

rail of his high deck. "And where might he be found, prythee?"

"It was upon some island, as I remember, to the northward of Sicily," I answered.

"'Tis as I thought then," said he, "and having a part of our cargo to discharge at Amalfi, we will read our instructions something more liberally than we be wont to do, and shape our course toward — well, should we chance to make this island of yours upon the way, there's no harm done, Master Supercargo;" and he blinked again.

"You will give them chase?" cried I.

"We be men peaceably inclined at all times," replied Tuchet, closing his eyes altogether, "and I should be sorry if resistance to our demands led to bloodshed."

"But my uncle . . ." I said and hesitated.

"Is a reasonable villain by all accounts," replied the Captain, and so for that while dismissed me.

The news that we were to alter our course in order to the end I have named, soon spread amongst the crew, who one and all rejoiced at the prospect of fighting it offered them; that being a luxury not often to be indulged in upon a merchant ship and therefore the more highly prized. From the mate I learned that there was an infinite number of such secret nooks and fastnesses by pirates and desperate thieves infested, in this sea, and that to any ordinary man it would appear an absurd thing to attempt, from amongst so many, to discover the particular refuge that Spurrier might affect. "So that were it not for some hint we have to go upon, which our Captain thinks sufficient, we might indeed