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NO DEFENSE

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 2.

BOOK II

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CHAPTER X

DYCK CALHOUN ENTERS THE WORLD AGAIN

"Is it near the time?" asked Michael Clones of his friend, as they stood in front of the prison.

His companion, who was seated on a stone, wrapped in dark-green coverings faded and worn, and looking pinched with cold in the dour November day, said, without lifting his head:

"Seven minutes, an' he'll be out, God bless him!" "And save him and protect him!" said Michael. "He deserved punishment no more than I did, and it's broke him. I've seen the grey gather at his temples, though he's only been in prison four years. He was condemned to eight, but they've let him free, I don't know why. Perhaps it was because of what he told the government about the French navy. I've seen the joy of life sob itself down to the sour earth. When I took him the news of his father's death, and told him the creditors were swallowing what was left of Playmore, what do you think he did?"

Old Christopher Dogan smiled; his eyes twinkled with a mirth which had more pain than gaiety. "God

love you, I know what he did. He flung out his hands, and said: 'Let it go! It's nothing to me.' Michael, have I said true?"

Michael nodded.

"Almost his very words you've used, and he flung out his hands, as you said.

"Aye, he'll be changed; but they've kept the clothes he had when he went to prison, and he'll come out in them, I'm thinking—"

"Ah, no!" interrupted Michael. "That can't be, for his clothes was stole. Only a week ago he sent to me for a suit of my own. I wouldn't have him wear my clothes—he a gentleman! It wasn't fitting. So I sent him a suit I bought from a shop, but he wouldn't have it. He would leave prison a poor man, as a peasant in peasant's clothes. So he wrote to me. Here is the letter." He drew from his pocket a sheet of paper, and spread it out. "See-read it. Ah, well, never mind," he added, as old Christopher shook his head. "Never mind, I'll read it to you!" Thereupon he read the note, and added: "We'll see him of the Calhouns risin' high beyant poverty and misfortune some day."

Old Christopher nodded.

"I'm glad Miles Calhoun was buried on the hilltop above Playmore. He had his day; he lived his life. Things went wrong with him, and he paid the price we all must pay for work ill-done."

"There you're right, Christopher Dogan, and I remember the day the downfall began. It was when him that's now Lord Mallow, Governor of Jamaica, came to summon Miles Calhoun to Dublin. Things were never the same after that; but I well remember one talk I had with Miles Calhoun just before his death. 'Michael,' he said to me, 'my family have had many ups and downs, and some that bear my name have been in prison before this, but never for killing a man out of fair fight.' 'One of your name may be in prison, sir,' said I, 'but not for killing a man out of fair fight. If you believe he did, there's no death bad enough for you!' He was silent for a while; then at last he whispered Mr. Dyck's name, and said to me: 'Tell him that as a Calhoun I love him, and as his father I love him ten times more. For look you, Michael, though we never ran together, but quarrelled and took our own paths, yet we are both Calhouns, and my heart is warm to him. If my son were a thousand times a criminal, nevertheless I would ache to take him by the hand.'"

"Hush! Look at the prison gate," said his companion, and stood up.

As the gates of the prison opened, the sun broke through the clouds and gave a brilliant phase to the scene. Out of the gates there came slowly, yet firmly, dressed in peasant clothes, the stalwart but faded figure of Dyck Calhoun.

Terrribly changed he was. He had entered prison with the flush upon his cheek, the lilt of young manhood in his eyes, with hair black and hands slender and handsome. There was no look of youth in his face now. It was the face of a middle-aged man from which the dew of youth had vanished, into which life's storms had come and gone. Though the body was held erect, yet the head was thrust slightly forward, and the heavy eyebrows were like a pent-house. The eyes were slightly feverish, and round the mouth there crept a smile, half-cynical but a little happy. All freshness was gone from his hands. One hung at his side, listless, corded; the other doffed his hat in reply to the salute of his two humble friends.

As the gates closed behind him he looked gravely at the two men, who were standing not a foot apart. There swept slowly into his eyes, enlarging, brightening them, the glamour of the Celtic soul. Of all Ireland, or all who had ever known him, these two were the only ones welcoming him into the world again! Michael Clones, with his oval red face, big nose, steely eye, and steadfast bearing, had in him the soul of great kings. His hat was set firmly on his head. His knee-breeches were neat, if coarse; his stockings were clean. His feet were well shod, his coat worn, and he had still the look that belongs to the well-to-do peasant. He was a figure of courage and endurance. Dyck's hand went out to him, and a warm smile crept to his lips.

"Michael—ever—faithful Michael!"

A moisture came to Michael's eyes. He did not speak as he clasped the hand Dyck offered him. Presently Dyck turned to old Christopher with a kindly laugh.

"Well, old friend! You, too, come to see the stag set loose again? You're not many, that's sure." A grim, hard look came into his face, but both hands went out and caught the old man's shoulders affectionately. "This is no day for you to be waiting at prison's gates, Christopher; but there are two men who believe in me—two in all the world. It isn't the killing," he added after a moment's silence—"it

isn't the killing that hurts so. If it's true that I killed Erris Boyne, what hurts most is the reason why I killed him."

"One way or another—does it matter now?" asked Christopher gently.

"Is it that you think nothing matters since I've paid the price, sunk myself in shame, lost my friends, and come out with not a penny left?" asked Dyck. "But yes," he added with a smile, wry and twisted, "yes, I have a little left!"

He drew from his pocket four small pieces of gold, and gazed ironically at them in his palm.

"Look at them!" He held out his hand, so that the two men could see the little coins. "Those were taken from me when I entered prison. They've been in the hands of the head of the jail ever since. They give them to me now—all that's left of what I was."

"No, not all, sir," declared Michael. "There's something left from Playmore—there's ninety pounds, and it's in my pocket. It was got from the sale of your sporting-kit. There was the boat upon the lake, the gun, and all kinds of ruffraff stuff not sold with Playmore."

Dyck nodded and smiled. "Good Michael!"

Then he drew himself up stiffly, and blew in and out his breath as if with the joy of living. For four hard years he had been denied the free air of free men. Even when walking in the prison-yard, on cold or fair days, when the air was like a knife or when it had the sun of summer in it, it still had seemed to choke him.

In prison he had read, thought, and worked much. They had at least done that for him. The Attorney-General had given him freedom to work with his hands, and to slave in the workshop like one whose living depended on it. Some philanthropic official had started the idea of a workshop, and the officials had given the best of the prisoners a chance to learn trades and make a little money before they went out into the world. All that Dyck had earned went to purchase things he needed, and to help his fellow prisoners or their families.

Where was he now? The gap between the old life of nonchalance, frivolity, fantasy, and excitement was as great as that between heaven and hell. Here he was, after four years of prison, walking the highway with two of the humblest creatures of Ireland, and yet, as his soul said, two of the best.

Stalking along in thought, he suddenly became conscious that Michael and Christopher had fallen behind. He turned round.

"Come on. Come on with me." But the two shook their heads.

"It's not fitting, you a Calhoun of Playmore!" Christopher answered.

"Well, then, list to me," said Dyck, for he saw the men could not bear his new democracy. "I'm hungry. In four years I haven't had a meal that came from the right place or went to the right spot. Is the little tavern, the Hen and Chickens, on the Liffeside, still going? I mean the place where the seamen and the merchant-ship officers visit."

Michael nodded.

"Well, look you, Michael—get you both there, and order me as good a meal of fish and chops and baked pudding as can be bought for money. Aye, and I'll have a bottle of red French wine, and you two will have what you like best. Mark me, we'll sit together there, for we're one of a kind. I've got to take to a life that fits me, an ex-jailbird, a man that's been in prison for killing!"

"There's the king's army," said Michael. "They make good officers in it."

A strange, half-sore smile came to Dyck's thin lips.

"Michael," said he, "give up these vain illusions. I was condemned for killing a man not in fair fight.

"I can't enter the army as an officer, and you should know it. The king himself could set me up again; but the distance between him and me is ten times round the world and back again!" But then Dyck nodded kindly. It was as if suddenly the martyr spirit had lifted him out of rigid, painful isolation, and he was speaking from a hilltop. "No, my friends, what is in my mind now is that I'm hungry. For four years I've eaten the bread of prison, and it's soured my mouth and galled my belly. Go you to that inn and make ready a good meal."

The two men started to leave, but old Christopher turned and stretched a hand up and out.

"Son of Ireland, bright and black and black and bright may be the picture of your life, but I see for you brightness and sweet faces, and music and song. It's not Irish music, and it's not Irish song, but the soul of the thing is Irish. Grim things await you, but you will conquer where the eagle sways to the shore, where the white mist flees from the hills, where heroes meet, where the hand of Moira stirs the blue and the witches flee from the voice of God. There is honour coming to you in the world."

Having said his say, with hand outstretched, having thrilled the air with the voice of one who had the soul of a prophet, the old man turned. Head bent forward, he shuffled away with Michael Clones along the stony street.

Dyck watched them go, his heart beating hard, his spirit overwhelmed.

It was not far to the Castle, yet every footstep had a history. Now and again he met people who knew him. Some bowed a little too profoundly, some nodded; but not one stopped to speak to him, though a few among them were people he had known well in days gone by. Was it the clothes he wore, or was it that his star had sunk so low that none could keep it company? He laughed to himself in scorn, and yet there kept ringing through his brain all the time the bells of St. Anselm's, which he was hearing:

"Oh, God, who is the sinner's friend,
Make clean my soul once more!"

When he arrived at the Castle walls he stood and looked long at them.

"No, I won't go in. I won't try to see him," he said at last. "God, how strange Ireland is to me! The soil of it, the trees of it, the grass of it, are dearer than ever, but—I'll have no more of Ireland. I'll ask for nothing. I'll get to England. What's Ireland to me? I must make my way somewhere. There's one in there"—he nodded towards the Castle—"that owes me money at cards. He should open his pockets to me, and see me safe on a ship for Australia; but I've had my fill of every one in Ireland. There's nothing here for me but shame. Well, back I'll go to the Hen and Chickens, to find a good dinner there."

He turned and went back slowly along the streets by which he had come, looking not to right nor left, thinking only of where he should go and what he should do outside of Ireland.

At the door of the inn he sniffed the dinner Michael had ordered.

"Man alive!" he said as he entered the place and saw the two men with their hands against the bright fire. "There's only one way to live, and that's the way I'm going to try."

"Well, you'll not try it alone, sir, if you please," said Michael. "I'll be with you, if I may."

"And I'll bless you as you go," said Christopher Dogan.

CHAPTER XI

WHITHER NOW?

England was in a state of unrest. She had, as yet, been none too successful in the war with France. From the king's castle to the poorest slum in Seven Dials there was a temper bordering on despair. Ministries came and went; statesmen rose and fell. The army was indifferently recruited and badly paid. England's battles were fought by men of whom many were only mercenaries, with no stake in England's rise or fall.

In the army and navy there were protests, many and powerful, against the smallness of the pay, while the cost of living had vastly increased. In more than one engagement on land England had had setbacks of a serious kind, and there were those who saw in the blind-eyed naval policy, in the general disregard of the seamen's position, in the means used for recruiting, the omens of disaster. The police courts furnished the navy with the worst citizens of the country. Quota men, the output of the Irish prisons—seditious, conspiring, dangerous—were drafted for the king's service.

The admiralty pursued its course of seizing men of the mercantile marine, taking them aboard ships, keeping them away for months from the harbours of the kingdom, and then, when their ships returned, denying them the right of visiting their homes. The press-gangs did not confine their activities to the men of the mercantile marine. From the streets after dusk they caught and brought in, often after ill-

treatment, torn from their wives and sweethearts, knocked on the head for resisting, tradesmen with businesses, young men studying for the professions, idlers, debtors, out-of-work men. The marvel is that the British fleets fought as well as they did.

Poverty and sorrow, loss and bereavement, were in every street, peeped mournfully out of every window, lurked at street corners. From all parts of the world adventurers came to renew their fortunes in the turmoil of London, and every street was a kaleidoscope of faces and clothes and colours, not British, not patriot, not national.

Among these outlanders were Dyck Calhoun and Michael Clones. They had left Ireland together in the late autumn, leaving behind them the stirrings of the coming revolution, and plunging into another revolt which was to prove the test and trial of English character.

Dyck had left Ireland with ninety pounds in his pocket and many tons' weight of misery in his heart. In his bones he felt tragedies on foot in Ireland which concession and good government could not prevent. He had fled from it all. When he set his face to Holyhead, he felt that he would never live in Ireland again. Yet his courage was firm as he made his way to London, with Michael Clones—faithful, devoted, a friend and yet a servant, treated like a comrade, yet always with a little dominance.

The journey to London had been without event, yet as the coach rolled through country where frost silvered the trees; where, in the early morning, the grass was shining with dew; where the everlasting green hedges and the red roofs of villages made a picture which pleased the eye and stirred the soul, Dyck Calhoun kept wondering what would be his future. He had no profession, no trade, no skill except with his sword; and as he neared London Town—when they left Hendon—he saw the smoke rising in the early winter morning and the business of life spread out before him, brave and buoyant.

As from the heights of Hampstead he looked down on the multitudinous area called London, something throbbed at his heart which seemed like hope; for what he saw was indeed inspiring. When at last, in the Edgware Road, he drew near to living London, he turned to Michael Clones and said:

"Michael, my lad, I think perhaps we'll find a footing here."

So they reached London, and quartered themselves in simple lodgings in Soho. Dyck walked the streets, and now and then he paid a visit to the barracks where soldiers were, to satisfy the thought that perhaps in the life of the common soldier he might, after all, find his future. It was, however, borne in upon him by a chance remark of Michael one day—"I'm not young enough to be a recruit, and you wouldn't go alone without me, would you?"—that this way to a livelihood was not open to him.

His faithful companion's remark had fixed Dyck's mind against entering the army, and then, towards the end of the winter, a fateful thing happened. His purse containing what was left of the ninety pounds—two-fifths of it—disappeared. It had been stolen, and in all the bitter days to come, when poverty and misery ground them down, no hint of the thief, no sign of the robber, was ever revealed.

Then, at last, a day when a letter came from Ireland. It was from the firm in which Bryan Llyn of Virginia had been interested, for the letter had been sent to their care, and Dyck had given them his address in London on this very chance. It reached Dyck's hands on the day after the last penny had been paid out for their lodgings, and they faced the streets, penniless, foodless—one was going to say friendless. The handwriting was that of Sheila Llyn.

At a street corner, by a chemist's shop where a red light burned, Dyck opened and read the letter. This is what Sheila had written to him.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

The time is near (I understand by a late letter to my mother from an official) when you will be freed from prison and will face the world again. I have not written you since your trial, but I have never forgotten and never shall. I have been forbidden to write to you or think of you, but I will take my own way about you. I have known all that has happened since we left Ireland, through the letters my mother has received. I know that Playmore has been sold, and I am sorry.

Now that your day of release is near, and you are to be again a free man, have you decided about your future? Is it to be in Ireland? No, I think not. Ireland is no place for a sane and level man to fight for honour, fame, and name. I hear that things are worse there in every way than they have been in our lifetime.

After what has happened in any case, it is not a field that offers you a chance. Listen to me. Ireland and England are not the only places in the world. My uncle came here to

Virginia a poor man. He is now immensely rich. He had little to begin with, but he was young like you—indeed, a little older than you—when he first came. He invested wisely, worked bravely, and his wealth grew fast. No man needs a fortune to start the business of life in this country. He can get plenty of land for almost nothing; he can get credit for planting and furnishing his land, and, if he has friends, the credit is sure.

All America is ready for "the likes of you." Think it over, and meanwhile please know there has been placed with the firm in Dublin money enough to bring you here with comfort. You must not refuse it. Take it as a loan, for I know you will not take it as a gift.

I do not know the story of the killing, even as it was told in court. Well, some one killed the man, but not you, and the truth will out in time. If one should come to me out of the courts of heaven, and say that there it was declared you were a rogue, I should say heaven was no place for me. No, of one thing I am sure— you never killed an undefended man. Wayward, wanton, reckless, dissipated you may have been, but you were never depraved—never!

When you are free, lift up your shoulders to all the threats of time, then go straight to the old firm where the money is, draw it, take ship, and come here. If you let me know you are coming, I will be there to meet you when you step ashore, to give you a firm hand-clasp; to tell you that in this land there is a good place for you, if you will win it.

Here there is little crime, though the perils of life are many. There is Indian fighting; there are Indian depredations; and not a dozen miles from where I sit men have been shot for crimes committed. The woods are full of fighters, and pirates harry the coast. On the wall of the room where I write there are carbines that have done service in Indian wars and in the Revolutionary War; and here out of the window I can see hundreds of black heads—slaves, brought from Africa and the Indies, slaves whose devotion to my uncle is very great. I hear them singing now; over the white-tipped cotton-fields there flows the sound of it.

This plantation has none of the vices that belong to slavery. Here life is complete. The plantation is one great workshop where trades are learned and carried out—shoeing, blacksmithing, building, working in wood and metal.

I am learning here—you see I am quite old, for I am twenty-one now —the art of management. They tell me that when my uncle's day is done—I grieve to think it is not far off—I must take the rod of control. I work very, very hard. I have to learn figures and finance; I have to see how all the work is done, so that I shall know it is done right. I have had to discipline the supervisors and bookkeepers, inspect and check the output, superintend the packing, and arrange for the sale of the crop—yes, I arranged for the sale of this year's crop myself. So I live the practical life, and when I say that you could make your home here and win success, I do it with some knowledge.

I beg you take ship for the Virginian coast. Enter upon the new life here with faith and courage. Have no fear. Heaven that has thus far helped you will guide you to the end.

I write without my mother's permission, but my uncle knows, and though he does not approve, he does not condemn.

Once more good-bye, my dear friend, and God be with you.

SHEILA LLYN.

P. S.—I wonder where you will read this letter. I hope it will find you before your release. Please remember that she who wrote it summons you from the darkness where you are to light and freedom here.

Slowly Dyck folded up the letter, when he had read it, and put it in his pocket. Then he turned with pale face and gaunt look to Michael Clones.

"Michael," said he, "that letter is from a lady. It comes from her new home in Virginia."

Michael nodded.

"Aye, aye, sir, I understand you," he said. "Then she doesn't know the truth about her father?" Dyck sighed heavily. "No, Michael, she doesn't know the truth."

"I don't believe it would make any difference to her if she did know."

"It would make all the difference to me, Michael. She says she wishes to help me. She tells me that money's been sent to the big firm in Dublin— money to take me across the sea to Virginia."

Michael's face clouded.

"Yes, sir. To Virginia—and what then?"

"Michael, we haven't a penny in the world, you and I, but if I took one farthing of that money I should hope you would kill me. I'm hungry; we've had nothing to eat since yesterday; but if I could put my hands upon that money here and now I wouldn't touch it. Michael, it looks as if we shall have to take to the trade of the footpad."

CHAPTER XII

THE HOUR BEFORE THE MUTINY

In the days when Dyck Calhoun was on the verge of starvation in London, evil naval rumours were abroad. Newspapers reported, one with apprehension, another with tyrannous comment, mutinous troubles in the fleet.

At first the only demand at Spithead and the Nore had been for an increase of pay, which had not been made since the days of Charles II. Then the sailors' wages were enough for comfortable support; but in 1797 through the rise in the cost of living, and with an advance of thirty per cent. on slops, their families could barely maintain themselves. It was said in the streets, and with truth, that seamen who had fought with unconquerable gallantry under Howe, Collingwood, Nelson, and the other big sea-captains, who had borne suffering and wounds, and had been in the shadow of death—that even these men damned a system which, in its stern withdrawal of their class for long spaces of time from their own womenfolk, brought evil results to the forecandle.

The soldier was always in touch with his own social world, and he had leave sufficient to enable him to break the back of monotony. He drank, gambled, and orated; but his indulgences were little compared with the debauches of able-bodied seamen when, after months of sea-life, they reached port again. A ship in port at such a time was not a scene of evangelical habits. Women of loose class, flower-girls, fruit-sellers, and costermongers turned the forecandle into a pleasure-house where the pleasures were not always secret; where native modesty suffered no affright, and physical good cheer, with ribald paraphrase, was notable everywhere.

"How did it happen, Michael?"

As he spoke, Dyck looked round the forecandle of the *Ariadne* with a restless and inquisitive expression. Michael was seated a few feet away, his head bent forward, his hands clasped around his knees.

"Well, it don't matter one way or 'nother," he replied; "but it was like this. The night you got a letter from Virginia we was penniless; so at last I went with my watch to the pawnbroker's. You said you'd wait till I got back, though you knew not where I was goin'. When I got back, you were still broodin'. You were seated on a horse-block by the chemist's lamp where you had read the letter. It's not for me to say of what you were thinkin'; but I could guess. You'd been struck hard, and there had come to you a letter from one who meant more to you than all the rest of the world; and you couldn't answer it because things weren't right. As I stood lookin' at you, wonderin' what to do, though, I had twelve shillin's in my pocket from the watch I'd pawned, there came four men, and I knew from their looks they were recruitin' officers of the navy. I saw what was in their eyes. They knew—as why shouldn't they, when they saw a gentleman like you in peasant clothes?—that luck had been agin' us.

"What the end would have been I don't know. It was you that solved the problem, not them. You looked at the first man of them hard. Then you got to your feet.

"'Michael,' says you quietly, 'I'm goin' to sea. England's at war, and there's work to do. So let's make for a king's ship, and have done with misery and poverty.'

"Then you waved a hand to the man in command of the recruitin' gang, and presently stepped up to

him and his friends.

"'Sir,' I said to you, 'I'm not going to be pressed into the navy.'

"'There's no pressin', Michael,' you answered. 'We'll be quota men. We'll do it for cash—for forty pounds each, and no other. You let them have you as you are. But if you don't want to come,' you added, 'it's all the same to me.'

"Faith, I knew that was only talk. I knew you wanted me. Also I knew the king's navy needed me, for men are hard to get. So, when they'd paid us the cash—forty pounds apiece—I stepped in behind you, and here we are—here we are! Forty pounds apiece—equal to three years' wages of an ordinary recruit of the army. It ain't bad, but we're here for three years, and no escape from it. Yes, here we are!"

Dyck laughed.

"Aye, here we're likely to remain, Michael. There's only this to be said—we'll be fighting the French soon, and it's easy to die in the midst of a great fight. If we don't die, Michael, something else will turn up, maybe."

"That's true, sir! They'll make an officer of you, once they see you fight. This is no place for you, among the common herd. It's the dregs o' the world that comes to the ship's bottom in time of peace or war."

"Well, I'm the dregs of the world, Michael. I'm the supreme dregs."

Somehow the letter from Virginia had decided Dyck Calhoun's fate for him. Here he was—at sea, a common sailor in the navy. He and Michael Clones had eaten and drunk as sailors do, and they had realized that, as they ate and drank on the River Thames, they would not eat and drink on the watery fairway. They had seen the tank foul with age, from which water was drawn for men who could not live without it, and the smell of it had revolted Dyck's senses. They had seen the kegs of pickled meat, and they had been told of the evil rations given to the sailors at sea.

The Ariadne had been a flag-ship in her day, the home of an admiral and his staff. She carried seventy-four guns, was easily obedient to her swift sail, and had a reputation for gallantry. From the first hour on board, Dyck Calhoun had fitted in; with a discerning eye he had understood the seamen's needs and the weaknesses of the system.

The months he had spent between his exit from prison and his entrance into the Ariadne had roughened, though not coarsened, his outward appearance. From his first appearance among the seamen he had set himself to become their leader. His enlistment was for three years, and he meant that these three should prove the final success of this naval enterprise, or the stark period in a calendar of tragedy.

The life of the sailor, with its coarseness and drudgery, its inadequate pay, its evil-smelling food, its maggoty bread, its beer drawn from casks that once had held oil or fish, its stinking salt-meat barrels, the hideous stench of the bilge-water—all this could in one sense be no worse than his sufferings in jail. In spite of self-control, jail had been to him the degradation of his hopes, the humiliation of his manhood.

He had suffered cold, dampness, fever, and indigestion there, and it had sapped the fresh fibre of life in him. His days in London had been cruel. He had sought work in great commercial concerns, and had almost been grateful when rejected. When his money was stolen, there seemed nothing to do, as he said to Michael Clones, but to become a footpad or a pirate. Then the stormy doors of the navy had opened wide to him; and as many a man is tempted into folly or crime by tempestuous nature, so he, forlorn, spiritually unkempt, but physically and mentally well-composed, in a spirit of bravado, flung himself into the bowels of the fleet.

From the moment Dyck arrived on board the Ariadne he was a marked man. Ferens, a disfranchised solicitor, who knew his story, spread the unwholesome truth about him among the ship's people, and he received attentions at once offensive and flattering. The best-educated of the ship's hands approached him on the grievances with which the whole navy was stirring.

Something had put a new spirit into the life of his majesty's ships; it was, in a sense, the reflection of the French Revolution and Tom Paine's Age of Reason. What the Americans had done in establishing a republic, what France was doing by her revolution, got into the veins and minds of some men in England, but it got into the veins and minds of the sailor first; for, however low his origin, he had intercourse not given to the average landsman. He visited foreign ports, he came in touch with other elements than those of British life and character.

Of all the ships in the navy the Ariadne was the best that Dyck Calhoun could have entered. Her officers were humane and friendly, yet firm; and it was quite certain that if mutiny came they would be treated well. The agitation on the Ariadne in support of the grievances of the sailors was so moderate that, from the first, Dyck threw in his lot with it. Ferens, the former solicitor, first came to him with a list of proposals, which only repeated the demands made by the agitators at Spithead.

"You're new among us," said Ferens to Dyck. "You don't quite know what we've been doing, I suppose. Some of us have been in the navy for two years, and some for ten. There are men on this ship who could tell you stories that would make your blood run cold—take my word for it. There's a lot of things goin' on that oughtn't to be goin' on. The time has come for reform. Have a look at this paper, and tell me what you think."

Dyck looked at the pockmarked face of Ferens, whose record in the courts was a bad one, and what he saw did not disgust him. It was as though Ferens had stumbled and been badly hit in his fall, but there were no signs of permanent evil in his countenance. He was square-headed, close-cropped, clear-eyed, though his face was yellow where it was not red, and his tongue was soft in his head.

Dyck read the paper slowly and carefully. Then he handed it back without a word.

"Well, what have you got to say?" asked Ferens. "Nothing? Don't you think that's a strong list of grievances and wrongs?"

Dyck nodded. "Yes, it's pretty strong," he said, and he held up his hand. "Number One, wages and cost of living. I'm sure we're right there. Cost of living was down in King Charles's time, and wages were down accordingly. Everything's gone up, and wages should go up. Number Two, the prize-money scandal. I'm with you there. I don't see why an officer should get two thousand five hundred times as much as a seaman. There ought to be a difference, but not so much. Number Three, the food ought to be better; the water ought to be better. We can't live on rum, maggoty bread, and foul water—that's sure. The rum's all right; it's powerful natural stuff, but we ought to have meat that doesn't stink, and bread that isn't alive. What's more, we ought to have lots of lime-juice, or there's no protection for us when we're out at sea with the best meat taken by the officers and the worst left to us; and with foul water and rotten food, there's no hope or help. But, if we're going in for this sort of thing, we ought to do it decently. We can't slap a government in the mouth, and we can't kick an admiral without paying heavy for it in the end. If it's wholesome petitioning you're up to, I'm with you; but I'm not if there's to be knuckle-dusting."

Ferens shrugged a shoulder.

"Things are movin', and we've got to take our stand now when the time is ripe for it, or else lose it for ever. Over at Spithead they're gettin' their own way. The government are goin' to send the Admiralty Board down here, because our admiral say to them that it won't be safe goin' unless they do."

"And what are we going to do here?" asked Dyck. "What's the game of the fleet at the Nore?"

Ferens replied in a low voice:

"Our men are goin' to send out petitions—to the Admiralty and to the House of Commons."

"Why don't you try Lord Howe?"

"He's not in command of a fleet now. Besides, petitions have been sent him, and he's taken no notice."

"Howe? No notice—the best admiral we ever had! I don't believe it," declared Dyck savagely. "Why, the whole navy believes in Howe. They haven't forgotten what he did in '94. He's as near to the seaman as the seaman is to his mother. Who sent the petitions to him?"

"They weren't signed by names—they were anonymous."

Dyck laughed.

"Yes, and all written by the same hand, I suppose." Ferens nodded.

"I think that's so."

"Can you wonder, then, that Lord Howe didn't acknowledge them? But I'm still sure he acted promptly. He's a big enough friend of the sailor to waste no time before doing his turn."

Ferens shook his head morosely.

"That may be," he said; "but the petitions were sent weeks ago, and there's no sign from Lord Howe. He was at Bath for gout. My idea is he referred them to the admiral commanding at Portsmouth, and was told that behind the whole thing is conspiracy—French socialism and English politics. I give you my word there's no French agent in the fleet, and if there were, it wouldn't have any effect. Our men's grievances are not new. They're as old as Cromwell."

Suddenly a light of suspicion flashed into Ferens's face.

"You're with us, aren't you? You see the wrongs we've suffered, and how bad it all is! Yet you haven't been on a voyage with us. You've only tasted the life in harbour. Good God, this life is heaven to what we have at sea! We don't mind the fightin'. We'd rather fight than eat." An evil grin covered his face for a minute. "Yes, we'd rather fight than eat, for the stuff we get to eat is hell's broil, God knows! Did you ever think what the life of the sailor is, that swings at the top of a mast with the frost freezin' his very soul, and because he's slow, owin' to the cold, gets twenty lashes for not bein' quicker? Well, I've seen that, and a bad sight it is. Did you ever see a man flogged? It ain't a pretty sight. First the back takes the click of the whip like a damned washboard, and you see the ridges rise and go purple and red, and the man has his breath knocked clean out of him with every blow. Nearly every stroke takes off the skin and draws the blood, and a dozen will make the back a ditch of murder. Then the whipper stops, looks at the lashes, feels them tender like, and out and down it comes again. When all the back is ridged and scarred, the flesh, that looked clean and beautiful, becomes a bloody mass. Some men get a hundred lashes, and that's torture and death.

"A man I knew was flogged told me once that the first blow made his flesh quiver in every nerve from his toe-nails to his finger-nails, and stung his heart as if a knife had gone through his body. There was agony in his lungs, and the time between each stroke was terrible, and yet the next came too soon. He choked with the blood from his tongue, lacerated with his teeth, and from his lungs, and went black in the face. I saw his back. It looked like roasted meat; yet he had only had eighty strokes.

"The punishments are bad. Runnin' the gauntlet is one of them. Each member of the crew is armed with three tarry rope-yarns, knotted at the ends. Then between the master-at-arms with a drawn sword and two corporals with drawn swords behind, the thief, stripped to the waist, is placed. The thing is started by a boatswain's mate givin' him a dozen lashes. Then he's slowly marched down the double line of men, who flog him as he passes, and at the end of the line he receives another dose of the cat from the boatswain's mate. The poor devil's body and head are flayed, and he's sent to hospital and rubbed with brine till he's healed.

"But the most horrible of all is flogging through the fleet. That's given for strikin' an officer, or tryin' to escape. It's a sickenin' thing. The victim is lashed by his wrists to a capstan-bar in the ship's long-boat, and all the ship's boats are lowered also, and each ship in harbour sends a boat manned by marines to attend. Then, with the master-at-arms and the ship's surgeon, the boat is cast off. The boatswain's mate begins the floggin', and the boat rows away to the half-minute bell, the drummer beatin' the rogue's march. From ship to ship the long-boat goes, and the punishment of floggin' is repeated. If he faints, he gets wine or rum, or is taken back to his ship to recover. When his back is healed he goes out to get the rest of his sentence. Very few ever live through it, or if they do it's only for a short time. They'd better have taken the hangin' that was the alternative. Even a corpse with its back bare of flesh to the bone has received the last lashes of a sentence, and was then buried in the mud of the shore with no religious ceremony.

"Mind you, there's many a man gets fifty lashes that don't deserve them. There's many men in the fleet that's stirred to anger at ill-treatment, until now, in these days, the whole lot is ready to see the thing through—to see the thing through—by heaven and by hell!"

The pockmarked face had taken on an almost ghastly fervour, until it looked like a distorted cartoon-vindictive, fanatical; but Dyck, on the edge of the river of tragedy, was not ready to lose himself in the stream of it.

As he looked round the ship he felt a stir of excitement like nothing he had ever known, though he had been brought up in a country where men were by nature revolutionists, and where the sword was as often outside as inside the scabbard. There was something terrible in a shipboard agitation not to be found in a land-rising. On land there were a thousand miles of open country, with woods and houses, caves and cliffs, to which men could flee for hiding; and the danger of rebellion was less dominant. At sea, a rebellion was like some beastly struggle in one room, beyond the walls of which was everlasting nothingness. The thing had to be fought out, as it were, man to man within four walls, and God help the weaker!

"How many ships in the fleet are sworn to this agitation?" Dyck asked presently.

"Every one. It's been like a spread of infection; it's entered at every door, looked out of every window. All the ships are in it, from the twenty-six-hundred-tonners to the little five-hundred-and-fifty-tonners. Besides, there are the Delegates."

He lowered his voice as he used these last words. "Yes, I know," Dyck answered, though he did not really know. "But who is at the head?"

"Why, as bold a man as can be—Richard Parker, an Irishman. He was once a junior naval officer, and left the navy and went into business; now he is a quotaman, and leads the mutiny. Let me tell you that unless there's a good round answer to what we demand, the Nore fleet'll have it out with the government. He's a man of character, is Richard Parker, and the fleet'll stand by him."

"How long has he been at it?" asked Dyck.

"Oh, weeks and weeks! It doesn't all come at once, the grip of the thing. It began at Spithead, and it worked right there; and now it's workin' at the Nore, and it'll work and work until there isn't a ship and there isn't a man that won't be behind the Delegates. Look. Half the seamen on this ship have tasted the inside of a jail; and the rest come from the press-gang, and what's left are just the ragged ends of street corners. But"—and here the man drew himself up with a flush—"but there's none of us that wouldn't fight to the last gasp of breath for the navy that since the days of Elizabeth has sailed at the head of all the world. Don't think we mean harm to the fleet. We mean to do it good. All we want is that its masters shall remember we're human flesh and blood; that we're as much entitled to good food and drink on sea as on land; and that, if we risk our lives and shed our blood, we ought to have some share in the spoils. We're a great country and we're a great people, but, by God, we're not good to our own! Look at them there."

He turned and waved a hand to the bowels of the ship where sailors traded with the slop-sellers, or chattered with women, or sat in groups and sang, or played rough games which had no vital meaning; while here and there in groups, with hands gesticulating, some fanatics declared their principles. And the principles of every man in the Nore fleet so far were embraced in the four words—wages, food, drink, prize-money.

Presently Ferens stopped short. "Listen!" he said.

There was a cry from the ship's side not far away, and then came little bursts of cheering.

"By Heaven, it's the Delegates comin' here!" he said. He held up a warning palm, as though commanding silence, while he listened intently. "Yes, it's the Delegates. Now look at that crowd of seamen!" He swung his hand towards the bowels of the ship. Scores of men were springing to their feet. Presently there came a great shouting and cheers, and then four new faces appeared on deck. They were faces of intelligence, but one of them had the enlightened look of leadership.

"By Judas, it's our leader, Richard Parker!" declared Ferens.

What Dyck now saw was good evidence of the progress of the agitation. There were officers of the Ariadne to be seen, but they wisely took no notice of the breaches of regulation which followed the arrival of the Delegates. Dyck saw Ferens speak to Richard Parker after the men had been in conference with Parker and the Delegates, and then turn towards himself. Richard Parker came to him.

"We are fellow countrymen," he said genially. "I know your history. We are out to make the navy better—to get the men their rights. I understand you are with us?"

Dyck bowed. "I will do all possible to get reforms in wages and food put through, sir."

"That's good," said Parker. "There are some petitions you can draft, and some letters also to the Admiralty and to the Houses of Lords and Commons."

"I am at your service," said Dyck.

He saw his chance to secure influence on the Ariadne, and also to do good to the service. Besides, he felt he might be able to check the worst excesses of the agitation, if he got power under Parker. He was free from any wish for mutiny, but he was the friend of an agitation which might end as successfully as the trouble at Spithead.

CHAPTER XIII

A fortnight later the mutiny at the Nore shook and bewildered the British Isles. In the public journals and in Parliament it was declared that this outbreak, like that at Spithead, was due partly to political strife, but more extensively to agents of revolution from France and Ireland.

The day after Richard Parker visited the *Ariadne* the fleet had been put under the control of the seamen's Delegates, who were men of standing in the ships, and of personal popularity. Their first act was to declare that the fleet should not leave port until the men's demands were satisfied.

The King, Prime Minister, and government had received a shock greater than that which had come with the announcement of American independence. The government had armed the forts at Sheerness, had sent troops and guns to Gravesend and Tilbury, and had declared war upon the rebellious fleet.

At the head of the Delegates, Richard Parker, with an officer's knowledge, became a kind of bogus admiral, who, in interview with the real admirals and the representatives of the Admiralty Board, talked like one who, having power, meant to use it ruthlessly. The government had yielded to the Spithead mutineers, giving pardon to all except the ringleaders, and granting demands for increased wages and better food, with a promise to consider the question of prize-money; but the Nore mutineers refused to accept that agreement, and enlarged the Spithead demands. Admiral Buckner arrived on board his flagship, the *Sandwich*, without the deference due to an admiral, and then had to wait three hours for Parker and the Delegates on the quarter-deck. At the interview that followed, while apologizing to the admiral for his discourtesy, Parker wore his hat as quasi-admiral of the fleet. The demands of the Delegates were met by reasoning on the part of Buckner, but without effect: for the seamen of the Nore believed that what Spithead could get by obstinacy the Nore could increase by contumacy; and it was their firm will to bring the Lords of the Admiralty to their knees.

The demands of the Nore Delegates, however, were rejected by the Admiralty, and with the rejection two regiments of militia came from Canterbury to reinforce the Sheerness garrison. The mutineers were allowed to parade the town, so long as their conduct was decent, as Admiral Buckner admitted it to be; but Parker declared that the presence of the militia was an insult to the seamen in the Nore fleet.

Then ensued the beginning of the terror. When Buckner presented the Admiralty's refusal to deal with the Delegates, there came quick response. The reply of the mutineers was to row into Sheerness harbour and take away with them eight gunboats lying there, each of which fired a shot at the fort, as if to announce that the mutineers were now the avowed enemies of the government.

Thereupon the rebels ordered all their ships together at the Great Nore, ranging them into two crescents, with the newly acquired gunboats at the flanks. The attitude of the authorities gave the violent mutineers their opportunity. Buckner's flag was struck from the mainmast-head of the *Sandwich*, and the red flag was hoisted in its place.

The Delegates would not accept an official pardon for their mutiny through Buckner. They demanded a deputation from the Admiralty, Parker saying that no accommodation could occur without the appearance of the Lords of the Admiralty at the Nore. Then followed threatening arrangements, and the Delegates decided to blockade the Thames and the Medway.

It was at this time that Dyck Calhoun—who, by consent of Richard Parker, had taken control of the *Ariadne*—took action which was to alter the course of his own life and that of many others.

Since the beginning of the mutiny he had acted with decision, judgment, and strength. He had agreed to the *Ariadne* joining the mutinous ships, and he had skilfully constructed petitions to the Admiralty, the House of Commons, and the King. His habit of thought, his knowledge of life, made him a power. He believed that the main demands of the seamen were just, and he made a useful organization to enforce them. It was only when he saw the mutineers would not accept the terms granted to the Spithead rebels that a new spirit influenced him.

He had determined to get control of the *Ariadne*. His gift as a speaker had conquered his fellow-sailors, and the fact that he was an ex-convict gave them confidence that he was no friend of the government.

One of the first things he did, after securing his own pre-eminence on the ship, was to get the captain and officers safely ashore. This he did with skill, and the crew of the ship even cheered them as they left.

None of the regular officers of the *Ariadne* were left upon her, except Greenock, the master of the ship, whose rank was below that of lieutenant, and whose duties were many and varied under the orders of the captain. Greenock chose to stay, though Dyck said he could go if he wished. Greenock's

reply was that it was his duty to stay, if the ship was going to remain at sea, for no one else could perform his duties or do his work.

Then, by vote, Dyck became captain of the ship. He did not, however, wear a captain's uniform—blue coat, with white cuffs, flat gold buttons; with lace at the neck, a white-sleeved waistcoat, knee-breeches, white silk stockings, and a three-cornered black hat edged with gold lace and ornamented with a cockade; with a black cravat, a straight dress sword, a powdered cue tied with a black-silk ribbon, and epaulets of heavy gold stuff completing the equipment. Dyck, to the end of his career at sea, wore only the common seaman's uniform.

Dyck would not have accepted the doubtful honour had he not had long purposes in view. With Ferens, Michael Clones, and two others whom Ferens could trust, a plan was arranged which Dyck explained to his fellow-seamen on the *Ariadne*.

"We've come to the parting of the ways, brothers," he said. "We've all become liable to death for mutiny. The pardon offered by the King has been refused, and fresh demands are made. There, I think, a real wrong has been done by our people. The *Ariadne* is well supplied with food and water. It is the only ship with sufficiency. And why? Because at the beginning we got provisions from the shore in time; also we got permission from Richard Parker to fill our holds from two stopped merchant-ships. Well, the rest of the fleet know what our food and drink fitment is. They know how safe we are, and to-day orders have come to yield our provisions to the rest of the fleet. That is, we, who have taken time by the forelock, must yield up our good gettings to bad receivers. I am not prepared to do it.

"On shore the Admiralty have stopped the supply of provisions to us and to all the fleet. Our men have been arrested at Gravesend, Tilbury, and Sheerness. The fleet could not sail now if it wished; but one ship can sail, and it is ours. The fleet hasn't the food to sail. On Richard Parker's ship, the *Sandwich*, there is food only for a week. The others are almost as bad. We are in danger of being attacked. Sir Erasmus Gower, of the *Neptune*, has a fleet of warships, gunboats, and amateur armed vessels getting ready to attack us. The North Sea fleet has come to help us, but that doesn't save us. I'll say this—we are loyal men in this fleet, otherwise our ships would have joined the enemy in the waters of France or Holland. They can't go now, in any case. The men have lost heart. Confidence in our cause has declined. The government sent Lords of the Admiralty here, and they offered pardon if we accepted the terms of the Spithead settlement. We declined the terms. That was a bad day for us, and put every one of our heads in a noose.

"For the moment we have a majority in men and ships; but we can't renew our food or drink, or ammunition. The end is sure against us. Our original agitation was just; our present obduracy is madness. This ship is suspected. It is believed by the rest of the fleet—by ships like the *Invincible*—that we're weak-kneed, selfish, and lacking in fidelity to the cause. That's not true; but we have either to fight or to run, and perhaps to do both.

"Make no mistake. The government are not cowards; the Admiralty are gentlemen of determination. If men like Admiral Howe support the Admiralty—Howe, one of the best friends the seaman ever had—what do you think the end will be? Have you heard what happened at Spithead? The seamen chivvied Admiral Alan Gardner and his colleagues aboard a ship. He caught hold of a seaman Delegate by the collar and shook him. They closed in on him. They handled him roughly. He sprang on the hammock-nettings, put the noose of the hanging-rope round his neck, and said to the men who advanced menacingly:

"If you will return to your duty, you may hang me at the yard-arm!"

"That's the kind of stuff our admirals are made of. We have no quarrel with the majority of our officers. They're straight, they're honest, and they're true to their game. Our quarrel is with Parliament and the Admiralty; our struggle is with the people of the kingdom, who have not seen to it that our wrongs are put right, that we have food to eat, water to drink, and money to spend."

He waved a hand, as though to sweep away the criticisms he felt must be rising against him.

"Don't think because I've spent four years in prison under the sternest discipline the world offers, and have never been a seaman before, that I'm not fitted to espouse your cause. By heaven, I am—I am—I am—I know the wrongs you've suffered. I've smelled the water you drink. I've tasted the rotten meat. I've seen the honest seaman who has been for years upon the main—I've seen the scars upon his back got from a brutal officer who gave him too big a job to do, and flogged him for not doing it. I know of men who, fevered with bad food, have fallen, from the mainmast-head, or have slipped overboard, glad to go, because of the wrongs they'd suffered.

"I'll tell you what our fate will be, and then I'll put a question to you. We must either give up our stock

of provisions or run for it. Parker and the other Delegates proclaim their comradeship; yet they have hidden from us the king's proclamation and the friendly resolutions of the London merchants. I say our only hope is to escape from the Thames. I know that skill will be needed, but if we escape, what then? I say if we escape, because, as we sail out, orders will be given for the other mutiny ships to attack us. We shall be fired on; we shall risk our lives. You've done that before, however, and will do it again.

"We have to work out our own problem and fight our own fight. Well, what I want to know is this—are we to give in to the government, or do we stand to be hammered by Sir Erasmus Gower? Remember what that means. It means that if we fight the government ships, we must either die in battle, or die with the ropes round our necks. There is another way. I'm not inclined to surrender, or to stand by men who have botched our business for us. I'm for making for the sea, and, when I get there, I'm for striking for the West Indies, where there's a British fleet fighting Britain's enemies, and for joining in and fighting with them. I'm for getting out of this river and away from England. It's a bold plan, but it's a good one. I want to know if you're with me. Remember, there's danger getting out, and there's danger when and if we get out. The other ships may pursue us. The Portsmouth fleet may nab us. We may be caught, and, if we are, we must take the dose prepared for us; but I'm for making a strong rush, going without fear, and asking no favour. I won't surrender here; it's too cowardly. I want to know, will you come to the open sea with me?"

There were many shouts of assent from the crowd, though here and there came a growl of dissent.

"Not all of you are willing to come with me," Dyck continued vigorously. "Tell me, what is it you expect to get by staying here? You're famished when you're not poisoned; you're badly clothed and badly fed; you're kept together by flogging; you're treated worse than a convict in jail or a victim in a plague hospital. You're not paid as well as your grandfathers were, and you're punished worse. Here, on the *Ariadne*, we're not skulkers. We don't fear our duty; we are loyal men. Many of you, on past voyages, fighting the enemy, lived on burgoo and molasses only, with rum and foul water to drink. On the other ships there have been terrible cruelty and offence. Surgeons have neglected and ill-treated sick men and embezzled provisions and drinks intended for the invalids. Many a man has died because of the neglect of the ship's surgeons; many have been kicked about the head and beaten, and haven't dared to go on the sick list for fear of their officers. The Victualling Board gets money to supply us with food and drink according to measure. They get the money for a full pound and a full gallon, and we get fourteen ounces of food and seven pints of liquor, or less. Well, what do you say, friends, to being our own Victualling Board out in the open sea, if we can get there?"

"We may have to fight when we get out; but I'm for taking the *Ariadne* into the great world battle when we can find it. This I want to ask— isn't it worth while making a great fight in our own way, and showing that British seamen can at once be mutineers and patriots? We have a pilot who knows the river. We can go to the West Indian Islands, to the British fleet there. It's doom and death to stay here; and it may be doom and death to go. If we try to break free, and are fired on, the Admiralty may approve of us, because we've broken away from the rest. See now, isn't that the thing to do? I'm for getting out. Who's coming with me?"

Suddenly a burly sailor pushed forward. He had the head of a viking. His eyes were strong with enterprise. He had a hand like a ham, with long, hairy fingers.

"Captain," said he, "you've put the thing so there can be only one answer to it. As for me, I'm sick of the way this mutiny has been bungled from first to last. There's been one good thing about it only—we've got order without cruelty, we've rebelled without ravagement; but we've missed the way, and we didn't deal with the Admiralty commissioners as we ought. So I'm for joining up with the captain here"—he waved a hand towards Dyck—"and making for open sea. As sure as God's above, they'll try to hammer us; but it's the only way."

He held a handkerchief—a dirty, red silk thing. "See," he continued, "the wind is right to take us out. The other ships won't know what we're going to do until we start. I'm for getting off. I'm a pressed man. I haven't seen my girl for five years, and they won't let me free in port to go and see her. Nothing can be worse than what we have to suffer now, so let's make a break for it. That's what I say. Come, now, lads, three cheers for Captain Calhoun!"

A half-hour later, on the captain's deck, Dyck gave the order to pass eastward. It was sunset when they started, and they had not gone a thousand yards before some of the mutineering ships opened fire on the *Ariadne*. The breeze was good, however, and she sailed bravely through the leaden storm. Once twice—thrice she was hit, but she sped on. Two men were killed and several were wounded. Sails were torn, and the high bulkheads were broken; but, without firing a shot in reply, the *Ariadne* swung clear at last of the hostile ships and reached safe water.

On the edge of the open sea Dyck took stock of the position. The *Ariadne* had been hit several times,

and the injury done her was marked. Before morning the dead seamen were sunk in watery graves, and the wounded were started back to health again. By daylight the Ariadne was well away from the land.

The first thing Dyck had done, after escaping from the river, was to study the wants of the Ariadne and make an estimate for the future with Greenock, the master. He calculated they had food and water enough to last for three months, even with liberal provisioning. Going among the crew, he realized there was no depression among them; that they seemed to care little where they were going. It was, however, quite clear they wished to fight—to fight the foes of England.

He knew his task was a hard one, and that all efforts at discipline would have dangers. He knew, also, that he could have no authority, save personality and success. He set himself, therefore, to win the confidence of Greenock and the crew, and he began discipline at once. He knew that a reaction must come; that the crew, loose upon their own trail, would come to regret the absence of official command. He realized that many of them would wish to return to the fleet at the Nore, but while the weather was good he did not fear serious trouble. The danger would come in rough weather or on a becalmed sea.

They had passed Beachy Head in the mist. They had seen no battle-ship, and had sighted no danger, as they made their way westward through the Channel. There had been one moment of anxiety. That was when they passed Portsmouth, and had seen in the far distance, to the right of them, the mastheads of Admiral Gardner's fleet.

It was here that Dyck's orderly, Michael Clones, was useful. He brought word of murmuring among the more brutish of the crew, that some of them wished to join Gardner's fleet. At this news, Dyck went down among the men. It was an unusual thing to do, but it brought matters to an issue.

Among the few dissatisfied sailors was one Nick Swaine, who had been the cause of more trouble on the Ariadne than any other. He had a quarrelsome mind; he had been influenced by the writings of Wolfe Tone, the Irish rebel. One of the secrets of Dyck's control of the crew was the fact that he was a gentleman, and was born in the ruling class, and this was anathema to Nick Swaine. His view of democracy was ignorance controlling ignorance.

By nature he was insolent, but under the system of control pursued by the officers of the Ariadne, previous to the mutiny, he had not been able to do much. The system had bound him down. He had been the slave of habit, custom, and daily duty. His record, therefore, was fairly clean until two days after the escape from the Thames and the sighting of the Portsmouth fleet. Then all his revolutionary spirit ran riot in him. Besides, the woman to whom he had become attached at the Nore had been put ashore on the day Dyck gained control. It roused his enmity now.

When Dyck came down, he had the gunners called to him, admonishing them that drill must go on steadily, and promising them good work to do. Then he turned to the ordinary seamen.

At this moment Nick Swaine strode forward within a dozen feet of Dyck.

"Look there!" he said, and he jerked a finger towards the distant Portsmouth fleet. "Look there! You've passed that."

Dyck shrugged a shoulder.

"I meant to pass it," he said quietly.

"Give orders to make for it," said Nick with a sullen eye.

"I shall not. And look you, my man, keep a civil tongue to me, who command this ship, or I'll have you put in irons."

"Have me put in irons!" Swaine cried hotly. "This isn't Dublin jail. You can't do what you like here. Who made you captain of this ship?"

"Those who made me captain will see my orders carried out. Now, get you back with the rest, or I'll see if they still hold good." Dyck waved a hand. "Get back when I tell you, Swaine!"

"When you've turned the ship to the Portsmouth fleet I'll get back, and not till then."

Dyck made a motion of the hand to some boatswains standing by. Before they could arrest him, Swaine flung himself towards Dyck with a knife in his hand.

Dyck's hand was quicker, however. His pistol flung out, a shot was fired, and the knife dropped from the battered fingers of Nick Swaine.

"Have his wounds dressed, then put him in irons," Dyck commanded.

From that moment, in good order and in good weather, the Ariadne sped on her way westward and southward.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE NICK OF TIME

Perhaps no mutineer in the history of the world ever succeeded, as did Dyck Calhoun, in holding control over fellow-mutineers on the journey from the English Channel to the Caribbean Sea. As a boy, Dyck had been an expert sailor, had studied the machinery of a man-of-war, and his love of the sea was innate and deep-seated; but his present success was based upon more than experience. Quite apart from the honour of his nature, prison had deepened in him the hatred of injustice. In soul he was bitter; in body he was healthy, powerful, and sane.

Slowly, sternly, yet tactfully, he had broken down the many customs of ship life injurious to the welfare of the men. Under his system the sailors had good coffee for breakfast, instead of a horrible mixture made of burnt biscuits cooked in foul water. He gave the men pea-soup and rice instead of burgoo and the wretched oatmeal mess which was the staple thing for breakfast. He saw to it that the meat was no longer a hateful, repulsive mass, two-thirds bone and gristle, and before it came into the cook's hands capable of being polished like mahogany. He threatened the cook with punishment if he found the meals ill-cooked.

In all the journey to the West Indian seas there had been only three formal floggings. His attitude was not that of the commander who declared:

"I will see the man's backbone, by God!"

He wished to secure discipline without cruelty. His greatest difficulty, at the start, was in making lieutenants. That he overcame by appointing senior midshipmen before the Ariadne was out of the Channel. He offered a lieutenancy to Ferens, who had the courage to decline it.

"Make me purser," remarked Ferens. "Make me purser, and I'll do the job justly."

As the purser of the Ariadne had been sent to the sick-bay and was likely to die (and did die subsequently), Ferens was put into his uniform—three-cornered cocked hat, white knee-breeches, and white stockings. The purser of a man-of-war was generally a friend of the captain, going with him from ship to ship.

Of the common sailors, on the whole, Dyck had little doubt. He had informed them that, whatever happened, they should not be in danger; that the ship should not join the West Indian fleet unless every man except himself received amnesty. If the amnesty was not granted, then one of two things should happen—the ship must make for a South American port, or she must fight. Fighting would not frighten these men.

It was rather among the midshipmen that Dyck looked for trouble. Sometimes, with only two years' training at Gosport, a youngster became a midshipman on first going to sea, and he could begin as early as eleven years of age. A second-rate ship like the Ariadne carried eighteen midshipmen; and as six lieutenants were appointed from them, only twelve remained. From these twelve, in the dingy after-cockpit, where the superficial area was not more than twelve square feet; where the air was foul, and the bilges reeked with a pestilential stench; where the purser's store-room near gave out the smell of rancid butter and poisonous cheese; where the musty taint of old ropes came to them, there was a spirit of danger.

Dyck was right in thinking that in the midshipmen's dismal berth the first flowers of revolt to his rule would bloom.

Sailors, even as low as the pig-sty men, had some idea of fair play; and as the weeks that had passed since they left the Thames had given them better food and drink, and lessened the severity of those above them, real obedience had come.

It was not strange that the ship ran well, for all the officers under the new conditions, except Dyck himself, had had previous experience. The old lieutenants had gone, but midshipmen, who in any case were trained, had taken their places. The rest of the ship's staff were the same, except the captain; and as Dyck had made a friend of Greenock the master, a man of glumness, the days were peaceful enough during the voyage to the Caribbean Sea.

The majority saw that every act of Dyck had proved him just and capable. He had rigidly insisted on gun practice; he had keyed up the marines to a better spirit, and churlishness had been promptly punished. He was, in effect, what the sailors called a "rogue," or a "taut one"—seldom smiling, gaunt of face but fearless of eye, and with a body free from fatigue.

As the weather grew warmer and the days longer, and they drew near to the coast of Jamaica, a stir of excitement was shown.

"You'd like to know what I'm going to do, Michael, I suppose?" said Dyck one morning, as he drank his coffee and watched the sun creeping up the sky.

"Well, in three days we shall know what's to become of us, and I have no doubt or fear. This ship's a rebel, but it's returning to duty. We've shown them how a ship can be run with good food and drink and fair dealing, and, please God, we'll have some work to do now that belongs to a man-of-war!"

"Sir, I know what you mean to do," replied Michael. "You mean to get all of us off by giving yourself up."

"Well, some one has to pay for what we've done, Michael." A dark, ruthless light came into Dyck's eyes. "Some one's got to pay." A grim smile crossed his face. "We've done the forbidden thing; we've mutinied and taken to the open sea. We were fired on by the other mutiny ships, and that will help our sailors, but it won't help me. I'm the leader. We ought, of course, to have taken refuge with the nearest squadron of the king's ships. Well, I've run my luck, and I'll have to pay."

He scratched his chin with a thumb-nail—a permanent physical trait. "You see, the government has pardoned all the sailors, and will hang only the leaders. I expect Parker is hung already. Well, I'm the leader on the *Ariadne*. I'm taking this ship straight to his majesty's West Indian fleet, in thorough discipline, and I'll hand it over well-found, well-manned, well-officered, on condition that all go free except myself. I came aboard a common sailor, a quota man, a prison-bird, penniless. Well, have I shown that I can run a ship? Have I learned the game of control? During the weeks we've been at sea, bursting along, have I proved myself?"

Michael smiled. "What did I say to you the first night on board, sir? Didn't I say they'd make an officer of you when they found out what brains you had? By St. Patrick, you've made yourself captain with the good-will of all, and your iron hand has held the thing together. You've got a great head, too, sir."

Dyck looked at him with a face in which the far future showed.

"Michael, I've been lucky. I've had good men about me. God only knows what would have happened to me if the master hadn't been what he is—a gentleman who knows his job-aye, a gentleman through and through! If he had gone against me, Michael"—he flicked a finger to the sky—"well, that much for my chances! I'd have been dropped overboard, or stabbed in my cabin, as was that famous Captain Pigot, son of an admiral, who had as much soul as you'd find in a stone-quarry. When two men had dropped from the masts, hurrying to get down because of his threat that the last man should be thrashed—when the two men lay smashed to pieces at his feet, Pigot said: 'Heave the lubbers overboard.' That night, Michael, the seamen rose, crept to his cabin, stabbed him to death, pitched his body overboard, put his lieutenants to sea in open boats, and then ran away to South America. Well, I've escaped that fate, because this was a good ship, and all the officers knew their business, and did it without cruelty. I've been well served. It was a great thing making the new lieutenants from the midshipmen. There never was a better lot on board a ship."

Michael's face clouded. "Sir, that's true. The new lieutenants have done their work well, but them that's left behind in the midshipmen's berth—do you think they're content? No, sir. The only spot on board this ship where there lurks an active spirit against you is in the midshipmen's berth. Mischief there, and that's what's brought me to you now."

Dyck smiled. "I know that. I've had my eye on the midshipmen. I've never trusted them. They're a hard lot; but if the rest of the ship is with me, I'll deal with them promptly. They're not clever or bold enough to do their job skilfully. They've got some old hands down there—hammock-men, old stagers of the sea that act as servants to them. What line do they take?"

Michael laughed softly.

"What I know I've got from two of them, and it is this—the young gentlemen'll try to get control of the ship."

The cynicism deepened in Dyck's face.

"Get control of the ship, eh? Well, it'll be a new situation on a king's ship if midshipmen succeed where the rest dare not try. Now, mark what I'm going to do."

He called, and a marine showed himself.

"The captain's compliments to the master, and his presence here at once. Michael," he continued presently, "what fools they are! They're scarcely a baker's dozen, and none of them has skill to lead. Why, the humblest sailor would have more sense than to start a revolt, the success of which depends upon his personal influence, and the failure of which must end in his own ruin. Does any one think they're the kind to lead a mutiny within a mutiny? Listen to me I'm not cruel, but I'll put an end to this plot. We're seven hundred on this ship, and she's a first-class sailer. I warrant no ship ever swam the seas that looks better going than she does. So we've got to see that her, record is kept clean as a mutineer."

At that moment the master appeared. He saluted. "Greenock," said Dyck, "I wonder if you've noticed the wind blowing chilly from the midshipmen's berth." A lurking devilish humour shot from Greenock's eyes.

"Aye, I've smelled that wind."

"Greenock, we're near the West Indian Islands. Before we eat many meals we'll see land. We may pass French ships, and we may have to fight. Well, we've had a good running, master; so I'll tell you what I mean to do."

He then briefly repeated what he had said to Michael, and added

"Greenock, in this last to-do, I shall be the only man in danger. The king's amnesty covers every one except the leaders—that lets you off. The Delegate of the Ariadne is aboard the Invincible, if he's not been hanged. I'm the only one left on the Ariadne. I've had a good time, Greenock—thanks to you, chiefly. I think the men are ready for anything that'll come; but I also think we should guard against a revolt of the midshipmen by healthy discipline now. Therefore I'll instruct the lieutenants to spread-eagle every midshipman for twelve hours. There's a stiff wind; there's a good stout spray, and the wind and spray should cool their hot souls. Meanwhile, though without food, they shall have water as they need it. If at the end of the twelve hours any still seems to be difficult, give him another twelve. Look!"

He stretched out a hand to the porthole on his right. "Far away in front are islands. You cannot see them yet, but those little thickening mists in the distance mean land. Those are the islands in front of the Windward Passage. I think it would be a good lesson for the young gentlemen to be spread-eagled against the mists of their future. It shall be done at once; and pass the word why it's done."

An hour later there was laughter in every portion of the ship, for the least popular members of the whole personnel were being dragooned into discipline. The sailors had seen individual midshipmen spread-eagled and mastheaded, while all save those they could bribe were forbidden to bring them drink or food; but here was a whole body of junior officers, punished en masse, as it were, lashed to the rigging and taking the wind and the spray in their teeth.

Before the day was over, the whole ship was alive with anticipation, for, in the far distance, could be seen the dark blue and purplish shadows which told of land; and this brought the minds of all to the end of their journey, with thoughts of the crisis near.

Word had been passed that all on board were considered safe—all except the captain who had manoeuvred them to the entrance of the Caribbean Sea. Had he been of their own origin, they would not have placed so much credence in the rumour; but coming as he did of an ancient Irish family, although he had been in jail for killing, the traditional respect for the word of a gentleman influenced them. When a man like Ferens, on the one hand, and the mutineer whose fingers had been mutilated by Dyck in the Channel, on the other—when these agreed to bend themselves to the rule of a usurper, some idea of Calhoun's power may be got.

On this day, with the glimmer of land in the far distance, the charges of all the guns were renewed. Also word was passed that at any moment the ship must be cleared for action. Down in the cockpit the tables were got ready by the surgeon and the loblolly-boys; the magazines were opened, and the guards were put on duty.

Orders were issued that none should be allowed to escape active share in the coming battle; that none should retreat to the orlop deck or the lower deck; that the boys should carry the cartridge-cases handed to them from the magazine under the cover of their coats, running hard to the guns. The twenty-four-pounders—the largest guns in use at the time—the eighteen-pounders, and the twelve-pounder guns were all in good order.

The bags of iron balls called grape-shot—the worst of all—varying in size from sixteen to nine balls in a bag, were prepared. Then the canister, which produced ghastly murder, chain-shot to bring down masts and spars, langrel to fire at masts and rigging, and the dismantling shot to tear off sails, were all made ready. The muskets for the marines, the musketoons, the pistols, the cutlasses, the boarding-pikes, the axes or tomahawks, the bayonets and sailors' knives, were placed conveniently for use. A bevy of men were kept busy cleaning the round shot of rust, and there was not a man on the ship who did not look with pride at the guns, in their paint of grey-blue steel, with a scarlet band round the muzzle.

To the right of the Ariadne was the coast of Cuba; to the left was the coast of Haiti, both invisible to the eye. Although the knowledge that they were nearing land had already given the officers and men a feeling of elation, the feeling was greatly intensified as they came through the Turk Island Passage, which is a kind of gateway to the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti. The glory of the sunny, tropical world was upon the ship and upon the sea; it crept into the blood of every man, and the sweet summer weather gave confidence to their minds. It was a day which only those who know tropical and semitropical seas can understand. It had the sense of soaking luxury.

In his cabin, with the ship's chart on the table before him, Dyck Calhoun studied the course of the Ariadne. The wind was fair and good, the sea-birds hovered overhead. From a distant part of the ship came the sound of men's voices in song. They were singing "Spanish Ladies":

"We hove our ship to when the wind was sou'west, boys,
We hove our ship to for to strike soundings clear;
Then we filled our main tops'l and bore right away, boys,
And right up the Channel our course did we steer.

"We'll rant and we'll roar like true British sailors,
We'll range and we'll roam over all the salt seas,
Until we strike soundings in the Channel of old England
From Ushant to Scilly 'tis thirty-five leagues."

Dyck raised his head, and a smile came to his lips.

"Yes, you sing of a Channel, my lads, but it's a long way there, as you'll find. I hope to God they give us some fighting! . . . Well, what is it?" he asked of a marine who appeared in his doorway.

"The master of the ship begs to see you, sir," was the reply.

A moment afterwards Greenock entered. He asked Dyck several questions concerning the possible fighting, the disposition of ammunition and all that, and said at last:

"I think we shall be of use, sir. The ship's all right now."

"As right as anything human can be. I've got faith in my star, master."

A light came into the other man's dour face. "I wish you'd get into uniform, sir."

"Uniform? No, Greenock! No, I use the borrowed power, but not the borrowed clothes. I'm a common sailor, and I wear the common sailor's clothes. You've earned your uniform, and it suits you. Stick to it; and when I've earned a captain's uniform I'll wear it. I owe you the success of this voyage so far, and my heart is full of it, up to the brim. Hark, what's that?"

"By God, it's guns, sir! There's fighting on!"

"Fighting!"

Dyck stood for a minute with head thrust forward, eyes fixed upon the distant mists ahead. The rumble of the guns came faintly through the air. An exultant look came into his face.

"Master, the game's with us—it is fighting! I know the difference between the two sets of guns, English and French. Listen—that quick, spasmodic firing is French; the steady-as-thunder is English. Well, we've got all sail on. Now, make ready the ship for fighting."

"She's almost ready, sir."

An hour later the light mist had risen, and almost suddenly the Ariadne seemed to come into the field of battle. Dyck Calhoun could see the struggle going on. The two sets of enemy ships had come to close quarters, and some were locked in deadly conflict. Other ships, still apart, fired at point-blank range, and all the horrors of slaughter were in full swing. From the square blue flag at the mizzen top gallant

masthead of one of the British ships engaged, Dyck saw that the admiral's own craft was in some peril. The way lay open for the Ariadne to bear down upon the French ship, engaged with the admiral's smaller ship, and help to end the struggle successfully for the British cause.

While still too far away for point-blank range, the Ariadne's guns began upon the French ships distinguishable by their shape and their colours. Before the first shot was fired, however, Dyck made a tour of the decks and gave some word of cheer to the men. The Ariadne lost no time in getting into the thick of the fight. The seamen were stripped to the waist, and black silk handkerchiefs were tightly bound round their heads and over their ears.

What the French thought of the coming of the Ariadne was shown by the reply they made presently to her firing. The number of French ships in action was greater than the British by six, and the Ariadne arrived just when she could be of greatest service. The boldness of her seamanship, and the favour of the wind, gave her an advantage which good fortune helped to justify.

As she drew in upon the action, she gave herself up to great danger; she was coming in upon the rear of the French ships, and was subject to fierce attack. To the French she seemed like a fugitive warrior returning to his camp just when he was most needed, as was indeed the case. Two of her shots settled one of the enemy's vessels; and before the others could converge upon her, she had crawled slowly up against the off side of the French admiral's ship, which was closely engaged with the Beatitude, the British flagship, on the other side.

The canister, chain-shot, and langrel of the French foe had caused much injury to the Ariadne, and her canvas was in a sore plight. Fifty of her seamen had been killed, and a hundred and fifty were wounded by the time she reached the starboard side of the Aquitaine. She would have lost many more were it not that her onset demoralized the French gunners, while the cheers of the British sailors aboard the Beatitude gave confidence to their mutineer comrades.

On his own deck, Dyck watched the progress of the battle with the joy of a natural fighter. He had carried the thing to an almost impossible success. There had only been this in his favour, that his was an unexpected entrance—a fact which had been worth another ship at least. He saw his boarders struggle for the Aquitaine. He saw them discharge their pistols, and then resort to the cutlass and the dagger; and the marines bringing down their victims from the masts of the French flag-ship.

Presently he heard the savagely buoyant shouts of the Beatitude men, and he realized that, by his coming, the admiral of the French fleet had been obliged to yield up his sword, and to signal to his ships—such as could—to get away. That half of them succeeded in doing so was because the British fleet had been heavily handled in the fight, and would have been defeated had it not been for the arrival of the Ariadne.

Never, perhaps, in the history of the navy had British ships clamped the enemy as the Aquitaine was clamped by the Beatitude and the Ariadne. Certain it is that no admiral of the British fleet had ever to perform two such acts in one day as receiving the submission of a French admiral and offering thanks to the captain of a British man-of-war whom, while thanking, he must at once place under arrest as a mutineer. What might have chanced further to Dyck's disadvantage can never be known, because there appeared on the deck of the Beatitude, as its captain under the rear-admiral, Captain Ivy, who, five years before, had visited Dyck and his father at Playmore, and had gone with them to Dublin.

The admiral had sent word to the Ariadne for its captain to come to the Beatitude. When the captain's gig arrived, and a man in seaman's clothes essayed to climb the side of the flag-ship, he was at first prevented. Captain Ivy, however, immediately gave orders for Dyck to be admitted, but without honours.

On the deck of the Beatitude, Dyck looked into the eyes of Captain Ivy. He saluted; but the captain held out a friendly hand.

"You're a mutineer, Calhoun, but your ship has given us victory. I'd like to shake hands with one that's done so good a stroke for England."

A queer smile played about Calhoun's lips.

"I've brought the Ariadne back to the fleet, Captain Ivy. The men have fought as well as men ever did since Britain had a navy. I've brought her back to the king's fleet to be pardoned."

"But you must be placed under arrest, Calhoun. Those are the orders—that wherever the Ariadne should be found she should be seized, and that you should be tried by court-martial."

Dyck nodded. "I understand. When did you get word?"

"About forty-eight hours ago. The king's mail came by a fast frigate."

"We took our time, but we came straight from the Channel to find this fleet. At the mouth of the Thames we willed to find it, and to fight with it—and by good luck so we have done."

"Let me take you to the admiral," said Captain Ivy.

He walked beside Dyck to the admiral's cabin. "You've made a terrible mess of things, Calhoun, but you've put a lot right to-day," he said at the entrance to the cabin. "Tell me one thing honestly before we part now—did you kill Erris Boyne?" Dyck looked at him long and hard.

"I don't know—on my honour I don't know! I don't remember—I was drunk and drugged."

"Calhoun, I don't believe you did; but if you did, you've paid the price—and the price of mutiny, too." In the clear blue eyes of Captain Ivy there was a look of friendliness. "I notice you don't wear uniform, Calhoun," he added. "I mean a captain's uniform." Dyck smiled. "I never have."

The next moment the door of the admiral's cabin was opened.

"Mr. Dyck Calhoun of the Ariadne, sir," said Captain Ivy.

CHAPTER XV

THE ADMIRAL HAS HIS SAY

The admiral's face was naturally vigorous and cheerful, but, as he looked at Dyck Calhoun, a steely hardness came into it, and gave a cynical twist to the lips. He was a short man, and spare, but his bearing had dignity and every motion significance.

He had had his high moment with the French admiral, had given his commands to the fleet and had arranged the disposition of the captured French ships. He was in good spirits, and the wreckage in the fleet seemed not to shake his nerve, for he had lost in men far less than the enemy, and had captured many ships—a good day's work, due finally to the man in sailor's clothes standing there with Captain Ivy. The admiral took in the dress of Calhoun at a glance—the trousers of blue cloth, the sheath-knife belt, the stockings of white silk, the white shirt with the horizontal stripes, the loose, unstarched, collar, the fine black silk handkerchief at the throat, the waistcoat of red kerseymere, the shoes like dancing-pumps, and the short, round blue jacket, with the flat gold buttons—a seaman complete. He smiled broadly; he liked this mutineer and ex-convict.

"Captain Calhoun, eh!" he remarked mockingly, and bowed satirically. "Well, you've played a strong game, and you've plunged us into great difficulty."

Dyck did not lose his opportunity. "Happily, I've done what I planned to do when we left the Thames, admiral," he said. "We came to get the chance of doing what, by favour of fate, we have accomplished. Now, sir, as I'm under arrest, and the ship which I controlled has done good service, may I beg that the Ariadne's personnel shall have amnesty, and that I alone be made to pay—if that must be—for the mutiny at the Nore."

The admiral nodded. "We know of your breaking away from the mutinous fleet, and of their firing on you as you passed, and that is in your favour. I can also say this: that bringing the ship here was masterly work, for I understand there were no officers on the Ariadne. She always had the reputation of being one of the best-trained ships in the navy, and she has splendidly upheld that reputation. How did you manage it, Mr. Calhoun?"

Dyck briefly told how the lieutenants were made, and how he himself had been enormously indebted to Greenock, the master of the ship, and all the subordinate officers.

The admiral smiled sourly. "I have little power until I get instructions from the Admiralty, and that will take some time. Meanwhile, the Ariadne shall go on as she is, and as if she were—and had been from the first, a member of my own squadron."

Dyck bowed, explained what reforms he had created in the food and provisions of the Ariadne, and expressed a hope that nothing should be altered. He said the ship had proved herself, chiefly because

of his reforms.

"Besides, she's been badly hammered. She's got great numbers of wounded and dead, and for many a day the men will be busy with repairs."

"For a man without naval experience, for a mutineer, an ex-convict and a usurper, you've done quite well, Mr. Calhoun; but my instructions were, if I captured your ship, and you fell into my hands, to try you, and hang you."

At this point Captain Ivy intervened.

"Sir," he said, "the instructions you received were general. They could not anticipate the special service which the Ariadne has rendered to the king's fleet. I have known Mr. Calhoun; I have visited at his father's house; I was with him on his journey to Dublin, which was the beginning of his bad luck. I would beg of you, sir, to give Mr. Calhoun his parole on sea and land until word comes from the Admiralty as to what, in the circumstances, his fate shall be."

"To be kept on the Beatitude on parole!" exclaimed the admiral.

"Land or sea, Captain Ivy said. I'm as well-born as any man in the king's fleet," declared Dyck. "I've as clean a record as any officer in his majesty's navy, save for the dark fact that I was put in prison for killing a man; and I will say here, in the secrecy of an admiral's cabin, that the man I killed—or was supposed to kill—was a traitor. If I did kill him, he deserved death by whatever hand it came. I care not what you do with me"—his hands clenched, his shoulders drew up, his eyes blackened with the dark fire of his soul—"whether you put me on parole, or try me by court-martial, or hang me from the yard-arm. I've done a piece of work of which I'm not ashamed. I've brought a mutinous ship out of mutiny, sailed her down the seas for many weeks, disciplined her, drilled her, trained her, fought her; helped to give the admiral of the West Indian squadron his victory. I enlisted; I was a quota man. I became a common sailor—I and my servant and friend, Michael Clones. I shared the feelings of the sailors who mutinied. I wrote petitions and appeals for them. I mutinied with them. Then at last, having been made leader of the ship, with the captain and the lieutenants sent safely ashore, and disagreeing with the policy of the Delegates in not accepting the terms offered, I brought the ship out, commanding it from the captain's cabin, and have so continued until to-day. If I'm put ashore at Jamaica, I'll keep my parole; if I stay a prisoner here, I'll keep my parole. If I've done you service, admiral, be sure of this, it was done with clear intent. My object was to save the men who, having mutinied and fled from Admiralty control, are subject to capital punishment."

"Your thinking came late. You should have thought before you mutinied," was the sharp reply.

"As a common sailor I acted on my conscience, and what we asked for the Admiralty has granted. Only by mutiny did the Admiralty yield to our demands. What I did I would do again! We took our risks in the Thames against the guns that were levelled at us; we've taken our risks down here against the French to help save your squadron, and we've done it. The men have done it, because they've been loyal to the flag, and from first to last set to make the Admiralty and the people know they have rights which must be cherished. If all your men were as faithful to the Crown as are the men on the Ariadne, then they deserve well of the King. But will you put for me on paper the written word that every man now aboard the Ariadne shall be held guiltless in the eyes of the admiral of this fleet; that the present officers shall remain officers, that the reforms I have made shall become permanent? For myself, I care not; but for the men who have fought under me, I want their amnesty. And I want Michael Clones to be kept with me, and Greenock, the master, and Ferens, the purser, to be kept where they are. Admiral, I think you know my demands are just. Over there on the Ariadne are a hundred and fifty wounded at least, and fifty have been killed. Let the living not suffer."

"You want it all on the nail, don't you?"

"I want it at this moment when the men who have fought under me have helped to win your battle, sir." There was something so set in Dyck's voice that the admiral had a sudden revulsion against him, yet, after a moment of thought, he made a sign to Captain Ivy. Then he dictated the terms which Dyck had asked, except as to the reforms he had made, which was not in his power to do, save for the present.

When the document had been signed by the admiral, Dyck read the contents aloud. It embodied nearly all he had asked.

"Now I ask permission for one more thing only, sir—for the new captain of the Ariadne to go with me to her, and there I will read this paper to the crew. I will give a copy of it to the new captain, whoever he may be."

The admiral stood for a moment in thought. Then he said:

"Ivy, I transfer you to the Ariadne. It's better that some one who understands, as you do, should be in control after Calhoun has gone. Go with him now, and have your belongings sent to you. I appoint you temporary captain of the Ariadne, because I think no one could deal with the situation there so wisely. Ivy, every ship in the squadron must treat the Ariadne respectfully. Within two days, Mr. Calhoun, you shall be landed at Jamaica, there to await the Admiralty decree. I will say this: that as the sure victory of our fleet has come through you, you shall not suffer in my report. Fighting is not an easy trade, and to fight according to the rules is a very hard trade. Let me ask you to conduct yourself as a prisoner of war on parole."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NO DEFENSE, VOLUME 2 ***

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