

### CHAPTER III

A WEEK elapsed and the tragic dispute between Merry Jonathan and his ancient ally grew into a nine days' wonder. That the new-come representative of law was responsible for their quarrel none doubted, for Mr. Bluett had arrived in an hour not auspicious from the smugglers' standpoint. He was at Daleham a fortnight earlier than most people expected him, and the presence of himself and his mates had threatened directly to interfere with greater matters than he guessed. Yet the secret of a cargo, its arrival nigh Daleham and the hour and place, now came frankly into Robert Bluett's keeping, since old Cramphorn—his friendship turned to gall under Godbeer's heavy hands—for once followed the unfamiliar paths of rectitude. So, at least, he declared to the Exciseman, though even Mr. Bluett, whose mind was cast in simple mould, perceived that a private hatred and a private grudge were responsible for the patriarch's treachery, rather than any desire to do right. It was mention of his former partner that always stung old Johnny into passion, made his beard shake and his voice go shrill and cracked.