

"I think we are in for a full sneezer before daybreak," replied Spenser, who was now dressed from top to toe in oilskin overalls. "I never knew a sudden shift of wind to S. W. at this season, that it did not blow hard."

"Sail, ho," sung out the "look-out," from the fore-top.

"Where away?" shouted Griffiths, "come below."

The look-out, in obedience to his orders, descended from the exalted but unenviable position which he had occupied, and, approaching the Captain and Spenser, who were standing to windward of the main-mast, said that "he saw a large vessel, about five miles to the southward, bearing towards the land."

"We must soon see what she is, as she will cross our course within half-an-hour if the look-out speaks right," observed Griffiths.

The anxiety of the captain and the lieutenant to ascertain the character of the strange craft extended to the crew, and many a practiced eye sought to catch a glimpse of the stranger.

"Halloa! I see her," said Bill Marlin (a tall, wiry-looking tar, as he stood in the weather-shrouds,) "and I'm blowed if I don't believe she is a down South Yankee—I know she is; she is one of them low, long craft they send out a privateering."

"If so, she is in the wrong box," said another sailor, a second edition of Bill; "the guns of the 'Sea Lark' would make short work of her."

"I tell you what, Jack, you mista'c," replied Bill. "The Yankee has more teeth than we have, and I know the lubber is up for mischief. He did not pipe down to-night; all the hammocks are in the nettings."

"Let us have a look at her, Bill," said Jack Trysil, as he took up his position alongside of Marlin. He fixed his gaze on the approaching ship, and, after scrutinizing her from stem to stern, as she rose and fell with the sea, he said, "You are right, Bill, I know by her flimsy cotton canvas that she is a Yankee. She is a three-masted schooner, as long as a street, and she is going through the weather, she is like smoke. The fellow see us, he's luffing to get on our weather quarter; that looks game, doesn't it, Bill?" continued Jack, as he jumped on deck.

"We'll have a brush, or I'm a harpoon," observed Bill. "I counted his ports, and if I am not out in my reckoning, he carries sixteen 'bull dogs' and a long swivel aft."

While this conversation was going on, two anxious watchers observed the movements of the strange sail that every moment approached closer to the brig that was now lying, gunwale under, to the fury of the gale.

"I smell powder already," observed Spenser; "the Yankee is well manned and armed, and I fear is too heavy for us in this weather."

Griffiths made no reply, but continued for some time as if wrapt in deep reflection, and, as if waking from sleep, he said, suddenly addressing Spenser with unusual sternness, "Pipe all hands, and clear for action!"

The order was scarcely given when all was energy and active bustle on board the "Sea Lark." The port and starboard guns were loaded with as much promptness and precision as if the brig was "going free under top-gallant sails and royals."

"If this fellow shows fight, as I am sure he will, our plan will be," said Griffiths, addressing Spenser, "to let him get to windward of us, and give him the whole of the

weather broadside, then he will wear the brig, even if he should lose every spar in her, and give him the other broadside, which will become a weather one by the movement of which I speak; and Spenser, if you should survive me in this encounter, fight the 'Sea Lark' till she goes down beneath your feet." There was an air of solemnity in the manner which Griffiths expressed the latter part of his observations that showed that the forebodings expressed by Alice affected him. Having given his orders, he assumed that cool indifference to danger which characterized the school of British sailors of his time.

"I like your plan well, in everything," replied Spenser, "but the wearing, in doing which, I fear, we will lose our masts."

"We never could fight our leeward guns in this weather," replied Griffiths, coldly, as he looked through his telescope at the stranger. "If they fight their ship as well as they sail her, we shall have some hot work on hands; there goes up his bunting at last" continued he, "stars and stripes, of course. About ship."

The "Sea Lark" head was again turned towards the shore, and, as she careened to the sea, in her rapid course, it was evident the Yankee was gaining on her. "Leave her away a point or two," said Griffiths, and as the saucy little craft was eased off more with the wind, she danced over the heavy tumbling sea. When about four miles off the land the Yankee came within range, which fact was announced by a round shot passing through the fore-top-sail of the brig, now about a half mile ahead and to windward of the Yankee, on whose decks numbers of half naked sailors were to be seen preparing for the approaching combat.

"This won't do," said Griffiths, "bear away and get to leeward of the Yankee, and as he passes give him a broadside." After this order had been given a period of fearful suspense ensued. The Yankee did not seem to understand the movements of the brig, as she foamed through sea-way. The American was congratulating himself on an easy capture, when the "Sea Lark" fired her six starboard guns into her formidable rival. "Stand by to wear ship," was now passed, and before the Yankee could return the fire the "Sea Lark" literally lay over in the trough of the sea as she was wore round.

"Bravo, good masts!" shouted Spenser, as he called lustily to "brace round the yards lively;" and as the brig righted on the other tack, the "port" broadside was sent at the upper works of the "ree master." As the smoke cleared away, the main-mast of the Yankee fell over the side, carrying the fore-top-mast with it. So rapid and so novel was this manoeuvre, that the captain of the Donald Richardson (the name which the Yankee ship bore), was quite taken by surprise; but as the brig was preparing to renew the encounter, the disabled American poured a deadly volley into the Sea Lark, which did some damage to her hull, and laid many a fine seaman a mangled corpse on the deck. A shot hit Griffiths below the right shoulder, and nearly severed the arm from the body.

As he fell in the arms of Spenser, he said—"Don't mind me; Alice was right. Poor Alice, what will become of you! Save your ship by getting out of range of the Yankees' guns. You need not trouble yourself more about him, he will be ashore and go to pieces within an hour. Take me below," continued Griffiths, "I feel very weak."

The surgeon of the brig succeeded in stopping the blood which had been flowing fast from the wound, caused by the amputation of the right arm of Griffiths, who was now

reduced to the extreme of weakness, no hope whatever being entertained of his recovery. Amongst the dead were numbered Bill Marlin and Jack Trysil, of whom Jack Oakum (the great yarn spinner of the crew) said, "I would as soon myself, or the captain was dead, as either of them. There is no one on board now to have a lark with, as poor Bill and Jack are gone."

At daybreak the gale continued to blow with the greatest violence, as the brig kept well off the land. Far to leeward the American was to be seen despite the exertions of the crew, drifting hopelessly to destruction, outside of the reach of all human aid. Onward she drove before the tempest like a doomed thug, bearing to their death hundreds of brave but despairing men. As the sickly sun rose above the horizon, she neared the rock-bound coast, on which the distracted waters broke in the wildness and terror of frenzy. She rolled broadsides on the rocks when she was struck by a tremendous sea which turned her keel up. She was borne back again by receding waters, and was dashed in fragments by returning ones against the giant sentries of the Atlantic on the western coast of Ireland. Not one of her crew survived to tell the fate of the once proud ship, "Donald Richardson," the celebrated privateer, and the terror of our mercantile marine.

The command of the Sea Lark having devolved on Lieutenant Spenser, he determined on bearing back at once for Cove, and early on the morning after the encounter, the brig was running briskly for harbor. The wind being fair, she arrived at her moorings early in the afternoon; but how changed. The dashing craft that looked so graceful when leaving on the previous evening, now returned to port shattered by shot, and bearing the wounded, the dying and the dead. Spenser, after reporting himself to the Admiral, and recording the events of the previous night, lost no time in having Griffiths carefully borne to the cottage of Alice. The meeting between them was most affecting, and, as she saw him who left her a few short hours before, full of youth, hope, and manly beauty, return maimed, bruised and dying, she wept bitterly. Long and carefully did she nurse and tend her wounded sailor. But she was rewarded for all her care as she saw her patient slowly but steadily recovering. The Sea Lark was put out of commission to refit, and when she was made good as ever, Spenser was promoted to command her. It is almost needless to say that Griffiths married Alice, or that a number of young Griffiths appeared on the stage. Walter Griffiths rose to be an admiral in the service which he adorned, but it does not appear that he ever trod a quarter deck after the eventful night of "Our Brush with the Privateer."

VOLUNTEER INSPECTION.—The annual inspection of the Volunteer Rifle Company of Carleton Place, was held here on Friday last. Col. Atcherly inspected. We observed present Brigade Major Jackson and Major Poole. We are happy to be able to say that our company received the highest praise from the Colonel, who affirmed it was one of the best he had inspected, and that he would hesitate whether to give the palm to the Almonte or Carleton Place Company. We most heartily congratulate our friend Captain Brown and the men of the company on their reception of this highly laudatory testimony as to their efficiency. We trust that they will go on as they have been doing, and by next inspection leave the Almonters and all theirs far behind.—C. P. Herald.