

"And does he attend the—by-the-bye," and the thought suddenly flashed upon Jack,—"if there's a school, I suppose there's a school-master?"

"To be sure; only just now, you see he's in a bit of trouble."

"On what account?" asked Jack.

"Why, he thought, you see, he was all right, and let his hair grow; but they've docked him again."

"And is it against the rules of the service that a school-master should let his hair grow?" inquired Runnymede wonderingly.

"You see, he wasn't a regular schoolmaster—he was only on trial. He come down here among a batch of marines—a volunteer, as you may be"—said the sailor.

"I'm a pressed man said Jack' with a sigh.

"It's all the same," said the philosophic tar. "Well they drills him for a marine, and gives him brown bess, and mounts him on the gang-way. One day, captain coming up the side sees Nankin's hands—for that's his name—'Dickson,' says the captain, 'that marine's either a scholar or a pickpocket.' You know, he might ha' been both, but the captain wasn't to know that—'either a scholar or a pickpocket,' says the captain, 'he's got such smooth hands.' Well they wanted somebody to learn the ship's boys, and they tries Nankin, and finds he can read, and write, and sum; and so they promotes him to the gun-room; and bit by bit, he casts his red and pipe-clay, and the blessed impudence to let his hair grow."

"I see said Runnymede, "he wished to quit the marines?"

"Proud as a mermaid with a new gold frame to her looking-glass," said the sailor. "Well he gets on—and gets on; and from messing with the carpenter in the fore cockpit, he get's right aft with the masters mate—sings songs to the purser's clerk's wife—wears boots when he goes ashore: and more than all, only yesterday—I heard him myself—ordered the bum-bustoman to bring him off a tooth brush."

Jack stared at the sailor, with great seriousness, touched on the last vanity of Nankin: then asked, "but what crime has the schoolmaster committed?"

"Why, he got leave to go to Lunnon two months ago. Mr. Highropes—he's the flag-lieutenant—was in Lunnon, too. Would you think it? The lieutenant going to—I think they call it Fox's-Hall—quite a grand place, who should he see there but the pot-hook marine, Nankin, with a long coat, and a squeeze hat under his arm? Well, when the lieutenant takes out a lady—some 'oman of quality, no doubt—to dance, Mr. Nankin, with no respect to his officer, has the impudence to think of dancing too!"

"And—and was this the only offence committed by the schoolmaster?" inquired the astonished Runnymede.

"And quite enough, aboard a man-of-war, I can tell you," answered the sailor with a significant nod.

"Why, they never, dared—that is—he was never punished for?"

"Warn't he? He hasn't got over it yet: directly he comes aboard, captain sends for him; tells him to rig in red again, to mess for'ard, and to give up his truck, that's his head to the barber."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Jack Runnymede, astonished at the rigorous discipline. "Has a man no command over his own hair?"

"Not a marine," answered the communicative tar, with great dignity, "we wouldn't stand that. But I think the schoolmaster's beating a little up again."

"Why—why?" inquired Runnymede, interested for the scholarly victim.

"He hasn't been cropped these three weeks; and, more than that, yesterday he rigged out the blue jacket agin. Poor devil! but for all that, no men aboard a man-of-war has any right to look, mate, there he goes!"

"What! the schoolmaster?—Where?" inquired Runnymede.

"There's his legs, going up the ladder," and the sailor pointed to a pair of thick, dwarfish limbs, almost bursting through blue worsted pantaloons. The upper part of their owner was unseen by Jack, but he hastily ran from the sailor in quest of it. As Jack ran aft, he was met by a fierce-looking man, who exclaimed, "Hallo! you're not going to dine with the captain, to-day—are you?"

"No," replied Runnymede, with a simplicity that evidently tickled the fellow, for he growled a laugh like a pleased bear.

"No."

"I thought not; well, for'ard, if you please," and he pushed Runnymede before him, who in vain attempted to explain his wishes to the despotic boatswain's mate.

LAMB.—Pair Jack!

MAJOR.—After a season the hapless Runnymede is promoted to the office of fifer, but misfortunes continue to attend him:

In an evil moment did Mr. Nankin present himself to the eyes of Runnymede; for, careless of the wants of the water-drawers, Jack stepped away to address the pedagogue; and heedless of the cry of "music," "fifer," "hubber," from the sailors, sought to secure the services of the scholar. "I trust, sir," said Jack, taking off all the hat that was left him, "I trust, sir, that my situation as an unfortunate gentleman will be my apology for addressing you?" Mr. Nankin bent his large black eyes very disdainfully on the miserable figure before him, and, endeavouring to brush up the hair which, by the indulgence of the captain, had been suffered to remain three weeks uncropped, was about to turn away: this action of Nankin brought to Runnymede's recollection the peculiar miseries of the school-master. "Ha! sir," said Jack, staring at Nankin's hair, "they can't do that, sir—they can't indeed."