

among us. Nay—look not so. I know that the Vengeance has been in these waters before, and were the commander of yonder brig that now lies so supinely upon the sleeping bay, to know that the smuggler was now within range of his guns, rest assured not even your commission would save you unscathed."

"He would find that for every shot he gave, two would be returned," replied Kyd, fiercely. "By Sathanus, I have almost a mind to run my brig along-side and give him a parting salute. But no, my fire must be reserved for those that make the most resistance."

"In this package," continued Bellamont, "you will find two commissions. One authorising you to use all means in your power—of peace or war—of treaty or the force of arms, to extirpate the gang of pirates and desperadoes therein named. The other is a letter of commission for reprisals. With this, you are to capture, sink, burn, or destroy every thing that comes in your way, appertaining to the French flag, but by no means are you to deviate, in the least, from your track. You are now in possession of your instructions, great trust is reposed in you, and I beseech you betray it not. Use your power discreetly—and now farewell."

Once more he extended his hand to the Buccaneer, who received it, and pressed it to his lips, then grasping the package, left the house, and the next moment the sound of his footsteps died away in the distance. A few hasty steps brought him to the landing, and signing to the boat's crew to shove in and receive him, he stepped aboard, and a single stroke sent it far into the channel. "Any signs of a breeze," said Kyd, to the one who sat next to him.

"There is a nor'wester beating to quarters aloft," answered the seaman, "and by the next watch, if we put to sea, we shall have the spray under our bows flying like a cataract."

"Silence, we are passing the brig of war."

Like a mountain in a valley lay the sleeping lion, at the distance of two oars' length from the boat. Several

lanterns gleamed at various points about her rigging, but not the least sign of activity was visible.

"A dozen good swords to back me, and I'd carry that brig's deck in spite of her teeth," exclaimed Kyd. "Hail to your ears, men—pull, and send us clear of her."

"Boat, ahoy!" hailed a voice from the brig.

"Bend on, hearties," exclaimed Kyd. As no answer being returned, the summons was again repeated. "Sweep us aboard the Vengeance in the least possible time. I'm in no mood to answer the cry of every bully that chooses to hail us. Dash away, we are almost aboard."

A dozen strokes more, and the boat shot in under the counter of the Vengeance, and in another moment, was hanging at its accustomed berth.

All was bustle and activity aboard the cutter as soon as its commander touched the deck. The courses were set, the topsails and lighter sails loosed, the massy anchor came slowly up from its ocean bed, and the graceful bark feeling the influence of the land breeze, careened, for a moment, upon her side, and then upright, like a being of the sea, slowly cut her path through the dancing waters that were washing her form. A bright flash shot over the surface of the harbour, the roar of a gun boomed heavily, and then a whizzing shot from the brig of war came skipping through the rigging of the Vengeance, cutting the fore topsail halliard in twain.

"For'ard, there," shouted the commander. "Spring aloft a dozen of you, and secure the fore tops'l. Lively, lively, and then we'll have revenge. Load every gun along the leeward bulwarks, and light your matches. All ready, there?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Then down with the helm, and lay us along-side."

Obedient to the command, the cutter was instantly brought in close contact with the brig.

"Fore and aft," shouted the trumpet-toned voice of Kyd. "Stand to your