

insist," replied the young officer, with difficulty restraining a smile; "and your wine of equal proof." But far more of his critical attention was given to the stout captain and the latter's evident anxiety to placate him, rather than to the writings which lay open before them. "As I can readily perceive, you are traders, without articles of contraband or even munitions of war, excepting those necessary for your own protection from piracy."

"Positively, young gentleman," gurgled Glenbucket, "you appear to be one of the most delightful companions I have ever met. I trust that"—

"May I have the pleasure of a few words with—Mr. Montgomery?" interrupted the officer.

"Eh! What!" ejaculated Glenbucket, falling back a step or two in evident consternation. Recovering himself but indifferently, he stutted forth: "Mo—o—st cer—certainly, if you s-so desire."

"Thanks. It is merely a courtesy which I owe him," replied the officer, with a smile and inflexion of voice which were both intended to be reassuring: "I would indeed be remiss in common politeness if I did not salute an honest merchant who has voyaged hither."

Paying but scant attention to these commonplaces, Glenbucket ostentatiously produced a pair of superbly inlaid pistols and adjusted them conveniently in his belt.