

expected on board till the next morning. There was a brilliant moon; and the instant Captain Penshurst reached the deck, I saw that he was in a state of extreme excitement. His face was white as stone; and so were his firmly-compressed, yet quivering lips; and a volcano of passionate rage gleamed in his burning eyes. He walked sharply aft, and spoke briefly with Lieutenant Armstrong: the subject was, I could hear, the *Fair Rosamond* and her captain. Presently he came forward and abruptly addressed me:—"Satchell, you know something of this Captain Charles Hubert, as he calls himself: so, at least, your father hints. Is this so?"

"I know very little of him, sir—and that—"

"Do you know where he is likely to be met with just now?" interrupted Captain Penshurst, impatiently.

"Very probably at the Royal Hotel."

"Show me: I know the fellow by sight, myself, but you had better come with me."

The shore-boat was still alongside, and in ten minutes we were landed. The Royal Hotel was soon reached, but we passed through several crowded rooms without meeting the object of our search. At length we found him in a billiard-room, with three or four companions. He was playing for a large stake, and did not notice our entrance. At last his eye caught the fixed, angry stare with which Captain Penshurst regarded him. It shook him somewhat; but quickly rallying, he returned it with one equally fierce and menacing. His self-possession and steadiness of hand were however gone: he missed the easiest of strokes, and finally threw down his cue, with a curse. He had lost a considerable sum. Captain Penshurst's fiery glance was now, it seemed to me, riveted upon a curiously-twisted guard-chain round Hubert's neck, to which, I supposed, a watch was attached. "Will you play with me?" exclaimed the commander of the *Curlew*, with startling abruptness, as he seized a cue, and approached close to Hubert: "you and I are, I am sure, old, though, I think, never before such near acquaintances as just now." A deep flush crimsoned the slave-captain's features, but he said nothing, and was moving away, when Captain Penshurst, who was fairly beside himself with passion, suddenly raised his cue, and, by a dexterous lateral jerk, struck open Hubert's waistcoat with the butt-end, thereby revealing a locket suspended by the curiously-twisted gold neck-chain. To seize it, glare at it with dilated eyes, and cast it wildly from him, was, with Captain Penshurst the work of an instant. "Rascal," he shouted, "from whom did you steal that portrait?" Hubert instantly saw his advantage; a mocking, triumphant light shot athwart his countenance, and his lips curled derisively, as he slowly rejoined, "Where did I steal this portrait of *la belle Virginie*, you ask? A pleasant question, truly. It strikes me now you have chanced to see mine, similarly chained and mounted, in that charming person's possession, eh? most valorous captain? But here is something you have not yet seen. Look! Read! '*A mon bien-aimé, Charles Hubert:—Virginie T.*' And, see, the date is June 9, 1824: an old friendship, you perceive; and I believe, your companion there can satisfy you that it is a very intimate, affectionate one."

A terrific blow on the face of the taunting rascal was Captain Penshurst's answer. Hubert reeled, lost his balance, and fell heavily on the floor; but regained his feet in an instant, and sprang towards his assailant with the leap and yell of a tiger. A bowie knife glittered for a moment in his hand; the next, an agonizing cry, and sudden jet of blood, proclaimed how fatally he had avenged himself. The terror and confusion of such a scene may be imagined. Hubert and his companions rushed out of the room, and I was left alone with the apparently dying captain. But a few moments, however, passed before the landlord and others made their appearance; the sufferer, who had fainted, was carried to bed, and medical assistance was instantly obtained. This done, I started off to inform the shore authorities of what had happened, and next made for the *Curlew* in all haste. Lieutenant Armstrong, after listening to the account I gave, with much emotion, instantly determined on boarding the *Fair Rosamond*, and seizing her captain, if on board by the sole warranty of force; and hastily left the cabin for that purpose. He was too late: the *Fair Rosamond* had given us the slip: and all we could discern of her was the faint gleam of her white sails, already far away to the eastward.

The lieutenant resolved upon instant pursuit: the necessary orders were given, and in less than no time we were cracking on in the wake of the brigantine, under a ten-knot breeze from the north-west. But the Atlantic is a wide place; and the morning light revealed to us nothing but a vast expanse of air and ocean, untenanted by a ship or human being, save ourselves. Our friend had, for the present, at least, escaped. We, however, kept on; reached in due time the Cape Verde Islands, looked in there and subsequently ran down the African coast to about ten degrees of south latitude, without falling in with either the *Fair Rosamond* or any other prizeable craft. We did not, however, despair of overhauling the brigantine, for we heard of her repeatedly, and at length our hopes were realized. The sloop had just rounded a headland at no great distance from the mouth of the Coanza river, when the look-out aloft sung out "Sail, ho! and right ahead." Every glass was instantly directed towards the stranger—distinctly visible, at the distance of about half a league, though evening was fast closing in. There was no mistaking her: it was the *Fair Rosamond*, plain enough, under crowded canvas, and slipping away to the westward at the rate of six knots at least, light as the wind was. She was well down in the water, and had, it was nothing doubted, a closely-packed living cargo on board. Every possible inch of canvass was instantly spread in pursuit; and, as it was evident we were seen, a gun was cast loose, and a shot sent across the slaver's bows; and at the same moment St. George's glorious ensign flew aloft, immediately greeted—as I have hundreds of times exulted to hear—by the incense of the man-stealer's maledictions. The impudent rascals returned the shot, hoisted Spanish colours, and, changing her course a point or two, ran off at a spanking rate. The *Curlew's* guns would have reached her, but, sending round shot after a vessel whose hold was crowded with human beings, was not to be thought of, except in the last extremity,