

proud as a monarch, but, happily, ignorant of the trying scenes which awaited him and were near at hand. Twilight had faded, and night had come on before the *Sea Lark* had weathered the Cork harbor light; but the moon rose gloriously, silencing the curling-crests of the waves, and displaying in richest beauty the border of snow-white foam that broke on the rocky barriers of the harbor.

"What do you think of the night, Mr. Spenser?" said Captain Griffiths to his first lieutenant, who happened to be the officer of the watch.

"I should think it will freshen. This is the first of the spring equinox, and I should say it would be as well to make everything as snug as possible aloft, though the *Sea Lark* is a real stiff 'un under canvas."

"She bears all the sail she has now on her with evident ease, and without straining. However, it would perhaps be prudent to adopt your suggestion."

This conversation between the skipper and the first lieutenant had scarcely concluded, when a heavy squall struck the *Sea Lark*, but she rose from her dip like a dolphin through the clouds of spray caused by her rapid course through the water.

"The wind came nearly as soon as your advice, Mr. Spenser," said Captain Griffiths, giving himself three or four good shakes, which sent the water drops flying from off the surface of his pea jacket, and clewing up to the weather side of the quarter-deck. The top-gallant masts were soon housed and topsails reefed, and the *Sea Lark* stood to the westward on the starboard tack.

On the evening on which our little story opens, the parting between Captain Griffiths and Alice Moreland partook of an amount of interest and anxiety on the part of the fair girl not to be accounted for by any of the ordinary risks contingent on the life of a sailor during a short cruise. Alice Moreland was the daughter of an officer, who had served with distinction throughout a long and arduous career, and who, after having wasted his best years and energies in the service of his country, died poor and penniless, the recipient of what is called "half pay," after having seen in his time class influence and class insolence promoted above merit, and to find himself a subaltern to mere pretension. Through the influence of a friend who had known him at a period when the throbbings of a big ambition seemed easy of being realized, he succeeded in his old days in obtaining the appointment of his only son to a commission in the navy. The young man went to sea, and in the stirring events of that period which opened the nineteenth century, he earned honor and renown up to a certain time, when he became a victim of a low vice, that of habitual intoxication; and at a critical period, on a "cutting-out expedition," it would seem that the disabled physical powers and unstrung nerves of the unhappy young man had rendered him incapable of doing a man's duty. He was accused of cowardice in the face of the enemy. He was tried by a court-martial and sentenced to death. During the few bitter hours which elapsed between his sentence and its execution, Frederick Moreland (for such was his name), experienced the greatest kindness from Captain Griffiths, and when about to be led forth to death, he made it a last request that Capt. Griffiths should always keep the interests of old Lieutenant Moreland and of Alice (the poor fellow's father and sister) always in view and under his special observation. This request Captain Griffiths promised faithfully to fulfil.

It was in the month of June, 1810, that the attention of the loungers and idlers on the cliffs and look-out points of Cove harbor was attracted by the appearance of a vessel of war, evidently, from her size and apparent number of guns, a line-of-battle ship, slowly entering the noble harbor. The ship had apparently come a long voyage. She looked like a sea-bird weary after flight, and bore about her, both in hull and rigging, well-marked signs and indications of having battled with ocean and tempest. As the storm-beaten ship approached the usual man-of-war anchorage, two individuals marked her approach with feverish anxiety. These individuals were Lieutenant Moreland and his daughter Alice, for it was in that ship that the Lieutenant's son, Fred. Moreland, was serving as second lieutenant. The massive anchor, with its heavy chain cable, were let fall from the bows, and the huge ship rounded to the tide. She looked like some huge animated being, fatigued with buffeting winds and storms, and now taking a position of ease in swinging to her berth in the placid anchorage of Cove harbor. Shoals of small boats clustered around the newly-arrived ship, and many an unturned face looked in vain for the features of loved ones who were destined never to return, or recognize those who had come back after encountering the dangers of sea and war. Amongst the first from the shore who stepped on board the newly-arrived ship were Lieutenant Moreland and his lovely daughter, Alice. They looked and looked in vain, for a sight of him who was so truly dear to them. Griffiths, as lieutenant, was on deck, and at once recognized the likeness between his unfortunate shipmate and the lady and gentleman before him. He had a sad story to record, and the brave old man and his daughter, who but a short time before had their hearts brimful with joyous hope, descended the ship's side and returned to their silent home, plunged in the deepest sorrow, and pierced with the bitterest and most humiliating affliction.

The kindness and consideration evinced by Griffiths excited in the mind of Alice the warmest gratitude, and, in fact, the sincerest affection, for the man who had proved himself the friend of her unhappy brother. The old Lieutenant did not long survive this bitter bereavement of cherished hope; and his orphan daughter became the occupant of one of the prettiest of cottages, that seemed to nestle amidst shrubs and trees, in the vicinity of the shore of that section of Cove harbour known as East Ferry. Day after day, Captain Griffiths was a constant visitor at the cottage, and strove, by every means in his power, to assuage the mental sufferings and subdue the bitter and hateful reminiscences of an event, which, whilst cutting short the life of one so dear to her by a disgraceful end, deprived her, even his own sister, of the power of blessing his memory. At the conclusion of one of those interviews between Alice and Captain Griffiths, the sailor offered her his hand in marriage, and the offer was accepted; but, with all a woman's pride, she reminded him, and solemnly warned him not to forget, that he had now pledged his troth, for life, to a woman the sister of one whose professional career had been stained by the imputation of a crime, the lowest and most degrading of which any man could be guilty, whose profession it was to bear arms in defence of his country.

The reply of Griffiths was manly and sailor-like. "I knew your brother well, Alice," said he, "and he was no coward. He was as physically brave as a lion, and he met his death with the calm composure of a truly

brave man. What was called cowardice in him was drunkenness; and I believe that a great wrong has been done to my unfortunate shipmate, your brother. Even if he had been guilty of the crime for which he died, it would not influence me for a moment with regard to you, to whom I feel the deepest and most unalterable affection."

"Then, be it so, Walter," said Alice, whose eyes were suffused with tears, as she heard the observations which Griffiths made relative to Frederick Moreland. "If you think me worthy of you," continued the beautiful girl, "I am yours for ever. But, tell me, Walter, will you be long absent on this voyage you are going to take, as I feel a kind of uneasiness on your account which I cannot recover myself out of?"

"Nonsense, pet," replied Griffiths, as he burst into a long, loud and joyous laugh: "you women are as superstitious as Danish sailors. And will you tell me what danger is there in going round the coast in the *Sea Lark*. By Jove, for a mere trifle, I would make you come round with us. I intend to be your guest at tea this evening, Alice, so be quick, as I must be on board within an hour."

Alice was not long in getting the tea equipage in order; but, despite every effort to shake it off, a feeling, or rather sad foreboding, haunted her like a shadow. This did not pass the observation of Griffiths, who accounted for it by assigning it to the affection which he knew Alice bore to him. He tried to converse as gaily as possible, but to no purpose, as the fair girl gave indications of unspeakable sadness. The time arrived when the sailor should return to his ship, and, as he rose to take his leave, Alice burst into tears. After an affectionate parting, Griffiths proceeded on board the *Sea Lark*, and Alice watched the vessel which bore him she so deeply loved, until the white sails of the brig faded in the hazy distance.

As the *Sea Lark* continued her course the wind freshened until it rose to half a gale, and as the gallant craft rushed through the foam, clouds of spray dashed over her quarter and deluged the decks. Her spars, from the pressure of the sails, whipped like fishing rods, and at this time the *Sea Lark* was going thirteen knots an hour.

"The wind is wasting a point or two," said Spenser, addressing Captain Griffiths. "and I think it would be well to 'go about,' and give the coast a 'wide berth.' I don't like a lee shore in a square rigged craft," continued Spenser, laughing. "I have got enough of that kind of thing in my time."

As the lieutenant spoke, the thunder of the huge breakers could be heard on board, and from time to time when the moon would shine out, the giant rocks that girdled the coast could be seen covered with foam and spray.

"You have given such good advice before this evening, be it so," replied Griffiths; pass the word."

"Stand by, about ship," shouted Spenser, through his trumpet, and in one minute the shrill whistle of the boatswain was heard above the tempest like the sound of the oboe above an orchestra. Every man was at his post, when the helm was put down, and the *Sea Lark* ran up in the wind like a sea-bird emerging from the water. The yards having been braced round, the brig rushed off on the "port" tack, standing to the southward.

She is behaving well to-night, Mr. Spenser said Griffiths, who never went below from the time the brig left her moorings, but I fear we have not had the worst of the gale yet: it looks very unsettled to windward.