

Perhaps, being so busy with weighty matters of State at home, the Council had not time to remember its weary mariners still tossing on the Atlantic, waiting a port whose trade was practically dead, ships being left to come out or go in, for so long a time at any rate. So the admiral determined to pay a visit of vengeance to the pirates of Salé, who, left to their own devilish devices for a long time, had forgotten the lessons taught to their *frères* of Tunis and Algiers. Orders were therefore given for sail to be made, and a course to be set southward for the pirate port, with the intention of dealing such a blow at the business as would effectually cripple it. But when the squadron arrived off the port, it took no long time to ascertain that under present conditions no attack could be made. None of Blake's ships could come near enough to bombard the pirate stronghold, while the light draughted pirate craft, sailing twice as fast as any of the English ships, foul with their long cruising and in any case too heavy for the service, never allowed themselves to get near enough to be shot at with any chance of success. It was also impossible to make a boat attack without risking too much valuable life. To send boats into a harbour swarming with these light-heeled pirate galleys, crowded with reckless ruffians, was to court their destruction; they must have been overwhelmed.

Yet such was the terror of Blake's name that the ruler of Salé, although he must have been fully conscious of the Englishmen's helplessness under present conditions, was anxious to treat with them