

Bella's being taken away, that he must be on board or lurking somewhere in the neighborhood.

I suggested that all the men he could spare should be well armed and immediately put ashore, so as to be able to get to the other side of the point before day-break or they would be seen in crossing the heights. That they should hide among the bushes till the tide was out, and then pounce upon the lugger which, by that time, would be high and dry upon the sands."

"Or gone out to sea?" said the officer interrogatively.

"O yes, my plan provides for such a probable contingency. Aye, *probable*, I continued, in reply to his startled and enquiring look, for we saw the signal light upon the point, and, if the lugger kept a sharp look out, and had her eyes about her, she might have seen it too."

"She could not surely have heard the shot that brought it so quickly down again?"

"O no! I replied, the wind was high and in the opposite direction, but we, I added, although much farther off, heard it, but not distinctly."

"Well, but proceed with your scheme," he said with some impatience, "what if she has seen the signal and gone out to sea?"

"After her instantly, was my ready answer, up anchor and away, the moment the boats return from putting us ashore, I say us, I added, because I should like, myself, to be with the men that cross the point."

"And so you shall," he said, "but this wind." "Has somewhat moderated already," I replied: and will fall still more by day-break, or if it should not, this tight little craft of yours, or I'm no sailor, can keep as closely to the wind as to gain a sufficient offing, in an hour or two, as will enable you to weather the point that separates you from the inlet.

"But it is quite unnecessary," the young man added, as he saw some symptoms of impatience in his auditory, "to dwell upon this part of my plan, as nothing came of it."

"I was put in command of the party, and off we started, but our preparations took up more time than we anticipated, or else the night was farther advanced than we supposed, as the day began to dawn before we reached our place of ambush."

"As we passed a rude sort of flag-staff, the same, I doubted not, on which we saw the signal light, one of the men told me that he had fired at the fellow who was hoisting it, and that he must either have been hit or frightened, as he instantly ran away. But we soon discovered, that he must

have been wounded, as the path, for some distance, was sprinkled with blood."

"That must have been the shot we heard, I observed, as the light went down."

"So it was," he said, and then proceeded with his story.

"Here we had a complete view of the inlet, or rather of the dense fog that rested on the ebbing tide, and we saw, with great delight, the bare poles of the lugger standing out above it."

"This fog was of essential service to us, as it prevented the lugger's crew from seeing us, either as we crossed the heights, or the intervening sands until we were upon them."

"And then the fight!" exclaimed my youngest niece, in great excitement.

"No, there was no fight," he continued; "On the contrary, we were permitted to board her, peaceably. She was busily employed, like an honest trader, discharging her lawful cargo; and although we searched the vessel thoroughly, not a contraband article could be found."

"And Bella!" we all interrogatively exclaimed at once.

"Was no where to be seen, nor William Armstrong either; but some one, under another name, as super-cargo, was missing, and we suspect that he's the man."

"Then you did not seize the vessel, and perhaps she was not a smuggler after all!"

"O yes, she's a smuggler, we have no doubt of that, but her papers are all right, or apparently so, and we cannot prove it. All we saw of her cargo was a mere make believe, and the principal and most valuable part of it is, doubtless, hid beneath the sea—they most likely had seen the signal-light, and instead of running for it, had adopted a safer method, and sunk their gin and brandy where they can find it again, when less liable to be interrupted. But I must be off again, in search of that villain, Armstrong, he is lurking somewhere in the neighborhood, I know."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ELOPEMENT.

Qwhen sche was mountit him behynd
(Blyth be hertis quhilkes luvo ilk ither)
Awa thai flew lyke slaucht of winde,
(Kin kens kin, and bairnis thair mither.)

ELFINLAND WUD.

"I'll be ready to go with you in a moment," was poor Bella Millway's instant and unsuspecting answer to the message she received. And she hastened her simple preparations, as much as