

and all our efforts were consequently directed to run alongside and capture her by boarding. This was more easily proposed than brought to pass. A stern-chase is proverbially a long chase; and our dance across the Atlantic after the *Fair Rosamond* proved no exception to the rule. The nights, were, however, fine and clear, so that we fortunately contrived not to lose sight of her. Cuba, or possibly Porto Rico seemed to be her destination; but the wind and the *Curlew* baffled her efforts to reach either of the desired havens, and so far was she driven out of her course that the blue mountains of Jamaica had been for some time visible from the deck, when the fitful, varying breeze fell suddenly to a dead calm. This occurred in the night; and, as a thick mist, which came on at the same time, rose, like a curtain in the dawning light, the *Fair Rosamond* was descried, as motionless as ourselves, at about two leagues distance on the starboard bow. Unless the devil could help his own, at such a pinch, with a speedy breeze, we were now sure of her. Three of the *Curlew's* boats fell quickly from the davits into the water, and were off in a crack, fully manned and armed, to take possession of the, at last, luckless brigantine. Two hours' lusty pulling brought us alongside, and though a foolish attempt at resistance was made, the contest was brief as it was sharp, and the *Fair Rosamond*, with 175 likely negroes on board, was the lawful prize of the *Curlew*. We had scarcely breathed after the struggle, when the second lieutenant, Mr. Burbage, called my attention to the brigantine's launch, already at a considerable distance from the vessel. "Captain Penshurst's murderer," said he, "is escaping in that boat; do you follow, as you know his person, and be sure that no effort is spared to effect his capture." A small barrel of water, a bag of biscuit, and a compass, were tumbled into the sloop's pinnace, and away we started in chase. I need not dwell on the details of this boat-race: suffice it to say that, by about eleven at night, we were so close upon our quarry, that the fugitives had no resource but to run their boat ashore near Yallah Point, Jamaica, and make for the interior of the island. One of them—the captain, I was pretty sure—was carried off in the arms of the men, having been, I presumed, wounded in resisting the *Curlew's* boats. Unacquainted as I was with the locality about Yallah Point, a night pursuit of the runaways would have been hopeless,—absurd. The only thing to be done was to secure the captured launch, and get on myself towards Kingston, as fast as possible, across the country, leaving the men to follow, more at leisure, with the boats, coastwise. After several hours' delay, I succeeded in procuring a horse, though a sorry one, and was thus enabled to reach the Vale of Bath at about noon the succeeding day. I had a strong suspicion as to where the wounded fox would run to earth, and I was not, it proved mistaken. My father, after attentively listening to my story, informed me that he happened to be at Vale Lodge early in the morning, when a cry, taken up by a score of voices, suddenly rang through the house to the effect, that Captain Charles Hubert was at the gate, mortally wounded—dying. The panic which instantly ensued was terrible. Madame Tollemache swooned,—her husband, usually so imperturbable,

was greatly agitated; and as to Virginie, her wild demeanour and passionate exclamations of sorrow, love, terror, and remorse, were vehement,—overwhelming.

"This is strange news," I remarked. "Did he appear much hurt?"

"Past all surgery, I should say, judging from his death-like aspect. That which especially astounds me," added my father, in a peevish tone, "in this strange business, is, that I understood from the Tollemaches themselves, that every vestige of a causeless jealousy had been removed from Captain Penshurst's mind (he is quite recovered, I should tell you, though still weak, and not permitted to leave his room), and that the preparations for his union with this precious Mademoiselle Virginie have been resumed. You must see him, Tom, without delay. So frank and honourable a man ought not to be so scandalously trifled with—deceived—bamboozled."

I assented, and was speedily on the road to Kingston. Captain Penshurst expressed much pleasure at seeing me, and, although still pale and weak from loss of blood, appeared in jocund spirits. I minutely related all that had occurred up to the time of landing at Yallah Point, and the narrative manifestly increased his good humour. I am glad the fellow has escaped," he said, "I have chiefly my own rash folly to blame for what occurred. And I may mention to you," he added, "that the affair of the portraits, and other matters you wot of, are, Mr. Tollemache has solemnly assured me, capable of the most satisfactory solution. It was merely by accident Mademoiselle Tollemache met Captain Hubert,—and—the particulars of the explanation, Virginie insists, I shall first hear from her own lips." The lover's eye lightened, and his pale countenance flushed pleasantly as he thus spoke, as if he already felt Virginie's sweet breath upon his cheek dissipating with its silvery tones, the foolish suspicions he had entertained.

It was cruel, though necessary, to destroy this illusion. "It is also, I suppose, then," I began, "by pure accident that Captain Hubert is at this very moment, sheltered at Vale Lodge,—that—"

"How!—what is that?" exclaimed Captain Penshurst, starting fiercely to his feet. "What do you say?"

I repeated the account my father had given me, *verbatim*. As I spoke, a stern, almost frightful expression, gathered upon Captain Penshurst's countenance—the same that I had seen him wear on the evening of the quarrel with Hubert.

"Can this be?" he muttered, with clenched teeth. "It seems impossible: but I will, at least, be satisfied, and at once. Do you, young sir," he added, "have a vehicle capable of containing two persons, brought to the door immediately." I was about to remonstrate, but a peremptory, commanding officer sort of gesture, cut me short, and I hastened off to perform his bidding. In less than a quarter of an hour we were being driven, at a rapid pace, towards Vale Lodge. He had dressed himself in full uniform,—had, I knew, pistols in his side-coat pockets, and was taciturn as a mute during the entire ride.

We reached Vale Lodge just at the close of day. Scipio, a house-slave, reconnoitered us from a window, and immediately disappeared, leaving us