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ROSE ISLAND

The Strange Story of a Love Adventure at Sea

BY

W. CLARK RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF 'THE WRECK OF THE "GROSVENOR,"' ETC.

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ROSE ISLAND

CHAPTER I.

THE CAPTAIN BEGINS.

WITH a slight lean to starboard, crushing through the long keen-edged seas of the North Atlantic, driven in thunder, and in trumpeting of divided canvas, now as moonrise with the starlight that shone upon it, sailed a noble modern ship, but a sailing-ship. She would be called a clipper. You saw her in the faint light of evening, and what was white was ghastly. The line betwixt her painted ports trembled through the flash of the sea like the little moons you sometimes observe hanging in wind-swept summer trees, and the foam about her bows was not the less splendid because of the dimness out of which it would leap in rushes with the beautiful gleam of spume.

The ship was a steel vessel. She still carried a few passengers. She was a great favourite as a vehicle for commodities. She brought 1840 before you sooner than 1890, but the swelling heights of canvas were wanting. Where was the milky breast of topsail upon which the fringes of the reef-points tapped with caressing

fingers? Where was the long fore-topmast stun'sail valiantly helping to drag its noble burden over the gleams and the sheen, the leaping lights and dark rolling hollows under the stun'sail boom?

Upon the short poop of this vessel, in the starlight after dinner, stood several people. A few were ladies, a few gentlemen. With them you tallied the passengers. A tall figure stood near the wheel to windward smoking a curled pipe. You could judge by the faint light of the night that he was a handsome, well-built man. He was Captain Tomson Foster, of the Australian clipper *Suez*, and his dignity of loneliness, spite of the adjacency of the passengers, was unimpaired. Presently a lady crossed to him. Another followed, and a group was formed. The lady said to the captain:

'I have been reading "The Green Hand" by George Cupples. Do you know that book?'

'I read it many years ago,' he answered.

'It is a beautiful book,' she said. 'It has descriptions of the sea which I cannot remember the like of in any other sea-book with which I am acquainted.'

'Have you a literary turn?'

'A good book is as precious to my mind as one of those stars,' she answered, pointing up.

'Yes,' said Captain Foster, 'Cupples wrote uncommonly well, although he was not a sailor, and his page teems with absurd situations and impossibilities of the sea. Let me see. Does not he make the captain of a ship tell a long yarn that occupies a voyage? It is all about a naval lieutenant who followed a young beauty to Bombay. She had charmed him wisely and well. The story is very good. All about Napoleon and St. Helena excellent.'

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‘Well, now, Captain Foster,’ said the lady, who was to be seen smiling, ‘this is the very thing I mean to speak to you about. We know that your mind is richly stored in sea-story. The voyage before us is long. Have not you some incident—some tale, I should rather say—with which you could entertain us of an evening as the captain of the Indiaman amused his passengers?’

Captain Foster was a Quaker. He was a Quaker by his father. His mother, though she remained a Churchwoman, frequently attended the meeting-house hard by their home at Peckham. Foster, consistently with his breed and type, was somewhat slow in trimming his moods and statements. He seemed to deliberate whilst he looked to windward at the wheeling surge chasing the flying ship with the foam-hounds of the sea, and then said with a shake of his head:

‘I am no story-teller.’

‘Captain Thompson of the *Flying Scud*,’ exclaimed another passenger, ‘assured me that you had the finest qualities of the sea-story-teller of any man, whether before or abaft the mast, in this fleet.’

‘It would be so delightful to listen to a story night after night—something to look forward to. So fearfully dull, you know, Captain!’ exclaimed somebody.

Captain Foster took a turn on the plank, and said:

‘Most of my stories are short.’

‘You know one,’ said the lady who had first addressed him on the subject. ‘It is a very romantic story of the sea. It is a love story; I have heard it spoken of. Best of all, it is true;’ and she added: ‘I believe, somehow, you were concerned in it.’

‘No,’ he said quickly, ‘I know the story you mean.’

I was scarce beyond petticoats in those times, but can tell it you as though I had lived with the people. The breeze freshens,' he added, looking aloft. 'There is too much noise for the opening of any story I might have to tell you in the deepening pouring of that bow sea. We will choose a quieter night.'

'But you promise,' said the lady who had suggested the idea, 'that you will tell the story?'

'I will tell it, and it will give me pleasure to do so,' he answered; and the tall figure walked forward a little way, and stood alone as though scanning the weather, probably in secret rehearsal of the subject he had pledged himself to.

Certainly there could have been no story-telling on deck. Before two bells of the first watch the famous and capricious gale of the North Atlantic had lifted its organ chime of pipes into a deep and aggrieved howl. The foam shrieked as it fled from the quarters. All effects of speech, of intonation, of the colouring of the voice, would have been lost on deck, and there was no idea of allowing the Captain to tell his story in the saloon, which is always haunted by the flavour of meals to come and meals despatched.

The third day, however, in the evening, when they had assembled on deck after dinner, the breeze blew a moderate wind. The dark curves ran in patient lines. It was a moonless night, but the stars trembled large, plentiful and glorious. It was the domain of the flying-fish, and of the skulking shape of the shark. The passengers had been liberally fed. All was contentment. Chairs were brought, and the Captain, sometimes walking, sometimes standing, began his story thus:

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north of the Antilles presented a striking scene. It was evening, or, rather, it was late in the afternoon; but midnight seemed to be coming down like a dome upon the ocean circle, a dark, lowering, sullen afternoon, with a tail end of wind trickling through the atmosphere, and barely shaking a ripple into the stagnant and heavy waters. What was air seemed to be smoke. Presently the moon rose, a dull face that was not light. She lifted with a circle, and to the right of the faint tremble of radiance which she shook into the sea under her a squall was blowing slowly along—a wet squall lanced by lightning, full of wind, for you could hear the noise of it, and the moon looked down upon it through its sinister frame.

‘Two ships were in sight, two vessels only in this wide command of water. One was a small handsome West Indiaman, and about a mile to the northward of her lay a schooner. They both slowly flapped forward to the airs of wind that gasped in a dying way, in true form and colour with the loathsome haze of night and storm that was gathering round about them. The ship was the *Eleuthera*, a vessel commanded by the son of a man who had been my father’s friend; Bahama Shanklin was his name. He was a hard little man, and all the West Indies came to you out of his bronzed face with its swift black eyes and his large sombrero.

‘The dinner-bell was not yet rung. Nearly all the passengers, of whom there was a goodly number, were moving about the quarter-deck. The discourse chiefly concerned the weather.

“‘Is it to be a storm, Captain Shanklin?’” inquired a West Indian planter, much respected by Shanklin for

his valuable stock-in-trade, and for his sterling qualities as host ashore.

“I don't see why not, sir,” answered Shanklin. “But what do you mean by a storm?”

“Wind,” said the planter sententiously.

“Well, at sea,” exclaimed Captain Shanklin, “storm is best understood by the terms thunder and lightning. If you believe we are to have wind——”

“That's what I want to know,” said the planter, whilst the chief mate laughed.

“Well, I guarantee that you shall have wind enough to last you a month before midnight,” said Shanklin.

“Does that prediction of yours,” asked a lady, “come out of that sickly circle up there?”

“It is the birth of a hundred experiences,” answered Shanklin, drawing himself erect.

“There's no man knows these waters better than Shanklin!” exclaimed one of a couple of passengers, pausing in his stroll to say the words.

“And this you may take, I reckon, to be the finest craft of her size in or out of any West Indian port,” said a little man with a large hooked nose and a white cap cover.

“She is the finest ship of her size and kind afloat,” answered Captain Shanklin, with an emphatic stamp of his foot.

“She would make a mockery,” said a lady, who had been listening to this conversation, “of the angriest of the storms which swing in that mysterious, dangerous-looking circle up there.”

“Circles don't always precede storms,” said the little man in the white cap-cover.

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sky," said a tall gentleman, with a bravado flourish of his hand aloft.

"Git out, Jones!" said the little man. "How many circles d'ye think I've seen in my time, with ne'er a drop of wet or wind before or astern of them, but blue weather and charming breezes?"

'Captain Shanklin, foreseeing an argument, walked off, and about that time the first dinner-bell rang.

'The deck was speedily deserted by the passengers. It fell swiftly into the solemn scene of a ship with her loftiest canvas bronzed in frequent glances by the lightning past the moon. There was now very little wind, and the sound of the ripple over the side was faint, and often the canvas came in to the mast with the sound of a thump on a big drum. The squall was dying, and its voice was silent in the distance, and the moon was growing into the aspect of a rushlight smouldering in a fog.

'It needs a poet's eye, ladies and gentlemen, to interpret all the meaning of a ship, whether she be of sail or of steam. In steam the power is hidden, and 'tis but grace of mast and shape that you admire, but the whole beauty of the ocean, the deep significance of the breathing calm or the hurling hurricane, enters into the sailing ship, where everything that seems a ship, that by all human merit and tradition remains a ship, is visible.

'At the wheel of the *Eleuthera* stood a dark figure, tintured by the soft flame of the binnacle lamp, which cast a tinge of yellow round about it and abaft. The mates paced the deck in quiet speech; they had a separate mess. Forward in the deepening gloom of the forecastle moved a few smudges, and sometimes a glare

of light leaped from the galley-door, and threw the figure of a seaman into colour and shape. It was commonly accompanied by much hoarse talk and profane language from the cook; for dinner on board the *Eleuthera* was a solemn festival, and if they did not give you as many dishes as they do to-day, what they gave you was quite as good as what you now sit down to; whilst the wines, especially the light sparkling wines, were very fine and elegant, and fit for the lips of angels.

'In short, the *Eleuthera*, taking her all round, was a well-found ship. The ladies and gentlemen withdrew to their cabins to make the necessary preparations for dining. The cabins ran fore and aft the saloon, and there was a steerage containing a number of cabins of small size. In one of these deck cabins a young lady stood alone at the wide open port. She had twenty minutes to dress in, and found plenty of time apparently for musing. She seemed struck, fascinated by the appearance of the sea as it sheeted off from the ship's side into the thickness that brought the horizon near. The sea-window through which she gazed was almost as big as a window ashore. Its sides exposed the great thickness of the ship's walls. It was wide open. The girl seemed to see many objects. They were visionary indeed: pinions of darkness, apparently motionless, yet gliding; outlines of titanic shapes intent upon the ship, with dusky outstretched arms reeling off into blackness. The phosphorus fell away cloudily a little distance under the sea from the ship's side, and seemed to boil into queer shapes of men and vegetables. This girl had no sick eye, was not despondent, was happy though an orphan and almost friendless—if you can talk of a girl worth two hundred a year being friendless. Yet

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she stared into the gloom as though she were a visionary, and seemed to see as deep into it beyond, far beyond, the remote recesses of wall-like blackness, as if she had the angel's gift of sight. Certainly, ladies and gentlemen, all tradition affirms that this girl, whose name I may tell you at once was Rose Island, had beautiful and penetrating eyes.

'Her moving gaze was suddenly arrested by something substantial. No fever-like figure of that brooding night-scowling storm, but the substantial form of a small vessel, magnified into some degree of closeness by the peculiar character of the atmosphere. She lay upon the *Eleuthera's* starboard quarter, and was difficult to catch a full view of by merely leaning from that thick port. The girl's bunk ran under this port. She got into it, and gained by hand and knee the comparatively broad embrasure of the port-hole. She must have been fearless, reckless, or wantonly thoughtless, for on hands and knees she stretched her neck through the port-hole, merely to catch a sight of that little vessel on the quarter, and in a breath, and without a shriek, she went head first overboard. There were cabin-ports to the right of hers and to left; they were open, and people were dressing in the cabins. But nobody heard that dew-soft fall of a girl's figure in the scarcely rippling water. The helmsman did not hear her, though he stood alone and his ears might easily be bent for anything of that sort. The two mates pacing the deck in talk did not hear her, though they stumped the side on which she fell. She fell from no great height, it is true. The *Eleuthera* was a small ship, and her port-holes were not high above the water. Without a shriek or struggle

to quicken the life of light in that black tranquillity of ripples, she seems to have slid off as one who is dead when she floats, and no man on board the ship knew that the most significant of all the tragedies of the deep which can happen on shipboard had found its record. There was something curious, however, in this circumstance: that a man standing on the forecastle and noticing a peculiar hollowness in the sound of a flap of canvas aloft, exclaimed to a mate gruffly, "Blowed if it didn't sound like the fall of a woman overboard," and this he must have said at the instant when the girl's body smote the water, soft as a sponge, and as silently.

'On the port-quarter of the *Eleuthera* a little schooner was delicately nibbling into the ebony ripple, scarce turning a transparency of gleam at her bow, and following in darkness and in the expectation of tempest. She, too, like the *Eleuthera*, had taken all care to prepare for the coming combat which had risen in that bleared and wicked circle of moon. The ship was under topsails, with all light canvas handed and the main-sail furled. The schooner had clewed up her royal, taken in gaff-topsail and other light canvas, and was now tying a reef in her topsail, leaving the boom-foresail set. Presently the mate of this schooner, whose thick-set person adorned the forecastle, and who had been casting the penetrating gaze of the born sailor round and round the sea and the horizon, hailed the quarter-deck in the tone of a negro:

"There's something floating just off our port bow. I believe it's a man swimming for his life."

'There was a run of figures to the side.

"Jump," shouted a man, "for a boat-hook, and catch him as he passes! Lower away the jolly-boat. He may be a living man fresh from yonder ship."

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' In a few moments a man, cleverly leaning in the main-chains, had hindered the further drifting of the body by the long boat-hook he had seized, and with a sailor's dexterity handled. The little boat was lowered, and two men dragged the body out of the water.

"It's a woman, sir," said one of them, looking up at the schooner's rail, which was overhung by the figure of the Captain.

"Is she alive?" inquired the Captain, in the notes of a man superior to his position.

'They could not tell; they handed her up and followed, and the jolly-boat again swung at its davits. If she was not doubly dead and drowned, she truly seemed so. They laid her softly down upon the deck, and a young fellow named Cochrane, the son of the Captain, knelt and pillowed her head. A sailor brought a lantern and held it to the pale face; and one of them, who was the mate, named Julius Nassau, said, in the thick coarse voice of Africa:

"Damned if she ain't dead! Only good for the fish this bout."

'This fellow by the lantern-light looked an ugly devil, with his swarthy face, negro-like lineaments, earrings glimmering in his ears, and a short strong body, slightly bowed by the sailor's stoop over legs fit for a giant to roll upon. His eyes flashed. He fitted the night. It was then that a stroke of lightning in the north smote the whole of the heavens into the effulgence of noontide, as though the sun had leapt and gone again. A single crash of thunder, which ran away on the calm like the noise of cannon-balls flying over a wooden stage, almost instantly followed. The scant air fell; the ripples ceased to flow; all was oppressive blackness, and silence, and waiting.

“Arthur, take this girl below, and see what you and the steward can do,” said Captain Cochrane. “Try brandy, and artificial breathing if you understand it. There’s a chance for every floating body.”

‘A second flash of lightning! The bolt itself fell from the heavens, and rushed in a blinding line of fire to the sea close to the *Eleuthera*, whose whole figure it lighted up, and the sea again was sun-bright for one thrilling instant: then, whilst Cochrane, assisted by a sailor, was carrying the girl to the companion-hatch, there proceeded out of the moody and desperate silence of the north the voice of the liberated storm. It had been manacled in the circle of the moon; it had chafed and sullenly groaned in wrathful thunder that was to be heard by the mariner at a greater distance than where the *Eleuthera* floated.

“Stand by!” shouted Captain Cochrane. “Here it comes, my lads! Put your helm a-port. Let go the foretop-sail halliards, and hands by the fore and main halliards.”

“D’ye hear it?” said one of the seamen.

‘They could hear it; they could see it. They heard it in a distant wild crackling noise like that of the burning of a forest; they saw it in a ghastly streak of white light extending right across the horizon. The lightning brought the clouds close to the mast-heads, and exhibited them in vast bodies of vapour, enriched with the gilt of the stroke, but hideous in form and menace. They were too stately to break up and rush in streaming and shorn shreds before the first of the tempest. It smote the *Eleuthera*, and by the blaze that lighted the skies at the time they saw her lean down to her wash-streak as a tree bends to a hurricane. In an instant she dis-

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appeared in the vapour, the flying uproar had smothered her out, and in a minute or two it was upon the *Charmer*. This was a little ship that had been made for bad weather. She had cost the value of a handsome yacht, and had been built at Liverpool entirely for the slave-trade, which in those days gave a good many bad men prosperity. She had a lifting bow, well poised to smite the sea, and break its weight of thunder into white recoil. She had plenty of beam, and sat stiff in a gale, and she ran aft in curves and lines of beauty. I saw her at Grimsby after she had long been converted into a coalman, but the original frame and fine design of her builder were not to be concealed. When Cochrane bought her, she had been for some years sold out by her original owners, and although she had done good business, for some reason I am unable to give you, she was never again to be heard of in the slave-trade. It was her turn, and she took the blow as any sailor knew she would. The wild white fury of the tempest leapt upon her in a dense flying cloud torn up from the sea, deepened by the rain, made terrific by the frequent lancing of the lightning stroke. It was a hurricane well north of the West Indies, but it had the true ring and howl of the storms of those fragrant islands where ships are carried a mile in-shore by the force of the wind, where negro villages on a hillside are set in motion, and dart amid the frantic shrieks of their miserable populations to the bosom of the abyss, and where the earthquake completes with horrible certainty what the other forces of Nature have left undone. The *Charmer* lay without motion to her gunwale, and the whipped and shrilling white water poured inboard over her lee-rail. Would she founder? The force of the wind was

terrific. Never had Captain Cochrane remembered such an immediate outfly, unheralded by squalls and other monitions of the coming gale. They stood by the weather-rigging with axes. You saw through the shroud of wet, through the frequent glares, the figures of men along the rail, steady, watchful, waiting for the word of command. The helm was hard up, but she lay like a drowned vessel, her decks slanting like the roof of a house, sheeting and boiling with foam, whilst between the masts blew with incredible velocity the white lines of this tempest. The lightning, like red rags, flickered and crackled amongst them. Would she pay off? Good God! with such lines as hers, she was not the ship to founder. But for four minutes, which was four months of suspense to all hands, the brave little craft lay smothered and idle with her lee deck awash. Then, in a God-sent lull, which was like a black yawn in the mouth of the storm, the schooner, slightly lifting her slanting masts, slowly rounded her bows, and in a few moments was before the wind, which with hellish clamour had closed about her again. And now the sea had begun to run.

'The weight of the gale had flattened the ocean; but the wind began to pick it up, and run it in steady processions—in wheels of foam, arching, diving, crashing, rising higher and higher to the wild lashing of those thongs of madness till they threatened to roll, to use Crusoe's expression, "mountain-high." On a sudden, whilst Captain Cochrane was in the act of yelling to his men to bring the schooner to the wind, the *Eleuthera* leapt right out of the wet, howling, torn, indescribable murkiness, and vanished across the *Charmer's* bows. Every man in that schooner held his breath, and what

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a picture was that! It was no longer the blackness of the first of the storm; there was the rush of the sea-flash to send high aloft the pale and wondrous shimmer of its own illumination. The whole fabric of the ship, as she swept and went, had been as visible as though the moist light of a dim moon was cast upon her. She arched to the seas as she ran, stooping her bows till the fo'c's'le was out of sight in foam, then lifting her forward part in the posture of an agony of entreaty, her ropes blown into hoops, pale fragments of rent canvas fluttering at her yards; and the seas roared as they raced with her and passed her, lifting her as easily as you would throw that buoy over the side. A tremor of lights was visible as she went past, and one might have wondered if the people were still at dinner and enjoying it. For how long would Captain Bahama Shanklin continue to run his ship before heaving her to?

'Cochrane lost no time. No sooner had the West Indiaman been swallowed up in that dissolving, engaging surface than Cochrane gave his orders to heave to. He was a fine seaman, and knew his ship; his crew were all good men, and this was a time of life or death. The familiar orders rang along the deck. In the first desperate plunge the determined little craft buried herself half way to the waist. She rose with yelling shrouds and foaming decks, then, sweeping her nose at the next sea, took it in a wild, long leap. Out of the next seething valley she soared all aslant to the tempest, and under the merest shred of canvas, and with her weather bow leaping and shouldering the huge bed of cream that rushed at her, the schooner lay hove to, scarcely less safe than if in harbour.'

CHAPTER II.

THE FLOATING GIRL.

'WHEN Captain Cochrane,' continued Captain Tomson Foster, 'had snugged his ship, and watched the uproar for some time, suspecting that he was in a cyclone, and not knowing but that the fateful centre of it might be close at hand, he thought he would go below for a little shelter and a little supper and a glass of grog. It is impossible to describe the terrific scene of strife he was quitting. The seas, now of giant form, were blowing in rushes of smoke into and through each other. The noise of the tempest was horrible. Its most dreadful note was in the heavens, through which it rushed with ever deepening thunderclad tones. It was the song of the Storm Fiend, and he was singing it with the demon's temper that night. The water about some parts of the deck was washing waist-high. Captain Cochrane gave certain instructions in the note of a speaking-trumpet to Julius Nassau, whose face, as it came within the glance of the binnacle lamp, showed for beauty like a toad's, and then, watching his chance, made a bolt for the little companion hatchway, which he simply opened and shut behind him, and descended a few steps into the cabin. A smart brass lamp hung at

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a beam; its tumblefication and ~~that of the swing tray~~ pleasantly illustrated the height, nimbleness, the daring springs, of the dance on deck. The lamp shed a bright light, and the whole interior was submitted to the eye, accustomed to the blinding opacity of the night, with startling clarity. It was a cosy little sea-parlour, just the sort of den in which brutal slaving men, divided by a plank or two from five hundred or a thousand miserable, sweating, dying or dead wretches, would lift up their voices in the loud rejoicings of the rum-cask. In such an interior they would fall drunk, and tumble with touching execrations under the table; for no man of his day, if it were not a bumboat woman (pardon the Paddyism), swore with the execrable capacity and needlessness of the downright Liverpool or London slaver. The pirate was a gentleman compared to him, and in my opinion the pirate led the more honest life.

'Captain Cochrane stood at the companion steps looking around him a minute. He had something to see; he had forgotten it; the storm had blown it out of his head. He was a man of middle stature, of a kindly, rugged countenance; he had followed the sea for many years, and looked his calling. There was something refined both in his aspect and speech—superior, I mean, to that of the herd of them who were at sea in those days, and he was not without social pretensions. Could a Cochrane fail to be a connection of the Dundonalds? It was generally accepted that Cochrane was a relation of the famous Earl, and, as the pretensions were never examined, he passed through life in the enjoyment of a speculative dignity.

'On the couch or locker to leeward sat a girl of about eighteen years of age. She sat upright. Her

skin was white, and she carried all those airs of disorder which the sea will fling as a mantle upon those who, ignorant of its nature, meddle with it either through ignorance or stupidity. Beside her stood a rather tall young man. The ladies would at once call him an extremely good-looking young man. How am I to paint in words the portrait of a good-looking young man? Dickens, by a turn of his pen, can give you the whole being he wishes to submit; but when he deals with the eyes, nose, and mouth, describes the colour of the hair and how it was worn, the real man sinks behind the pigments, and what you see is something else than what Dickens believes you are looking at. I have no turns of speech—would I had! I would not be the skipper of a ship, I would be the most popular author in the world, greatly fêted in America, the beloved friend of every Englishman, and as immortal as a painter of human manners as Jove is as a god. The young man standing beside the girl was Arthur Cochrane. He was the only son of his father, and was a sailor. He was not only a sailor by profession, but in his looks he inherited the splendid gift of old ocean: the easy style, the frank address, the cordial laugh, the inimitable hearty manner. They attempt this thing on the stage by men who have gone for a fortnight as a passenger, or served for a few months as an apprentice, and the result is that the stage never has submitted, and never will, to the public the true representation of a merchant sailor's life, his fore-castle troubles, the quarrels with the captain, the bad food, and the rest of it.

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sea. Captain Cochrane at the foot of the steps halted, and stared hard at the girl. He struggled with memory, so potent had been the forces of the storm to sweep all things before it, then remembered that she was the most marvellously-saved woman in the world, for say what you will, the girl was scarcely in the schooner before the whiteness of the tempest was shrieking through the night.

'The lamp burned finely; he could examine her with ease, and saw before him a girl of about eighteen seated and leaning with her back against a locker. She was stripped to her bodice, but the water still drained from the heels of her stockings. Her hair reposed in coils, and the fingers of the sea seemed to have done them no mischief; in fact, she had not been long overboard. I have always heard her described as a very striking young woman. Did you ever read "Elsie Venner"? There was a suggestion of Holmes's serpentine beauty about her at the first look. But this wore off when you got to see how truly English her blood was. She had an angel's eyes for searching and smiling upon you and expressing the language of the heart to you. She was very white, for she was fresh from death, and now sat in a thunderous interior whose hideous uproar of groaning bulkheads and timbers, seeking to rend plank from plank, would have appalled a stouter-hearted person than a poor half-drowned girl. Her nose had a peculiar curve suggestive of the Jewess, but how remote! yet the curve seemed to combine with the serpentine character of her face and figure. It corresponded with her eyes, and was full of talent, which cannot be said of most noses. She had very little feet. She had charmingly shaped legs. Her naked arms gleamed like the flash of ice in the careering rushes of the lamp. Captain Coch-

rane stared at her with gaining admiration, then went swaying like a wind-swept bough up to her.

“D’ye feel any the worse for your dive?” said he, in a bluff, sailorly way, but with the well-bred note that characterized his intonation.

“I hardly know where I am,” she answered in a whisper that was barely audible.

“She is none the worse, father, I’ll wager ye that,” said Arthur Cochrane. “What sort of weather are we making? By heavens, what a leap!”

‘The crash of the fall that followed was deafening. The whole ship seemed to be let go of and dropped in all her dead weight. A roar of thunder rushed along her as the immense sea that was to heave her on high swept her decks with its flickering peaks blazing with the beautiful brine-stars of those seas.

“You may guess what weather she makes by *that*,” answered Captain Cochrane. “Nothing to be afraid of, lady. This is a hooker, built not only for the calms of the sun, but for the heights of the North and the fury of the Horn. Nothing to fear, indeed,” he continued, rolling his eyes about him in search of something to eat. A glass of fine Jamaica rum, a slice of ship’s beef, and a crisp sea-biscuit make a meal fit to set before a king. The sailors say no, but I say yes, though I agree with the forecastle that it is good only, and supportable, when of the best. Captain Cochrane sat eating. The girl stared with amazement fading out of her eyes and the light of realization quickening and beautifying them. She looked at Captain Cochrane, who was flashed up in a thousand twinkles of wet and spray, as he shaggily sat munching. Arthur, on his knees, was chafing and squeezing the water out of her feet.

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“It’s a pity,” says he, “we have no clothes for this young lady. We must get her dress dried smartly.”

“Dried, dried!” echoed the Captain with contempt. “Who wants drying in this climate? She’ll dry as she goes. How came ye swimming in the sea, missy?”

“I was looking through a port and I fell,” answered the girl.

“Whose port?”

“The West Indiaman, *Eleuthera*, in which I was making the voyage to Kingston.”

“Ho, to Kingston!” cries the Captain. “We are bound on that journey; you will find the *Eleuthera* there, with all your clothes on board, which will be a nice thing.”

“It will,” she answered with a faint smile, glancing at Arthur Cochrane.

“You have brought her to grandly,” said Captain Cochrane to his son. “No ship was ever brought to as that girl. It is a splendid stroke of seamanship to save a human life. Could you eat or drink, do you think, missy?” said the old chap, with his face full of kindness.

The young man put a glass of brandy-and-water into her hand, with a biscuit; and she looked at him gratefully and with growing approval as the reality of things deepened in her gaze.

“Pray, what might your name be?” asked the Captain.

“Rose Island,” she answered.

“Are you related to Mr. and Mrs. Island of Kingston?”

“They are my uncle and aunt, and I was proceeding to join them when I fell overboard.”

“I know Tom Island very well; I am glad to have

saved his niece," said Captain Cochrane heartily. "You come to us as a friend, but though this world is big, miss, the horizon of life is small, and you are constantly falling against people you know or ought to know."

"I can't help thinking I know you," said Miss Island, who made that wild and storm-tossed cabin look like a picture in a fairy tale, with her half-clad form, and coloured bodice and striped petticoat. When Rose said that she could not help thinking that she knew Captain Cochrane, the sailor stared at her and so did the son, and then the son burst out:

"Did you ever make a voyage in a ship called the *Swan*, commanded by my father?"

"Yes; to Philadelphia," she answered.

"Then," said he, "we are old shipmates, and played together!"

"I perfectly remember you, and I perfectly remember Captain Cochrane," she exclaimed, with a pretty tint entering her face, for she was certainly delighted with this meeting. She felt herself among old friends, and the knowledge rallied her, so that she smiled and spoke with vivacity, and flashed sweet looks about her, and exhibited no horror at the tremendous commotion without, and the hideous leaping within, being spirited by this meeting.

"How are your father and mother?" asked Captain Cochrane.

"They are dead," she answered. "They lived for a long time in Philadelphia, and then returned to the old country and died within a year of each other."

A silence of speech fell, then Captain Cochrane asked Arthur to step on deck and take a look round. The girl's dress lay upon a locker. She asked Captain

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Cochrane's leave to put it on. The Captain replied that it was as wet as a swab just fished up from over the side, and so was she. They would make up a bed for her in one of those cabins, and her clothes would be dried when there was anything to dry them at.

'Whilst they awaited the return of Arthur Cochrane, the girl spoke of him. She said he was a fine, handsome man; and, with a look of profound gratitude that rose to the height and beauty of passion, she exclaimed that she owed her life to him. This was not quite true, however; others had brought her into the vessel, and she was in little more than a swoon when young Cochrane and the man who helped him prepared her for rubbing, and for squeezing the water out of her and the life into her.

"He's a handsome young man," she said. "Think of his being the Arthur Cochrane I used to play with on board the old *Swan*! Is he a sailor?"

"From his hair to his heels," answered the Captain proudly. "No smarter sailor sails the ocean. He was on the look out for a job, but not finding one quickly enough, he agreed to make this voyage with me, acting as second mate, but in reality as an all-round man. The second mate is the Only Mate, an ugly rascal called Julius Nassau. He stands watch and watch with me, and 'tis Arthur's privilege to relieve his old father;" and the Captain gave the girl a cordial smile and bow.

'Young Cochrane descended and described the night. The wind was of hurricane force, the seas running enormously high; but the schooner, save that she occasionally smothered herself forward, was making magnificent weather of it. The hands were assembled aft for shelter.

“Sing out for Cabbage,” said the Captain.

‘Cabbage was the name of a man who occasionally officiated in the cabin.

“You and he’ll get that little starboard berth there rigged up for the reception of this young lady. There’s a mattress and there are blankets in my bed. Take another glass of grog,” said he, clasping her hand, and looking at her with kindly eyes, “and turn in as fast as ever the ship will let you. Dream securely, for if this little vessel were the dome of St. Paul’s she couldn’t be safer in this wild weather.”

‘So saying, Captain Cochrane put on his fur cap, buttoned up his glistening coat, and vanished in the screaming blackness of the companion-way. Ladies and gentlemen, he is no sailor who does not delight in being of use to the ladies, attending them with manly solicitude during their hours of trial at sea. Cochrane and the seaman went to work with a will, and a will they needed, for had they possessed sea-legs as old as Noah’s, they stood to be dashed to pieces and their limbs and necks broken upon that barbarous dance of deck. They found the bed-apparel they wanted, Arthur Cochrane contributing. The berth in such a little ship as this was a small one, you will suppose. It was a monkey’s cage; it was a hole in a wooden wall, but it gave you planks for a bed, and when you fell asleep the greatest and most sumptuous cabin in the world could not have housed you with more comfort for yourself than this recess in the *Charmer’s* bulkhead.

‘The demon of the storm howled through its black jaws, wide as the night outside; the schooner was sometimes thrown up twenty feet, and her corresponding souse into the hissing and becalmed valley sent a shriek

of dissolution. At such a time, finding a wall when she was on which the shipwrecked of. If the seen to be each seized they yawed swinging furious men, is very little heed telescopic a few minutes. The cabin she was drawn a little but of a saucer thanked the now, but a and was in knew who shook her floating dead thundering her little be-

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of dissolution through the beaten and helpless vessel. At such moments the slope of the deck was like climbing a wall. How, then, was Miss Island to go to bed when she could not stir to save her life from the locker on which she was glued by the diabolic heaves? In shipwreck no impropriety is felt or perhaps thought of. If the lady was to be got to bed, she was to be seen to bed, and the two sailors went to her. They each seized her by an arm; they watched their chances; they yawed and heaved on their legs as though in a swing furiously swung. But a sailor, ladies and gentlemen, is very seldom dashed to pieces at sea; he takes little heed of perpendicular decks, and his legs are telescopic in their power of balancing his frame. In a few minutes the two men got the girl to her berth. The cabin lamp made light enough. In twenty minutes she was dry and comfortable, wrapped in blankets, in a little bunk with a porthole over it of the diameter of a saucer. They wished her good-night, and she thanked them with sobs. It was reality to her now, but all between was what? She fell overboard, and was insensible. She was picked up, and scarce knew who she was or why she was here, and horror shook her frame as she thought of herself as out alone, floating dead or alive upon the raging sea that was thundering in shocks of earthquake from the side of her little berth.

'The men put her clothes in a heap ready to dry, replaced the lamp, closed the door, and left her. Young Cochrane gave Cabbage, as he was nicknamed, a glass of grog.

"A fine young woman," said Cabbage, who, like most sailors, grew loquacious when anything to drink

was put into his hands. "Her eyes glowed like a ship's side-lights over the blanket."

"Strange to find her floating and alive," said Arthur, swallowing his own second mate's nip.

'But the other said:

"We once picked up a man about five mile off the Lizard. He was a smacksman, had been knocked overboard, fell on his back and lay, and was alive and hearty, and able to sit up and eat a meal of bread and pork soon after his clothes had been brought to him."

"How long was he overboard?"

"Eight hours, as God is truth," answered the man, with great emphasis.

'Young Cochrane made no answer; he looked for a moment around him, then drove his way up the steps, through the closed companion-door, on to the deck. The seas were running in large pale masses. They rushed through the gloom in mighty processions; fire flamed in them; they were beautiful and terrible to see in their visionary bulk, each rolling onward with a sound of the thunder of heaven. There was no lightning. You almost thought you saw the horizon working upon its leaping circle. Aft, the schooner was dry; forward, in frightful rushes, she would bury herself, and all seemed boiling whiteness there, with the bowsprit and the jibboom forking out. The music aloft was a dance of the witches. Every rope had a note of its own; all gave voice to it at their shrillest, and the concert at each sheering heave to windward was a sound beyond imagination or description.

'The men were assembled aft for shelter. There were five sailors, including a boy named Wilkinson, who bore the nickname of Dr. Johnson, because of his

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curious knowledge of Boswell's Life of that great man. They crouched under the bulwarks. The Captain and Julius Nassau stood together at the little wheel, which was lashed hard a-lee. Just when Arthur Cochrane came on deck his father said to Nassau, in the notes of a speaking-trumpet—you might not whisper in that Satanic ballroom:

“No good in keeping the men on deck. As lief founder below, if that's to be it.”

“Oh, she rides like a circus girl!” exclaimed Nassau.

“Whose watch is it?” said the Captain.

“It's mine. I'll keep the look-out,” answered young Cochrane.

‘On this the Captain shouted aloud, and all the men went into the cabin, the Captain following, leaving his son to keep a look-out, under the protection of a small square of canvas that was seized in the main-rigging. The cabin looked strange and something savage with those wild seamen sitting about it. Its atmosphere, too, was the colour of the storm, the muffled thunder of seas smiting forward, those desperate falls from foaming peak to black and hissing base. The seamen were a rough lot—men for adventures, you would have said. Wilkinson, nicknamed Dr. Johnson, had been turned out of the cabin for reasons I forget. Cabbage had taken his place, and did some of his work; a sour, burly man, with a nose like a horseshoe and two eyes stained with drink sunk deep in their crimson webs. There were also Ben Black, and a man who passed as Old Stormy, and another called Jacob Overalls; these and the Captain and Nassau and Arthur made the crew, and the schooner was well equipped. The wet streamed from the men who sat

about, and as the occasion was extraordinary the Captain ordered rum to be served. They also smoked; there was not the discipline in this little ship that you would expect to find in an East Indiaman; yet the Captain was held in respect; the men admired his fine seamanlike qualities, and were subdued and satisfied by those qualities of the gentleman that they found in him.

'The Captain ordered Cabbage to bring some supper for the men out of his private larder, a little hole at the fore-end, where the stuff lifted from the lazarette was stowed. A conspicuous figure at this feast was Julius Nassau, the Only Mate. Even eyes to whom he was familiar would dwell upon him for a minute whilst talk went on. He was repulsive by virtue of his negro face, which wanted all the elements of blandness you meet with in most of the races of South Africa, where the eye is large, pleading, and handsome, with an intelligence which is not human, which is not animal, which is of itself, which is like the skin it is set in. His dress was a little grotesque: his pilot-coat was belted; he wore earrings; his negro curls glistened in the rushing sparkles of the lamp; his white trousers, very much soiled, were stuffed into that sort of boots which are called half-Wellingtons; his dusky eyes charged the encounter of your gaze with red rays. He was such a figure as Sir Walter would have loved to depict. They talked, and ate, and drank. The schooner rushed and soared. At any moment might come the thunder-shock of dissolution, the blow of some overwhelming black sea, which should drown the little fabric out of hand. But the sailors ate and drank and smoked, and did not seem to heed the weather, unless by an

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occasional interjection wrested from them by some extraordinary leap of the little ship.

“What was the name of that ship in this storm?” asked Nassau.

“The *Eleuthera*,” answered the Captain, who sat at the head of the little table with a pipe in his mouth and one hand steadying a pannikin of grog.

“She will have foundered,” said Nassau. “I saw her on her beam-ends; her yard-arms were level with the sea. Then I found something else to do than to watch her.”

“Well, ’tis sink or swim with every ship afloat,” said Old Stormy. “What would sailors do if there wasn’t shipwrecks? The old vessels would go on lasting for ever, patched and botched, and there would be no room for the Jacks as would swarm.”

“That was a fine girl that was brought on board,” said Nassau. “Is she comfortable and turned-in?”

“She has been looked after,” exclaimed the Captain briefly. “She proves to be a connection of an old friend of mine.”

“An uncommonly fine girl, I should say,” continued Nassau, “when properly dressed and standing up. I’m a single man, Cap’n, and ain’t giv’n to wives unless they’re other men’s.” Here he tweaked the coarse ends of horse-hair which grew under his nose. “But, by my mother’s soul, I’d marry the girl we brought aboard, if it was only for the sake of her eyes.”

The Captain frowned. A great laugh rose amongst the men.

“Wilkinson,” called out the half-caste, with a wild, savage, merry look in his singular deep-sunk eyes, “what do that old Dr. Johnson of yours—him you’re always a-quoting—say of marriage?”

“Why,” answered the boy, who was in reality a young man of about four or five and twenty, “he said that if the Lord Chancellor had the choosing of people for marriage, people would be a darned sight happier than they are now.”

“You mean,” says Ben Black, “that we’re not to choose for ourselves?”

“That’s what Dr. Johnson says.”

“That old Johnson of yours is a hass!” said Old Stormy. “Every time you quote him makes me think so. Captain, what sort of a wind is this we’ve got into?”

“A wind with a hole in it,” answered the Captain.

“What does that mean?” exclaimed Old Stormy.

“There’s a hole,” said the Captain, “somewhere about, and when you’re in it you may hear the storm hissing and yelling round you; whilst in that hole you may catch butterflies and beautiful birds like parrots, and birds of paradise have been seen flying about in that hole.”

‘The man thought the Captain was laughing at him. The fact is, in those days, ladies and gentlemen, very little about the true theories of winds was understood. I don’t know whether Piddington had written, or Reid, but the theory that all wind is circular was not to be accepted for many a year by the hard-mouthed old soakers who, in tall hats and square-toed boots, sailed the ships of trade; and my friend Captain Cochrane, you’ll perceive, was something before his time. Fortunately for him—for he was without the true knowledge of the thing—he had hove his schooner to on the right tack, and the vast mass of whirlwind, with its terrible seas washing the rush of soot above the mastheads, was

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slowly passing away, carrying its deadly centre with it, and the Captain could talk of holes with impunity. The crew remained below all night. One or another kept watch for short periods. Some lay down and slept and snored in sounds superior to the noises of the schooner and the sea. A sailor must go in deadly peril to keep awake when he cant stretch his limbs and sleep. Very hard indeed did it blow all that night; and a long, black night it was, interminable to those who waited for the dawn, and the spirit of death seemed to blacken the atmosphere, under which the dim froth in heaps like hills stretched, defining their own limit by the wild and ghastly light they made. But when the dawn came the gale had broken, the weight of it was passing, and over the swollen sea, white, snorting, and raging with conflict, a visible sky could be seen breaking up into huge masses of vapour, flying with the gale and closing into the aspect of a wall of thunder against that part of the circle of the sea towards which they were swept. The most melancholy picture under the heaven of God is dawn at sea, whether the ocean be broken, rent, hurled by the power of the hurricane, or whether it sleeps from its confines in the west, awaiting the jewelled flash that is to convert its melancholy into magnificence.

“The schooner has done well,” said Nassau to Captain Cochrane. “See them seas to windward? By my mother, who was the handsomest woman that ever stepped the streets of Kingston, they are but half the size of the waters which ran in the middle watch, and yet see 'em!”

‘He let drop his jaw, and struck an attitude that made him look like a buccaneer in the act of leaping

on board an enemy. Most of the men were on deck. Arthur Cochrane, after keeping some black look-outs, had gone below for an hour's rest. As the dismal dawn, washed by the hard seas off whose heads the gale was still blowing the spindrift in hair-like brine, sifted its stormy hue into the sky, every eye, as may be supposed, was directed round the sea in search of some sign of the *Eleuthera*. Nothing in that way was visible: no sullen flashing keel of capsized boat; no length of mast lifting, snake-like, its rigging, and hissing amidst the hollow.

"But, I say," shouted Nassau suddenly, "what is that on the lee-bow? Look, all hands! As I am a white man when stripped, it is a ship!"

The Captain rushed to the little companion for the old ship's glass that usually lay in brackets there. He directed it. The object was a ship, sure enough, but she was not the *Eleuthera*. She was small, and had apparently been a barque, but was entirely dismasted of all but her mizzen-mast and mizzen-peak, half-way up which blew a flag whose nationality could not be distinguished. The carrying rolls of the sea were so great, and the gale so troubled with spray, that it was almost impossible to fix her, whether with the eye or the glass.

"There's nothing to be done yet," said Cochrane. "But we'll have a look at her. She's not abandoned." And then he turned his attention to his own schooner. The brave little craft had come through it nobly. Her caboose had been washed away from its moorings, but it was a stout little sea-kitchen, and lay solid in the scuppers. It was speedily picked up and set on end in its own place; for the galley fire had to be lighted, and the men were hungering for their breakfast of hot coffee

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and salt beef. Aloft, she was unharmed, save that her fore-topmast had been sprung. She had also carried away her jibboom. They sounded the pumps, and before breakfast was ready had pumped her out. Meanwhile they let the vessel lie hove-to, keeping a steady eye on the ship to leeward (whose colour was a resistless appeal to them) for they could do nothing for her in this weather, and so they waited.'

CHAPTER III.

THE FRENCHMAN.

'It is a soft warm breeze this evening,' said Captain Tomson Foster to the attentive company that had gathered round him, 'and the ship sails fast. At this rate we shall soon have the jewels of the South dangling in our rigging, and the *Suez* will be heading off for the Cape of Good Hope. What a noble sunset has just disappeared—the red ruin of the stateliest pyre in the world!'

He stood looking to seaward, lost in thought. A passenger coughed. He started, and, returning from the rail, began to slowly fill his pipe whilst he said :

'But now for the yarn. The dance of the schooner was hard and savage upon the sea, and tons of water were flashed over her bows; but she was now comparatively a dry ship, and shortly after the caboose had been secured to the deck, its chimney was pouring out smoke, and a brisk relish of ham was to be tasted in the gale. About this time, when it still blew too hard to attempt to approach the distant vessel, Arthur Cochrane came out of his bit of a berth, and as he was making his way to the ladder, he was arrested by the sight of Miss Rose Island standing in her door holding

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on with all her might, fully dressed, yea, even to a small hat, for in that hat she had floated, and in that hat she had been brought on board. She bowed and coloured; he bowed and smiled. Their bows were the attitudes of contortionists on that still frantic deck.'

“Have I to thank you,” said she, “for placing all my clothes in my cabin?”

“Oh, I just dried them,” he answered, “by hanging them up. This is a close atmosphere, with the companion hatchway shut.”

“You are extremely thoughtful!” she exclaimed. “One must shriek to be heard. What a terrible noise of straining timbers! Does it always blow in this way in these seas?”

And then she wanted to know if the schooner was safe, and if the *Eleuthera* was in sight. Cochrane caught her by the hand, and brought her to the table and seated her, and then she was safe. There was a little daylight in this cabin, quite enough to see by. Perhaps it softened what it could not sweeten, but sweetness was not lacking in this resounding hole. Cochrane was again struck by the serpentine character of the girl's beauty and figure. Her fascination was that of a poem which is full of mystery and the loveliness of words which are not the gift of most poets. But any fancies bred by her figure, and the contour of her face, must have been dispelled by the beauty of her eyes—of her large, rich, star-like eyes—which gazed with a light of their own from under her beautiful brow, and idealized her into a very Shakespearian conception of womanhood. Arthur Cochrane stared at her intently, whilst he paused at the table to exchange a few words with her. More original beauty in the female

he had never witnessed, though many might have been repelled, by it through its somewhat Jewish character.

“It is extraordinary,” she said, “that you should be the little boy I played with on board the *Swan*. How happy to find one’s self overboard, and then picked up by such an old friend as you, and by your father, who is the friend of my people! I love God for this generous salvation of my poor body. I have no recollection of falling in the water. Everything has the blankness of the closed eyelid down to the moment when I awoke and found you bending over me.”

“Did you sleep well?”

“I fell out four or five times. It is a little cot,” she said, with a smile that lighted up her face like a play of sheet-lightning, “but it is fine and handsome enough to keep me from drowning,” she added, with a kiss of her hand towards her little resting-place.

Their talk was not long. Cochrane was due on deck; yet they found time to say a good deal. He asked her if she would like to come on deck, as she would be as safe there as below. Just then, as the girl, with her hand on Arthur Cochrane’s arm, was essaying to rise, down the companion-steps, with a great swagger of dirty white breeches and belted bulk of form, came Julius Nassau. He started on seeing Miss Island, and with grotesque courtesy, as much in keeping with his appearance as the mirth of a monkey with its face, pulled off his wet hat and gave her a low bow, to which she responded by a slight inclination of the head. He certainly looked an ugly villain. His face was a sort of yellow, not easily described, blackened by his bristles of hair, and by the

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negro wool that framed it. Arthur thought he would have the grace to pass on.

“Good-morning!” he said, in a strong familiar voice, and a throaty note full of admiration. “I hope you slept well.”

“Very well, thank you,” she answered.

“Mr. Cochrane should take you on deck, miss. There is a sight to be seen, and I dare say there are lives to be saved. We are still hove-to, and very properly, for it yet blows half a gale, miss, and the seas are scaling and dangerous; but after breakfast I guess we shall be heading off for the dismantled little barque that is in sight.”

“Will you come on deck and look at her?” said Cochrane; and she eagerly consented.

He hauled her up the steps, and when on deck the sad light of the streaming day was all about them. Captain Cochrane grasped her by the hand, and placed her under the hurricane house, with a turn of a rope round her body, so that she could not fall away and break her neck to leeward. The men were at breakfast forward, out of sight in their forecabin. It still blew very hard: you could not look to windward very long. The seas came rolling in leaden heaps to the schooner, which glanced to their summit with yelling spars, and airily took the trough where the howl of the gale was silent, and where on the low elevation of that deck you heard nothing but the steam-like hiss of expiring spray. The distant ship was difficult to make out by the naked eye. Captain Cochrane was of opinion that she was a Frenchman. She was painted green, sat low, rolled heavily, and seemed to be sinking; but there was nothing to be done until the sea abated. Overhead great masses

of cloud sailed slow and solemn; you would not have guessed they were driven by this wind, but under them flew the scud of the gale like the yellow froth that is blown off the breaker on the sandy shore. Were there people on board? Rose Island wanted to know. The colour under the peak answered the question, was the Captain's reply, unless, indeed, she had been abandoned, and left that colour flying.

Soon after this the cabin breakfast came along, in the shape of Cabbage staggering aft out of the caboose, with a long pot of coffee and a big pot of tea. With these he sank into the cabin, to reappear in a minute, and he then returned with two or three tin plates of broiled ham, which he hugged to his heart, whilst he danced in measure to the music of those waving spars overhead. The Captain's stores provided the rest. On the whole, for a small schooner in the tail of a gale, with a sea running which kept her hove-to, it was not a bad breakfast. Arthur Cochrane kept the watch on deck, and Julius Nassau formed one of the group below. This man showed some reserve in the presence of his Captain. He constantly glanced at the girl with his deep-sunk eyes, ardent with admiration, but had little to say, because the conversation mainly referred to the friends of Miss Island. I have said that he was an Only Mate, in which term he combined the two grades, so that in rank he stood next to the Captain; but there was little of rank or standing in a schooner of the size of the *Charmer*, and Nassau commonly was very free with his tongue. This morning, however, whether wearied by the night, or influenced by the presence of the girl, he held his peace. One remark he made, when they were talking about the dismasted vessel on the port bow:

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“When I was coming aft, old Overalls says to Cabbage, pointing to the wreck, ‘D’ye know,’ says he, ‘what Dr. Johnson, ’cording to Wilkinson, says of the likes of her? He says, says he, that no man ’ud go to sea who could manage to get into gaol, and that being in a ship was worse than being in a prison, for you had not only the hardships, but you stood to be drowned.’ Old Johnson knew what’s what,” continued Nassau, after bestowing a wide grin on Miss Island. “The sailor gets better fare when he’s cast into gaol than he ate in the ship which locked him up for mutinying on account of bad food. I’ve been a common sailor myself, and would rather pick oakum in a prison than turn a spunyarn winch on a ship’s fo’c’s’le.”

‘Just as he said this a flash of dazzling brightness struck the dingy little skylight over the cabin. It glorified the darksome interior; stars of the day danced in Rose Island’s eyes. Nassau looked horribly swarthy, and the Captain, starting up, exclaimed:

“The gale’s broken! We must help those people. I will send my son to eat some breakfast with you, Miss Rose;” and so saying, he stepped on deck, and Nassau, after making the bow of a baboon to the lady, followed Captain Cochrane.

‘There is not a more glorious sight in the world, as you ladies and gentlemen must often have observed, than the flash of a sunbeam revolving with a cloud, past whose edge it smites the waters, lighting up leagues of dark-green seas, which roll in long tunnels of brine, and make the heavens white with the whiteness they pour.

“Go below,” said the Captain to his son, “and get some breakfast. I shall make for that ship.”

'In a moment he howled out the necessary orders. He did so at a great risk. The sea ran very high, and the schooner would be in dire peril as her head paid off. They set the stay-foresail and the boom-foresail with a double reef in it, and the helm was put up, with the high seas curling about the quarters and bows, for the Frenchman far to leeward. Then when they had got the vessel in position, they set the square topsail, and the small top-gallant sail, the spar having been fished, and she foamed along the seas in beauty and comfort, lifting lofty spars clothed in white, and raising her counter dryly out of the whirlpool of foam that raved about her and went away in a wake. It was soon seen by the naked eye that the vessel was in dire distress, and it was clear from the sluggish motions of her rolling and pitching that she was half-full of water and sinking. The dark-green seas broke over her in waterfalls which blew in plumes of foam over her naked decks.

'There are many melancholy objects to be observed in this world. A stork on one leg on a gleam of sandy tract, half veiled by drizzling rain, is a cheerless object. Melancholy, too, is the old windmill whose sides are long since green with decay, and whose wooden fabric trembles and shudders and groans throughout the long wet midnight, with its dull gusts giving a fresh voice to the whispers of invisible running waters. But saddest of all the melancholy sights is a dismasted ship, far out at sea, wrecked, helpless, with human beings grouped at her stern, frequently with frantic gestures extending their arms. Captain Cochrane counted ten men and one woman. He gazed at the vessel long and steadfastly. His face was full of speculation. He looked a fine example of an English seaman as he stood at the

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rail, firmly gripping a backstay with the intensity of thought and resolution, bent upon a most extraordinary, hazardous and adventurous piece of seamanship. Just at this time Arthur Cochrane came on deck, helping Rose Island. Now that the vessel was sailing with the wind upon the quarter, there was little difficulty in using one's legs, but often, in spite of the helmsman's skill, a huge sea would come running along the bends, showing its white teeth all along the bulwark rails, often slapping a bruising weight of water over the deck, and seas of this sort made the slope of the planks dangerous. Our handsome friend Arthur stepped with Rose to the main rigging, and secured her to it. Nassau, who stood near the wheel, watched these proceedings with a greedy grin of peculiarly white fangs, whilst the rays of his deep-sunk eyes, red with drink, villainy, and nature, were as noticeable as his prickly moustache, dirty with flying cloud as the atmosphere was, in spite of the flash of the sun.

"Oh, there's the ship!" cried Rose. "Oh, my heavenly God, I do hope that if there are people on board we shall be in time!"

"Time! Ay, that is very well," answered young Cochrane thoughtfully, looking at the vessel. "But no boat is going to live in this sea, Rose"—she was an old playmate, and had told him to call her Rose just the same as when they were children on board the old *Swan*; "it still blows hard, and the sea is not going to moderate whilst the wind lasts."

"If there are people on board, they must be saved," said Rose.

"They ought to be saved, certainly," replied Arthur. "And she's a sinking ship beyond doubt. She is drunk

with salt water. She has taken in a great many drops too much."

'Captain Cochrane, looking round, saw them and approached.

'"Are there living people on board?" asked Rose.

'"I count ten men in the glass, and a woman," answered the Captain. "D'ye observe that dark line along the taffrail?"

'She strained her beautiful eyes, protecting her sight from the edge of the wind by her hand, and, after peering and staring, she cried:

'"Yes."

'"They are human beings," said Captain Cochrane, "and they must be saved."

'"She is foundering," said Arthur, wearing his puzzled look as he gazed at the still distant wreck.

'"She'll keep afloat long enough to serve our turn," said the Captain cheerfully.

'Arthur looked at him, and said something. The Captain answered, Arthur replied, and they conferred together, Arthur with a face made up of doubt, admiration, and zeal. Rose could not understand them, and watched the wreck, that was growing rapidly upon the horizon to the keen keel of the schooner, which now hoisted her mainsail with two reefs in it, and her standing jib. The young fellow Wilkinson was to leeward, looking at the vessel they were approaching.

'"Jump below for my speaking-trumpet," said the Captain; and in a few minutes this obsolete instrument, which in my time no captain ever went to sea without, was in Cochrane's hands. He walked aft to the wheel, and looked deliberately at the man who was steering. He was Ben Black. He stared at him

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fixedly, considered, looked around him, and then said, "You are the best helmsman in the ship. I can trust you. You will do. Lives are to be saved, and their rescue from death will depend upon you, Black."

'And he then told him what he intended to do.

"It'll be ticklish work, sir," said the sailor.

"There are ten men and a woman," was Captain Cochrane's answer.

'He went a little way forward, and stationed himself on the bulwark-rail, with his hand grasping a backstay. The sea yawned hollowly under the schooner. A number of seabirds were noticed; they had white plumage and black bills, and were distinguishable chiefly by their bills from the freckles of foam that raced up the liquid steeps. The wreck was now close to, and the schooner was steering a course that should carry her under her stern. Details of incredible interest with magic swiftness leaped forth as the eye shot over the forlorn ship. You saw the shrouds in the sea creeping up the vessel's side to her wearied, battered, staggering rolls; they looked like serpents trying in vain to get on board. As the ship leaned, you had a clear view of her decks. The companion was a sheaf of splinters; the wheel, binnacle, and deckhouse were gone; the water upon her decks rushed in foam as she reeled, and the ropes' ends looked like gigantic eels making for the sea. Right aft upon the taffrail stood the ten men and the woman, who wore a bonnet and was wrapped in a shawl. The men were mostly habited in blue dungaree, which trembled in the wind, and added an accentuation to their foreign appealing gestures—hands outstretched, hands to their faces, wringing of hands, appealing to God by a lifting of



arms, and so forth. An immensely fat man seemed the captain. He wore a cap and a great streaming and rushing dungaree coat, and immensely wide pantaloons, and one somehow gathered—perhaps, by their keeping together—that he was the husband of the woman. The *Charmer* now reduced canvas. The crew's hearts were in this business, and they leaped about with magical alertness. The topgallant-sail was furled and the square topsail clewed up. Other canvas was taken in, and the schooner drove in hollow valleys and over swelling peaks slowly close astern of the Frenchman. Raising his trumpet to his lips, Cochrane roared:

“Keep up your hearts, my lads! We'll stand by you! Lower away that mizzen-gaff on deck out of the road.”

‘The speaker was clearly understood, and the obtrusive spar came rattling to the deck.

“Stand by to jump aboard of us, as we forge down again under your stern. Do you understand?”

‘This was followed by a number of cries and gesticulations. But the time for further parleying had passed; and now, having gone half-a-mile clear of the Frenchman, the schooner wore, and under all the canvas she dared show came thrashing to windward, and the unhappy crowd of Frenchmen roared to her as she passed by.

‘The sight of that English vessel, straining every treenail and timber in her to preserve those people—burying herself in foam to the gangways, leaping in staggers to the liquid acclivities, and rushing down them with the flight of a meteor—was a noble, was a thrilling picture, and the sun at intervals shone forth, and encompassed the heroism of the little *Charmer*

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with the full-bosomed majesty of the dark blue deep, shadowed by islands of clouds and a scene of splendid freedom, with the pendulum roll of its noble surge, timed by the deepening melodies of the sinking gale. Many will wonder that Cochrane did not wait for gale and sea to abate, and keep his little ship hove-to to windward of the wreck. Then, as the weather grew fine, the work of rescue might prove more or less easy. But the fact is, ladies and gentlemen, Captain Cochrane saw, as all saw, that the Frenchman was sinking, and that at any minute she might take a header and vanish. Therefore the attempt must be made at a tremendous risk; and after a desperate struggle with those fierce head seas, the schooner was wore, and under very small canvas headed directly for the Frenchman's counter. The eyes of the helpless men had been glued to her. They saw her coming. Then in a minute they began to tear off their clothes, and awaited the tremendous approach half naked. Cochrane went to the wheel and conned the schooner. He found Black's precision, and his art of "meeting her," exquisite, and he had nothing to say but to wait and watch with the rest. He stood with his speaking-trumpet. The sensations of the moment held the stoutest breathless. Now, lifted on the summit of a seething surge that rushed like steam into its hollow, the schooner was under the counter of the Frenchman.

"Jump!" was the yell. "Now's your chance. Jump!"

'And five men, hurling themselves off the taffrail, gained the deck in the waist, and stood safe, and gasping and sobbing like women.

"We will come back!" roared Captain Cochrane.

'It seemed as though the unhappy people, being too timid to jump, were now under the impression that they were to be abandoned. They threw themselves into every posture of distress and pleading. One seized his trousers, which he had torn off, and flourished them with the air of a madman. It was a terrible time. The wreck was undoubtedly sinking. The seas broke over her as if she had been a half-tide rock, and went away with the gale in cataractal upheavals of brine thick as a London fog. The immensely fat Frenchman, who was undoubtedly the captain, was seen to address the woman, and by a thousand antics and convulsions to prove to her that there was no danger in the leap. She shrank and tossed her hands, and her demonstrations of distress were piteous. Just then Julius Nassau came along the deck, past Rose, who stood at the main-rigging, secured by Arthur's girdle of rope. She had followed the proceedings so far with a countenance beautiful with the animation of glowing eyes, parted lips, cheeks flushing and paling, and with all the other signs of a mind in a very anguish of sympathy with what it beheld. She said to Nassau:

"Why does not that poor woman take off her dress and petticoats, so that her leap may be sure!"

"She is a Frenchwoman and a fool," was the ugly devil's answer. "Was it you, miss," he added, with a look of unpleasant familiarity, "your wonderful fine English spirit would have brought you aboard us at once."

'She did not like the expression in his eyes, nor his smile—such a smile as something wild that starts at you between parted boughs in a forest might bestow—and remained silent. But Nassau was wanted. The

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vessel was again brought to the wind, and began afresh her plucky, tremendous conflict to windward.

“By God!” cried Captain Cochrane, breaking out to Arthur in the extremity of his anxiety, “if they do not jump this bout, she will sink under them.”

‘As they approached, they saw the fat Frenchman struggling with the woman. He was encouraging her. He pointed to the sea under the counter, then to the thunderous white lifts of water over the sodden hull. But her shrinking and terror were exquisitely expressed by her withdrawals, attitudes, and uplifting of arms to God for mercy; and by this time the schooner was under the counter, marvellously steered, close in that instant of ocean movement as ships alongside each other in dock.

“Jump!” went up a universal shriek from her decks.

‘And the jump was made. Four of the men alighted easily; the fifth, who was the fat man, with a shriek to the woman, threw himself into the air, and came down upon the edge of the schooner’s uplifting rail like a feather-bed. He was snatched from his dangerous position, and the schooner forged ahead, leaving the woman standing alone on the taffrail shrieking to be saved, whilst the fat man, having recovered his breath, was shouting in a frenzy:

“She is my wife! For God’s sake save her!”

‘Some of the Frenchmen were bawling, and some were praying.

“You are not going to leave her to drown?” screamed Rose from the main-rigging to Arthur Cochrane.

‘Arthur rushed up to his father.

“She must be rescued!” he exclaimed.

“The ship will be under water before we can shift our helm for another ratch,” answered the Captain.

““ Oh, but the woman is alive, and must be saved !”

““ But how is it to be done ?” said Captain Cochrane, looking gloomily at his son, then at the sinking wreck.

‘ Arthur replied vehemently, and his father listened attentively.

““ But who will risk his life to do this thing ?” said Captain Cochrane.

““ I will,” answered Arthur.

‘ His father looked at him ; his eyes moistened. He grasped him by the hand, and exclaimed, in a broken voice :

““ Be it as you say.”

‘ The orders were promptly given. Again the schooner was wore at a distance of about half a mile from the wreck, which was dangerously dipping her bows. The woman stood alone upon the taffrail, a piteous, appealing object. The Frenchmen, guessing what was to be attempted, shouted : “ Long live the English !” and the fat captain rushed up to Captain Cochrane with his arms extended as though he would kiss him. Again was the noble little craft headed against the still high sea that was running, leaning down lee gunwale under, blowing whole acres of foam off her weather-bow, snapping, bruising, disappearing, emerging in foam, her lofty spars flogging like fishing-rods. Whilst this was doing, her men were busy aboard of her. They got up the deep-sea lead-line, the hand-lead, spare log-lines, unrove signal-halliards, and bent the whole into a line of great length, with fresh stuff at hand ready to bend on in case the first gave out. Arthur had run to his cabin, and reappeared clad in a light cork-jacket which some friendly lady had given him, but which, truly, had never been a part of his equipment as a

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sailor. It was to prove invaluable now. He stood in the gangway dressed in his jacket, and the end of the line was girt to him. The sun was coming and going in splendour amidst the lagoons of blue, and the clouds were sailing in great cream-coloured masses, and the scud of the gale still fled down the wind with the flight of the white birds of the deep. Never had the day shone upon a more pathetic and heroic marine piece than this. Captain Cochrane went to the helmsman and said to him :

“My son will leap on board that wreck to save that woman if there be time. He is my only son. In the name of God, Black, my man, use now your utmost skill!”

“He shall not come to harm through my steering, sir,” answered the man, with something like a touch of emotion in his hoarse voice.

They then went to work to reduce the schooner to bare poles after wearing her, leaving a piece of jib hoisted to secure steerage-way. The little vessel rolled with solemn dignity on the mighty pulse of the sea down towards the wreck, whose counter was often awash when a sea hove her head up. Arthur sprang upon the rail and waited. Rose watched with a white face; her eyes were on fire; her lips were tightly set. He was an Englishman and a sailor, and, desperate as was the act, she would not have had it otherwise. The Captain stood dumbly near the wheel conning his craft. There had been a silence in the schooner until young Cochrane jumped upon the bulwarks, and then all the people, clearly seeing his meaning, broke into a roar of enthusiastic excitement. But no man offered to take his place—not even Nassau. The schooner was steered

marvellously close, and under the wreck's counter she was thrown up by a heavy rush of sea, which at the same instant hove up the Frenchman's stern. The woman was screaming to be saved, and her husband was shouting to her from the schooner's deck. Where was young Cochrane? He had disappeared. Had he gone overboard? No, by Heaven! he was clinging to an end of rope mercifully belayed to a pin in the ship's taffrail, and in a few minutes he had gained the deck.

“Pay out line! pay out line!” roared Captain Cochrane. “Mind that the weight of the bight in the hollow does not drag him overboard!”

‘The young fellow, on scrambling on deck, had whipped out his knife, and severed the seizings of a large lifebuoy that was secured to the grating. The woman clung to him, and, evidently half mad with terror, was impeding his motions, whilst she yelled to him to save her. He took the lifebuoy and jammed it securely over the woman's head, and scarcely had he done so when the ship pitched heavily forwards, then sank in her whole length, leaving a roar and maze of boiling waters, through which Cochrane and the unfortunate woman were slowly dragged. The schooner had come to a stand as close under the lee of the spot in which the Frenchman had vanished as her dexterous steersman could manage to place her.’

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CHAPTER IV.

THE FRENCHMEN LEAVE.

CAPTAIN TOMSON FOSTER, who had been relating his story with great enjoyment and keen appreciation of the act of heroism as a memory, was interrupted by a squall of wet wind, which drove the ladies into the cabin, and brought the topgallant yards on to the caps. When he again resumed his yarn he proceeded thus :

'No sooner had the French ship disappeared than the wind went out. The heaven of clouds hung white, mute, and motionless, like a painted piece. The seas lost their heads of foam, but they still ran fast and with weight, savage in the mood of recollection. Young Cochrane and his companion emerged out of the vast bed of lifting and falling froth caused by the Frenchman's sinking, and by the leap of the seas over her vanishing frame. It was a wonderful picture. There is nothing that puts so much significance into a scene of life as a sinking ship, and people struggling near her. This French ship had sunk with neither bow nor stern uplifted. She had gone down like something sentient, wearied, beaten, going to her account in dumb apathy and scorn of her gods. Now, though Cochrane and the Frenchwoman were buoyed, and attached to a line

that communicated with the schooner, they were in great danger of being drowned from the frequent leaps of the sea over them. The bight of the line, too, was hammered out afar by those remorseless liquid blows, and then there was the constant send of the schooner. It required exquisite judgment and Captain Cochrane's noble skill to bring those two people in safety to the schooner's side. Bowlines on the bight were then lowered, and in a few minutes they were standing safe upon the deck of the *Charmer*. The immensely fat Frenchman with a shrill scream of "Is it possible?" rushed up to his wife and clasped her saturated form to his orbicular breast, whereupon she fainted.

"She is dead!" he yelled.

Rose rushed up to Arthur and, grasping both his dripping hands, cried, whilst she looked with streaming eyes into his face:

"This is the noblest act in the world! A human life saved—a poor woman—oh, Arthur, how I envy you!"

The Frenchmen pressed around. They were extraordinarily enthusiastic. There was no country like the English! No people in the world comparable to the British sailor! Several hugged him, and two or three kissed him. It was French fashion, and he smiled at his own men, who stood looking on with but little emotion of any sort expressed in their faces, and endured the adoration of the Frenchmen until the Captain arrived with a glass of brandy.

"Will you take that poor woman to your cabin?" said Captain Cochrane to Miss Island. "We will dry her clothes after you have undressed her." Then, starting, he exclaimed: "She is not dead, I hope!"

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'The fat Frenchman, with his eyes bubbling with tears, cried :

"I do not know; she is very heavy. It is a faint, I hope. A little restorative——"

"Take her into the cabin," repeated the Captain. "You will find brandy there."

'And the fat Frenchman, assisted by one of his crew, and accompanied by Rose, carried his wife into the cabin.

"Arthur, go and shift yourself," said the Captain. "Make sail, my lads! 'Tis fine weather at last, and plenty of it, I hope."

'And in a few minutes the cheerful song or the hoarse brawling note which the British seaman will raise when he pulls a rope, if he can, sounded about the decks, and soon the pretty little schooner was clothed from gaff-topsail to outer jib, the dark lines of her loose reef points showing like the working fingers of a human being as the marble-white sails swelled in and out to the glory on high. And just there, or there, she went down—*there* it may be, in the heart of that flashing space of sunshine, where the billows softening in thin roll to the magic wand of peace which had been stretched across the sky, made the splendour of the French ship's tomb more radiant even than the sparkles of the sunbeam by their reverberation of the magnificence of the wide and spacious day of beauty and solemn restful cloud, and horizon undulating softly.

'I have recounted this anecdote at large, because it is one of those occurrences, very frequent at sea, which landsmen somehow never get to hear of. If a train runs off an embankment, and the guard covers himself

with glory by dragging an old woman with a broken leg from the *débris*, much is made of the event by the men of the daily papers; possibly a column is devoted to the accident, and sometimes they print leading articles. So of a house on fire. A fireman rescues two children from the blaze. Next day the papers are full of this man and the fire. But magnificent examples of British heroism at sea are never heard of. Perhaps in a corner of your page you may read in five lines how the mate of the ship *London* saved six people by passing along a line to the wreck, or a noble action is trimmed into a small paragraph in which the writer, after a most bald and naked recital of the deed, says that the Board of Trade presented the captain with a telescope—no column of large type, no leading article: it happened at sea; and although we are supposed to be a maritime people, the things which happen at sea we take no note of, unless, indeed, a great ocean liner founders. Then we trouble ourselves, for most of the people drowned, rescued, or otherwise concerned, are landsmen. Ladies and gentlemen, you will pardon my warmth. I have long used the sea, and know the merchant sailor, and I say that his splendid manhood and bravery, when his qualities as a seaman and a man are called upon, are not done justice to.

‘Captain Cochrane would not have very much relished the cost and discomfort of the carrying of the eleven people he had saved to Kingston, to which port he was bound, as you know. They were nearly naked, they were woe-begone wretches, yet most insufferably grateful to their rescuers, repeatedly offering to shake hands, striving often to kiss the rugged seamen, and so forth. The woman’s gratitude was pathetic. When her

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clothes were dried and she was dressed, she made a respectable figure, in a bonnet and shawl—and the bonnet did not seem the worse for having been hauled through the sea. Late in the afternoon, at the table, she talked to Rose Island, related particulars of the voyage, and how the ship came to be wrecked, which happened because it was an old ship, and an overloaded ship—a ship that had no right to do business in any waters deeper than her keel could rest on the bottom of. The gale started her butts; the seamen with frantic energy pumped and plied the buckets; the foremast went over the side, and carried the rotten mainmast with it; and so she lay a miserable wreck, defying the exhausted seamen by slowly filling her hold with water. They hoisted a rag of French bunting and left the rest to God, seeing that two of their boats had been stove, and that if they had been equipped with the boats of a man-of-war they durst not have lowered them in that sea. Whilst she told her story to Rose, who listened with grave sympathy and fine eyes full of intelligence, Arthur Cochrane came down the companion-steps. He bowed and was passing, when the Frenchwoman stopped him. She asked him eagerly if he understood French. He answered:

“Yes, a little. I can understand you, if I cannot speak well.”

She gazed at him with an adoring look of gratitude and was silent a moment or two. Rose marked that look, and saw how the eloquence of the soul can transform the homeliest features into a countenance of beauty—of beauty that might be compared to that light which never was on land or sea. She then said:

“I owe you my life, and I have thanked you,

monsieur. But my thanks were not equal to the ambition of my heart, which loves you with a sister's love for your incomparable devotion. Monsieur, I am a Catholic; I know not your faith: pure it must be, and good, to rank such as you amongst its believers."

'She put her hand in her bosom and produced a little gold crucifix attached to a thin gold chain. "This," she said, "was given to me by my son, a mariner, who perished at sea six years ago. He gave me this on the eve of the last voyage in which he lost his life. He was my only child." She paused. "Will you, monsieur," she said, approaching him by a step, "accept this as the only memorial I am able to offer of your beautiful devotion—the devotion, monsieur, that He who rests upon that cross looks down upon with love, and blesses?"

'He hesitated for an instant. The taking of that cross was to his momentary impulse and reflection like the spoliation of a grave, but the instincts of the gentleman helped him, and, as it seemed to his hearers, without a pause, he said in such French as he could muster:

"I did but my duty, but I accept with pleasure and with gratitude."

'On this the poor woman, whose eyes were full of tears, clasped the chain round Arthur's neck, and after muttering some words with her eyes intent upon the figure of the Saviour, she hid the little crucifix down the neck of the seaman, kissing him first on one cheek, then on the other, as though he had been her son or brother.

"I shall ever cherish this," said Arthur, tapping his breast, "and remember with affection the good woman who parted with so valued an object for a mere act of duty."

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'It was, in its way, an affecting scene, and Rose wept quietly.

"I was saved by this schooner, and by him chiefly," she said, pointing to Arthur, "who brought me to life, and I have no gift to make—no such gift as that," and she looked with some colour at young Cochrane.

"Madam," said the Frenchwoman, "you have made him the sweetest and finest gift in the world—the gift of your life. It is a jewel, and happy will he be who wears it."

This made Cochrane smile, and perhaps more civilities and kindnesses would have been exchanged, for Rose spoke French with a very good accent, and Arthur had scraped all he found necessary out of the several French ports he had visited; but they were interrupted by the entrance into the cabin of Mr. Julius Nassau, who bowed with familiarity to both ladies, and asked Cochrane, with the thick utterance of the negro, whilst his eyes remained fixed on Rose, if he had such a thing as a pipe of tobacco on him.

'Fortunately for the shipwrecked people, and more fortunately for Captain Cochrane, on the morning of the second day of the rescue a sail right ahead was made out. It was a beautiful tropical morning. The schooner had a yacht-like look, with her sparkling decks and lofty canvas. The flying-fish swept in winged bodkins of silver and pearl from the delicate curl of brine at the *Charmer's* cutwater. Astern glistened a short scope of wake, which shone in purples and blues and greens like oil in the daybeam. Far away on the lee-quarter was the star of some small vessel bound northwards; she gleamed as pale in the mist of light upon the horizon as the moon reflected in water. A

tropical morning in those parallels through which the *Charmer* was sailing on her way to Kingston, Jamaica, is one of the glories, the delights, the happinesses, of nature. The sea of a deep blue, spread smooth to its limits; gentle undulations kindled the flash of the sun as they passed through the water; a delicate breeze had deepened the oceanic dye, and every ripple ran with a mirthful song of its own. The sky was delicately shredded into a marvellous fine vapour; thin, wan, motionless, creating a ceiling for the heavens which gave them the height the eye seeks in vain in pure cloudless ether. The black, wet sparkling shape of some monster of the deep moved leisurely a mile or two distant. As yet the heat was not great. The sweetness and the freshness of the night are still in such mornings, and if you are on board a sailing ship you glide through the calm profound almost imperceptibly; the sweet wind hushes the sails; you look over, say from the margin of a quarter boat, and see, down past the ship's glossy sides, the reflection of those white cloths trembling like streaming and draining pearl, as though the vessel was set in a bed of light of her own making.

'On such a morning as this did the *Charmer* fall in with a stranger, who, to the great satisfaction of Captain Cochrane, hoisted French colours. She was an old-fashioned barque with painted ports and stump top-gallant masts, and now and then she would give herself a lazy swing as she came along, as though to keep the fellows who were lounging over the windlass ends awake. The *Charmer* hove to with a signal signifying she desired to speak. The Frenchman proved to be the *Havre de Grace*, from San Domingo to Havre. Would she receive ten compatriots and a lady? and here Cochrane,

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discovering that the skipper spoke English, roared out briefly the story of the rescue. The French captain lifted his arm in a gesture of salutation and acquiescence, and then followed a moving scene. Two of the schooner's boats were lowered to take the men, and before the Frenchmen entered them they must needs take a farewell of the *Charmer's* ship's company. This they did with the most extravagant motions and behaviour of gratitude. They offered to kiss Captain Cochrane, but he was too salt to stand that sort of thing, and backed clear with pleasant laughter. The Frenchmen on board the barque clearly witnessed this leave-taking, and understood all the meaning of it, and they fell to flourishing their caps and shouting, and crowded about the gangway to receive the shipwrecked men and woman. Captain Cochrane went up to Rose Island, who stood near Arthur on the quarter-deck watching what was going forward, and asked her if she would like to return to Europe in that vessel, which he was sure would gladly receive her and treat her handsomely. She coloured, and bit her lip; her eyes glowed. She glanced at young Cochrane, and then said to the Captain:

“You know I am going to Kingston.”

“Yes, we all know that,” answered the Captain. “But that ship's going straight for France, and you could make your way to England, which I thought you might prefer to——”

“Unless you throw me overboard,” she interrupted, with some vehemence, “just as I accidentally *fell* overboard, I will remain in this schooner. I am perfectly happy and perfectly comfortable. You will gain nothing by sending me on board that ship, for I would jump

into the water and swim after you. You know at least that I can float."

'At this Captain Cochrane and his son laughed, and a look was exchanged between Arthur and Miss Island which was not lost upon Captain Cochrane. Whilst the French people were being transhipped, Julius Nassau leaned against the bulwark rail in the waist watching them, with an end of black cigar in his mouth, the glowing tip of which was in excellent correspondence with the man's eyes. Next him, likewise leaning, was the man called Old Stormy. He acted as boatswain on board the schooner, but his rating was not entered, and his pay therefore was not that of a boatswain, at which he was in the habit of grumbling, for Old Stormy was a man of grievances. He was exactly like the rough sailors described by Marryat and depicted with much extravagance by the pencil of Cruikshank. His walk was a roll. He had the stage trick of hitching up his breeches. He wore his cap, as Jack says, on nine hairs. His breast was much exposed, and his muscular arms, thick as the trunk of a young tree, were wild with devices. Discipline was greatly relaxed on board the *Charmer*, as I have said, and Old Stormy was the man to consider himself quite as good as, and a sight better than, 'a bloody nigger.' So he conversed with Julius Nassau.

"I guess," said he, "they'll be making a fuss over this here rescue when that ship arrives at Havre."

"The rescue," answered Nassau, with an ugly look at his whiskered companion, "is entirely owing to one man—s'elp me God, I say it!—and his name's Ben Black."

"Yes," answered Old Stormy; "that was a bit of

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steering worth talking about. Fower times off the slant into the yawn, then making her square her whole length with that dipping counter. Bloom me if it 'ud be believed."

"The Captain 'ull get all the credit," said Nassau, whom by this single observation one might know for a scoundrel, because no officer who is not a scoundrel ever dreams of talking against his Captain to the men. "They'll say he conceived the job and carried it out, and Lloyd's 'ull present him with a piece of plate, and the French Government with a magnificent binocular glass, and perhaps the Stock Exchange may take a fancy to the business, and if they do, they'll have him down to view him and cheer him, and he'll walk away with a hatful of gold; whilst you and me and others of the ship's company, who stood to be smashed and sent to the bottom, if it 'ud been Cabbage instead of Black, don't even get a thank you, not a nod, by the heart of my mother!"

"What do that old owl of yourn say about 'eroes?" exclaimed Old Stormy, turning suddenly upon the young man Wilkinson, who stood near listening.

"Don't know about heroes," answered the young man with wonderful promptitude; "but I know he says this, that so far from it being true that men are by natur equal, no two people can't be half an hour together but one shall be found superior to the other."

He smiled at Nassau, who frowned back at him with hideous face and snarling lips.

"Of course they'll make young Cochrane the hero of this job," said Julius. "Would he have done it hadn't a pretty girl been on board to see him go through

one of the cheapest and safest performances that's to be met with at sea? What was it? Plenty of life-line, body well buoyed, the distance as wide as a biscuit, and he leaps and catches hold of the woman and buoys her—'tis a farce, but they'll make a high tragedy of it ashore."

"You stood by and looked on," said Old Stormy; "whether it was a wide leap or whether it warn't, ye looked on."

"I was nearly jumping—just had the spirit of the resolution in my toes and hands," answered the negro mate, "when I saw him standing all ready, with that fine girl he's talking to looking on. Do you think, you scoundrel," he shouted, suddenly and fiercely turning upon the young man Wilkinson, "for all your cursed Johnsons, that I wouldn't have jumped?"

"The young man slunk forward. He did not like this nigger mate.

"Well, what's the odds how he's rewarded if we're to be out of it?" grumbled Old Stormy.

"I would rather that any man but him should get the honour and the rewards," said the mate, but in a subdued voice. "Someone called him handsome; a curse upon such beauty as his! Do you see," he cried eagerly, "a handsomer man in that lady's hero than in Overalls or Ben Black? Both are manly-looking sailors. That chap might be a grocer's assistant."

"This was carrying the conversation into a matter that Old Stormy did not understand or wish to pursue. He said:

"The best-looking man I know is Tom Shadwell, who keeps the Waterloo public-house in the Waterloo Road. I am very fond of that man. He's a friend of

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'Nassau looked a little haughtily, and the red in his eyes glittered as he cast his deep-set orbs upon his companion. He was mate, and the other did not seem to know it. His mood changed, and he said:

"What's the general opinion of the Captain amongst you?"

"We ain't got no opinion," answered Old Stormy. "If we had, it shouldn't get aft."

Nassau smiled.

"Well," said he, with a note of carelessness in his speech as he made to go, "Captain Cochrane and his son may be very nice gents for a ladies' tea-party, but, s' help me, by my mother's memory, I never knew any two men say tauter things of his ship's company than Captain Cochrane and his handsome son."

"Let them say what they like, and be damned!" said Old Stormy with an air of real indifference. "I shall leave ye at Kingston. Had enough of small hookers, I have. Don't like the ship's bread. Don't like the hole they call the fo'c's'le, and I don't like being called bo's'n when I don't fill the orfice and don't get the pay of it."

"You'll not leave the schooner at Kingston, I hope!" exclaimed the mate, looking with intense earnestness at him for a moment; and he then lounged right aft, and stood with folded arms in Napoleonic posture close against the man at the wheel, with his fiery little eyes fixed upon Miss Rose Island, who, the boats not having yet returned from the Frenchman, stood in eager conversation with Arthur, her gaze full of light,

her smiles full of pleasure. Once the helmsman looked round, wondering what that noise could be. It was Nassau grinding his teeth.

'Incidents, ladies and gentlemen, are rare upon the deep. You shall make a long voyage and find nothing worth relating on your return. Trifles, therefore, become important, and the meeting of two ships and their speaking each other, whether by flags, or whether by heaving to and hailing in the old-fashioned style, is an event which will be the talk of the passengers for a week. Cochrane had no passengers, but still his meeting that Frenchman was of interest to him. It will hardly be thought that the sturdy old sea-captain had the strong poetic instinct, and that he saw beauties with a silent eye, but with a quick heart.

'The two boats had left the Frenchman, and the schooner's men were hoisting them to the davits. Sail was then trimmed aboard both vessels, and the ripple broke from the schooner's bow. A large fish leapt a hundred fathoms distant, and great coils of brine went flashing from the place of its disappearance to the steady stroke of the sun. The Frenchman dipped his farewell, and the British ensign was run up and down thrice at the gaff-end of the schooner in courteous return. This is how they say "Good-bye" at sea; but the Frenchman went beyond the muteness of bunting: all his people, reinforced by the ten men saved, and by the poor woman, who stood beside her fat husband, gathered upon the short poop, and sang at the top of their voices "God save the Queen!" Their voices came finely over the waters; they kept time, and sang with taste, introducing harmonizing notes. The English ensign was kept half-masted, just as you take off your hat when you

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hear the anthem. Cochrane, his son, and Rose, stood together watching the Frenchman receding, and listening to the singing.

“Her stern is as broad as a house,” said Rose. “She wants the right number of sails, and those she has are not very white, and she floats with the clumsiness of a cask. What makes her beautiful?” added the girl musingly.

“Distance, colour, light,” exclaimed Captain Cochrane. “She is made a gem of by the setting of the sea. The spirit of all that is beautiful in this beautiful day is in her as it is in us if we were viewed at a distance. Look how white is the sunshine upon her sails! how those dirty old windows in her counter or in her stern drop flakes of light into the water, and sparkle as though they were diamonds! The sea-line runs in a blue hair past her, and because it encompasses her, Miss Rose, she is beautiful.”

“I never heard you so eloquent before, father,” laughed Arthur. “Could you believe, Rose, that he has a sight that sees more than his most powerful telescope tells him?”

“How can I match such fine language, and how can I see poetry where all is matter-of-fact?” said the girl. “See how her sails shudder as she slightly rolls, and so she goes trembling into a toy, and one on board of her will never forget you, Arthur, or cease to ask God in her prayers to bless you. Such acts as yours are the poetry of the deep. What do you say, Captain Cochrane?”

“Too much has been made of it,” answered the Captain, in a true deep-sea growl, but with a look, nevertheless, of real pride at his handsome son.

“I agree with father,” said Arthur. “The story has gone away in that barque, and we want no more of it here.”

‘Captain Cochrane, after speaking, had gone towards the companion, through which he sank. Julius Nassau came from beside the wheel to the couple, and asked Arthur if he would keep his look-out.

“Yes,” answered Arthur briefly; and Julius, after an impassioned look at the girl, which was astonishing for its audacity, smiled at her, touched his cap, and walked away.

‘There is an ugliness in man that is a sickness to women. I cannot persuade myself that Jack Wilkes’ beauty lagged in his speech, as he boasted, half an hour behind his face, neither can I believe that Desdemona was ever seriously in love with Othello. Rose involuntarily shuddered as Julius Nassau walked away from her, and said to Arthur:

“What an extraordinary looking man this mate of yours is!”

“Don’t you admire his attire?” Arthur answered, laughing. “I envy his white breeches tucked into his half-boots, and the yellow girdle round the waist of his monkey-jacket. He reckons himself a beauty, and is fond of striking attitudes. I have watched him, when he has thought himself unobserved, writhing in preposterous postures.”

“He would like to be an actor,” said Rose, “and I believe he would just hit the taste of certain audiences.”

“He would like to be an actor,” said Arthur, “of piratic and slaving parts. But not on the stage, not within the scent of the orange-girl. In my humble opinion the fellow is a scoundrel, with antecedents as

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black as a pirate flag ; and, comparatively young as he is, he might be able to lift the hair upon our heads by personal narratives of exploits, both as a slaver and a picaroon. I disliked him when I saw him. I have hated him ever since, with his cursed familiar airs, and his way of talking to the sailors, so that, by some black art known to himself, he seems to possess an influence over them. They have no respect for him, and call him a nigger to his face."

"What made your father take such a man as the mate of his schooner?" asked Rose.

"Partly a whim, partly a necessity. He told me those half-bloods made first-class sailors, and certainly this fellow is no exception to the rule."

"I should have refused to sail under him had I been you," said Rose, looking at him with that expression of admiration which was seldom absent from her eyes when her gaze rested upon him.

"There was some bother," said Arthur, "about the mate we had shipped. He left the vessel without a note, and my father took this man instead. I have had little to do with him throughout the voyage. He hates me—perhaps because I am white," he added, laughing. "I joined to please my father; moreover, I was disappointed in two berths, one of which I was sure of. I am not on the articles, but sail as a sort of passenger; but, whenever necessary, I act as second mate."

"The wind was very light. The schooner moved soundlessly and softly through the sea. The Frenchman was a square of white, like a butterfly, upon the waters. The heat was dry and pleasant, and the draught of air fanned the cheek, and there was the shadow of

the short awning for shelter. The men about the deck were at several jobs. The discipline was very scanty, as I have explained, and they talked, and laughed, and squirted tobacco-juice over the rail. Right in the "eyes" was a fellow washing himself. He was draped for decency in dungaree breeches. The blue brine, brimming to the rim, rose in the bucket he soused himself with, and the sound was refreshing, and the sight was a sea-piece—a little corner of canvas full of colour and the truth, with the man's black hair slabbed like paint down his face, and his yellow body curving as he drew up his bucket.

"It is as pleasant as yachting, if it was not for that monkey Nassau," said Rose; and she drew her companion aft to the shadow of the awning, and talked to him about the time when they played together as children on the deck of the old *Swan* in their memorable voyage to Philadelphia.'

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CHAPTER V.

THE PLAGUE SHIP.

'THE night was fine and calm. The moon shone in glory, and she cast a wake that sank in a shaft of splendour to the very bottom of the sea. Rich stars trembled over the mast-heads of the schooner, which slipped through the water like a shape of marble, save for the dark rails and patches of the shadow of her sails that defined her. A man was at the wheel, and each time he looked towards the moon his whiskers were silvered. Full in the moonlight, a little forward of the main-mast, was Julius Nassau, whose watch on deck it was. He was conversing with two or three men, and seemed scarcely to heed that he had the look-out. He was telling yarns. They were yarns which did not concern glory or heroism at sea, but yarns of the slaver, and hardly darker yet, yarns of the pirate. One would not say, however, that he related these stories merely to amuse. He praised the life of the pirate, and said that it was the easiest and safest life to follow that the sea provides, and to prove this he would give instances, and the men would murmur as he talked.

'They seemed to like these yarns. They certainly

had heard some of them before, and it was pretty sure that they also listened with interest to Nassau's advocacy of marine scoundrelism. He seemed to have got the history of the pirates by heart, and was unquestionably acquainted with the slaving districts on the West Coast of Africa—the slavers' methods of doing business, the value of a slave—man, woman, or child.

“You see,” he said, “these black people are wanted by the planters of South America and the West Indies, and if one don't fetch 'em another will, and let the Navy ships do their best, they'll never hinder the traffic.”

‘Meanwhile, aft in the little cabin sat three persons engaged in eating their supper. Needless to say, they were Captain Cochrane, his son, and Miss Rose Island. Rose looked curiously pretty. Many who might have merely glanced at some average type of pretty woman would have found themselves staring at her. She had a serpentine, enfolding way with her, and the man who came within the embrace of what, by extravagant image, I must describe as her coils, would, you might say, find it hard to shift clear of them. All her postures had a something serpentine about them—the enwreathing of her arms, the turns of her head, the movements of her body, and then her face heightened the suggestion. It was romantic with its delicate curves, fascinating with its full orbs of sight, and her mouth was small, and her teeth were small. The lamp shone full upon her, and whenever she spoke it was with vivacity. Captain Cochrane often looked at her, but not so often as his son.

‘And so they sat in that little cabin making their supper, whilst Nassau forward talked the language of the dreamer in Newgate.

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"I never should have thought," said Captain Cochrane, "that the little girl who used to play on board the old *Swan* along with my son there could have grown into so fine a young woman."

"I should have known your son," she answered, with a blush and a gratified smile.

"Behind all this sunburn?" said he, laughing; "and, mind you, it's fifteen or sixteen years ago."

"Some girls have good memories. I have an excellent one," she answered.

"But to think, too, of our saving your life," said Captain Cochrane. "After all, it's astonishing you should have floated. You fell out of a port, and must have sunk. Up you come again on your back in a swoon; and so we find you with never a shark to take notice, nor one of your wet petticoats to drag ye down."

'The interior of that cabin was one of those old, pleasant marine pieces which are seldom to be found in these days, though I'm aware wherever you fall in with the English collier and with certain timber-built ships of foreign States there you will meet with cosy little holes for the skipper and his mate to live in. This cabin was a sort of gray, and it took the light of the lamp well. The flash of the burning wicks was stronger than moonlight down there, and the cabin looked always bright.

'Against the bulkhead, past which Arthur Cochrane was in the habit of disappearing when he went to bed, was a small stand of arms, and some old-fashioned pistols were hung up near it. The muskets were of various patterns, and looked like the remains of goods with which the slavers were in the habit of trucking.

But nothing of the kind. These were all respectable weapons, honestly laid in, for I am now talking to you about a long time ago, when the black flag and the flag of the slaver were still afloat, and when even the master of so small a schooner as the *Charmer* did not think fit to put to sea without being able to show a few teeth if he should be annoyed. There was also plenty of ammunition in the hole in which the younger Cochrane slept. Nothing else, perhaps, beyond the general aspect of the place to detain the eye. The companion steps fell in a short flight from the naked deck; the lockers were good and ample. The cabin was equipped with certain conveniences in the shape of swing-trays, and a long, old-fashioned barometer—but a very Gospel in its declarations—was nailed against the mainmast, which came through the upper deck and vanished through the lower. Rose looked about her a little in the silence that followed the reference to her falling overboard. She then said :

“How long do you expect it will take you to get to Kingston?”

“About ten days or a fortnight,” answered the Captain, pulling out his pipe. “We are not steam, Miss Rose, and we depend upon the airs of heaven.”

“Do you return to England direct from Kingston?”

“No,” answered the Captain. “Having discharged, we shall seek a cargo coast-wise. Failing that, I intend to go away to Australia.”

“A good round voyage,” laughed Arthur, whose eyes constantly sought Rose’s face; and the girl seemed to know it, and to talk as though all she felt and said had direct reference behind it to her handsome young friend.

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“But you will stop long enough at Kingston to enable me to see a great deal of both of you? Two dear old friends who have saved me from drowning, and to lose sight of them soon!”

And here she looked at Arthur, and Arthur, with a heightened light in his eye, smiled at her; and the skipper smoked his pipe.

“After discharging,” said the old salt, dropping his words betwixt puffs at the pipe he lighted in the old-fashioned style with a flint and steel, “we may sail next day, or hang about the place for weeks whilst I find out if we can get anything to carry.”

“Suppose we go to Australia,” said Arthur, looking a little eagerly at the girl. “Why do you want to leave the little hooker? I will see that your berth is made a boudoir of”—Captain Cochrane rounded his eyes at his son—“and we will promise you a long, delicious yachting tour.”

‘At that moment they heard the cry of “Sail ho!” sounding in the music of a bass voice from the bows of the schooner.

“Where away?” was the answering cry of Julius Nassau.

‘This man had left the others, and was now in his proper place on the quarterdeck. His figure shone like faint brass in the moonlight, and his shadow on the white plank seemed as deeply scored as though a marvellously-finished piece of black wood had been let in; but the ugly coarse figure of the whole man prevailed, and there was nothing the moonbeam could idealize in the shadow it threw for him. Captain Cochrane rose from the cabin table, and, followed by the others, went on deck. The moment Rose Island

appeared in the companion, Julius Nassau, who stood close, said :

“There’s the ship, miss. See how beautiful she looks in the moon.”

‘This was a piece of infernal impudence on the part of this black mate. The Captain took no notice, and stepped to the rail, and looked over to sight the ship. Arthur was hot, and stared at the man, who continued to observe Rose as if he thought she would answer him. She stepped to the side of the Captain in silence, and Nassau walked right aft. It was bad discipline—it was gross impudence—to address the lady in the Captain’s presence. Some might have imagined an element of alarm, of something to quicken doubt into apprehension, by the fellow’s beastly coolness. I believe Captain Cochrane accepted him as he submitted himself, as a coloured rascal, without knowledge or manners. He was a simple-hearted man, was poor Cochrane, possessed of that sort of heart which goes to the making of the Tom Bowlings and the Tom Toughs of the ocean. He loved a good sailor, and certainly Nassau was that if nothing else. The vessel was clear in the moonlight. She floated on the deep almost ahead, a little on the starboard or right-hand bow. What is there on land to parallel the mystery and the beauty of a ship under sail, glazed by the moonlight, resting solitary under the stars—a wraith, a phantom, clothed with that silence of the sea which passeth all understanding? The darkness yields her and absorbs her. Nothing beautiful in the shape of mystery crosses your midnight heath on shore. It is a shock; it is something to bring the sweat upon the brow; you step swiftly from it, clutching your stick and turning fearful glances. But a ship

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under sail, on such a placid night as this, woos the eye. She may be full of people, but the silence of death is there. The black circle winds round her, and presses like something material all its significance of majestic and eternal solitude into her.

"Which way is she heading?" said Captain Cochrane.

'Arthur gave him the glass, which Nassau had laid upon the skylight. They say you cannot see through a telescope at night upon the ocean with the distinctness the binocular gives you. I beg to differ. Captain Cochrane levelled the tubes and resolved the vessel, which shone in the moonbeams, into a small ship. She was not apparently under government. Her yards were not all braced the same way. She was not, therefore, moving. She rested like something at anchor, and was instantly an appeal to the nautical eye.

"What do you think of her, Arthur?" said the skipper, after his son had taken a long look.

"She seems to be abandoned," answered the young man.

"That may be so, unless all her people are lying drunk below," said Captain Cochrane.

"Mutiny, may be, and desertion," said Arthur.

"Good gracious!" murmured Rose; "how full of shocking romances the sea is!"

"But you don't hear a particle of them," said Captain Cochrane, with a short laugh. "The man who is washed ashore with a knife in his heart is a mystery. Could he speak, he could tell much that would make the blood run cold. Hundreds have not been washed ashore. They have gone to their account as privily as a dog hides himself to die. When the

Last Day comes, I should not like to be some of the sailors who will stand up to the general muster."

'It was about nine o'clock in the evening. The sea lay smooth, and trembled to the light breeze. The *Charmer* slipped onward towards the motionless craft. When within an easy stroke of the oar of her, the schooner hove-to. It might be guessed, by the glistening of the moonshine in her sides, that she was painted green. She had a white rail around her poop, and she looked a stout, well-built and well-found little ship. The yards were not braced, as though to bring the vessel to a stand; they lay in that sort of fashion which they might take when men sick or weary had feebly essayed to haul upon the braces and dropped the ropes. It was thought that she was not abandoned, although no sign of human being was visible, because they saw a light shining in a cabin window, just abaft the mizzen-rigging. Captain Cochrane hailed her. He did not need a speaking-trumpet. He could sling his voice like a piece of iron, and the vessels lay near to each other.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted the skipper.

'There was no answer, save the cat-like purring of the wind in the rigging of the schooner, whilst a faint echo of "ahoy" could be heard in the sails of the silent ship. Thrice did Captain Cochrane hail the vessel. All the men in the schooner were on deck, and every man was dodging and ducking to catch a sight of anything alive in the ship. There could be no doubt, then, that she was deserted: but as Captain Cochrane's curiosity was excited by a very uncommon spectacle—for the burning light proved the ship had been freshly-quitted—he ordered his son to lower a boat and go aboard, and make his report.

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““ Oh, Arthur, I wish I could go with you!” exclaimed Rose.

““ Perhaps you wouldn't presently,” he answered, with a laugh.

‘ A boat was lowered and brought to the gangway, and three men, with Arthur in the stern sheets, put off. They approached the ship cautiously, the rowers often looking behind them. When they were within a ship's length of her, they paused and examined her earnestly. The light evidently proceeded from a lamp in the cabin beyond, and, through the door being open, was visible in the port-hole.

““ I never seed anything more abandoned in all my time,” said Ben Black.

““ Let's all hullo together,” said Cabbage. “ That may waken 'em.”

‘ They shouted at the top of their voices and listened. They were answered by the sob of the dark water washing along the bends, and by the dull flap of some square of canvas aloft.

““ We'll make for the main-chains. Give way, my lads,” said Arthur.

‘ In a minute or two they were alongside, and young Cochrane, springing into the bows of the boat, was the first to gain the ship's deck. He looked around him. The moonlight lay as white as frost upon the planks. The moon was on the other side, and the shadow she made of the rigging and masts streamed like lines of ink upon the bulwarks abreast. Young Cochrane's eye was immediately attracted by the figure of a man seated in a squatting posture on the edge of the main hatch. His arms were folded, and his head was sunk as though in deep thought, or deeper sleep. Arthur and the

sailor Black went up to him, shook him by the shoulder, called to him, stooped and examined his face by the clear light.

“Why,” says young Cochrane, “this man is dead!”

‘He was dressed in the costume of the fore-castle sailor, and wore a jacket over his coloured shirt, which suggested, as the night was exceedingly warm, that he had died suddenly whilst keeping watch.

“There are three more yonder!” exclaimed Cabbage, and they trudged away to abreast of the foremast, where they beheld three men in as many postures. They were all dead. There could be no doubt of that. Their faces were the faces of the dead, and Cochrane, with a face of horror, looked round him, and cried:

“What is it?”

“The crew’s been poisoned!” exclaimed Black.

“It ain’t the first crew that’s been poisoned by a ship’s cargo on the high seas. Smell now, mates. D’ye smell it in the breeze?” said Cabbage.

‘They sniffed and snuffled, and Black said yes, he could smell it.

‘Probably it was imagination on his part. Young Cochrane found the breeze sweet as usual. Cabbage exclaimed that he wasn’t going to stop in a stink that killed men.

“One of her boats is gone,” said young Cochrane. “Some, therefore, have escaped with their lives, and that quite recently. You can get into the boat, men, and wait for me. I must see more, if I’ve got to make a report.”

‘Cabbage said he wasn’t afraid. Then Black joined Overalls in the boat, in which he remained to tend her. ‘All the four dead men on deck were what people are accustomed ashore to call “common sailors.” There

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were no more figures visible. Very slowly, and snuffing as he went, Cochrane entered the cabin, followed by Cabbage, whose eyes roamed in superstitious alarm. A lamp hung amidships, and was burning. It was about half-past nine; the lamp possibly was not lighted before dusk, and if she was abandoned the men who had left her had gone away but an hour or two before. It was a plain little cabin, strong and snug, with two berths on either hand. In one of those berths Cochrane caught sight of a figure on the deck prone on his face, with his arms out, and his fingers clenched.

“If it ain't the cap'n, it 'ull be the mate,” said Cabbage.

‘And they turned him over, and holding the lantern to his face saw, as though the truth were written upon his brow, that he was dead. This was a good-looking man, dressed in a gray suit, and was probably the mate of the ship. Cochrane mused a minute upon him. Cabbage, who continued to snuffle, exclaimed:

“It's blowsy strong here! I'm not for smelling merely to die of my curiosity. Why, I may have cotched the plague in the very breath I'm a-drawing!” saying which he left the cabin, and Cochrane, lantern in hand, inspected the berths for information of the ship. He discovered that she was the *Euphrasia*, of six hundred and fifty tons, bound from Calcutta to Dundee with jute, linseed, and other commodities. He could undeniably taste a smell down here which was offensive and oppressive, though subtle. It might have arisen from the sweating of the cargo, or of such of it as could yield the miasmatic stench which rose through every opening into the men's quarters, and aft into the cabin.

‘Arthur did not choose to linger. He had seen

enough. He was not a superstitious man, but somehow he did not like the idea of being alone with that body in the little cabin, nor had he any notion of poisoning himself because his father wanted an account of the ship. He went on deck, and whilst passing the main-chains to regain the boat, he looked at the sea on the port side, and clear in the wake of moonlight was a spot of ink. It was a boat. He shaded his eyes from the brilliant luminary, and made sure that it was a boat. He then sprang into his own boat, singing out:

““ Push off; there’s a boat to the eastwards.”

‘They thrust the boat clear, and went away with a steady pulse of oar for the boat, answering the schooner’s hail by saying they saw her. The night breeze was cool, the starry scene of night serene. The water rippled against the sides of the stricken ship, and filled the air with the sound of many fountains. They heard Captain Cochrane order the helm to be shifted: sail was trimmed, and the schooner followed her boat to the other boat. It is scarcely to be said she was moving. Perhaps they had given up rowing now they saw the schooner and the boat making for them. Two black stripes of oar rose and fell in the moonlight with the languor of the arms of a drowning swimmer. Young Cochrane was speedily alongside.

““ Oars! What boat are you?”

““ We belong to that ship there,” answered the man in a weak voice. “ We caught sight of you beyond the schooner in the moonshine and returned.”

““ Are you two all of the crew who are living?”

““ Two have died,” was the answer, “ since we shoved off. They were dying when we went, but they were alive, and we couldn’t leave them.”

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“Have you buried them?” exclaimed Cochrane, in a voice of consternation, whilst a murmur that sounded very like terror arose from his own three men.

‘The speaker in the boat, silvered by the moonlight, showed ashen as a ghost. He wore a beard, and you could see the ice-like sparkle of the moonlight in his eyes. He was clothed in the garb of a common seaman, as was the other, who throughout remained seated. The speaker stood for a minute or two, then sat. The schooner was now close at hand. She was thrown into the wind, and Captain Cochrane hailed his son to come with both boats aboard.

“Take our painter, for God’s sake!” said the speaker in the boat, “my mate and me can’t row no further.”

‘This was done. The men were helped up the schooner’s side, whose boat was hoisted to her place, leaving the other nibbling the water under the gangway. Captain Cochrane immediately saw that the poor fellows were much too exhausted to tell their yarn at once. He told them to sit, and gave them rum and food. Rose looked on with tender pity, and the crew of the schooner gathered about, and amongst those who assembled, and watched the unfortunate men, was Julius Nassau, whose arms were folded, whose head was hung, his right leg crooked and projected. Arthur gave his father, and necessarily the crew, all the information he had been able to collect.

“What is she doing so far to the westward?” exclaimed the Captain, in accents of horror.

“They’re all dead,” said Black, speaking loudly to one of the crew. “My gracious boots! Ye should see that chap, just like life, on the main hatch; and they lies

thick as the shadow of their shrouds against the foremast."

" "They ain't going to stop here, I hope," said Old Stormy. "As it is, they may have brought death along with them, and dum me if I don't stink a stench which certainly worn't here before they came aboard."

' He snuffled, and Overalls snuffled, and then they spat in company.

' The grog seemed to do the two men good, and they listened with interest to Arthur's account of his visit to the ship. Then the man who had spoken to Arthur in the boat told the story—as much, at least, as he knew of it. He said that all went well with them until they arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. There two of the crew deserted at Cape Town, and two others were taken in their room. Both these men were Afrikanders, or something of that sort, and two days after sailing they were both taken ill and died suddenly, one six hours after the other. Then one of the crew sickened and died. Some sort of plague was undoubtedly on board, caused, not by the linseed and jute, but by the importation of the two yellow sailors at Cape Town. Day after day the men died, and the captain died, and the man the gentleman saw in the cabin lying on his face was the mate of the ship. There were but four alive when the ship reached these parts; two of them were very ill, but they were alive, and a man doesn't abandon a living shipmate. There was no navigation. The ship was anyhow, and the four made up their minds to lower a boat and go away, trusting to be picked up. That was only a few hours ago, before the schooner hove in sight. The two sick men were got into the boat, and the others followed, with some provisions and

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water, and they went away. In an hour's time one of the sick men died and was put over the side, and a little later the other fell down into the bottom of the boat, and when he was looked at he was seen to be dead. That was the men's story. They had nothing more to tell, except that the one who spoke in the boat said that he had lighted the cabin lamp to find some provisions in the pantry.

'Ladies and gentlemen, this seems an incredible story of the swiftness of death at sea, but as surely as the pitying angels looked down upon that shocking day by day picture, so surely is it true. It was not the cholera; it was a plague of some sort, but there was no doctor there to name it. Neither man could explain how it was that the ship was so far to the westward. It was want of navigation, they supposed, and foul winds.

"Well, my lads," said the worthy Captain Cochrane, "I am glad to have preserved even two of you. Get you forward, and rest yourselves."

'The picture was this at that moment: The two men had been drinking rather than eating on the skylight. Around them stood the whole ship's company, listening, all save Wilkinson, who was afraid of the plague, and went to the man at the wheel, and told him what he thought Dr. Johnson would have said of such a dreadful business. The moonlight bathed the faces; nearest to the men were the Captain and his son, Rose, and Nassau. The silence of the night was upon the sea, and the terrible significance of this tale of death came like the very spirit of the tragedy itself into the story from yonder ship, lying pale as snow on a mountain-side—a floating coffin, with a lading of unburied men. Now, no soner had the Captain let fall the

words "and rest yourselves," than Old Stormy exclaimed, in a voice of thunder:

"No, by God, Captain! We're a good and willing crew, but them two men aren't a-going to stop aboard of us."

"What?" shouted the Captain, in a note of pure dismay and disgust.

"We never shipped to die of the plague," said Cabbage. "Them two men don't take no rest forward, nor in this schooner."

The two poor fellows looked ghastly in the whiteness, as, still seated in their weariness, they turned their faces upon the speakers.

"What would you have me do?" shouted the Captain, in a sudden great passion. "These are Englishmen—they are fellow-beings. Am I to send them to their doom because some cowards amongst you fear the consequence of a righteous act?"

"Captain Cochrane," said Old Stormy, "we don't want no fine words and no appeals. Them two men aren't a-going to stop *here*. Is that right, mates?"

"Right—ay, of course it's right," growled the men in chorus, in a tone that left no room for misinterpretation.

"And if they don't get into their boat of their own accord," continued Old Stormy, whose voice seemed to shake with terror and temper, "by God, we'll heave 'em into it!"

There was a moment's silence. Nassau, taking a step which brought him close to Rose, exclaimed:

"Lay your commands upon me, and I will do your bidding."

She shuddered and recoiled, finding him so close,

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and answered, in a voice tearful with the emotions of that time:

“I have no commands. Address yourself to the Captain;” and she went and stood by Arthur’s side.

“You won’t let them turn us out of this ship, Captain?” exclaimed one of the two poor men. “There’s nothing wrong with me or my mate. We’re alive and well, and if we ain’t ’earty, it’s because of the sufferings we’ve gone through. We’re Englishmen like yourselves, and we ask you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to let us remain, and the Captain ’ll find that we’ll do our bit as English seamen manfully and gratefully.”

“It’s no good,” roared Old Stormy; “you’re bound to have the plague, and you may be giving it to us whilst the Captain allows ye to stand and talk to us there. Mates, I speak in your name, I think. If them two men aren’t off in two minutes, we’ll put them into their boat; for it’s every man for himself, and curse me if I mean to die like a poisoned rat in a hole!”

“You dare not send these men to their death!” cried Arthur.

‘This was followed by a chorus dangerous with mutiny, fierce in tone, the significance not to be dreamt of in the mere repeating it.

“Go to hell! You’re no mate of ourn. Take the gal along with the two men, and board the ship, if you’re so bleeding anxious to save those men’s lives. Let the nigger Nassau put ’em aboard.”

“Come,” cried the seaman Cabbage, stepping up to the poor fellows, and speaking in a threatening, determined voice; “we’re sorry, but you must go. Get into your boat at once. Our dyin’ of the plague ain’t goin’ to help you. Be off before we get it.”

'And then, all on a sudden, as stirred by one impulse, the crew gathered about the two poor fellows, and, without laying hands upon them, drove them to the side, and watched them until, with feeble movements, they had entered their boat. They then let go the line that held her, and threw the end into the sea.'

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CHAPTER VI.

A QUARREL.

'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,' said Captain Tomson Foster, when he resumed his story, 'there are many strange and terrible experiences which are undergone by the shipmaster; but few, I think, parallel the horrible dilemma in which worthy and hearty Captain Cochrane found himself. His position was the harder, because, first and foremost, he knew that his men had the right on their side. What would be thought of him if these two men came on board, and the schooner was afterwards found floating with all her company dead? On the other hand, what would be thought of him if it were known that he had sent away two suffering fellow-countrymen to perish in an open boat at sea? The action of the men had brought matters to a head. They stood in a group near to where the boat's line had been belayed, and every movement and posture of their moonlit forms expressed resolution, deep, sullen, tragic. The line had been an end of brace. This had been cut to release the boat, but the schooner was without way, and the boat remained alongside. One of the two men, when the line fell, got up and made the end fast to a chain-plate. All the time the poor fellows were looking

up with white faces down in the shadow. Thus they sat, mutely imploring help and mercy. Cochrane, after a minute's reflection, called his son and Nassau. Rose stepped close to listen.

"It would be easy," said Cochrane, "for us three men to arm ourselves, and compel the crew to receive the two men. But, I say, if the men are admitted, the plague may be admitted, too. The whole of us may be stricken. I am at a loss."

He paused.

"Captain," said Nassau, "you would have no right to admit the men. Suppose this schooner a house, and those two men were fresh from a small-pox hospital; they ask to be let in, saying nobody would receive them. Would the people of your house suffer you to let them in?"

Here he looked round, as though he addressed Miss Island.

"Father," said Arthur, "let me see those two men aboard their own ship. I'll help them aloft into one of the tops, where surely they'll be safe from contagion. I'll seize some canvas to the shrouds for shelter, and place food and water for them. This done, father," said the fine young fellow, "we shall have attempted all that the whole Christian world could expect of us."

"Don't let him go!" shrieked Rose, leaping upon Captain Cochrane, and twining about him. "He can do no good. He may catch the plague. He shall not be always tempting death for others. Arthur"—and here she rounded upon him—"you are not to go."

"I'll go," said Nassau to Rose. "If it were for your sake only, I'd go a hundred times over."

"Damn you!" shouted young Cochrane. "How

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dare you—— But you'll not go, by God! Father, this is my business. If I can catch the plague, I have caught it. You catch the plague by living in the ship, not by a hasty visit. Come! these two poor sufferers shall not be driven from us in an open boat."

"My son will not catch the plague by a second visit, as he says," exclaimed Captain Cochrane. "Those two poor fellows must be saved, if possible. They'll surely be out of contagion's way if they keep aloft. Arthur, you'll want help."

"Don't let him go!" murmured Rose, catching hold of Arthur's hand.

"Mr. Nassau will help you," said the skipper.

"I'll go alone," answered Nassau, with a ferocious look in the moonlight at Arthur.

Arthur, turning his back upon Nassau, asked the Captain for some brandy and provisions for the boat. Wilkinson fetched these things, and they were lowered to the two men, to whom Arthur cheerily called that he would see them safe and out of harm's way on board their own ship. When this was said, Overalls, who stood with others in the waist, sung out:

"If yer go, yer don't come back again."

Captain Cochrane advanced a step or two. It was strange to see the ink-black shadows of the men swaying with the regular tick of the pendulum to the faint heave of swell that rolled through the moonlight. The Captain began by pointing out that his son had been on board the ship once, and that he would have taken the plague then just the same as now; two other men had been aboard the ship; they had looked at the corpses, they had tasted the atmosphere.

“In all probability they have the plague as they stand amongst you,” he shouted.

“Oh, that be damned!” shouted Old Stormy, nevertheless twining nervously on his quaintly-cut legs.

“That’ll be giving the plague to me for doing of my duty,” sung out Overalls.

‘But, to cut this part short, after much remonstrance, appeals, oaths, and the like, the men said, Well, if young Mr. Cochrane chose to take the risk they warn’t for denying of him; but it was understood that he didn’t go amongst the corpses, but, as he promised, took the two men right straight up aloft. So Arthur descended into the boat.

‘The schooner’s sails were trimmed, and aslant the ripples of that spacious, picturesque, beautiful scene of sea she towed the boat to-within a few strokes’ reach of the plague ship. It turned the blood cold in the veins to see her close, to know what sort of figure was watching near the gangway, what sort of ghastly burden lay near to the foremast, close companions in death as in the churchyard. The moon shone between the sails, and made them by their ill trim a beggarly suit for a ship. In the boat towing alongside the schooner little had been said. Arthur explained his ideas, and begged them to count upon being rescued by a passing ship before next day should have closed. One of them, the feebler of the two, simply said, “God bless you, sir!” but the other spoke strongly, nay, with a fury of despair and grief, of the cowardly behaviour of the crew of the *Charmer*. They cast adrift when the schooner’s sails were shivering in the breeze, and Arthur, throwing an oar over the stern of the boat, sculled her to the main chains. The men filled their pockets with the brandy

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and provisions. Arthur also did the same, so that there was nothing left in the boat, and they all three got into the main rigging, and climbed slowly, like tortoises coming out of water, for young Cochrane knew that the eyes of the schooner's company were upon him, and that if he went on deck before going aloft they might compel Captain Cochrane to shift his helm and leave him. The two men, followed by young Cochrane, scrambled in sickly fashion into the main top, upon whose platform they deposited their stock of provisions and liquor and water, and sat down. Cochrane believed that neither would be alive when the sun rose. After disburdening himself of the weight he bore, he ran up the topmast rigging, lay out upon the yard, and with his sharp knife cut away as much sailcloth as he thought he would need. He worked with wonderful energy; he was a fine sailor, his heart was true and full of commiseration, and in less than half an hour he, with his own hands—the men being too feeble to help him—had seized lengths of canvas to the rigging and gear round the top, forming a sort of roofless tent, in the lowest part a little less than the height of a man. The gallant fellow wiped the sweat from his brow.

“There, my lads,” said he. “This is a sort of shelter. You can rest in it, and you will feel as if you were cared for. Don't be afraid to ask God to send a ship to save you, to take you off; and see that ye both keep a good look-out. No more can be done. Here you are high above contagion, in the pure air of heaven. Let that thought be your comfort, and so God bless you!”

‘They wanted to shake hands, but he was afraid to

do that, and sank like a spirit through the lubber's hole, descended the rigging, sprang into the boat, and sculled himself aboard the schooner. The men had gathered to receive him, and recoiled ostentatiously as through fear when he sprang upon the deck. His father came right up to him and shook him by both hands. He was a man of few words. He merely said:

“You have acted as I could wish, and as God will bless. A passing ship will rescue them. You have enabled us all to do our duty.”

The fine young fellow smiled proudly at his father, and then turned to Rose, who stood beside old Cochrane, and I am bound to say that the way they grasped hands, and the words they uttered one to the other, must have proved convincingly to the most sterile eye that they were already sweethearts. Julius Nassau, who had the look-out, and who stood listening to and watching the foregoing near the skylight, crossed to the rail, and just then old Cochrane sang out orders for sail to be trimmed for a new start.

This was done, the men making haste and working with a will. Perhaps they were sensible that on the whole they had acted like mean-spirited cowards, and that henceforth the words “British seamen” were a term of contempt so far as they were concerned. They were in a hurry to get away from the plague ship, to sink her ghastly canvas behind the moon-lit horizon, and in a few minutes the little *Charmer* was leaning from the wind, her leeward rounds of canvas pale and glowing to the moon, which was now westering, with the lurid tinge of the heaven of the west upon her face, and several little clouds were flying. The breeze had freshened, the schooner knew it, and her wake was

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like a trail of jewels. Old Cochrane had gone below. It was about eleven o'clock. Arthur and Rose went to the schooner's quarter and stood hand in hand, gazing at the receding plague ship. The rest of the sailors lighted their pipes, and those who had the watch below turned in.

"Is not the ocean a great graveyard!" said Rose, mindless of the adjacency of the helmsman, Cabbage, who pricked up his ears to hear them talk. "Your white seas are funeral stones. Yonder is an ocean spectre corresponding with the spirits which stalk abroad at midnight ashore."

"The thing that will haunt me longest," exclaimed Arthur, "will be my looking over the rails when I sprang aboard that ship just now. The man sat almost abreast of me on the main-hatch. I had forgotten *him*. I had recollected the man in the cabin, and the dead men forward, but I had forgotten *him*. He was a terrific sentinel, as he sat, in his sleep of death, as life-like as Nassau there."

They conversed together for some time, watching the ship growing pale and faint in the distance. The smaller she became, the greater grew her significance to the feeling heart. It was impossible to look up at all those stars, and then upon the line of endless dark waters, and not think how poor was the chance of anything sighting that midget, that pallid spot, that death-bearing toy, in time enough to rescue the two poor fellows who were lying together in her main-top.

"But wherever the sailor is the cherub is," said Arthur, and after a silent look at the ship, which was already almost absorbed, they went below, Rose to bed and Arthur to smoke a pipe and drink a glass of

rum with his father before he went on deck. Whilst father and son were at table a voice was heard in the companion way, a deep voice, evidently proceeding from a broad chest.

““ Can I see the Cap’n, please ?” it said.

““ Who is that ?” called out the Captain.

““ Overalls,” was the answer. ““ Can I speak to you, sir ?”

““ What is it ? Come below.”

The man lumbered down the steps. He stood upright, and twisted his cap, and looked first at Captain Cochrane and then at his son. He then exclaimed :

““ What d’ye think ? Damned if Old Stormy and the others will allow me to sleep in the fore-castle, ’cos, says they, I may have the plague !”

““ Perhaps you have,” said Captain Cochrane, with an expression of contempt.

““ Then, by God,” said the sailor, growing excited, ““ if I’ve got the plague, I’ll rub myself against every man aboard the schooner ! I’ll lay hold of them, I’ll wrestle with them, and bloomed a man but shall get it from me.”

““ Don’t make a fool of yourself, and don’t let the others do so,” said the Captain quietly. ““ Go forward, tell them that I say you have not the plague, and turn in as usual. If you have the plague, all have the plague ; but the plague is not in this ship, so go forward and, if needs be, fight for your rights.”

‘The man, with a manner of surly dissent, climbed the steps and disappeared.

““ Did you ever hear or read of such a set of cowards ?” said Captain Cochrane.

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“They could make out a good case for themselves, though,” answered Arthur.

‘They dropped the subject, and old Cochrane, after a sip at his glass of rum, and a stout pull at his handsome pipe, said to Arthur with a sideways nod at Rose’s berth :

“Aren’t you getting fond of that girl?”

“Yes,” answered Arthur quietly, without a smile or change of countenance.

“Well,” said Captain Cochrane, “there’s been many a woman led to the altar without half her beauty. I remember hearing that she had a tidy bit of money of her own. Her father died in comfort. She seems to have taken to you as a kid to a cabbage-leaf. It’s been nibble, nibble ever since we picked her up.”

‘Arthur pointed with solemnity to Rose’s berth.

“But the law of the ocean should be that a sailor-man should not get married,” said Captain Cochrane, sucking thoughtfully at his pipe, and looking at his son. “He leaves a wife and family ashore, and that is dangerous. He follows a beggarly calling, and never can put by for them. How I’ve managed—well, well!”—he tossed his hands with his pipe. “It’s come, anyhow, to a small schooner, and I’m lucky at that.”

‘He grinned sardonically, and looked up at the little clock, which was hard upon midnight. Then, knocking out his pipe, he went on deck to take a look round, returned, said it was a fine night, with a nice little wind, and went to his bunk, to rest.

‘The clock showed that Nassau’s watch had come round. From midnight till four is called the middle watch at sea, as, ladies and gentlemen, you doubtless

know. And this was the middle watch, and Arthur went on deck. It was a fine night, indeed, with plenty of small white clouds flying, and the wind lifted foam in the water alongside. The schooner was going at eight knots, which meant that it would not run into many days to bring Kingston within hail. The decks wore a dull light in the moon. The sails curved in dim whiteness, and were like the wings of seagulls rounding to the wind. Nassau stood near the companion, awaiting the arrival of Arthur. The customary sentences were exchanged, and Nassau was walking forward, when Arthur sang out "Stop!" in a voice that brought the powerfully made nigger fellow, with his white breeches and half boots, up with a round turn.

"Do you speak to me?" said he.

"Step to the rail," said Arthur, not intending that the helmsman should overhear them.

"They walked to the bulwarks, Nassau staring hard at Arthur by the midnight sheen.

"What d'ye want?" said Nassau.

"In offering your services to take the plague-men on board," said Arthur, "you made an allusion to Miss Island. You know what I mean. You will easily recall the exact words by an effort of thought. I don't ask you to apologize to me on behalf of the lady, who is my friend, for I believe you are incapable of framing an apology or understanding one. This I will teach you," continued Arthur, who talked with dangerous vehemence: "it is not for you to make yourself offensive to the lady whom accident has cast amongst us, and who, as I suppose you are aware, is an old play-mate of mine."

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Nassau stared a minute, and the red rays were in his eyes with the moon looking at them, but scarce seeing them, so deep-sunk they were. He then said:

“Although you are the Captain’s son, you shall not be sheltered by that for being insolent to me, who am your superior.”

“Your superior!” echoed Arthur with haughty disgust.

“You are a damned second mate, and I am a chief mate, and only mate, and by the heart of my mother, you shall not be insolent to me!”

“I am not a second mate. I have nothing to do with this ship,” said Arthur. “I am not on the articles. I am a passenger, as you know, and have known, with a willingness to lend my father a hand. But it would not serve you even if I *were* a second mate, and I give you my word, chief mate or only mate,” he added with a sneer, “that I will kick you round this deck if you presume to address Miss Island, unless courteously, at a distance, and in a few words.”

“Kick me round this deck!” said the nigger mate, both his hands involuntarily clenching, and his powerful frame knitting as though for a struggle. He paused. “Second mate or passenger, you are a damned impudent fellow to address such language to me, who am better than you, whether as a gentleman or as a sailor;” and he loosened one fist to hold it up and snap his fingers.

“Leave the lady alone, all then will be well,” said Arthur, whose posture was one that expressed him prepared for any assault Mr. Nassau might attempt.

“My mother,” said Nassau, in a voice harsh with fury, “was the most beautiful woman in Kingston.

She sprang from one of the oldest families. If she was not as *white* as you"—he pronounced the word with great scorn—"her loveliness was not the less admirable, and she refused offers of marriage from persons of high distinction——"

"What is all this to me?" broke in Arthur.

"My father," continued the coloured mate, "owns some plantations, and was universally respected wherever his name was uttered. He could have sold you and your father up a hundred times over, and I doubt if he would have cared for the society of either of you. Do you, then, dare tell me that I am not to address a lady on board this schooner?"

"Not as you addressed Miss Island. Observe that, and lay it to heart!" exclaimed Arthur. "Keep yourself in your place, and all will go well."

"I helped to save Miss Island's life, and I have a right to address her," said Nassau.

"You helped! Yes, by looking on. You helped as that quarter-boat helped. She does not want you to address her, and I advise you not to do so. Besides, though I don't know in what sort of ships you have sailed, you must be aware that it is a law of the sea for officers of the vessel not to address passengers."

'Having said this—and the provocation was not sufficiently great in the coloured man's speech to justify the kicking that Arthur had threatened—he went below, and the mate, after pausing a minute or two, turned on his vigorous legs, spat violently, and moved slowly in the direction of the helmsman.

'Now, as if incident had not been sufficiently crowded since we fell in with the *Charmer*, a singular experience befell Captain Cochrane in the morning of the day

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which had just begun. At sunrise he was on deck. He watched, with the admiration of a poet, the beautiful rosy vision. The breeze was abeam, a pleasant sailing wind. The sea ran in little flashes, touched by the rose of the distant sky. In the east it was still pure violet, fining into azure where the schooner was sailing. After admiring the sunrise, the old seaman's sight travelled round the horizon, and to leeward, hull-down, he spied a ship. She was sailing fast, and the schooner was sailing fast, and they were both going almost the same road, saving that the ship was looking up about two points, bringing her bowlines taut. Captain Cochrane inspected her through a telescope, and with the sea-going eye of the sailor instantly knew her to be a British frigate or corvette. How was this? The truth is, that no experienced eye can be deceived in these matters, for the sails of a British man-of-war of those days were cut and set as were the sails of no other ships of the State, call the country what you will. She grew even as Captain Cochrane watched her. How beautiful is a ship seen by sunrise! The pearls of the sky rest upon her, and she moves stately in spires of pearl, gleaming and ever memorable to the ardent spectator. Rose came on deck. The planks had been washed down; the men were swabbing forward; the smoke curled black from the galley chimney. It was a fair morning, full of the life of the sea. Its music was at the bow, and its jewellery glanced astern. It was hot soon after the sun rose, and his flash sank in glory, broken by the tremble of the waters. Rose was glad to come on deck quickly. Small blame to her! Her berth was scarce a den, and dark as a room in a thunderstorm; but she was

not to be better served in the way of accommodation. The schooner was a little ship, and Rose's berth was tiny. She looked fresh, dark, sweet, and glowing as she saluted Captain Cochrane, giving him what I would like to call a serpentine bow, if I did not fear your laughter, but serpentine is the word, nevertheless, to express the motion; and when she shook hands she reminded you of a tendril of creeper, full of the exquisite grace of nature, consistent with her own rare grace, her rare form, her singular and beautiful movements.

"Why, you have a ship down there, I see!" she exclaimed. "What a welcome sight is a ship! It is like meeting a man in a desert."

"A man in a desert is not always a welcome sight," answered Captain Cochrane. "He may carry a hatchet, and wear a less lovely countenance than Mr. Nassau."

"I do not like that man," said Rose, with a look towards the fellow, who was superintending some business on the forecastle. "He's thrusting, impertinent, almost audacious. I wonder you shipped such a beast!"

"So do I," said Cochrane, "but we must take the best that comes. At sea we pay no regard to looks, and very little to manners. We are the roughest body of men in the world. The sea makes us so. Ladies find the sea always rough, and the sailor is always rough; but as a practical seaman—I won't say navigator—Julius Nassau has no equal in my experience."

"You praise him highly. He may be a good sailor; but in my opinion he is a dangerous man. An artist would take his face as a portrait of the devil." And here the girl laughed, and added: "May I look at that ship?"

She pointed the glass, and Captain Cochrane sup-

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ported it. Just then Arthur arrived on deck. The girl was all blushes and delight when she saw him, told him there was a beautiful ship in the distance, and pointed to it. Arthur laughed and looked love at her, and the foam alongside rushed past, widening into drifted snow astern, and the invisible angels of the morning sang sweetly in the shrouds and rigging. I knew young Cochrane when he was well advanced in years, and easily supposed that when young he was the handsome man all who saw him declared him to be. There is nothing, then, remarkable in the sudden passion of love with which he had inspired Rose Island, and then there was the platform of early days, of childhood, of the playground of a ship's deck, for the affections to dance on.

The girl could not but shudder when she saw Nassau coming aft. Arthur had relieved the deck. Julius knew the cabin breakfast would be ready in a minute, and the coloured gentleman was hungry. He glared at Arthur, then, stepping up to him on violent legs, he gave him the course as is customary 'twixt officers relieving each other at sea, turned his back upon him with a gesture of hatred and contempt, and followed Captain Cochrane and Rose into the cabin, whither the rashers of bacon, the coffee, the galley rolls, and one or two other matters had preceded them. Julius washed himself and brushed his hair before seating himself, but his face discovered no marks of the marine soap he used, and his hair was wool despite the brush. He bade Miss Rose good-morning with a languishing look, and his gaze was full of delight in her beauty. She faintly answered him, and took the greatest pains not to see him. The skipper was in a good humour; his ship was sailing

briskly; it was a fine morning; he felt well; he knew he should enjoy his pipe after breakfast. He was pleased with the society of the charming girl, and perhaps out of the natural kindness of his heart he tried to make something of Nassau.

““There are few men, I reckon,” said he, “who have seen more of sea-life than you.”

““I reckon none,” answered the coloured coxcomb, with a look at the young lady. “I have washed across the Channel in a gale of wind in a barge loaden with stone from Cally, and never knew what had become of the barge until she’d been blowed into smooth water. That’s seeing the sea-life, Miss Island,” he added.

““Ever been a pirate, Mr. Nassau?” asked the Captain with a half laugh, perhaps finding something in that moment humanly repellent in the man’s face.

““Once,” he said. “We were taken by pirates, and I had to serve.”

‘And here he looked wickedly, and the Captain began to think that he was a liar.

““Ever held command, Mr. Nassau?”

““Ay, of one of the finest American brigs out of New York. She was called the *Bloomazelle*,” he continued, speaking rapidly. “She carried sky-sail masts. She could waltz round this boat in speed, and met her fate after two voyages by fire.”

““How old are you?”

““Thirty-two,” answered Nassau, looking at Rose, as if everything that was in his mind had particular reference to her.

““You went to sea very young, I suppose, Mr. Nassau?” said the skipper, with a side glance at the young lady of mischief and contempt.

“ Yaas, sir, soon as my mother let me go. She was the most beautiful woman in Kingston. Did you know her, sir?”

“ I had not that pleasure.”

“ You did hear of her, I reckon?”

“ No, sir.”

“ Not of the beautiful Mrs. Nassau of Duck Place?”

He gazed with hideous astonishment at Miss Rose, and was clearly about to bestow some fragments of autobiography upon his companions, when the skylight was darkened by the figure of Arthur, who cried down :

“ The ship to leeward is an English frigate. She has hoisted her colours, and has some signals flying.”

CHAPTER VII.

NASSAU'S PASSION.

'THE skipper received Arthur's news with a grave nod up at the skylight, and after finishing his breakfast, which occupied some minutes, during which he ventured on several conjectures as to the motive of the frigate in signalling, he rose, lighted his pipe, and stepped on deck. Miss Island also rose, and put out her hand to the locker to take her hat. In that instant Nassau sprang to his feet and stood between her and the foot of the companion steps. He was as pale as a coloured man can very well turn. His arms were outstretched and his fingers tightly linked. His posture was one of piteous appeal, absolutely grotesque. His face was crumpled by the passions of his mind, his little eyes shot redly, his teeth chattered for a moment, and as his lips were spread in a grin his teeth made him look at a little distance as though he frothed at the mouth.

"May I speak to you a moment?" exclaimed this striking, fantastic, almost appalling figure. His voice was harsh with feeling, it was moving, and even so the whole of the man had something moving about it.

"What do you want?" asked Miss Rose, turning as pale as a rose that is white, and looking up with a

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hurried glance at the skylight, through which she was prepared to shriek for help.

“Miss Island—Miss Rose—Rose,” began Nassau, in a stammer, maintaining his attitude of grotesque appeal, “I admire you with such admiration that I cannot tell you how beautiful and adorable I think you. Oh! hear me,” he cried, as she started and made as if to push past him. “By the eternal God who created me, and by the heart of my mother, who loved me, I am no wild beast, and it is not because I do not possess the purely white man’s whiteness of skin that I am less a man than he—oh! hear me,” he cried again, as she stood trembling and pale, silent, and most beautiful in his sight. “My face has the dusk of Ethiopia, but my mother is white and I am of her colour, as you shall judge,” and to Rose’s consternation and horror, with passionate hands he tore open his coat and shirt, and exposed his breast. It was of the hue of the buttercup, and some device in Indian ink trailed amongst the wiry moss upon it.

“Pray consider that you are keeping me from going on deck,” said the girl.

“But why will you not hear me?” cried the infatuated man. “I love to look at you. You are sweet and fair. In Jamaica—but in this wide world, there is no woman who is your equal. Do I insult you by saying this?” he continued, dropping his voice into a plaintive tone as though he was entreating somebody not to hurt him. “What greater compliment can a man pay a lady than to fall in love with her, admire her as I admire you, and fling himself at her feet?” And here this extraordinary seaman dropped on one knee.

'Rose stared at him as if he were a toad. She had no pity; she was not flattered. Her heart was not hers, and had it been, she would rather have sunk the carving-knife on the table into it than have allowed yonder sturdy coloured mountebank to have anything to do with her.

"I will make you a lady in Kingston," he continued, still kneeling. "I shall be Captain Nassau, for the next voyage I shall be in command of a ship. All the money I make shall be yours. You shall be dressed in silk and satin, and hold your head the highest at the routs; you shall have horses to ride and drive, and slaves to do your bidding, for I, Julius Nassau, know the sea, and it is a field of produce and I know how to reap." He sprang to his feet with a smiling face of incomparable triumph, and said: "Oh, give me leave to hope!"

'Rose had had already too much of this. She thought the man mad at root, consumed with vanity, a fluent liar, and company by no means to be desired. Not one human touch came to help him—all was gross, farcical, hideous. He still obstructed the ladder, but at that moment Arthur called to her through the skylight to come and see the beautiful frigate, and Nassau, taking a swift backward step, bent himself to her in a low bow whilst she hurried up through the companion. Arthur stood by the companion waiting for her, otherwise she would have been glad to calm the agitation she was under by walking right aft and pausing a little. Instantly he noticed that she had been troubled. There yet lingered a startled look in her fine eyes, and her face wore a pallor that was not its natural tender complexion. He went up to her, and said in a low voice:

“What is the matter, Rose?”

‘She now coloured, and answered:

“Oh, something has happened that is truly too ridiculous to tell you about.”

“Has Nassau been troubling you?” and he went to the skylight to obtain a glimpse of that gentleman, whom he knew must be below. But the coloured mate was in his berth, and Arthur returned again to Rose.

“What do you think of that for a sight, Miss Rose?” called out Captain Cochrane from the rail, where, with telescope in hand and pipe in mouth, he was gazing at a spectacle the like of which has been swept for ever from the seas she glorified.

‘Rose, with a smile at Arthur, went to old Cochrane’s side. The sight was a noble English frigate that had risen her hull, in the splendid pace that her canvas was giving her, to the height of her yellow metal, which, catching the sun’s rays, shot stars of dazzling light across the windward rush of seas. Her canvas was milk-white, and swelled to the breeze as though it would burst in fragments from its bolt ropes. Plume-like fountains of foam leaped at her bows, and each time she sank her stately length in a lofty roll to windward, the water made a splendour of sunlight about her, and the scene was a poem. Some signal-flags flew from her gaff-end, but they were on a line with her spanker and were indistinguishable. She was on the port quarter, but well to leeward, and far away. She was coming along hand over hand, in bursts of crystal smoke, in fierce plunges to the tremendous strain of canvas. On high streamed the noble flag of St. George. She was a fifty-one gun frigate, possibly the handsomest of her

type afloat at that time. Cochrane stuck to his course, and as the frigate was looking up two or three points, the vessels were closing, the frigate drawing astern.

“What do you think of that?” said old Cochrane, pointing with his telescope to the ship. “All those black ports have guns in them, though they are too far off to be seen. Aren’t you proud of belonging to the country that owns such a vessel as that? And only think of the memories she carries! Not but that she might be a few years old. I mean simply that the British frigate is the queen of the seas, the most peerless beauty, and the most dangerous enemy that the foe can contemplate or fire into. Think of Nelson on board a frigate! Do you know that two Spanish ships of the line pretended to chase him, very well knowing that he was on board, and when he ordered his mizzen-topsail to be laid aback to pick up an officer who had gone with a boat’s crew to rescue a man who had fallen overboard, the mighty Spaniards, shivering their topsails as well as their breeches, turned tail, gave up the pursuit, and sailed back their colossal bulks to the safety of Algeçiras.”

“There never was a greater seaman, Captain, than Nelson,” said Rose, straining her eyes with admiration at the frigate, as though she could almost believe that Nelson was on board.

“Yes, he was a great hero, a very fortunate captain,” answered Cochrane. “There were men who were his equal, but they never got his chances and they never made his name.”

‘Suddenly Arthur cried out :

“Look, father, my lord has heard you. See that !” And he pointed to the man-of-war, from whose bow was

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spreading a veil of white powder-smoke, thinning as it blew down the wind.

““ Could it have been a blank shot?” shouted the skipper with great excitement. “ What does she want, and what does she mean by firing at a friend? He knows the red rag,” he continued, looking up at his colours, “ although he may despise it. And what right has he to fire at anything that carries that signal of nationality?”

‘ Pouff! Another white leap of powder-smoke from the starboard bow of the frigate! The report came clear and sharp. It was impossible to mistake the vessel’s meaning. With adamantine throat, in her imperious way, she ordered the schooner to stop, and Cochrane at once shortened canvas and hove his little ship to. It was fine to watch the frigate tearing through the seas, rending each surge with irresistible stem, bowing the beauty of her forward canvas to the blue and creaming slant of the water. She shortened sail as if by magic as she approached, intending to heave-to.

““ What can she want?” exclaimed Captain Cochrane, lost in wonderment.

‘ The shot had sorely troubled his speculations about her meaning. Nassau had come on deck.

““ Ha! a noble British frigate!” he cried in a theatrical way. “ She means to board us; she distrusts us.”

““ How the devil d’ye know?” exclaimed Arthur, looking at him with eyes of contempt and hate.

““ I heard her send a shot at us,” answered Nassau, showing his teeth and trying to catch Rose’s eye, but the girl looked strenuously at the frigate. “ British ships do not behave with that sort of impertinence

unless they have a very good reason indeed. Here we have mistrust. Ha! I think I understand. We were spoken and overhauled by a corvette twenty leagues to the nor'rad of the Dead Chest, and we, who were a harmless drogher, were asked to produce the negroes we had kidnapped."

'Old Cochrane was intent on the frigate's manœuvres, and the others kept silent. Arthur stepped to the side of Rose, but asked her no more questions then. Julius admired the frigate with his arms folded, and his right leg crooked. If they had this man fair in the frigate's glass, her people would fancy they knew what to think, without taking the trouble to inquire. The frigate swung the sails of her main. Topsail, topgallant-sail, royal and hauled-up mainsail, came round swiftly to the wind, as though they had been one yard. Soft pencil shadowings curved from each leech, and floated upon the white canvas like something apart with the steady and gracious bowing of that arrested frigate. Rose, looking with enthusiasm, saw the red-coated marines, active sailors, thronging like bees; several officers, shining in buttons and the raiment of their noble calling, moved upon the quarterdeck; and one stout chap, evidently the commander, stood with his foot on the slide of a carronade.

"Schooner ahoy!"

"Hillo, sir!" bawled Captain Cochrane in reply.

"Why did you not bring to when you read our signal?"

"We have no book of signals, and therefore could not read yours. Besides, you showed us your flags end on."

"Not all the while, sir," was the shout. "What schooner are you?"

“The schooner *Charmex*, of and from——” and here the skipper gave the particulars asked for.

‘All this while there was much levelling of telescopes at the schooner on the quarterdeck of the frigate. Some might have thought the attraction was Rose, but that this was not so was suggested by the eager posture of the gazers fore and aft. It was not difficult to read the word “Prize-money” along the line of that ship’s bulwarks.

“I will send a boat aboard of you,” came the cry from the frigate, and in a minute a boat descended into the sea, with six or eight bluejackets in her for the oars, a midshipman for the helm, and a lieutenant for the confab.

‘This gentleman was short, stout, with a comedian’s face upon him. His mouth was awry, his nose had been cocked in a fight, he had a humorous eye, and you thought of Buckstone, or Harley, or Wright, on looking at him. He came over the side, and was received and saluted by Captain Cochrane, to whom he said :

“Are you the commander of this vessel?” drawling out the word “commander” as if it were a joke.

“Yes, I’m her skipper,” answered Cochrane, by no means boastfully.

‘The lieutenant paused and took a look around him. His eyes first sought Rose. This was natural. Handsome and charming girls were seldom to be met with at sea in those days in trading schooners. The lady of that sort of craft usually wore a shawl round her head, and in fine weather sat in the companion-way, darning her husband’s stockings whilst he steered. The lieutenant then glanced at Nassau, but his gaze

became a keen regard, and his attention began to grow uncomfortable, when he wheeled round with a look aloft and a glance along the decks, and asked the Captain for a sight of his papers.

““ Oh, certainly,” answered Cochrane, with the easy smile of a man who knows he has nothing to fear; and he called to his son to accompany them.

‘ The papers were produced; all was found perfectly right. It was clear that the captain of the frigate had made a mistake. They were in search of a notorious pirate vessel called the *Pearl*, and this vessel was as like her as two sea-boots. But the lieutenant had been on board the *Pearl* when she was a peaceable ship, lying at anchor at some port in San Domingo. He knew by the internal equipment that this *Charmer* was not the vessel. Captain Cochrane laughed at the idea of being mistaken for a pirate. And then the Captain asked the lieutenant what he would have. There was rum, and there was whisky. The lieutenant chose rum, and Arthur gave him a caulker. In those days the naval men drank hard—they all drank hard in the Navy. In these days one never hears of drunkenness; on the contrary, the naval man is held up as an example of sobriety. For my part, I am disposed to think that a little drink helps a man on at sea. It freshens the nip of his dull, hard, briny routine. They substituted cocoa and coffee for rum in the merchant service in God’s name; but I am of opinion that had coffee and cocoa been costlier articles than rum, we should not have heard of the owners troubling themselves about Jack’s soul in this connection.

““ I’ll go on deck,” said the lieutenant; “and I’ll ask you to lift your hatches.”

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“Whilst it’s in my head, sir,” said Captain Cochrane, “let me make you acquainted with a singular incident which befell us quite recently. Arthur, tell the lieutenant the story of the plague ship.”

‘This he did, with great modesty and a charming address. The Lieutenant seemed as much struck by his presence as by Rose’s. He showed his appreciation of the young fellow’s heroism by his critical attention, and then the father said :

“It is more than probable that those two men are still alive in the maintop where my son left them.”

“You have a brave crew,” said the Lieutenant.

“They certainly are not pirates, sir,” answered Arthur, laughing.

“And pray, sir, what may be your rating on board this vessel?” said the Lieutenant kindly, as with a liking for the young man.

“Why, sir, I am my father’s son, and nominally the *Charmer’s* second mate. But I am not on the articles, and am therefore a passenger.”

“But you are a sailor?” said the Lieutenant.

“Ever since a little boy,” said the skipper, looking proudly and fondly at his son.

“You should have entered him under our flag,” said the Lieutenant, turning and leading the way to the companion-steps. “Your flag is no flag.”

‘It is doubtful whether Cochrane heard this, otherwise he must certainly have made some remark which would have led more or less to a strong argument. They all went on deck. The main hatch was opened. The Lieutenant peered down.

“Oh, yes,” he said heartily; “it is all right. An

apology is due to you, Captain. But why the deuce are you so infernally like the *Pearl* in rig and hull?"

'Again he caught sight of Nassau, and seemed to minutely observe him. Then, turning to the Captain, he said:

"Who is that man?"

"A man named Nassau, my chief mate," was the answer.

"I am sure," he continued, gazing at Nassau, who stood at a little distance out of hearing, "that I have seen that chap before. We boarded a brig loaded with tobacco and rum. She had been captured by pirates, and I could swear that that fellow was one of them. His damned ugliness took my eye. Of course, I may be wrong. Not all the gang were hanged, and yonder fellow, if he is the man, may have regained his liberty by an admissible plea."

"He is infernally ugly, as you say, sir," answered Captain Cochrane; "but I have found him a good sailor, and, allowing for his manners, which are those of a baboon, I have no fault to find with him."

"Well, sir, keep your weather-eye lifting," said the Lieutenant. "I may be mistaken; but human hideousness of that sort, even in the Antilles, is uncommon. And now, as to this plague ship; we will get the two men if they are alive."

'He entered the particulars of the plague ship's latitude and longitude in a little pocket-book, bowed to Miss Rose, who stood by with Arthur, an interested listener, and, shaking Cochrane by the hand as a man very superior to his position, and bearing a name of renown in the navy, he got over the side, entered his boat, and went away in a dance of foam, the precise

oars of the seamen dipping and flashing in single pulses of light. The schooner remained hove-to until the frigate got under way, which was soon, for they are not commonly slow in the Royal Navy. Her boat was hoisted, her yards swung; she was leaning from the breeze on a north-easterly course, and frothing each hurl of sea at her bow, with the glorious crimson cross like a fragment of rainbow at her peak, in the time that it would have occupied a merchantman to throw his topsail braces off the pins. Meanwhile Cochrane, Rose, and Arthur talked as they watched, and Nassau watched also, but alone, from the aftermost part of the quarterdeck.

“It is curious,” said Arthur, “that that fellow Nassau should have owned he’d been a pirate, having undoubtedly *been* one; for I trust the memory of those lieutenants.”

“It is not fair that his ugliness only should convict him,” answered old Cochrane. “He may have been a pirate, and yet not the man the Lieutenant thinks. But what are his antecedents to us? Most sailors have a past whose pages they would not much enjoy hearing read aloud. How daintily she goes!” he cried, referring to the frigate. “Watch the royal curtseying grace with which she sinks her counter to the lift of her bows! Keep that flag half-masted in token of farewell and good wishes and respect!” he cried to Nassau, who had thrice dipped the flag in ordinary sea courtesy. “Ah,” he exclaimed, “England has little to fear whilst the ocean is whitened by such keels as those, with her flag at the mast-head!”

Indeed, the old fellow was a great enthusiast, and, being a poet also, he was so lost in love with that ship,

he could talk of nothing else, scarcely referring again to the quest he had been the means of despatching her on. But it was now approaching the hour when the sun in that place crossed his meridian. The schooner was started afresh in a few shouts of Nassau, to the bidding of old Cochrane. The flying-fish darted out of the curl of the head-sea of her bow. The glorious heavens were high, and beautiful with fine weather. The breeze was steady, and frothed the waters. All was blue in the valleys, and flashing at the peaks. Even the schooner was good to admire, despite the frigate; and her skipper seemed to think so as he looked aloft and around him, and then went below, followed by Nassau, for his sextant. Rose and Arthur were alone. They stood a little abaft the lee main rigging, clear of the ear of the man at the wheel. Arthur seldom troubled himself to take sights. A little schooner hardly needed three navigators.

“Now, Rose,” said Arthur, “we are alone, but not for long. Tell me what that nigger said to you to mortify and distress you in the cabin after breakfast when my father and I were on deck.”

“He’s an impudent fellow,” answered Rose, colouring with something like a glow of shame in her eyes, “and I do not care to remember what he said.”

“Was it so bad as that?” exclaimed Arthur, after a pause. “You must tell me, and I beg to know the facts; for, in any case, you have admitted that he insulted you, and I can do no less than knock his head off for that.”

She reflected, and then said:

“Well, I may tell you that he wanted me to marry him.”

'Arthur whistled, with a face which made Rose burst into hysterical laughter. *A. A. Sillou*

"To marry you!" he cried, almost theatrically, as Nassau might on a like occasion. "To marry you! Does he know he's a nigger? Do you know that in America they would lynch him for this? Did he actually *ask* you to marry him?"

'Just then Captain Cochrane and Nassau came on deck with their instruments. Nassau looked at the couple, then turned his back upon them, and raised the sextant to his eye. Captain Cochrane stopped inconveniently close, and Arthur put his hand upon Rose's arm, and drew her a little distance forward. He looked dumfounded. He stared aghast at the girl. He was taking it with tragic seriousness; he could not see the humour of it.

"He knows that I am in love with you," he said, looking towards the dusky dog's back as he stood on straddled legs, white trousered, half-booted, "and he knows that we are sweethearts. How shall such a beast be dealt with? I thought that there was a limit even to audacity. But this fellow is the hellish incarnation of impudence, triumphing over his ignoble extraction, over the detested blood that blackens his repulsive face, with utter disregard of those whom he addresses, or what may be said and done."

"It is not worth growing angry over, Arthur."

"He will make you a fine lady—you will be the Princess of Jamaica!" cried Arthur, with a hoarse-sounding laugh which brought the nigger mate's face round upon his shoulder in a swift insolent stare. "He is to have command of a splendid ship next voyage. The lying hound! But enough of it, Rose. I am sorry

you should have met with such an insult in my father's vessel."

'At that moment the sun showed that it was noon, and it was made so by a little bell struck on the fore-castle by a hand who had stationed himself there for that purpose.

"Please let the subject drop, and say nothing to your father about it," said Rose. "Let the voyage be made in peace. He is an animal who acts after his kind. I suppose the toad has no sense of his ugliness. Neither has that man. He is not likely to trouble me, and if he does, your father will quietly put a stop to it."

'This she said laying her hand unconsciously on Arthur's arm, and looking up with all her beauty glowing with pleasure and pride in her lover; and Nassau had the satisfaction of witnessing the caressing hand and the eloquent gaze as he left the deck after Captain Cochrane to work out his sights. Forward the men were getting their dinner. The breeze had slackened. It promised a quiet afternoon, with a wide dominion of sky of mares'-tails south-west. The light tropic heave of the sea was from that quarter. The frigate was a square of white, flashing a sheen of satin with her distant faint motions; but over the beauty of the sea brooded the terror of its mighty solitude. They dined in the cabin at half-past twelve. By custom, the mate always kept a look-out whilst the Captain dined, and then went to dinner when the Captain relieved him. Arthur often acted good-naturedly in reality the part of second mate by keeping a look-out for Julius Nassau whilst that beggar ate with his father. But this day he did not offer to take Julius's place, and the nigger buck, to

the great relief of Rose, was not present at the dinner-table.

“It is a very curious thing,” said Captain Cochrane, after a prolonged thoughtful look at Rose, as though he was considering her beauty rather than the subject that occupied his mind, “that for the past two days I have found the schooner out of her course, set to the westward.”

“By how much?” asked Arthur.

“By fifteen miles.”

Arthur delivered a prolonged whistle.

“Who cons this hooker when you and I are asleep?” said he. “Who is the man at the wheel on those occasions? What has Mr. Nassau to say about it?”

“He is greatly surprised. He solemnly swears there was no bad steering in his watches. He believes,” said the Captain, “that the compasses are out, or that we have gone away on the drift of a current.”

There was a pause.

“What object,” said Rose, “would anybody in this schooner have in prolonging this voyage by steering a course that makes it fifteen miles longer?”

“I think that chief mate of yours, father, a scoundrel,” said Arthur, with a look up at the skylight, which lay open, as if he would catch Mr. Nassau listening. “He is a double-faced liar, and is capable of concocting schemes which would easily account for this vessel’s westing.”

Old Cochrane shook his head.

“No,” he said, a little impatiently. “The man has nothing to gain. He is a dutiful sailor and a good

navigator—a damned monkey, if you please. Who values his airs or his lies? Who would scoff at his face, which the God of Mercy clothed his skull withal? Keep the peace, Arthur, and let the voyage be sunny to the end, if only for the sake of this charming girl,” and he bowed with kingly dignity, a manner not easily to be found in the cabin of a schooner, to Rose, who, saying, “I quite agree with you, Captain Cochrane,” beamed her sweetest smile upon him.

‘In the second dog-watch of that same day the sailors, with the exception of the man at the wheel, were lounging about the windlass on the forecastle. Nassau had charge. Arthur overhung the bulwark rail abreast of the mainmast, pipe in mouth. Rose was reading a book in the cabin. Captain Cochrane was enjoying a doze in his berth. The mares’-tails had gone out of the sky, but the draught had travelled round with the swell, north-west, and was blowing a soft, hot, pleasant wind. The sun blazed in pink and sultry glory. Low down and far abeam were two ships sailing abreast, and over them were small curls of cloud, like flocks of seagulls. Says Ben Black, on the forecastle, coming out of the galley with a lighted rope-yarn, at which he sucked through his pipe, holding his head on one side, and the bowl inverted:

““What was that there Johnson you’re always a-talking about?”

““He wrote books,” answered Wilkinson, at whose side lay a concertina.

““What sort?” inquired Cabbage.

““He wrote a dictionary,” replied Wilkinson.

““What in blue brimstone ’s that?” cried Old Stormy.

“Why, a book which shows ignorant men how to spell,” answered Wilkinson.

“Do it give sailors’ words?” asked Black.

“Ay, scores.”

“Was he ever a sailor?” inquired Old Stormy.

“No.”

“Then what should he know about sailors’ words?” said Old Stormy, spitting on the deck with contempt.

“Did you ever hear a sailor that was called a doctor in all your life,” asked Cabbage, “if he ain’t the ship’s cook, and *he’s* no sailor!”

“What was this here Johnson doctor of?” inquired Black. “Did he physic men?”

“He wrote books, I tell you,” answered Wilkinson.

“For a livin’?”

“Ay.”

“And he actually got money for his books?” said Black.

“Pounds in scores,” answered Wilkinson.

“Well, blast me,” exclaimed Black, “if ever I could understand this ’ere trade of selling books! Books wrote by a man’s own hand, and sold by him for good money! Who buys ’em? If a man were to come to me with a bundle of writing, and said it was fust class readin’, and asked me to buy it, wouldn’t he make me feel as if I was only fit to be something in a menagerie? Doctor! Would ye give a month’s wages for one of that there old Johnson’s pieces, if he brought it to you in a bundle of writin’, and tells ye it was made up of words, some of them sailors’?”

“Blow me if I would!” said Cabbage.

“’Ain’t we had enough of this here Wilkinson’s

doctor?" exclaimed Black. "Give us a toon; I'll sing ye a song, mates. It shall be——"

'He did not tell them what it was to be. He was arrested in his speech as though struck by lightning. The others sprang erect, and stared with all their eyes, too astonished, perhaps, for the moment to utter a word; and, indeed, on the quarterdeck of the schooner was a sight which the men would in the instant stare with amazement at.'

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE PICAROON'S BOAT.

'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,' said Captain Foster, lighting the pipe filled with black cavendish tobacco which he sometimes smoked during the delivery of this story, 'I left the people in the after-part of the schooner thus placed. Old Cochrane and Rose were below; the other two were on deck. Arthur seemed to be thinking of the two ships sailing abreast, the scene of which was a lovely, tranquil bit of ocean canvas, with the sails reddening to the western light, and the shrouds and backstays descending to the decks in lines of gold. But once he looked round, and sent a swift glance at Nassau, who was patrolling the deck near the wheel, dressed as usual, only this evening he wore a blue coat, short in the skirts, braided down the front, with some suspicious ornamentation on the shoulders as of epaulets; further, he had adorned his wiry head with a cap shaped like a Turkish fez or a common smoking-cap. It was of pale-blue velvet, and sat jauntily over against one ear. He had been at some pains to dress himself; he knew in all this fine weather that Rose would be much on deck, and he was persuaded she could not view him long in several attires without beginning to contrast him with Arthur, not wholly to

the advantage of the latter. All of a sudden Arthur knocked out his pipe, put it in his pocket, and walked across the deck to Nassau.

“Do you know anything of this westing,” said he, “that my father is complaining of?”

“It’s a drift of current, or bad steering in your watch,” answered Nassau morosely.

“You insolent dog!” exclaimed Arthur, scarcely able to articulate for the sudden rage that possessed him. “I am not going to call you a negro, because if you were you could not help it. But the colour in you should keep you modest, and that you can’t be,” and he looked at him as if he were some loathsome animal.

“What have you come up to me to say?” said Nassau. “I do not want to quarrel with you or have words with you.”

“Perhaps you don’t,” said Arthur. “But I have come up to you, as you call it, to tell you a truth, and then to punish you. You are a low, black, dirty rascal. You know that Miss Rose Island is my sweetheart, and you dared this morning, after breakfast, when I was out of hearing, to distress and humiliate her by an offer of that dirty yellow paw of yours. You! It’s not to be credited.”

“I have as much right to fall in love with Miss Rose as you have,” answered Nassau, whose fingers had unconsciously clenched themselves into fists, and who was very sensible, not only by the cruel insults in Arthur’s mouth, but by the steely light in Arthur’s eyes, that a crisis was at hand. “It is not my fault that she is beautiful; it is not my fault that my skin is a little darker than yours. I am as good as you, and the sweetest woman in the world shall find it out—in time.”

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“You may be as good as I am, and better,” cried Arthur, with laughter involuntarily tumbling out of his mouth in a tumult of mingled dangerous passions. “But all the same, for daring to approach this lady, for daring to glance at her, save with a respect she would get from any nigger in her kinsmen’s employment, I mean to punish you. Stand up to me, Mr. Nassau.”

Nassau drew back a step. His nostrils were as round as two shillings, the crimson in his eyes was as clear as the crimson in the west.

“Mr. Cochrane,” he said in a low voice, level yet vibratory, with the singular intonation of the African utterance—throaty I have heard it called, and throaty it is when it laughs—“I do not want to have anything to do with you. I wish to keep away from you in this ship. I respect your father, but will not tell you that you have a right to say that you are better than I am. Better! Your looks would count because they’re white. But how are you better? Aboard this ship I am your superior officer, anyhow.”

“You’re a liar!” said young Cochrane.

“For all your fine name,” continued Nassau, whose face seemed gradually to wither as he talked, until his skin took the appearance of an old red cabbage, “you are a nobody when you are at home. I am much more than you when I am at home. What can you do for the lady you would marry? Shall I tell you what I can do? She shall hold her head amongst the highest in Kingston. She shall wear the finest silks and satins. She shall be driven in a carriage of her own to her friends. She shall be the wife of the commander of a splendid sailing ship.”

“You damned liar!” burst in Arthur. “Stand up

to me, you scoundrel nigger!" and he whipped off his coat, flung it on the deck, and, forgetting his request that Nassau should stand up to him, grasped him by the shoulders, turned him round with lightning speed, kicked him the length of his own height, sprang and kicked him again, this time not so far, but all in conformity with his earlier threat. This was the sight which had arrested the sailor's speech, and which was keeping the hands staring with gaping mouths.

'Nassau, however, was not to be kicked any further. He turned, his coat was off in a trice, he flung down his cap, spat in his hands, and the two men faced each other. One by one the men on the fore-castle drew aft, and the schooner was off her course by three or four points, whilst the helmsman gaped thirstily at so delightful a sight as a fight between a first and second mate on board their own vessel. Nassau was short; I have often said that he was powerfully built and stood on legs that would have strained a cart-horse to move. His fists were heavy, and hard as lumps of coal, and now that he was in the fighting mood, now that the dark passions of his soul were stirred up out of the ooze on which, crocodile-like, they slumbered, his face grew horrible with all the savagery of his antecedents, and if you had asked for a correct portrait of the devil at that moment, there he stood, with his fists advanced. Young Cochrane, on the other hand, was tall and slender, but of a most robust frame, nevertheless; his staying powers were great, he had breath enough for half a dozen, and he had that which the dandy ducky who stood up in front of him had not—I mean science, which implies coolness and caution. Yes, young Arthur had picked up the art of boxing from various people at sea who

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knew how to use their fists, and he instantly saw by Nassau's posture that, scientifically, he was no match for him.

'I will not enter into the particulars of this battle; the ladies would not thank me. The men from stealing came running aft, and circled the two to see fair play, and watch the glorious scene of a fight between their officers. In a very short time patches of blood might be seen on the deck, and the face of Nassau streamed with a blow which had widened his mouth into his cheek. The fellow struck out with the savageness of the brute, and once young Cochrane was felled and Nassau sprang upon him, but the men literally kicked him off with howls of execration, and whilst this was doing, loud shrieks and cries for Captain Cochrane were to be heard from the companion-way. Rose had been reading in the cabin, as I have told you; her attention had been called from the book by the voices of Arthur and Nassau on deck. She listened. The two men went a little away, and not being able to hear, Rose closed her book and sat straining her attention at the dim sound of voices which floated down to her through the skylight. Presently she heard a noise of scuffling and shuffling, immediately followed by a rush of feet from forward. Her heart beat fast. What had happened? She feared that a mutiny had broken out. She was afraid to go on deck alone, and walked to Captain Cochrane's cabin. But before she could knock at the door, she gathered most unmistakably that a hand-to-hand fight was proceeding between Nassau and her sweetheart, on which she rushed up the steps, and seeing blood, and the two men hammering each other, she shrieked aloud and called upon Captain Cochrane

to come on deck and prevent Mr. Nassau from murdering Arthur.

At this precise moment Nassau uttered a peculiar cry—it was lonely, it was weird, you might hear such a cry on some midnight in an African forest—and lowering his head he butted that wire-covered cannon-ball slap into the chest of Arthur, who, with a gasp as though his heart had burst, fell backwards his whole length and lay motionless.

“They have killed him!” screamed Rose.

“By God! if that’s the niggers’ style of fighting, you shall try the game on me, and we’ll play it out together,” shouted Wilkinson, who came flapping and wildly driving his arms round about him right up to Nassau, dancing and curvetting like an educated goat in a fair. But the coloured mate, spitting blood, with a mad working face of rage, folded his arms, and stood looking at the man he had thrown with his head, with his breast panting, and his nostrils showing larger even than shillings.

‘Captain Cochrane, was awake and overhauling a locker. On hearing Rose’s screams, and guessing that something terrible was happening, he thrust a pistol in his breast and in a few bounds gained the deck. The lower limb of the sun was close to the horizon; the evening was purple down to the eastern confines. The swell swung sleepily through the deep, and the schooner rocked languidly as though she knew she was off her course and was in no hurry to proceed. Captain Cochrane, with his hand in his breast, saw his son lying on the deck, with Rose kneeling beside him. He saw Nassau standing with folded arms. There was blood on the nigger’s face, and blood in several places on the

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planks. He saw his crew assembled, and instantly suspected that the men had risen, killed his son, voted Nassau skipper, and taken possession of the little hooker. He walked right up to the side of his prostrate boy, and the men recoiled a little, and Nassau looked at him earnestly, as if the beggar would weep. Before Cochrane could speak, the half-blood said:

““I call these men to witness: I knocked him down——”

““With your 'ead!” shouted Wilkinson.

““But not before he had made a disgraceful attack upon me. I, as a mate, am his superior officer whilst he acts as second mate, and he comes to me with the men looking on and kicks me twice”—and here Nassau slapped himself—“and, naturally, I then fought him. Look what he has done to me”—and he pointed to his mouth—“and all for what? Because I dare take the liberty of admiring that young lady!”

‘On this Arthur, who had been slightly stunned, sat up, and Rose stood up and helped her lover to his feet. Captain Cochrane was a kind man, but he could often be what the Yankee sailor calls “a hard case” when angered. His hand fell from his breast. He would not need a pistol. He saw with the falcon’s eye how things stood. It was a quarrel of jealousy; he believed Nassau’s story, which, indeed, was perfectly true.

““Go forward, men!” he said sternly to the fellows, who still lounged about the spot. “Get to your quarters;” and the men trudged towards the fore-castle talking, with now and then a hoarse laugh. The man at the wheel sneakingly got the vessel to her course, and steered with a squint of attention.

““This is a fine example to show the men!” said Captain Cochrane with a glance at the bloodstains, and a swift look over his son to note what damage he had received; but Arthur had come off with a black eye, and a little blood in one nostril. In fact, nothing had hurt him but the blow of Nassau’s iron-hard head in his chest, and the concussion of his skull with the deck.

““Mr. Nassau tells me, Arthur, you were the aggressor.”

““I have punished him for his infernal impudence to this young lady,” replied Arthur, grasping Rose by the arm.

““You were guilty of an intolerable breach of discipline in striking your superior officer,” said Cochrane with a very stern face and manner, which, seeing that he loved his son and did not love Nassau, might be something simulated. “You know how you would be dealt with on board a man-of-war.’

““My superior officer!” exclaimed Arthur with great scorn; and Rose thought, in spite of his black eye, he never looked a handsomer, dearer man. “I am a passenger. This fellow is no officer of *mine*. He impudently made love to this young lady this morning, and the dirty dog asked her hand in marriage.”

““Dirty dog!” said Nassau through his teeth; and the skin of his brow came together in folds like the corrugated iron they use in roofing.

““Mr. Nassau,” said Captain Cochrane, “there was provocation certainly. This young lady is under *my* protection!” and he lifted his figure, which years of seafaring had slightly curved, into a highly dignified air. “Her friends are known to me, and already she

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has attached herself to me by the virtues which I witness in her. You have, therefore, my command not to molest her——”

“Not to address me,” broke in Rose.

“Nor even to address her,” continued Captain Cochrane. “It is an affair that is no business of yours, sir. It does not concern the navigation of the vessel, nor the discipline aboard of her,” Cochrane went on.

Here young Wilkinson began to play the concertina on the forecastle. It was a well-known negro song of that day—a sort of hymn—beginning, if my memory is accurate:

‘Let de nigger know de right,
To him de good God gib His light,
He is a man, tho’ he ain’t white.’

“Aft a hand and clean this mess up,” shouted Captain Cochrane, referring to the bloodstains. “Arthur, step below, sir. Mr. Nassau, I am sorry ’tis my son that is concerned in this business. It may be unnecessary for me to say that after this you will cease to provoke my son, whilst I, on the other hand, engage that he gives you no cause of offence.”

“He charged me with causing the westing,” said Arthur.

“He charged *me!*” cried Nassau, in a snap of fury.

“Whoever has the watch in which it occurs,” said old Cochrane, “is guilty of gross inattention and undutifulness. A schooner is easily conned. The *Charmer* lies marvellously close. If this is not done for a motive,” said he, looking at Nassau, “it is barbarous inattention, which might easily end in the loss of the vessel. I count upon your seeing to this, sir. Arthur, step below, as I ordered you just now.”

Arthur went into the cabin, followed by Rose, who had put his cap on, and was holding his coat. Cochrane followed, and standing under the skylight, and raising his voice so that Mr. Nassau should hear him, he rated his son as though he had been a forecastle hand, and said that he should punish him and end a grave difficulty, which was entirely owing to want of tact and discipline, by transferring Rose to the first comfortable ship that would receive her.

“I’ll not leave Arthur, Captain Cochrane!” cried Rose, in part tearful, in part wrathful. “If you send me away, he must go with me. But you will not send me away?” she cried, with charming, subtle, incommunicable serpentine motions of her form and neck as she pleaded. “What has been my crime that I should be sent away? Could I prevent that horrible man from insulting me this morning? How dared *he* look at me! How dared *he* think of me, the nigger puppy! Oh, Arthur, if I go, if I am forced from this dear little schooner which saved my life, you will not let me go alone, dear—dearest, my dearest! you will not let me go alone!” and she flung her arms round Arthur’s neck, and wept in passion.

‘This was enough for old Cochrane, who was a sailor at root, with a contempt for emotional exhibitions, and he ended the matter by going into his cabin to put away the pistol.

After this nothing particular happened for two or three days. Neither Nassau nor Arthur exchanged a sentence, save the utterance of the ordinary words when the watch is changed. Nassau did not attempt to speak to Rose, and it was contrived by Captain Cochrane that the coloured mate was never at table

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when Rose was present. But nobody could stop him from looking, and at every opportunity he stared at the charming girl with his little eyes illuminated by red rays, inflamed by a passion which by his countenance and demeanour he certainly made no effort to conceal. His mouth healed, and Arthur's eye whitened, and the little schooner drove quietly along her course to the south'ard and west'ard, and there was no more unnecessary westing in the next few days.

'But one thing was observable: Nassau hung much about with the men forward. It is idle to speak of the discipline of that schooner, for, as you have seen, there was only just enough to carry on the day's work with. Yet it was strange that Nassau, who at all events was chief mate of the craft, should condescend to talk to the men forward. When his watch was up, instead of going below—I am speaking, of course, of the mornings and afternoons—he would go to the galley, light his pipe, and yarn with any of the men who had leisure to yarn with him. He generally spoke in subdued tones, so that the meaning of his words never travelled aft; but what he said seemed of deep interest, and when the yarning was over the listeners would walk away slowly and thoughtfully, as men who revolved an important subject in their minds. Arthur called his father's attention to the mate's familiarity with the men. His father's rejoinder was:

“He springs from that breed. He is a fo'c's'le hand by rights. It is natural he should make his way forward as often as he can. No doubt he finds the men good listeners to his lies, and that pleases the fellow. I never met a more conceited half-blood. Better that he should hang about the men than trouble Rose. I

want no difficulties aboard our little vessel. All has been smooth sailing so far. The presence of Rose adds to our obligations as seamen, and our duty and business is to get our ship into Kingston Harbour as soon as possible, and without any disturbance.

‘ Well, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure now to relate to you a very singular incident. You, of course, know that in the times with which I am dealing, piracy at sea was only a little less common than it had been in the days of “Tom Cringle,” who has written of the pirate better than any man ever has, and perhaps ever will. Desperate fellows fitted out brigs and schooners, and wandered about the waters in which the *Charmer* was sailing, and they swarmed about the islands, their mastheads up a creek being as familiar as the cocoanut-tree. English ships of war had dealt this bloody and dreadful trade heavy blows, and sloops and brigs and corvettes of the State were ever on the alert, chasing everything suspicious, but unfortunately not always capturing, for the pirates of those days were careful to do their business in swift bottoms. The worst offenders were the Spaniards, and they, of them all, were the nimblest of heel, the most desperate in the assault, the most barbarous in their triumphs.

‘ The third morning, dating from the day of the battle on the quarterdeck, broke in true tropic profusion of splendour, and flaming spaciousness of sky and scene. The men washed down the decks as usual, and the reflection of their figures trembled in the wet planks as they trudged about with buckets and scrubbing-brushes. There was the heat of storm threatened in the dazzling pink of the risen sun. A hot breeze blew from the south-west, and the schooner was off her course with

the luffs of her fore and aft canvas, and the leeches of her square cloths hollowing in as she bowed to the swell. The noise of running waters was in the air; it was in the ripples, and in the gush of the scupper-holes. Shortly before breakfast Captain Cochrane came on deck. He wore a light dressing-gown, and a pair of slippers, and looked a very comfortable sea-captain. He cast his eyes round the sea, and admired the freshness of the morning and the glory of its birth. He noted in the disc of the sun the tropic heat it portended. There was nothing at first sight visible upon the surface of the deep. He then went to the compass and mused upon it a little, throwing attentive glances aloft, and next he walked over to Mr. Nassau, who was standing near the mainmast. They exchanged a few civilities, for Cochrane, earnestly desirous that no trouble should arise in his little vessel, continued polite to his coloured mate, though after he had heard Rose and Arthur in full his mind took a change.

““ You have knocked about so long in fo’c’s’les, Mr. Nassau,” said he, “that the habit of attachment remains with you, and you would rather smoke your pipe forward than aft?”

““ I am fond of sailors’ company,” answered Nassau, looking warily, with a slight exhibition of his teeth, at the skipper, and speaking in a voice whose note rendered it audible to the seaman at the wheel. “They have seen more than anybody. They most of them know ships and shipmates of yours, and their yarns are always pleasant talk to me, because they recall old associations. The men forward are lively hearties, saving Wilkinson, men after my own heart, deep-water and square-yard men, and I like to smoke a pipe with them.”

“It is not customary,” said Captain Cochrane, with a steady look at Nassau, “for chief mates of ships to associate in familiarity with the men whom they officer.”

“Officer is scarcely a word to attach to this craft, is it, Cap’n?” responded Nassau, with a curious sneering smile. “I did not creep into the sea-life through the cabin window. I know the customs and discipline of big ships, and all ships, and I know that aboard a craft of this sort a mate is reckoned no more than a man. You know how the men speak of me and to me, sir.”

“It is your own fault,” said Captain Cochrane, with some degree of sternness. “You should not be hand in glove with the men as you are. I do not understand it.”

Nassau shrugged his shoulders with Haytian grace. At this moment the man at the wheel, levelling his arm through the light that blazed round above the bright brass binnacle-hood, sung out :

“Is that speck out on the bow there a boat, or is it a fish?”

Cochrane, though an elderly man, had excellent sight. He spied the object in an instant, and walking to the companion, took the telescope and levelled it. He immediately perceived that it was a boat, and so excellent were the lenses he directed, that he was able to count the number of men in her. They were nine : eight men at the oars, and one man erect, like a harpooner, in the bows, holding something white in his hand. In the telescope the pulsing stream of flashing oars was distinctly visible, and it was also gatherable that the men were straining their whole souls out of

their bodies to come up with the schooner before she should drive ahead. The boat was being swept through the water at a great speed. She was a long boat, without a mast. She had the look of a ten-oared galley, and the water was shredded into milk at her bows, and the toilers at the oars strained their backs with frequent glances over their shoulders at the schooner.

“Take this glass, Mr. Nassau,” said the Captain, “and tell me what you make of yonder boat.”

‘Julius pointed the tubes; his inspection was severe and thirsty.

“The man in the bows, sir,” he said, still keeping his eye at the glass, “is holding something up. It is white. It may be a fish; but you will not find fishermen hereabouts in open boats, sir. I should recommend that they are not allowed to board you.”

‘Captain Cochrane looked at the boat again.

“They seem a queer lot, certainly,” said he. “They are decidedly not fishermen. I have heard of ships being taken, and their people miserably ill-used, by innocent boats containing apparently shipwrecked seamen.”

‘Captain Cochrane then sang out to the men to lay aft. They all arrived in a run. They had been watching the approaching boat, and 'twas a God-send, with business and excitement in her wake, perhaps, that broke for that day, at least, the eternal monotony of the deep.

“Men,” said Cochrane, pointing to the boat, “d’ye know what she is?”

“Yes,” said Old Stormy, “she’s a bloody pirate.”

“No,” exclaimed Nassau, “they are pirates, if you please; but, in any case, they’ve lost their ship.”

“They are not to be allowed to board us!” cried

Captain Cochrane. "What does that man hold up in the bows?" and once again he levelled the glass.

"It's a fish," he said presently.

Nassau laughed.

"A painted fish!" he cried, speaking rapidly. "They make 'em out of thin planks, and paint 'em. They hold 'em up as if they had fish for sale, and so dash alongside and board you before you can guess what they would be at."

Arthur arrived, with Rose following him. Nassau studiously looked away from the pair. There was something of elation and sympathy in the gaze he fastened upon the boat, as, bow on, she came along in a smother.

"A shipwrecked crew!" cried Rose.

"Pirates, by thunder!" cried Arthur.

On this Cochrane ordered the men to arm themselves. The guns and pistols were brought up out of the cabin, loaded and distributed. The men were told to keep them concealed, and the schooner's helm was put up, which slightly smartened her pace, and the boat, that was now about half a mile distant, was brought almost abeam; but she shifted her course with the schooner's, and her drive through the sea was a lateral one. The man in the bows began to shout. His pantomime with the fish was vehement; but though he yelled with his hand to the side of his mouth, nothing but his voice could be heard. For a few minutes there was silence; the scene was picturesque, and belonging to old times. The schooner was sliding nimbly through it, but so was the boat, with a visibly faster motion, so passionate was the toil of the rowers. The seamen of the schooner, grasping their muskets in readiness

until they should be called upon, crouched about the bulwarks that their weapons should not be seen; 'twas clear they liked as little the idea of being boarded by those nine men as Captain Cochrane. The skipper, Rose, and Arthur were grouped together near the main-rigging. Both father and son grasped a musket, and sometimes Arthur sent a wary glance at Nassau, who stood apart, always with folded arms and right leg crooked and advanced in the heroic Napoleonic posture.

'The boat was now nearing the schooner, slowly, but with certainty. There could be no question that in a very short time she would be alongside. Her crew had become easily distinguishable. They were as romantic a set of villains in attire and looks as ever cut the throats of homely merchant skippers, or compelled the trembling passengers to walk the plank. They were variously attired in red, blue, and dirty-white shirts, breeches of drill or something of that sort, and one or two wore little round caps like British soldiers, and others straw hats, and others coloured caps like night-caps. The man in the bows suddenly dashed down the thing he held, and now his voice was clearly to be heard, and his language was Spanish. Captain Cochrane very imperfectly knew that tongue. Nassau, who was not armed, exclaimed:

"Shall I speak to him, sir?"

"Yes, if you can make him understand you," answered Cochrane.

'With a superbly hideous grin Nassau leapt upon the rail, and shouted in as good Spanish as was ever heard spoken in the West Indies:

"I know you, Garcia, and am alive to your tricks. You know me, of course?"

“Captain Julius Nassau, by the Holy Virgin!” shouted the man in the bow with a yell of surprise.

‘At this the rowers, raging at their oars, looked behind them, necessarily slackened the pace, and the boat lost a little ground.

“Pull!” shrieked the man in the bow. “We have been wrecked, and we have fish to sell,” he continued, whilst the ruffianly crew once again whitened the water round about them into boiling foam. “You will receive us, Captain Nassau, in pity?”

“Tell him,” shouted Captain Cochrane, “that if he approaches any closer, we will fire into him.”

‘This was delivered by Nassau in excellent Spanish. He had the terms of the sea in that tongue. He might have passed as a half-blood Spanish sailor.

“We are hungry and thirsty, and are destitute of food and water,” screeched the man in the bow. “My God! in pity receive us on board! Do not abandon us to a dreadful fate!”

‘And still the rowers swept the boat nearer and nearer, until they could see that the man in the bows squinted, and that he had a crimson scar down one swarthy cheek, and they saw his long, black, snake-like hair lifting and falling upon his shoulders and back to the rush of the wind.

“He says that he has no food, yet wants to sell us fish,” said Arthur, with a loud laugh. “If they board us ’twill be a bloody business, and I mind Rose here.”

‘The threat of shooting produced no effect upon the man in the bows and the rowers. The boat was passing through the water faster than the schooner. She was creeping up close to under the port quarter. It did

not appear that the ruffians were armed; no signs of weapons were visible, neither weapons nor fish.

“Keep off,” shouted Captain Cochrane, “or we will fire into you!”

‘Undoubtedly his plain English was understood. It produced no effect, and the boat was now within reach of the heave of a rope’s end when Cochrane, taking aim, fired. The man in the bows, with a scream, fell back.

“I am killed!” he was heard to cry in Spanish.

‘All but two or three of the rowers paused. Then there rose yells of execration and cries in Spanish that every creature on board the schooner would have his throat cut for that piece of work. The boat lost way, the schooner went ahead. Then again the infuriate men buckled to their oars.

“Give them a dose, and put an end to it,” said Arthur.

‘The order was delivered. Five muskets were levelled and fired slap into the thick of the people. Two sank under the thwarts. One jumped on to a thwart as though he would leap overboard, then fell headlong into the bottom of the boat. They ceased to row, and the boat dropped swiftly astern.

“Get your fore-sheet to windward,” sang out Captain Cochrane. “Break out a cask of water, and buoy a cask of bread.”

‘This was done, and Nassau, standing upon the taff-rail, yelled a hail to the boat, pointing with his finger at the casks that they might pick them up.

‘Well, ladies and gentlemen, there is no other sequel to this yarn than this: that sometime afterwards Arthur Cochrane got to know that the boat was manned by

nine pirates who had formed a portion of the crew of a well-known Spanish picaroon. This vessel had sprung a leak about thirty miles to the southward of the spot where the *Charmer* had fallen in with the boat. She sank so rapidly that she barely gave time to the men to escape. The boats separated. The boat which had flourished the sham fish contained two breakers of fresh water, but no provisions. The fish, I may say, had formed a part of the boat's equipment. Every boat had one, and by flourishing it and representing themselves as shipwrecked fishermen they succeeded in boarding ships without fighting, which exactly suited the curs.'

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CHAPTER IX.

SAILORS' PLEASURE.

'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,' continued Captain Foster, whilst he smiled at the pleasant attention which he noted amongst his hearers, 'before I continue my story, it is right that I should say I claim nothing heroic or spirited in the behaviour of Cochrane and his people. They were armed, the pirate crew were not—at least, they had no firearms, though every man carried a long murderous sheath-knife strapped to his hip, and there was no question, had they succeeded in gaining the deck, it would have gone hard with the *Charmer*, seeing how they would, by hunger, by the dread of coming across a man-of-war, and by the circumstance of the *Charmer* being exactly the sort of craft they wanted, have fought with the pluck and rage of demons. They could not better the falling-in with this schooner if they could work fortune out of it, and how they would have fought had they been unwarily allowed on board as distressed fellow-creatures you may guess. *I say that Cochrane did the right thing, and the only thing that was to be done. It was what *I* should do were I so beset, and it was done by a captain with whom I served as third mate. We were overhauled in the

Malacca Straits by a boat as suspicious as Cochrane's friend. We fired a round shot into her, and they plugged the hole and departed.

'Cochrane and his son talked a little over this matter when the boat had diminished into a point of black far astern. Where Arthur was, Rose was ever near. She stood close, and never did her eyes meet his but that a smile of love made deeper the beautiful glow of them. The girl was no doubt desperately in love, and so in truth was Arthur.

"What do you think of Nassau's part in to-day's business?" Arthur asked his father.

"Why, if he knew the man I shot, he did not act as his friend," answered old Cochrane, with a laugh.

"I should think he knows most of the pirates," said Rose. "He was called by the man Captain Nassau, as if he had commanded a pirate."

"He is undoubtedly a pirate," said Arthur.

"His yarns don't fit in with that notion," exclaimed old Cochrane. "He has certainly served in other ships than pirates. He was ready with his Spanish, though, and he speaks it wonderfully well, with a remarkably good accent. Now, to a certain extent, I trusted him. I believe I should have credited his assurances, and I consider that, pirate or no pirate, he has been honest enough to bring us clear of a very ugly job."

"In my opinion," said Arthur, in a voice of cool conviction, "he is a pirate steeped to the finger-tips, and he has an eye to this schooner. What's the meaning of our mysterious westing?"

'His father looked at him very gravely, but not as if he was being convinced.

"What is his object," pursued Arthur, "in going

among the men and talking to them? Keep your weather-eye lifting, father," said he. "I should be glad to hang Mr. Nassau."

"You are prejudiced through Rose," replied Cochrane.

'Rose coloured, and replied that Nassau was a hideous baboon of a man, who dared approach her in speech which made her feel humiliated; but that these things did not constitute a pirate, nor could they concern his determination to seize the schooner.

"Seize the schooner!" cried old Cochrane, with proud contempt. "Single-handed, or by the aid of my men?"

"I don't know," answered Rose languidly.

'It was, in truth, burning hot, and they were talking in the sun. The girl's demeanour or voice was a hint, and Cochrane, after a prolonged stare forward at the crew who were visible, went below for his sextant. It continued to blow a baffling air all that day and night. Cochrane came on deck shortly after midnight; the sea spread black and trembling, but the moon was making a great light in the south, though she rose late, and by the roll of the shadow was now become a piece of moon. The fires of the sea sprang in the coils of the running ripples. The skipper walked straight to the binnacle, and looked at the compass-card. It was Nassau's watch on deck. No schooner ever looked closer to the wind than the *Charmer*. The skipper observed that she was a point off the course which the wind would have permitted the helmsman to keep. He shouted to Nassau:

"Is this," said he, pointing to the card, and speaking with angry sarcasm, "that drift of current which has been giving us so much mysterious westing?"

'The helmsman luffed. He was Jacob Overalls.

"It was my fault, sir," said the man. "This lamp gives a blasted bad light. My vision ain't what it was, and I let her fall off."

"It can only have been for a minute, sir," said Nassau. "She was as she should lie a few moments ago."

'Cochrane rated the man at the wheel in strong terms, told him that the binnacle-lamp burnt brightly, and shed a light in which a bat could see. He recommended Nassau, in a few emphatic words, to keep a stricter con, if he did not wish the schooner to run foul of some cay or other. Nassau, in a transport of earnestness in which his voice trembled, swore that throughout the voyage, during his watch, the schooner had never been off her course unless the wind headed her, and then 'twas always as close a luff as he could keep. Did not the Captain believe him? If not, let Mr. Arthur take his place, and he would go forward. He had served as a man before, and he could serve as a man again. The Captain answered by saying, in a speculative voice, whilst he pointed to the binnacle-compass with a hand of shadow:

"Keep your luff, sir, and if she breaks off call me."

'He was up again on deck at three o'clock, gliding like a ghost from the companion to the binnacle-stand. The schooner was then lying half a point closer to her course than she could have kept when he had first come up after midnight. The wind promised a fair breeze presently, if it did not fail and fall a flat calm. He saw the coloured mate standing motionless like a block of black and white marble at the weather main-shrouds, but without addressing him returned to his cabin. He pondered this matter closely, and made up his mind to

conclude that Nassau had spoken the truth. He therefore said nothing upon the subject to his son. He did not want any trouble on board; he knew how his son would misinterpret this stroke of bad steering—how, indeed, it might lead to further acts of violence between him and the coloured mate. The voyage would be ended soon, he hoped; he would get rid of Nassau, and terminate a worry and a difficulty. Moreover, he was an old man, and he loved to step the level road.

‘At dinner that day in the cabin, after some brisk chat—for Rose was an excellent talker, and the two men in their several ways had seen life in the vast variety of the sea—the conversation turned upon music; not a subject you would think quite likely to be discussed by the skipper of a bit of a schooner and his son, but both these men, as I have told you, were a considerable touch above the average merchantman. It came about by Rose saying that the song of the sea, in the little open cabin port-hole, sounded to her like the strains of a harp played in some windy distance on a hillside. In fact, a nice draught was blowing, and the schooner, close hauled on the port tack, was again holding her course.

“Are you fond of music, Miss Rose?” asked old Cochrane.

“I should never be without it, and it should be of the choicest, both in singers and in instruments, if I had wealth enough to indulge in such delights.”

“They say there is music in everything,” exclaimed Arthur. “They tell you there is a music you can’t hear; the tones are too deep for the reception of the human ear.”

'Rose smiled incredulously. Cochrane asked her if she could sing.

"Just a little," she answered, with a flash at Arthur, and a downward look at her fingers, on which gleamed a couple of rings, one a little serpent with emerald eyes. Cochrane surveyed her thoughtfully, clearly meditating another matter, then addressing his son said:

"I am for giving the men some pleasure. The best way to deal with a mutinous crew, with men, here he smiled, 'who might rise and seize your ship, is to treat them as men, be kind to them, to let them taste a little sailor's pleasure now and again. I am thinking——' He broke off and looked at the skylight. "This is splendid weather. Suppose we fill a dog-watch to-night with music and singing?"

'Arthur's face lighted up.

"Will you sing, Miss Rose?" said the skipper.

"I will do anything to please you," she answered, with engaging emphasis, and one of those serpentine motions of her form which were among her fascinations in the sight of young Cochrane.

"They have a concertina forward; I dare say they play it well enough," said the Captain. "I am rather of opinion," he continued, "that the mate possesses an instrument representing a banjo."

"Yes," said Arthur, looking at Rose, and bursting into a laugh, "he owns such a thing; he once showed it to me. He has never produced it in public, but I have heard him strumming softly in his berth and whistling an accompaniment. But we won't have him."

"Oh yes, he shall sing, certainly, if he will," said the skipper with warmth.

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"I would not lose the chance of hearing him sing for a great deal," said Rose.

Thus they discussed this unimportant matter. Rose's eyes were lighted up. You saw she looked forward to some amusement. It was settled that the men should have grog served out to them; that such lights as the schooner yielded should be hung about the decks to give the plain fabric a character of festivity when the sun went down. They would start with the concert, and the Captain left the task of drawing up the programme to his son. The schooner carried amongst her consignments a number of cases of cakes and boxes of sweetmeats, and the men were to be regaled on something choicer than the flint-hard biscuit, the peepshow of the weevil. After dinner Arthur went forward, and saw Old Stormy sucking an inch of black pipe on the coamings of the fore-hatch. He said to him:

"Bring the men together, I have something to say to them."

Now, the man at the wheel was Cabbage, but the others who arrived were Jacob Overalls, Ben Black, and Wilkinson. These formed the crew, and a sufficient crew for that ship, whose cook had died three weeks after they had left port.

"Men," said Arthur, "it is proposed to have some fooling to-night in the second dog-watch. What do you say? There'll be drink, and cakes, and sweetmeats."

"Oh, we're all agreeable to that," said Overalls.

"There will be singing. The lady will sing to you. The mate will be asked to sing. He owns a banjo, and should sing a good song. All of you will be asked to sing. Are you willing?"

'The fellows looked at one another with the awkwardness of cattle. They seemed to accept the proposal as a duty, on the whole. They were blockheads, and needed time to realize a thing.

"What shall I be expected to sing?" says Ben Black.

"Oh, my lad, you'll just turn to and pipe up any old ditty that your grandmother may have taught you. You, a sailor, wanting a song!"

Black looked at Arthur as though he hunted in his mind for recollections of old airs.

"You own a concertina, don't you?" says young Cochrane, turning upon Wilkinson.

"Yes, sir."

"What can you play upon it?"

"Why, anything I've once heard."

"Dummed if I won't say this for the Doctor," exclaimed Overalls, "that what he says is true! I once sung him a toon they sings in Iceland, and wither my leggings if he hadn't got it next minute on that there organ of his!"

"All right," said Arthur, "you shall be the accompanist. We shan't expect you to sing, but there'll be dancing after the chanteys are ended, and the job of playing from truck to kelson will be yours."

The fellow looked delighted, and Arthur told Old Stormy to collect all the lamps he could muster, and get them hung about, and place anything that should answer for seats on the quarterdeck.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, as you know, the second dog-watch is from six to eight in the evening, and it is needless to tell you that it is the sailors' holiday watch, in which they lounge, yarn, smoke, sing, and do, in

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short, what they please. Six o'clock that day brought around a rich evening of western lights of heaven, Oriental in splendour of shafts of burning gold, and a pleasant breeze off the bows still sweetened the heat; the sails slept, the sea was of a deep blue which I have never seen anywhere save in a woman's eyes. At this hour they had raised a sail right ahead, and already they knew that she was going their way, and that she showed the mast-heads of a square-rigged ship. Shortly after six the scene of the quarterdeck of the *Charmer* a little abaft of the mainmast was this: over a hen-coop, through whose bars a few surviving hens had ceased to dart their crested heads in astonishment, was spread the Union Jack, and a seat formed of a plank on two inverted tubs ran down the foremost side of it. At this table was seated the crew—the whole of them—Captain Cochrane having taken the helm. They had cleaned themselves up for this occasion. Old Stormy looked more nautical than any nautical figure in Cruikshank's travesties. His straw-hat was at the back of his head, his throat lay open, he wore a jacket over a blue shirt, and the ends of a great silk neckerchief hung as low as his belt. The others were of the average type, in their attire more or less nautical, and merchantmen to the finger tips. They gaped about them like countrymen in a theatre, as though they had never seen the schooner before, so innocent in character are sailors, so easily pleased and amazed by trifles. Upon the table was placed, in a couple of jugs, enough rum and water to supply each man with three good glasses, also an open box of round cakes, plum and seed, with knives for cutting them up, and a small case of various sweet-meats at which Old Stormy, while he chewed his

tobacco, looked with contempt. A few cakes of tobacco were scattered over the table for each man to use, with liberty to pocket the remainder. It was a sumptuous regale and entertainment, unheard of aboard such a schooner as the *Charmer*, and, ladies and gentlemen, I must admit, never to be heard of in my experience aboard any ship flying the British flag. A couple or three chairs brought from the cabin were placed upon the quarterdeck. They faced the men. Miss Rose occupied one. Her wardrobe consisted of the attire in which she had floated to the schooner. She had no dress to change, but looked, nevertheless, a very sweet girl as she sat, glowing in the sun, just clear of the small awning, with her large, dark, liquid eyes of light, scarcely suppressing the emotion of humour which you felt stirred in her, glancing in a floating manner over the sailors opposite her.

Arthur, standing beside her with his hand upon the back of her chair, sang out, "Heave ahead, my lads, with your drink and cake, then get your pipes. Look alive, Wilkinson! We shall be wanting that concertina of yours very soon."

'A fine fellow he looked; his face was coloured by the weather, his melodious voice had a note of command in it that was inborn. He bore no extravagant traces of the sea, but you would have known him as a sailor on seeing him. The men poured out the rum and water and began to eat and drink. There was a certain grimness about them. They were watched by Julius Nassau, who stood a little apart from Arthur and Rose. It was clear he was going to help in the entertainment. His banjo lay upon the skylight and he was dressed in his best. The more he accentuated himself by apparel,

naturally the more repellant he looked, and this evening Julius Nassau, who was a real marine beau in his go-ashore clothes, might have passed as something in the gorilla line, which had escaped from a menagerie and stolen a civilized man's dress. It was scarcely the shore-going costume of those years, ladies and gentlemen. I don't know whether the "Spencer" was then in vogue. His negro blood loved straps, and his striped calico breeches were tautened to the soles of his boots. He wore a coloured shirt, the collars of which, there being no starch on board, lay limp: but he contrived to support them into the aspect of stick-ups by a heavy green cloth pierced by several pins connected by chains, all of them various, one being a death's head. Through these limp stick-ups stared his grotesquely hideous face, and his eyes were red as sunset.

'After some time, during which Rose and Arthur conversed whilst kind-hearted Captain Cochrane steered, and Julius stealthily looked on apart, Arthur sung out to Wilkinson to bring his concertina, and the young fellow, the extraordinary admirer of Dr. Samuel Johnson, was aft in a bound or two. It had been agreed that Rose should question him as to his musical knowledge.

"What songs do you know?" she asked, looking up at him with the whole sweetness of her beauty and her desire to please warm in her face. Wilkinson was a little embarrassed by standing so close to this fine girl and being talked to by her. Nassau watched, and his lips frequently worked with the sensations of his soul. The young fellow, knuckling his brow with an old-fashioned scrape aft of his right foot, named a short list. Most of them were sea-songs, some of them of

the "Bully-in-the-Alley" type; not likely that any young lady would have ever heard of such songs. She named a few herself, and it turned out that he knew "Annie Laurie," "Home, Sweet Home," and "The Last Rose of Summer." This would be good entertainment for the sailors, who loved sentiment. It is a mistake to suppose that the sailor's song is the working chorus which pours in hurricane volume from throats winding round the capstan or heaving at the windlass. When sailors are called upon for a song in festive moments, away from the duties of shipboard, they will sing sentiment. It had been arranged that Rose should start the concert. She stood up and looked at the row of sailors with a smile. The fellows lighted their pipes and took pulls at their glasses. Wilkinson played the opening bars of "Home, Sweet Home." He played them well; he was determined to do his best. This is a song whose melody and theme have taken a deep and lasting hold of the English heart. The roughest will pause and listen, or slacken their pace whilst they pass on humming in sympathy. I am aware, ladies and gentlemen, that it is customary for people who write books or tell stories to represent their heroines as gifted with finer voices than any to be heard among the pick of the Italian Opera. Yet this you may believe, on my word of honour: Miss Rose Island had a rich and far-reaching contralto voice, which, though she had never gone into training with it, she could use with an innate art that is denied to many who spend a little fortune and years in the cultivation of their gift. Her soul was in sympathy with the song she was singing; her voice rang with a tremor of tears in it to the heights of the sleeping canvas, and away into the still-

ness of the homeless sea. The men were moved. They pulled their pipes from their lips and opened their mouths whilst they listened to her. One or another would shake his head with admiration. It is true that "Home, Sweet Home" should be one of the very last songs to affect the sailor, for there is no man so homeless as he; there is no home for him, unless it is the Sailors' Home, which he detests. When ashore the sailor's home is a boarding-house, where he is drugged, stripped, robbed, and sometimes rolled like a barrel aboard a vessel by the boarding-house-keeper, who claims and gets his advance money. So much for the "home, sweet home" of the sailor, ladies and gentlemen.

'The study among that band of listeners was Julius Nassau. He flung himself into several attitudes, each of which was expressive of rapt admiration. He rolled his little red-bright eyes in their sockets till sometimes the pupils vanished in the upper lids and left nothing visible but the dirty whites. Old Cochrane, at the wheel, laughed at him. Arthur never looked at him. It was no piece of acting, but a genuine expression of emotion. The man was deeply touched by the charm and beauty of the singing, and could not contain himself. The sailors were so enraptured by this song that they encored it with a thunder of fists upon the hen-coop and of feet upon the plank of the deck. Then Arthur gave them "The Bay of Biscay." And now it was Julius's turn to favour the company. He walked in his striped trousers and cut-away coat to the skylight, took up his banjo, and came with it to the third chair, next to Arthur. He pulled the seat a little forward, that the girl might obtain a good view of him; then, making her a low bow, he turned to the seamen

and bowed to them, seated himself, and fell a-strumming. The mere tones of the banjo delighted the sailors, who are great lovers of this instrument, and associate it with negro minstrels, and the corked humours of the music-hall. But instead of singing a comic song, which everyone expected, Nassau broke into something from one of the Italian operas. It was a love song, and the beggar sang it in Italian, proving that he was acquainted with several tongues. The sailors, who did not care for this, because to them, though a beautiful melody, it had not the flavour of the ordinary music they were accustomed to, treated it as though it were a comic song, and grinned continuously at the singer. Nassau, putting on faces which he might suppose to express the tender and impassioned sentiments of the words, was ludicrously hideous betwixt his collars. His mouth yawed as if he would swallow a baby, and his hair stood up like the bristles of a scrubbing-brush. But, nevertheless, he sang with wonderful taste, with perfect appreciation of the music, and in a voice in which the guttural of the negro was not to be detected. He sang at Rose, he sang to Rose; it was clearly for Rose only that he sang this song. Possibly he hoped that she knew Italian. She kept her face averted. Arthur stared at him, but the negro mate sang on, strummed his banjo with passion, sang his heart out to the charming girl in a language which nobody understood but himself, and so enjoyed the luxury of making love to her, without risk of having his mouth cut open, as if he had got her alone up in a corner. When this song was ended the sailors did not howl encore, but yelled for something comic. Nassau got up, bowed to Miss Rose with a leer, as though he

had established an understanding between them, bowed to the sailors, making a hideous face at which they roared, sat down, placed his banjo on his knee, and swept into a real negro song, not such as the negroes really sing, but such as they are represented to sing by clever composers of music. It tickled the men to their very souls. If ever there had been a doubt as to their partiality for the mate, their reception of him, their enjoyment, the applause they gave him, would have settled it. Then Rose sang "The Last Rose of Summer." Her sweet voice and fair person made it beautiful to hear, and the sailors listened as though they were in church. Nassau followed this performance with contortions of admiration, and Arthur from time to time eyed him sternly and almost menacingly, as though he believed that the coloured dog was trying to reduce the girl's singing to an absurdity. I'll not weary you with a description of the singing, or a statement of the songs. One extraordinary feature I will describe: just before Old Stormy stood up to dance the hornpipe, Nassau, addressing Miss Rose, but in a voice that all might hear, asked if she would like to see the Pirates' Dance. There was a general shout of "Ay, ay!" "Oh, yes, give us that!" and Rose exclaimed, "Pray dance it, Mr. Nassau."

On this, Nassau rushed to the companion and disappeared. He emerged in a few minutes, dressed in a red shirt, blue sash, the fez or round cap we have already seen him in, and by his side dangled a cutlass. He wore his striped trousers as before. Bowing to right and left with a ridiculous gravity, he made a short speech, addressing himself to Rose. He said he had learnt the dance he was about to give them from the pirates of

San Domingo and the Tortugas, where he was kidnapped and forced to serve, whereat there was a rumble of laughter from some of the men seated at the hen-coop. Nassau, with an unmoved face, added that this dance was to be seen to perfection only when executed by five or six men of good bearing and agility, but they could see what it was like. He began by marching round and round, as in the common hornpipe, he then broke into a peculiar whistle with which he timed his extraordinary antics. It was absolutely tuneless, and yet had a measure of its own. All in a minute his eyes flashed, his face took on a horrible grin, he drew his cutlass and leaped half the breadth of the deck, always whistling. His dartings and rushings, the flourishing of his cutlass, his horribly wild and eager looks, all indicated that the pirate had hove a sail into sight. They were giving chase, they were coming up with him; they drew alongside of him and boarded. All this was most incomparably indicated by savage but eloquent motions, by his wonderful jumps, his thrusts and parries, and almost all the time he continued to whistle, as though he could not dance without this noise. Whether it was his own invention, or a dance really danced, cannot be known. It was not only a prodigious feat of agility, it marked an extraordinary power of pantomime. He looked a formidable figure as he sprang, cutlass in hand, and it was plain that he danced for Miss Rose and at Miss Rose, and the sailors shouted with excitement and enjoyment, and Arthur clapped his hands, and old Cochrane, still at the wheel, was heard to cry several times, "Bravo!"

'The sun had set when Nassau ended and the skipper called a hand aft to relieve him. Some of

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the men sang a few songs, and then they lighted the lanterns, and bringing them together made a fine light, in which Old Stormy stood up and danced the sailor's hornpipe to the notes of the concertina. Ah! 'twas then a scene for the eye of a lover of nautical pieces to dwell upon; the subtle beauty of it pervading, dominating everything, like the incense breathed by the earth in summer; and the purple light of the sun that was gone, and the pink effulgence that dwelt in the zenith, softened into delicate violet into the far recesses of the east. In this light were all things bathed, and the schooner, with her dancing sailors, and her galaxy of lights amidships, and her sails descending from a dim purple into a dim whiteness, rippled through the shadow that was now upon the sea, and right ahead, risen at this time to her topgallant-sails, was the ship they had sighted before the festivity began.

““ I wonder what ship that can be,” said Rose to Arthur.

CHAPTER X.

THE ELEUTHERA.

'THE weather at sea is the first consideration of a man when he arrives on deck. This is true whether he is a sailor or a passenger, unless, indeed, the passenger is one of those unfortunate, narrow-headed, asinine specimens of humanity who, on board ship, can think of nothing but cards, the smoking-room and its stories, the meals, and the bar. It is not, therefore, wonderful that in all sailors' descriptions of the sea a plentiful account of the weather will be found. Their logbooks are full of it. It is impossible to tell a story of the sea without talking of the weather, and this constant reference is perfectly consistent with truth and art; because, when you are upon the ocean, the weather is about the one thing you see, taste, suffer, or enjoy, betwixt your ports, and luck and calamity are contained in the word. I have spoken much of the weather, ladies and gentlemen, in connection with the schooner *Charmer*, and with your good leave I must still continue to introduce brief descriptions of it. All night, long after the amusements of the second dog-watch had come to an end, the wind had continued to blow a light air. When the moon was a half, and

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slowly stemming like a red boat through the southwestern ether, dropping blood in the water for a wake, and making the semi-circle of light in the midst of which she floated pale and dreary with her peculiar dark-red face, as though some pestilential wind was to blow straight out of her presently—when the moon was in this situation the night-air freshened, the schooner leaned and creaked with a pleasant flap of canvas throughout the heights of her, as though she were some huge bird of ocean testing her wings ere sailing into the void where the stars were shining; but it passed, slackened down into the old soft breathing, and at sunrise it was as yester day: smooth, delicately wrinkled, and full of the promise of bright, baffling calm weather.

'At six o'clock in the morning Captain Cochrane came on deck and joined his son, who had been keeping the look-out since four, and now stood leaning over the bulwark-rail, whistling softly to himself, with his eyes fixed upon a large ship, going the schooner's way, between two and three miles ahead. She was under all sail, but the light breeze was on the bow, and she showed no studding-sails.

"That will be the ship we sighted last evening!" exclaimed Captain Cochrane. "She has no chance with this schooner in light winds and her yards fore and aft. Evidently bound to Kingston. A West Indiaman apparently. They rig those ships too loftily, and the steeve of their bowsprits is a danger to the whole fabric."

"I can't help thinking that I've seen that ship," said Arthur. "I have been working at her with the glass, but can't make out her name, though you can

just catch sight of the white letters trembling in refraction as she lifts to the swell."

"Old Cochrane examined her with the telescope. He could see people moving on the poop, but the name, owing to the slant of the letters, was not distinguishable.

" "We'll be up with her in an hour or two," said the skipper. "I should be pleased to command that ship. They give you good pay, and room in cubic feet for a venture. What did you think of last night's jollity?" said the old chap, stepping to the skylight to lay down the glass. "Do the men seem pleased? Do they show any signs of a better disposition? I shall have stuck for once in my theory of seamen if this crew give us any trouble."

" "I have not spoken with the men," answered Arthur, casting a glance at one or two of the fellows, who were coiling down after washing the decks. "I do not think they will say anything, and I do not think your entertainment will have made them wholesomer. Let St. Peter open the gates of heaven to them, and let them get a view of their beloved friends who have gone before, and of the glories and the bliss which await the just, they would curse St. Peter for keeping them waiting, though the saint had whipped out his key as soon as ever he had heard them knock. But do you really expect, father, contentment amongst a set of men who live on equal terms with their chief mate, which chief mate is a damnable pirate at heart?"

" "I don't care what he is!" exclaimed old Cochrane a little testily. "We have made the voyage so far in peace, and we must end it in peace. Rose's floating aboard was somewhat unfortunate. The

nigger's fallen in love with her, but who is to help it? and who cares? Ill-blood has come aboard with her, and it is a pity. Why did she fall out of the window of the *Eleuthera*?"

"I have such a strong dislike and suspicion of that ugly beggar who danced the pirates' dance last night," said Arthur, "that I'm for transferring the girl to yonder ship, where she'll be safe, if she'll receive her."

"Safe!" exclaimed old Cochrane. "What's to make it less safe for her than for us? Not but that I should be glad to see her in better quarters, and whilst she's aboard you make love and she adores you, and it all irritates the mate."

"Damn the mate!" said Arthur. "I'm for transferring the girl, nevertheless, that is, if the ship is bound to Kingston;" and he said this in heroic accents, with a proud, defiant motion of his head, as though he was galled but must endure it, for, to speak the truth, the thought of parting with the girl on the high seas, good as it might be for her, cut like a knife into his heart. He went to the skylight to look at the ship again through the telescope. Ladies and gentlemen, you will probably think old Cochrane's character a weak one. You will say he was without penetration. The fact is, when he took command of the *Charmer*, it was with something of sickness. He had commanded in considerable tonnage; he could not treat his handful of a crew, amongst whom the discipline of the big ship did not exist, seriously. He was advancing in age, and all that he asked for was peace. His schooner was little more than a coaster, and the life aboard was much that of coasters. It was strange that the men did not call old Cochrane to his face by his Christian

name, but they had a respect which stopped them short of *that*. But the fact is, ladies and gentlemen, though the yarn I am spinning is as true as yonder compass, 'tis a queer one—mighty queer, with its mixture of Cochranes, nigger mate, and crew, and how things fell out with them; if otherwise, I really should not bore you. Whilst Arthur was looking through the glass, struggling to make out the name of the ship ahead, Rose came up and put her hand affectionately upon his. An instant later she caught sight of the ship, and after staring a little, whilst Arthur was bidding her good-morning, and admiring her fine eyes and the curve of her nostril, and the whole fascinating contour, colour, and expression of her remarkable and singular face, she exclaimed:

“Good gracious, dearest! do you know that I believe that ship there is the *Eleuthera*?”

“By George, I believe you are right!” said Arthur, once again lifting the glass. “I ought to have remembered those gilded quarter-galleries, and the big stern-windows, and the square cut of her royals, almost the size of her t'gallant-sails.”

“Hoist the ensign,” cried the skipper. “What other ship than the *Eleuthera* should she be? Bound to Kingston, of course. Bless me! not to remember her, after lying together off the edge of that hurricane for hours.”

‘Arthur sent the ensign to the peak end. It shook its crimson folds sulkily; it wanted a strong breeze to blow it into the flame and meteor that Campbell calls it.

“‘There’s Rose’s chance!’” exclaimed Captain Cochran, pointing to the ship. “Her clothes are there,

and the friends of her voyage." He glanced askant, and perhaps archly, at her. "There she'll be safe, Arthur."

"I am safe here," exclaimed Rose, with a manner of decision which tautened her figure from her hair to her heels.

"You will be safer in that ship, dearest," said Arthur, caressing her arm soothingly. "Father and I were just now talking about the risks you run aboard a little schooner, full of ill-conditioned men, influenced by a beastly savage."

"Mr. Nassau will not hurt me," said the girl, who had turned very pale, with something like a little dimness of tears in her eyes. "The men have been always civil. How they applauded me last night! Do you want to drive me from you? If I enter that ship and you remain here, we may never meet again. Oh, Arthur, I had thought you loved me!"

Old Cochrane looked as if he believed his son was a very lucky fellow.

"We'll meet at Kingston, and you'll get there without risk and in comfort," said Arthur, in the tones and with the air of a man who combats his own strong wishes. "God knows, I shall be the unhappiest wretch until I see you again, but I think of you only, my darling, of you only."

"You will have to force me out of this ship," she said, looking at him with a face all awork with feeling, and touching and beautiful with its involuntary play of emotions. "I will stop here. I am with you, and mean to remain with you," she added, with proud decision and a putting forth of her little foot with a stamp which was like clinching her meaning. She

added quickly: "But will you come with me if I am to go? You're a passenger here: your father can dispense with your services."

"I don't know that," said the skipper.

"They would not receive me," said Arthur. "I'd pay no passage money, and I'm not going to work before the mast."

"Here I am, and here I remain," said Rose, flushing with the vehemence with which she expressed her determination, and old Cochrane cried out:

"By God! I love your spirit, Rose. Arthur, here she *shall* remain."

At that moment Mr. Nassau rose through the companion. He stood with folded arms, contemplating the ship with a frown. Then, advancing a few paces, he exclaimed:

"That is the ship we were becalmed with."

"Ay, the same ship," said the skipper.

"Are you going on board of her?" exclaimed Nassau.

"Certainly, if we can overhaul her, and the captain will receive us."

"It is Miss Island's ship," said Nassau, with his eyes fixed on the girl, though he did not address her. "Is she to resume her place as a passenger on board that ship?"

"What the devil has Miss Island's intention got to do with you?" shouted Arthur. "Father, is not this coloured man to be taught some sort of discipline?"

The two men looked at each other with hatred in the short silence which followed. This silence was broken by old Cochrane exclaiming:

"By Heaven! I do not think she means to have anything to do with us. Look!"

'It blew a light air, in which the motions of a full-rigged ship would be sluggish. They watched the vessel's head slowly paying off, whilst her yards came leisurely rounding in with hands running aloft to starboard and port, where, with something of the celerity of men-of-warriors, though they were comparatively few, they rigged out the topmast and t'gallant stunsail booms, and presently the sails were to be seen mounting.

"By thunder! She is heading away from us!" cried the skipper.

'He looked up at his flag. The Indiaman showed no colours, but through the glass you might have seen the people running about her in excitement, and young Cochrane, looking, said that she had two carronades of a side on the main deck, and he believed he could see them loading the port guns.

"Two guns on each side," said Rose. "It is certainly the *Eleuthera*."

"We must have your luggage out of her!" exclaimed Arthur.

'And his father sang out orders to up helm, loose the square sails on the fore, and slacken away all sheets for a running chase.

"I believe," said Nassau, "that I can tell you, Captain Cochrane, why that ship is going away from us."

'It flashed upon Cochrane in an instant.

"You reckon she thinks us suspicious?"

'Nassau, with a glance at Miss Rose, bowed his head over his folded arms.

"Perhaps they have caught a sight of *him*," whispered Arthur to Rose.

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‘Nassau saw the smile she returned to this.

“How shall we prove our honesty to them?” said the skipper, again viewing the ship through the glass, and noticing the crowd upon the taffrail.

“The wind’s scanting; there will be little chasing soon!” exclaimed Arthur. “I’ll go in a boat if you like; it’ll be a calm presently. She’s not doing three, and the boat would do four.”

“Take Rose,” said the skipper. “When they see her, they will know it is all right.”

The light air dropped in a delicate gasp aloft even as he spoke, but the ripples ran their dye of heavenly blue along the sea where the air was still moving, and on the face of the waters you saw swathes, and gleams and large bland eyes of glassy calm, with the horizon afar growing faint, and the bite of the sun took a fresh sting. Bubbles rose in the deck-seams. The smell of old paint blew along with the draughts, fanned by the lower canvas. Hands were called to lower one of the boats, and bring it to the gangway. Three of the crew entered her, and Arthur took an oar after settling Rose comfortably in the stern sheets. The ship had almost come to a stand. They could now see with the naked eye the word *Eleuthera* painted in large white letters on her counter. Nassau’s ugly head, with rage, fear, mortification, jealousy, in every line of his face, writhing his lips till his teeth showed like a false set in a dentist’s window, fire in his eyes with that red light which was, no doubt, the reflection on his soul of its state of being after death, watched the boat with his chin on his arms over the bulwark rail. The skipper, seeing how it was to be with the weather, and desirous of quickly putting an end to all distrust aboard the ship,

put his helm down, clewed up forward, eased away aft, and his little vessel lay quiet, showing her broadside to the now motionless Indiaman, whose lofty canvas on that silent breast of sea hung from the yards with as little motion as the banners of knights in ancient roofs. As the boat approached she was hailed by a man who stood erect on the taffrail.

““ You need not trouble to come nearer,” he shouted. “ We advise you to return to your captain and tell him that we know him, and are prepared to give him a reception that will go hard if he don't save the Jamaica gibbets from weighing him and his people.”

‘ This very far-fetched joke, which would seem more the effusion of fear than wit, was attended by a rumble of laughter that sounded curiously as it rolled over the polished swathe, in whose heart the ship was reflected with the gorgeous tints of the daguerreotype, the lower stun'sail shuddering into the transparency like a wide thin sheet of silver, the gilt badges of the quarter-galleries burning in the surface of the calm like the reflection of some splendid day star, streams of light moving sinuously like sea-snakes in phosphor slowly sinking, and the reflection of the man who was shouting to the boat lay heels up in the sea under the long white letters of the ship's name. Arthur had thrown down his oar, and was standing up.

““ I can assure you,” he shouted, “ that we are not what you think, but an honest trader, the *Charmer*, Captain Cochrane, bound to Kingston. We were becalmed with you on the edge of the storm sometime since, and one of your passengers fell overboard, and here she is,” continued Arthur, pointing to Rose. “ She wants her baggage. Will you not allow us to get it ?”

'On this the man on the taffrail put his glass to his eye, and examined the boat minutely. In spite of the manifest truth of Arthur's statement, the hero of the taffrail must needs make a further minute inspection of the people in the boat. The pirates practised a thousand tricks under all sorts of guises, and a beardless ruffian in woman's attire was no novelty. He seemed satisfied; his glass sank. He spoke to those about him, and tokens of astonishment in gestures, at least, were visible. But he must still make certain.

"What is the name of the lady passenger who fell overboard?"

"Miss Rose Island," shouted Arthur; and Rose stood up and flourished a handkerchief.

"Come aboard! come aboard!" yelled the man on the taffrail, and disappeared; and a few minutes later a light accommodation ladder was thrown over the side.

'Now, ladies and gentlemen, it will be remembered that Rose fell overboard through her cabin port-hole on the eve of the storm. There was no time or opportunity to miss her before the storm broke, and then when the hurricane came raging down all was confusion, with officers shouting, the ship on her beam-ends, passengers scrambling for their lives, the seamen yelling at the ropes, the sails filling the roaring on high with a continuous roll of thunder. When eventually things grew quiet, and the ship lay plunging in the trenches of the sea, crew and passengers were mustered, because several heavy seas had broken over the ship, and no one could be sure that lives had not been lost. Nobody, however, was missing but Miss Rose Island. Great search was made for her throughout. The Captain

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was filled with concern; she had been placed under his particular protection. Her cabin window was found shut, and the steward said that when he shut it, and the gale broke, Miss Island was not there, and he supposed that she was in the saloon or on deck. So they very naturally gave her up for lost. She had been swept overboard; she had fallen overboard. Anyhow, she was in the sea, drowned dead as a drowned flounder. Judge, then, the amazement with which the people of the ship saw this beautiful corpse, her face full of the divine colours of life, helped by a handsome sailorly young fellow up the ladder and through the gangway. Captain Bahama Shanklin stood at that gangway, and so did his mates, and so did the passengers, and a body of seamen hung like a cloud close behind. The ship looked a full ship *then*, and Shanklin a man loaded with unenviable responsibilities. Before offering her his hand he fell back, stared at her, surveyed her from head to foot.

"After this," cried he, in whose amazed face glowed the full spirit of the West Indies, "I am a steadfast believer in miracles! Do ye swim through hurricanes which level forests, and which bend ships like mine down to the very roaring salt till the stoutest cry 'Lord, preserve us!'"

'And here Captain Shanklin grasped her by both hands, and then the passengers pressed forward, and their greetings were cordial; they marvelled at her rescue, and in their spirits, too, was the buoyancy which attends the perception that an ugly danger has been escaped, for you see, ladies and gentlemen, that the *Charmer* was an honest trader, and no pirate. The Captain shook Arthur Cochrane by the hand, and in

the heart of a body of passengers, thirsting to hear the girl's adventures, they went surging through the saloon-doors, and sat down round about the table. The hospitality of wine and cake was immediately offered, but not before they were talking. They all admired Rose—they thought she looked wonderfully well; even the ladies found something beautiful and delicate in her complexion and a light not common in her fine eyes. She related how she had managed to fall overboard, for *her* story was to come first. She had floated on her back on coming to the surface, but she was perfectly unconscious. Heavens, how wonderful! To think of her as floating to safety, with the giant fiend of storm, with flashing brows and the foam of the sea about his feet, striding with the velocity of the hurricane towards her! Her being picked up was commonplace—a longshore wonder—nothing in it to detain the attention; but some marks of surprise were exhibited when she spoke of Arthur Cochrane and herself as playmates aboard the ship his father commanded on a voyage to Philadelphia. The handsome face of young Cochrane made this thing a romantic coincidence, and the ladies fluttered a little.

“We should have recollected your schooner,” said Captain Shanklin; “but the fact is, we were made uneasy by a small brig who reported to us the notorious pirate *Pearl*, commanded by the fiercest cut-throat out of Jamaica, who is haunting these waters for prey.”

“We were a long time in sight of you before you squared away.”

“We could not make up our minds,” answered Shanklin. “Well, Miss Island, you are a wonderful young woman, and, seeing that you are under my protection, I am very glad to have recovered you.”

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"I shall not proceed in this ship," said Rose sweetly.

The Captain started and stared, and the ladies looked hard at Arthur, and the gentlemen smiled.

"In what ship do you propose to proceed?" said Captain Shanklin.

"In the schooner commanded by this gentleman's father, who saved my life," answered Rose.

"What!" shouted the Captain, who did not immediately see the truth as most of the others did; "abandon a splendid ship and a beautiful cabin, and all the comfort and safety which such things provide, for a little schooner! A pretty little schooner, I admit," he continued, with a friendly nod at young Cochrane; "but this is a fine passenger ship."

"I am going to Kingston in the schooner *Charmer*," said Rose to Shanklin softly and tenderly, and then looked at Arthur and smiled; and by the light of that smile all saw how it was, even the Captain.

Love is love, and women will go through much for the men they adore; but many there were present in that cuddy or saloon who imperfectly understood how it was that Rose should go so far as to choose the damp and dark accommodation of a little coasting schooner for the light, the life, the agreeable assurance of safety, yielded by the lofty Indiaman in which she had originally embarked. Captain Shanklin did not know quite what to do. He asked her to step into his cabin. She followed him, and he closed the door upon an interior brilliant with the sunlight that was flowing off the sea, sparkling with rays darted by brass nautical instruments, and hospitable with carpet, pictures, books, and the like.

"I am thankful to God that you are safe, Miss

Island," the sun-roasted man began. "But you must consider you are placed under my protection, and that it is my duty to see you to your destination."

"I can't help that, Captain Shanklin," said Rose. "I am going to Kingston in the schooner. You saw Arthur Cochrane? I knew him when he was a little boy. We are sweethearts, and engaged to be married."

"Already?" half murmured the Captain, with lifted eyebrows.

"It is not likely that you would dream of separating us?" said the girl, with one of those serpentine motions of the body which betrayed in her the rising emotion.

"What is he aboard your schooner?"

"To oblige his father, he acts as second mate," answered Rose; "but, as he is not entered on the articles, he is really a passenger."

"Then, let him make the remainder of the voyage with us as passenger," said Captain Shanklin.

"I love his old father, if only for memory's sake," said Rose, with eyes which began to burn. "I will not leave his little schooner. Arthur would not leave his father alone with an intolerable mate in whom he has no confidence. We shall be at Kingston before you. I am perfectly comfortable and happy, and have come on board only for my luggage, which I trust, Captain Shanklin, you will give your men orders to place in the boat alongside."

She spoke with a decision that was not wanting in heat. The Captain eyed her, not without an expression of admiration in his gaze.

"I wouldn't ask a young lady how old she is," said the plain sailor, who was evidently puzzled as to how to act; "but I'll allow that you are over twenty-one, and,

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as your protector appointed by your friends, I have no lawful control over you. But you'd better stop."

"No, thank you," responded Rose, making a movement towards the door; for there were two very pretty girls at the table who had looked very hard at Arthur, and Rose was a woman, and she wanted to be at her sweetheart's side.

"This love-making and marriage-business is very sudden, ain't it?" said Captain Shanklin, stepping to the door, and pausing whilst he grasped the handle. "It was only the other day you fell overboard."

"Have you looked into his eyes, and do you know his character?" answered Rose.

"I can look a man in the eye as well as another," answered the Captain; "and I dare say his character is as beautiful as you think his face. But being at sea accounts for everything. These love-jobs ought to be allowed to grow. They want to be watered and put in the sun. I don't ask you to stay for the flower; but, at least, wait till the bud peeps that you may guess what you're going to pick and wear. This is no fault of mine."

'This he seemed to say to himself, whilst Rose's impatience was growing into pain.

"Your luggage shall be put over the side, and I wish you joy."

He bowed, opened the door, and she walked through the saloon immediately to Arthur's side. All the passengers had kept their seats. They were listening to Arthur's description of the boatful of pirates, and seemed charmed by his conversation, and the two sweet, fair-haired girls who sat opposite to him never removed their eyes from his face, and Rose saw them

staring at him when she sat down. A sunny scene to enter was this same old-world saloon, bright with mirrors, gay with the brush of the artist, with the central dome full of singing birds and flowers, courting the eye through the open casement to the stately heights of canvas on the main.

“What’s that about a pirate boat?” said Captain Shanklin, standing at the head of the table.

‘Arthur repeated the brief story.

“Was it a ruse of the *Pearl*?” said the Captain.

“She was not in sight, sir.”

“We must keep a bright look-out,” exclaimed the Captain to the chief officer, who had come down the companion steps, and paused on hearing of this pirate boat. “So your father shot the gentleman with the fish through the heart? He deserves a *Gazette* all to himself.”

‘Then, after some further conversation, he requested the mate to see the young lady’s luggage into the *Charmer’s* boat under the gangway, and they all went out of that radiant and comfortable saloon into the sunshine upon deck, or into the shadow of the long awning upon the poop. The ladies plied Rose with questions. What were her feelings when she fell into the sea? What were her sensations when, on returning to consciousness, she found herself in the cabin, of a schooner with a handsome young man, like a prince in a fairy-tale, bending over her? Arthur Cochrane talked apart with Captain Shanklin. The young fellow spoke of the westing that had been mysteriously made in the navigation of the schooner, and Captain Shanklin inquired who that Mulatto-looking fellow was on board the *Charmer*, for faces were easily visible through glasses.

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““There can be no doubt,” said Shanklin, after Arthur had talked pretty freely about Julius Nassau, “that the intention of the pirate boat’s crew was to steal your schooner. Perhaps this had been pre-arranged by Nassau.”

““Hardly, in England, sir.”

““She is a smart little vessel,” said Shanklin, looking at her. “She has a sweeter entry than any schooner yacht that ever I saw. Her lower masts have a pretty rake, and the topmasts are stayed to a hair. She sits upon her own reflection like a swan. She should be a fast schooner. She would make a first-class pirate ship.’

Shanklin then began to speak of Rose, and said that she ought to stay in the ship. Arthur, with a mounting colour, assured him that that was his wish, but that he could not prevail upon the girl to remain.

““Well, I have done my duty,” said Shanklin with a shrug, “and a man can do no more.”

Shortly after this Rose, followed by Arthur, went to the cabin she had formerly occupied, to collect the things out of a chest of drawers, and pack what remained in the berth. The stewardess came in to help. Until this business was over Arthur remained looking through the port-hole in silence, though the girl chatted to him a little about her sensations in the instant when she kneeled in the embrasure and found herself gone. Then, when they were alone for a minute, young Cochrane, passionately taking his sweetheart by both hands, entreated her to remain in safety and comfort on board this fine ship.

““The Captain’s your protector,” he said, “and everybody seems to be in love with you.”

“Everybody seems to be in love with me but you,” she exclaimed, looking at him with that sort of anger which is the heat of love that believes itself wronged.

“Under heaven, you are the dearest of all things to me, my sweet girl! Do I wish to be separated from you? You know I should be as miserable as yourself, but this ship will arrive in Kingston, and I shall be there, and there is no Nassau in this ship——”

“Nassau is nothing to me,” she cried. “I have said that I will remain with you and in your schooner, and if you determine for me otherwise——” And, in her incommunicable serpentine manner, her eyes all on fire with temper and resolution, she pointed to the port-hole with every eloquence of gesture that a consummate actress could have communicated to the mute indication. Arthur kissed her on both cheeks, held her face in his hands, and kissed her on the mouth again and again, and they left the cabin. The crowd that received them assembled at the gangway to witness their departure. The ladies kissed Rose, the gentlemen shook hands with the manly young sailor. A pleasant breeze out of the east had sprung up, brushing the sea into little lines of foam, and in the east were clouds, and a clear look of dry wind through which the horizon ran delicate as a line of quicksilver in a glass tube. On the top of Rose’s luggage, in the stern sheets of the *Charmer’s* boat, lay a case or two of champagne and some boxes of cigars, the gift of the Captain to old Cochrane. The boat shoved off; the ladies ran to the poop to watch her. Rose kissed her hand and waved her handkerchief, and Arthur flourished his cap. In a few minutes the lovers and the luggage were on board the *Charmer*.

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CHAPTER XI.

COCHRANE'S DREAM.

'WELL, ladies and gentlemen,' continued Captain Foster, who was gratified by the attention his story received, 'I have told you that the boat of the *Charmer* regained the schooner, and that a pleasant breeze was brightening into whispering lines of silver the dark blue surge of the ocean. Old Cochrane stumped his quarter-deck, pipe in hand, awaiting the return of his son and Rose. One or two men lounged over the rail awaiting the summons to trim sail for the start, and Mr. Nassau was in the gangway. It was his watch below, and he profited from the spell of liberty and comparative license to smoke a long paper cigar, which consisted of ship's tobacco finely cut and rolled up by the nimble fingers of the coloured mate in paper made for that purpose. Rose was the first to step on board. The mate made her a very low bow, and without regard to the trifling circumstance that she cut him persistently, and was ever on the alert to escape him, whether in the cabin or on deck, he said to her, with the light and spirit of his feelings very strong in his ugly face :

“I, for one, Miss Island, am overjoyed that you

have returned to us. I believe I can save you here, but I could not save you there," and he pointed with his cigar, from which smoke was blowing like a chimney, at the West Indiaman. An idle greeting of welcome would have been returned by Rose in some murmur of speech and a stiff bow, but she was startled by his words, and stared at him, pausing.

"What do you mean by saving me, Mr. Nassau?" she exclaimed.

"I hope it may not come to it," he answered, and with another low bow he walked a little distance away, and stood watching her with devouring eyes as she went to Captain Cochrane. But there could be no talk for the moment. Sail was to be trimmed, the luggage handed over the side, and the boat hoisted. This filled the little ship with hurry and business, and Rose stood beside Captain Cochrane, watching the beautiful spectacle of the West Indiaman making a start. Strange that the two vessels should have been in company twice. Rose looked at her with liking and even fondness. Yonder ship had borne her in safety over many leagues of water, heavy and hollow with storm, calm, and full of shadows and gleams as glass. You cannot make a voyage in a ship, if your humanity is up to the common level, without a fondness for her growing up in you, which will deepen into a life-long memory of kindness and obligation, as towards something living. But she must be a sailing ship. I do not believe you can fall in love very easily with a steamer. The steamer steers a straight course for her destination. She is like a railway train; she is like a hotel lift. It is sheer mechanism, and you feel that the whole merit of her passage through the sea lies in the revolution

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of the screw at her stern. But with a sailing ship the struggle is human. She edges aslant through the head wind; she strips for the affray with such instinctive knowledge and perception of the forces which the heavens and the deep hurl at her, that if she were gifted with an immortal soul and her hawse-holes were living eyes which she turned about, ever watchful of the headlong rushes of the storming brine, she could not behave with greater wisdom and prudence. Do you smile, ladies and gentlemen? I am an old sailor and know the sea, and I swear that every ship has a spirit which informs and will guide her; she will take up the secure position in storm if you will allow her; in the calm her sails whisper, and her rigging and shrouds are melodious with faint songs, which the ear of the faithful, as he climbs aloft, may hearken to and interpret as vocal legends of the elements and wild or tender traditions of the deep.

'A fine sight, I say, was that which Rose stood watching by the side of Captain Cochrane, when the *Eleuthera* manned her braces for the wind, and when her metal forefoot broke the sunny and foam-edged ripples into curves, graceful as the backward send of the pearly arm of a swimming girl. Shadows of the daintiest violet trembled in the soft eclipse down the sunward leeches of her tall topsails and other sails, as the yards came slowly round, and the canvas swelled, yearning as with a strained vision from mainsail to royal for the haven under the sea. Her passengers watched the schooner from the poop. The sailors ran about coiling down, glass sparkled, brass work flashed, the white plank of the deck, visible in part in the slight list of the ship, gleamed like lengths of satin. She was a noble picture,

and the little fountains which her bows tossed into rainbows kissed her sides as they passed.

“The mate Nassau, when I came on board,” said Rose, “coolly informed me that he could save me if I remained here, but that he could not save me had I remained in the *Eleuthera*. What does the impudent fellow mean, Captain Cochrane?”

“He is a sea-puppy,” returned the Captain. “Save you! Save you! What does he mean to save you from either here or there?” and he laughed a little. “He is an impudent brute to accost you after what has been said on the subject. Pray give him and his words no heed whatsoever. I don’t want to send him forward amongst the men, because revenge may cause him to act treacherously. I wish him to stay where he is, as a man whose services I can’t easily do without; and really I have no excuse for breaking him. It is not for me to take notice of his cheap brag. Don’t repeat what he said to Arthur. There will be another row between the men, and any further trouble of that sort will anger me excessively.”

‘He spoke in a tone of irritation. The girl simply said, “I shall not repeat a word to Arthur.”’

‘Sail by this time had been trimmed, and the schooner was bearing down upon the Indiaman, that Cochrane might thank Shanklin for his gift. Arthur came aft and talked to his father about what had passed aboard the *Eleuthera*. Rose watched the picture of the beautiful ship, and the eyes of the infatuated negro mate were seldom off her as he slowly paced the deck smoking his paper cigar, and willing, though it was his watch below, to linger above to see the schooner pass the Indiaman. It happened in due course, for though sail had been

trimmed with the precision of a frigate's canvas, though white and swelling studding-sails had been swung handsomely aloft to the yard-arms and the boom-ends to the music of men's throats, the *Eleuthera* had not the keel of the *Charmer*, which was bound, in the particular bright, royal breeze that was then blowing, to overhaul the Indiaman and be out of sight of her in a few hours. The *Charmer* was steered very close. The ladies on the poop of the Indiaman were delighted; all this was indeed a break in the monotony of a long voyage. It was seeing the sea life as the sea life was lived in reality. The ocean was baring her bosom, they were beholding a little of what is only visible to the sailor. A pistol-shot would have measured the distance between the two vessels. Beautiful was the prismatic flow of the water between, lustrous with foam bells, shot like the white of the oyster-shell, glorified by the blind, low, sailing leap of the flying-fish. Rose could see the stewardess looking at them out of a port-hole; several binoculars were levelled at the schooner, and Mr. Nassau appeared to be the chief object of this inquisition of lenses. The creaking of the fabric aloft ran like a sound of castanets through the musical wash of the waters between. She bowed often and stately, for the swell from the east had a little weight, and her figure-head, that was some black goddess, curtseyed with splendid grace to the radiant billow as it rolled athwart.

““ Ho, the *Eleuthera* ahoy!” shouted Captain Cochrane.

““ Hillo!” answered Shanklin, standing on top of a hencoop grasping a backstay.

““ Many thanks to you, sir, for your kindly gift.”

““ You are very welcome, I owe you thanks for the

preservation of the life of Miss Island. She is so well treated aboard of you that she declines to return to us."

'The ladies, taking this tip, flourished their handkerchiefs. Rose was of the colour of the flower she was named after. Arthur stood beside her, and Captain Shanklin shouted :

"We all wish the young couple much happiness, and we will take care to drink their healths."

'Again more flourishes, cheers from the *Eleuthera*, a scowling look at the ship from Julius Nassau. The schooner was forging ahead of the Indiaman. The noble panorama of lofty white sail, of chequered side, of delicately curved bowsprit and jibbooms arresting the flight of white wings, which softly shadowed one another over the sea, was passing, and in a few minutes the schooner was ahead, with her flag dipping her farewell, and her sharp stem taking the swell in bounds which often clouded the wrinkled folds with foam.

'In the afternoon the Indiaman had been sunk out of sight. A blue mist had gathered round the horizon, and the sea ran in steady pulses of foam, aslant of which the schooner sprang with the white spray smoking over her figure-head, and a white swell of sea billowing in steady adhesion at each counter, though the foam of it went away into the wake and the schooner's speed could be measured by that in this pleasant freshening breeze. At about three o'clock on the afternoon of the day on which they had spoken the *Eleuthera*, they sighted a small schooner on the port bow. She was a mere toy in the distance, a something for a baby to stretch its hands at. She sailed close against the very confines of the thickness, as though the delicate bank of vapour were a wall. Captain Cochrane took a look at

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her through the glass, but made no remark. Arthur, taking the glass from his father, steadied it against the rigging and gazed earnestly. He found this out: that she was long and low—so low that her bulwark-rail dipped from the altitude of the *Charmer's* quarterdeck. She was passing against the mist like a steamer; apparently she was nearly twice as lofty in rig as the *Charmer*, with immensely long heads to her fore and aft canvas, and the square sail which she was carrying was big enough, to use Jack's expression, to hold wind enough to last a Dutchman a week. Julius Nassau at this moment came up from below, with a pipe in his mouth. His first glance was at Rose, who sat on a chair against the skylight under the awning with a book upon her knee and her speaking dark eyes fixed upon the distant schooner. Julius had been sleeping; he did not look the sweeter for his slumbers. His eyes, after dwelling upon the girl, roamed away in the direction of her gaze, and on seeing the schooner he started as if he had been bitten, and crossing to Arthur asked him for permission to view the vessel through the glass. Arthur, with an air of dislike, handed the telescope to the man, who levelled it, and after looking a few minutes returned the glass to young Cochrane with a singular expression on his face.

“She has all her kites aboard,” said he. “She has plenty of them, and by the heart of my mother, I never saw such a head to a gaff-topsail in a schooner of her size before.”

“Do you know her?” said Arthur dryly, condescending to talk about yonder vessel with this man, with whom he rarely exchanged a sentence.

“Put me closer and I'll tell you,” answered Julius,

after a suck at his pipe. "She is a beauty, and she can travel."

"Something bound to Bristol, do you think?" said Arthur, in the same dry voice.

"Or to Liverpool," answered Nassau, baring all his teeth. "If she is up to the hatches with wool, she's not bound to Europe, is she?"

Arthur, without further remark, joined Rose, and the two watched Nassau, straining his sight at the distant streak of whiteness upon the horizon until it had disappeared in the mist.

Captain Cochrane came lounging along to his son and Miss Island.

"That was a beautiful schooner," said he. "She must have been a yacht. Who knows, miss, but that she may be the property of some great nobleman, who is on board, and is making the round voyage to the West Indies for his health."

"She had more the look of a slaver or a pirate, I thought," said Arthur.

"Why should a slaver be travelling her way?" exclaimed the skipper, "and as to her being a pirate——" He paused, looking into the misty distance in which the vessel had disappeared. "I do not think," he added, "that you will find pirates doing their business in vessels of that pattern."

"If," said Rose, with a smile and a half glance in the direction of Julius Nassau—"if there is eloquence in the spirit of a coloured man to betray his convictions into his dark face, then, Captain Cochrane, the schooner that man there has been watching is either a slaver or a pirate. His blood does not colour his face, it adds a shade to it; but the mounting blood was visible all

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the same, and there was a curl of enjoyment at the corners of his leathern mouth whilst he kept his eye at the telescope Arthur handed to him."

'Nassau turned his head, observed them regarding him, and went forward to the galley under pretence of lighting his cigar, but in reality to fall into conversation with any loungee he found there.

'That same evening, in the second dog-watch, it came on to blow a strong breeze right ahead. This was a great mortification to Captain Cochrane, who had made an unusually long passage so far, but was now about a week's fair sail to Kingston. He reefed down and fought awhile, and the schooner, hard pressed, tore through the blackening ridges, whose lightning-like lines of foam seemed to flash like the levin brand itself against the soot of the sky from the horizon to the zenith. But the weight of the black billow knocked her head off. Her ducks and swoops were cataractal. It was more froth than way, and with the thunder of the violent wind in her rigging, and with phantasmal avalanches of white water sheeting across her deck, she was hove-to a little before sunrise next morning. However, all this foul weather blew itself away, and the coming of the sun was another revelation of one of those mornings of tender loveliness at sea that are to be met in the parallels which the *Charmer* had arrived at. All about the sun the sky was filled with feather-tips of clouds, each burning like gold, and they looked like plumes of the wings of heavenly beings. Beneath ran the sea in long lines of glory. It was a calm morning, ladies and gentlemen. I fear that I weary you with my descriptions of the weather; but the breeze and the calm enter as largely into this part of the story of the

Charmer as the coloured man who was her chief mate, as the girl who is my heroine, as the crew who were just then busy in washing down. Nothing in sight to greet Rose's eyes when she stepped on deck, nothing visible but the beauty and the splendour of the morning, and the height of the sky over the swinging trucks, and those shining pavilions and palaces in the east which seemed like the abode of God Himself.

'As the girl stood with her hand upon the companion-hatch gazing round her, do you think she was growing a little bit weary of this voyage and of the *Charmer*? On the contrary, had the schooner been a magnificent sailing-yacht her heart could not have taken more pleasure in the sight of her, as the water flashed like steel from the buckets of the men washing down, as the tiny canvas floated to right and left with the cradling of the swell, as the tar-blackened rigging, taking the radiance of the eastern seaboard, climbed like lines of twisted metal to the mastheads. Then, like the lover she had strangely found, and loved in return to the very divine depths of her maiden spirit, she was never alone when alone in looking at the sea and finding its life and its pictures in its surface. Nassau paced the weather-side of the deck. He had made a profound bow to her when she emerged, yet had not ventured to speak; but his observation of her was ceaseless. The man, in a word, was madly in love, and was rejected with scorn and hatred of his colour in return. This simply should effectually establish the beggar's state of mind; but, unhappily for Julius, Rose loved another. He was in the schooner and was constantly in her company, to her great delight. Though Nassau was coloured, he might freely admit, in the language of Lord Nelson, that he was a man,

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and could not help feeling as a man. Even now, whilst he and she occupied the deck alone, saving of course the presence of the inevitable helmsman, Arthur must needs come on deck. But he did not know that Rose had left her berth. He sprang to her side with love and pleasure, and they would have pressed lips, but the coloured mate stalked to windward. She caressed his hand as it lay upon the bulwark-rail, and kisses could not have made sweeter to his heart the love-lighted eyes she greeted him with, and the sudden smile of delight with which she welcomed him.

“Anything in sight this beautiful morning, Rose?” said he, scanning the horizon, and taking in the whole little ship with the swift, exacting eyes of a sailor.

“Nothing,” she answered, “but a sunrise whose early glory I think we have both lost, though were the heavens ever painted with more beautiful designs? See to the left of the sun. It is a magnificent tapestry. I do not wonder that the Parsee worships the sun,” she continued. “Why not the majestic orb which fills the land with the apple-blossom, and the violet, and the divine variety of the fields, meadows, and gardens, rather than the odd little effigies in wood and wax with which the interiors of some of the most splendid Christian edifices are defaced!”

“It is strange,” said Arthur, “that my father should carry such a poetical eye. There is nothing rarer than a sailor that will give you one dump for all the grandeur he sails through.”

“Sailors do not go to sea to interpret its mysteries,” said Rose, laughing, whilst Nassau across the deck strove in his pendulum turns to overhear even a syllable of what the lovers were saying; but they talked with

subdued voices, and he could hear but a laugh and no more.

“How would that miracle of beauty, the iceberg, when lighted by the sun, affect our friend the Only Mate?” said Arthur. “Once, in the South Pacific, I saw an iceberg capsize. The lights of the rainbow leapt from its blow of the sea. I said to the second mate: ‘What do you think of that for a fine sight?’—‘I wish it was out of sight,’ he answered. He could see no beauty. To him it was the old story of the primrose.”

“I fancy,” said Rose, with a glance that brought Nassau into the corner of her eye, “that the Only Mate must have a vein of sentiment running through him, else why should he dress himself so romantically?”

“D’ye know, Rosé,” said Arthur, “that the acts and appearance of the pirates of old were grossly exaggerated by their chroniclers. They make the villains picturesque, when they were as commonplace as any vulgar seaman out of Wapping. They clothed them in horrible preposterous garments, girded them with belts into which they stuck enough pistols to furnish ornaments for area railings. There was a man named Teach; he plaited his beard and stuck lighted fuses for letting off guns behind his ears. He would cut off the head of a man who contradicted him. At table he would draw forth a brace of pistols, and, holding them low, blaze away at the legs of his companions. Do you believe in all this wild stuff? Would any crew, do you suppose, long endure the atrocities perpetrated by this scoundrel on his own people—his own men? A man named Johnson (the publishers called him Captain) wrote two volumes of the lives of

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the pirates. They are queer reading; he is disgusting in the minuteness of his details, and yet I believe that most of his narratives are founded upon gossip he picked up in the low ale-houses which were frequented by seafaring men in his time. It was in this way that Defoe got his knowledge of 'Pyracies.' Dampier was a noble pirate and a great seaman, and a bold, but unfortunate circumnavigator. Defoe was constantly in his company when he was ashore, and so 'Captain Singleton,' and other piratic yarns, all full of lies, came to be written."

"But you believe, Arthur," said Rose, "that the pirates were a bloodthirsty lot? They enjoyed that tradition at home, and I know it was so in the West Indies."

"I am certain," answered Arthur, "that the pirates did not murder people merely for the sake of shedding human blood. I have met several captains who, in their day, were overhauled and sacked by pirates. As no defence was made, no outrage was committed. The pirates took what they wanted, and with a smile and a bow left the ship they had plundered, all as quietly as a tax-collector leaves your door when he is paid."

"What do you think of Scott's pirate, Cleveland?" asked Rose.

"He is finely imagined," answered Arthur. "But I don't remember that he does anything in the book to justify his title."

"There is a great deal of love-making," said Rose demurely. "How sweet it all is! Cleveland talks a little too sumptuously, I think, as a pirate. Scott was getting on in years when he wrote that book, and the

wonder to me is how old men can make love in imagination."

'This made Arthur laugh, and, unfortunately, in laughing he turned his head and met the full gaze of the coloured mate. With a horrible frown, that crumpled up his face and buried his eyes, Nassau stalked away aft. To his sensitive ear all the laughs that proceeded from the couple opposite were intended for him. The conversation of the lovers was interrupted by the arrival of Captain Cochrane, who, after exchanging a few words with the mate, crossed the deck. He carried a tired manner, as of a man who has not slept. In his gravity lurked the shadow of care. He looked as if he had aged on a sudden, or had passed through some heavy calamity which had bowed down his heart of oak, despite the sterling qualities of his spirit as sailor and man. Arthur and Rose instantly noticed the change that had come over him. He spoke impatiently whilst he looked round.

"Always fine weather and light airs," he said. "Gorgeous studies for the poet and the painter, but the length of this voyage begins to harass me. We are due at Kingston. We ought to be half-way on the road of our departure. It seems to me in these seas that if you get a breeze of wind that blows you onward it falls to a calm, till the same breeze has had time to shift and blow you backwards again."

"We shall arrive at Kingston before the *Eleuthera*, at all events," said Rose.

The skipper looked at her, and said:

"You can be sure of nothing at sea."

"You are a bit down, aren't you, father, this morning?" said Arthur, studying the Captain's face.

'The old fellow glanced from one to the other, then took a view of his little ship, then at the few sailors who were at work upon the deck. He seemed to reflect, and then with a doubtful sort of smile, as though it helped him to confess his mind, though he was sensible of his weakness in doing so, he said:

"I have dreamt a bad dream,"

'Rose seemed a little astonished. She did not know, as the Captain's son knew, that a considerable element of superstition went to the making of Captain Cochrane's mind. Arthur gazed away to sea. He had no idea of asking silly questions about silly things. Rose said:

"What was your dream, Captain Cochrane?"

"I dreamt that I was murdered," he answered, speaking with an eagerness that was almost affecting in a man of his sort and calling and age, to Rose, whose dark, illuminated eyes of the prophetess, whose strange and beautiful gestures, and enchanting suppleness of form, expressed her as the right sort of person to whom to talk of dreams. Arthur leaned with his back against the bulwarks, watching his sweetheart.

"Do you believe in dreams, Captain?" said the girl.

"I believe in dreams that come true," he answered with a smile which the expression of his eyes deprived of all mirth. "I was once mate of a barque, and dreamt that a man was alive, and naked and long-haired, like Peter Serrano, upon a rock some four leagues to the southward of our course. I was so impressed by the weirdness of this dream that I resolved to urge the captain, who was a humane, simple sort of sailor, to put the ship's head off, so that

we might sight the rock, anyhow. This was done, and the rock was duly hove into view. We saw smoke, and I took the jolly-boat and two men, went ashore, and found standing waiting for us upon the beach the same wild, hairy, shipwrecked, naked seaman I had seen in my dream."

"How did he make smoke?" inquired Arthur.

"By a burning glass out of a telescope which had been washed ashore."

"It was a wonderful dream," said Rose. "But what is not a dream? My rescue was a dream. We see with dreaming eyes, and the world is full of visions, which we hug only to be mocked."

'She looked at Arthur.

"There are some visions which are rather dangerous to be hugged," said he. "They don't mock you, either. Be hugged by a bear; be hugged by Nassau yonder."

"I should not allow my mind to be depressed," said Rose, with a smile at the Captain, "by dreaming an ugly dream."

"It was too minute," he answered gloomily. "By God, Arthur! I felt the plunge of the knife in my heart, and with my dying eyes I saw the face of the murderer."

"Who was it?" said Arthur, faintly impressed by his father's emphatic manner.

"It was the devil, I think," said Captain Cochrane; and he turned and looked hard in the direction of Julius Nassau. "Come," said he, "let us change the subject. This is a fine morning, and we will make a good breakfast."

'And as he spoke, Wilkinson passed on his way to the companion-hatch with a tray-load that made the air savoury—coffee and ham, and a dish or two

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of canned meats, hot and good as cabin fare then went. But, though he suggested that the subject should be changed, he recurred to it promptly at table as something that fascinated him and would not leave him. Ladies and gentlemen, this Captain belonged to an old race of seamen. They are fast dying out; they are being beaten under water by the thrash of the propeller. The foreigner is called in to do their work, and the romance of the sea lies buried with other romantic conditions of human life—such as those, for instance, which Cervantes tilted against, that the Trouvères and Troubadours sang about. It is, to my mind, the least wonderful thing in the world that sailors should be superstitious, considering the tomes of legend and superstition which have descended to them. It is not easy to shake clear of the faith of your grandsires. We have done so, and may we be thanked! It had not been done when Cochrane was at sea. Sailors then believed in Russian Finns who sold them knots for winds, and were so masterful in the art of sorcery that, when on board ship, they have been known to cause a head-wind to blow for fifteen days, and they have been seen to sit and talk to a rum-bottle as if it was a man, which rum-bottle, though they took copious draughts from it, they always continued to keep half filled. Hark back again to the superstitions of the seaman as told in full in old Hakluyt and Purchas. A sailor in those days would come across a strange fish—a manatee, a seal—and on his return home he would swear on the crucifix that he had beheld a beautiful female half in and half out of the water; and he had also seen another person looking like an old man, slightly intoxicated, in the act of slipping off a thin beach of ice. The ancient mariner had

plenty of time to think over these fish. Men took their leisure at sea in those times, and, like the wind which urged them, blew along much as they listed. The ancient mariner would think of the manatee, and relish it and garnish it as a wonderful discovery, and long before he arrived at Wapping his nimble superstitious imagination had crowned the fish with a head of golden hair; he gave her two speaking eyes of liquid blue; her wistful little mouth pouted for kisses; her arms were of snowy brilliancy, and in one hand she grasped a kind of harp. In vain the ancient mariner had sought for legs; finding none, he gave her a long and beautiful tail, armoured in rich scales which shone like gold. Of course, his story was credited. The poets are never far off; they seized upon this old seaman's narrative, and imported all the machinery with which we associate the legendary mermaid. They explained that she played upon the harp merely as an invitation to ancient mariners to jump overboard, and dwell with her in coral palaces lighted by lamps of the sea-glow, green and wonderful in long beds of waving plume-like marine vegetation. So of the rainbow, so of the waterspout, to be exorcised by nothing but the swords of the seamen held aloft cross-wise. Out of imaginations of this sort sprang the Flying Dutchman. Ladies and gentlemen,' said Captain Tomson Foster, 'I am fond of this subject, and could cheerfully pursue it; but you are weary, and you want me to resume my story. Let this digression, however, be accepted as an apology for Cochrane.'

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CHAPTER XII.

A MISSIVE FROM THE SKY.

'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,' continued the commander of the Australian liner *Suez*, after watching the men trimming sail to a breeze that was steadily drawing ahead, 'it is fortunate for the generations already born, and those awaiting the Divine call to come, that the paddle-wheel and the screw should have been invented. I wonder what, in the olden days, the hoary, hook-nosed, glittering-eyed seaman would have thought of the man who told him that a day of splendour was beaming below the horizon that girds the centuries, in which the sailor would not give a snap of his two tarry fingers how the wind blew, so far as concerned his getting under way, and stemming with ceaseless thrust the troubled ocean ?

'During three days after they had spoken the *Eleuthera*, the Captain of the pretty little *Charmer* was cat's-pawed here and there until he thought he was bewitched. The comparative adjacency of the coast of Jamaica rendered these flaws and mocking, ruffling draughts as irritating as a scab in the eye. Nothing in these days hove into view save one strange object, which grew amain when first seen at the flying jibboom-end,

and passed slowly, within easy reach of the naked eye, aslant the mast-heads of the *Charmer*. It was a balloon; it was a sign of cities and human interest at no great distance, and it was looked up at with wonder and pleasure. It was a large balloon, but the telescope levelled at the car did not reveal more than two persons. Ballooning was much in its infancy in those days, and the souls of heroes must have animated the two men who formed the crew of that balloon to take mid-air so coolly leagues away from land, making for the ocean, which was limitless to a balloon if it was to depend upon the wind—and what else had it to depend on?

“Two philosophic numskulls, no doubt,” said old Cochrane, looking straight up. “They don’t give us particular heed, because at their altitude they compass a field of brine which probably yields several ships to their sight. What’s their hope and their idea? The balloon will fall into the sea, and the men be drowned.”

“They are plucky fellows, no matter the theory that sends them up to heaven,” said Arthur, viewing the balloon with unaffected admiration.

“When I was in England,” said Rose, “I knew a young man who could talk of nothing but balloons. He bought or made one, and got into the car, and went up in full view of about six hundred villagers. He disappeared in a cloud, and was never again heard of. The villagers,” she added, smiling, “thought he had become an angel.”

Rose was prettily dressed this day. The outfit she had brought from the *Eleuthera* was a good one. It contained some truly choice articles in the way of dress. She was also the owner of some sparkling jewellery,

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which she showed Arthur, and wished him to choose one of two or three diamond rings. He had laughed and said no, the boot was on the other leg; they would be finding out by-and-by who was to choose the ring. When she had put on a fresh dress and a fresh hat, the frock fitting her as a sail fits its yards, Julius, who stood near the companion when she stepped forth, stared with his little wild eyes of reddish gleam in secret adoration of the figure she made. Heretofore she had gone clothed in the dress in which she had floated to the side of the *Charmer*. Now she showed as a beautiful young woman attired in some light silky substance or material. She wore a large hat, which took all imaginable grace from the face beneath it. How purely splendid were her eyes under the shadow of that hat! how delicate was the tinge of her cheeks in the soft protective shade! Julius could have tumbled down upon his knees and grovelled and adored her. She made her way to the side of Captain Cochrane; but all the while that she remained on deck Julius feasted his eyes. She was prettily dressed now as she stood by Arthur's side looking up at the balloon:

““ They are an exploring party,” she said, “ Americans in search of a new continent, their own not being quite big enough.”

““ They are evidently from some near island,” said Cochrane, “ and why the deuce are they sailing north when they must know that every rock high and dry enough to receive a little colony of mussels and winkles is known to the hydrographer? I grant you there are lands which never have been seen save by the people who reported them. I once kept a bright look-out for an island said to be a trifle to the south

of St. Paul in the Atlantic, and I certainly fell in with something that would have convinced a captain who took no trouble to draw close, or was too drunk to see the truth, that the thing was an island. Instead of which the object consisted of hundreds of trees which appeared to have been blown off an island by a hurricane, and interlacing their boughs had started away on a northern jaunt."

'The balloon dwindled into a speck in a straight line, which proved the existence of at least two currents of air, one not, perhaps, much deeper than the middle space betwixt the balloon and the schooner. This diversity of air-tides galled Captain Cochrane to the quick. He likened himself to Vanderdecken, and said after this he should believe in the Phantom Ship. Rose asked who Vanderdecken was, and Cochrane answered that he originally hailed from Amsterdam. In 1662 he set sail for Batavia. He was a strange-looking man, with a tall narrow forehead, down which his white hair fell like straw from a thatched cottage. His eyes were deep-set, of piercing light and spirit, and as he was generally admitted to be somewhat mad at root, he was regarded as a genius by his friends. On his voyage home, when nearing the Cape, he met with head-winds and gales, and these he submitted to; but at last an agony of impatience was wrought in his spirit. He would march to and fro his little poop, shaking his fist at the viewless thundering enemy that with mocking howls and sweeps of shrieking passion was heading him off now to port, now to starboard. One day, heedless of the wrath of the Father of Compassion, and rendered ferocious by raging days of headlong and useless endeavour, he fell upon his knees, and lifted up his hands

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and swore in effect that, let the wind continue to head him as it chose, he would weather the Cape yet, and he defied God to stop him.

“How dreadful!” said Rose.

“Scarcely had he spoken the words,” continued Captain Cochrane, looking earnestly at the girl, whose interest was unaffected, “than a stroke of lightning illuminated the whole of the dark mid-day sea as though the sun’s glory had beat through a rift in the clouds. A roll of thunder followed. It was a succession of heart-shaking detonations rushing across the path of Vanderdecken from about north to almost south, and it seemed to all hands as though it were a barrier of the sound or voice of Heaven in rage past which Vanderdecken never was to get.”

“I hope it won’t come to such things with us,” said Rose, smiling. “It is a wonderful legend. Who invented it, I wonder? Not the Dutch. They can invent nice little clocks and cheeses which, when good, are very good indeed. But to think of a Dutchman as a *dreamer*!”

“They tried to improve upon the Death Ship,” said Arthur. “They invented a ship that was so immense she could not be turned in the English Channel. A young man who went aloft to furl a sail was found on his descent to be bald or gray, so long a time did it occupy to climb those masts. How clumsy is all this compared to Vanderdecken!”

“I never met with light airs so continuous and accursed,” said Captain Cochrane, “as they blow about here. Blow, did I say? Why, the shutting of a door in a room will give you a breeze compared to what we have been having.”

“You may get wind, and plenty, soon enough, father,” said Arthur, looking with concern at Captain Cochrane; for there was nothing in his words, which were idle enough: ’twas the skipper’s whole manner that made the son attentive to his speech.

“I hope there is no curse upon this little vessel,” continued Captain Cochrane. “I am not a superstitious man, but I do not understand this infernally long spell of variable winds, as they’re called.”

“There is nothing of Vanderdecken in you, Captain,” said Rose, laughing. “You’re a pious man. Besides, you’re not likely to tempt Providence by such an inglorious piece of profanity as keeps the Phantom Ship to leeward of the Cape.”

‘He looked at her for a little fixedly, and there was assuredly some trouble of the spirit in him. He then went to the rail, and thoroughly searched the heavens for any signs of weather that should be useful to the *Charmer*. No; the ripple ran athwart, and carried the steadfastness of a painted thing. The swell was in the south-west, and each lift bore a burnished brow. It went with the ripple, and the skipper could behold no change in it. On high, on the margin of the light-blue ether sloping north-west, was a scattering of white clouds, and here and there upon the face of the heavens a cloud looked down like an eye upon the deep, and now and then it would pause over a swathe as though in love with the reflection it found in that ice-like break of pale-blue brine. Then, removing his hand from the rail, which was nearly as hot as a kettle on the fire, Captain Cochrane sent a forlorn look up at the canvas, and another look in the direction in which the balloon had vanished, then walked aft, where he stood with

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Mr. Nassau in conversation. Their talk evidently concerned the balloon, the ghastly mockery of the light airs of these parallels, and other matters connected with the slow progress of the schooner. They fell into an argument, and Nassau raised his voice, and Arthur and Rose, who were on the other side of the deck a little way forward, heard him say :

“ You shall steer it straight as the arrow flies, sir, and I give you my word of honour,” and here he clapped his thigh, clothed in the inevitable white trousers—rather dingy, by the way, pretty often, “ that in twenty-four hours a ship shall find her westing ten leagues in excess of her reckoning. You have no soundings here. You could not blame the officer of the watch for not heaving to and trying the vessel’s drift by dropping the deep-sea lead over the side.”

“ No currents are indicated in the chart,” Captain Cochrane answered.

“ How should the men who draw up the charts know?” exclaimed Nassau. “ You do not see the current you drive with. Your chart-makers sound in waters with a bottom to feel with their lead, and even then you can’t trust them.”

‘ He spoke with a certain dictatorialness. To Arthur’s ears nothing could be more offensive. Rose, looking at the dusky monkey-face of the man, whispered some comment of disgust. In fact, had you not known, you’d have reckoned Julius Nassau the captain of the schooner, and Captain Cochrane his mate. The skipper went below. “ Nothing but the strange mood that is upon him,” said Arthur to Rose, “ would have permitted him to allow the tone of the fellow’s speech to pass. But he knows that I heard him, and I’ll make his

mouth wider yet if he does not use it with more civility."

"To me, somehow, it seems," said Rose, "that this fellow exercises a sort of malignant influence over your father."

"I don't know about that," answered Arthur, who was not very well pleased by the suggestion, "but I think that the dear old man has made voyages enough, and that it is about time for him to say in earnest the words which he has often sung, 'Then fare you well, my pretty young gell.'"

Rose gazed at her sweetheart attentively. There was musing and speculation in her fine eyes. Her face was full of beauty, and he gazed at her in return as though her look meant merely a caress.

"Arthur," she said softly, "but I must tell you—it is strange—you will wonder when I say that I, too, dreamt that your father was murdered."

She laid her hand upon his arm in her girlish way, thinking he would be startled. A shade of surprise crossed his face, but he merely said :

"It is a coincidence. Such things sometimes occur. I remember telling a dream to a man who told me that he had dreamt the same dream. It was about nothing worth an instant's curiosity. You remember the dreams that are verified, but never the dreams that are false. There is nothing in your dream, Rose."

"Of course not, Arthur."

"How ran your tragedy in your vision of the night?" he asked with a smile at his own big words.

"Your father was stabbed by some shadow whose face was a shadow," answered the girl, speaking as though she subdued an emotion of awe.

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“Did the shadow bear any resemblance to yonder brute, whose face is a shadow?” asked Arthur, and they both looked at Nassau, who, standing close beside the helmsman, received their gaze with a steady frown.

“Don’t let us talk of him,” answered Rose, and she then turned the conversation, making much of the balloon and its object, and walking to and fro, side by side with her sweetheart, in the shadow of the awning that stretched from the mainmast to within a few feet of the wheel. On the other hand, Nassau patrolled the weather deck, and as often as was practicable he looked at the charming young girl to leeward, pausing often to admire her when she passed him, and even Overalls at the wheel could see that the unhappy wretch loved her madly. All that day the Captain preserved his gloomy manner. His son stepped into his father’s berth to reason with him.

“You are allowing a dream to depress you, father. Is it worth it?”

“It is no dream that depresses me, Arthur,” he replied. “I am perhaps out of health. Even sailors are permitted to fall ill occasionally. I grow weary of this life of the ocean. The eternal monotony of it, that endless girdle that they call the horizon, binds a man round and round, as a fly is bound by a spider. The bound man is a sailor, and drink and determined poverty devour his soul, as ulcers consume the eyes. It binds him round and round, and the spider-like sucker, the owner, drinks his full of his blood, and the maimed, travel-burnt husk is flung overboard to the fishes, who fly the horror.”

Arthur listened with a growing face of concern. He had never heard him talk in this strain. Was it possible

he was growing a little mad? He continued to reason with his father, and to explain things from a sane point of view, but when he quitted the berth he was pretty nearly as dejected as his father. The calm day of glassy tracts of water, of sweet, faint gushings of delicately ruffling air, of a sky that was noble all south-west with the gradual rise of linked vapour, so gloriously interwoven that it looked like a coat of mail, resplendent with the colours of the sun, shot with gold and purple, with violet and faint blue, whilst all its central heart was stately whiteness; this day passed, and it grew to eight bells, four o'clock, the first hour of the first dog-watch. Whilst Wilkinson was striking the bell, with his eyes fixed on the sky over against the star-board yard-arm of the schooner, he suddenly shouted: "Sail ho! from the skies! Another balloon, mates. See how she hangs!" and having finished striking he rushed to the side and pointed high into the air over the sea.

'A cry at sea always carries importance; an order from the poop will make men jump and run; a cry from aloft instantly calls the attention of the men from below, and the necessary rejoinder is yelled. And now a balloon was in sight. Wilkinson had said so, and was pointing.

"Well, I'm damned!" said Old Stormy, after surveying the object under the sharp of his hand, pressed against his brow, "is this here sky a randy-voo for balloons?"

"Ain't it the same balloon agoing home?" asked a man.

"They can't steer balloons. They never will," said Wilkinson. "It's just like your cap when it's blowed

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off: it goes where the wind do. They'll never get a balloon to steer, and old Johnson's with me, for don't he somewhere represent a man constructing of a pair of wings for near half his life, then getting on top of a cliff overlooking a lake, and jumping and falling into the water, and being hooked out half drowned?"

"What do I know what that there blooming old Johnson says!" exclaimed Ben Black. "There comes a balloon, and I allows it's the same as this morning's, and maybe as it's travellin' this way it's going to bring a fair wind with it."

'By this time the news had spread fore and aft, and the Captain had come again out of his cabin, and with his spy-glass had easily determined that it was the balloon they had before seen, now harking back on some current of wind which was evidently a deeper stratum of air than the occupants of the balloon cared to sound with their machine. As it was, the thing was floating much lower than when first beheld in the earlier part of the day, proving that they had exhausted as much gas as they chose to part with, and through the glasses she was clearly made out, a huge bronze-coloured shape, fretted with holding cords at the extremity of which hung a small car, and after she had been floating in the direction of the schooner for some twenty minutes or so, the men in her (two) were to be distinguished by the help of the glass. The balloon was certainly bringing a fair draft of wind along with her, for when she was off the starboard bow about a quarter of a mile, plumb with the zenith, but how high in the air I could not tell you, the sea, that had been sparkling and glancing, and trembling, and streaming for a little in some mocking trouble of a catspaw, composed its face into a steady

violet line that gradually came creeping down along the waters, which had the variety of the hues of the flower-garden in blues, and whites, and yellows, and pinks, and the Captain exclaimed to Mr. Nassau, in about the cheerfullest note he had delivered that day:

“Here comes a breeze at last, and I hope it's going to last.”

As he pronounced these words someone uttered a cry forward, and all hands, looking aloft at the balloon, saw that it had burst and collapsed, and was descending. It lolled over all agape, and as attenuated as a cashmere shawl which you may draw through a ring, whilst the car, after a wild swing, like a thing of life vibrating ere it plunges, turned completely over, and the spectators of the schooner easily saw the two men drop out of it, one man coming headlong, the other revolving like a wheel; other things were to be seen falling out of the car, but they could not be distinguished.

A general groan of horror broke from the schooner's decks. The wildness and the awfulness of it lay in the suddenness. One minute a lofty commanding balloon was sailing in safety through the beautiful weather over the sea, the next, it was rent and ragged, fluttering like a torn flag, sinking in pursuit of its car.

“My God!” shouted Captain Cochrane. “What a dreadful thing to happen! Must a man come to sea to witness such horrors? Arthur, take a boat and row as hard as you can towards that car. The men may be floating, but I see no signs of them.”

A boat was lowered, but not with expedition. Merchant seamen are little used to handling boats, and when they are called upon in a hurry they usually make

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slow and clumsy jobs of a manœuvre that ought to be as easy as flinging a life-buoy. A boat was at last lowered. Rose overhung the rail in agony at the departure of her sweetheart. The three men gave way with a will, and Arthur stood up in the stern-sheets, and searched the sea where the balloon had fallen. The spot was within half a mile; swollen bodies of silk were slowly settling. The car had disappeared; there was nothing visible on the face of the deep that way in the shape of struggling men. Close to a floating chair, which was the only visible piece of equipment of the car, was a large dead bird, as big as that bird which is called by sailors the booby, but it was not the same species. They are to be found in great flocks on some of the deserted cays of the West Indies, and they are often taken at sea, though chiefly for wanton purposes, as they are not good to eat. The oil they spill is a worthless fluid, and they seem but an idle noisy creation of the air. About twenty fathoms from this bird was another of the same species. It had life, but it was fast ebbing; it lay a little on one side, and feebly used the scarlet leg that was half out of the water. Both gulls' wings had been cut. The helpless fall from the immense height had killed outright one of these wretched sea-fowl, and perhaps had killed the other out of hand, had its wings been less closely cropped than its fellow's. Arthur caught hold of the dead bird, and lifted it into the stern-sheets. Around its neck was a piece of strong white tape, which was secured backwards by a knot under one wing, so that the tape could not slip off the bird. To it, at the breast of the dead fowl, was attached a small bottle, which looked as if it had contained medicine. It was tightly and most

securely corked, and inside of it was a scroll of paper. The other bird was then approached and easily handled, being nearly dead. It bore no missive of any sort, though its plumage and wings were narrowly searched for any sort of message. The bird was left to die upon the sea—a funeral couch it would doubtless have chosen in preference to the bottom of the boat—and Arthur returned to the schooner.

‘Again, ladies and gentlemen, I am obliged to own that there was very little discipline maintained aboard the schooner *Charmer*. When, therefore, the bird was brought aboard, all hands came about it, and a stranger would not have known Wilkinson from the skipper. Cochrane pulled out his knife, severed the ligature, gave the bird to a sailor to hold, and with some trouble pulled out the cork from the bottle. He then extracted the piece of paper which was rolled up like such a piece as you would light your pipe with. He was safe in handling it; barring Nassau, Arthur, and Dr. Johnson’s admirer, there was probably no man in the ship who could read. The writing was in Spanish, and in very black lead pencil. It was dated noon that day, and, after scanning it, the Captain gave it to Nassau to interpret to the men; the coloured mate grinned as he read in silence, and then interpreted aloud :

“A large sailing ship is being plundered by a pirate. I cannot tell how they bear. They are probably sixty miles distant, at this time of writing, north-west.”

‘No signature was attached to this.

“And scarcely had this been written when the balloon burst and the poor fellows lost their lives!” said the Captain, bending a melancholy pair of eyes on the spot where the balloon had sunk.

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““They cut off the wings,” said Nassau, looking at the bird in the sailor’s hands, “that it might not fly away with its message. Why did they drop it at us?”

““Why,” said Old Stormy, “’cos they reckoned we was more likely than them to fall in with a man-o’-war.”

““Never heard of a message falling plump out of the sky like that,” said Ben Black.

““What were those wretched men doing up there?” exclaimed Rose, who had been stroking the dead bird, now casting her eyes aloft.

““Why didn’t they relate their story?” said Arthur. “There was another booby already unthatched for the heave.”

““They were probably philosophers making experiments,” said the Captain, “and were no doubt satisfied to find themselves returning home on the wings of a pleasant wind.”

As he spoke the wind that had come along in a field of sparkling green from one quarter of the horizon to another, was all about them, gushing like a song of summer insects in the rigging, swinging each space of canvas till the full bosom of it looked like the human breast deeply breathing with rejoicing. Sail was to be trimmed for the fair course to Kingston. The boat was hoisted to the davits; the skipper, the mate, and Arthur stood in conversation on the quarterdeck, and Rose at the bulwarks watched the dead bird at a distance floating slowly astern. The talk, needless to say, concerned the balloon and the ship in the clutches of the pirate.

““Seeing us,” said Nassau, “I guess those men, suddenly finding themselves bound over our mastheads,

and nothing else in sight, determined to make the condition of the ship known, little guessing," added he with a wild grin, "what was to be their own condition shortly after. So they made out that writing, which ain't sufficient, for it don't tell the name of the people, or tell where the balloon's owned, and they cut short the feathers of the birds, and dropped one of 'em."

"But why unwing both birds?" exclaimed Captain Cochrane.

"Because they meant, I calculate," answered Julius, "if the first bird wasn't picked up by us, they'd reserve the other for the next sailing ship they sailed over."

"Which is the ship those cursed pirates have got hold of?" exclaimed Arthur.

'Nassau's deepset eyes burned redly with true dramatic effect as he replied, looking with hate at Arthur in every pucker of his baboon face:

"You'll find she's the ship Miss Rose Island came aboard of us from."

'In the brief silence that followed, Rose drew from the side and joined the party.

"You mean," said the skipper, "that the *Eleuthera* has been captured?"

"The *Eleuthera*!" cried Rose. "Who knows this for certain?" and she shuddered and looked with a light of eyes that was not wanting in fierceness at Mr. Julius Nassau.

"Well, as for certain," answered Nassau, making the girl a low bow, and smiling and ogling her, "nothing is certain in this world, Miss Island; no, not even marriage, which it is true the law can't make certain," here he sent his little devil eyes at Arthur. "But what ship is she, if she ain't the *Eleuthera*? That

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vessel can't be far astern of us, and it is not long since that the beautiful schooner, which most of us admired against the bank of mist, passed on her way to the capture of the doomed craft."

" "I have no doubt it is the *Eleuthera*," said the skipper, looking at the piece of paper he held, and speaking in a voice that was little removed from a groan.

" "If I am right, Miss Rose," continued Nassau, who seemed to delight in an excuse to address her, "you have been rescued from a greater danger than the danger you escaped when you fell out of the port-hole of the ship. I believe I know the schooner who has captured her, and, if she is the same ship, she is commanded by a man whose acquaintance I made at Kingston when I was last there. I know her captain, and can tell you that you've escaped the most dangerous and brutal animal, soft as silk and as fair as a woman, that flies the black flag in this part of the world."

' He folded his arms and stalked off, and at a little distance leaned against the bulwark. Captain Cochrane, after much further talk of the missive from the sky with his son and Rose, went below. But the other two kept the deck, for the sweetness of the air that was now gushing gaily over the breast of the waters; and the schooner was striking white feathers off either bow, and leaning to it, which is a pleasant part of a fair wind.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEATH OF THE SKIPPER.

'It was the morning of the day following that of the explosion of the balloon, and its headlong dismissal of two men, one as the stick of a rocket, the other as a wheel, to eternity. It was four o'clock in the morning, and the morning watch, as it is termed at sea, was beginning with the music of the sailor, as eight bells were rung in silver notes on the forecastle head of the *Charmer*. It was still dark, but the brilliants of the night hovered with something of faintness in the wide field they tipped with silver points, as though the morning were not far distant, and the pallor of its face, fresh from the embrace of the hag Darkness, was rising upon the ocean line. It still blew the gentle wind of yesterday, and the schooner with all wings abroad, dropping fire into her wake, and trimming her sides with fire, whereof played a fountain at the cutwater, stole across the sea and through the beautiful later night, and all seemed well with her.

'It was Captain Cochrane's place at four o'clock to relieve the deck, whereon stumped the infernal figure and dark face of Nassau, like to that veiled prophet whose disclosure of countenance smote the sweet girl

to whom he showed himself into a fit at his feet. At midnight, however, after a long talk about the exploded balloon, its object, the manifest intention of the men to label the second bird with a report ready for a man-of-war, and also after much discussion about the plunder of their unfortunate temporary consort, the fine West Indiaman, the skipper had asked his son to stand his watch from four till eight, as he felt exceedingly weary and very sad of heart, he knew not why. He believed slumber, which he now admitted had been denied him some time, would refresh him, and he hoped to be able to get some sleep from the present hour until it was time to turn out again.

“Captain,” said Nassau, who had stood by and overheard much of the conversation betwixt father and son, “I will stand your watch with pleasure, that you may be sure of rest, so that Mr. Arthur here may go on enjoying his privileges as a passenger.”

Arthur thanked him bluntly, and said he would relieve his father at four. A little while before the hour of four Nassau stepped down the companion-ladder, and walking to the berth or hole which Arthur Cochrane had occupied since Rose had been fished up over the side, entered and stood a moment before putting his hand upon the sleeping man. The cabin-lamp was usually kept alight all night, the wick being turned low. The lustre diffused penetrated the berths all round when the doors were open, and the shape of the sleeper was easily visible to the coloured mate. Seldom would the interior of a wooden ship be so quiet, even on such a night as this, as was the *Charmer*; only now and again a sound was made by some slightly-strained timber, a strong fastening creaked, and you would hear, dim

in the hold, the squeak of that universal mariner, the rat.

“What do you want, Mr. Nassau?” exclaimed Arthur.

‘Nassau started and said:

“I was about to awaken you. It is eight bells, and your watch has come round.”

“Thanks,” said Arthur, and the mate withdrew, a little disturbed by having discovered that Arthur, apparently asleep, had been watching him in that pause and stare.

‘In a minute Arthur was dressed and on his way to relieve the deck. It was hot to suffocation in the cabin, though the skylights were open, and he stopped at the table to get a drink of fresh water before mounting. He then thought he would like to peep in on his father and discover if he was, or had been, getting the rest he needed. Undoubtedly it would be a bad symptom for old Cochrane to suffer from sleeplessness. Of old, Arthur had dimly heard through his mother that his father had once upon a time shown himself as distinctly off colour: in other words, something more than erratic. They talked of it as due to an illness, but Arthur afterwards heard that this disturbance of mental functions in the bright, brisk, gallant sea-captain was, in reality, a family misfortune, and the only bequest, saving a family Bible and an old parrot, which had reached his hands. He stepped to his father’s door and listened, thinking he might hear the skipper moving. All being silent within, he lightly turned the handle and advanced his head and shoulders, so that the full light in the cabin should not pass into the berths. Now, ladies and gentlemen, it was the custom of Captain Cochrane to

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keep a light in his berth burning all night. This he made a rule of, without regard to the lights outside. The interior was dusky, for the lamp burnt low, but all points of equipment were to be readily distinguished after the pause of the eye for a few moments. Arthur's sight went at once to the open bunk, or bedstead, in which his father lay. There was scarcely more than that and its sleeping inmate in the little room: a couple of chairs, a little table, a washstand screwed to the bulkhead, and so you have it.

'The outline of old Cochrane, as he rested, clothed in white drill-trousers and white shirt, was easily made out, and so, too, was his posture, which caused Arthur to reach his father's side in a swift stride of alarm and horror; for, by the faint light that was burning, he saw in his father's face, in the uplifted eye, in the fallen jaw, that the old man was dead, and he also saw the cause of his death in the handle of a common carving-knife used at their meals, the blade of which was sunk in the dead man's breast. Owing to the cleanness of the drive-home of the steel, but little blood was to be seen upon the shirt round about the knife; the right arm lay across the breast, and two of its fingers touched the blade of the knife. It might be that the man had let go the haft in the agony of the death-wound, or it might be that the arm had been placed by his murderer in that position after the man had been killed. Arthur stood motionless. The surprise was so violently sudden, so tragic, in his conception beyond all degrees of possibility, that he could not realize the reality of the hideous and tremendous spectacle he contemplated. He bent his ear to the dead mouth. He stood erect, with his arms uplifted in a posture of wailing; for, indeed, he

had loved the old man; he was his only son, and all through his life he had known him as a good, generous, loving father. Who could feel hate towards such a man, to outstep the limits of natural passion by the most cruel and wicked of human deeds? Arthur knew, indeed, that a strong spirit of insubordination worked in the crew, whose criminal attitude in this matter had been heightened not a little by the familiar conversation and intercourse of Mr. Julius Nassau. But could he have dreamt that, there being no mutiny in evidence, murder would stalk forth on a sudden, and in that little ocean sleeping-room make a floating hell of the schooner lifting on the light swell slowly forward in the dusk of the morning?

'By the faint light the poor young fellow stood looking. Then a passion of rage and terror fired him; he rushed through the cabin-door, leapt up the companion-steps, shouting "Murder! murder!" till the word of frightful import was echoed again and again along the vessel's decks and up in the hollow canvas. Nassau stood close to the companion, apparently awaiting the arrival of Arthur, who, after yelling the word, turned in furious wrath upon the coloured mate, and shouted, "My father has been stabbed to death!" And he shouted again to the man at the wheel, whose face was indistinguishable, "My father has been basely murdered by someone who has stabbed him through the heart in his sleep!" And then, rushing forward until he came near the caboose, he stopped, and, at the height of his voice, raved, "Murder! murder! My father lies murdered in his cabin!"

'At any time the murder of a captain at sea rises to a height that is above the moral enormity of the deed.

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It is thus felt by sailors. Let him be what he will, the commander of a ship is a power; he walks the weather-side of the quarter-deck, controls the navigation of the ship, is responsible for her, and is a god-almighty in his way. It was not necessary, therefore, for Arthur to shout long and lustily. Before he had gained the companion-hatch, the crew, leaping out of the fore-castle, were at his heels, and, with the exception of the man at the wheel, down they fell pell-mell into the cabin, and in a trice the poor skipper's berth was filled. At the foot of the table stood Rose, whilst she waited for the men to rush by. She had swiftly shrieked a question to Arthur; but he had hastened to his father's berth with an imploring gesture, and she remained at the table, white in the cheek, with eyes which burnt like the lamp that lighted them, but in an attitude of expectation and preparedness. No man glancing at her as he ran past, but must have witnessed the heroine latent in that lonely, beautiful, erect figure. Not a sound was to be heard save the muffled sob of the rudder, and the cold and cheerless creak of its gear, whilst the men gazed at the dead figure. Then Arthur, rounding suddenly upon Nassau, who stood close by, cried out, in a wild and broken voice:

“Who has done this?”

“Why do you ask *me* of all the others?” inquired the mate, whose red eyes showed, and whose white teeth gleamed in the dusk of his face against the imperfect light.

“Who has done this?” shouted Arthur again, in a sudden frenzy of rage, and sense of deep and utter loss.

“It was his father,” said a voice.

“I know nothing about it,” said Nassau, bending

over to catch a view of the dead man's face. "But who should know anything about it? Why, he murdered himself! That's the handle of a carving-knife. His hand is close against it. By the heart of my dead mother, it *touches* it, men! See them two fore-fingers? This is no murder."

'He shot erect, and, seeing Rose in the doorway, bowed and smiled, and said:

"It is no murder, Miss Rose; it is suicide. He went to bed depressed. I overheard some of his talk with his son. He has been dejected for some days. It is not murder; it is suicide."

'He shrugged his shoulders, and crossed his arms upon his breast in an attitude of defiance and conviction. Arthur stood dumbly looking at his father. He continued dumb, whilst the men, talking gruffly, drew close to the bunk, the better to judge of the accuracy of Nassau's conjecture. After plenty of peering and muttering, one said:

"Why, of course it's soo'cide. Tell ye what though: no man who kills hisself stabs hisself; they all cuts their throats."

"Wouldn't 'e 'av' kept a hold of the knife had he done it?" said the sailor Black.

"Just what he wouldn't do," said Old Stormy. "Fingers was bound to come away." And then, steadying his voice into the tone of a man who accepts the gravity and responsibility of an important statement, he added: "That genelman lyin' there died by his own hand. There's no good in walking round the notion, and making of it out to be something else. By his killing himself he proves all us men innocent of the crime. I'll put my mark to any document that's drawed

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up describing the body, and the 'and, and the 'andle of the knife, in proof that this is as clear a case of soo'cide as if the crew had seen 'im jump overboard."

'Arthur, with his eyes fastened upon the corpse, listened in silence, and Nassau, after taking another view of the body, said to young Cochrane:

"I am very sorry, and sorrier that so good a man and so fine a sailor should have found life too heavy a load. I'll keep your watch, sir;" and he went out, Rose shrinking to let him pass, and disappeared on deck.

'Arthur joined the girl without making any reply to Mr. Nassau's civil speech; and, after hanging about the body for some time, whilst they all proved conclusively one to another that old Cochrane had killed himself, that nothing could come of any other man killing him, that they had "drawed too close to their port to make such a job as this likely as a calculated murder," the crew went on deck.

"Has he killed himself, Arthur?" said Rose.

"No," answered Arthur, whose voice shook with the grief of his heart; "he has been murdered, and the arm placed so as to suggest suicide."

"Who did it?"

"Nassau," he said.

'After a pause, she exclaimed:

"If there is a man in the crew capable of such a crime, it is Nassau. What would be his object?"

"I must think," answered Arthur, wiping his brow with his hand.

"Horrible it is in either case, Arthur," she exclaimed. "But, oh, to think of him as having been coolly murdered by one of his men! It cannot be," she

continued, softening her voice till her syllables hissed between her teeth. "Nassau and your father were on good terms. I cannot imagine any man amongst the crew whose hate reached to the height of deliberate murder. His talk, his moods, point to the truth. It is shocking; but, oh, Arthur, it is best so!"

"They placed his arm," said Arthur, "but they could not make the dead fingers grip the haft."

"It is impossible to be sure, Arthur."

"Go back to bed, Rose. I will cover my father's body, and go to take the watch he asked me to keep."

He sobbed dryly, and Rose went into her berth. He stepped into his father's berth, and, with resolution born of the desire of vengeance, he drew the knife out of old Cochrane's heart, and, rolling it up in a piece of canvas, placed it in a locker. He then covered the body with a rough sheet, pausing a moment to muse, all his thoughts running in a manner as though he were still thunderstruck. "Who has killed him?" he thought, "and why?" And, thus thinking, he went on deck to keep the watch that his father should have kept. Dawn had broken. It was as faint as illuminated slate along the seaboard; the ocean ran black against it, but the light paled as it circled to the west, over which the stars of the night were still trembling. The schooner, with masts of ebony and sails like the raiment of ghosts, leaning slightly and heaving slightly, moved in a path of faint light which the eastern gleam had not yet power to extinguish. Nassau was talking to the man at the wheel. The helmsman was Wilkinson, and the tone of the nigger mate was propitiatory. It was an unusual tone in the voice of a man who never addressed this

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young fellow, this singular admirer of Dr. Johnson, but as though he were a dog. When the mate saw Arthur, without speech he went below, and in solitude young Cochrane walked the deck of the vessel. As he insisted upon thinking that his father had been killed, his mind dwelt incessantly upon the motive of his murder. In his heart he believed the black mate the assassin; but still came in the "why" had he murdered him. To get command of the schooner? He could not promise himself acceptance of that post at Kingston even though old Cochrane was dead.

'Suddenly he started and stopped. Might it be that he desired to obtain command of the schooner whilst she was on the high seas? If so, then his game might be piracy or slaving; but had he the crew at his heels? If not, who'd help him to carry his ship to a port where he could fill up with a load of ruffians for his purpose? But the mere idea of Nassau being in sole command of the schooner brought him to think of Rose, and this nearly drove him mad as he faced, breathing short, the soft and silky wind which was now blowing with the illumination of the east in it. If Nassau got command, how could Arthur save his sweetheart from the ruffian black who professed to adore her? Had not Nassau killed old Cochrane with the idea and determination of getting hold of the schooner, and with her Rose Island? This seemed the answer that fitted all his questions, and the poor young fellow walked up and down the deck with a distracted mind. For he was alone; his rival for the girl was a murderous, reckless ruffian; the men, if they did not choose to sail with Nassau, would leave him, and a new crew come on board; Arthur himself would be either murdered or sent away, and

Rose would be compelled to accept Nassau or end her life. His walk brought him to the wheel; there he paused, seeking with an habitual eye the bearing of the schooner's head. He glanced at the helmsman, and observed that he was Wilkinson, who had come to the relief at four. He said to the young man:

“Were you on deck when my father's murder was discovered?”

“I don't know, sir.”

“Did you see anybody sneak below, or come on deck from the cabin at eight bells?”

A pause followed this question. Wilkinson then spoke in a tone of agitation; his voice was low and broken; he occasionally looked behind him, as though by any possibility someone should be lurking betwixt the wheel and the taffrail. It was brightening into clear dawn. The light swell rolled with a delicate pink tint on its brow. The breeze was small and steady on the quarter, and the sea ran in an ashen surface away to the heavens of night, which were fainting to the coming of the rising sun. A couple of the watch on deck paced in the waist; they puffed at their pipes; their roll was the easy swing of the deep-sea deck; they did not seem to make much of the murder of their Captain. The others were not to be seen.

“Mr. Cochrane,” said Wilkinson in a low voice, and after a prolonged stare at Arthur, as though, to use the Scotch expression, he was taking a thought, “if I tell you what's on my tongue, you'll swear by your living God and mine—and Dr. Johnson once said there was no stronger oath—that you'll not repeat it as coming from me?”

“What have you to say?” said Arthur quickly.

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"I swear by your God and mine; so tell me what you know."

"It's merely this," said Wilkinson, with a little whirl of a spoke which brought the schooner to her course again, "I'd got a bad toothache—I've got it still—I couldn't sleep for it in my watch below, and a little before eight bells, knowing it would be my trick, I came aft, meaning to ask for a drop of brandy to put to it. There was no one on the quarter-deck save the chap at the helm. I stepped to the skylight to look down, and I saw Mr. Nassau come round past the ladder, where he stopped a minute looking forrard. I went to the companion-way, and he came up, and after staring at me as if I'd been the ghost of his mother, who he's always a-quoting of, he sez, sez he, 'What the hell do you want?' I told 'im I'd got the toothache crool bad, and was coming aft for a drop of brandy. He damned and cursed me, as his custom is, and says that rum was good enough for the likes of me, and that I must wait till noon, when it would be served out. I sloped forward and got a drop of rum from Black, and soon after it was eight bells, and I lay aft again to relieve the wheel. Mr. Nassau saw me, but never spoke."

"This fellow Nassau," said Arthur, speaking in a hoarse whisper, "was in the cabin a little while before eight bells?"

"Aye, sir."

"And you saw him coming from the direction of my father's berth?"

"He certainly must have come that way. As old Dr. Johnson says——"

"What was his behaviour when he saw you at the head of the steps?"

“Well, Mr. Cochrane, he gave a violent start, as I’ve said; the rest was Oh’s!”

“You could not possibly have mistaken him?” said Arthur.

“It was the darkey Nassau, sir, him and no other.”

“What do you think of my father’s death?” said Arthur.

“The young fellow, with another faint twirl of a spoke, answered, after some hesitation, “If you say I think it, it ’ull cost me my life. Mr. Cochrane, it ’ull cost the life of any man aboard who says he thinks as I think. So I’m putting my life in your hands when I tell you it’s as true as that your father lies dead that that black dog, Julius Nassau, who means to go for a pirate in this vessel, drove the carving-knife into your father’s heart.”

“Sail ho!” shouted one of the two men who were walking in the waist.

“Where away?” cried Arthur, in his usual voice.

“On the weather quarter, sir.”

“There, glowing white in the rosy light, was a star or disc of sail. That she had not been passed was certain. She was therefore overhauling them, which merely proved her a faster ship.

“Wilkinson,” said Arthur, speaking quickly, as he desired to end this conversation before the length of its duration should be observed, “I thank you from my heart for your sincerity and sympathy, and count you the one friend Miss Island and I have in this cruel, tremendous trial. I will take a chance of asking you what you know about Nassau’s intention with regard to pirating. The young lady has no one to protect her but ourselves against the villainy of that black scoundrel and murderer below.”

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' This said, he left the wheel, for he did not want to be observed in conversation with Wilkinson. It was six o'clock when the young man's trick was up; Arthur gave no directions as to the washing down of the decks, the schooner flapped forward, the men lounged about smoking and awaiting the preparation of their breakfast, perhaps talking of the death of Captain Cochrane. When Wilkinson came from the wheel, young Cochrane asked him if he would step below at eight bells into the cabin and stitch up his father in canvas or in a hammock ready for the funeral. Astern the star of daybreak was growing and glowing. Almost mechanically Arthur picked up the glass and resolved the point of light into a topsail schooner under every stitch of canvas. He made nothing of so common an apparition, but as he was putting the glass into the companion, Rose came up. She wore a frightened look, but determination deep as death was in her face. Clearly she had been thinking, and had decided upon a course, and the trouble in her face was merely the shadow of a woman's heart barely darkening the road she had chosen. She asked her sweetheart if he were now as convinced as herself that his father had committed suicide.

"No," he answered. "Wilkinson—but you must swear not to repeat this, Rose," he added in a whisper, for the man at the wheel was not far off, "swears that he saw the negro mate come down the steps a little before eight bells."

' Her lips parted as to the motion of a shriek, and she said, "If he is your father's murderer, you and I are the same as dead."

"He may kill me," said Arthur, speaking in a very low voice, "and that will be his next step; but he will not

kill you. Oh God! how am I to protect you from him, if the men are with him and agree to sail with him as a pirate, as Wilkinson has as good as said!"

'She stood motionless, regarding him. A curious smile made the steadfast expression of her shining eyes extraordinary. They did not participate in her smile.

"I am not afraid of him, Arthur," she said. "Mr. Nassau will not trouble me greatly. I, too——" she interrupted herself violently, and said, "Do not fear for me, Arthur. See to yourself, darling. But who can guard you by night, by day, against the sudden attack of the black ruffian whose mouth you widened?"

"Your safety is all I care for," said Arthur. "Be out of his sight, Rose, as often as you can. Be with me whether below or on deck when he is visible. I am a passenger, and henceforth shall take no part in the working of this vessel. I must go below, my dearest."

'He left her, and went to his father's berth. At eight bells Nassau came out of his cabin and went on deck and stood looking about him for Arthur, and then, seeing the sail astern, which was now lifted almost to the line of her hull, he examined her through the telescope with a long, thirsty, searching look. Turning, he saw Wilkinson approaching.

"What do you want below?" he asked, as he put his hand upon the companion hood.

"Mr. Cochrane asked me to 'elp to stitch up his father."

'Nassau turned away, and the youth descended. Young Cochrane had been in his father's berth since a little after six; at varying intervals he would step on deck to observe that the schooner was held to her course. He would then return to his father's cabin. He occupied his time in deep thought; in contemplation of

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his father, whom he loved, and from time to time would weep at the sight of; in going through the poor old fellow's papers and his effects. He was interrupted by Wilkinson, who, at the hour of eight punctually, knocked at the door and was admitted. He had brought with him the necessary equipment of sail-needle, palm, and twine, and the hammock in which the remains of the skipper were to be stitched lay folded in a corner of the little room. Whilst they raised the body to receive the hammock flattened to its clews, Wilkinson said :

“ “ This 'ere poor old gentleman never killed himself, sir.”

“ “ Why do you say that ?” demanded Arthur eagerly.

“ “ Would the arm of a man who killed himself lay like that ?” said Wilkinson. “ No, sir,” continued the young man, in imitation of the style of his literary hero, “ it was to be made a picture of suicide, sir, and,” said he, “ that's just how they would go about to make the likeness, thinking it first-class.”

‘ Arthur made no reply. He had reasoned himself into complete conviction that his father had been murdered, and that the assassin was the coloured mate, and he was also persuaded that the object of the barbarous, bloody stroke was to obtain command of the schooner and possession of Rose. Their ghastly toil was soon ended. Two or three round shot were secured in the clews, and Arthur and his companion went on deck to bring aft a plank or a carpenter's stage to serve as a bier for the body. Young Cochrane noticed that the sailors were leaning over the side watching the schooner astern, whose hull was now visible. Nassau was walking the deck with a telescope in his hand. He took no notice of Arthur and the other, though he sent a red

and grimy glance at the plank they carried. It was clear that the coloured mate did not mean to deal with the question of look-outs until after the funeral. The *Charmer* was going along under leisurely canvas. She could have carried stun'-sails, but it was evident that Julius, satisfied that whatever canvas he showed was certain to be overtaken by that press of shining white cloths astern, was resolved to take it easy. In about twenty mintues' time Arthur reappeared. He stepped up at once to Nassau, who received him with a bow of the head which was not wanting in melancholy.

"I have come to report the body ready for burial, sir," said Arthur, whose handsome, cold, firm face compared to the mate's was as a specimen of the manly beauty of the Anglo-Saxon opposed to that of a cannibal tribe.

"He shall be buried with due honours whenever you will," answered Nassau, speaking to an unusual degree in his throat, as though he imagined that this tone harmonized with his looks. "I wish to God he was alive! I was fond of your father! May God strike me dead if I did it or had a hand in it. May God smite me blind if it wasn't his own doing——"

Arthur held up his hand, but not menacingly. "At ten o'clock, if you please," said he. "I presume the seamen would wish to attend."

"He shall be buried as the fine and gallant sailor he was," answered Nassau, with rounded nostrils. Then, observing Arthur cast a look over the quarter, he said: "Yonder's the famous pirate *Pearl*—she who, by the balloon account, sacked the *Eleuthera*. She'll not be abreast of us till after ten, except she means to heave us to by a shot." He glanced at Arthur, who went forward to speak to Wilkinson.

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CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTAIN CUTYARD.

‘THE full significance, ladies and gentlemen,’ continued Captain Tomson Foster, whose audience proved the interest they took in his yarn by the uniformity of their attendance, ‘of Nassau’s intimation that they were being chased (as he supposed) by the pirate schooner *Pearl* did not flash upon Arthur then nor for awhile after. He was full of thoughts of his father, and of the business of the funeral. At ten o’clock the strange schooner was about five miles astern, having as yet made no signal of flag or gun. The breeze that had helped her was now helping the *Charmer*, and the sea was rich with blue ripple, and beautiful with the deep-blue dye of the fathomless ocean. At ten o’clock Nassau came along the quarter-deck to as far as the mainmast, and in a tone of authority and command he shouted to the seamen to lay aft and attend with the respect that was due to a fine seaman, and a worthy, good-hearted man, the burial of their late lamented commander, whose self-inflicted death he should always remember with deep and sincere sorrow. Arthur, who stood near the gangway when this was said, looked away to sea, but by no token of manner did he give

expression to his feelings. Rose was below in her cabin. There she had remained eating some breakfast which Arthur had taken to her, and Nassau had made no inquiries about her before sitting down at the little cabin table.

'Ten o'clock was struck. They kept their bells going steadily on board that little schooner *Charmer*, and presently the body of Captain Cochrane, shrouded by an ensign, was brought up the companion steps by Old Stormy and Wilkinson. The edge of one plank with the feet facing the sea was laid upon the bulwark rail near the gangway.

"Will you read in the Holy Book, Mr. Arthur?" said Nassau, running his eyes over the men who had collected about the funeral plank. It chanced that Captain Cochrane had possessed a Church Service, and this book his son had brought on deck and stood holding in a conspicuous way so that Nassau could not fail to see it. That the negro mate knew what book it was, and what it contained, was as doubtful as his being able to explain why the yolk of an egg is yellow. Arthur began to read; the men, bareheaded, listened, chewing hard. Nassau crossed his arms, and attended with a bowed head, which he once or twice turned to glance astern. There is nothing more unobtrusively appealing and in its way more obscurely sad, than a simple funeral at sea. The plank is tilted, the body flashes into the brine, which as a symbol of eternity is as wide as the heavens which cover it. But with the humblest sailor's death goes this beautiful and solemn assurance—that when buried he lies in the vaults of a more majestic cathedral than was ever built by human hands. The poor skipper's body disappeared over the side. Arthur

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was in the act of closing the Prayer-Book, and stepping to the companion hatch. Just then a puff of white smoke sailed out of the chasing schooner's bow, lengthening down the wind as it grew. None looked for the round shot, but all guessed that that still distant dog had not barked without trying to bite. Instantly Nassau shifted his mock deportment of mourner into the full-blown commander. The helm was put down, the schooner thrown into the wind, and all way was shaken out of her.

"Mr. Arthur," said Nassau, as the young man was going below, "a word with you, and let it be to the purpose."

He spoke in a commanding way, with a lifting of his whole figure as though he would physically overshadow the fine form of the man who stood before him. Arthur, with a frown, looked at him to hear.

"I have said," exclaimed Nassau, "that that schooner yonder is the *Pearl*, and I have no doubt whatever that she is still commanded by the most reckless cut-throat pirate in West Indian waters. Now, sir, attend to this. That man I may call a friend, and I can control him to my wishes as regards this schooner and her crew; but he is a great lover of women, and I warn you that Miss Rose's beauty will appeal to him in language which will not be reasoned with by earnest entreaties of mine. Therefore, as she is dear to you"—he paused, and in that pause bit his lip till he drew blood, whilst his eyes gleamed in red fury in their sunken sockets—"you will at once," he proceeded, resuming with an effort, "hide this young lady in the lazarette—do it instantly—and see that her boxes and all her woman's fal-lals which may be in her cabin—

see that these are hidden with her so that to the most practised eye there shall be no signs visible of a woman aboard. No words. Off, sir, and see that your work is thorough."

'Instantly Arthur fled below. He guessed that the man spoke with perfect truth as regarded the scoundrel that was approaching; he also understood that this concealment of Rose was entirely in Nassau's interests, and had no reference whatever to himself. But this did not hinder him from rushing the desperate work in hand. In a few breathless sentences he repeated Nassau's instructions to Rose. All that she said was:

"He is preserving me for himself."

"He will have me to deal with in that part," answered Arthur; and, springing to the lazarette hatch, he pulled up the little cover.

'It was a darksome hole for a girl to hide in. When the cover was on, the blackness was of the tomb. It was a small afterhold, in which were kept the cabin and other stores. Arthur peered down, and said:

"Crawl as far aft as the casks and stuff will allow; I will lower your boxes."

'She looked at him, grasped him by both hands, and kissed him. Then, speechless, she put her foot over, and like a snake glided on hands and feet into the deep shadow out of Arthur's sight. With the swiftness and sure hand of the seaman he lowered her boxes, thrusting them when below clear of the gaze of any spectator above. Other trifling belongings he also concealed near these boxes. Then shouting out, "Are you all right?" and receiving in reply, "Perfectly right!" he sprang through the manhole, replaced the cover, and went on deck.

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'Nassau was in the act of addressing the men. He had explained to them the character of the schooner that was now almost within gunshot. He said he believed he knew the captain of her, and if so they and the *Charmer* would be safe; but he informed them they must speak of him as commander of the *Charmer* if they did not want to be cut to pieces, and every man must swear that he was going for a pirate under Captain Nassau, for it was more than likely that the man who refused to say this, and who by refusing implied that he was an honest steady sailor-man, would be hanged at the yard-arm. He also told them not to breathe a syllable about a young lady being on board. The man that did this he himself would shoot through the heart, and he pulled out a pistol and flourished it.

"In fact," he yelled, "you're a small band of men going a-pirating, with me as cap'n, and all you know of my intentions is that we are bound to Silver Cay, where we shall take in guns and munition, and where we shall find a band of seamen awaiting our arrival." Then, turning and seeing young Cochrane, he said in a fierce voice, with a flourish of his arm: "Go forward, sir, and remain as much as you can out of sight. You're a pirate, and you're the schooner's cook. Go and make up for your part, sir, and be found in the galley should yonder schooner throw some men aboard."

'There was too much funk and agitation, and the emotions which the presence of such a pirate as the *Pearl* provoked amongst the stoutest in those times, for the laugh and the jest which would otherwise have attended Nassau's orders to Arthur. The young man walked in silence to the galley, and at the same moment the fine schooner, putting her helm down and shortening

sail as she did so, came rounding to, with a graceful sweep of cut-water and low height and harmonious length of broadside, till the manœuvred arrest brought her stationary within a biscuit toss of the *Charmer*. She was apparently full of men. Her starboard side and forecastle were crowded with them. There was little of that picturesque element, so frequently and always so admirably described by Michael Scott, to be found in the crowd of villains. There were a great many blacks, most of them simply attired in dungaree shirts and cotton trousers. Most of the others were dressed as the average seaman usually goes, in coloured shirts and loose airy trousers and wide straw hats. But they were all armed to the teeth, as the novelists say; that is, they carried pistols in their belts, and knives and daggers in their breasts, and cutlasses on their hips, and these things made the devils deadly dangerous. Her guns were light carronades; her real office lay in boarding, not in broadsiding, but on her forecastle and aft she carried a long gun—formidable weapons in the sight of the honest merchantman dragging her heap of canvas without hope of escape in the stern chase that might last a few hours. She was sheathed to the bends with copper, and the glance of it above the silken line of brine was like the lightning stroke. She was a vessel of about two hundred tons, built at Philadelphia with the consummate skill of the shipwrights of that city, and being captured, she had for four years served her owner, who was her commander, as a pirate, and was a terror throughout the seaboard of the Antilles, and northwards on the American coast. Again and again she had been nearly captured, but a wonderful success attended the black flag she flew, and she proved

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hopeless to the efforts of the swiftest corvettes and cruisers stationed in those seas. Her captain stood on the rail, holding on to a backstay, and looked in silence for a moment or two at Nassau, who had similarly perched himself. The man was about the most picturesquely dressed of the whole gang. He wore an embroidered velvet smoking-cap, with a tassel which dangled upon his shoulders. He was dressed in a velvet jacket, and, strange to say, in white drill trousers and half-boots like to those in which Nassau had introduced himself to us. His arms consisted of a couple of silver-mounted pistols in a belt, and a fine long sword, rich about the hilt. That he had been, and was still at a loss, is certain, for the custom of the pirates was to run alongside their victims and throw their men aboard, when the bloody havoc commenced, and as a rule the ship was speedily a prize, for they mainly fought the defenceless. There was no going to and fro in boats, no parleyings from the bulwarks. The silence following upon the arrest of the *Charmer* was broken by a shout from the man in the velveteen cap:

“Ho! the schooner ahoy! Who is your captain, and what is your trade?” And with that he looked up at the *Charmer's* mastheads, his own running naked from the rigging into the suggestive decoration of a brilliantly gilt ball at the head of each pole.

“We are the schooner *Charmer*,” shouted Julius, “and we will tell you our trade when we can converse. Our commander is Captain Julius Nassau, who has the honour of addressing Captain Henry Cutyard, an old friend, who has for some years commanded with marvellous success the schooner *Pearl*.”

“I believed I knew you,” bawled Captain Cutyard;

"but where are your guns, and where are your men? Stop, I'll come aboard of you. You shall give me the news."

"Let me go aboard of you!" yelled Nassau, who with Rose in hiding little relished a visit from Cutyard. "You have a beautiful ship there. I have never seen over her."

"No, no," shouted Cutyard, "I'll come aboard of you;" and Nassau fell silent and stared, whilst, with the agility of a cruiser's cutter, a fine long boat, pulling six oars, with a negro in a white hat steering, rowed Cutyard to the *Charmer's* gangway. In six strokes 'twas done. The water foamed about the boat; in a graceful lift and fall the *Pearl* glanced shadow and shine into her canvas, as though in salutation, and Cutyard was aboard the *Charmer*, whilst five heavily armed men who had followed him went about the *Charmer's* decks, viewing her, attended by two or three of the schooner's crew, who asked questions of the pirates, and got into talk. Arthur was repeatedly in and out of the galley. He had grimed his face, tied a red handkerchief round his head, stripped to his vest, kicked off his boots, turned up his trousers, and looked a good example of a sea-cook. His eyes went forever aft, and he watched the two pirate chiefs as a tethered ferret would watch a brace of rats. Captain Cutyard was as unlike all ideas of the pirate, both of this and past centuries, as if he had been a grocer's assistant out for a spree on the high seas. His face was comely. His eyes were large and blue, arch and intelligent, and you would have thought the soul of kindness dwelt in them. His nose was aquiline and very handsome, his mouth well shaped. He was clean-shaved, and his

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throat and neck had the delicacy and grace of a woman's. He stood a taller man by nearly a head than Nassau, who by his side looked the most contemptible, the dirtiest, the most repulsively grinning scoundrel, that was ever afloat.

"Why, Julius," said Cutyard, thrusting Nassau backwards with both hands and a loud laugh, "trying your fortunes again, eh? I said to myself, 'She is one of us,' as soon as ever your mainsail had risen into my glass, and I followed you for information, and to test my heels. You're a beauty," said he, speaking with a roving gaze, "but I'll give you the horizon, and you shall name your wind, and I'll be alongside in seven hours."

"I guessed you was hereabouts," said Nassau. "You met with good booty a day or two ago. It would set a plain man like me up for life."

"How d'ye know?" exclaimed the other, and a strange look darted into his eyes, as though he spoke to a man who had betrayed him.

"It fell from the heavens," said Nassau, looking up. "She was the *Eleuthera*; we were in her company some days. She was a rich ship; I'll give you a thousand pounds for your share."

"We saw that balloon," responded Cutyard, without change of face. "Damned if news don't travel in roundabout ways in these fine times. Tell you what, Nassau: I've got a prize aboard that schooner there that I'd not take twice one thousand pounds for. Oh, she's sweet as honey! There were two of them; I chose the loveliest. She shall learn to love me, and she's a girl to do honour to the name of Cutyard."

"You stole the wenches as well as the goods?" said Nassau.

“One only,” replied the man. “Got anything in that line aboard?”

“No; I always wait till I come to court for it.”

“How long have you been at this work without guns and a crew?” said Cutyard, with an air of mingled suspicion and curiosity.

“Why, when I shipped as her chief mate,” responded Nassau, “I made up my mind what her trade should be, and that I should command her. The Captain’s been knocked on the head, and I’m in charge of her with those few who are my men, and I’m sailing straight either for Rum or Silver Cay to ship hands and cannon.”

“I’ll keep you company,” said Captain Cutyard. “Rum Cay will do my business.”

This proposal was little to Nassau’s liking, but he was an artist with his countenance, and Cutyard imagined him highly delighted and proud. Their talk in a little while grew desultory. They had news to exchange, chiefly piratical incidents. Several times Nassau proposed to go aboard the *Pearl*, but Cutyard, for some perverse reason of his own, chose to remain on board the *Charmer*. Arthur, standing in the door of the *Charmer*’s little caboose or galley, overheard a few words of conversation between Old Stormy and two of the pirates. Both these men were Englishmen; they hailed from the part of England Old Stormy was born in. Above all, they accepted Old Stormy without question as a pirate.

“I never heard of a pirate,” said Old Stormy, “looting the prize of its women. They takes what liberties pleases them whilst they’re aboard, then leaves ’em to their luck.”

“She’s a fine girl,” said one of the pirates, “but

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it's booty, as you say, not proper for pirates to meddle with. But beautifuller gals you never set eyes on, and we was content that he should take her, because you see she'll go to his share, and that'll make more money for us, bully."

"Had she any relations on board?" said Old Stormy, who did not show himself much affected by this relation of an atrocious deed.

"There was her mother and her sister; that's all I know," was the answer; and the three strolled off, leaving Arthur trembling; for every second he had feared that Old Stormy would tell the two men that the *Charmer* also had a beautiful woman on board, and his heart turned sick with helplessness and pity when he realized that the girls whom the men talked about were the two fair young creatures who had complimented his manly beauty with their glances of delight and appreciation when he was in the cabin of the *Eleuthera*. Meanwhile Cutyard and Nassau stood upon the quarter-deck engaged in eager conversation, as I have said. When Nassau asked Cutyard if he had heard lately of their mutual friend Israel Boom, he answered that when he was last at San Juan he counted Boom's bones as they hung in irons on a gibbet. He had no further news to report as to Boom, he said. Several experiences were exchanged on both sides, but it was quite clear to Nassau that it was not Cutyard's intention to invite him on board the *Pearl*, so he called to Wilkinson and ordered him to furnish the cabin table with the best repast the *Charmer* could yield.

"Of course we can't show your hospitality," he said to Cutyard, with a horrible grin. "We have captured

nothing, and possess but our original stores. If I cannot give you good wine, you shall drink our health in excellent rum."

'Wilkinson surveyed Cutyard with awe and fear, and made haste to be off when he had received his instructions. The two pirates strolled about the decks, and Nassau caused the main hold to be thrown open, that Cutyard should see the character of the commodities the *Charmer* was lightly freighted with, a piece of polite attention which Cutyard himself would not have insisted upon, though with the practised gaze of one who had been bred in this sort of seamanship, he swiftly took full and convincing observation of what his large blue eyes sped over.

"If I was you," says Cutyard, after going to the side to look at his beautiful schooner, and see that all was right with her, as she still continued to lie almost within musket-shot of the *Charmer*, "I would not mount more than four carronades; they frighten the women, and are of use in that way. I advise an eighteen-pounder on your foc's'le. You have a flaring bow and a fine spring, which will stand the weight of an eighteen-pound gun. A smaller piece should be a stern-chaser. How seldom they are used! Where do you get your money from, Julius?"

"I have a few hundreds," answered Nassau, with a careless shrug, "and I can mortgage the earnings of the schooner, if not the schooner herself."

"Got any cruising ground in mind?" asked Cutyard.

"Now, why take a cruising ground?" inquired Julius, and it then seemed to come into his head to relate the incident of the man-of-war which had overhauled the *Charmer*, mistaking her for the *Pearl*.

““Oh, ho!” cried Cutyard. “Thank ye for that. But why stop till now to give it to me?” and he sent the suspicious, frowning stare of the pirate right round the horizon.

““It never occurred to me till this instant,” said Julius.

““I’m damned if I’ll stop with you!” said Cutyard, gazing with a heavy face of gloom and anxiety at his companion. “We sighted a topsail yesterday. She may be within the compass of this field.”

‘Again he swept the horizon with the penetrating look of a vulture. He seemed to take fright on a sudden. He easily recognised the man-of-war from the accurate description Nassau had painted, and was perfectly conscious that he was her special quarry in those waters. He shouted to his men to man the boat, and before Nassau could well recover his astonishment at the actual hurry of terror which his brief statement had flung the handsome lion-hearted Cutyard into, the bold buccaneer was in his boat, which in a few flashes of oars placed him aboard the *Pearl*. The moment he gained the *Pearl* the boat was hoisted and sail trimmed. The same steady breeze the little ship had brought with her was blowing. She leaned in it like a beauty in her lover’s arms; the thin white line of broken coloured waters streamed aft alongside, and she was making a wake as white as moonlight, whilst her crowds of men were rushing here and there, and whilst the sheet was flattening, and the yards of the fore slowly rounding, and whilst Cutyard was waving farewell to the *Charmer*. Julius was amazed, but he was equally delighted to be cheaply rid of so deadly and dangerous a visitor. He gave no orders, that he might watch the direction Cut-

yard meant to head on. No cry of any sort came from the *Pearl*, no reference of any sort to their meeting at Silver Cay or elsewhere. It was clear that Captain Cutyard, not wanting the *Charmer*, had wanted nothing else, for certainly he did not bear the character of a man who denied himself, and Nassau understood that if the inhuman devil in the smoking cap had made choice of any object in the schooner it would have been Rose; and his black heart leapt up, and his thick negro lips squared into a grin that fell little short of an expression of ecstasy. How little he knew! he thought, whilst his few seamen stood about the deck watching the schooner and awaiting orders. "Talk of the *Eleuthera* girl he's got aboard—had he but set eyes on Rose!" and here the dusky scoundrel executed a caper of pure joy, which the man at the wheel observing, interpreted into a further sign of farewell to Cutyard, who was quite visible, though his schooner, on wings wider in proportion than those which the albatross curves over the Andean heights of the Pacific, was bearing him north-west with gathering speed. When Cutyard was fairly a mile away, sweeping through the brine, which the schooner whitened with the clipper's buoyant rush, Julius ordered sail to be trimmed and told the helmsman to keep the *Charmer's* head at west; then, seeing Arthur standing near the galley, he called to him:

"Mr. Cochrane!"

Arthur went along to the negro mate. He had re-clothed himself, and cleansed himself with the help of a bucket of brine drawn from over the side, and was again the Arthur of the quarterdeck, passenger or second mate as he pleased. Nassau eyed him from head to

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foot with the utmost temper and contempt, which the ugly rascal's countenance was capable of assuming at command. Arthur eyed him in return with a look which was easily interpretable into "You diabolical murderer of my father! But I will avenge him yet!"

"I got you out of that mess pretty easily, I reckon," said Nassau, with a nod in the direction of the *Pearl*. "If I'd uttered a word, her skipper would have found a good man in you."

"I should not have gone without Miss Island," said Arthur. "Rest you assured of *that*"; and he made, with a curious motion of his wrist, his hand hanging by his sides, as though he would strangle Nassau.

"Jump below and liberate Miss Rose, and tell her not to leave the cabin until I see her," exclaimed Nassau. "If you don't know that I'm captain here, by God, you shall find it out in a fashion I'm no new hand at! Away with you, and be back again on deck in a trice, as I want you to hear what I'm going to tell the men!"

'It was wonderful that such a mere grimy ape of a man—with the weight of the deformity of manners, face, and colour for ever dragging him back into the irresponsible contempt which he sought, by fine airs, wide smiles, and a costume not wanting in Napoleonic suggestiveness, to free himself from—should have been able in a moment to put on such an air of command and accustomed captaincy as that with which he addressed Arthur Cochrane, with his sunburn coloured to the hue of mahogany, whose wrath sparkled in both eyes with as dangerous a light as ever crimsoned the little orbs of the coloured man. But all in a moment, before the passions could command him, he thought of Rose—how that now, if the men were in favour of

Nassau, she was absolutely in the nigger fellow's power, and how that her purity, safety, and life must depend upon the judgment, prudence, and foresight of himself. He looked the coloured mate full in the face for an instant or two, and then said, "Right, sir"; and with that he walked straight to the companion-way and entered the cabin. He made at once for the little trap-door with the ring upon it, lifted it, and, dropping into the lazarette, called Rose by name. She immediately answered from a little distance, buried in blackness:

"I am here, Arthur, perfectly safe. Am I to come out?"

"Yes. Be very cautious, my beloved. If I approach and extend my hand, will it help you?"

"I can see your figure dimly," she answered. "I am nearer than you think;" and, even as she spoke, Arthur faintly discerned her form crawling over a barrel, and a minute later they stood under the little hatch breast to breast, and lip to lip.

'Ladies and gentlemen, the heroic young lady was not in trim fit, for example, for attendance at Court. A nail in a stanchion had pulled down her hair; the bosom of her dress had been ripped open by a hooked spike; she was covered from head to foot with all those ends of chaff, shavings, yarns, and the like, which the clothes of people who scramble about the holds of ships usually gather.

"Has the pirate gone, Arthur?" she asked.

"Yes, and what do you think?" looking at her sweet face in the dim light shed by that little square of hatch. "Do you remember two pretty girls who stared at me as we passed through the cabin of the *Eleuthera*?"

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friends. Ellen and Mary, and then there was their mother. What is the news of them?"

"“Why,” answered Arthur, “I learnt from the conversation of some men belonging to the pirate that the scoundrel Cutyard had stolen the prettier of the two——”

““Mary!” interrupted Rose, in a voice that was half a shriek.

““And that she was on board his ship.”

‘Rose was about to speak. The voice of Nassau was heard yelling, “Cochrane! Cochrane!” through the open skylight.

““There is much to be said, and something to be done,” said Arthur; “but that black scoundrel is in command, and it is my policy to obey him whilst I watch and think.”

‘He sprang through the hatch, and helped Miss Rose on to the deck, which was, of course, the deck of the cabin. Nassau’s body was half-way through the skylight of this same cabin.

““Have ye had much of a hunt?” he yelled. “Come along on deck; we’re waiting for you.” And, as he spoke, the form of Overalls shoved to the skylight alongside the coloured man, and looked down also. “My congratulation upon the success of your hiding, Miss Rose!” cried Nassau. Then, catching sight of her, and pulling off his cap in the skylight with many horrid grins and grotesque contortions: “That was a clever comb that ploughed your hair to its perfection of length. I shall hope shortly to have the pleasure of hearing you in person on your experiences in the lazarette; meanwhile, you are safe from the pirates.”

‘He withdrew his ugly face and head of hair that

made you think of a chimney-sweep's brush, and Rose said :

“ I understand it all. Go on deck, and obey him as if he was a gentleman and your true captain.”

“ He will be seeing you alone, Rose,” said Arthur, pausing a moment, so great was his dread of Rose being in Nassau's power.

“ Better for him had his father cut the little beast's head off when he was born than that he should lay a finger upon me!” said Rose, with a smile so brave, so full and inspiring with the light of meaning and capacity, that Arthur, smiling to its influence with one passionate look of love, bounded up the companion ladder.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE NEW SKIPPER.

'I HAVE been at sea many years,' said Captain Tomson Foster, 'and have witnessed a good deal of its happenings, and I have read much that has amazed and much that has amused me ; but I cannot recall from the Marine Records anything more original and out of the way than this incident of the voyage of the *Charmer* which I shall endeavour to relate to you. But, first, I must say that the characters of several of the people are very hard to draw. They would be hard to draw by the first-rate hand of the artist in marine colours, but what is to be done with them by a poor sea captain, who knows very little of human nature, and who went to sea for all the education he got? I find Nassau so complicated, so involved of white and black, that often in ending this yarn for the time, I feel that I have not made out even so much as his boot-lace successfully to you. Michael Scott could have been trusted with him, but other hands superior to his in the shore-going page would feel their weakness when they came to this mixture of black and white blood, of the airs of the sailor's dancing-rooms, combined with studies of genteel life and high life, as they may be found illustrated

amongst the marine parts of the city of London; of a negro-like capacity of delivering quaint ideas in forms of expression which made them striking and grotesque. Then take Wilkinson. You doubt there was any sailor alive or dead who relished Boswell's book about Johnson and quoted it to you. Yet I was ship-mate with a young ordinary seaman, whose father was a small cobbler in the regions of Wapping, and this young man, who had taught himself to read and write, would quote page after page from Lord Byron's poetry, and recite the verse so well, that on the skipper hearing of it, he invited him aft, and made him deliver whole poems by Byron—cantos and separate pieces—to the wonder and admiration of the passengers, who before arriving at Calcutta presented the fellow with a purse of fifteen guineas.

'But to proceed with my story. It was now the afternoon, and in the far distance, as I have said, fast turning blue in the blue air, hung the white plumage of the pirate *Pearl*, steering north-west, for what recess of ocean or for what point of Cay could not be conjectured. Every inch of cloth that could catch the least sigh of the rich and sparkling breeze she had spread; in fact, as it afterwards appeared, Captain Cutyard was perfectly well aware that a man-of-war of heavy metal, which in strong breezes could easily fore-reach and fore-weather upon him, was hunting those waters in search of him, and he had also known that she could not be far distant. But how near she was in reality he was ignorant of until Nassau gave him the truth, when, of course, in the swiftness of a flash, the safety of his neck became his first consideration. Very well was he conscious that his crimes had hove ahead of the ordinary

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bloody qualities of the pirate when he kidnapped Miss Mackenzie, a British female, a young British subject, with the intention of adding her to the stock of wives which he kept up and down the coast at wide and wise intervals, heaping the proceeds of his calling upon them, and allowing them all the license during his absence which the wife of a pirate might have a right to expect. His fleet and beautiful vessel, of a type to exactly suit the taste of Fenimore Cooper, whose skimmer of the seas must be well known to you in his pages, was the only object visible in the majestic sweep of liquid blue, in a corner of which in the tail of the wind a few large clouds, with patches of bronze upon their brows, were showing. But the human interest girdled by these shining seas was to be sought on board the *Charmer*.

When Arthur sprang on deck, he found Nassau standing abreast of the mainmast in a posture which he was fond of assuming—Napoleonic, in short—the head bowed, the eyes lifted to the level under a frown, the arms crossed upon the breast, and one leg with its hint of cucumber shin advanced. His shadow softly swayed at his feet; it was black, and a good likeness of Nassau. At the wheel stood Wilkinson, keeping the schooner a steadfast west under the impression he was heading her direct for Kingston harbour. The rest of the crew lounged about the quarter-deck in the neighbourhood of Nassau. Two or three of them smoked, the others chewed. Their attitudes and behaviour proved that they now considered themselves all bosses, good as Julius, good as young Cochrane, and infinitely better, though they respected him in life, than the dead man sunk far astern, with a red rent in his shirt just over his heart. Forward, there was no life,

for the small collection of live-stock with which the *Charmer* had started on her voyage had long since been eaten up; the coop was empty; no cheerful grunt from under the keel-up boat amidships pleased the ear. She was an abandoned schooner from the waist forward, and marks of neglect were already visible; the decks had not been washed down, or if washed, a single sluice had sufficed; the ropes were roughly coiled upon the pins. Nevertheless, the canvas was well set fore and aft. As a matter of fact an extra drag had in a somewhat furtive manner been got upon the gear, which wanted tautening, very soon after Captain Cutyard had unceremoniously spread his wings.

'Arthur went to the rail, and posted himself with his back against it. Some of the sailors glanced at him out of the corners of their eyes. It was quite clear that the crew had been called together to hear a statement, or take counsel with Nassau. When the coloured man's eyes fell upon young Cochrane, he said to him after a pause, which was filled up with a frowning stare, "I suppose you guess now that Rose has had the narrowest shave that was ever heard of at sea."

'Arthur, after a little, that his pause should appear as full of contempt as Nassau's, answered briefly:

"She's better here."

"I suppose you know," said Nassau, letting fall his arms and pulling out of his side-pocket the materials for rolling up a paper cigar, "that, your father being dead, I take his place?"

'Arthur looked here and there at the men as though this matter was as much theirs as his. Cabbage answered instead of Arthur:

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“Course, when a master of a wessel dies at sea, the mate becomes skipper.”

“I am skipper,” said Nassau, with one of his revolting smiles and an air of cruel triumph in the gaze he fastened on Arthur, whilst he slowly rolled up some tobacco in a piece of paper, “and more. As skipper I am the shipmate of you all, and you will know me as from the beginning to be as much a 'fore-mast hand with fo'c's'le feelings and likes as though I had never held command, nor been said 'sir' to, as though I were a dog. This I may say by the heart of my mother, and when I swear that oath, God A'mighty looks down and approves.”

Old Stormy burst into a laugh.

“By God, Cap'n,” said he, “is it a yarn of your country's that makes the first man called Adam that was ever put into a garden in the Heast Indies to be a nigger?”

“I said I am more than captain,” continued Nassau, stretching his figure to its fullest inches, and taking not the least notice of Old Stormy's interruption: “I am a part-owner of this schooner, the *Charmer*, and the rest of yer share in her, like and like, from Black to Wilkin-son.”

Here Wilkinson was observed to shake his head as he steadied the wheel with a long-armed grip of spoke, and as though he imagined that Arthur Cochrane would observe the gesture. But Arthur's eyes were upon Nassau, who, pulling a burning-glass out of his pocket, fired his cigar by the light of the sun, which still shone with glory and heat, with the violet faintly crimsoning under him. Nassau smoked. All were silent, waiting for Arthur to speak. He said, after waving his foot

across the plank in a motion full of nerve and reflection :

“Of course you know, Mr. Nassau, that my poor father, who was cruelly murdered this morning, was part owner of this schooner, and that what belonged to him now comes by every decree of law and reason to me.”

“Well, you shall share,” said Nassau contemptuously, spitting over the rail. “Share and share alike, I said. You’re in luck, and wise to turn pirate. By God, the black flag gives ye more money, more jools, more beautiful things to make the ladies swear by the love in your eyes, than a fleet of footy schooners could get for you, though they have fine young men like you as part owners. Men!” he shouted, sending his little reddish eyes on a tour round the deck, so that all should know they were addressed, “think of the chances of this fine young gentleman here. What was Cutyard’s talk of the *Eleuthera*? Now, I’ll tell yer. Well, to be plain, men—and I’ll take my burning oath as to his words—he told me he’d sacked the Indiaman to the value of eighty thousand pounds.”

‘There was a pause, whilst Old Stormy whistled low and long.

“Of that booty, there were three cases of hard sovereigns—chests, my lads,” continued the coloured man, relishing his own words by slow delivery, and garnishing them by a peculiar throaty tone. “Chests of gold!” he shouted, flourishing his paper cigar. “And this money he took, besides portable articles of great value, bracelets, diamonds, earrings, and so on, for the passengers were a rich company. Now, shipmates and all of you who are listening to me, as I’ve told you,

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again and again, this is a sorrowful world, and a hard world, that is made harder than it need be by hard men for poor men; and what I says is, here is an occupation called piracy—and a good name, too—which will yield the poor man what the hard man possesses, mainly because he *is* hard, because if he wasn't so hard the case of the poor man in this world wouldn't be so dreadful."

'He paused, and a murmur ran about:

"'Damned if Julius ain't a prophet!"

"'Blast me if his views wouldn't convince a judge!"

"'But it's always been this reasoning with him, and that's why things with me is as they are."

'Julius overheard some of these remarks. His face was full of triumph; he was impressed by his own eloquence. He lighted his paper cigar again by the sun, and when this was done, he proceeded:

"'A man has no call to lead a dreadful life, and I contend that life at sea *is* dreadful as 'ard men make it. How is the sailor fed? He is allowed to grow rotten on grubs and worms, on pork that never came off the pig, on beef that never came off the ox. He clothes himself, poor devil, and goes half-naked, because his wages are so low, so starvin', so perishing to any decent aspirations a man may have, that, by God, men! as we all know, when the sailor steps ashore, even arter a long voyage, he has scarce dollars enough in his pocket to buy himself a coat and pants. He may be called upon to work for twenty-four hours in the day, and he is the only labourer in the world," continued Nassau, who was beginning to grind his teeth betwixt his words, "who can't say: 'To hell with your orders! I'll work as a man, and not as the beast you would like to make me!'"

““ Oh, it's all true enough, it's all true enough,” growled Black, with a face dark with mutiny and the wrath kindled in him by Julius's words. “ We are beasts, and as such are we treated.”

““ You are beasts,” yelled Nassau, “ but you become men when you become pirates, as I found out. All are equal. Booty is fairly divided. Every man stands to make a fortune, with little peril. His life ashore is filled up with sailors' joys, and at sea he has got nothing to do but fill his pockets. Now, my lads, you are men of sense, and we've talked the matter over often enough, and I know your minds. You're agreeable to become pirates under my command ?”

‘ There was a general shout of “ Ay, ay !”

““ It was settled days ago !”

““ Hurrah for the jolly Roger !”

‘ Wilkinson at the wheel made no sign. Arthur watched Nassau attentively, as though he was an artist making a study of him. Nassau, rounding upon him, said :

““ Will you be one of us ?”

““ I'll help you to work the ship,” answered young Cochrane, in a cool voice, and with a cool face, “ but I'll not serve under you as a pirate.”

““ We want no unwilling men,” said Nassau, in low, thick, gloomy tones. “ You shall help us to work the ship, and we shall expect no more from your father's son.”

““ What port are you bound to ?” said Arthur.

‘ Nassau, with a wide grin answered :

““ Just the port to please you. It's got a good theaytre, and there's a meetin'-'ouse round the corner.”

‘ This, somehow, was to the taste of the men, and

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there was a general laugh. Arthur remained silent. Nassau, after watching him a little, said :

““ But, my lads, you are all aware that, failing Cochrane ” (he seemed to find a particular pleasure in calling Cochrane his plain name, as if he were a ship’s cook or a man before the mast) “ there is no navigator but me in this schooner, none that could bring you to any port, just as you should decide, for the sale of your booty, and for quitting the calling, if you’re so disposed ; therefore, in any case I was bound to be boss when Captain Cochrane was this morning found bleeding dead, a regrettable corpse, by his own hand.” Arthur started, recollected himself almost in the motion of his impulse, and sank back in silence with a single dumb movement of lip. “ It now comes,” Nassau went on, beginning to take short walks fore and aft whilst he talked, “ to our deciding upon who shall be chief mate.”

““ Suppose you offer the berth to Mr. Cochrane there ?” exclaimed Black.

““ He declines,” said Nassau quickly. “ He is a passenger willing to sign as a foremast hand—none of us, mates, but one to go ashore at the first chance that comes along. *He mate of the Charmer !*” He laughed out of his huge mouth with great scorn. “ You shall choose a chief mate from amongst yourselves.”

‘ Some debate followed this. It was finally agreed that Old Stormy should fill the post. His merits were many. To begin with, he was about the most heartless old liar that ever drove a knife with wrath and appetite into ship’s beef. He had followed the sea all his life, and knew every phase of it. He claimed to have seen much bloody service in a French buccaneer. He was

a very strong man, and very active; could drink a small ship's company under the table, and in many other respects was well qualified to serve as mate of a pirate. When this was settled, Nassau proposed that they should make a toast of Old Stormy and drink his health. Some bottles of rum were fetched from the cabin—Rose was not to be seen there; glasses and biscuit and some eatable stuff, newly laid in out of the lazarette, were provided. Nassau seated himself upon the harness cask—a hooped cask, often brass bound, and a fine piece of furniture in a lowly ship's decoration, for the holding of a stock of salt meat for the crew. The men gathered around; Arthur volunteered to relieve the wheel that Wilkinson might join them.

“Squat here, squat there, but sit ye down!” shouted Nassau. “We're all as one man here,” he cried, laying hold of a bottle and fitting his round nostrils to the round hole of its neck.

‘The seamen filed up rapidly. Old Stormy was hoisted on to a capstan, and a full bottle and glass put into his hands. A queer picture for that Atlantic sunset to gild! Melting now like a wreath of vapour in the blue glory of the north-west was the topmost canvas of the *Pearl*, and the sea was a surface of divine tints, from the heaving gold under the sun to the deep, soft, fervid dye of evening in the far and lonely east. This age, ladies and gentlemen, could not produce this picture. I do not mean because the pirate is dead, but because most of the romantic conditions of the sea have been entirely changed by steam, or by the transformation which steam has worked in the sailing ship. The sea has been picturesque since the days of the coracle; if it has ceased to be so, I do not desire to say, nor to

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hold that all the poetic and sentimental elements of one of the most prosaic callings under the moon must be sought in ships of this sort, and not in the steam liner which passes through the night full of fire and the clanging songs of engines. At the same time, the sea will never more give you this picture of Nassau and his men, with the imprisoned girl below, and the faint, vanishing streak of the pirate north-west. But then, and before, the annals of the ocean teemed with high romance. The mariner's ship, no matter what century you choose, seemed built for the painter's art, and the ancient seaman of Coleridge is no opium-inspired creation of one of the great spirits of his time, but a phantasy very fit indeed for the manning of the castelated hulks in which he is to be found, in one time peering at you in a suit of armour, at another in raiment which makes him look like a visitor from another world. His "shippe" is a "barke," and she streams onwards towards the undiscovered land of virgin gold, of that sweet singer the mermaid, and of many enchantments hidden beyond the mountains—forward, I say, she streams under low, round-bellied canvas with tops like church-towers, whence blow her pennons, whose tongues lick the blue breeze some distance beyond that queer spar called the boltsprit. All this has passed; we remain,' continued Captain Foster with a glance of pride aloft at his own lustrous and teeming pyramids—'we remain; but, ladies and gentlemen, the age of the *Charmer* lies dead amongst the buried centuries. Yet she, and only such as she, gives us the picture of Nassau and the revelry of his men.

'It was not long before some of them showed marks of intoxication. Cabbage had carried a glass of grog to

Wilkinson, who declined it (though he could suck from the can as thirstily as another), on the grounds that he would drink as a seaman, but not as a pirate. So Cabbage swallowed the pannikinful in the face of Wilkinson, and was slightly the drunker therefor; if he repeated Wilkinson's saying to Nassau, the coloured rascal took no notice of it. It was to be a fine dog-watch, with the gorgeous western sky and a tender breeze that promised the radiance of stars and the flash of the running phosphorescence throughout the night, and it was not until half-past six that two of the *Charmer's* pirates lay motionlessly drunk, one with a bottle in his hand, the other with a can; they lay against the scuttle-butt, which was secured hard by the starboard fore-rigging. The others at this hour were lurching in the direction of the fore-castle, where all had been arranged as regards the routine, sleeping-places and the like; and Nassau, who was as sober as an empty hook-pot, stretched himself a moment before proceeding to the cabin to engage in a conversation with Miss Rose. Just then Arthur Cochrane, who had kept forward during the greater part of the men's drinking and yarns, seeing Nassau making his way to the cabin, followed him fast, and Nassau stopped on looking behind and seeing him.

"Captain Nassau," exclaimed young Cochrane, "can I have a word with you?"

"What do you want to say?" asked Nassau.

"I presume I am to occupy the berth," said the young fellow, "that I have slept in since the rescue of Miss Rose Island?"

'Nassau never hated this young man more bitterly than when he put on a natural easy air which went

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as far beyond the coloured man's reach as his bright hair and handsome looks.

"You're a foremast hand, and you'll sleep with the men," answered Nassau, in one of the brutal ways he had. "I shall want your cabin for the chief mate; you're too old a soldier, I reckon, to suppose that foremast hands, whether you call them men or boys, sleep in the officers' quarters."

"I am willing to do the work of a foremast hand, it is true," returned Arthur, with a face which made Nassau instinctively knit his frame together; in fact, he saw quick death and damnation to him in the eyes and slight frown of the tall young man who stood before him, and so his perception shaped his arms into readiness. "But," continued young Cochrane, "I am a passenger. I am not a stowaway; you cannot compel me to work. I can use this ship as I did when my father was alive——"

A sudden shiver of a passion that had nearly mastered him left his face white as it swept through his form when he spoke of his father. Julius stepped back a pace. Young Cochrane went on:

"I shall sleep in the cabin, if I occupy but a locker. Do you object?"

Nassau muttered to himself. His face was full of rage, but there was fear in it too. "You shall sleep where you please!" he exclaimed. "And you shall be a passenger, and you shall not work—d'ye hear? But this is a fact: Old Stormy, who is chief officer of this schooner, shifts to your berth this day."

Arthur looked him up and down; then in silence walked right aft, and seated himself near the wheel. Evening was now at hand; its darkness was upon the

face of the waters across the stern of the schooner, and the glittering tapestries of the west were slowly fading out, but the light in that corner of splendour still suffused the heavens to the zenith, and the schooner was illuminated, and her sails were spaces of cloth of gold, and the light was upon the deck with dark shadows moving in time to the unheard music of the delicate swell, and the men forward and the two drunken seamen were perfectly visible to their good angels, let alone to Nassau, who was their bad one. The coloured pirate put his hand upon the companion, and was about to descend, when he bethought him that when he had left the deck there would be no look-out kept. He stood a minute looking forward, and, spying his chief officer, Old Stormy, leaning over the windlass end, he hailed him, and told him to step aft and keep a look-out till the watches were settled. But Old Stormy answered by a drunken shake of the head, and Nassau, seeing that he was too tipsy to obey orders or understand things, turned to Arthur, and said:

“Will you keep watch whilst I am below?”

“As a passenger, I am willing to oblige you to that extent,” answered young Cochrane.

“No further words were exchanged. Nassau sank down the companion way, followed by the eyes of Arthur, who thought of Rose.

“I don’t know,” said Wilkinson, “how long they’re a-going to keep me standing ’ere. My trick was up more than an hour ago. If I ain’t relieved soon, I shall let go the wheel, get some supper, and turn in, and take my chance. What would Dr. Johnson ’a thought of them swillers as pirates?”

‘His laugh exposed a wonderful grin of yellow fangs.

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““ You are not one of them ?” said Cochrane.

““ I am not a bloody pirate,” answered the young man. “I came to sea to work a better traverse than that. Why, them men will never fight when it comes to it. In my opinion, it’s mere mutiny with the word piracy wrote under it by ignorant men to give it a meaning.”

““ They are a bad lot,” said Cochrane.

““ A worse you couldn’t find ; but if it should come to fighting——”

‘The young fellow broke off, laughing loud and continuously. Cochrane, looking at him steadily, spoke with trembling lips :

““ I am sure you are an honest fellow, and are on the side of myself and Miss Rose. You know the crew better than I do, and Nassau, by his own confessions, has been a pirate. He’s the author of deeds for the lightest of which they would hang him if they could bring it home. Tell me now, as an honest man, who killed my father this morning ?”

‘He began to shake as he asked this tremendous question, and a look of awe entered Wilkinson’s face, and he seemed to be struck with consternation and a deeper sense of the assassination than had before visited him as he answered, holding a spoke with one hand, and resting his clenched fist upon another :

““ So help me God, then, Mr. Cochrane, it was that black dog Julius Nassau, or his father the devil.”

““ You have no doubt ?” said Cochrane.

““ Who is the man outside him to do it ?” was the answer. “I know the crew ; I’ve lived long enough with ’em to know them. There is no man aboard would have killed your father in his sleep if it isn’t

that stinking nigger. He did it to seize the vessel. It was arranged amongst the men that if any accident happened to your father so that Nassau took command, he and all hands were to possess themselves of the *Charmer* as their own property, Nassau bossing 'em, and they were to go to a island where they'd get a few men and some guns and stuff proper to a pirate, and cruise about in the manner of the *Pearl* till they'd got as much money as they wanted, when they'd give up and disperse, and all this I knew was agreed upon."

"He killed my father to get command," muttered Arthur. "Oh, the bloody, fiendish hound! So kind! so good! a prince amongst sailors! to be sent to his death by the black hand of the vilest coward that ever slew in his sleep a harmless gentleman!"

'He could speak no more, and turned his head aside to hide his tears.'

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOVERS' DILEMMA.

'THE low, almost level, sunshine slanted off the dim, mean, open skylight of the schooner, and her cabin was dark because her ports were small. Nassau unhooked the lamp and lighted it, and hung it up again, and waited until he could see easily. The interior was empty. Miss Rose Island, then, was in her little berth, and there she must have been nearly all day. Captain Nassau was come to pay his court. To qualify him for the romantic pleasure, duty and obligation he contemplated he went into the cabin or berth which Captain Cochrane had occupied, lighted the small lamp in it, and washed his face and brushed his hair, and put on a plum-coloured short coat with yellow embroidery, and he tied a cravat round his neck, which expanded into a large spotted bow under his chin. He did not look very much like a sailor, nor, indeed, a pirate. In fact, he very well resembled that which he was—a 'longshore dandy half-blood. But it must always be said that he was an excellent practical seaman, and that for purposes of navigation he knew a great deal about the sun, moon, and stars. He was in the late Captain Cochrane's cabin, and stood looking

about him for a few moments. His eye particularly paused upon the bunk which henceforth he would occupy, for this was now his cabin as captain of the schooner, and most of his effects, including his banjo, had been carried into it, and they were mixed up a little with certain belongings of the late skipper—boots, oilskins, and the like. Whatever may have been the reflections which passed through his mind at sight of the bunk, they did not detain him. In a minute, after beautifying himself, he stepped out of his berth into the schooner's cabin or living-room, and straightway knocked upon Rose's door. The girl opened it instantly, clearly prepared for his visit, and you saw she expected him and not Arthur by her swift opening of that door, and a resolved air as her eyes went in a flash to his dusky face. The strange fancy of a serpent of beautiful shape and fascinating in motion would, I think, have been strong in you had you seen her framed in that small open doorway, though she stood motionless—yet not motionless, for her small beautifully-shaped head moved as with the vibration of a serpent's upon her delicate neck whilst she waited for the man's accost. His teeth looked white in their dark setting, and his smile produced nearly all he had in that way. He made her one of those bows which can only be described as reaching the very height of finish and elegance in the opinions of the ladies whose company is kept by such men as Mr. Nassau when they are ashore.

“Pray, Miss Rose,” said he, giving her another bow of the same exquisite sort, in which the spotted tie figured as well as the wide negro grin, “let me lead you to the table. I have not had the pleasure of seeing

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you for many hours. I beg you will make yourself perfectly easy in mind. In me," and here his voice sounded like a bray, heard at a distance, "you behold one who adores you, and who will be as a shield of steel to you, let what will happen. You are as safe in this little vessel as you would be amongst your friends in Kingston. Can I say more?" he continued, with a grin of passion, and an expression of sincerity in his face which rendered his horribly ugly mask unendurable as an illustration of the human visage. He held out his dark hand, which she took with a slight curtsy without a moment's hesitation, without shudder or visible aversion, and he led her to a chair at the table, himself standing beside her, but not offensively or alarmingly close.

"Is Mr. Arthur Cochrane in the ship?" she asked, scarcely glancing up at him.

"Oh yes."

"Has the pirate you made me hide from gone?"

"Long ago," he answered, trying to languish at her, but with so little success that you could have thought of nothing but a hedgehog. "Haven't you a single word of thanks to offer me for rescuing you from the terrible clutches of the most bloodthirsty pirate now afloat upon the ocean?"

She slightly bowed her head.

"Don't you know, my sweet Miss Rose," said he, stooping his repulsive face by about half a head closer to hers, "that this dreadful Captain Cutyard not only pillaged the *Eleuthera*, of which you were a passenger, and might have been a passenger again, but stole a beautiful girl out of her to make a wife of, which will be the seventh; and he certainly would have stole you

before her had I allowed him to clap eyes on your face."

"It is true, then," she exclaimed, starting in her chair and staring up at him with a countenance that looked as though chiselled out of marble in the sea-light that swung over the table, "that the young lady, a girl I was friendly with on board, has been seized by this pirate Cutyard, who is taking her away to one of the places he haunts?"

"He says so. I did not see her. The notion of a ship of war being on his track made him in a hurry on a sudden," said Nassau.

The girl looked straight across at the opposite bulkhead with her under lip awork, and her eyes were never more flashing or scornful. The black standing by her side could have fallen on his knees and worshipped her. Such extraordinary beauty he had never heard of. Oh, what a glorious creature to possess! But with his exalted admiration was mingled perception that it was not very difficult to raise hell in the heart of that wonderful, beautiful, serpentine creature who had floated to the schooner's side for him and for him only. Suddenly she looked up; something in phantasmal fashion—a human face, faintly touched by light—had passed the skylight, but out of the line of Nassau's vision. Julius was about to speak; she interrupted him.

"Has the murderer of Captain Cochrane been discovered?" she asked.

"How can he be discovered?" he answered, with a low, deep laugh. "They'll want more fathoms than go to the deep-sea lead who search for him. He is deep in the sea, my Rose, for the hand that murdered Captain Cochrane is stitched up in sailcloth, and lies at the end of the man's own right arm."

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"Where are you steering this schooner to?" said the girl, after a short silence, during which she directed a glance at the skylight.

"To one of the most romantic islands in the world, but we have not yet shaped a course for it," he replied; and he added very irrelevantly: "You have two pretty rings on your finger; I will take care that all your fingers shall be gloriously adorned. You are made for beautiful clothes and rich gems, and you shall walk in splendour. By the heart of my mother I swear it! You shall not desire anything in vain."

'This man, whose appearance was that of an ape tethered to a street organ, dropped on one knee at her side, and with a face grotesque with passion laid his heavy lips upon her hand. She glanced again at the skylight, but she did not remove her hand. On a sudden she stood up.

"I suppose I am at liberty to go on deck?" she said.

"Certainly," he answered, getting up off his knee. "You are no prisoner, but mistress of this schooner, and of the man who commands her."

'She scarcely strove to disguise her disgust at this, though it is certain she had in a few hours schooled her mind to an attitude from which nothing could make her depart, and perhaps in rectification of her oversight she softened and sweetened her voice to say: "The mistress should always command, and I desire you will tell me when I may hope to find myself ashore at Kingston amongst my friends."

"You shall command—you shall command," he replied in a sort of guttural murmur, and added, "but you shall see an earthly paradise first, and the sight of it

will fascinate you and enchant you. You will be the princess of it, and the wish to return to Kingston will trouble you like a bad dream."

"I will go on deck now," was all she said in answer to this. "I should like to see Mr. Cochrane."

"Oh! he is alive and well, and as a passenger he is keeping my watch to oblige me," he answered, with a curl of nostril, and bringing his brows together; and then in a dramatic manner which he could frequently adopt, no doubt being persuaded to the depth of his soul that he was a fine actor, and had missed his chance of great fame and greater wealth by going to sea, he said: "Surely you have had nothing to eat or drink this long day!"

"I have taken what I needed, thank you," she answered, indicating by a motion of the head the little place in which the cabin stores in small quantities were kept. She entered her berth to fetch her hat. He watched every movement of her form. When she came out she said: "Who will occupy the Captain's cabin?"

He placed his hand upon his heart and bowed to her.

"In what berth does Mr. Cochrane sleep?" she inquired.

"He will make use of this cabin," he answered.

"He will leave this vessel at the first opportunity. He is a sailor," he added, with his wild, wide grin, "and he can sleep, whether his couch be a plank or a feather-bed."

'Ladies and gentlemen,' said Captain Foster, 'I am endeavouring to make this man speak as he often chose to speak, and believe I am placing a fairly accurate picture before you. Where Nassau had picked up his language, his command of the English tongue, his

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knowledge of other languages, I am not able to tell you. But it is certain he could unfold his mind with fewer errors of grammar, and fewer blunders in effect, than many who would laugh at him as a black spouter. Often he sank to the level of the fo'c'sl'e, but his vocabulary, nevertheless, was large, liberal, and even rich. Miss Rose, without further reference to the subject of Arthur's quarters and his condition in the schooner, went on deck, and Nassau followed her. It was now early night upon the ocean. The breeze still softly sang, and the schooner was making fire in the sea. The last scar of sunset was gone, and the figure of the helmsman slowly rose and slowly fell against the soft scintillant dusk that floated in flashings of stars over the vessel's mastheads. Wilkinson had been replaced at the wheel by Cabbage, who was not too drunk to steer. Rose instantly looked for Arthur, and saw him standing a little forward of the mainmast. She immediately joined him. They kissed; there was nobody near to observe their greeting.

"Where is the black?" he said in a low voice.

"He followed me on deck, and he is there—speaking to the man at the wheel," she answered.

"What has he been talking about?"

"Oh, he is going to make me a princess, and he is going to steer the schooner to a glorious island," she answered. "He is to cover me with jewels; you are to leave the vessel at the first opportunity. I believe he is mad."

"My God!" muttered Arthur. "You put the idea into my head; it may be so."

"He was not offensive in his speech," she continued; "he was disgusting only in his presence. What does

he mean to do with me? If he sends you out of the ship I shall be alone."

"He'll not separate us," said Arthur, preserving his low tone. "The crew are with him; but they did not ship as pirates, and they may be reasoned with."

"No, he'll not separate us," said Rose quietly. "Are not we strong enough to recover this vessel? There is Wilkinson. I believe he could be trusted. There are firearms in the cabin."

She was proceeding. A man came lurching out of the shadows forward.

"Where's the land of knives and forks?" said he, in a drunken voice. "Blast me, if you don't need to strike your eyes together to get a light. Hillo! is this you, my young cock?" he exclaimed, halting opposite Cochrane, without taking notice of the girl. "I'm chief mate—Old Stormy they calls me. I'm to occupy your berth as a hoffer of the ship by command. I'm a-going to take a look at it. It's good that it's dark. Smother me if I should like the lady to see the bundle of straw which makes my bed. Do pirates sleep on straw? I'll take your'n, and the skipper shall find you another," and he lurched aft, singing.

"Are you armed, Arthur?" asked Rose, after watching the drunken sailor, whilst Nassau still continued in conversation with the man at the wheel.

"No," he answered. "If I drew a weapon upon a man I know how it would go with me, and if this schooner keeps you on board, she keeps me also."

She seemed to hesitate before she asked the next question, then in a low voice said:

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' He told her how he had wrapped it up, and placed it in a locker in the Captain's cabin ; it might be useful as a testimony. He did not seem struck by her question.

" "I am utterly at fault," he said, "because your presence on board makes it impossible for me to accept the ideas which occur to me. You speak of Wilkinson. We dare not say that he can be certainly trusted, and if he betrayed us in some drunken mood, they would make no more trouble of tossing me overboard than of wringing the neck of a fowl. You would then be left alone—alone with Nassau—a frightful thought to me, Rose ; and so it is that I dare not dream of taking any steps which might result in our being separated."

' As he was talking they heard a man singing and a loud shout in the cabin. His roaring voice, which was full of drink and merriment, caught the ears of others who were forward. The two men who had sat down, overcome by the fumes of drink, stood up. A shadow passed staggering on the other side of the deck. Then one of the people, observing that Old Stormy had got hold of a decanter half full of some sort of drink, yelled applause, staggered round to the hatch, and disappeared down the steps. In a few minutes they began to sing, and Old Stormy's voice was loud. Nassau stepped below to hunt the men on deck again and silence the shindy ; and the lovers, who with the fellow at the wheel were the sole occupants of the schooner's decks, continued in deep and earnest conversation. It was clear that Rose had made up her mind to a course. Arthur seemed perfectly sensible that she had framed an intention, which to be sure might be conditional, but which, as a resolution, was supporting and even animating. She suggested several schemes. The crew

were few, she said ; could not she keep the man at the wheel covered with a pistol, whilst Arthur secured the men in their fo'c's'le under hatches ? What should prevent them killing Captain Nassau as a pirate, and with the schooner's muskets shooting down the crew, leaving one or two who might plead for mercy, and keeping them to help to navigate the vessel to Kingston ? This was a girl's suggestion, born of desperation, willing that every creature aboard should be murdered in cold blood, so that she and Arthur were not separated. Arthur, whilst she talked, glanced aloft at the stars at the yardarms, and noticing that the particular star that had swung to and fro like a jewel at the yardarm of the little topgallant yard had disappeared past the sail, he pressed Rose's wrist in token that he would return to her, and walked swiftly and lightly to the wheel. He glanced at the little illuminated disc of compass card, and immediately observed that the course had been changed since Nassau came on deck with Rose. It had been west, it was now west-north-west. Probably the change had been made without attempt to trim sail to it, because of the state of the men. He was about to rejoin Rose, who remained waiting for him at the mainmast, when Cabbage, who grasped the wheel, said in a voice still a little maudlin with drink :

“ “ Where are we a-going to ? ”

“ “ Why, we're a crew of pirates, aren't we ? ” answered Arthur, “ and we're going to an island where we shall fill up with guns and men, and then we mean to sail the ocean until we are chockablock with minted gold. ”

“ “ You bain't one of us, are you ? ” asked Cabbage ; but Arthur was walking forward when this question was

put to him, listening as he went to the shouts and songs of men in the cabin, and the one voice that sounded highest, and whose laughter sometimes reminded you of the bleating of a sheep, was Nassau's.

'Arthur stepped to Rose's side:

"The course has been changed," he said. "What fine land can the black devil have in his mind? If he touches anywhere, it must be at a cay. Anything at all answering to a fairyland fit for a princess must be hunted for in seas which this course will effectually keep us clear of."

"Oh, what is to be done?" cried Rose, clasping Arthur's arm, whilst she sobbed once or twice. "Cannot you tell his motive? It may be piracy, too; but his main idea in stealing the schooner was to steal me with her, and how can I escape him unless by some desperate efforts which you dislike, because you *know* that failure might end in brutality and murder, and leave me helpless and alone in possession of Nassau?"

"Whatever we do, Rose, must be triumphantly done," he said, after seeming to think a little. "Give me time to reflect upon a scheme which *shall not* fail, and do not wonder at anything I say or do. We are together now. I believe the heart of the wretch who murdered my father would halt at the idea of butchering his son, but——"

'At this moment Nassau and the others in the cabin came tramping and roaring up on deck, and Nassau in cordial notes shouted:

"Now, men, away forward!" and with this he shoved one, and braying in feigned laughter, he shoved another, whilst the men were singing brokenly certain strange songs of the sea, whilst Black danced with all

his might, yelling, "This is how they do it in our alley, bullies!"

'Nassau crossed the deck to Rose and Arthur.

"Will you give me the pleasure," said he, in a voice utterly changed from the hilarious negro-like tones he had employed in shouting to the men, "of taking you for a charming evening stroll up and down that quarter-deck? I know you are a lover of the beautiful, and the sea is as beautiful this night as the divine painter can represent it."

'It was astonishing to hear such fine words in the mouth of such a man. He bowed and flourished as he spoke as though he were a Frenchman. He seemed wholly ignorant that Arthur existed, and addressed himself to Rose.

"Oh, it will give me pleasure to walk with you," answered Rose, in a voice which was a clearer intimation that she had resolved upon a distincter line of conduct than any she had yet betrayed.

"Cochrane," said Nassau, "you see the state of the men; keep an eye upon 'em, and keep my look-out whilst I get some supper for Miss Island. When I return on deck, you have all night in before you."

'So saying, he offered his arm to Rose, who, after a pause that was perhaps unnoticeable in that darkness, passed her hand through his crooked elbow, and they walked slowly aft.

"You seem to object to Mr. Arthur. Why should not he join us?" said the girl.

"I am jealous, my love," he answered, trying to speak softly; but his mouth was too wide for softness, which comprises sweetness and delicacy of utterance, and Nassau's voice in softness was the true voice of the negro gasping in slumber.

'In truth the black dog owed more than his colour, and perhaps his hair, to his father. Cochrane walked slowly forward as far as the fore-rigging, keeping to windward, so that he held the weatherside of the quarterdeck in view. Two men were sitting on the fore-castle-head, smoking and arguing, and still the worse for the doses they had drained down. They talked of pirates and piracy, and the little that young Cochrane could collect was this: that they both praised the life, and that one was more enthusiastic and blasphemous on the subject than the other. Another, apparently asleep, rested his back, with his head lolled against a bulwark stanchion. Ladies and gentlemen, I will not insist that at this critical juncture Arthur Cochrane exhibited the spirit and courage you had a right to expect from him after considering his character by the light of the earlier part of this narrative; but I am an old sailor, and know the difficulties and perils of the ocean, and I am at a loss to tell you how I should have acted had I been in this man's place. It is easy for writers of romance to represent their heroes as passing through adventures at whose absurdity the sailor laughs, and performing prodigies of valour at whose impossibility the sailor laughs more loudly still. How young Cochrane would have acted had he stood alone it is idle to conjecture. He had great spirit and the fearlessness of the British seaman. But in this trouble he had Rose and Rose's safety to consider. He could take no step which would imperil her purity and life, so far as they could be provided for by his presence. She had talked, in the true wild romantic vein, of shooting and battenning down. But could matters be so nicely arranged—as they would be, of course, by the hand of the novelist—

as to insure that the men could be battened down in their fore-castle at the moment that Nassau was shot? If not, miscarriage was inevitable.

‘His mind was crowded. Again and again he turned over the projects which thronged the chambers of his brain. It worked like madness in him to see his Rose, his beautiful Rose, on the arm of the wretch whom he knew to be the bloody and ruthless assassin of his father. But let him in his righteous wrath rush to the man and lay him dead at the foot of Rose! what would be the attitude of the sailors? How would they serve him, who they knew could stretch their necks to the sun by proclaiming them pirates and relating the story of the voyage? The breeze was sweet and cool. The splash of the curl of sea at the bow was as pleasant to the senses as the rain-like music of a fountain playing in the dark. The young fellow in the shadow of the shrouds of the foremast thought of his father, and the tears of manhood, which seldom visit the eyes though they fill the heart, tightened in his throat, and he looked over the side at the black surface of water, in which the sea-lightning flashed with the faintness of the gleam of a distant storm across the hills, and in imagination he saw his father in the white shroud in which he had been launched, and he cast up his eyes to God and prayed for him whom he had dearly loved.

‘By-and-by, on looking towards the quarter-deck, he noticed it was vacant, and he walked slowly aft. The frame of the skylight submitted a considerable square of the little interior well illuminated by the cabin lamp. He saw Rose sitting at the table resting her cheek in most forlorn posture in her hand, and then suddenly Nassau appeared within the square, bearing

sweets, cakes, wine, and other stuff, which he would exactly know where to find. What he said Arthur could not hear. He spoke throatily, as though emotion were overmastering him. His wide smile, the colour of his skin, his absurd costume, formed one of those pictures, with the rough table and the cake and wine upon it and the girl sitting at it, which make you think of some masterpiece of Hogarth as you look. Rose ate and drank, and the black, sitting close by, gazed at her with a devouring passion as he sparingly sipped his wine. It was impossible to hear what the coloured coxcomb said, and young Cochrane would not deign to listen, though once he met the gaze of his love looking upward, but unconscious that her sight rested upon him, for he stood in the darkness. Presently Julius disappeared, but immediately reappeared with his banjo, which he fell to strumming, sitting within two chairs of Rose, that his music should not be too loud to be sweet. He sang songs in Spanish and English; they were love songs; his little eyes, deep in their sockets, reddened, perhaps to the demoniac hue of his soul; his leaning attitude was as though he would overwhelm her with his banjo and songs, striking by the magic of music, and by the "Dorique delicacie" of his singing, and by the impassioned gaze he fixed upon her, and by the tremendous sincerity he expressed from his wiry hair down to his half-Wellington boots, through the bitter prejudice the unfortunate colour of his skin had excited in her. The fellows forward, being pretty well drunk, did not lie aft to listen, but Wilkinson's tall knock-kneed figure might have been seen hovering near the skylight. The banjo ceased; Arthur on passing the skylight saw that Rose had retired. A few minutes

later Nassau came on deck. His voice betokened him as in an exalted mood. He sang out to Arthur :

““You can go below and turn in for the rest of the night. Make no noise; the young lady has gone to her repose.”

‘He then began to whistle and dance, all very softly, snapping his fingers till they sounded like castanets; and in this way he capered to the man at the wheel, whilst Arthur, almost convinced that Rose was right when she said that the man was mad, descended the companion-steps to the cabin. Nassau had cleared the table; he had turned down the wick of the lamp, and it burnt dimly. Young Cochrane paused before his sweetheart’s door, then, with a shake of the head and a look up, passed forgetfully to his berth—I mean the little hole which he had occupied since Rose was rescued. He opened the door; there was light to see by; a bushy-faced man, with one leg over the edge of the bunk and his arms folded across his breast, lay in the four boards which had been nailed together, and which left about room enough to hang up an oilskin coat. Arthur, forgetting the matter, was astonished at the sight of a man coolly stretched upon his mattress, but before he could speak the man in a deep voice, without lifting his head, grumbled out :

““Who the hell are you? Ain’t I to get no rest in this blasted rat-trap? He’s been a-singing fit to turn the stomach of a shark, and now he’s done ’ere *you* come——”

‘Cochrane shut the door, recollecting that Old Stormy was chief mate, with the right to use this berth, and, laughing a little, he took up an old hair pillow and lay down upon an athwart-ship locker facing the companion-steps.’

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SLEEPWALKER.

'I HAVE said that Arthur Cochrane stretched himself upon a locker, with an old hair pillow under his head. It is supposed that a sailor can sleep anywhere and anyhow, even amid the greatest uproar of thunderous storm and smiting seas. This is not exactly true. Sailors are much more like human beings in appearance, prejudices, passions, and the like, than is commonly believed. On board ship, at all events, there is no person more profoundly respected than the sleeper in his watch below. For him the deck is lightly trodden; for him the laugh is silenced, and the hoarse loud voice subdued into a mere rattle of whisper. Had all been well with the little schooner, doubtless young Cochrane would soon have been making a long off-shore stretch. But his mind was too heavily burthened to admit of sleep. He lay in the shadows forward, and his brain spun rapidly, and his eyes remained open, and his gaze alternated betwixt the cabin his father had slept in and the cabin which was occupied by Rose. In the open frame of the skylight the stars ran to and fro, like marbles of quicksilver kept running on a velvet board whose sides were invisible. The voices of the sea sung

their songs of the night in the small open port-holes. The hush was broken by the sounds which the timbers of a ship make when she is lightly lifted and softly sunk by the swell. Shortly before midnight the young fellow fell asleep. He woke on a sudden, and saw Nassau standing at his side gazing down upon him. The expression on the nigger's face was extraordinary, so far as it could be read in that dim light. It was a mixture of loathing and fear, with a thin veiling of blackness, as though the man saw something that dazed him. Arthur met his gaze, and the coloured man without a sign passed straight to the little hole in which Old Stormy was sleeping. He called to Old Stormy to rouse up. It was eight bells, he said, and his watch on deck. Old Stormy exclaimed:

““Ay, ay; it's all right. I'm a-coming. Cuss these watches! They're always a-waking of a man up.”

“Nassau repassed Arthur without looking at him, and softly and slowly went along the cabin, and mounted the companion-steps to await the old seaman. Arthur could hear the voices of Nassau and the man at the wheel, but not what they said. Watches are changed by good men rapidly; no good sailor will keep his brother-sailor waiting for his relief. In a few moments Old Stormy appeared, and Arthur, sitting up, said to him:

““You're using my mattress. Bring down your own when you come. You've got something softer than a plank in your fo'c's'le bunk, and I'm damned if I'm going to make shift with the lid of a locker.”

““Who wants your mattress?” grumbled Old Stormy, in the level tone of a seaman who begins a working song, in the chorus of which all hands will in a minute

join. "What brings the likes of you to sea? Lockers too 'ard, are they? You stop at 'ome when you get there, and sign articles for nothing ashore that ain't soft."

'The growling old salt, who was scarcely awake, pushed himself to the companion by thrusting at the table with one big tarry fist. He vanished, and then there was the noise of three men talking on deck, but no word came into the cabin. Arthur pulled his mattress out of the bunk, and laid it along the locker, and then lay down. But not to sleep. His mind was full of thoughts of his father, and a good idea as to the salvation of Rose and himself would enter his head, only to prove, after a close view, that, even if practicable, even if possible, the scheme would be too perilous, with its danger of exposure to Rose afterwards. Whilst he lay awake thinking, Nassau came into the cabin. He paused at the table, looking forward in the direction of Arthur; then turned the reddish gleam of his eye upon the door of Rose's cabin. Arthur watched him. He was unarmed, but some knives for cabin use lay in shelves almost within arm's reach when the young fellow should jump up; and Arthur lay still as though in sleep, and watched the dusky man, erect and motionless, at the table.

'It was a false alarm, however, for, after whistling softly to himself, Nassau walked straight to the cabin which had been occupied by the skipper, and which the coloured devil had now made his own. He closed the door. It was evident that the man was going to "turn in," as they say at sea, and take all the sleep he could get out of his watch below. Then came as a wave through the cabin, with its dim lantern lightly

swinging, the former hush, with its music of the night in the port-holes, and now and again the tread of a shoe along the plank above. Wearing out at last, Arthur closed his eyes and slept. He was awakened by a noise, as of a box or light case having been overturned. Like most sailors, he was swift in his awakenings, and when awake all his dormant faculties informed and illuminated as one the tower and look-out of his brain. They were acting at once. This splendid and useful quality of leaping into life from the very verge of the black stupor of sleep is the gift of the sea. Aroused by the noise I have mentioned, Arthur lifted his head, and saw Nassau coming out of his cabin. Dimly as the cabin lantern burned, it revealed to Arthur the white face of the clock under the skylight, and the hour was a quarter to two. The weather was as it had been at midnight. Sounds easily caught the attention. The squeak of a rat in the hold was as plain to the hearing as the creak of a block high aloft. Arthur knew that Nassau's watch did not come round till four o'clock, which would be eight bells of the middle watch, and then it was for the coloured captain to stand the watch that followed—namely, the morning watch. Nassau came out of his cabin walking stiffly; the buoyancy of the ocean was not in his legs. He looked right ahead of him, and, still keeping his head fixed in a way that was like a sentry's marching up and down, he turned and went on deck.

'Now, there is nothing whatever unusual in the master of a ship going on deck in the night to see how things stand. The officer of the watch is sometimes surprised by his apparition. A bad officer of the watch may be discovered by his skipper asleep, and the ship

at the mercy of the helmsman and the weather. Had Nassau been any other captain, Arthur would have thought nothing of his going on deck at that or any other hour. But the man who had, in strange walk and stiff figure, vanished into the open night above was a murderer, as Arthur believed—a foul and dangerous villain, to be watched as you follow the motions of a deadly reptile at large.

“He cannot rest,” thought young Cochrane. “Of course he has committed other murders. But this is one of a few hours’ since; the blood is in his damned nostril; the knife is still clutched by his damned hand; he cannot sleep. . . .”

‘A man was speaking near the open skylight; this was some five minutes after Nassau had gone on deck. It was the voice of Old Stormy, and Arthur heard him say, presumably to the man at the wheel:

“Curse me, if I believe he’s alive! He’s a-walking and a-talking just as a ghost would!”

‘A question was asked from the wheel. Still standing close to the skylight, so that Arthur could hear, Old Stormy answered:

“He’s walking forwards. He don’t turn his head. He’s gone deaf. He’s a-talking to himself. If he ain’t the corpse of himself, what is he?”

‘Then another man, evidently moving in a hurry, arrived at the skylight, and stood near Old Stormy. It was Cabbage. The crew were few, and Arthur easily distinguished them by their voices.

“What’s he a-hunting after?” said Cabbage. “He went past me with his head straight, and I heard him say, in his natural voice, ‘By the heart of my mother, I’d wade through a sea of blood to get her, and it’s but

the one way of doing it. A patient, good-natured old man, who never—who never——’ He broke off, and went round the windlass, and I heard him muttering, but it wasn’t sense.”

‘The two men strolled away from the skylight. Arthur sat upright upon his mattress, waiting to see if Nassau, whether awake or asleep, meant to return below. He wished that the black dog would walk overboard. He listened attentively. Yes; he even listened for the sound of a splash. He could catch the grumble, but not the articulate sounds of voices on deck, and judged that the men were commenting upon Nassau’s movements. Excitement in him grew rapidly, and he was in the act of rising to go on deck and see what was happening, when he saw one of Nassau’s legs in the companion-way, and the whole man showed. He entered in the same strange manner in which he had quitted the cabin, and turned, stiff as a ramrod, with set face as though his neck was bound in some iron collar, to survey his berth. It was his sleeping-place now, though, as you know, and as I venture to remind you, it had been the cabin occupied by Captain Cochrane. The coloured man halted and stood looking. He seemed as though buried in profound meditation. Arthur could hear him talking to himself, but he spoke softly, as though there were some sleeper at hand whom he would not wake. He continued for a while muttering and seemingly meditating as his face remained turned upon the Captain’s door. Then, with a sudden wild gesture of arm as though he were one who had solved some desperate problem, or to whom had come some illumination of tragic import, he faced about, and walked slowly down the cabin. Arthur Cochrane sprang erect,

but did not think to arm himself with a knife, seeing quite clearly now that the man was walking in his sleep. Presumably the men, when Nassau went below, imagined that he had returned to his cabin to turn in. Their voices could be heard, but they did not dodge in the skylight, or follow down the companion-way as men interested in the coloured man's movements would. Nassau's little eyes were open, but they had no more speculation than those of Banquo. His face in the light was an extraordinary sable mask; his lips lay apart, as though he breathed as a runner might. His lifeless stare was firmly fixed ahead of him. But now there occurred sundry small movements in the posture of his head, and he seemed to look slightly from side to side. One hand was tightly clenched, and lay upon his breast. The fingers of the other moved swiftly as though he played upon a musical instrument, or talked to the deaf. He came along down on the starboard side—it was, indeed, but a few paces—and, looking a little from side to side with incomparable effect, as though he had been a marvellous marionette put together and worked by an invisible intelligence almost Divine, he went straight to the two or three shelves in which the cutlery for cabin use was kept, and seemed to take a knife from a number. He weighed it, tested the sharpness of the blade as though he were purchasing or reasoning about it; but in reality he had taken no knife—he toyed with a phantom, and with other phantoms which he took from that shelf of knives, until he had satisfied himself, and, without a knife in his hand, he put on the motions of a man who is armed and must move stealthily, and walked in his blind living way, as though dead and galvanized, to the cabin he occupied. His coloured

face, his grotesque exhibition of hair, the red shirt he had put on when he had turned in at eight bells, were all the perfect counterpart and untravestied presentment of a Coburg stage murderer; but the reality made the difference—he was a frightful figure walking in his sleep. Arthur followed him close; he did not pause to grasp a knife—he knew himself more than the equal of the wretch whom he would rather hang by lawful measures than kill in a melodramatic shipboard affray. Just as Nassau grasped the handle of his cabin-door, the door of Rose's cabin was opened a little way, and by the small light Arthur saw his sweetheart. She had hastily wrapped a dressing-gown about her. He lifted his hand in a gesture signifying "Hush!" and then pointed to Nassau, who at that moment passed into his cabin, closing the door behind him.

"He walks in his sleep," whispered Arthur. "Do not awaken him."

'He stepped to the door, the handle of which he lightly turned. The door opened on soundless hinges with the droop of the stern in the swell, and the light of the cabin lamp came into the berth. Arthur immediately opened the door, and left it open, that he might see what Nassau did. Into the swoon of the keel-whitened swell the *Charmer*, with clock-like regularity, dipped her counter, and the clothes and other things which hung against the bulk-heads slightly swayed, and shadows entered which flitted. There was then a semblance of life even in the dead furniture of this little interior, with its table and chair and the like, not to mention the bunk in which Cochrane had slept, and in which he had lain dead yesterday morning. Close to that bunk stood the figure of Nassau. His

form had lost its ramrod stiffness, his figure moved to the motion of the deck with pliancy, and his neck was supple, and gave his head full play. He stood looking down into the bunk, which was furnished simply with a mattress and bolster, with strange gestures of his arms. He then turned his face to the right, and Arthur, who stood near, shrank, so lifelike were the lifeless eyes in that dark, corrugated, brute-like face, and in starting he saw Rose standing in the doorway. For the second time he lifted his arm in motion of silence. When he looked afresh at Nassau, the man was in the act of approaching the bunk close, and still his arms and his left hand—the right hand seemingly clasping a weapon—betokened in the black devil's soul a horror and agitation which made him as frightful to watch as a human being tortured by savages. And now he began to talk aloud in a thick and tremulous voice, but his speech was Spanish, and neither Arthur nor his listening sweetheart could understand him. Suddenly he raised to its full stretch the arm whose fist clutched the visionary weapon, and with a singular moan, the words having clearly some reference to pity and Mary in heaven, he brought the knife of his sleepwalking imagination down into the mattress with a force of stab that must have carried a real blade clean through the heart and body of any sleeper in that bunk.

“So, Rose, 'tis God forcing him into confession!” yelled Arthur; and in a spring he grasped Nassau by the throat, and bore him heavily to the deck.

‘Ladies and gentlemen, it is not customary, I believe, nor a process recommended by the faculty, to awaken the sleepwalker by knocking him down. In fact, great care is needed, great discretion must be exercised, in

following and observing him, lest he should be suddenly awakened in alarm and hurt himself. Nassau, however, was not to be regarded or thought of at this particular juncture from the side of humanity. He fell heavily to the deck with Arthur's strangling grip on his throat, and Rose screamed aloud. Nassau was a sailor, and very easily awakened, but no sailor, however easily awakened, can make much of things whilst he is being strangled. With the strength of a man in a struggle for life or death the coloured sleepwalker hove his assailant away from him and got on his legs, with a tremendous scramble of hands and play of feet. He looked round him; his amazement is not describable. He had half torn the shirt off his back in his struggle to throw Arthur off his throat, and stood up looking about him, a ragged figure of coloured terror and astonishment, expressing by a play of features of stupendous merit in a dramatic sense the vast variety of the movements of his soul. Arthur was about to close with him. Julius started back with a wild "Hallo!" Rose's scream had been heard on deck, but Nassau's bellow would have abundantly sufficed to let all hands know that something very much out of the way was going on below. Old Stormy came rushing down; he was followed by Black, Wilkinson, and the rest, leaving one man at the wheel. Who he was I cannot remember. Though it might be said that Nassau was wide awake, his senses had barely shown their heads above water, and after he had bellowed "Hallo!" he cried out in his thick braying voice:

"Why, in God A'mighty's name, am I dragged from my bed to be choked upon the deck?"

“What’s gone wrong?” shouted Old Stormy, bundling in at the door, and by his clumsy entrance forcing Rose into the Captain’s sleeping-berth.

‘As he asked this question the rest of the men came clattering down the companion-steps.

“This villain,” shouted Arthur in a passion of excitement, and red-hot with the discovery he did not question he had made, “has been compelled by the devil to betray his bloody secret in his sleep by acting over again unconsciously his murder of my father!”

“What do you say?” cried Nassau, lifting his voice almost into a scream. “That I in my sleep have acted the part which I was guiltless of when a waking man?”

‘The sailors stared at him. Rose had stepped to Arthur’s side, and was clinging to him in a shrinking attitude. The red lights of Nassau’s eyes travelled over the men’s faces and rested in the momentary pause upon Rose, and he then cried out again, almost in the same screaming tone, “I swear, my beautiful lady, my princess, my adored, that I am innocent of the murder of this man’s father, and that if I have acted the assassination over again——” He broke off, adding in a deep and thrilling voice, “It was a dream!”

“You’ve been a-mousing about the deck, you know,” said Old Stormy, “talkin’ a mucking rum lot of stuff.”

‘Another said, not quite accurately:

“Why, you was round by the fore ’atch, swearin’ you’d get her if you had to wade through blood.”

“A dream!” shouted Nassau. “Is a man responsible for what he says and does in his sleep? Who saw me play the part in my sleep of stabbing to

death a sleeping man—the man I respected, the man I could have loved for his gentleness and goodness?”

““Yes,” said a sailor. “Yer spoke very kindly of him whilst you was gliding like a ghost round the windlass.”

““I saw you,” said Arthur, evidently speaking with difficulty, so overpowering to the physical degree of almost setting his teeth were his feelings as he looked at the coloured man.

““And I saw you!” exclaimed Rose, snaking (for-give the only expression which occurs to me) out of her shrinking posture into a full and swelling attitude of hatred and defiance. “You appealed to the Virgin Mary, and then you drove the knife, which you believed you held, into the mattress, where, in your vision, you imagined you saw the sleeping figure of poor Captain Cochrane.”

““By God, I know nothing of all this!” said Nassau, folding his arms and sinking his head.

““It ain’t unusual for men to walk in their sleep,” said Black. “I’ve been shipmate with a sailor who used to tumble out of his hammock in his sleep, and walk right aft to the officer of the watch, and when he was kicked and pummelled and woke up, he’d swear that all he wanted to know was if the men’s dinner ’ad been served out, as ’e couldn’t get the news in the galley.”

““Well,” said Old Stormy, “it can’t be said that it’s out of the usual for folks to walk in their sleep. I knew a cobbler who one night got out of his bed with his eyes open and his mind shut. He was as sound asleep as was this ’ere black pirate just now. He walks across the street, gets into the ’ouse of his son-in-law, and

steals forty pound, the savings of years. This cobbler was very fond of his son-in-law, and 'ad 'elped 'im to save the money which 'e was a-stealing of. The son-in-law and his wife were up, disturbed by the noise of thieves, and they watched him, and saw him go to the cupboard and take the cash-box. They followed him back to his own 'ouse, and when 'e was comfortable in bed they woke the poor old chap up, and after they had let him swear that it was all a lie, they pointed to the cash-box, laughing fit to split their sides, the box being stowed away in a closet over agin the cobbler's bed, and then, as seeing was believing, he said 'e never could 'ave supposed that 'e could be guilty of such a sin, waking or sleeping."

'Here Old Stormy spat, without regard to the company, upon the cabin-floor. This was a long yarn for an old spouter, and he added, looking round, "What says the Captain to a glass of grog?"

"Go and take what you want," said Nassau; and all hands shuffled out.

'Whilst Old Stormy had been spinning his yarn, which was probably true, Nassau had stood with folded arms gazing at Rose, from whom he seemed to draw courage, confidence, and calmness. Yet he was still greatly agitated, and, indeed, any man might be excused for continuing in a state of agitation on top of such a slaughterous awaking as Nassau had suffered. The moment he had answered Old Stormy the coloured skipper, addressing himself to Rose, as though Arthur were not present, and speaking with a degree of moderation which proved him the possessor of a quality of control over passions of the most heated and deadly kind, said :

““You heard, dear one, what the sailor said. Is it not possible for a man to receive such an impression in his waking hours as to repeat by action the dreadful scene in his sleep? Oh,” he cried, clasping his dusky hands and holding them aloft, “think how the crime of this murder would come home to me, who am a man of powerful imaginations and deep sensibilities, suspected as I am by you—for your suspicions alone do I heed. I slept,” he cried, pointing to the bunk, “in the place where he killed himself.”

““Liar and murderer!” shouted Arthur, at which time the men were returning with pannikins of grog in their hands.

‘Nassau waved off the young man with a motion of his hand.

““It was his father,” he said, as though speaking to himself. Then, continuing to address Rose Island: “I slept in the poor man’s bed. All day long had I been thinking of him. I lay wondering, on the very mattress on which he lay, why he had destroyed himself. I saw his body carried to the gangway and dropped overboard. His face,” the coloured man went on, with much flourishing of his hands, “was before me whilst I was still awake. I could follow his motions about this cabin, and my vision of imagination beheld him in life itself, kind, calm, as good a friend as ever sailors had.”

‘Arthur looked at him as if he would tear him to pieces. A grumble of applause broke from two or three of the seamen, and one of them handed Nassau a pannikin half full of red rum. The extraordinary creature, whose fertility of speech was an astonishment to all who heard him, despite the varying emotions

with which he was listened to, made a humble yet impassioned bow to Rose, then drained the pannikin, and returned the vessel to the seaman, who immediately stepped out for more.

“Before I slumbered,” continued Nassau, “I was thinking much—indeed, I was thinking only of the suicide—of the reasons for it, and wondered that he should have chosen such a bloody method of self-extinction when he could have silently, and in the cleanliness and sweetness of salt water, drowned himself.”

“You murderous villain!” shouted Arthur, unable to contain himself, though he was grasped by Rose with the hold which had all the eloquence of an appeal of the eyes or mouth.

“Them’s hard words!” exclaimed Old Stormy. “If Nassau’s to be charged with murder, he ought to be allowed a ’earin’.”

“So he ought,” said Black.

“I don’t care,” continued Old Stormy, “who ’ears me, but I do say that, so far, he’s conducted his case first class.”

‘And down Old Stormy’s throat went another drink from his pannikin.

“I wish to convince this lady and you men,” Nassau went on with a sort of general bow, “that, having a habit of walking in my sleep, though I haven’t walked to my knowledge for some years, and being a man on whose brain ideas stamp themselves, as you stamp the sealing wax on letters, it is the most possible and credible thing in the whole world that I should rise in my unconsciousness, walk about the deck all unbeknown to myself, return to this cabin, and repeat

in a dream, not the truth, but the charge that the suicide's son had brought against me."

" "You went direct to the shelves where the knives are kept," said Arthur. "If you had not visited them before in search of a knife with which you killed my father, what moved you to the place in your sleep? The fact! the deed!" he shouted, again losing self-control. "You took the knife with which you killed my father from those shelves, and in that act you repeated the damnable work."

" "One word, Cap'n Nassau," said Overalls; "it stands to reason that if the Cap'n killed himself, which I most truly believe, 'e must ha' used a weapon of some sort, and the knife that was stuck in him showed what weapon it was. Thinks you, in your sleep, a knife was used, and knowin' as a sleepwalker where the knives was kep', you went for to fetch one without taking of it, which simply proves that in yer sleep you had to act up to the whole bloody job just as it was discovered."

" "Well, look here," exclaimed Old Stormy, "this 'ere schooner ain't watched, and something may run into us which will cause confusion. I'm a-going on deck," he added, with the cool impudence of a sailor when he is in mutiny, and acknowledges no superiors, "arter I've had another drain of rum. I think we're all agreed. The skipper here 'as made out the case for himself, and I don't know," he went on, with a significant look at Arthur, "whether any funder talking about it is going to 'elp. He's our captain, and Cochrane don't acknowledge him, nor do 'e form one of us when we mount our guns and sail away for booty. That's my opinion;" and very coolly he wheeled round,

went into the cabin, took a stout nip of rum, of which there was plenty of bottles in the place where they kept the cabin food, and then went on deck, every man following his example, especially in the case of the rum.

'It was perfectly clear from this and what some of the men had said that Nassau was in every sense commander of the vessel, whatever Arthur might think or do. They had agreed to accept his black colours, and down to the present moment they were proving that they knew their own meaning, and meant to stick to it.

'Nassau, Rose, and Cochrane remained alone, and whilst the men were going into the cabin, the black, with grotesque motion of arm, and a face that varied its hideousness twenty times in the minute, so extraordinary was his swift management of his mask of countenance, appealed in the most endearing language, and in terms which he might have borrowed from a cheap romance, to Rose, to believe his story, and not suffer Mr. Cochrane to prejudice her against him. Then, changing his whole demeanour, he said ferociously to Arthur :

“This is my cabin. Walk out of it. Return to your locker, and,” he added, lifting his fist and shaking it, “I would advise you to be very careful in your foul-mouthed speech of me to the men.”

'His eyes glared redly. He had entirely recovered the rude shock of his awakening. Arthur stood irresolute, with his blood crimson to his brow ; but in a few seconds Rose had decided him.

“I am going to my cabin,” she said. “If Mr. Nassau is captain, he must be obeyed. Do what he says ;” and with a look made up of fright and appeal

at the baboon who watched her with speechless delight and admiration, she literally forced her sweetheart to the door, muttering: "Believe, for God's sake, in the man's story. Yield to him, be patient, or, oh, Arthur, another murder may happen!"

'She entered her cabin. Arthur threw himself upon the locker, and at the same moment Nassau closed the door upon himself.'

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LOVERS' TACTICS.

'SAILORS are a class of men who on board ship will take matters which do not concern them very coolly. Let a sailor drop dead out of the mizzen rigging whilst going aloft; he is picked up and, in a few hours, put over the side, and in an hour or two later he is out of memory. But let the allowance of sugar to the crew be infinitesimally reduced, but detected, and the ship is filled with murmurs and mutiny; the seamen throw down their serving mallets and their scrubbing brushes, and swear in the various language of the forecabin until the quantity of sugar they signed for is served out to them they'll see the skipper and his blasted hooker at the bottom of the Dead Sea before they lift a finger in work. This stands good of the mariners of the schooner *Charmer*, of whom and of whose doings abroad, ladies and gentlemen, we have been yarning night after night for some time, with entertainment, I trust, to yourselves.

'The captain of the *Charmer*, Cochrane, was dead. He had either been murdered or he had committed suicide. Now, to a company of rascals who were making for a certain place to prepare for a series of

scoundrel trips under the black flag of Captain Julius Nassau, it did not matter the value of a rope-yarn whether Cochrane had been killed or whether he had killed himself. Two or three of them were not unfamiliar with bloodshed, and if the pirate hoisted his black flag at the main-topmast head he would also often send aloft to the fore-topmast head the bloody flag, as the "no-quarter" rag was called. Naturally, if the opinions of the men had been challenged, they would have told you that on the whole they would rather that Captain Cochrane had killed himself than that he had been murdered, because a murderer who has committed the crime on board his own ship, and remains undetected, is not considered choice company, though there be murderers among his shipmates who are held in no mean esteem for their exploits in other ships. The truth is that the crew of the *Charmer* did not care how it had gone with Captain Cochrane. They made up their minds to believe that Nassau had spoken the truth, and they declined to hear him in further confirmation of the subject when he went amongst them to talk and explain, and to repeat how likely it was for a man impressed as he had been by Cochrane's suicide to believe in a dream that he was the murderer, and to rise and act the part.

"It's all right," said the crew in effect. "His death ain't no business of ourn. When are we a-going to sight this here island of yourn?"

'And they drifted into familiar talk with their skipper, for all men were equal in that little ship, and, as a matter of fact, Julius Nassau had sunk himself below the general equality by his going amongst the crew during the voyage whilst Cochrane was alive, and

talking to them of pirates, and hinting, not, indeed, very vaguely, of some scheme of seizing the *Charmer* and manning and arming her. Aft, affairs, as you may suppose, stood in a somewhat different posture, of course excluding Old Stormy, who, though mate, was very much of the crew. On the day following the murder of Captain Cochrane Arthur found a good opportunity for a long conversation with Rose on the quarterdeck, under the shelter of the slender breadth of awning. Old Stormy stumped the plank and did not heed them. Black was at the wheel, and often talked to Old Stormy, as the to-and-fro swings of the old rascal brought him abreast of the helm. The crew lounged anywhere and anyhow, and were doing anything but work; some rum had been taken forward, and the men tasted their tobacco in the aroma of it as it went down their gullets. To illustrate the character of life and the discipline on board the *Charmer* at this time, enough perhaps if I add that Wilkinson sat on the heel of the bowsprit playing his concertina and occasionally interrupting the whistle with which he accompanied his music by a short but steady pull at his pannikin. The weather was still an enchanting time; good for those men who are sick only when the ship heaves, and good for the ladies who might be induced to man ships on their own account if a temperature so delicious, and a surface of brine so lustrous and gay with the delicate sportings and caresses of the wind, which should be always fair for square yards and easy steering, could be warranted. Great, strange fish, like men in silver armour, would leap in a splendour of scales to the light, and vanish with a shake of black tail in a foaming circle. A ship was in sight in the

dim distance, distorted in the swimming blue ether, and hanging by refraction a little way over the flawless edge of the sea. Nassau had gone to his cabin. He had drunk freely at dinner, and the figure that his door closed upon lurched as it disappeared. He was just tipsy enough to fall asleep when he lay down, and now you can understand how it was that the lovers sat together freed from the odious and oppressive presence of Rose's adorer.

'It was whilst Arthur was placing a chair for Rose that a singular and deeply interesting vision formed itself in the sky in the south-east quarter. The sailors saw it, and lazily smoked and pointed, and looked at it. Old Stormy, after a short stare, said :

"She's a schooner. Never but once saw the like. Looks the image of the *Pearl*."

'The lovers gazed. What was the heavenly picture? It was the image of a schooner hanging in mid-air, upside down, how high above the level of that portion of sea where sailed the real schooner she duplicated could not be imagined. The vision was sailing through the blue just as she was sailing in reality upon the sea. She was under very small canvas. Her fore-topsail yard was sweated fore and aft, and she was going to windward very leisurely, as close hauled as she could lie. She was like a beautiful toy up there, how small you may judge when you consider that she was the reflection of something behind the sea-line. She was a beautiful and perfect painting; her small canvas was exquisitely white with its mixture of cotton, and it trembled in rills of shadow. Her being upside down did not spoil the picture. You saw the light of the sea in her glossy sides, and through the glass which Arthur pointed at

her, and through which Rose took a peep, you could see the curl of white brine at her cutwater, and the flash of what was bright about her; but she was too minute to determine human beings, if aught were visible along her inverted line of rail.

"Blowed if she don't answer to the *Pearl*!" said Old Stormy, handing the telescope to Arthur, who placed it upon the skylight. "That wessel can't be far off, anyway."

'And then he strolled over to the helmsman to talk about the vision, but not in the language of poetry; on the contrary, he wanted to know, in most prosaic terms, why, if that schooner were the *Pearl*, she was cruising about under small canvas, instead of cracking on, with her hold full of the plunder of the *Eleuthera*, for the island her skipper had talked about. Meanwhile, the phantom of the sky slowly faded as you extinguish your reflection by breathing on a mirror, and Rose and Arthur seated themselves to talk softly, well clear of the wide-open ears of the skylight, of matters infinitely more interesting to them than the mirage.

"The more I think of the man," said Rose, "of his doings, looks, and behaviour to me, the more I am convinced that he is mad. Would any man but a madman address me, and go on making love to me, before his men, as this strange creature does?"

"Yes," returned Arthur quickly, "his business is to let the men clearly understand that you are his possession; they understand him, and will not meddle with you, so long, at all events, as he is on board. As for me, and what *I* may think, this madman, as you consider him, is full of methods, and he has some design against me which will keep him civil and quiet until he

can put it into execution. I don't think his design means my death. This devil is not red to the very bottom of his soul. He has killed my father. He would rather get rid of me by some method which should not comprise my murder. Partly this, Rose, for your sake, because, very well knowing how it stands between us, he would not choose to take the risk of what you might think, and of even what you might do, by killing me."

"The girl looked at him fondly and thoughtfully. A slight shudder, which she strove her utmost to disguise, shook her, and she said, putting her hand to her breast, but quickly withdrawing it :

"It is a horrible situation—to be at the mercy of a man who may kill you or me, but whom *we* may not kill to save our own lives. All the same, Arthur, I am convinced he is a madman. He is altogether too strange, wild, and original to be sane. His sleepwalking—does not that show something desperately out of the common? I sincerely believe, dearest, though I hate to say it, that he did not kill your father."

"My father had no reason to take his own life," exclaimed Arthur, in a voice so low and sad she could scarcely catch his words. "Nassau had a good reason for killing him."

"I don't want to believe him capable of this dreadful crime," she cried a little vehemently, "until we are safe; otherwise, if he dared one murder, he would dare another."

"The scoundrel has turned pirate," said Arthur. "This is not the first time he has flown the black flag. A fellow of his sort stops at nothing. There is that inhuman Cutyard, of one of whose piracies I remember

hearing some men speaking in my last voyage. He thinks nothing of kidnapping a young lady."

"It is monstrous, horrible, if it is true!" exclaimed Rose, with a glance at that part of the sky in which the schooner had found a mirror, though the beautiful illusion had by this time faded. "What will Mary Mackenzie do? She is in the power, and at the mercy, of a savage. I should say she is a girl of high spirit. But would it enter her head——"

'She stopped, catching her breath in a respiration, so fierce, fiery, and sudden it was, you would have thought the grip of death was on her throat. Arthur looked at her with that sort of wonder which might hang breathless on the verge of enthusiastic delight and pride. After a short pause, during which they continued to look each other in the eyes—Arthur with a seeking expression, and the girl as though she would have him read her without obliging her to confess herself—he said:

"A young woman in the power of a fellow like Captain Cutyard is the most helpless creature in the world. The sailors won't help her. She is utterly and absolutely alone."

'A faint smile that had something of the beauty of a blush in it passed over the pale, pure, remarkable face of Rose Island. He listened to catch its interpretation from her lips, but whatever her meaning, it was not betrayed by what she now said:

"Arthur, what chance has Miss Mackenzie?"

"Chance of what?" he replied.

"Has she a chance of making her escape from the man?"

"She has the chance of escape through death," answered Arthur grimly. "She can throw herself over-

board, and that will be her escape from certain dishonour and captivity in some little-frequented island in the Spanish Main. This is the nineteenth century," he added, "and we might be talking of the fifteenth or the sixteenth. This seems an incredible crime, with so much romance in the character of its villainy that you would not get home-keeping people to believe you. They'd say, 'Oh! she's been reading novels;' and yet in the same year the thing is as true as any burglary that might have taken place last night in the city of London."

"Cutyard said that he sank the ship after plundering her," Rose exclaimed, "and sent the passengers adrift in their boats. One of those boats might be picked up. The people would report that Mary Mackenzie had been stolen. Would not that lead to information being given, so that a man-of-war would be put to work to find her out and recover her? And would not her mother and her friends offer such a reward for her as would insure her being delivered up, not by the pirate himself, but by members of his crew?"

"I don't know what Cutyard may do; and, sorry as I am for Mary Mackenzie, it is but natural, Rose, that I should be sorrier for you, and be able to think of nothing else but your deliverance," said Arthur, pulling out a pipe, cutting up some tobacco, and filling the bowl, with a hail to Wilkinson, playing his concertina, to bring him a light from the galley.

'This the young fellow did smartly, smiling at Rose as he handed a little bunch of blazing rope-yarns to Arthur.

"Your pipe's bound to go out again," said he, "and you can't smoke without a light, sir. Dr. Johnson has

a good saying on this: 'What can't be done won't be done.' I'll fetch you a standing light;" and he went down into the cabin, and returned with a little lantern, which he lighted with a blazing rope-yarn, and placed on the deck beside Arthur; then returned to his concertina, upon which he struck up "For we are Homeward Bound."

'Arthur could enjoy his pipe as well as another; but now he smoked to let the hands see that he could take things with coolness and unconcern. By very small strokes of behaviour are men judged in this world of watchers of their fellow-creatures, this globe of critical inspectors of their human fellows' conduct, who sum up and utterly misunderstand.

"I like that young man," said Rose, as Wilkinson went forward. "He is obliging, and has an honest face. He declines to be one of the crew of pirates, and I am certain, Arthur, that I can easily induce him to join us in securing Nassau, and getting the other wretches under."

'It was brave to hear her talk. She had the language of the salt when she chose to employ it. She spoke low, but with an ardent heart, and her face was flushed, and thrills seemed to run through the light that shone in her eyes like the tremble of sunshine on the water.

"Well, you know my objection to taking any man belonging to the crew—even Wilkinson, whom I do not distrust—into my confidence when betrayal, when, dearest, even a hint of the lightest sort, might cost me my life, and leave you to the mercy of Nassau and his men," was Arthur's answer, after a short spell of reflection.

“Am I not at his mercy now?” she said, and immediately after she faintly smiled.

“No; he dare not harm you whilst I remain in the vessel. If he did, and I was alive——”

‘He broke off; he was no idle threatener, but if ever a man looked the resolution of assassination, Arthur did when he abruptly halted and stared away to sea. She gazed at him with devotion; then, after looking slowly along the starboard and port sides of the quarter-deck, she said, in a soft voice—for Old Stormy sometimes passed them close when he fell into his look-out walk, though, for the most part, he stood yawning with the man at the wheel:

“Could not we escape in one of those boats?”

“Would not such an idea occur to me, Rose, do you think?” he replied, in a voice that was almost one of reproach; and, in truth, it was an elementary question to put to a seaman who was at his wits’ ends to get away from the ship. “Had I not told Nassau that I was a passenger, though I might be willing to help the crew in working the schooner, I might have thought twice of the idea of a boat, for in that case the men might have been willing to allow me to keep a look-out. But put the facts as they stand: First of all, there is always a man at the helm. He would have to be silenced, either with a knife or by garrotting him. It is certain I would be obliged to kill him. Could I throw him overboard alive to drown? The splash his body made would bring others aft, and if he were a swimmer his shouts for help would be heard. But I should not have only to deal with the man at the wheel. Either Nassau or Old Stormy is always on the look-out. Is one or the other who is on watch to be murdered, as

in the case of the helmsman? Even then, after clearing the quarterdeck by the killing of two men, we have got to lower the boat and get away in her. Could we manage this unperceived by one or more of the people forward? Not likely they would allow us to quit the vessel; but, on the contrary, they would chuck me overboard to keep company with those already despatched. Our only chance," he continued, "for getting away in one of those quarter-boats would be by murdering all hands, and then, having the schooner to ourselves, we should not want the boat."

'She was convinced, and hung her head, and he thought she would weep. Her dream for some time had been of their getting away in one of the boats, and now that she saw clearly it was not to be done, save by the cutting of the throats of the whole ship's company, she hung her head, and, with bitter grief and pain in her face, she asked herself, "What is to be done? How are we to be saved?" Then, looking at Arthur, she suddenly cried, "Oh God! oh God!"

"My brave, sweet Rose, it shall come right! Do you remember my father's cry, 'Keep up your heart!' I say, I do not fear this Nassau will harm me. If he lets me live, and remain in the vessel, my great hope is founded on the chances that must offer when we arrive at the Cay for which the fellow is certainly steering."

"What Cay?"

"Silver Cay. It is within five days' sail. Till then let my love support you as yours supports me; treat Nassau as if you were willing yet to yield to the fascination which the ugly devil believes he exercises. My own line of conduct you shall observe. Rose," he

added, speaking in a tone of deep conviction, "if the breeze holds, I predict that in a week's time we are both out of this schooner, and you safe from the black demon who has stolen her."

'Eight bells had been struck—four o'clock in the afternoon. Old Stormy, wearied of his watch, had instantly gone below to call Nassau; but the coloured pirate had been evidently awake and was emerging before he was summoned, and the two men followed each other on deck. Old Stormy paused to tell Nassau of the image in the sky, and said that he took it to be the reflection of the pirate schooner *Pearl*, and he informed him how she was standing, and that she was under small canvas.

"If she is the *Pearl*," said Nassau, "she is cruising on the look-out for something big which she expects to capture. Cutyard has maw enough for a whale, and when swallowed its tail isn't visible. I thought he was cracking on for——" He interrupted himself, and then said, "'Tis clear that he satisfied himself that the man-of-war which I gave him news of isn't hereabouts."

"It mightn't have been her either," said Old Stormy, who thereupon went forward.

'Nassau stood a moment, and his sunken eyes rested upon Arthur and Rose, both of whom remained seated. He seemed to recognise their presence for the first time. He was dressed in a grotesque garb, in which the negro blood in him would delight. He wore a striped waistcoat, and his jacket, which was cut like a jockey's, was blue, with bright metal buttons. His trousers were white drill, and descended to a pair of shoes with bows. The trousers were tightened by straps; his

flannel collar lay outside the collar of his jacket, and the ends of a large white spotted bow shot out from either side his chin. It was certain that he was the possessor of plenty of queer garments, and some of them might have served him to take a place in a troupe of blackened minstrels on the Ramsgate sands; perhaps, however, he was more fitted for the stage of an East End music-hall. In none of these clothes had he ever made his appearance on deck when he was chief mate, and when Captain Cochrane was alive. On seeing Miss Rose, he pulled off his white straw hat with a low bow, and walked straight up to her, taking no notice of Arthur, who, on his beginning to address Miss Rose, left his chair with a glance at his sweetheart, and went below.

“Well, my beautiful one!” exclaimed this chimpanzee of a man, who, as you have observed, filled his speech to Rose with the most extravagant terms of endearment, without the least regard to the presence or the opinions of those about him: addressing her, in short, as if she were his adorable sweetheart, presently to become the wife of his coloured bosom, and the one girl who worshipped the ground, or deck, he walked on. And I may add here that his language of passion was very highly-coloured indeed, as though he had been a reader of poetry in his day, and had learnt by heart the expressions of love to be found in Mrs. Hemans, in Lord Byron, in Thomas Moore, and others remembered or forgotten.

“How have you enjoyed this beautiful afternoon? I have been sleeping, and all my dreams were of you, my sweet one!”

‘Considering he had turned in well primed with

liquor, this was a doubtful compliment. He made as if he would take her hand. She evaded this by one of those subtle, serpentine motions of her body, which in the effect they produced upon the eye were like gliding. There was no snatching, no heated denial, with suggestion of disgust. She kept her hand to herself, and he continued:

“Aren't you very weary of the sea? I am, my loved one, and can think of nothing but the time when you and I will be settled down together in the rich island, rich in verdure, and the best of the glorious beauties of the West Indies.”

“Are you sailing for that island?” she asked.

“No. We are sailing for an island in which I hope to find men and guns, for until we are armed with the right sort to man our cannon, and to leap aboard a stranger, it's idle to call ourselves a pirate.”

“This he spoke in an earnest voice, as though he was anxious that she should now be admitted into the secret of his intentions.

“Is the island,” she inquired, “you are making for far off?”

“Given a breeze, my beauty, it is five days.”

“And when do you proceed to your rich island?”

“We sail straight for it when we have done our business at the Cay we are now bound to.”

“But are not you taking me to Kingston, where my friends live, and where they are expecting me by the *Eleuthera*?” she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and slightly leaning towards him in a posture of moving entreaty.

“He smiled, he showed his grin of teeth; his deep-set eyes glowed with their red light.

“You are to be my wife, my honey,” he answered, in that throaty voice of his which he exerted when he was moved, or wished to be thought moved. “You are to be the princess of that island. You shall be richly arrayed, and your home shall be enchanting, and all about it. All the year round there shall be the colour and perfume of the flowers of the Antilles. Birds of gorgeous plumage shall gild the trees, and slaves for every office shall watch your lips for your wishes. Your Kingston friends shall come and see you; and when you are satisfied that in me you have found a lover and a husband whom you would not exchange for the whitest man in Europe, you shall visit your relations in Kingston, and wherever you go you shall be the admiration and wonder of all who behold you.”

‘There was something so extravagant and ridiculous in this address, that, loathing him as she did, oppressed by the very atmosphere he breathed, terrified, too, by his talk about the rich island, she could not help smiling. But with that smile the girl darted a keen glance at the fellow, one of those glances which seemed to pierce like a flash, and, almost in the instant of it, she had averted her face and was looking at the horizon abreast of her. In fact, her suspicions that he was mad, and capable therefore of the acts of a madman, were confirmed now by his talk of the rich island, and the rest of the stuff. Yet it is hard to tell a madman by merely keenly glancing at him. Nassau would be, particularly, a difficult subject in this way. His dusky hue and wrinkled, almost indescribable features, with their wide grin, and setting of hair which was not wholly of the wool of the African—these things baffled

you; and scrutiny was arrested and defeated by his little eyes, which lay buried in a strange light in their little holes. One reads of the blazing eye of the madman, of the unmistakable expression you note at once, or presently, in the eyes of one who is insane. My own experience, ladies and gentlemen, is very small, but I can tell you I once carried a passenger who proved mad, though his state was not known when he booked. He was a tall, handsome, melancholy man, with as sober an eye and calm a gaze as you ever saw in the head of one perfectly sane. And I also remember meeting two insane ladies, who, though their manners and speech were sometimes extraordinary, never betrayed the unhappy condition of their intellect by their eyes. Yet I may say this, that once at Cardiff railway-station I saw a madman bound around with ropes in charge of two keepers. This man's eyes flashed each time he broke forth, whilst we waited for the train, with a light that—I do not exaggerate—can be likened to nothing but the flash of sunlight upon the water. He shouted, "I am God!" and was raving mad, and in that horrible state a man's eyes possibly deliver fire. But Nassau's little eyes glowed redly in their little sockets, and were inscrutable, and if he was mad it was not by his face and eyes that Rose judged him.

"Do you like dancing?" he asked, pulling out the materials for a paper cigar, and putting on a very finical manner.

"Yes; I am fond of dancing," she answered.

"Then," he exclaimed with great vivacity, "we will have a sea ball to-night, and you shall be my only partner, and the men shall dance together. By my mother's heart, it will be enchantment, my beauty, to

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hold you in my arms, gliding round these decks, which will keep time to the tunes of the concertina. Did you ever dance with a dark man before—with a man of my colour? By the God that made me, my sweetest Rose, I am not black as you think. Look at this face; it is deepened in colour by the suns under which I have sailed. But judge of the reality of my skin;" and dashing down his paper cigar, the infatuated ape, with both hands and huge grimace, and with great vehemence, tore open his light waistcoat and flannel shirt and exposed his chest.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I will not trouble you with the precise description of the exact hue of the square of hairy hide which Nassau's clutch again lay bare. It certainly was not black, neither was it white. Rose looked, and fell into a fit of hysteric laughter. He seemed to accept her mirth as a compliment, and gazed with great pride at her as he buttoned up his waistcoat and adjusted his cravat, the bow of which had been twisted under his long ear.

"One must not judge by appearances," said Rose, sobering her face.

"If Mr. Arthur should sneer at me to you, you will tell him the truth."

"He will not sneer," she answered with simulated earnestness. "He has his father's respect for you as a navigator and a seaman."

Nassau lighted his cigar by the sun without answer, and stood a moment looking into the south-east heavens, where the sky was dimly clouding. The fellow had looked long enough to windward in his day to understand the signs of the weather, and he found nothing of stormy prediction in that delicate stretch of dimness

which lay upon the starboard quarter. He returned to the subject of the ball with great eagerness, and Rose had too much tact to suggest that merry-making that evening would not accord very well with the recent mysterious dreadful death of Captain Cochrane. She let the fellow gabble, talk grotesque stuff to her that might or might not have been remembered from some of the poets, agreed with all his proposals, asked him what dances he knew, and where he had learnt to dance, and if he would favour them again with that spirited performance which the pirates indulged in. She was, in fact, bent on carrying out to the letter the advice of Arthur. Never was Nassau in such high spirits. At two bells he shouted to Wilkinson to put tea upon the cabin table, and when this was done he led the girl, with two low bows, to the companion-way, and preceded her down the steps, followed by a rumble of laughter from Cabbage, who was at the wheel. Arthur was seated on the locker on which he had slept. A little parcel lay behind him, and he seemed to be reading a book.

““ You go to my cabin for your books ?” said Nassau in no ill-natured tone.

““ It contains my father’s property,” answered Arthur, rising and speaking calmly. “ I take the liberty of fetching what I want. I shall seldom trespass upon you. Amongst other things I have secured this as a memorial.”

‘ He held up the parcel. Nassau said :

““ What have you got there ?”

““ The knife with which my father was stabbed,” answered Arthur coolly.

““ It is a horrid memorial to possess,” said Nassau,

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preserving his composure. "I would not keep it in the ship. What are your commands, my dearest?"

'He turned to Rose, and bowed his negro head to her hand, and Rose neither by face nor motion repelled him. Arthur caught her eye, and swiftly signified assent by a light movement of his head.

"Give me that knife to preserve as a keepsake," the girl cried, extending her hand for the parcel. "We were children together, and I loved your father when I was a little girl, and you shall give me that knife, with Captain Nassau's consent, to hold in memory of him."

'She turned to Nassau, and put on such a charming, pleading look, approaching him close, and daringly laying her white hand upon his coloured wrist, that the wretch, with his dance of eye, his convulsions of mouth, the triumphant look that sat in the ridges of his brow, might have made you think he was drunk—an extraordinary figure indeed, with his bow, and drill breeches, and stripes.

"My princess knows," he said, in a voice that literally gurgled with passion and feeling—I have taken note of that gurgle in the throat of a Zulu woman fondling her boy—"that she need not speak to command me. 'Tis a horrible keepsake for my adored girl to preserve; but you will give it her, Cochrane?"

'Arthur had been looking at her inquiringly. Without a word he put the ghastly memento into her hand, and with a smile at Nassau she went away with it to her cabin. Arthur said:

"Shall I keep watch whilst you are at supper with Miss Island?"

'At sea, tea, which is the last meal, is invariably called supper.

"Yes, you can," answered Nassau. "I'd be glad for you to enter under my flag."

To this Arthur made no response, but stepped at once on deck, wondering what on earth Rose could mean in asking as a memorial of his father the blood-stained knife which she had taken to her berth.'

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CHAPTER XIX.

NASSAU'S CAY.

'I AM unwilling to trespass upon your time with an account of the dance on board the *Charmer*. I have elsewhere given you a narrative of this sort of festivity. It was scarcely a dance; there was plenty of drink, and when the men got drunk, they fell about more to the measures of their bewildered feet than to the pleasant noise of Wilkinson's concertina. Arthur held the helm throughout the humours of the evening. Once, whilst Nassau had gone below, he motioned to Rose with his head, and said:

“What was your motive in asking for that knife as a memorial?”

“I want it,” she answered.

“I had brought it out,” he said, “intending to open the piece of canvas that the scoundrel might see the knife and the blood upon it, and know that I retained it. It is very ghastly as a memento, Rose. What will you do?”

“I want it,” she answered.

‘He looked hard at her; but just then Nassau's dusky face reappeared, and she went a little way from her sweetheart's side, and Nassau joined her.

' Yet, if I do not dwell upon the jinks of the schooner's people this evening, I must pause a moment to speak of Nassau's dancing with Rose. The men gave them the quarterdeck to themselves, and Wilkinson was perched near with his concertina. Rose's motions in her dance had that serpentine wreathing and writhing which I am unable to describe. If I had not met with such a figure in one other woman, so supple, so sinuous in movement that she seemed boneless, I should not have ventured to submit even the portrait I have attempted. 'Twas undoubtedly a beauty in Rose, but not perhaps of a kind that would be relished by those who admire best the stately, and the gracious, and the lofty in ladies. Nassau danced very well, but a more ludicrous figure never spun beside a girl. He wore the white trousers, shoes with bows, jockey-cut jacket with buttons, in which he had been apparelled during the day. Some of his graces might have been thought recollections of the airs and capers of the East End music-saloon; but he was dancing with a girl whom he professed to adore—his soul was exalted by spirits, and by the privilege he enjoyed in clasping his beautiful one round the waist. Arthur, at the wheel, watched them keenly. The girl had started with the resolution to act her part in all completeness—to make the ugly scoundrel really believe that secretly her heart was inclining towards his beauty, his grand airs, and his masterly knowledge of languages. But Arthur noticed that, before the sun had set, each time their dance brought them near the wheel her distress and disgust, her loathing, fear and horror, were growing more and more visible in her pale face. Once the black baboon had dared to touch her ear with his lips. Again and again

he pressed her to him till she stopped for release and for breath. His eyes were alight with such passion as might kindle fire in the stare of some wild and hairy horror loose in the woods. Again and again, as they glided along or spun round, he poured his frothy talk, in the guttural notes of a swine's grunt, into her ear. He was never more impassioned, and never more frightful.

The poor girl's tortures ended at last; it was then dark, and the few lamps of the little ship shed swaying angles of light upon the decks. The concertina ceased; Rose threw herself into a chair, panting and exhausted. Nassau fled to the skylight for a jug of lemonade of his own making; but she refused the drink, and he did not ask her to dance again. Now, whilst the concertina was sounding on the deck of the *Charmer*, there had slowly risen and stretched in the south-east quarter a mist or thickness which, catching the crimson glance of the setting sun, had showed like tapestry, with gigantic figures dimly inwoven. When the night fell, that darkness proved no more than a distant thunderstorm, with its heavy batteries hidden behind the scene, so that the flash of the electric bolt was scarce more than a tropic play of sheet-lightning, which opened and shut like an eye of light in the water beneath. The wind blew from it, and at nine o'clock, or thereabouts, was little more than a five-knot breeze. By this time Nassau had exhausted Miss Rose. The helm had been relieved by Wilkinson, and the fuddled crew were drinking and smoking about the decks. Suddenly a seaman, lurching to the schooner's side, pointed into the heart of the electric play south-east, and sung out:

““ See that light, mates?””

‘A light it certainly was, a small globe of light, crim-

son, and confounding. For even as it showed, it was too big for a signal, and as it grew, even as the eye rested upon it, it was impossible to suppose it was a ship on fire. In those days, as of course you know, ladies and gentlemen, nearly everything afloat was sail, and as the spectators of that increasing light could not hold in their imaginations any other idea of a ship than a sailing-ship, they almost grew sober with astonishment. What big fire was that which was coming up hand over hand? The glass showed nothing but flames, soaring high, and curling into volumes of smoke which obscured the stars. Whatever that travelling fire proceeded from was eclipsed by the light it made, and it was passing over the water at certainly not less than ten knots an hour. It was not until it was about two miles distant, and a little more than a point abaft the beam, that it could be made out as a large paddle-steamer with two funnels, burnt already to the water's edge, though it was clear her engines were in full revolution, and she was still throwing up such volumes of flame that the sea right away round was illuminated as by the newly-risen moon. Do not let it be supposed that this is the only instance of a steamer abandoned by her engineers and crew, and rushing onwards uncontrolled. I will not be sure that the *Amazon* was not one of them. The steamer which the *Charmer's* crew surveyed with tipsy astonishment was something under two thousand tons. The heavens were filled with the stars that the great fire made. Her wake rushed from her in the colour of blood; the paddle, as you know, churns into white foam a great spread of brine, and the water fell in purple cataracts from her sponsons, which still stood some feet above the sea. No boat was visible

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by the brilliance. She blazed with flame. Forward she was beginning to look like a glowing basket. Whatever her cargo, it burnt fiercely, and was plentiful. Nassau, staring at her, said to the row of people of whom he was one that she had been bound to the West Indies. Old Stormy said she was a South Pacific steamer, and hiccoughed out a lie by saying he knew her. Even a tar-barrel will light up the ocean for leagues; imagine the almost noontide radiance, spreading to the far recesses of the horizon, shed by the masses of flame climbing out of a great hold of many tons, filled with combustible goods! Once a sheaf of rockets sped on high above the spangles of her smoke, and filled the air with coloured lights, and it was at that moment or thereabouts that both funnels went over the side. The foremost, roaring in flame, fell aft, and the steamer, which had been barque-rigged, came to a stand. She was then about three miles on the bow, and burning with a low thunder of sounds that came along the ocean like the noises of the disruption of fields of ice. Suddenly Old Stormy, who was standing close to Arthur, beside whom, with her hand locked in his, was Rose—for the sight of that steamer was too absorbing, with its elements of splendour and terror, to permit of Nassau even thinking of his love—yelled out:

“Why, what ocean is this here? Look at that! By all the little dolly-boys they worships as God Almighty in Jamakey, look at it!”

‘Every eye was turned in the direction indicated by the sailor’s arm, levelled straight from the shoulder. ’Twas sometimes light enough, in a sudden volcanic leap of that vast fire three miles off, to see the face by.

The shadows of spar and rigging were cast upon the deck of the *Charmer* with a clearness of outline that might have made you look round for sunrise. And in the wide area of the light heading about south-south-west, and some two miles distant from the *Charmer*, was a large full-rigged ship towing a dismasted vessel. Though there was plenty of light to have seen them by a long way off, no one, until Old Stormy shouted it out, appeared to have noticed them, and they formed suddenly upon the eyes of the spectator as though they had been magically uphove out of the heart of the deep. The light of the burning ship was like the betrayal of these two craft by a level stroke of sunset, and all saw that the ship which towed the other was a man-of-war under all plain sail, and they could see her sails rounding like squares of silk to the breath of the breeze that still blew at five knots out of the lightning-trimmed coast of storm away south-east with a sulky, southerly trend. They could see the white line broken by her open ports. They could also see by the cut of her canvas, and a certain peculiarity in the aspect of her rigging, which fluctuated and flashed with the tar and grease upon it to the great light that was hard by, that she was a foreigner, and they could also tell that the vessel she towed was a schooner which had been dismasted in action. Nassau rushed for the telescope; he had gazed thirstily and fiercely in deep and breathless silence at the two craft; he flung himself down upon one knee, and, resting the glass upon the rail, levelled it first at the man-of-war, which he studied as though she were the only ship to be seen, then at the dismasted craft in her wake, which he did not inspect so long. He sprang erect, brought the tubes of his

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glass together with a ringing crash, and shouted in a voice that rang in echoes in the stirless canvas of the *Charmer* :

“By the heart of my mother, men, yonder is the *Pearl*, captured by a Spanish man-of-war, and being towed to her doom!”

‘There was a dead pause whilst all hands stared at the two vessels. The frigate was heading so as to pass under the now motionless, burning steamer’s stern by about a quarter of a mile. Evidently her captain meant to obtain a good view of the sight; perhaps some higher thought of life-saving might have directed the action of his helm. She passed on very slowly with the dimasted hull, a forlorn black shape, following her, and no notice was taken of the *Charmer*. The apparition of a man-of-war, whether British or foreign, was tolerably certain to sober the crew of the schooner, and much talk ensued, and the glass was passed from hand to hand; and Arthur, after studying the schooner through his father’s binocular, told Rose that Nassau was unquestionably right in pronouncing the schooner to be the pirate *Pearl*, dimasted, and a prize to a ship of war that certainly did not fly her Britannic Majesty’s colours. Now, how could Nassau know that the vessel was a Spaniard? But the light of the burning ship was piercing, and every detail of the towed and the towing craft was visible, and Nassau was promptly believed. In truth, any sailor would have accepted his assurance, when, half mad with the dancing, with the drink he had taken, and with the marvellous apparition of the pirate schooner, whose hull he knew as he knew his large feet, he stood shouting to the men whilst standing on the bulwark rail.

“She is the Spanish frigate *Alhambra*. I was on board of her at the Havanas six years ago. Look at those signs. Can they deceive me? A trysail-mast for the spanker—I know no other ship with it. She has royal cross-trees and fidded royal masts, and tell me of them in any other ship. She has two jibs for a standing jib, and she carries no flying jib. Look at her spring for’ard! ’Tis like a Yarmouth smack’s!” he yelled, striking his thigh, and following the yell with a roar of laughter. “The *Alhambra*, my bullies, and a fine rich cargo she tows astern. Cutyard will not swing, by the heart of my mother; he’s a man to his heels. If he isn’t shot, he’s dead by his own hand. Look how they fought! By all the saints those dogs believe in, the pirates must have been fearfully overmatched, and when they struck,” he shouted, “the devils had nothing but a stump of mainmast to hoist a colour upon.”

“He danced and capered upon the rail as he shouted, and his grotesque frenzy served not a little to heighten the wild colours and the amazing scene lighted up by the burning ship. Every man’s figure swayed at his feet, and Nassau’s shape, painted by the blaze, hopped and tumbled among the gliding lines of the rigging on the planks like one of those penny monkeys which slide up and down sticks, and go head over heels.

“If Nassau is right,” said Rose, in a low voice to Arthur, “Miss Mackenzie is saved.”

“He does not mistake,” Cochrane answered. “That vessel in tow is certainly the *Pearl*.”

“Thank God!” cried the girl, clasping her hands with deep emotion in her voice.

“And you will be safe, dearest. I watched the

fellow closely whilst at the wheel; I now certainly believe he is mad. He is fooling the men. He humours them to the top of their bent with liquor and dancing; but I'll swear that the scoundrel all the same does not intend to turn pirate."

"He must have some object," said Rose. "He would not accept the risk of calling himself a pirate, and sailing with the black flag in that box there;" and here Rose pointed to the flag-locker.

'Arthur was about to answer, for all this time Nassau paid no heed to anything but the frigate and the prize and the burning ship, when in a broad flash of light the steamer blew up. She was ill-primed for such display, for the flame of the exploded magazine made a poor show compared with the splendours and the noontide effulgence, and the star-searching forks and tongues of fire which had made the burning of her a tremendous spectacle. In a second or two after the leap of flame had vanished in the smoke-blackened sky, the darkness of the night rolled down in a dry obscurity that was denser than it actually was to the eye that had been dazzled by the blaze, and then there stole out, like visionary shapes summoned from the world of shadows, the frigate and the prize she was towing. Slowly they passed away, whilst the stars came out one by one past the shroud of smoke, which sailed with the vessels. It was certain that the frigate had seen the *Charmer*, but she took no notice of her, doubtless deeming her some honest trader bound to the westwards, and before midnight the schooner was sailing softly with a wind sweet with dew in the midst of an ocean that might have been desolate for a hundred leagues around.

“And now, ladies and gentlemen, for the next five days nothing material happened to the progress of this intricate voyage. The incidents of those days were not fresh; they would not, at all events, appear so to you, for I should have but to repeat sketches of the ludicrous theatrical love-making of Nassau, the behaviour of Rose under the sickening and terrifying conditions of her life, the conduct and general attitude of Arthur Cochrane. In this time, however, it was noticed by Arthur that Nassau was unusually familiar with the crew. He would stay an hour forward, talking to one or another of them, with much demonstration of shoulders and arms, much exhibition of teeth and variety, all of the baboon sort, of facial expression. The only one who held aloof was the young fellow Wilkinson. Nassau never addressed him except to give him an order, and that invariably in the thunder of his throatiest and most commanding voice. The fellow sat about a good deal playing the concertina; in fact, no work was done short of the absolutely essential demands made by the needs of the schooner upon the crew. They kept her decks clean, they trimmed her canvas, now and again one or another of his own accord would leisurely make right something that was wrong in the chafing gear, in the stirrup of a foot rope, or, if within convenient reach, he might cut away an Irish pennant. The fellows were well supplied with grog and the good things of the lazarette. They were chiefly in that state which happy sailors enjoy when they go ashore and are paid off. That there was a thorough understanding between them and Nassau was as clear as the striped waistcoats which their coloured chief from time to time wore. Arthur was

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puzzled by it. In fits and moods of conjecture he had striven to believe that the whole adventure was to prove a mock romance of the sea. He did not sometimes believe that Nassau meant to arm and sail the schooner as a pirate. Nor did he sometimes suppose that the crew had any notion of risking their necks as pirates. What was Nassau's real meaning, and what was his intention, which the crew seemed well to understand? He observed that the vessel was occasionally off her course in her navigation to Silver Cay. Then, again, he did not believe that Silver Cay was a pirate's retreat, and that guns and men were to be obtained there. There were several Cays in that part of the sea. Did Nassau intend to fool the whole of the ship's company by carrying off Rose and leaving the fellows to shift for themselves? How could he carry off Rose without outcry and detection? The men would murder him for any attempt of a treacherous sort. What did the coloured rascal mean by his dwelling upon the existence of a rich island of which Rose was to be princess? Madness at root might account for much, but not for everything, and Arthur thought, and Rose agreed with him, that the black devil never showed himself saner than during those five days. In short, poor Cochrane had to face a problem which he could only solve by waiting. Had he stood alone he might have known what to do, but there was Rose; and it was impossible for him to act whilst the *Charmer* remained at sea.

'In all this time the weather continued as fair and clear, as helpful to the westerly course of the schooner, as it had at the outset of this story been violent. The day passed over the mastheads out of the liquid rose

and the silver shivering of old ocean, like boundless shoals of herrings, to the pure western crimson, with lines of violet, lagoons of azure, soft as the blue eyes of a maiden, amidst the hot glory out of which they looked. The warm gush of the breeze was between. Now and again a ship passed, white in the distance. At one bell, half-past twelve, on the fifth day, the internal disposition of the schooner *Charmer* was this: In the bows leaned Old Stormy, smoking an afternoon pipe, black as the dark of his nails, and beside him, in lounging posture, overhanging the rail, was Cabbage, and the two were talking about the plans which had at various periods been revealed to them by Nassau. Arthur Cochrane walked alone in the waist, a part of the deck that lies a little forward of the gangway. He seemed lost in thought, yet had eyes for Nassau and Rose, who paced the quarterdeck together. Black was at the wheel. Wilkinson and one or two others lay about the deck. The only persons in motion were Nassau and Rose, and it was clear to Arthur that Nassau was making love to his companion. The black's manner was suggestive of great excitement and expectation; he spoke rapidly and often, and quite unconsciously made his walk fit for the merriment of the surliest by his sudden springs into the air and convulsive jumps, as though he was testing his legs for a rush at a hurdle. Suddenly Old Stormy in the bows, lifting his curved back, looked right ahead under the sharp of his hand, and even whilst he stared Cabbage shouted, "Land ho!"

'It lay in a blue shadow, upon the edge of the sea, and the horizon went from it on either hand in as clean and perfect a circle as the pupil of an eye. The men

ran to the sides and overhung them, gazing, but without demonstration. 'Twas clear that shadow had been promised to heave into a vision of land much about that hour. It was expected, and therefore viewed without the excitement which usually attends the making of a landfall. Nassau picked up a telescope, and gazed for a long time fixedly; and Rose, heedless of her black bugbear, joined her sweetheart in the waist.

"What is that island, Arthur?" she asked, in a breathless way.

"It is a Cay," he answered. "I have followed the courses of this vessel and know her latitude and longitude, and I also know that Cay is not Silver Cay, nor any other Cay or island which Nassau talked to us about. There is no land for many leagues near it. I have looked at the chart too often not to know."

"Why is he sailing to it?" said Rose.

"That's to be the villain's secret, evidently," answered Arthur. "The men are in his confidence and know. How quietly they look at the land!"

He turned just as Nassau dropped the glass from one of his little red eyes.

"There is little to make out at this distance, Rose, my love," he said, putting down the glass and approaching the pair with a rolling, swaggering sea-gait. "Shadows and lines marking clefts—don't you call 'em clefts?—in the cliffs. Cliffs there be. It's a sorter square, and you can see the foam twinkling along the foot of the rocks, like your white fingers pulsating on the strings of my banjo."

He thought this a very fine image, and grinned hideously with self-complacency.

"I don't make out any houses."

“Why, there be none. It’s Desolation Cay, and the crabs have large families, and nobody goes ashore to trouble ’em.”

“It is not the island I am to be princess of, Mr. Nassau?” said Rose, with a smile that was sweet, though ’twas feigned, and forced to the very extremities of her pretty lips; but the magical light that always glowed with her smile, whether false or true, was in her eyes.

‘Nassau looked at her with one of his worshipping expressions and answered:

“The island of the princess is clothed with beauty.”

“What are you going to do at that island?” said Arthur bluntly, with a sideways motion of his head at the Cay, which was slowly shaping itself into clear lines, the clefts, as Nassau called them, or ravines or gaps, growing visible, and the line of white foam at the base faintly fluctuating upon the gaze like a hair of spider’s silver web floating with the wind from one tree to another.

“Wait, and you’ll see,” answered Nassau, scarcely looking at him.

“You’ll find no men or ammunition on that rock,” said Arthur.

“Do you know?” exclaimed Nassau.

“I know that yonder is a desolate Cay,” answered Arthur, “and——” he was on the verge of losing his temper, his hot heart burnt in his throat.

‘He checked himself, looked steadily at Nassau, whose eyes, unaccustomed to the steadfast, overpowering gaze of this young man, beside whom, though erect on his legs, he might have passed for some filthy animal, something proper as an emanation from the brain of Swift

—I say, the black's eyes dropped, and Arthur walked right aft, and was followed by Rose. By five o'clock in the afternoon the vessel was off the Cay, which certainly was not Silver Cay, nor, in fact, as Arthur had said, any of the Cays or islands which Nassau had talked about. From time to time the black had swept the ocean-line with the telescope, and twice he had gone aloft on to the foretop-gallant yard with the glass; but no ship was in sight, nothing was visible from the height of the foretopmast, no blurr of land was to be seen upon the horizon, which ran unbroken as the edge of a burning-glass. The sailors followed his movements, but seemed perfectly to understand what was in his mind, and from time to time they cast a look at Arthur. They did no work, and hung over the rail until came some swift orders from Nassau which brought the little ship to a stand. No sail was shortened, no anchor dropped, no cast of the lead taken. Nassau evidently knew his whereabouts. The island might have been called a Cay, but it little resembled the character and formation of most of the Cays which, desolate all the year round, or thinly populated, or visited only by the wreckers, make a wide area of the waters of the Antilles dangerous with currents and shoals and scarcely submerged rocks, to those who pass through those parts. This Cay might have passed as a small Table Mountain in appearance. A mass of yellowish rocks grinned near the south-east quarter, and the play of the sea there, the archings of foam, the half-savage leaps of blue water, soaring into the hues of the rainbow ere they fell in garlanded feathers of sparkling spume, formed one of those miracles of Nature upon whose lovely variety the contemplative eye could dwell

for hours without exhausting the revelations of those waters to the heart. The island went round in various altitude of cliff, much of which was naked and repellent, with several ravines and lengths of broken beach, curiously shelving in places. The breakers of the great ocean beat upon the base of this piece of land, which might have been wrought out of lava, and the corruptions spewed up out of the belching heart of the volcano; and the curl of the comber corresponded with the majesty and spaciousness of the ocean, out of which it formed in volumes of white thunder, lifting to the height of a ship's mast in parts, though the day was serene, the wind soft, and the swell gentle and long-drawn. The island was not without vegetation. Up a ravine abreast of which the schooner was hove-to was the shadow of what resembled a valley, and you saw clumps of cocoanut trees here and there, with spaces of verdure as of guinea-grass; but on the whole it was an arid piece of land, without signs of human life upon it.

“What does he mean to do, do you think?” exclaimed Rose, who had followed Arthur aft; her face was pale, her expression was charged with fear and foreboding.

“Get this port-quarter boat lowered!” shouted Nassau. “Unship the gangway, and bring her alongside it!”

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CHAPTER XX.

NASSAU GOES.

‘WHEN Nassau shouted to the men to get a boat over the side, he looked aft, and in that moment Arthur, grasping the whole meaning of the fellow, turned white as the plank of the deck, and then his face was coloured with a deep crimson; he gasped, and said with difficulty to Rose:

“He means to put me ashore, and we are to be separated. By the God of heaven, I will have his life before he does it!”

“I will go with you,” said Rose, setting her teeth.

“Cochrane!” shouted Nassau, “step this way.”

Arthur stood stock-still, his arms folded.

“Step this way—do you hear?” roared the black, working himself up into a rage. “If you don’t come quietly, I’ll have you carried.”

“You are not the captain of this ship; you have no command over me,” answered Arthur. “If you lay a hand upon me, you bloody black dog, you foul and filthy fiend of hell, I will kill you as you killed my father!”

Saying which, and before Nassau could reply or act, Cochrane rushed to the companion, fled down the steps, seized a cutlass from the cabin bulkhead where the few

poor arms were stocked, and was on deck again in less time than it takes a girl to scream.

“Now,” said he, erect, dauntless, red as fire, approaching Nassau, who stood, with a pistol in his hand, waiting for him, having clearly interpreted the motive of his swift descent to the cabin; his eyes shone like rubies, his horrible grin was surely without mirth. The insulting language of Arthur, in the hearing of Rose, and in the hearing of the men, had maddened him, and still you witnessed a degree of self-control in his air, posture, and even in the expression of his face. “Now,” said Arthur, “what do you want?”

“Get into that boat,” said Nassau, pointing to the open gangway with his pistol.

“Very willingly indeed,” replied Arthur; and he beckoned with his cutlass to Rose, crying, “Come!”

“Miss Rose,” said Nassau, endeavouring to soften his voice, “I am at your feet, and you shall command me in all things but one. I must now command you, and entreat that you go below.”

“And remain alone with you?” answered Rose, in a calmer voice than you would have looked for from one with her white face of grief and horror. “Arthur, help me to enter the boat.”

‘She was coming to him.

“Touch him, and I’ll shoot him like the dog that he is!” cried Nassau. The men had drawn close around. Nassau, having spoken these words, cried, with the wildness of a maniac: “Help me, men! You know the penalty of keeping him. Let no blood be shed.”

‘As he spoke, he flung himself upon Arthur, striking with cruel dexterity the young fellow’s wrist with the butt of his pistol, an old-fashioned, heavy weapon. The

blow was paralyzing; the cutlass fell to the deck. Had Arthur had Nassau to deal with alone, even then, though the nigger scoundrel was armed, he might have met his end, for there was no man in the ship with Arthur's strength, and it was a struggle for life and love. But even as the cutlass dropped, even as Nassau roared, Cabbage and Old Stormy, yelling out together, "We want no bloodshed!" flung themselves upon young Cochrane. Nassau seized him, and in an instant he was thrown through the gangway into the boat. His back struck a thwart, and he lay motionless.

"You wretches—you murderers!" shrieked Rose. "But I am coming, Arthur—I am coming;" and she rushed to the open gangway. The powerful hand of the ruffian Nassau grasped her arm. She struggled with him with the strength and wrath of raving madness, shrieking again and again, "You butcher—you murderer! You shall not separate us."

The strength of a man was hers then, and 'twas marvellous that English seamen should stand by and see a bright, brave young lady, who had ever had a kind word and gentle smile for them, struggling with a base scoundrel of a coloured seaman; but if man's strength was hers, hers, too, was the weakness of the woman. She fought furiously to liberate herself from Nassau, then fell on the deck in a dead swoon.

"Jump into the boat, Wilkinson!" now roared Nassau; and, pointing to the girl at his feet, he said: "Two of you carry her—with all tenderness, look you—into the cabin."

"What am I to jump into the boat for?" answered Wilkinson, who stood close by.

"Jump, you traitorous rascal!—jump, you treacherous

villain!—before I send a bullet through your damned head,” was Nassau’s polite reply, as he levelled his ungainly weapon at the head of the young man.

““In yer get!” shouted Old Stormy.

““Can’t I take my concertina?” shouted Wilkinson, who did not seem in the smallest degree disconcerted by the proximity of the muzzle of the pistol to his face.

‘Nassau seized him by the scruff of the neck, twisted him into the gangway, and, with a cruelly hard kick, drove him overboard. He fell into the boat. Instantly Nassau let go the line which held the boat to the schooner, at the same time shouting at the open skylight to the two fellows below to come on deck at once and trim sail. They worked as though a man-of-war had hove into view, the topsail was filled, and in a few moments the *Charmer* was sliding away from the boat with her head at about W.S.W., undoubtedly in correspondence with the scheme with which Nassau had turned the heads of the sailors, and made rogues, cowards, pirates, and, in sympathy, murderers of English seamen. Arthur had not been stunned; the blow on the spine had caused a passing feeling of faintness. He was sitting up when the *Charmer* filled and sailed away.

““Have they kept Miss Island?” were the first words he said, looking at Wilkinson with a moment’s wonder at finding him there. He could not be sure that she had not jumped overboard and drowned herself.

““Ay, she swounded and was carried below,” answered Wilkinson.

‘Arthur’s fingers slowly closed; in the agony of his thoughts, he beat in a strange mechanical way with his clenched fist on the thwart on which he was seated. His face was that of a high-spirited, determined man

in torture. She was lost to him, of that he felt as sure as that yonder was a Cay, and that yonder was a schooner leaving them to their fate. How am I to express that man's grief? how am I to reveal the workings of that manly broken heart? He had clung to a faint hope that Nassau was a madman, and that, through the agency of some outrageous behaviour of his, he (Arthur) might bring the men to a sense of their desperate folly and wickedness. He had dreamt sometimes that if Nassau made the island he feigned to be bound to, he would find an opportunity of escaping with Rose. But the black devil had acted with all necessary cunning. His scheme proved his sanity, and the poor fellow, in the torments of his perceptions, cried dumbly in his heart, "She is dishonoured; she will kill herself; she is lost to me for ever."

"I wish to Gubbins they'd have let me have my concertina," said Wilkinson. "It was mother's gift, and Nassau will be trying to learn how to play it."

'Arthur sat like a man who has been blasted by lightning. He sat like a shape that has been carved out of stone. There was never a ship's figurehead in any dock in London that hung more motionless under the bowsprit than Arthur, remained seated on the thwart of the boat. Suddenly he stood up, his throat swelled, groans as of a dying man escaped him; he extended his arms, and wept such tears as might furrow cheeks of iron; he cursed Nassau in terms which would have made even Nassau himself shrink. Wilkinson thought he was gone mad.

"They'll sure to be taken," said he, "and the young lady 'ull be restored to her friends."

'Arthur looked at him, and was silent for some

moments whilst striving to conquer his passions, and then said, "Why are you here?"

"Because I wouldn't turn pirate, and Nassau knew it. I could give you several good quotations from old Dr. Johnson as would fit this occasion to a hair and please you," said Wilkinson. "But, to my notion, Mr. Cochrane, the most sensible thing we can do, seeing that here we are, and not able to help it, is to get ashore as soon as we can, and see what's to be done to help ourselves and the young lady when we get there."

'This was plain and sober speaking. It fell cool on Arthur's maniacal wrath. They stuck the oars into the thole-pins, and headed for a part of the beach which opened into a foamless mouth, and formed apparently a creek, terminating abruptly a little distance up a ravine. The boat was absolutely unprovided, save with the ordinary equipment of oars, rudder, and tiller, thole-pins, and in the bows a small breaker which Wilkinson with a kick found empty. There were no guns, no ammunition, no food or drink. This was exceeding the barbaric custom of the pirates when they marooned a man. To maroon is to set a person ashore on a desolate place and leave him. But always, ladies and gentlemen, if I have read aright, the wretches who perpetrated this crime left a musket, powder, and balls, with provisions. Nassau's inhumanity was, therefore, not traditional, but then, it is true they had a boat. They rowed almost in silence towards the mouth of the creek which yawned betwixt the breakers. Arthur asked Wilkinson if he had gathered from the crew the intentions of Nassau. Wilkinson answered that ever since he had refused to join Nassau as a pirate, the men had treated him as though he had been a traitor ;

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and if he happened to stand near when they talked, they either broke off or told him to go away to his concertina. He had left all his clothes behind him in the schooner, and should be as naked as Man Friday if they had kept the coat and breeches he was now wearing. For his part he thought that Nassau would fool the men and make off with the lady, which, in his opinion, was the sole motive of the black in murdering Captain Cochrane, and stealing the schooner to convert her into a pirate. This fellow Wilkinson was a sort of Dick Swiveller in his way, and spoke in a tone of unconcern, although 'twas all one to him, and that he'd just as soon be here as there. Arthur ground his teeth. But now they fell silent; they pulled over a smooth swell, and on either hand of them was the roar of the breaker, which grew in volume and beauty of form and splendour of light, north and south, where the Cay was apparently steep. This roar broke off as they passed into the creek, just as the whistle of the locomotive dies out of its yell as the engine sweeps into the tunnel. High cliffs of fifty or sixty feet rose on either hand, and the waters of the creek, in which the pulse of the ocean was to be felt for some distance, were stained with the shadow cast by either side. They rowed to the extremity of the creek, which was about half a mile from the entrance. It was an oval, and the land was flat there, rising somewhat precipitously further on. A slender line of foam gave a more defined dye to the yellow soil beyond. Several clumps of cocoa-nut trees were visible, and some turtle were lying on the beach. The sun was behind the land, and in its light was the rich crimson of the tropic evening.

“We'll land here,” said Arthur, “and get the boat

out of the surf. It looks like a lump of big hill that's been splintered by some tremendous stroke of storm or gigantic bolt."

'He said this looking about him. The island or Cay, indeed, might have been the grim and gloomy pavilion or dwelling-place of the spirit of desolation. They sprang ashore, and both being young giants in strength, they hauled the boat easily through the surf, and up the slight incline, till she was keel-out. They then stood awhile, breathing deeply. This toil and the labour of rowing had made them thirsty, and the passion of thirst was increased by the spur of imagination, cruel of necessity by knowledge that the boat's breaker was empty. Therefore they must hunt for water forthwith, and the boat on the shore being as safe as they could make her, they trudged inland over the yellow soil, which here and there was tufted with narrow growths of a sort of grass. After walking some distance without seeing any signs of water, without perceiving any signs of human being, no, not so much as a black desolate ruin of homestead or rudest shelter, they gained the side of a hill, and mounted to the top of it, which was a climb of about eight hundred feet. The top of this hill was covered with the same sort of grass they had noticed on the yellow plain. Its sides were very rugged and jagged, and it was the counterpart of the other hills round about. They saw several valleys, and in the valley at the foot of the adjacent hill they observed a quantity of skeletons, some of them of human beings, but most of these startling remains were the bones of large birds, horses, and other animals indeterminate.

"“Why, is that there a cemetery?” observed Wilkinson.

'Arthur could only stare and wonder. It was years afterwards, in speaking of this strange collection of human and other bones in the valley, that he learnt that a poisonous atmosphere lay low upon the soil in that place, and that whatever entered it, man or beast, died in a few minutes. It was supposed that the human skeletons were either the remains of shipwrecked men or of pirates, who had come ashore and roamed about to view the island. It was not known how the remains of the animals and birds came to be lying in that spot.

"Is this here island haunted, I wonder?" exclaimed Wilkinson. "I'm for returning to the boat, sir, and digging for water down upon the beach, where I've read it's often found, and then shoving off."

"We must find water before we shove off," said Arthur, whose thirst was great, and he called upon God to curse the black scoundrel who had sent them ashore without water or provisions. As he spoke the words his eye was taken by a gleam in a part of the rocks of the hill on which they stood. He gazed at it intently, and presently saw that a black line upon the cliff went straight from it, and was lost in the herbage. Again he stared, then shouted, "Water!"

'Wilkinson's eye instantly went to the spot.

"Water!" he shrieked.

'Both men were seamen, and seamen make no more of crags and rocks than of ratlines and footropes. They ran, they crawled upon their hands and knees, they dropped, and then they arrived at the place where the water was spouting. In truth, a sailor needs nothing but his eyelids to hold on by. The water gushed from a rift in a rock; it came out like a twisted hand, and of that bigness, and its running made a black mark down

the rocks, till it vanished far below in some hideous herbage. Arthur put his finger into the water, it was warm; he tasted it, it was slightly brackish; it also had a faint sulphuric flavour. It was apparently one of those thermal fountains around which, had it spouted in any part of Great Britain, doctors would have collected, and we should have had a library of volumes and pamphlets, filled with lies about its miraculous qualities as a cure for gout and rheumatism. But nauseous as it was, it assuaged the thirst. One after the other stooped and opened his mouth to the flow, and in a few minutes each was as taut with the drench they had swallowed as an air-ball.

“I should like to go into that valley,” repeated Arthur, gazing at the skeletons, which lay more plainly in sight at their present elevation. He was much refreshed by the drink, and looked about him with firmness and curiosity.

“I’d not go for the love of all the saints,” answered Wilkinson. “Who wants to mess about with old bones? I’m for getting away as soon as we can launch clear of this bloody island. What belonged to them skeletons may walk about in the night. I’m for taking some of this ’ere water to the boat, and making tracks.”

“How are we to carry the water?” said Arthur.

“He looked about him. Wilkinson shouted, “This will do!” and in a jump or two he got hold of a piece of rounded rock that was like pumice-stone, but not smooth. It resembled a distorted turnip, or a rough attempt at the manufacture of a bowl. It was hollow, and when filled it held about a quart. This they agreed would serve for the night, and after some talk they settled to sleep under the boat, and at dawn to

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bring the breaker to the water, and then be off in search of a passing vessel. But first they regained the top of the hill, and after walking some distance, leaving their natural bowl full of water handy for their return, they ascended an acclivity from whose summit they obtained a spacious view of the island and ocean all round. I call it an island, for it little resembled the Cays of the West Indian waters. Its desolation was soul-subduing, and the fearfulness of it as a solitude was deepened to the complexion of the very grave itself by the skeletons which whitened the valley beyond the base of the hill. Little wonder that it was never visited, that no hint of human habitation was visible, nor was it remarkable that it was not occasionally touched at for supplies of water, if the water it yielded was everywhere the same that Arthur and his companion had drunk. The sun was near his going, and the rolling swell clad in purple, like gorgeously-attired newsmen, carried the story of the setting of the monarch of the day into the far east. Arthur and the other looked around them.

'In a minute young Cochrane's gaze was taken by the sight of a sail about five miles distant, the only object upon the wide ocean. The breeze was light, and she was sailing slowly, and she hovered like a sea-gull with white pinions broadly spread over the golden deep.

"The *Charmer*!" said Arthur; and as he looked, once again, as in the boat, his finger-nails bit into the palms of his hands with the agony the thought of Rose struck into his heart.

"There's my concertina and duds a-sailing away for good and all," said Wilkinson, looking at the receding

schooner with the sharp of his hand at his brow. "Wonder the island they're bound to ain't in sight from up here. Why, she's like a little boat that a boy swims," and he began to curse her.

'Arthur watched her in silence; his teeth were set. Oh, if he could but have two minutes with Nassau up here alone! And the blood of his father was in his face, and the murder of his father worked, as the poet says, "like madness in his brain," and he thought of Rose, his sweet, his precious, his lost Rose!

"He turned abruptly and said to Wilkinson:

"Come."

'Wilkinson began to quote something consoling out of Boswell's life, but he stopped suddenly when he saw the look on Arthur's face. Between them, one relieving the other, they carried the slender stock of water that was to serve them during the night to the boat. They then turned the little craft on to her broadside, took a couple of stretchers out of her, and propped her gunwale, which made a sort of shed of her. By this time the sun was gone. The ocean went fluctuating away in gloom, and the stars shone brightly, and the Cay thrilled as to the deep notes of an organ, to the plunging strokes of the great white surf boiling along its base. When the darkness fell, and when the boat had been converted into a shelter for the night, Wilkinson, smearing the sweat off his brow with the length of his sleeve, exclaimed that he felt as if he could eat something.

"There were some turtle down yonder," said Cochrane.

'Both men looked, but the turtle had gone away. Then Wilkinson said he would go and see if there were

any cocoanuts to be got. His fear of the relics of the carnage of miasma did not dispose him to a close scrutiny; he walked as far as the first clump of trees, gazing fearfully on either hand, and after looking up into the deep shadow of the tufted height, and after staring all round upon the ground, he returned, saying there were no cocoanuts to be seen, and he guessed that the trees of this land didn't put forth as they ought to. They sought for crabs, but the few they saw crawling looked so black, and created so much disgust as food, that they made up their minds to lie down supperless, and to wait for the morning, when they might hope to catch a turtle.

'Fortunately, both men had a pipe and a piece of cake tobacco. They sat down with their backs against the boat and smoked. How did they get a light? By flint and steel, which Arthur had carried to sea with him ever since he first went a-sailing. I submit that this was as perfect a picture of forlornness and destitution as any marine artist could wish to place upon canvas. The gap, or ravine, blackened the waters of the creek into ink. There was the sense of the neighbourhood of the field of skeletons, silent and white under the stars. The ocean was a mysterious and solemn presence to every sense, though invisible where the men sat. Out of its thunder-like hymn all around the base of the cliffs came the spirit of its vastness, and your inmost soul, though you hearkened but a minute, was subdued into awe and reverence for That which dwells beyond the stars. For awhile Arthur could talk of nothing but his barbarous separation from Rose. But they slid into other discourse presently, and spoke of getting away in the morning, and in what

direction they should steer. Wilkinson said he was glad that they had the shelter of the boat; he would not like to have slept in the open. He reckoned that spectres stalked out of that valley yonder, and he believed in ghosts, he did; he once saw one. Dr. Johnson also believed in ghosts. At about ten o'clock, by the lights of the sky, they crawled into the boat after a long and earnest look round, and Arthur pulled off his coat for a pillow, and Wilkinson found a bolster in his arm. They lay talking for a little time. They rather feared the invasion of the crab. Wilkinson had read of a huge creature, shaped like a star-fish, with a hundred crooked legs; this monster had strength enough to pull a man into the water and drown him, and eat him up. At last they slept.

'They were awakened by the boat being thrown back again on to her bilge by the fall of the stretchers. Each, with the alertness of the sailor, sprang to his feet, though still almost blinded by the deep slumber of the weary. It was dawn, and brightening fast, and in the light they saw three men, who stood together looking at them.

"My God!" cried Arthur.

'The men were Old Stormy, Cabbage, and Black. On the beach lay the boat they had arrived in, and far beyond her, away past the dark waters of the creek, about a mile distant from the coast, floated, with slight curtseys to the swell, the schooner *Charmer*, framed by the sides of the ravine, and fast stealing out of the tender gloom of dawn into the brilliance of the risen day. Arthur looked from the men to the boat and from the boat to the *Charmer*, and then the whole truth flashed upon him as though the full story had been

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told, and the memory of certain mysterious sentences which had dropped from time to time from Rose recurred to him, and, I say, as though the full story had been told, he understood with the velocity of thought and intuition how things stood. His posture was upright, his face white, he folded his arms, his eyes glittered, he showed no signs of astonishment, no marks of hope or delight. The men looked at him in silence, and with scarce more than the shadow of a frown he shot a gaze of fire into Old Stormy's broad countenance, and said :

“ Is Miss Rose Island safe and well ? ”

“ Ay,” answered Old Stormy promptly, “ as safe and well as me and you. She's aboard and a-waiting.”

“ You can see her 'ead, over the rail abreast of the mainmast,” said Cabbage, pointing.

“ She's killed Nassau, and that's why we're here,” said Old Stormy.

“ We've been nearly all night a-fetching the island,” exclaimed Black.

“ Killed Nassau ! ” said Arthur, in a low, thrilling voice.

“ She told us,” said Old Stormy, “ that he tried to take liberties with her, and she pulled out of her breast the carving-knife you found in your father's heart, and stabbed the nigger dead.”

Wilkinson clapped his hands and delivered a shout that might have been heard aboard the schooner. Arthur looked intently at Old Stormy. Even that rough son of a gun could interpret some at least of the thoughts which were revealing themselves in the workings of the fine young fellow's face.

“ Better cut this yarn short,” said Black. “ We're now without a navigator. We don't fancy any more—

none of us don't—of the dead nigger's notion of going a-pirating, and if you'll take charge, and land us somewhere which will be a safe place for us men to tramp from to where there's civilization, then you're welcome aboard, sir; we'll obey your commands, and your lady will be as safe from interference as if she was in her own drawing-room at 'ome."

'Arthur pulled on his coat, and saying, "I will do what you wish: I will land you in safety—you shall name your own place; this I swear by my murdered father," he walked to the boat, and stood with his hand upon the gunwale, waiting for the others.

'They followed in rolling gait, and there was much talk, but silence fell when they grasped the gunwale for the launch, and nothing was said when she was afloat but this question, asked by Arthur:

"Where is the man's body?"

"We flung it overboard," was Old Stormy's answer, and then they took to their oars, leaving the other boat to rot upon the Cay.'

When Captain Foster arrived at this point he faintly smiled, touched the naval peak of his cap to the ladies and gentlemen who had been listening to him, and walked to the side, overleaning it as a man might who is suddenly visited by sober, earnest thought. The moon sparkled brightly over the sea, and the noble clipper ship *Suez*, which had long outrun the trades, lay becalmed; and the westerly swell of the ocean, faintly glittering with the gold-dust of the beautiful fire of the deep, swayed the canvas of the ship into cool refreshing draughts, and the sails flapped up in the visionary heights with a sound as though many invisible spirits had taken wing.

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'Surely, Captain Foster,' cried a lady, a young one, after some talk about the termination of the story had passed amongst those who had listened, 'you will not, I hope, tell us that your charming tale has ended?'

The Captain returned slowly to the seated groups, and said lightly:

'Why, Miss Howard, if I should be obliged to tell the whole story you would require to make another round voyage with me.'

'Ay, Captain,' exclaimed a gentleman, 'but you tantalize us by leaving the boat approaching the schooner with the girl awaiting her lover.'

'You know,' said Captain Foster gravely, 'that Miss Rose Island was alive and safe, and that she had killed Nassau for attempting to caress her. She was the girl to do it, and since the murder of Captain Cochrane she had made up her mind to do it. I am no hand at describing love-scenes, and I should prefer to leave to your imagination, which has helped me much in my narrative, the scene of the meeting of Arthur and Rose, and how in a few words she told him that Nassau had gone below after the schooner had started, but not before. On awaking to consciousness, she had hidden in her bosom the knife with which Captain Cochrane had been killed. Nassau's behaviour grew free. She threw him from her, drew out the knife, and, with the spring of a tigress, buried the weapon in the scoundrel's heart. The men then, as you know—accepting Nassau's death as coolly as if he had been a pig under the long boat—finding themselves without a commander or navigator, returned to the island.'

Here Captain Foster again paused as if he would make an end.

'Have you nothing to tell us, Captain, about the further adventures of Rose?' asked Miss Howard. 'Did they arrive in safety? Were they married?'

'Ay, and what became of the men?' inquired someone.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' said Captain Foster, smiling, 'it is nearly nine o'clock, and before two bells have struck I shall hope to have satisfied your curiosity. A certain Cay, far to the north of the Cay they had left, was chosen by the men from the chart which Arthur unrolled before them. One of them knew that Cay, and it was agreed that they should go ashore in the long-boat well stocked. In that boat they would easily make their way to an inhabited island. This being settled, Arthur steered a course for the Cay, but before two days had passed—that is, in the afternoon of the second day of their leaving the Cay—they sighted a ship which signalled to them to heave to. The sailors of the schooner, guessing her to be a man-of-war, cracked on their vessel, but it came on to blow, and next morning the stranger, which proved to be a heavy British corvette, was within gunshot. In helpless plight the *Charmer* was hove to. The second lieutenant of the corvette came on board; to him Arthur told the whole story of the intricate voyage of the schooner, and the *Charmer's* company, cursing and swearing, were sent on board the corvette to be carried to Kingston, where they would be tried as pirates. Rose and Arthur also went on board the corvette and a prize crew took charge of the schooner. On the arrival of the vessels at Kingston, Rose was charged with the murder of Nassau. The excitement was universal. As a sensation trial, it stood high above all others in the annals of the island.

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She was acquitted, of course; they made a heroine of her; they loaded her with gifts, and the day of her marriage to Arthur was like one of public rejoicing, so dense were the crowds, and so resolved were the negroes to make the utmost of any excuse for getting drunk and otherwise enjoying themselves.'

Two bells were struck as the Captain ceased.

THE END.