

Now we heard the inarticulate murmurings of the mates, half smothered by the handkerchiefs which gagged them. Outside the timbers creaked and the sea hummed under the brisk breeze which was sweeping upon our way. Amid the splash of the waves and the whistle of the wind we heard the wild cheers and shoutings of the English sailors as they broached the keg of rum. We played half-a-dozen games and then the captain rose. "I think they are ready for us now," said he. He took a brace of pistols from a locker, and handed one of them to me.

But we had no need to fear resistance, for there was no one to resist. The Englishman of those days, whether soldier or sailor, was an incorrigible drunkard. Without drink he was a brave and good man. But when drink were laid before him it was a perfect madness. Nothing could induce him to take it with moderation. In the dim light of the den which they inhabited, five senseless figures and two shouting, swearing, singing madmen represented the crew of the Black Swan. Coils of rope were brought forward by the steward, and with the help of two French seamen (the third was at the wheel) we secured the drunkards and tied them up, so that it was impossible for them to speak or move. The