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## SCENE WITH A PIRATE.

In about latitude twenty degrees, and longitude sixty degrees fifteen minutes, we were running along with a fine fresh breeze abeam, and all our weather studding-sails set. I was sitting alone in the cabin, ruminating upon the changes of scene and society into which I had been forced so contrary to my inclinations, and wondering whether the happiness of a quiet and domestic life was ever to fall to my lot, when the captain came down and told me that, as I was so fond of using my glass, there was a vessel just appearing on the horizon to windward, and that I might go and see what she was, for he could not make her out at all. I went on deck, and mounted into the maintop, and began my scrutiny. "Well, what is she?" asked the captain from the deck. "I can hardly make her out, but I think she is a schooner." "Ay—what's her course?" "South-west by south, I think; about the same as ourselves." I remained in the top for a few minutes, and continued looking at the stranger. "She seems fonder of the sea than I am," I continued, "for she might have her topsails and top-gallants, and studding-sails to boot, all set, instead of slipping along under her lower sails." The captain made no answer, but was looking hard at her with his eye. I now perceived through my glass a white speck above her foresail, flap, flapping against the mast. "Well, she must have heard me, for there goes her fore-topsail." The captain now went to the companion for his glass, and after looking attentively at her for a short time, "What's that?" he asked; "is that her square-sail she's setting? I can't very well see from the deck." I looked again: "Yes, 'tis her square-sail; as I'm alive, she's changed her course, and is bearing down upon us." But by this time the captain had mounted the rigging, and was standing beside me; he was eyeing the distant vessel keenly. After having apparently satisfied himself, he asked me to go with him to the cabin, as he wished to talk with me alone. We descended to the deck, and I followed him to the cabin. He motioned me to take a seat, and after carefully shutting the door, "I rather expect," said he, "that fellow's a pirate." "Pirate?" I asked in alarm. "Yes, I say pirate, and I'll tell you why. In the first place, you see, he'd no business to be sneaking along in that do little sort of a way, as when we first saw him; who ever, that had any honest business to do, would allow such a fine breeze to go by without showing more canvas than a powder-monkey's old breeches to catch it? Next, you see, what the mischief has he to do with us, that, as soon as he clapped eyes on us, he must alter his course, and be so anxious to get out his square-sail? Again, he looks just like one of those imps of mischief, with his low black hull and tall raking masts. But it's no use talking; I tell you he's a pirate, and that's as true as my name's Isaac Tuttle. And now the only thing is, what shall we do? The Patrick Henry ain't a Baltimore clipper, and that 'ere fellow will walk up to us like nothing. But I'll tell you what strikes me: If we let them rascals aboard, it's most likely we'll all walk the plank; so we'd better try to keep 'em out. We h'aint got but an old rusty carronade and two six-pounders, and I don't believe there's a ball on board, we came off in such a hurry. Then, there's two muskets and an old regulation rifle down in my state-room; but they h'aint been fired I don't know when, and I'd as lief stand afore 'em as behind 'em. But our ship's as handsome a looking craft as you'll see; and couldn't we look wicked-like now, and try to frighten that cut-throat looking rascal?"

I confess I was at first startled at the captain's opinion of the strange sail, and his reasoning left me hardly a hope that his judgment was incorrect; but his cool and collected manner impressed me with confidence in his management, and I told him he knew best what we should do, and I would second him as I best could. He walked up and down the cabin twice; then rubbing his hands together as if pleased with his own idea, "I have it," he cried; "I'll just go on deck to put things in order, and in the meantime you'd better amuse yourself looking out your pistols, if you have any; for if he won't be content with a look at us, we'll have to fight."

I hurriedly took my fowling-piece and pistols from their cases, for I fortunately had both; and though I somehow refused to allow myself to believe there would be any occasion for their use, yet I loaded them all with ball, and in each of the pistols put a brace; this done, I went on deck, where I found the captain surrounded by his crew, telling them his suspicions, and his plan of action. "But," said he, "maybe we'll have to fight; if them villains have a mind to try us, they'll send a boat on board, and I want to know if you'll help me to keep 'em off. You see it's most likely they'll make you walk the plank, whether you fight

or not, if they get on board; and I calculate, if you do just as I tell you, we'll frighten 'em." There was a hearty "Ay, ay, sir," to this short and pithy harangue. "Thankee, thankee, boys," said the captain; "now we'll not show another stitch of canvass, but seem to take no more notice of that fellow than if we didn't see him; and if he does try to come aboard, then we'll show 'em what we can do."

Our captain was about fifty years old, rather short and stout, but muscular; his face was bronzed with time and tempest, and his locks, which had once been black, were grizzled by the same causes. He was an old sailor and a staunch republican; and as some of his men told tales of fight in which their captain had borne a part, I presumed he had served, when a young man, in the navies of the States.

The crew were busy, in obedience to his orders, cutting up a spare foretop-gallant-mast into logs of about four feet long; these were immediately painted black, with a round spot in the centre of one end, so as to bear a tolerable resemblance to pieces of cannon, and, with two old six-pounders, were placed, one at each port, on our deck, five on a side; but the ports were to be kept closed until the captain gave the order to open them, then they were to be raised as quickly as possible, and the logs thrust out about a foot. A platform was then made on the top of the long-boat, which was fixed between the fore and main masts, and the carronade, or fourteen-pounder, was hoisted up. These things being arranged, the captain went below, and the crew mustered in knots, to wonder and talk of what was to be done.

In the meantime, we had been standing on our course, and had not shifted or hoisted a single sail, but were as if perfectly regardless of the schooner. Not so with her, however; for besides a large square-sail and square-topsail, on the fore-mast, she had run out small fore-topmast studding-sails, and onward she came, right before a pretty smart breeze, yawing from side to side, at one moment sinking stern foremost into the trough of the sea, as an enormous wave rolled out from under her, and at the next forced headlong onwards by its successor, while a broad white sheet of foam spread out around her, giving beautiful relief to the jet black colour of her hull, testifying how rapidly she was going through the water. I could not help thinking of the captain's expression, for she certainly did "walk up to us like nothing," and as there appeared to be not much time to lose, I went down to the cabin to assume my weapons. The captain was there arranging some papers, and a bottle was before him, into which he had put a letter. "Maybe," said he, "something 'll happen to me; for if them 'ere bloody pirates won't be cheated, I will be the first to suffer; and natural enough too, for all the mischief they'll suffer will be by my orders, just because I didn't like to be overhauled like an old tarpaulin by every rascal who chooses to say heave to, on the high seas. But never mind; only, should you escape, just drop the bottle and letter overboard, if you think you can't deliver it yourself."

Now, I had never seriously considered the probability that I might also be killed in an approaching melee, for I thought that the captain intended to throw open his ports and show his sham-guns, and that, of course, the schooner would take fright. But when he began to talk about death in such a serious strain, I began to feel very uncomfortable; and not being naturally a warrior, I wished myself anywhere else than on board the Patrick Henry. There I was, however, without a chance of escape; and I suggested to the captain that it would be as well for me to put a letter into the bottle also, in case of any accident to both of us, which was agreed to; and we arranged that if either survived and had the opportunity, the letter of the unfortunate should be safely forwarded to its destination. After this little piece of preparation, the captain took me by the hand. "'Tis well," said he; "are you willing to share with me the post of danger? Do not suppose I am unaccustomed to the perils of a sea-fight; no, young man; I've supported the glory of the thirteen stripes in many a gallant action, and have witnessed the death of those honoured and esteemed as the sons of liberty. Yet they were fighting for their country, and it was their duty to hold their lives cheap; but you are a passenger, and should be under my protection—yet I ask you to share my danger. I wish some one to stand by me on the platform, and help me to manage the swivel. Hands are scarce, and I don't know where else to place you." The hardy fellow's eyes glistened as he made the proposal, to which I, of course, instantly agreed. "Thankee, thankee," he replied, and relapsed into his former character. 'Twas strange; he had always appeared on board his vessel as a common Yankee captain, with little to say, and with a rough uncouth manner but little removed from his

men. Yet he at once, though evidently inadvertently, assumed the air and manner of a polished gentleman; and it certainly struck me that the latter character appeared more natural in him than the former. There was evidently a mystery about him, and I determined to find it out when more opportune circumstances should occur.

We went on deck, and the men were still hanging about waiting for the orders of the captain to make them start. These were soon given. The cooper and the carpenter were ordered to bring up all hatchets and other offensive and defensive weapons, and with the muskets and rifle they were distributed among the crew, who received their orders to use them in repelling any attempt to board.

The schooner had now come down within half a mile of us, when she suddenly took down her square-sail, and hauled her wind, to have a look at us. I dare say she did not know what to make of our seeming indifference. Presently a cloud of smoke burst from her side, and a ball came skipping over the water, and passed astern of us. "I thought so," said the captain; "now, lads, show her our stripes." A ball of bunting flew up to the end of our mizen peak, rested an instant, and fluttered out into the American ensign. The smoke drifted away from the schooner, and she ran up at her gaff the ensign of the Columbian republic. "That's 'ternally the way with them blackguards; they're always making a fool of some republic." Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when another column of smoke burst from the schooner, and another ball came skip-skipping along towards us, but, catching a swell, it plunged in, and we saw no more of it. "That fellow now, I take it, is a good shot, so we'll not wait for another. Clue up the mainsail, boys; haul aft the weather main-braces; clue up the foresail; luff her, man, luff her a little more—steady," burst from our captain's mouth: the orders were obeyed with the quickness of a well-disciplined crew, and our ship was hove to. "Now, my lads, take your stations, four to each port on the weather side, but do nothin' till I tell ye." The men took their stations, as directed, round each log on the weather side, and I followed the captain to the platform where our carronade was mounted. It was loaded to the muzzle with bits of iron, musket-balls, lumps of lead, and various other missiles, for the captain had conjectured truly—there were no balls on board. The schooner hove to, and a boat was lowered, and crowded with men. It approached rapidly, pulled by eight rowers. The muzzle of our carronade was depressed as much as possible, and made to bear on the water about fifty yards from the ship. The captain stood with his speaking-trumpet in one hand, and a handspike, with which he shifted the position of the gun as required, in the other. The schooner's boat approached, and was pulling rapidly to get alongside. "Now, sir, keep steady, and obey my orders coolly," said the captain, in an under tone. "Boy, fetch the iron that's heating in the galley—run." The boy ran, and returned with the iron rod heated at one end, which was handed to me. "When I tell you to fire, fire, as you value your life and those on board." The captain now put his speaking-trumpet to his mouth, and hailed the boat, which was within a hundred yards of us. "Stop—no nearer, or I'll blow you all out of the water—keep off, keep off, or, I say, I'll—" At that instant the man at the bows of the boat, who appeared to take the command, gave an order, and a volley from several muskets was fired at us. I heard the balls hit about me, and turned to look for the captain to receive my order to fire. He was on one knee behind the cannon, and holding it by the breech. "Why, captain! what's the matter? are you hit?" He rallied. "Nothing—they're coming." He gave another hoist to the gun; cast his eye hurriedly along its barrel—"Fire, and be quick!" I needed not a second bidding, for the boat was close alongside. The smoke burst from the touch-hole with a hiss, and for an instant I thought the gun had missed fire, but in the next it exploded with a tremendous report, that deafened me. "Throw open your ports, boys, and show them your teeth," roared the captain through his trumpet, and his voice sounded hideously unnatural. In an instant every port was up, and our guns protruded their muzzles. I had fancied that I had heard a crash, followed by wild screams, immediately upon the discharge of the cannon; but the report had deafened me; and the smoke, which was driven back in my face, had so shrouded me, that I could not see; the unearthly shout of the captain had also for the moment driven the idea from my mind, and I now grasped my gun to repel boarders. But my hearing had not deceived me; for, as the smoke was borne away to leeward, the whole scene of destruction burst upon my sight. The cannon had been most truly pointed, and its contents had shivered the hapless boat, killing or wounding almost every person in her. The longest lifetime will