

ous questions were put all of which I answered frankly and *truly*. Thirteen of my crew were slain, and nearly all the rest wounded. My papers were next inspected, and found to be Spanish. "How was it, then," exclaimed the commander, "that you fought under the Portuguese flag?"

Here was the question I always expected, and for which I had in vain taxed with my wit and ingenuity to supply a reasonable excuse! I had nothing to say for the daring violation of nationality; so I resolved to tell the truth boldly about my dispute with the Dane, and my desire to deceive him early in the day, but I cautiously omitted the adroitness with which I had deprived him of his darkies. I confessed that I forgot the flag when I found that I had a different foe from the Dane to contend with, and I flattered myself with the hope that, had I repulsed the first unaided onset, I would have been able to escape with the usual sea-breeze.

The captain looked at me in silence a while, and, in a sorrowful voice, asked if I was aware that my defence under the Portuguese ensign, no matter what tempted its use, could only be construed as an act of *piracy*!

A change of colour, an earnest gaze at the floor, compressed lips and clenched teeth, were my only replies.

This painful scrutiny took place before the surgeon, whose looks and expressions strongly denoted his cordial sympathy with my situation. "Yes," said Captain \* \* \* \*, "it is a pity for a sailor who fights as bravely as you have done, in defence of what he considers his property, to be condemned for a combination of mistakes and forgetfulness. However, let us not hasten matters; you are hungry and want rest, and, though we are navy-men, and on the coast of Africa, we are not savages." I was then directed to remain where I was till further orders, while my servant came below with an abundant supply of provisions. The captain went on deck, but the doctor remained. Presently, I saw the surgeon and the commander's steward busy over a basket of biscuits, meat and bottles, to the handle of which a cord several yards in length, was carefully knotted. After this was arranged, the doctor called for a lamp, and unrolling a chart, asked whether I knew the position of the vessel. I replied affirmatively, and, at his request, measured the distance, and noted the course to the nearest land, which was Cape Verga, about thirty-seven miles off.

"Now, Don Theodore, if I were in your place, with the prospect of a noose and tight-rope dancing before me, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that I would make an attempt to know what Cape Verga is made of before twenty-four hours were over my head! And see, my good fellow, how Providence, accident, or fortune favours you! First of all, your own boat *happens* to be towing astern beneath these very cabin windows; secondly, a basket of provisions, water and brandy, stands packed on the transom, almost ready to slip

into the boat by itself; next, your boy is in the neighbourhood to help you with the skiff; and, finally, it is pitch dark, perfectly calm, and there isn't a sentry to be seen aft the cabin door. Now, good night, my clever fighter, and let me never have the happiness of seeing your face again!"

As he said this, he rose, shaking my hand with the hearty grasp of a sailor, and, as he passed my servant, slipped something into his pocket, which proved to be a couple of sovereigns. Meanwhile, the steward appeared with blankets, which he spread on the locker; and, blowing out the lamp, went on deck with a "good night."

It was very still, and unusually dark. There was dead silence in the corvette. Presently, I crawled softly to the stern window, and lying flat on my stomach over the transom, peered out into night. There, in reality, was my boat towing astern by a slack line! As I gazed, some one on deck above me drew in the rope with softest motion, until the skiff lay close under the windows. Patiently, slowly, cautiously,—fearing the sound of his fall, and dreading almost the rush of my breath in the profound silence,—I lowered my boy into the boat. The basket followed. The negro fastened the boat-hook to the cabin window, and on this, lame as I was, I followed the basket. Fortunately, not a plash, a crack, or a footfall disturbed the silence. I looked aloft, and no one was visible on the quarter-deck. A slight jerk brought the boat-rope softly into the water, and I drifted away into the darkness.

LAIRD.—What kind o' a production is this, that bears the new-fangled, jaw-breaking name o' *Periscopies*? Is it onything anent the Peris, that Tummas Moore maks sic a sang about?

MAJOR.—Not at all. The volume is a mere collection of odds and ends which have appeared in sundry Yankee magazines and newspapers.

LAIRD.—Were the aforesaid odds and ends worthy o' republication?

MAJOR.—So far as two-thirds thereof are concerned, I should emphatically say—no! The author, William Elder, appears to be one of those writing machines, who are at all times ready to grapple with every subject, to order, from Parr's Pills up to the philosophy of Kant. Under an editor who could judiciously use the scissors, he might make a useful penny-a-liner, but further this deponent sayeth not! He enunciates stale platitudes with all the apparent profundity of a seraphic doctor; and every now and then shows his originality by differing point blank from his fellow mortals!

LAIRD.—Are ye no a fraction overly snell on puir William?