

will I claim you for my bride. We will be all the world to each other, and set the cold formalities of unmeaning frivolity at defiance. Yes, Ellen," he added with more vehemence, "at defiance! But, come love, come, the last sweet kiss—ay, lay your head against my breast, and let me press it there."

"Like a lily blooming on a grave, like a ray of light beaming on desolation," mournfully uttered a musical and plaintive voice close to them, which Ellen instantly knew to be her aunt's.

"Edmund Foster, or whatever your name may be, forbear!" The young man's faculties were for the moment paralyzed, but it was only for the moment. Shaking off the superstitious dread that had suddenly seized him, he exclaimed:—"How now! what impudent intruder, what eaves-dropping creature, is this?" but Ellen's whisper: "It is my aunt," silenced his harshness, and he continued with more softness, "Your relatives should be mine, Ellen; they claim my respect, though their language may not be altogether suited to my feelings."

"Hush! hush!" said the same plaintive and melodious voice. "I see the vision; it is even now before me. There is a burning pile, and armed men; a deed of blood, and a deed of bravery; that fire hath enkindled in the human heart a flame which death alone can quench!" She ceased for a moment or two, amidst profound silence, and proceeded: "It is past, it is gone; and now the dimly-veiled future opens on my sight. Ha!" she faintly shrieked, "what is it that flits before my eyes? No, no, it cannot be. Oh, anguish! this is mockery—it cannot be; and yet it is there—a nameless death and a broken heart. Ellen Courtney, child of my sister's love, beware! Young man, depart. Oh, hasten hence, there is danger to all whilst you remain. If you are generous, and brave, and noble-minded, depart, I say, and come here no more. Remember the warning—a nameless death, and a broken heart!" and they heard her retreating footsteps outside the alcove.

Both stood for several minutes gazing at each other. The light of day was nearly gone, but there was a flush of crimson on the western sky that was reflected upon their faces, and heightened the colour on their cheeks. At length Ellen broke silence. "Oh, Edmund," said she imploringly, "what is this that has come upon us? Tell me, tell me all; indeed I can endure any thing for your sake."

The young man hesitated, and for an instant trembled, but, again assuming his usual boldness, he uttered with a degree of bitterness that smote painfully upon poor Ellen's heart, "Do you expect me to become accountable for the wild ravings of a maniac? Have you engaged a lunatic to aid you in your scheme of wringing from me a secret, which I am bound by oath to keep inviolate? This is not the Ellen Courtney who clung to me in the hour of peril. This is not the Ellen Courtney whose faith was pledged to me before the God of Nature."

"Edmund, dear Edmund, do not upbraid me thus," said the weeping maiden, "do not part from me in anger; indeed, indeed I was not aware of Aunt Margaret's presence. And her words—oh they were fearful words, Edmund, and fearful must be their meaning. What danger do you apprehend? what danger is at hand? I know I am but a child in heart, Edmund, but, believe me, I would brave every thing but dishonour to secure your safety."

"Danger, Ellen!" proudly returned the young man, as he firmly planted his foot upon the green sward, and pressed the fair girl more closely in his arm. "I fear no danger; it has been familiar to me from my childhood. My only fear is that you will brood over the ranting foolery of your aunt, and her words really amount to nothing after all; the mere effects of a distempered imagination; but, as I say, my only fear is that you will brood over them during my absence and make yourself wretched. I spoke too hastily in my vexation at such mummery; for, what is there to dread? But, come, dearest, let it be forgotten; the time for my departure has arrived. Smile upon me, Ellen, before I go. Yes, let me see one of those sweet smiles that shed the sunlight of hope upon my heart, to cheer me when away. Oh! my soul always clings with fond remembrance to your last look of innocence and beauty; amid the howlings of the storm, it is the bright star that bursts through every cloud; in the hour of battle, it shall guide me on to victory! Your smile, Ellen! your smile!"

The affectionate maiden looked on her lover's animated countenance, and tried to smile, but tears forced their way, till by gentle soothing he had calmed the perturbation of her mind, and then, after an ardent embrace of fond regard and solemn promises of fidelity, they parted, Ellen almost verifying her aunt's prediction, and Edmund—but, I must not forestall my story.

The course of events must now carry me to another scene, and in a different kingdom. It was morning; the sun rose angrily, imparting the reddened hue of his inflamed wrath to the dark clouds that hung upon the horizon, like the mantling curtains of his night's pavilion. The breeze was fresh, approaching to a gale. Within the port of Flushing lay one of those handsome luggers which the well-practised eye of a seaman loves to gaze upon, and more especially if such seaman is in the service of his country, or engaged in the contraband. She was a smuggler. Her hull was painted white, and deep in the water;

her working lugs were all ready for setting, and the crew were busily employed in the necessary acts of preparation for sailing. An uncouth elderly man sat abaft upon the companion, with a long Flemish pipe in his mouth, which he removed occasionally for the purpose of giving orders, or conversing with those who were near him, whilst a huge mug of grog was placed by his side, and partaken of equally and freely by all on deck.

"The 'Saucy Suke' will have a fine run to-night, I predicts," said the apparent superior after a long whiff, and the smoke scudding away to leeward, as if from the muzzle of a gun; here's wind and weather in our favour; the cruisers all snug at anchor, for your 'long-shore groupers loves to shelter their noses from a rough night-gale. Clap a piece of twine round the fag end of them main halliards, Juniper; lugs in good condition; craft in excellent trim; off she goes, lads; Flamborough Head and the boys all ready."

"Ould Badger has it by heart," rejoined Juniper, laughing, "and mayhap it's all right, for, happy-go-lucky's the best arter all. What time is Young Lion to be aboard?"

"Yonder he stands, upon the key," answered the other, pointing to a young man clothed in canvas trowsers, a warm Flushing jacket, with a hairy cap that partly concealed his features. "Well, that youngster be the devil, for sartin. How cleverly he brought us off that night in Saint Marget's barn! it was 'touch and go' with us. We've had many a carouse there, that's true, and now the blackened ruins will sarve for some o' your nonsensical novel-writers to spin a yarn about. They may call it the 'Smuggler's Disaster, or the Tragical end of Coldtoast the murderer.'" A laugh succeeded this sally, and the hardened veteran went on: "By the hookey, though, Young Lion has been a different sort of fellow since, and he talks of this being his last trip. Well, let him bring up wheresomever he likes—the free trade will lose one of its best hands, and ould Dangerfield will never get such another gallant fellow to do his sarvice. See, he is waving for the punt; jump into the boat, Teetotum, and fetch the skipper aboard."

Teetotum, (who with the others will be recognized as old acquaintances), immediately obeyed, and the commander was soon pacing the deck, issuing his directions for getting under way, and in a short space of time the "Saucy Suke" was rattling through the Duerloo channel, bound on an adventurous voyage to England. The lugger was one of the largest of her class, admeasuring nearly two hundred tons, and carrying sixteen guns, with a crew of sixty determined men. The gale blew strong, with a broken cross sea; and, as the lovely craft danced over the waters like a flying fish, she threw the spray about as if in sportive play with her native element. The skipper, with watchful and eager eye, not only kept a good look-out on every straining motion of his vessel, but his spy-glass was constantly in his hand, observing every stranger that hove in sight.

It was nearly six bells in the afternoon watch, when a large cutter made her appearance on their weather-beam, standing in for the English coast, and the smuggler instantly knew her to be the Lively, under the flag of the revenue. "She sees us," exclaimed the captain, addressing old Badger, his second in command, "and he will run in with us for the purpose of deception. Never mind, keep her in her course, lad, and steer small."

"Ay, ay," responded old Badger, "we do not fear him; our guns are as heavy as his, and we are better manned; both men and metal would like to do a bit of talking with them chaps."

"I know it," replied the captain, and then added musingly, "still, it will not suit my designs to fight, if I can avoid it; but I will not run away."

That the revenue cutter had recognized the smuggler was evident: the former kept edging off to close the latter, who, however, had the heels of his opponent, and would soon have left her, had not a large ship appeared right ahead, which, by the squareness and nice set of her close-reefed topsails and large courses, Young Lion knew to be a heavy sloop or a frigate a little off the wind. Somewhat chagrined, but nothing daunted, the skipper revolved in his mind what was best to be done. If he ran away before it, he should be carried off from his ground, and the frigate might set a press of canvas that would bring her alongside. If he came to the wind, he must close with the cutter, whose signals were already informing the man-of-war that a smuggler was in sight. It is true, he might return towards the port which he had left, but there was still the chance of being intercepted by some of the numerous cruisers that were constantly in these seas; he was dead under the lee of the cutter, but to windward of the ship which had immediately hauled up in chase. Under all circumstances, he came to the wind on the larboard tack, bringing the cutter a handspike's length open on his weather-bow; and she, observing the manœuvre, wore round upon the starboard tack, to keep the weather-gage, as well also as to close the lugger. "There is too much sea for the guns to be of any use," exclaimed old Badger, addressing the commander, "but, if the Lively comes to speak us, our small arms may keep 'em civil. We shall soon have a dark night, and then we can bid 'em good by."

"We have nothing to fear," returned the captain; "the

Saucy Suke will sail round the cutter in this breeze; our sticks are good, for that new foremast, though it bends but little, carries the canvas well. We will hold on to the wind till dark, and then keep our course again."

The two vessels were now rapidly approaching each other; the cutter hoisted her ensign at the peak, and swallow-tailed flag at the mast head; the lugger showed the horizontal tricolours of Holland on her mizen-staff. The Lively edged down towards her opponent, well knowing her character and the determined and daring men she had to deal with. Affairs were in this position; the cutter had reached within musket-shot; the lugger's crew, excepting the captain, old Badger, and a few hands to tend the sheets, were sheltering (fire-arms in hand) below, when a short, broken sea struck the Saucy Suke on her bow. There was a cracking and crashing of spars, and the new foremast lay in splintered wreck over the side; the fore yard-arm passing through the mainsail, and rending it from clue to ear-ring. The cutter beheld the catastrophe, and a loud shout came down upon the breeze across the waters to the embarrassed smugglers. The shout was, however, promptly returned, as the crew of the lugger turned to with hearty good will to repair the damages as well as it was possible to do so. The cutter passed within hail, and a musket-shot, whether by design or accident, struck old Badger, and wounded him in the arm. The smugglers, inflamed with resentment, immediately returned the fire, and a smart engagement ensued, in which several on both sides were killed and wounded.

Young Lion saw his men fall with feelings approaching to maddened desperation; he knew himself more than a match for the cutter, but he looked at the wreck of the foremast as it was cut clear from the side and went astern; he saw the frigate was creeping up to windward, and, therefore, he determined to run for it. The tattered main lug was shifted for a sail of much larger dimensions, and, putting up the helm, the lugger was placed as near before the wind as could be allowed without danger of gibing. Away she went over the green seas, nearly burying her bows beneath the waves; the cutter followed in her wake, firing as long as she was within reach of musketry, and many a stout fellow was driven wounded from the helm. The frigate had also borne up and shaken out her reefs, but the Saucy Suke outsailed them both, till, darkness veiling the sky and ocean, and a jury foremast having been rigged, she once more stood in for the British coast. But the wind fell, and a thick fog came on, which at first the smugglers deemed favourable, and probably it would have been so, had not Fate decreed that the career of the Saucy Suke should be at an end.

The lugger had rounded to for the purpose of sounding, when a heavy shock upon the quarter, that nearly threw her on her beam ends, told them they had been run foul of, and a cutter's bowsprit between their two after-masts informed them of the character of the vessel which had struck them. At first, consternation reigned in both vessels, but a few minutes served to change the feelings into deadly animosity, when each discovered their old opponent—the Lively and the Smuggler. Forgetting their immediate danger, forgetting all but the hatred they mutually bore, both parties closed in deadly strife. The revenue men boarded and were repulsed; and the smugglers, in their eagerness to drive them back, followed the retreating enemy to the Lively's deck. Old Badger fought with desperation, till the commander of the cutter put a pistol-ball through his head, which was immediately retaliated by Young Lion passing his sword through the heart of the captain of the Lively, and the cutter surrendered. The heavy booming of an eighteen-pounder at no great distance startled the smugglers, who, in an almost sinking state, cut themselves clear of the conquered craft. But the cutter's bowsprit had split the mainsail, and, before they could shift it for the great one, a partial clear showed them the frigate close aboard of them, and all hopes of escape were at an end. In another quarter of an hour, the Saucy Suke was prize to his Majesty's ship the Vigilant, and which, as soon as the lugger's damages were repaired, stood with her for the Downs.

The daring band of outlaws were sent to Maidstone jail, where they were tried for murder, and, being convicted, received various sentences, some to be transported for life, and others to an ignominious death, and amongst the latter was the smuggler chief, Young Lion, who was sworn to as having killed the captain of the cutter.

But, to return to Ellen. After Edmund's departure, she had frequently heard from him, and the letters breathed the pure spirit of affection. Hope revived her pleasing anticipations of his return, and the last letter she received had fixed the period when they were to meet again. The time arrived, and passed away; days, weeks, rolled on, and yet he came not, and her heart sickened and sickened, as continued disappointment marred her expectations.

It was on a cold morning of January that business called aunt Margaret to Dover, and her niece accompanied her in a small pony chaise; and, as their road lay across the country, they met with but little interruption, till, coming upon the turnpike, they were surprised at observing numerous crowds of the people hastening towards the town. At Charlton Lane-end the crowd was so dense