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THE PIRATE VESSEL.

During the 17th and 18th of May, a distant sail had been seen upon our starboard quarter, standing the same course with ourselves; and from the circumstance of her position being always the same, we could only conclude that she was steering by us, for she continued to preserve, both in light and fresh breezes, the same distance, as a mere speck upon the horizon, so that it was impossible to make her out. The suspicions of the captain were awakened by her continuing to hover thus perseveringly about our wake; the magazine was overhauled, and the ship's cutlasses and muskets were passed once more through the armourer's hands; however, it was not thought necessary to remount the guns, which had been stowed away only the previous day.

In the evening, I was writing in my cabin, when Tom, the little cabin-boy came, running in. 'Sir, sir, there's a great ship coming down to us, to fight us; there's the captain and officers and all the passengers upon the poop, with their glasses, and they all think she is a pirate ship.'

I took my telescope, and ran on deck, and there, as the boy had said, were all the people anxiously reconnoitring the stranger, who was bearing directly down upon us. It was getting dark, and the vessel was at too great a distance for any but a sailor's eye to determine what she was.

'What do you make of her, Mr. Harcourt?' asked the captain of the chief mate.

'She's a schooner, sir, and a rakish little craft she is too; in my mind no better than she should be.'

'Faith, and there may be some truth in that,' replied the skipper. 'Let's have the guns on deck smartly, Mr. Harcourt, and tell Macanley and the steward to stand by the magazine. Carpenter, knock out the ports!'

Considerable excitement now prevailed on board; every hand was actively engaged in preparation. It was evident that the captain anticipated a bit of a skirmish; for except while superintending the work on deck, his eye was anxiously fixed upon the movements of the stranger. She was nearing us rapidly, and every spar and every rope quickly became visible in relief against the clear sky.

'Now, boys,' said the captain, 'if we are obliged to grapple that little devil, there will be no child's-play for us; you all know what hands such as she are manned by. I don't want to preach to you, my lads; I put too much confidence in every man of you to think that you require to be talked into your duty—it is enough that you are British seamen. Boatswain, pipe all hands to splice the main brace!'

The little craft was now within hail; not a soul was to be seen on board, except the man at the wheel. She really appeared to manoeuvre as if by magic, as she came sweeping down upon us, now luffing to the wind, now again lying off a point or two, as if to show her superiority of sailing. Now, like a little water-witch, the most perfect model of symmetry and grace, she came skimming over the water but a stone's throw to windward of us. Our captain hailed her, but she made us no reply; again, but with a little effect: once more, but she still persisted in her obstinate silence. He now threatened to fire into her if she did not reply, and up started a figure, trumpet in hand, who answered our hail by a loud incomprehensible sort of a grunt, and again she steered wide of us. As she fell off from us, she wore round upon the wind, as if with the intention of bringing her broadside to rake our decks from the stern forwards: our skipper, however, was a little too wide awake for her, and wore ship also, before the manoeuvre had time to take effect, so that we were again standing the same course; but we were now upon the

windward side, an advantage which the schooner had hitherto enjoyed. Finding herself foiled, she now went off at a tangent before the wind, and was quickly lost sight of in the increasing gloom.

'She's not gone yet,' said the captain; 'lay the ship her course again, Mr. Harcourt; she'll be down upon us again directly. But, eh! how's this? why the ladies are all in the cuddy; they had better go below. See to that, Mr. Harcourt: I'll keep an eye on deck.'

Now let us take a peep fore and aft the decks. All the more combative among the passengers were assembled upon the poop, armed to the teeth, with fowling-pieces, regimental swords, ship's muskets, boarding-pikes, and cutlasses. I had taken my station upon the larboard bumpkin boom, with my double-barrelled Joe, having been commissioned by the captain to reserve my fire in order to pick off the stranger's helmsman, if an opportunity should occur. The quarterdeck, waist, and fore-castle, were crowded with the able hands on board. The capstern was surrounded with ammunition and small arms, and all the shot-lockers were well furnished. The sailors appointed to man the guns stood by them, anxiously awaiting an opportunity of displaying their skill; the musketeers occupied the intervals between the guns, and at the gangway stood, with his shirt sleeves tucked above his elbows, our gigantic immolating priest, Tom Kitts, the butcher, brandishing a red-hot poker, wherewith to fire the guns: not a port-fire was to be found on board.

It will be understood that the schooner having gone off before the wind, and we now lying our course with the wind upon our larboard quarter, the two vessels were supposed to be sailing in directions diverging from one another. It was to our utter astonishment, therefore, that the watch upon the fore-castle descried the little witch coming down directly across our course, and not a hundred yards a-head of us; it could be no other? no! there she was, the same little gull-like craft, sweeping along under a press of canvass, and impudently running under our very bows.

'Port your helm!' roared the captain to the man at the wheel; 'why that lubber is determined to make us run her down: but, by the mighty Jove, I'll not lay a point off my course for her again. Steady!'

'Steady she is, sir,' replied the helmsman.

The schooner again tried the same manoeuvre as before, but our captain was too keen to be out-witted, and as she brought her broadside upon our quarter, we again wore round, so as to keep her on our beam. Finding that she had gained nothing, she did not attempt any renewal of this manoeuvre; but filling again her towering canvass, she passed a-head, and once more crossed our bows, so close, indeed, that our flying jib-boom was reported to have carried away her peak halliards: for our skipper kept his word, declaring that he would run her down rather than break off his course again. We entreated him to fire into her for her insolence; but he declared he dared not do it.

'I would,' said he, 'if I dared, but such a thing would subject me to the loss of my command; besides remember how many petticoats I have under my charge: if we were to get the worst of the fray, a very pretty pickle I should bring these young girls into: the most fortunate of them would have their throats cut, and the rest, the fattest of course, would be led in captivity to the harem of the Dey of Algiers. Do you think, Miss Virginia Letitia Swallow would ever survive the honour of being made a sultana? No, my dear fellows; if he hits me, I'll fight; but I dare not strike the first blow.'

Once more, she hauled her wind, and sailed clean round us, still refusing to answer our repeated hail: well might she have been proud of her superior sailing; but she did not venture to compete with us in force. I fancy she was too well satisfied with her scrutiny, for as she ran to leeward of us, she put herself before the wind, and once more took her departure.

'Ah, ah!' cried the captain, 'that is the last of her,' as the rising moon displayed to us her rigging, decks, and bulwarks literally swarming with human beings. 'She's off!' repeated the captain, 'or she would never have shown her bee-hive. Why, they mustered full 200 hands, I'll be sworn. I'm very glad she has walked off; let us go down and crush the hopes of the aspiring sultanas.'

'Well Adams,' said I to an old man-of-war's man 'what do you think of her? I hardly fancied that she would display such a craven crest. Do you think we should have been a match for her?'

'No saying exactly, sir; she's a proper tight little craft as a sailor might love to look upon, and carries a nation lot of hands; regular fire-eaters too, every man jack of em, I'll be sworn; but then they never show fight unless it's a dead thing; she see'd too many hands aboard of us, and didn't quite like our skipper's cool way of working; besides, she didn't twig no quakers among our bull dogs, and may be, it's the better for both of us that she didn't, your honor.'

'But a couple of broadsides would have cut her up fore and aft, and a third would have sunk her.'

'Don't know that, sir; them 'ere sort of craft ain't quite so easy done up; you might riddle her hull through and through like an old cullender before she'd die of the dropsy.'—Bacon's *Hindustan*.

A GERMAN GHOST STORY.

The following strange and wonderful story is related by Sir William Whraxall, in the first part of his "Historical Memoirs." The reader will bear in mind that the incident occurred in Germany; and being only that it is not located in the Hartz Mountains, we should pronounce it to be one of the most veritable ghost stories on record, not even excepting Sir Josiah Barrington's wonderful, marvellous ghost music.

In the autumn of 1778, I visited Dresden for the second time; a court which was rendered peculiarly agreeable to the English at that period, by the hospitality and polished manners of his majesty's minister to Saxony, Sir John Stepney; one of the best gentlemen who had been employed on foreign missions, during the course of the present reign. Dresden was then a place where the Illumines had made a deep and general impression on the public mind; Schrepfer having chosen it, only a few years earlier, for the scene of his famous exhibition of the apparition of the chevalier de Saxe. Having given, in a former work, some account of the extraordinary imposition, I shall not resume the subject here; but I cannot help relating another somewhat similar story, which was told me during my residence in Dresden, by the count de Felkesheim. He was a Livonian gentleman, settled in Saxony, of a very improved understanding, equally superior to credulity, as to superstition. Being together in the month of October, 1778, and our discourse accidentally turning on the character and performances of Schrepfer, "I have conversed," said he to me, "with several of the individuals who were present at the scene of the spectre or phantom, presented by him in the place of the duke Courland. They all agree in their recount of the leading particulars. Though I do not pretend to explain by what process or machinery the spectre