

I suspected that he was off the *Albemarle*, a frigate of twenty-four guns, which had served as convoy to provision vessels coming up the Gulph; but before we came together for the confirmation of my surmise, a *fracas* occurred on the hill between us. It was an incident common enough in that day, when the ships of His Majesty's navy were generally shorthanded. A press-gang from one of these had hauled out of a tavern, just at the turn in Mountain Hill, two lusty rogues whom they were bent on marching to their ship to be trained into decent seamen. This laudable purpose might have been effected without remark had it not been for two females walking directly in front of me, one of whom felt called upon to interfere—with that tendency to thrust a finger into the affairs of others so noticeable in the sex. The older lady passed hurriedly on her way, in apparent and natural anxiety to get out of the road; it was the younger who stood up and protested. Unfortunately, I had been presented to her at a recent assembly in the town, and though I had made no effort towards the continuance of the acquaintance, she remembered me.

“Oh, Captain Mathews! It is truly lucky you are here. You will put a stop to this.”

I stayed my steps, as in duty bound, though none too pleased at the appeal. The press-gang was a necessity. We of the army hated it as heartily as did, no doubt, the officers of the navy; but what else could be done, in war time, with ships to be