

yonder on the bridge, and when your Majesty sees and speaks with her you will know that she is not one to wed a murderer."

"Come, look not so straight at me, man!" said the King. "Though if all be as you say, your head is forfeit for coming between a traitor and the law."

"I throw myself upon your Majesty's clemency," said Arnold. "My wife and I have landed only ten minutes since from a French ship that brought us over the ocean from the New World. Hearing your Majesty was to honour my house, I have come straight to your Majesty's side to fulfil our ancient duty."

Charles, whose indolent eyes, under their heavily-drooping lids, had been keenly watching the frank face of the man before him, suddenly dropped his bantering tone. "Tell me," said he, "was it you, my lord, who fought our little *Lion* against the *Zwarte Gans* and sank her?"

"My captain was killed, Sire; there was nothing else for me to do."

"Well, well," said Charles, "at least you are a man, which is more than some of us are nowadays, hey, my lords? But who knows if your story is true?" he added, turning back from his courtiers to Arnold.

"Sire," said the latter, "the boatman who brought us in from seaward sits at this moment in his boat at the bridge stairs, and there should be one still in Westringfold who can bear out what I say of my cousin's escape. Let your Majesty ask for the landlord of the inn by the bridge."

"Let him be fetched," ordered the King, and the word passed along to the crowd which stood waiting beyond the bridge, and in another minute the stout figure of Stephen the landlord was seen advancing, his usually florid countenance blank and pale at the sudden summons to converse with Majesty.

"Friend," said Charles to him, "who is this gentleman here?"