

"Do what, man?" asked Nankin. "Do what?"

"It's an offence against the person, sir, for a man to cut another's hair against his will. But pardon me, sir,—I was about to say—Oh!" shrieked Jack; "Oh!" and Jack sank doubled to the deck; he then rose, writhing like a snake, and ground his teeth, and his face was purple with pain.

The reader may recollect that, in a by-gone page, we spoke of the boatswain of the guard-ship, and, further, of an impenitent, his constant companion, formed of three ebony twigs twisted, and bound with metal. Unhappily for poor Runnymede, the boatswain, taking his noon-day walk, espied him absorbed in his address to the schoolmaster, the men vainly calling for "the sifer." Without a word—a syllable—the boatswain, with his huge hand, grasped his weapon, and, as if he would have put the strength of a whole life into one blow, smote Runnymede a little above the hips.

"You want another—do you?" asked the boatswain, shaking the ebony at poor Jack, speechless with pain.

At length, Runnymede was capable of stammering—"You—you—can't do it! You know—you—can't do it."

"What! you want another?" and the boatswain was evidently desirous of a repetition of his peculiar enjoyment.

"Oh! you—you shall suffer for this," cried Jack; "see if you don't suffer for this! I'm not to be struck in this way—for, thank God!"

"What! you will have another?" and never before did the boatswain exhibit so much self-denial.

"You know, you can't do it!" repeated John, as we think, very unnecessarily.

"Come; blow away! Come—rig out your fife!" Blow! and the boatswain held aloft the plaited ebony.

"Oh, life! how terrible are thy changes! Think, gentle reader—think of Jack Runnymede—nursed in comfort—written down gentleman—a man, who had twenty times in his life shown his acute taste by lissing a false note at the opera—think of him a pressed man aboard a guard-ship—his coat lessened to a jacket—the rim rent from his hat—his shirt in tatters—with a vile, cracked fife, in his hand, wherein he is ordered "to blow," for the inspiration of a very mixed company of thieves and vagabonds, and the penalty of his disobedience, a scourging with plaited ebony!

"You won't blow?" roared the boatswain, with rising wrath.

"I—I"—and poor Runnymede, his blood boiling, and his flesh quivering, endeavoured to fern his mouth to the fife, but produced a sound very like that of the wind gasping through a key-hole.

"Well, then, if you won't blow," cried the boatswain, and he brandished his weapon.

"What will—what—what will you have?" inquired poor Runnymede.

"Give us 'Jack's alive,'" exclaimed the boatswain, with unintentional satire.

Again Runnymede vainly whistled in the fife, and again the boatswain threatened. Jack caught the glowing eye of his executioner, and after an effort, burst into full strain.

The required quantity of water being drawn from the hold, Jack hoped that he might be allowed to retire below, and—if he could beg or steal a sheet of paper—dispatch a letter to London. Jack, however, was doomed to disappointment; for, in a few minutes, a cutter, with a large black bull painted in her mainsail, came alongside. Beef, by the half carcase was to be hoisted aboard, and again the music of Jack was to lighten the labour of his shipmates. "If I'm made to play whilst they hoist water and get aboard the beef, I suppose they'll want my fife at their dinner," and then Jack cursed the vanity that made him publish his accomplishments.

"What! you won't blow?" roared the boatswain, as Jack stood with one hand, to his back, the other holding the fife. "You can't ch?" and again the threatened ebony drew music from the pressed man. "I see you can play," cried the boatswain; "so, if there's any hitch, I'll give you double allowance next time."

"It's very well," exclaimed Jack, "but you can't do it: yes, yes—there's *habeas corpus*—you think you have me safe enough, but no—no—thank God! I'm an Englishman."

About a month had elapsed, and still Jack Runnymede remained the Orpheus of the waist. At length he contrived to get a letter put into the post-office; a letter to Mr. Candidus, who was immediately to obtain the freedom of his client by means of *habeas corpus*. Mr. Candidus, however, acting upon his own discretion, thought, under all circumstances, his client would be more certain of a dinner if remaining aboard a man-of-war. Jack had been of great service to Mr. Sidewind, whose party was now in office; nay, Sidewind himself, newly crawled into parliament through not a very open borough, had a small place in the ministry; hence, he was enabled to serve an old constituent. Moreover, he did serve him.

A letter "on his Majesty's service" was received by the captain of the guard-ship, recommending to his notice "an unfortunate person, a very respectable man—a man of superior breeding—named John Runnymede. He was fully competent to the duties of a purser's clerk."

Jack Runnymede was summoned to the quarter-deck, and informed by the captain of his good fortune. He was immediately handed over to the master's mate, Mr. Dark, who took him down to his berth in the after cock-pit, where Jack had the additional advantage of messing with Nankin, the tawny schoolmaster; a person, as he himself averred, of the very highest connexions in London.

Candidus had presented ten guineas to poor Runnymede, with which he was enabled to make a very respectable appearance; although, with strange taste, he refused to purchase the blue worsted pantaloons of the schoolmaster at a few shillings, Mr. Nankin himself having a