasture.

"Mr. Rhines," he cried, "I wish you would come up here. A pink is coming up the bay, steering straight for Uncle Isaac's Cove. She hasn't varied a pint this hour and a half. I could swear it was the schooner, only she's rigged differently."

"How is this one rigged?"

"She's got two jibs and two gaff-topsails."

"So has the Perseverance."

Peterson was not aware of the change that had been made in her rig, it having been done while he was at sea.

The moment Lion Ben put the glass to his eye he said, "It's her."

Old and young were now flocking to every place commanding a good view of the water. Half way between Elm Island and the main was a whale-boat containing Ben Peterson, Lion Ben, and all his family, the Lion pulling two oars, and Peterson one. Doubts now began to be freely expressed by some of the least sanguine, and indignantly scouted by others.

"That's the vessel, to be sure," said Joe Bradish, always a prophet of ill omen; "but no knowing as Peterson's in her. He might be dead when they got there, or that planter might have sold him to another planter on some other island, or they might not be able to get him."

"Just shut up your clam-shell—will you? You're always an off-ox," said Joe Griffin, seeing poor Luce tremble and the tears rundown her cheeks,—as she stood holding the two youngest children by the hand,—at the words of Bradish. "She's deep-loaded; that, to my mind, shows for itself that they've sold their cargo and had good luck; don't it captain?" turning to Captain Rhines.

"I think it does, Joseph. Cheer up, my girl," to Luce, "and hope for the best."

But, to the disappointment of all, the wind, that had been moderating for some time, died away to a flat calm, the tide turned, and the vessel so anxiously expected was obliged to anchor.

"Neighbors," said Lion Ben, "what say you for towing her up?"

"That's the talk, Ben," said Joe Griffin.

"Boats and boys!" shouted Joel Ricker.

"Hurrah for a tow!" echoed the crowd.

Thanks to Charlie Bell, whale-boats were plenty enough now.

"Father," said Ben, "you shall be fleet commodore."

It was but a short time before twelve boats and fifty men were ready. Joe Bradish was getting into Joe Griffin's boat.

"You shan't go, you small concern," said Joe, and pitched him head foremost into the water.

"Jonah's overboard—we shall have good luck, now."

"I'll hoist the flag, neighbors," said the captain, as they were shoving off, "if they've got him."

"If you want to get Peterson home," said Dick Cameron, "take the boat and pull up. I'll keep ship."

"No need of that," said Walter, "for here comes the whole neighborhood."

"I seed him! I seed dad!" screamed little Ike, who was nestled close to the side of Captain Rhines.

"So do I see his old black face," said the captain, standing up. He waved his hat, when a cheer arose from the fleet of boats astern. Like bees they swarmed aboard the schooner, completely covering her deck, while Peterson embraced his two boys, and clasped the hands of his neighbors.

"They've got him, Luce; there goes the flag," cried Will Griffin; "I can see it plain with the glass; they are stringing out the boats."

After a while,—

"Here she comes! Beeswax, don't she come!"

And well she might, with fifty of the strongest men in the town towing her, three to each of her own sweeps, and Lion Ben to lead.

A shout arose from the crowd that made the shores ring as the sweeps were shipped aboard the schooner, and Peterson, walking out on the bowsprit, waved his hand to his friends.

Tears of joyous sympathy moistened many a cheek when Luce flung herself into her husband's arms, while the little ones clasped his legs.

Walter and Ned have now become accustomed to hardship, had experience of danger, and incurred responsibility. The next volume of the series, the Cruise of the Casco, will exhibit their capabilities when thrown more entirely upon their own resources, and placed in trust of a large interest under circumstances of deadly peril.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE YOUNG DELIVERERS OF PLEASANT COVE ***

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