THE WEEKLY MAIL: TORONTO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1873.

ASTERN.

The long-lighted days begin to shrink,
And flowers are fain to droop and sink;
The late-sown grass, that alone in June
Broke upon brook, and brink upon brink,

The wheat, so lately rustling thick,
Is now in sere and yellow sheaves,
All yellow before the sky of blue,
Up after up, and rick by rick.

No starlings in the flock on wing;
The oriole has stilled the wood-land round;
The swallow no longer skims the ground,
Dip after dip, and swing by swing;

While shadows are resting around the field,
By wind-driven leaves on quiv'ring grass,
Or down where the sky-blue waters pass,
Full after full, and stand by stand.

The brown-dappled pointers nimbly trot
By russet hound's tress, white gun smoke grey
Dissolves in the air of sunny day,
Reef upon reef, at shot by shot.

While near I can scale a dusty mile,
I'll take my fill while days are clear,
To feel the friends that still are dear,
Face upon face, and smile by smile.

READY-MONEY MORTIBOY

A MATTER-OF-FACT STORY.

CHAPTER VI.—*Continued.*

We cannot, historians though we are, linger over this fatal week. Dick had but seen six months with Mr. Oswald. It is easy, therefore, to calculate how much money he had saved, at the rate of about ten pounds a month. With this in his pocket, he took a chamber in the hotel for the week of the races, and prepared to be happy. Everybody liked him: the young ladies because he was young and handsome, and danced well, and looked like a chevalier; the men because he was never ill-natured, never in the way, never in the least squeamish—a thing which could not always be said of the Fahnblasheiros—and because he would sit up all night, sing a good song, and play a game at cards when the dancing was over. This little game of cards it was that brought him to grief; for Dick went back at the end of his week with a sorrowful heart, and fifty pounds to pay in the course of the next month—a debt of honour. He was profoundly miserable. Among all his acquaintance, he had not one friend; there was not a soul in all Palmiste to whom he could have gone for the loan of a ten-pound note, except old Mrs. Oswald. If only the young man had poured out his troubles to her, all would have been well with him. For the sake of the childless old lady yearned to the bright and handsome lad, who might have been her own son, and who looked so innocent and happy.

But Dick had already plucked the fatal apple which bars the way. Pride, that he had passed the portal which leads from innocence to guilt; and having passed through it once, found little difficulty in going through again. "Ce n'est que la premier pas qui coute": the brave who can number his adversaries by thousands have forgotten the terrible heart-sickness that came upon them when they contemplated the first.

In the month the debts were paid, and Dick freed from all his difficulties. He went on with his clerkship, but looked pale and harassed. Mrs. Oswald used to ask him if he were ill, and made him dine at the house oftener—thinking, in her kindness, that he wanted society. And her husband offered him a holiday; and Dick jumped at the first night, if that would do him good. But Dick about the last head, tried to look pleased, and declined.

Thus two or three months passed away. One day Mrs. Oswald received a letter, which he read with trembling hands. The letter put in at once, and drove away to town. Mr. Oswald did not come back that night. That was unlikely enough. But he came the next day accompanied by two men whom Dick knew—he saw them, to his inspectors of police. As the carriage drove up, it was crossing the open space between the mill and his own cottage. Why did he stop, and turn as if for flight; and then, trembling, in all his limbs, seem to be in a moment all his pride and manliness, and crouch together as he continued his walk?

Mr. Oswald called him. The old gentleman was perfectly haggard with anxiety and terror. To look at him, you would have thought that he was himself the criminal, when the officers came to look for.

Dick pulled himself together. He succeeded to a small extent, and advanced with a conscious swagger to the verandah where his employer was standing.

"Mr. Mellon," said Mr. Oswald, "a very painful thing has happened. Some rascal has forged an order to a cheque for £50, and the money has been paid. The forged cheque has been placed by the bank in the hands of the Crown Solicitor, and they—they say I a you." He coughed slightly. "Of course, I am quite certain it is a mistake."

"Quite, sir," said Dick, with a nervous twitch of his mouth. "These gentlemen—"

He looked at the inspectors.

"We have to arrest you, Mr. Mellon."

"Oh! May I have a word with you, Mr. Oswald?"

The inspectors, in reply to a look of interrogation from the old gentleman, nodded; and Mr. Oswald led his clerk into the dining-room. As they came in at one door, Mrs. Oswald entered at another. Dick did not see her.

"I do not want to waste your time, sir," he said. "You have been very kind to me—more than kind; but the thing is true."

"What thing?" asked Mrs. Oswald.

"I am arrested for forging a cheque. It is quite true. I did it. You will not tell them in the court what I have told you. I am certain, Mr. Oswald. I gambled during the race week, and lost all I had, and fifty pounds besides. How was I to pay it?"

"Why did you not ask me?" cried Mrs. Oswald. "Oh! my boy, why did you not ask me?"

"I wish I had," said Dick, ruefully.

"If you must forge some one's name, said Mr. Oswald, almost weeping, "why, in Heaven's name, did you not forge your father's?"

"I wish I had," said Dick, looking at him with real emotion, "I wish to God I had!"

And while Mrs. Oswald cried and lamented, and the worthy old man, her husband, sat mournfully with his head in his hands, the young fellow stood off with his captors, to be locked up in the gaol of Port Dauphin. One friend of compassion—the only one for many years—visited his hard when he saw the grief of the good old couple.

CHAPTER VII.

It is not a pleasant thing, apart from the shame which every man feels, except the true philosopher, to be clapped into prison in any climate; but it must be most unpleasant of all under a tropical sun. The absence of fresh and free air, and the deprivation of those small comforts which alone make life in Palmiste tolerable, are of themselves enough to make a weak man commit suicide, and a strong man go mad. Poor Dick was the first night of his confinement, on the stone couch with the iron bolt at his feet, cell, mournfully thinking over his chances and speculating—for the case was far too clear to leave him any hope of acquittal—how long a term of imprisonment he would be likely to have. Then, with the elasticity of youth, he went on to speculate, further, what he should do when he got out. And presently the thought came into his thinking: he lay back upon his grass mat and went to sleep, till the sun rose, and shining in at his barred window, awakened him. He started up, and instead of his little room at Hazelnoe, made neat and comfortable by the care of Mrs. Oswald, he found himself in a white-washed cell, with a stone floor, and iron bars instead of green jalousies. The window looked into the court yard of the prison, where some miserable Indians, prisoners, were huddled together, waiting for the guards who were to take them to work. Presently his door opened, and a mulatto turnkey appeared—a fat, merry-looking rascal—who gave him the usual instructions as to the rules of the cell, and let him know that he was to be brought before the magistrate that morning.

Perhaps, in D. A. Mortiboy's whole life—which was chequered enough, and had its ups and downs—he had not one consideration to which he turned as seldom as he could, only one which caused him bitter shame and pain even to think of. It was the recollection of the time of dismal and degraded promiscuity which he had passed in the gaol. He had fled out from the prison doors, and was marched solemnly down the street, crowds people, to the magistrate's court. It was headed by a brace of weeping Indians, charged with burglary and an attempt to murder—they had tried to kill their wives, and howled their innocence; then three or four men who had been drunk and disorderly—these were the most shamefaced of the lot; then a negro, who pretended to laugh at the absurdity of the charge against him—he had been stealing ducks; then Dick—the bright, handsome young Englishman—walking along, red with shame and misery, with this crew; and then a Chinaman, against whom something unlawful connected with other people's pork was alleged—he wore a surprised countenance, as one who should say, "Dear me! this is very singular—very singular, indeed! What can be the motive of this?" then half a dozen more Indians; and then the procession was closed by two policemen. A long procession, it was felt, this, which every man had to hold with one hand. The Indian is quite contented so long as he keeps his fingers closed on the string, and considers himself laden with letters. If he is driven along loose, he runs away sullkivious.

That dreary day! Many of his acquaintances—including the man for whom he had forged the cheque, who was the principal witness—were in the court; and not one—not one of all the men with whom he had lived and drank and sang—seemed to have a kind or pitying look. Dick tried to steal his heart, ineffably, against the shame. It was bruised and scared by this day's misery, and it lived long before it became again as it had been once—soft, relenting, charitable. Have you not noticed that criminals appear to have no sense at all of moral culpability? It is because circumstances, as well as repetition, deaden the feeling of remorse. Thus, when Dick forged his father's name, in the first place, the consequences were sharp and decisive; secondly, they were not accompanied by any public shame; thirdly, he was in dire straits in the town, and only too glad to get out of Market Rasing; and lastly, his father had always restricted his pleasures, and cut down his allowances to the merest pittance; so that he hated his home, and left it with delight. Now it was different: he had a chance in life, and he threw it away. He made friends, and he lost them. He got a certain sort of position, and he put himself out of it by his own act and deed. It is the public punishment of a crime which gives the remorse and agony of the sinner: not those half-dozen months in the common gaol, perhaps, more retributive, because they tear the heart, and paralyze the will.

The day came to an end at last, and the procession was returned to return—Dick being duly committed for trial, and sent to prison, now some two months off. They pushed him into his cell, gave him his dinner, and left him to lie handcuffed on his bed.

There are only occasionally in Palmiste prisoners of any social grade or rank above that of merchant-sailor, or Indian coolie; but at this moment there was another prisoner also awaiting trial—a young Frenchman, some few years older than Dick. At stated hours the prisoners were allowed to walk in the courtyard, between which and the main entrance was a strongly locked gate, opening into a sort of barrack-room, where policemen and guards were always about. There was also another entrance, by an iron door, never opened, which led into the chief gaoler's private house, and was designed as a means of getting into the prison without going through the guard-room, in case of a disturbance; and at the back of the court yard, a large barn room open to it, which had been built for the prisoners as a place where they might work out of the sun, when the door work had to be done.

In this room, on the second day of his confinement, Dick, being released for his walk, saw a man sitting on the stone bench which ran round the four walls, and formed the only furniture. He started, for a moment—changed colour, and half turned to go back—only there was nowhere to go, and he stopped. For the man he saw there was one of his old friends—one of those who had dined at the same table d'hote with him in Port Dauphin. He was a young Frenchman of the country—like many of the French—a clerk, and, like himself, a gambler; but Lafleur had always a reputation beyond his years. He was slightly built, and pale, with close black hair and a thick massive beard, like a Spanish grandee. He was a Dick knew him chiefly as connected with a card story in which he figured as the principal actor. The quarrel had been made up by a duel, in which Lafleur's opponent gave information to the police, and the combat was stopped on the ground. But men looked at me and shrugged their shoulders in Port Dauphin, where public morality runs low, were chary of being seen much in his company.

The man started at the sound of Dick's step, and turned a haggard and careworn face to see who was coming. He rose, with a strange, constrained air, quite unusual in him, and had not taken his eyes off him.

"You are come to see me, Mellon? This is kind of you."

"I? No, by gad! You have come to see me, I am"—Dick turned red for a moment—"I am a prisoner."

"So am I," returned the other.

"You, too! What have you been doing?"

"They pretend that I murdered young Duchamp."

Dick involuntarily recoiled. Then he laughed defiantly.

"They pretended I forged a cheque. Damn it!—they will pretend anything. Only, I say, Lafleur, you're in a worse scrape than I am."

"Eh?" said the Frenchman; "it is nothing. In the first place, I am not guilty."

Dick chuck's arm, curiously, before he began to speak, and felt the biceps. Now Dick was strong-limbed and muscular, besides being tall.

"My faith, my friend, if I had your chance!"

"Go on, man—go on."

Lafleur looked sharply. No one was in the court-yard except a couple of policemen, whose backs were turned. He drew a key from his pocket, and put it furtively shewed it to Dick.

"It is the governor's own key—the key of the iron door."

Dick nodded, and said nothing.

"The mason gaoler got it for me. He is my father's son."

"Your brother?"

"Pardon me—I said my father's son. Now listen. It depends on you. At six, we have to go up to our cells. Who always conducts us?"

"Pierre, your—your friend, and Smith."

"Just so. Smith is drunk every night. Pierre will be managed by me without any trouble. I shall escape with him."

Dick looked thoughtful.

"Smith's a big man; but I think I can stick him. Are you in earnest, Lafleur? Why did you tell me so soon?"

The day was intensely hot.

Slowly the leaden-footed hours crept away.

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The clock struck a quarter to six. The sun was already down, and the twilight lasts, and in a few minutes it would be dark.

Presently, making a great jingle with his keys, Smith, a ponderous Englishman of stolen stock, shuffled into the court, through the large gate. According to custom, with Lafleur and Dick, he should have gone leisurely crossed the yard to the work-room. Dick held himself at the inside of the door.

"Come, I say! Smith, look sharp! The door, "Nine's up. Where's Mr. Mellon?" He was looking anxiously at the door, where Lafleur was standing, motionless and trembling.

"Here," cried Dick, striking him full in the temple with his fist. Smith reeled, and would have cried for help; but another blow, from each knuckle of Lafleur, fell upon him, and another had been dashed against the corner of the stone bench, and he fell, senseless and bleeding.

He was stunned.

Lafleur rushed out, followed by Dick. They had hardly taken a step, when Pierre, who waited stupidly; standing still, to be disposed of, saw what had been done, and followed the gigantic Smith. To his astonishment, they had opened the little door, and locked him inside with the key on the other side. Now, he had specially signified a desire to escape, and had made delicious half-brother exactly the same treatment that designed for Smith. They had disappointed him.

A single passage led through the gover-ment's house to his garden in the front. There was no one there, for it was dinner time, and stood without—for the moment, free.

Outside the door, a dozen paths led off left of them, was a small knot of policemen and gaolers, idly talking and enjoying the fresh air after the sultry day. Lafleur took his companion lightly on the arm, and they strolled out, the Frenchman leaning upon them to a bye-street. It was now quite dark—for there is no twilight in latitude 20°; and fortunately there was no moon.

"Where now?" asked Dick, breathlessly, wondering what was the use of liberty in a place where there was nowhere to hide.

"Follow me. It is all arranged. If only we can find the boat."

Dick began to understand a little; and they walked quickly along the narrow streets of the Indian quarter, where they were likely to meet Europeans who might know them.

They passed no one, a stray Indian or two excepted, and in ten minutes were out of the town and on the high road.

Here it ran across a bare and rocky plain, which stretched for a mile or so to the sea shore. Lafleur led the way still, and now began to run. No one was over on the plain by day or night. They reached the shore, then was one mile of rocks, then a sandy quarter of a mile out, the breakers of the Indian Ocean rolling in upon it, curled and rolled in, and formed their long, white crests like a fringe round the shore, or like a bulwark to protect the land from the sea. So well. But the two were in no mood for similes or sentiment.

"Was the devil are we to do next?" said Dick.

"See this white post? It is a landmark. We are to keep in a line with this and the lighthouse."

"But I can't see the fork."

"I know the direction: it is exactly over there—and they will be off the reef. It is all arranged, I tell you. Can you swim?"

"Can I? Like a fish."

"Then follow me."

It was low tide—the sea, as well as everything else, seeming to favor them, they stepped into the water, keeping as well as they could in the line along which they had started. This was not easy, for it was quite dark. They slipped and fell. Now their foot would catch in a branch of coral. Now they would step upon a large sea slug—a loathsome worm, two feet long—into whose milky body their foot would sink, and, conveying a horrible sense of danger and misery; now a hole in the coral, and they would be up to their armpits. But they struggled on in silence, and at last stood close to the very edge of the reef, and peered eagerly into the darkness. The crash of the waves was all that they could hear. The white breakers rose higher than their heads, and they could see nothing beyond them. Where, they could ask, was to send signs of oarsmen.

"Where are they?" cried Dick, almost breaking down at last. "Good God! have you brought me to this horrible place to look for a boat in darkness like this?"

"Better to die here than to be hanged. Remember it was you who killed Smith."

"Fool! I forgot. Let us go back, leaving the water up to his middle.

For nearly half an hour—they thought it half the night—they stood so: silent, washed by the wave. The tide was rising, and they would shortly have to return, perhaps wading back or being drowned. But neither dared speak to the other.

Suddenly Dick caught Lafleur's arm.

"I hear voices!" he cried. "Shout, man, shout!"

Lafleur listened with a sort of sob. Suppose it should not be his boat! But no—it was impossible. Now it was another boat, and off the reef is so desolate a place, and at such a time.

He shouted. There was no reply.

He shouted again; but in vain. Then Dick put his hand on his shoulder, and gave a cry that might have been—and I dare say was—heard in shore.

A hoarse sailor's call was the answer, followed by a shrill whistle. It sounded close at hand; but they could see nothing.

"All right," cried Lafleur. "Let us keep close together. Now!"

He plunged through the breakers and disappeared.

"Lord keep the sharks off," thought Dick, and followed him.

Coolest, a boat lay tossing in the roll of the Atlantic, the crew resting on their oars; all with their faces turned anxiously towards the shore. There was a cry near them, and they turned a light in its direction. In two minutes they were alongside the escaped prisoner. Dick, who was the first, clambered in over the stern, and sat in the bottom shaking and trembling. Lafleur was more exhausted. He seized an oar, but had not strength enough to climb into the boat. They drew him over the side; and the next moment—for the lantern had been used to facilitate the business—a huge black fin showed for an instant above the water, and then disappeared.

"It's a shark," said the man at the helm.

"I touched him with my foot," said Dick, his voice soft and shaking. "Good God! my legs were bare enough."

They gave him brandy, and he revived a little. Then they performed the same kind office for Lafleur.

The Frenchman pointed to Dick.

"He did it all," he gasped. "Without him I should never have succeeded. You must put him on board too."

Dick was astonished; but the helmsman stopped them.

"Another little difference. I will settle it with the captain."

Two miles from the reef, in the roadstead, lay a small schooner. The night was as dark that she could only be reached by her lights, and the men pulled unskilfully. But they got alongside at last; and the moment they touched, a rope was lowered.

"Captain," said the man at the helm, who seemed to be one holding authority, "there are two. You will hear from me at your port."

"Right, sir, right. Now, then, gentlemen, quick's the word."

Dick clambered up. He touched the deck, and looked wildly round; for he almost thought it was all a dream.

The captain clapped him on the back.

"Come," said he, "this was bravely done. Where's the other?"

As Lafleur climbed the rope, the man in the boat shouted "Adieu," and pushed off.

The captain whistled, the sails of the schooner fell, and Dick felt her move. In half an hour they were in open sea, bound for the port of Havana.

The captain took them below, and showed them a small cabin, with a pair of berths. He had, too, changed their clothing; and though it was difficult to fit a man of Dick's height, it was something to be dry, even with six inches of leg between his trousers and the trouser.

"No one of the sailors," said the captain, "knows anything. We've only been in port two days, and none of them have been ashore except the cook, and he's deaf. Mr. Lafleur, you're welcome, for you're father's sake. And you, young sir, for any sake you like, whatever you have done."

Dick stuttered out, "What had he done?"

The thought of his being murdered, whose hand blood he had seen oozing out upon the stones, struck cold at his heart.

"Hit a man who had struck Lafleur, and said, with an emotion that had nothing simulated in it—

"You've rescued me from that infernal place, and you stood by me in the boat. I owe you life, and I owe it to your father by that, I will stand by you till the last. If you have a quarrel, I will stand by you. If you fend you, I will defend you. If I can save you in any trouble, I will save you. If I can help you, I will help you. If I can defend you, I will defend you. If I can save your life, I will save your life. If I can help you, I will help you. If I can defend you, I will defend you. If I can save your life, I will save your life. If I can help you, I will help you."

"Stop!" said Dick, laughing and trembling, "I owe you my life, too. Shake hands on that. Now, I'm ready for the story."

Lafleur looked at the captain, who was a strong-limbed and muscular, besides being tall.

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"You've rescued me from that infernal place, and you stood by me in the boat. I owe you life, Lafleur, by all that's dear to me by, that I will stand by you till the last. If you have a quarrel, I will stand by you. If you fend you, I will defend you. If I can save you in any trouble, I will save you. If I can help you, I will help you. If I can defend you, I will defend you. If I can save your life, I will save your life. If I can help you, I will help you."

"Stop!" said Dick, laughing and trembling, "I owe you my life, too. Shake hands on that. Now, I'm ready for the story."

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"Just so. Smith is drunk every night. Pierre will be managed by me without any trouble. I shall escape with him."

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Presently, making a great jingle with his keys, Smith, a ponderous Englishman of stolen stock, shuffled into the court, through the large gate. According to custom, with Lafleur and Dick, he should have gone leisurely crossed the yard to the work-room. Dick held himself at the inside of the door.

"Come, I say! Smith, look sharp! The door, "Nine's up. Where's Mr. Mellon?" He was looking anxiously at the door, where Lafleur was standing, motionless and trembling.

"Here," cried Dick, striking him full in the temple with his fist. Smith reeled, and would have cried for help; but another blow, from each knuckle of Lafleur, fell upon him, and another had been dashed against the corner of the stone bench, and he fell, senseless and bleeding.

He was stunned.

Lafleur rushed out, followed by Dick. They had hardly taken a step, when Pierre, who waited stupidly; standing still, to be disposed of, saw what had been done, and followed the gigantic Smith. To his astonishment, they had opened the little door, and locked him inside with the key on the other side. Now, he had specially signified a desire to escape, and had made delicious half-brother exactly the same treatment that designed for Smith. They had disappointed him.

A single passage led through the governor's house to his garden in the front. There was no one there, for it was dinner time, and stood without—for the moment, free.

Outside the door, a dozen paths led off left of them, was a small knot of policemen and gaolers, idly talking and enjoying the fresh air after the sultry day. Lafleur took his companion lightly on the arm, and they strolled out, the Frenchman leaning upon them to a bye-street. It was now quite dark—for there is no twilight in latitude 20°; and fortunately there was no moon.

"Where now?" asked Dick, breathlessly, wondering what was the use of liberty in a place where there was nowhere to hide.

"Follow me. It is all arranged. If only we can find the boat."

Dick began to understand a little; and they walked quickly along the narrow streets of the Indian quarter, where they were likely to meet Europeans who might know them.

They passed no one, a stray Indian or two excepted, and in ten minutes were out of the town and on the high road.

Here it ran across a bare and rocky plain, which stretched for a mile or so to the sea shore. Lafleur led the way still, and now began to run. No one was over on the plain, by day or night. They reached the shore, then was one mile of rocks, then a sandy quarter of a mile out, the breakers of the Indian Ocean rolling in upon it, curled and rolled in, and formed their long, white crests like a fringe round the shore, or like a bulwark to protect the land from the sea. So well. But the two were in no mood for similes or sentiment.

"Was the devil are we to do next?" said Dick.

"See this white post? It is a landmark. We are to keep in a line with this and the lighthouse."

"But I can't see the fork."

"I know the direction: it is exactly over there—and they will be off the reef. It is all arranged, I tell you. Can you swim?"

"Can I? Like a fish."

"Then follow me."

It was low tide—the sea, as well as everything else, seeming to favor them, they stepped into the water, keeping as well as they could in the line along which they had started. This was not easy, for it was quite dark. They slipped and fell. Now their foot would catch in a branch of coral. Now they would step upon a large sea slug—a loathsome worm, two feet long—into whose milky body their foot would sink, and, conveying a horrible sense of danger and misery; now a hole in the coral, and they would be up to their armpits. But they struggled on in silence, and at last stood close to the very edge of the reef, and peered eagerly into the darkness. The crash of the waves was all that they could hear. The white breakers rose higher than their heads, and they could see nothing beyond them. Where, they could ask, was to send signs of oarsmen.

"Where are they?" cried Dick, almost breaking down at last. "Good God! have you brought me to this horrible place to look for a boat in darkness like this?"

"Better to die here than to be hanged. Remember it was you who killed Smith."

"Fool! I forgot. Let us go back," leaving the water up to his middle.

For nearly half an hour—they thought it half the night—they stood so: silent, washed by the wave. The tide was rising, and they would shortly have to return, perhaps wading back or being drowned. But neither dared speak to the other.

Suddenly Dick caught Lafleur's arm.

"I hear voices!" he cried. "Shout, man, shout!"

Lafleur listened with a sort of sob. Suppose it should not be his boat! But no—it was impossible. Now it was another boat, and off the reef is so desolate a place, and at such a time.

He shouted. There was no reply.

He shouted again; but in vain. Then Dick put his hand on his shoulder, and gave a cry that might have been—and I dare say was—heard in shore.

A hoarse sailor's call was the answer, followed by a shrill whistle. It sounded close at hand; but they could see nothing.

"All right," cried Lafleur. "Let us keep close together. Now!"

He plunged through the breakers and disappeared.

"Lord keep the sharks off," thought Dick, and followed him.

Coolest, a boat lay tossing in the roll of the Atlantic, the crew resting on their oars; all with their faces turned anxiously towards the shore. There was a cry near them, and they turned a light in its direction. In two minutes they were alongside the escaped prisoner. Dick, who was the first, clambered in over the stern, and sat in the bottom shaking and trembling. Lafleur was more exhausted. He seized an oar, but had not strength enough to climb into the boat. They drew him over the side; and the next moment—for the lantern had been used to facilitate the business—a huge black fin showed for an instant above the water, and then disappeared.

"It's a shark," said the man at the helm.

"I touched him with my foot," said Dick, his voice soft and shaking. "Good God! my legs were bare enough."

They gave him brandy, and he revived a little. Then they performed the same kind office for Lafleur.

The Frenchman pointed to Dick.

"He did it all," he gasped. "Without him I should never have succeeded. You must put him on board too."

Dick astonished; but the helmsman stopped them.

"Another little difference. I will settle it with the captain."

Two miles from the reef, in the roadstead, lay a small schooner. The night was as dark that she could only be reached by her lights, and the men pulled unskilfully. But they got alongside at last; and the moment they touched, a rope was lowered.

"Captain," said the man at the helm, who seemed to be one holding authority, "there are two. You will hear from me at your port."

"Right, sir, right. Now, then, gentlemen, quick's the word."

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