

and saved her from the cruel fate which would have been hers had she been overpowered by the pirates. During the latter portion of the time in which the preceding events were taking place the sky, which, as we have already said, was heavily clouded, had begun to clear somewhat, and now the moon, which before had been invisible, came out from a rift in the clouds, and shone clear over the water, bathing everything in its soft silvery light, and disclosing to the almost despairing crew and passengers of the *Junna* the welcome vision of a gunboat clearly outlined against the sky, her spars shewing up in relief upon the dark clouds which still hung over the horizon. She was under full head of steam, and standing in for the scene of battle, which she was rapidly nearing. In a very short time she had approached near enough to bring her ordnance to bear on the pirates, at the same time that she did so throwing out the Italian tricolor. The buccaneers were now obliged to leave their former foe and devote all their attention to the new assailant. They fought desperately, but their stand was not of long duration. In the short but sharp conflict which ensued, one of them, the original one, was sunk by a well-directed shot from the gunboat, which struck her below the water-line amid ships, and the other fell soon after an easy prey to a boarding party from the Italian vessel.

The *Junna* was saved. Twice delivered from a peril almost the greatest and most awful to which those who go down to the sea in ships must expose themselves, delivered moreover by an interposition so opportune and so providential, the thankful crew set to work to repair the damages they had incurred at the hands of the pirates, who had paid so dearly for their unsuccessful attempt. Satisfied with their prize, after coming to an arrangement with the captain, who was also part owner, of the steamer, about their claim for salvage, and offering him their convoy to Gibraltar, which was declined with thanks, the gun-boat and the battered pirate made off to the north-east. The *Junna's* damaged screw could not of course be replaced in mid-ocean, and so she had to trust to the light breeze to carry her slowly to the nearest English possession, Gibraltar, where the necessary repairs could be made. The working portion of the ship's crew

was greatly diminished. Though few were killed, the number wounded by musket balls and flying splinters was considerable, and gave quite enough work to the surgeon and his two nurses. Miss Dunscombe, whose heroic action was on every one's lips, was in no way injured and had soon resumed her position in the temporary hospital. The lieutenant was in a critical condition, and she was with him almost constantly, attending to all his needs, soothing him in his feverish and excited state as only a woman can. It was hard work and for two days she only slept at odd intervals, snatching a nap now and again, but at the end of that time he began to recover. Owing to the unfavourable winds they were four days making the Pillars of Hercules, and those four days were days of fate for the Lieutenant and Miss Fanny Dunscombe. The young officer had always felt tenderly inclined towards the beautiful and brave young English girl, who had done so much to cheer and brighten his lonely and monotonous life on the India station, and her simple and unaffected kindness and devotion now won him entirely. By the time they put into Gibraltar he was passionately in love with the fair Fanny. While not daring to open his heart to the object of his affection, he nevertheless confided his state of mind to the old Major, who had probably long ago foreseen something of the kind, and who in a frank bluff way, advised him to "pitch right in, and he'd help him."

And so it befell that one night, as they were sitting in a sheltered nook under the lee of the after-deckhouse, with the moon casting its pale beams athwart the deck, the vessel's prow rapidly cutting the usually stormy, but now calm and scarcely rippled waters of the Bay of Biscay, the lieutenant screwed his courage to the sticking place, and resolved to ascertain his fate.

"Fanny, I have been waiting and longing for this opportunity for some days. When first I met you I was struck with your mental and physical charms, and ever since, as our acquaintance ripened into friendship, I have entertained for you a sincere affection and respect. But only during these last few days have I realized the depth of your character, the nobility of soul, the gentleness, the tender sympathy, the high courage of which you are capable. And that realization