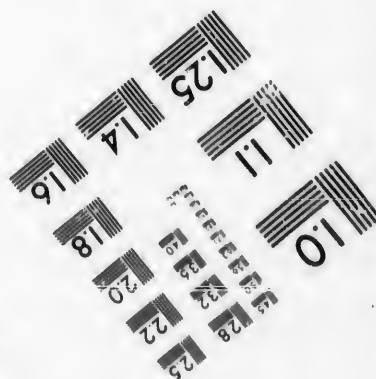
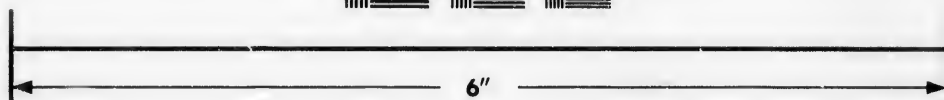
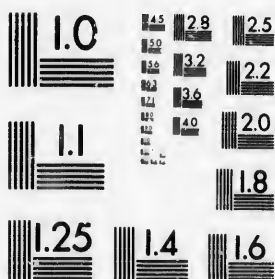


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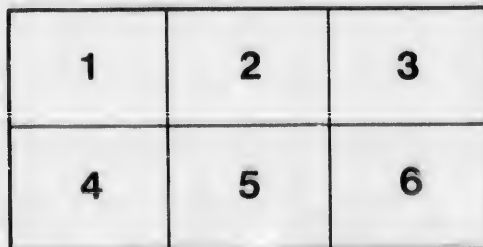
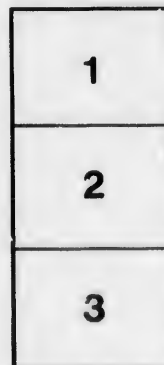
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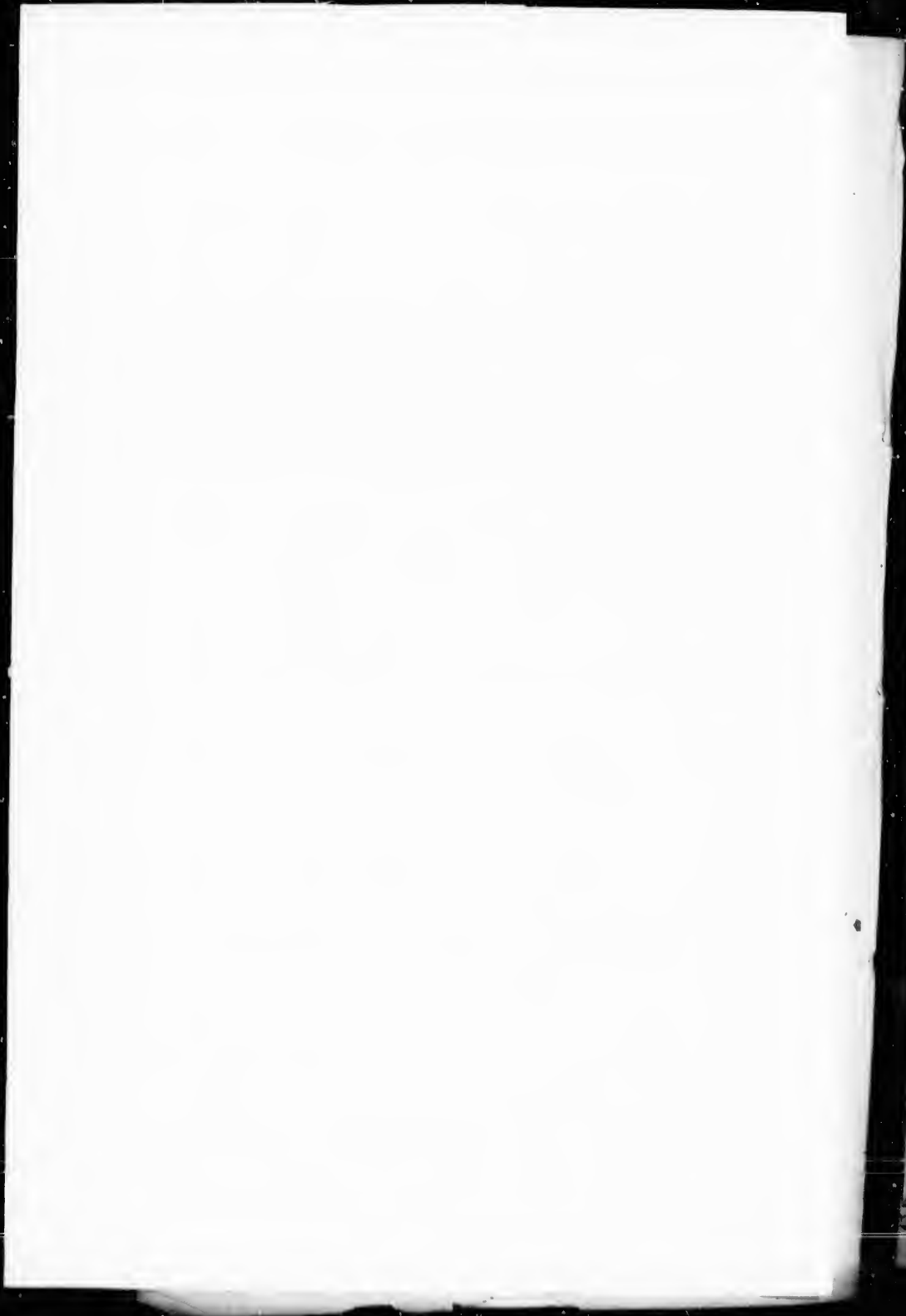
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NORVEL HASTINGS;

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THE FRIGATE IN THE OFFING.

CHAPTER I.

THE shades of night were gradually stealing over a small secluded inlet of the sea, till its dark blue waters grew inky black, and reflected the stars like diamonds sparkling on a belt of velvet. The willow, with its fragile and bending arms, leaned over it and met their arching tops mid-way, while the stiff-leaved pine and gnarl-limbed oak interlocked their branches half-way across in rough companionship, increasing the gloom.

This inlet did not penetrate more than a mile and a half inland from the shore of the romantic bay of which it was an arm, when it received a narrow but romantic creek (or what in England would be termed a river), of which the inlet was only the embouchure or outlet to the ocean.

The little river,—which had as many windings, and as graceful ones, as a Brazilian serpent when he moves slowly over the green savannah,—was navigable for small craft nearly a mile and a half beyond the inlet, and three miles from the bay coast. The bay in question was one of the numerous indentures in the coast of Maine that give to its geographical outline on the charts, for a hundred leagues' extent, the scalloped irregularity of the border of a lady's lace cape. Its

breadth was not more than four, and its length to the open ocean, not more than five miles.

The entrance to it from the sea was not a quarter of a mile wide, and was formed by two cliffs, of nearly equal height, on one of which,—that which made the western column of the opening,—stood the ruins of an old Beacon, which was a lofty landmark for many a mariner seeking the dangerous coast. From these two cliffs the shores of the bay swept inward in a pear-shape form, partly bounded by rocks with precipitous sides, partly belted with glittering sand, as spotless as snow in its whiteness. At the top of the bay, in a straight line, four miles from the surge-washed cliffs, at its entrance, opened the narrow inlet which led to the mouth of the little river, whose windings we have compared to a snake.

If the reader has clearly impressed upon his imagination these features of the scene in which we shall open and carry on the first parts of our tale, we will now take him up the inlet, and into the creek, the dark curves of which we shall follow, under the shadows of rocks and of trees, amid lawns and meadow-land as green as emerald, until we reach, unexpectedly, after a short turn in the river, a small pier, built solidly of hewn timber and stones, that projects thirty feet from the shore, and extends full one hundred along the land. Opposite this mole the creek expands a few yards into a natural basin—a feature of the place which doubtless suggested the construction of a landing at that point. Facing the wharf, on the same side of the creek with it, which is the west side, stood, at the time of our story, which is laid in the first year of our last war with England (1812), a long row of weather-worn, unpainted warehouses, curiously built, the under story of stone, the upper of wood, while immense roofs projected ten feet on all sides, affording large shelter beneath to protect merchandise outside from rain or sun. In the middle of this long hipped-roof edifice of trade rose a square tower, enclosed by open blinds; and upon its helmet-shaped

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dome was fixed an iron rod, upon which, pierced through the middle, swung a wooden representation of Captain Cook, in a blue naval coat, yellow epaulettes, red cocked hat, sword, and Wellington boots, albeit they bore not that appellation then. The famous navigator in wood and paint held to his eye a spy-glass, with which he was never known to look in any other direction than the wind's eye; so that, if his back was towards the ocean, everybody knew the wind was south; and if he looked to the setting sun, that the wind blew from the west.

The appearance of everything about the mole and warehouses manifested the highest commercial prosperity. Bales and kegs, marked with strange, outlandish names, barrels and pipes, rolls of merchandise, and crates of foreign wares, piled up under the projecting eaves, and partly covered with tarpaulins, betokened the extent of trade of which this secluded pier was the central point.

In the rear of the warehouse was a glen, or defile, along which a road wound leading from the wharf to the top of a ridge, which towered eighty feet above the level of the captain's head, and nearly overhung it. On gaining the summit of this eminence, which was not more than fifty feet high, the eye was struck with the extent of a high degree of cultivation of a wide domain, that lay before and around him, and stretched even to the sea-side. Groves, open and park-like in their beauty, meadows bending with the rich harvest of golden corn; fields green with pastures, on which flocks and herds, and even a few deer, were browsing peacefully; foot-paths and hedge-rows were features of the scene. But the chief and distinguishing attraction was a mansion, visible through the trees in the distance, of large size and imposing exterior, with turreted ends, a bastion and terrace, and separated from the agricultural grounds by a wide lawn, while its southern front looked down upon the bay, and out upon the illimitable sea.

The whole of the promontory seemed one noble estate, under the direction of one master; while a lowly roof seen here and there, distant from the "great house," showed the humbler abode of the hired labourer or tenant. Of the latter, there was one in particular which made a marked object in the view, from the singularity of its position and its extremely neat but yet rustic aspect.

It occupied the side, half-way down, of the rock on the bay shore, on which the villa stood, and seemed to belong as much to the domain of the ocean as that of the land. It was built of stone and moss, and overrun with creeping plants, so that its chimney seemed to rise rather from an irregular hillock of leaves, than from a roof—a sort of hanging nest midway the cliff. Though full a third of a mile distant from the mansion, its situation along the curving line of the bay placed it obliquely in sight, westwardly, from the south front of the turreted house. Directly beneath this hanging cottage was the smooth beach, on which usually lay a skiff, or anchored off against it swung a fishing zebec. There was a narrow and perilous path from the hut to the beach, and one scarcely less precipitous leading from it to the top of the cliff, connecting it with the estate. When we add that it was not more than three-quarters of a mile from the cottage, going south, to the extreme end of the promontory, on which the ruined Beacon stood, we have terminated our description of localities, which, being imperfectly comprehended by readers, render the details of a story usually confused and unsatisfactory.

We now return to the secret and scarcely illuminated inlet, with a description of which we commenced our narrative. It was the autumnal night of the first day of September on which we introduce the reader to this dark and noiseless current, flowing between its leafy banks. Not a sound was heard, save at intervals the wailing cry of the whip-poor-will, or the ceaseless, shrilly song of the winged locust. Far in the blue skies shone a glittering host of stars, but only here and there

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did one find its way, as we have already said, through the close trees, to be reproduced in image in the waveless river.

Suddenly the silence is disturbed by the faint dip of an oar or paddle, and, like a flitting shadow, scarcely distinguishable from the blackness of the water, a boat is seen ascending the creek. It contains two forms; whether white or black, young or old, male or female, is not distinguishable. One is placed in the bow, the other guides the boat. Its shape cannot be made out, nor whether it is light or laden. But from the celerity with which it steals along under the easy impulse of the paddle, it cannot be heavily burdened. The steadiness and certainty with which it moves, shows plainly enough that the person at the stern is not unfamiliar with the devious windings of the stream, for his course never falters.

The figure in the bow now moves towards the one seated at the stern, and speaks, but in a low, hushed tone.

"The place is as dark as Tophet, skipper! You must have a lynx eye, to steer in such a night. Are we near?"

"Hush, man," answered the one addressed, in a whisper, and holding up his paddle, as if listening. "If you speak again I'll put back!" he added, in a menacing, husky tone, and the voice was evidently that of a vulgar and coarse person.

"If you do, it is at your peril!" responded the first speaker in an authoritative tone; which, though but little raised above his breath, was that of a person of a far higher order of character and condition than he whom he addressed. As he spoke, a star-beam stealing between the leaves above him, glanced along a steel weapon which he moved in his hand.

"Then keep quiet," grumbled the other, in a surly tone, and the voice was evidently that of a young man.

The man with the weapon merely ejaculated a contemptuous "eh?" and folding his arms, stood silently watching the upward course of the boat, which continued its secret and mysterious way with the same certainty which had marked it from the first.

CHAPTER II.

LEAVING the boat to pursue its way amid the dark windings of the river, we will take the reader back to the afternoon of the day, at the close of which we opened our story, and to the villa which we have already described.

Upon the portico, about four o' clock in the afternoon, stood two persons looking seaward; for the main ocean was in view to the south-west, and to its shores it was not half an hour's walk across the promontory, while the inner bay, enclosed by the promontory of the Beacon, lay directly beneath and to the left of the mansion like a map.

One of the persons was a gentleman with gray hair, and a florid, handsome face, with a decidedly English cast of features, while his frame was large and English built, not unlike that we have of the pictures of the Duke of Sussex, portly and noble-looking. He was in high health, and yet as he paced up and down the piazza, there was visible a contraction of the brow and compressure of the lip, that betokened thoughts perplexing, or a mind temporarily ill at ease. He held a letter in his hand, which contained a printed slip cut from some Gazette.

The second personage was a female of seventeen or perhaps full eighteen summers, fresh, blooming, graceful and handsome enough for a score of knights in the crusading times to do battle for, vizor down and lance in rest. *That she was the*

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daughter of the fine-looking, silver-haired man, who marched up and down the portico, was very evident from the shape of the profile and the form of the eye. She was standing at the western angle of the verandah, looking earnestly seaward, and watching with animated interest a "white squall," as the sailors term a peculiar kind of gale, remarkable for its violence and brevity. From her position she commanded the sea and sky in one complete view. Having seen the cloud *create itself* out of nothing, as it were, in mid sky, and then darken and lower over the sea, like a huge inverted balloon, she felt that she could not divert her eyes from the strange and sublime spectacle until she should see the issue—the meeting of the storm and of the sea! The latter, beneath it, grew suddenly black as night, while sunshine and blue sky were everywhere else around. The sudden darkness cast by the shadow of the down-rushing cloud of wind upon the waters, revealed all at once to her eyes, and at the very moment we introduce her to the reader, a sail white as snow!

At the sight of it she turned pale, and her lips parted as if with terror—that sort of humane terror which noble spirits feel in sympathy with fellow-mortals in peril.

"Look, dear father, look! The storm will burst upon that vessel, and all on board will perish!"

The gentleman paused in his walk, and following the direction of her eye, glanced seaward.

"You are right! She will get the whole weight of that squall. My glass here, Pedro," he called aloud.

The person addressed with this foreign name, though not then on the portico, in a moment made his appearance with a spy-glass, and placing it in the hands of his master, he bowed very low, and stepped back with the profound deference of a menial. Small in stature, slightly framed, with a dark complexion, jet black hair curling in corkscrew ringlets down his cheeks, and a pair of eyes like those of a basilisk, small hands

and small feet, and exceedingly white teeth, he was a true specimen of a West Indian half-blood Creole—the most faithful of servants and most implacable in their hatred to those who injure them—kissing their master's feet in love and devotion, but stabbing him to the heart if he tread but upon his little finger. Pedro was about forty years of age, for a few silver hairs were sprinkled over his polished hair; his dress was a scarlet velvet cap, an embroidered jacket adorned with rows of buttons, worn not with his arms in the sleeves, but hung on the left shoulder like a Polish jacket. His shirt was frilled and embroidered, and he was without a vest; but worked suspenders lavishly displayed, were a handsome substitute for this vestment. His pantaloons were snow-white linen, and his stockings were red, cloaked on the instep, while a neat morocco slipper, garnished with huge buckles, finished his picturesque costume.

"It is a man-of-war!" exclaimed Mr. Canning Fielding, with some emphasis, after he had fixed his glass for half a minute steadily upon her.

"It may be an American frigate, and if so, may Heaven protect her from the storm rushing towards her!" exclaimed the maiden, with deep feeling.

"If it is a Yankee, may she go to the bottom!" was the decided response of Mr. Fielding.

"Father!" was the deprecatory ejaculation of Mary Fielding, as she fixed her clear blue eyes upon him with surprise and pain.

"What has an American man-of-war to do on this coast at this time? She can be here for no good!" he said, with ill-humour.

"To protect the coast. Was not an English sloop-of-war and her tender in the offing three weeks ago? We certainly have need of protection. If the English vessel had come into the bay and landed, what would have saved us from pillage?"

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"The girl is thoroughly Yankee, bred in the bone!" muttered the father, in a tone which savoured both of anger and contempt. "I must keep my own councils, or she is patriotic enough to betray even her own father!"

"The squall is nearly upon her!" cried Mary Fielding, with excitement; "but she is rapidly shortening sail, and seems to be fully aware of her danger. How the wind whitens the surface of the sea, making a mile-broad path across it; and the ship lies directly in its track. What a whirlwind of foam! Hark, the roar of the lifted and lashed waves reaches us even here, dear father! The ship has got it now in all its fury! See how she bends over, as if she would upset; and—see! she has disappeared from sight for ever! Mercy upon the poor souls within her!"

She covered her face with both hands, and seemed to be putting up prayers. Mr. Fielding, who had the spy-glass constantly at his eye, with more eager interest than mere humanity and sympathy would dictate, vainly endeavouring to make out her nation, for she had no colour set, merely remarked—

"No fears for her safety. They put her under close-reefed topsails before it struck her. She must be a bad sea-boat, or ignorantly officered, to shipwreck in a white squall, heavy as this one is."

"De frigat' no poseeble to be see more, sefforita, coz de theek meest hide 'im away," observed the Creole, in a lisp and pleasant tone, but with a strong Cuban accent, and he took off his cap and made her a respectful congee.

"You are right, Pedro. She may be safe. Foe or friend, I have put up my prayers for her safety," answered the generous girl.

The roar of the storm, which was not three miles off, was now so loud and terrific that all eyes were directed to the spectacle. It was a whirlwind in mid air, its base upon the ocean and its diameter scarcely a mile, proceeding from a low

black cloud, hanging not two thousand feet above the ocean, and rolling along it like a chariot on wheels, so swift was its course. The sea on all sides of it was smooth and shining, and the skies serene, save in that black spot. In less than ten minutes the whole fierce commotion had travelled far away to leeward, and was seen ploughing its white track leagues away on the south-eastern horizon. The waves left in its path sank from mountains with tops of snow to lesser and lesser billows, and from the misty shroud that hung on its rear, out came, but full eight miles off, the noble vessel safe, and, save the loss of her two after topgallant masts, which there was not time to house, sound as before. Shaking the reefs out of her topsails, and setting her spanker and jibs with her foretopgallant sail aloft, she laid her course back again to regain the position from which she had been driven by the squall.

"Safe, and well-earned, too," said Mr. Fielding. "She must be an Englishman; for no Yankee seaman could have rode out that blast without more harm done."

"You seem to fancy, dear father, that the Americans are no seamen. I thought you were too much of one to think ill of them. If this war, now but a few weeks old, continue three years, England will find that we are as skilful on the ocean as we were efficient in our armies of the Revolution on land."

"By St. George! The girl speaks as if she had been born before the rebel war, and had fought in it under Washington. I must take better heed of my speech; for if she is so deuced patriotic as all this comes to, I may have a traitress in the camp. I must feign, if I do not feel. Well, Moll, the Americans are brave enough, and good sailors, I dare say. All the same race, you know—Anglo-Saxon blood all! One o' these odd days, I dare say, we shall together conquer the world!"

This was said in a cheery, badinaging sort of tone, meant to appear sincere; and, as Mary Fielding was too fond of her

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father, and too unsuspecting to suspect him less American than herself, it raised in her mind no doubt or suspicions of his insincerity—emotions which, in reference to his patriotism, she had never for a moment experienced.

The surface of the ocean began to resume its former quiet aspect: a gentle wind rippled its bosom, and bore the ship onward, in a north-westerly course, at about three miles an hour. The stranger at length hove to, about six miles distant from the entrance to the pear-shaped bay, which was called Weconnet bay by the Indian fishermen.

"He has come to, to repair damages," said Mr. Fielding; "and now her broadside can be seen, Moll She is a frigate; and, by her high poop and full bow, and the breadth of her topsail yards, I will wager fifty guineas she is a John Bull." And he brought his hand down with emphasis.

"You seem delighted, father, at the prospect of an enemy so near, when I should suppose you would feel most anxious. Nothing can prevent the vessel from coming in, and taking whatever you have. An American would protect you. And such I hope it is, as I would rejoice once to place eyes on a war-ship of my own country!"

Mr. Fielding was about to make some remark that would evidently have compromised his patriotism with Pedro, if not with his daughter; when the former remarked, in his sycophantic, fawning, bowing manner, his black eyes dancing and glittering, and his teeth smiling:

"Me see Americano frigate in Habana, señorita; he berry *hermoso*—nice, bootefool; big gun *veinte ocho*, and officer *bueno grande*; splandy uniform, and sword berry sharp. I see too mosh."

"I should like to go to Havana! It must be a beautiful city," said Mary Fielding, thoughtfully; but not answering Pedro so much as uttering aloud thoughts which his mention of Havana suggested to her.

"Oh, si, señora, si," he said, rubbing his small yellow hands together, and looking inexpressibly happy; "yes, Habana, too pretty—too bootfool—De handsomes seety in de voorl'. Sish handsom hous', sich graate iglesias, schurches, noble gardin, fine street, big castle, frigat of all nation—speak sonorous Spanish language. I wish too mosh señorita make go to Habana!"

"Pedro!"

The Creole jumped at the startling sound of his master's voice, and bent low before him.

"Has the master of the scudder had his dinner, and has he drank his bottle of wine?"

"Si, señor, me go see!"

"Father, who is that low-browed man who came to see you just as we rose from the table?"

"He came on business. Brought me this letter! Girls and women know nothing about business matters. Don't be inquisitive, child."

"I am not inquisitive, father. But it seemed to please you and yet to trouble you, at one and the same time, that I could not but feel some curiosity to learn from whom it came. I half hoped"—

"Half hoped what?" he said, turning and looking her full in the face.

"That it was some news from my brother."

"None from him. He is in England, and doing his duty to his king and country."

"Poor George!" sighed the maiden. "My brother, and yet my country's foe!"

"You need not make yourself unhappy about him. He is as much of an Englishman as you are an American. He was born in London and you in Maine!"

"Yet America is his true country. I heartily wish that—"

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Here Mr. Fielding checked himself, being very imprudently about to say that he wished for his part he and she were both safe in England, with all their property; but discretion and the sight of Pedro coming around the house followed by a salt-water looking man, prevented this open confession of his prepossessions; and turning his words into "Here is my man," he descended the steps of the portico and met the stranger on the shelled walk in front.

"Well, Master Westcap, I hope you have made out?"

"All right an' abov board, sir," responded the salt-sea looking man with a touch of the back of his brown hand at the front of his tarpaulin, a motion which was doubtless meant for a polite bow. "Prowisions fresh—duff plenty and nice—and liquor good as smuggled. You keep your locker well stored, Admiral!"

"We have to in these war times, Master. Are you for your vessel now?"

"Steerin' straight for her, Admiral! Mean to be in deep soundin's 'fore the first night-watch. Don't feel safe ashore a'ter dark, nor nowhere near land. Smooth sea, deep sea lead, and long life, is my motto!"

Mr. Fielding saw that his man was a little tipsy, and he looked vexed; but taking hold of his arm with his fore-finger and thumb, he said to him—

"Come, I will walk down to your craft with you." He then turned to Pedro and said privately: "Did you see that he spoke to no one while he was at his food?"

"Yiss, señor! Me lock him in—find him lock in!"

"That is well! Now, Master Westcap, I will trouble you with this letter. Can you carry it safely?"

"Safe as I brought the other, Admiral," he responded with tipsy confidence in himself. "But I want to look about a bit first. They do say, Admiral, you've got the best 'state here on the coast from St. Johns to Portland bay. Yer house is like a palace any way; and—"

"Here is the path! Come, step carefully," said Mr. Fielding, thoroughly disgusted with his visiter, but whom he was, nevertheless, afraid to leave a moment to himself; for to suffer him to hold conversation with any person were a risk too great for him to run; he therefore had no intention of leaving him till he should see him take the boat at the beach.

Here they soon arrived, and Westcap stumbling into a skiff in which two men waited for him, was pulled off to a small, sharp-bowed vessel, schooner-rigged aft and sloop-rigged forward, with a foresail heavy enough for a vessel four times as large, a kind of craft now known in the Bay of Fundy as a scudder, and then in use more or less along the eastern coast of Maine by a certain class of fishing traders.

Mr. Fielding anxiously watched until he beheld the scudder make sail and lay her course down the bay; and when he saw her disappear between the two cliffs that formed the outlet to the ocean, he blessed his good fortune in having got clear of a man who, as he expressed it to himself, as he reclinèd the way to the villa, "might have done him an irreparable mischief with his tipsy tongue, had the humour taken him."

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CHAPTER III.

MARY FIELDING remained a few moments standing where her father had left her, upon the verandah, and gazing with interest upon the ship-of-war, which, with her head sails backed, lay to, stationary upon the sea. Taking the spy-glass, she tried to "guess" her nation; but as this was the first frigate she had ever seen, there was but little chance of success in this species of nautical scrutiny. But her eye in ranging along the horizon detected a second vessel some distance to leeward, and which seemed to have met the squall also, for her foretopsail was close reefed.

Mary was sailor enough to know that the second vessel was a large schooner with foretopgallantsail yard across; and she knew by the rakish slew of her masts, that she was a different affair from the clumsy, short, upright-masted coasters she had been accustomed to see pass the Beacon Head, and anchor in the bay.

"Dears me, Miss Mary, 'ow can you love to look so much hon the 'orrid sea, and 'old that 'eavy glass at arms' length, enough to break both of your harms, to say nothing of jaming your heyes hout? I 'ate the sea—I'm so tired of seeing it. Hit is the same thing from morning till night, blue and dull. One might has well turn their faces hup and look hat the sky hall the time!"

"And it is pleasant to look at the sky, especially in the

night when the stars are out. Don't you remember, Hetty, how I showed you Orion, and the Pleiades, and the north star, and Jupiter and his moons, and Saturn——”

“I dare says I saw something—but they danced habout so one couldn't tell; and, has for Satan, I didn't care about seeing him, and so I shut my heyes when you pointed at the 'orrid monster, as the cethens vorshipped!”

The speaker was a rosy-checked, buxom little maiden about sixteen years of age, with hazel eyes, brown hair that curled coquettishly about her little ears, and ripe, cherry-tinted lips, that would have captivated a honey-bee, to say nothing of a young man's heart. She was dressed in a white frock, short enough to show a pretty ankle and foot, a black silk apron, a blue ribbon tied in a love-knot about her neck, and a brooch and ear-rings, the latter representing a heart hanging by a golden hoop. Altogether, she was a nice, clever, blooming, mischievous-looking little *femme-de-chambre*, which was the office she held near the person of the beautiful Mary Fielding. By birth a cockney, she still retained the freshness of her native enunciation, and her London notions about nearly every idea that her little round head held.

“I should think you would find amusement in watching the vessels on the ocean, Hetty,” said her mistress, who smiled at her astronomical speech.

“Dears me! One wessel a day! Hin Lonnon you can see sights o' young lords and gentlemen, and fine hequipages, a hundred going by in a minnit! I honly want to see the wessel that is going to take you to Lonnon, and me with you, dear Miss Mary.”

“Well, Hetty, one of these days! You have not been three years, no, not two from England, and yet you are sighing to return, while I have never been there, and yet how quiet I am.”

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"Well, Hetty, father says after this war——"

"Hafter this war! He vas goin' before the war, as he said, going with all his riches, and take you to live and die in England. I wish I had never left it, dears me!"

"I see you are out of patience about the war, Hetty. But if you are so home-sick, you shall go in the first vessel that we can get you passage on. I should miss you very much, for you are so good and attentive, and seem to love me so much; but if you can't be happy——"

"No, no, kind, dear Miss Mary," exclaimed the full-hearted English girl, with swimming eyes; "no, no, I will not go away from you! I love you too well to leave you; but I honly wish we could hall go!"

"We may soon, Hetty. What would William say, Hetty, if he heard you wishing to go back to England in such a hurry?" asked the maiden with an arch smile, as if she knew there was some secret reason why a certain Mr. William ought to be iaformed of these truant predilections for London. The little maid blushed like a rose, and smiled and pouted, and patted the toe of her petite foot against the floor, and betrayed visibly her very badly kept secret, if secret it ever was. If the "William" whose name had brought into action these pretty motions and plays of love, had witnessed these effects, he would have felt himself to be one of the happiest lovers in existence.

Miss Fielding, without noticing these confusions of the heart in her pretty waiting-maid, continued to direct the spy-glass over the waters, as if, having satisfied her curiosity with regard to the two strange vessels, she were now coursing the sea for her own amusement. But there was a certain earnest expression in her fine face, and a close searching perspective in her eye, that indicated that a stronger motive than mere

pastime guided her telescope. It was particularly directed to the south-western board, and in that quarter was levelled long and steadily, until the sight of the scudder hoisting her sails in the bay below drew Hetty's attention, whereupon her exclamation caused her mistress to remove her eye from the glass, and turn and look to the left upon the bay.

"This is a short and hodd visit to Master," said Hetty. "I didn't like the looks o' that man in the tarpaulin an' storm-jacket, at hall, Miss Mary. I wonder what brought 'im 'ere!"

"He came on business, and you should not be too curious, Hetty," answered Mary, who, nevertheless, had felt, from the mysterious mode of the visit, and its effect upon her father, the keenest curiosity to learn the object of it.

"Well, it is the hugliest-looking vessel, too, I hever laid heyes hon! Its sails is a mile too big for hit; and I've no doubt it'll tip hover before hit gets where hit's going to. But here comes the clerk, Master Cracklewood; and his thin face looks an hinch longer than hever. Something's the matter down to the warehouses, Miss Mary, I'll be bound. He'd never stir from his desk to walk up here, with his thin, spider-legs, hif there wasn't."

"Hetty, you are too saucy, girl!"

"Well, Miss Mary, there's reasons;" and here she pursed her rose-bud lips: "there's reasons for being saucy, perhaps, when some folks is named!"

"Pray, what has Mr. Cracklewood said to stir your ire, Hetty?" said her mistress, laughing at her manner.

"He one day compared my fingers to shapely goose-quills, and taking hold of my hand, wanted to sharpen the nail of the little finger, and write with it. And then he had the 'dacity to say my mouth was prettier than a coral hinkstand, and was filled with the hink o' nectarine or some hother kind o' preserve. He is an old grizzled bachelor, and must keep his flirtatings to himself."

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The personage thus complimentarily alluded to by the spoiled and pretty serving-maid, now approached the step of the portico, hat in hand, with a low bow to Miss Fielding. He was a tall, spare man, with fiery red hair, gray whiskers, and high cheek-bones, with a broad mouth and bad teeth: the whole face decidedly Scotch. He was dressed in a snuff-coloured coat, with quaker-like skirts and flaps; a long, red velvet waistcoat, soiled with much snuff, and small-clothes of plaid, buckled at the knee, long stockings, of dark mixed gray, high-quartered square shoes, with enormous paste buckles, and a stiff military black stock, that raised his chin in the air, and gave him a pompous air, completed his outward fashion, save a broad-brimmed white hat, which he held now in his left hand. This gentleman was the clerk or manager of Fielding Manor.

"You seem in haste, Mr. Cracklewood," accosted Miss Fielding, with that courtesy which never forsakes right-minded people.

"Ye'es, Miss Mawry," answered the manager, wiping the sweat from his fiery brow. "I wud see yer fether. I ha' cemmportant eentelligence to make known to him."

"My father has gone to the beach; but, as it is not far, he will soon be in. Sit down, Mr. Cracklewood."

"Na, na, thankee, I'll e'en gang and meet him;" and with these words, the manager bowed stiffly to the young lady, and without noticing the maid, turned, and crossed the lawn in the direction of the descent to the beach. Hetty pouted, and looking after him, said,

"Ha! the ypocrite! He pretends not to see me when you are by, Miss Mary; but whenever I am halone, he's alays at some o' his gallanties, an' 'orrid love-making! You laughs, Miss; but it's death to me to think he thinks I'm ugly and hold enough to love him! If I should dare to tell Wil——"

Here the sudden booming of a cannon from the sea startled

maid and mistress ; and, looking in the direction of the sound, they saw a wreath of smoke rolling swiftly along the surface of the water, to leeward of the frigate, looking like a cloud fallen from the skies on the bosom of the blue ocean.

At this moment the head of Mr. Fielding appeared, as he climbed over the edge of the bluff, closely followed by Pedro.

"My glass, bring the glass, Mary!" he shouted to his daughter as soon as he regained his feet.

She instantly obeyed him, hastening from the house to carry it to him, notwithstanding the ejaculations of Hetty, that if they went one step nearer the sea they would "hall be killed, and *then* who'll see Lonnon?"

Mr. Fielding no sooner placed the glass to his eye, than he said,

"She has fired to bring that schooner to, to leeward ; and there is a flash ! that is another gun for the same purpose ; for I can distinctly see the spout of the water as the shot struck it astern of the schooner. She is a large frigate, and carries heavy metal, by the way her guns speak. The schooner must be a Yankee !"

"Or perhaps one o' our own craft, sir," observed the Manager, who was peering over Mr. Fielding's shoulder with his eye run along the barrel of the telescope, as if he could thereby be assisted in seeing. "It was to report to ye, sir, the fact that I had discovered the frigate out in the offing from the turret o' the warehoose that I hastened hitker to tell ye, suspicioning ye had na' seen it, an' fearin' it might be a dangerous neighbour, and shoul' be weel looked to. Ken ye its flag, sir?"

"No, but I'll wager she is John Bull."

"Thin it's expedient, sir, we get the people together to get the wares and goods up the river farther, oot o' the reach o' their boats, whilk'll be speerin' aboot seekin' what they may devoor."

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"There'll be plenty time, Master Cracklewood; it's now an hour to sunset; and if we see her coming in, I'll then have time to take care of our goods. You know we have, all told, forty-five men on employ in field and warehouse, boat and wharf, and these can take all to a safe place in four hours, or by day."

"It may be, sir; but ye have noo, at the least calculation, one hunder' thousand dollars o' wealth in packages and box and pipe, and if ye lose these ye'll be a poor man, sir, aiblin's the farm and mansion hoos. There's the vessel load o' silks and costly cloths, landed only three weeks ago from the 'Petrol' brig, and there is the half freight of spices and West India fruits brought by the schooner 'Jeannette' last week, and then the forty casks of English bale goods, landed from the barque 'William' before we heard of this war, all these are vera costly, and are not in a safe place so near the sea, with a war-ship on the coast. Then there is——"

"I know all this, good Master David; and as my interest is quite as deep in their safety as yours, you must let me decide which is best, and follow my directions, as becomes you. I have seen this frigate in ^{the} offing this last hour, and yet the sight of her has not frightened me, as I see it has you, and even Mary looks pale."

"War, dear father, is so terrible. The prospect that there may be a battle between the two vessels is enough to pale a stouter cheek than mine. There is a third gun fired, and it seems louder than the others."

"The schooner is an armed vessel—and, see! she returns the frigate's fire! That is bold, to say the least! She has her colours set too, but I can't make them out—they fly edge-wise to us. The schooner now squares her yards and runs for it. How she spreads her canvass! The frigate swings her head yards and pursues; and hark! how she thunders!"

The scene was now deeply exciting to the spectators on the bluff. The schooner, which had been fired at to heave to,

was full a league beyond the frigate when the first gun was discharged from her, and had been edging up towards her as if to make her out; which temerity was rewarded, as we have seen, by a shot. The second and third shots led to a change in the movements of the schooner; and wearing so as to bring a bow gun to bear on the frigate, she fired a parting salute, and, as if satisfied of the quality of the huge stranger, steered square off before the wind and went southward at a fleet speed. The frigate followed for about four miles, when, finding that the schooner steadily increased her distance, she gave up the chase and came to again.

"That is because she finds herself too crippled to overtake the fellow," said Mr. Fielding, who with the rest had watched the chase with deep interest. "If she had her top-gallant masts up again, I'd answer for her she'd have the runaway schooner in her hands before midnight."

"I would like to ascertain vera particularly," said David Cracklewood, "what flags these vessels sail under. These are peerilous teems, sir!"

"There are two of our bay fishing boats outside; and one of them is running close past the frigate's bow; and they will be able to tell us something of her, when they come in," said Mr. Fielding, who still held the glass.

"There goes a craft creeping out down the shore o' the bay, sir! If yo pleeze, shoot yer glass that awa' and seo if ye ken wha it may be!"

"That—that is a small Eastport trader, just been in here to make a bargain about my wares, David."

"I did na' see the mon."

"No. He came to anchor in the bay below there, and came straight to the house."

"It's vera odd; they should na do their beesness that awa', but coom up to the warehouse, and not mako yer hoos a counting-room, sir. But that was no the craft I meant,

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“It is the small one-sail vessel that seems stealin’ along under the shadow o’ the inner side o’ the Beacon cleef and makin’ for the outside.”

“I see it, but can’t make out who is in it: it is growing too dusky, for the sun you see is just disappearing. But it is a xebec, probably Dirk Harder, or some other running out to fish all night. I see nothing in that!”

“I would rather keep all boats in bay, sir,” responded David with a cautious shake of the head, “until these suspicious vessels are out of sight; for if some one should tell them what wealth o’ goods could be found in here, an’ the ship were English, ye were a ruined mon afore the morn, Mr. Fielding!”

Mr. Fielding did not hear or heed these remarks of the suspicious and cautious Scotsman, for he was at the moment looking, with an expression of intense satisfaction on his face, through his glass at the frigate, which, in changing her position, brought her colours for the first time into full sight; but only for an instant, for the sunset-gun thundered from the larboard bow, and the blood-red bunting descended to the quarter-deck and disappeared. But Mr. Fielding had seen them distinctly enough in the brief moment of their exhibition to his eyes, to recognise the “cross of St. George and merrie England,” which words half escaped his lips in joyful accents. But discretion checked their utterance; for he knew that none there present would sympathize with him, unless it were Hetty, who, however, was half dead with terror at the roar of this last gun.

“What did you see, father? You seem to have discovered something that pleases you.”

“Pleases me! It ought not, child. The frigate is English. I clearly made out her colours as the wind blew them out the moment that sunset gun was fired.”

“An English frigaat!” repeated David with the keenest

alarm. "That bodes us na good! Wud no I better be stirrin' up the people to move the goods up the creek?"

"There can be no danger to-night. The frigate would not come in the bay without a pilot; and she would hardly send her boats in the night for what she could take by day."

David looked at the calm face of his employer with surprise and perplexity. He beheld in him a ruined man, in his own imagination, and he wondered at his quiet confidence in safety with so much at stake, and a dangerous enemy so near. It did not harmonize with his master's ordinarily sagacious and safe mode of doing business, and he began to suspect that the presence of the terrible war-ship had turned his head, and that he had gone *daft*.

"It maun be, it maun be," he soliloquized. "The fear o' losing all has made him clean daft. He smiled, I kenned, whan he made oot the flag to be English, but I'm jalousing it was a uncannie smile—no a natural-like anc. He's daft, and it becooms me to tak the safety o' things in me own hands; and I will do it without further woord of Maister Fielding aboon the matter."

With this resoluion, after having cast a gloaming and fearful eye towards the dark-looking war-ship that lay about four miles off, he said he would "gang back to the warehooose, for in his hurry to come away he had left the doors unfastened."

Mr. Fielding, who was a man of the closest observation and keenest sagacity, otherwise he would not have been the opulent proprietor and merchant he was, seemed clearly to read his factor's thoughts, for David's face was expressive of the workings of his mind, and following him, he put his arm in his and walked by his side, leaving his daughter, her maid and Pedro, upon the cliff, the former intently watching the receding form of the schooner, interested in it because she now knew it was American. Pedro, meanwhile, essayed to engage the pert cockney girl in sentimental conversation, but with various results.

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"David," said the wily Anglo-American proprietor, "you have long been a faithful manager to me. I owe you full the half of my wealth."

"Na, good Maister Fielding, na," answered Mr. Cracklewood, deprecatingly, and with a modest blush on his harsh face; "I ha' doon only my duty, an' all ye owe me, or I can joostly claim o' ye, is my salary; and that ye ne'er missed the payin' quarterly."

"You are too conscientious, worthy David—have quite too low an opinion of your use to me. When, twenty-four years ago, I fell heir to this estate, by the death of my uncle, Sir Charles, who was feolish enough, because he had lived here under the crown before the revolution, to remain here afterwards, and so sacrifice h's country and title, to be called plain Mr. Charles Fielding; when he willed this to me, I was poor—a merchant's clerk in London."

"And yet an Earl's son!"

"A Scotch Earl's, David—with a castle—in the air, and an estate—in the moon, where all poor men's homesteads lie. But my father, to say true, was opulent enough to sustain his title: but I was a younger brother; and, of course, my wits were my acres. When, then, Sir Charles made me his heir, I resolved to be rich. I resolved to be richer far than my proud brother, Earl James—who, forsooth, because he bore my father's title, and inherited his estates, looked upon me as a menial, and once insulted me beyond a brother's forgiveness. But no more of this! I came to this estate. I found it a noble domain, but rude and wild, and without tenants. I saw at a glance its capabilities for enriching me; and I resolved to become both farmer and merchant—to plough both the land and the sea for gold. The inlet, with the creek emptying into it, I saw would make an excellent landing-place to lade and unlade cargoes—secretly, if I wished; for I cared not to unfold to all men's eyes the ways by which I

intended to grow rich. The annual visits of the caravans of sleds of the Canadian habitans of the St. Lawrence in winter, to this and the neighbouring bays for fish to sell in Quebec during lent, suggested the idea of my profitable Canadian trade; by loading their return sleds half with frozen fish, and the other half with bales of foreign goods stored beneath. These, received by my agent in Quebec free from the heavy duties paid on such as entered the St. Lawrence by ship, have been the basis of my wealth."

"Ye ha' deserved it, sir!"

"Perhaps I have, David. I owe much to you, however. When I sent for you to come from Scotland to me, I knew well your qualities, and I was not deceived. You have not only carried out my plans, but enlarged and extended them for my benefit. It was at your suggestion I built my own vessels and sent them to the West Indies and the Spanish Main, to England and to France. But times are changing about us, David!"

"I see it weel, sir!" sighed the Manager. "This is a sad war wi' England!"

"You are very American, I think, David?"

"Very nearly a born ane, sir. I love the country nixt to Scotland. For England, na' true Scot can hold her in estimation."

"As I said, David, the times are changed. This war may continue years. Our commeree must cease on the sea; and our winter exports by the sleds, this coming winter, into Canada, will be stopped by the war."

"True enough; I did na' think o' that, sir. It is vera solemn times, uncannie times, sir."

"So I think, David. Therefore, I shall take the first opportunity to turn my bales into money, and leave for——"

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sively. "But I shall go somewhere. Now you have money, David."

"Not much, sir, a wee sma' sum nat worth the naming."

"Some sixteen thousand pounds or so! Now I have heard you say you would rather have this estate than any Duke's domain in England. I will sell it to you for one-half its value. For ten thousand pounds you shall be master here!"

The Scot's eyes sparkled. He looked on the ground to hide his sudden gratification from being seen in their looks. The key to his ambition had been touched. Mr. Fielding read his soul, and seemed pleased at its revelations.

"You hesitate, David!"

"Na, na! But there'll be na need o' your ganging away, sir!"

"I am rich enough. I am now willing to give you the opportunity I have so long enjoyed, in return for your faithful services. I must go, and my land I can't carry with me! It is time my daughter was presented into society. After the war you can pursue the same business that is now temporarily at an end. Will you agree to purchase?"

They had now reached the door of the mansion, and Mr. Fielding led him into the hall, and thence into his private room, the door of which he closed. "Seat yourself at my desk with me, David, and we will at once draw up and sign the contract of sale!"

"It's robbing you, Maister Fielding," said David, who could hardly suppress his nervous eagerness to "commit the robbery."

"That is my own issue, not yours!"

"The estate, and house, and warehouses, and wharf, and tenants' houses, and all?"

"All! But I occupy them for a month to come, if I wish."

"Weel, sir, if you wish it, I will buy," responded the Manager with diffidence, while he could hardly contain himself for joy.

The necessary papers had already been drawn up in anticipation of this business arrangement by Mr. Fielding, who, as the story will develop, had been conceiving certain plans of his own since the war was declared. They were duly signed in duplicates by both parties, and bills on Boston, where Mr. Cracklewood's funds were at interest, to the amount of the purchase-money, were placed by the happy purchaser in the hands of Mr. Fielding. It is questionable, whether a bargain was ever concluded on such mutually satisfactory terms as this one.

"And now, my good Maister Fielding, what 'll be done wi' the bales o' your property in the warehouse?"

"I'll have them removed in good time. Leave that to me. Let us now have some wine together to seal our trade!"

"Wi' the greatest pleasure, sir! Do I buy all the foorniture o' the mansion?" asked David, as his eye glanced at the glittering plate upon the side-board, and then around upon the rich tables, carpets, and hangings.

"All but the family plate, Master Cracklewood. Here is Burgundy and here Port. Let me fill your glass! But I will first call for lights."

Leaving Mr. Fielding to accomplish the oblivious inebriation of the Scot, a task to which he deliberately devoted himself, we return to Mary Fielding.

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CHAPTER IV.

It will be remembered that the sun had just gone down when Mr. Fielding left his daughter upon the cliff, to hold the conversation with David Cracklewood which we have detailed in the preceding chapter.

Mary Fielding remained for some minutes after the departure of her father thoughtfully gazing off upon the ocean, which was gradually darkening with the shades of the coming evening. The wind went down with the sun, and left its surface as smooth as a mirror, which reflected richly the orange and golden tints of the sunset sky. Even the canvas of the frigate assumed a rose colour from the western glow. Far in the south the retiring schooner was just visible, like a white bird nestling on the horizon. Two or three fisher's barks were in the offing making for the land at unwonted points, as if desirous of avoiding too close proximity to the frigate. The scudder had passed seaward between the capes of the bay and was hidden by them; but the little bark to which the Manager had drawn the attention of his employer, was yet to be seen stealing, as David had aptly said, along the windings of the shore in the direction of the outlet of the bay.

"It berry pleasum evening, Misse Heety," observed Pedro, who, seeing his young mistress engaged in looking at the sea, thought he would prove himself sociable with the maid. "Ah,

Missee, if you see de sky in West Indee! It all as pretty as de back of dolphin—ten fousand color an' more! Ah, Missee Heety, I vish you see Habana!"

"Havanna?" repeated the pretty English lass, with an unequivocal expression of contempt. "If you 'ad seen Lon'nun, Master Pedro, you'd never think o' talkin' of heny hother place hon this hearth! Vhy there's the Park a hundred mile round, hand the Surrey Gardens, hand Boxhall, hand the menagery, hand the tower, hand the Cold Streamers, hand the, hand the circuses, hand the King, hand the Queen, hand the New River, hand Christmas olidays, hand Guy Forks, hand St. Polls, hand Newgate, hand the two giants, han'——"

Here Hetty stopped to take breath, and seeing that poor Pedro looked bewildered, she added, in a tone of pity,

"You talk of Havanna! But I won't shame you! O, I dare say you haven't got hany thing to say of it, now!"

"Si, Missee Heety! Me know Londres one grand, superbo citee! But Habana me home! Me love me home, me warm sky, me green trees, me pretty sing bird, me sweet fruit! Ebery body lovee he home!"

"That's true, Master Pedro! I don't like you hany less for loving your 'ome! Hit shows your 'cart's in the right place!"

"My heart den is buried in your heart, Missee Heety! Ah, me lovee you berry too mtush and great deal more! I fall in love wid you pretty eye—you look so haandsome me nebber help lovee you all me life!" Here Pedro with great gallantry placed his small brown hand on his heart, and cast his dark, glittering eyes down meekly to the ground; for he had been long nourishing this daring passion for the bewitching maid, and had only this hour found courage to confess his passion.

Hetty looked at her swarthy lover with amazement, and not without a spice of fear, as he warmly poured out his passionate and broken words of devotion. But as he presumed on her

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silence to essay to press her hand, she burst into a merry peal of laughter, and said, with anger,

"You make love to me, too! Do you think I ham a half Hafrican like yourself, that you should think I would look upon you save to sp.' upon you! Because I 'ave treated you civil, master Pedro Blackamoor, you must think I would descend to be your wife! If I 'ad known, as I do now, what hall them bunches o' roses and forget-me-nots you sent me meant, I'd stamped on 'em before I wore 'em! You think because I 'm Miss Mary's maid, I ham has low as you!" With these words, which seemed strongly to disharmonize with the pretty mouth from which they fell, she took a faded flower from her hair, and flung it in the Creole's face. Pedro, who stood perfectly quiet and silent, immoveable as a statue, while she poured these biting insults into his ears, no sooner saw this act, than his eyes, which had been gathering dark and almost murderous fire, flashed like meteors beneath their half-veiled lashes; and stooping down, he caught up the flower, a forget-me-not, and placing it against his brow, he said in low, but remarkably distinct words,

"Pedro will remember thee!"

The words, though few and almost inaudible, were menacing. She felt them strike like cold steel upon her heart. Her cheek grew pale, and she was conscious that she had made an enemy of one of whose ill-will it was dangerous to be the object. But Hetty was wayward and wilful, and, with as much pride as beauty, felt that the confession of the Creole's love had degraded her to his own level; for she had yet to learn that every woman is truly complimented by the admiration even of a slave. If the lowest may love God, may not they love the highest among the beautiful creatures He has made!

The Creole now flung the sleeve of his broidered jacket across his eyes and mouth, and without turning upon her another look, proceeded at a slow pace towards the villa, which

was already getting to be indistinctly outlined in the advancing twilight.

Mary Fielding had been some paces in advance of the ill-matched pair, too busily occupied in observing the movements of the frigate, on board of which her eyes were attracted by several lights moving to and fro. These were the battle-lanterns gleaming through the port-holes, and usually lighted at sunset: but to her they seemed to precursor some new movement. Her fears had been excited from the moment she learned the nation of the stranger-ship; and, like a true American girl, she felt apprehensive of mischief to some of her countrymen on the coast, or, perhaps, to her father. Hetty now approached her in ill-humour, and in some fear.

"Miss Mary, the presuming fool, Pedro——"

"Well, what of Pedro?"

"He has dared to fall in love with me, he 'as!"

"Well, that is not anything to be so very angry about. I should think he would! Doubtless he has never seen such rosy cheeks in his land!"

"But they are not for him to cull or wear; and I hup and told him so; hand——"

"Well, that was plain enough! I hope he understood you?" said Mary, smiling.

"I'm afraid of 'im now, Miss Mary! You should 'ave seen 'ow he looked hout o' 'is heyes, just for hall the world like the Lonnon tiger, sixpenny a sight, in the Tower! It made me shudder! I'm afraid of him; and he threatened to remember me!"

"You must have given him some encouragement. Pedro is quiet, and docile, and faithful. You should not have angered him!"

"I never hencouraged him hin the least bit! It's hall of takin' roses from him, and a little red-bird he caught for me: and one day he sung me a Spanisher's song; and I asked 'im

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to sing hit again, hit sounded so hodd, and musical, and soft-like. That's hall!"

"Do you recollect any of the words of the song?" asked Miss Fielding, with an arch smile; "for I overheard him chanting something for you one day that sounded very like a true love song!"

"Oh dear me! I hopes not! But 'ow should poor me tell what the dreadful man might say, when I don't know one word o' the furrin gibberish. I remembers some o' the words was—

‘Yo te amaré, yo te amaré,
Mia cara, mia cara, criada.’”

On hearing these words repeated with Hetty's strong cockney accent, Miss Fielding laughed for a moment in the liveliest manner.

"Why, Hetty, you have made poor Pedro believe you are enamoured with him!"

"Oh, dears mercy!"

"The words of that song are, put into round English—

‘I love thee, I love thee,
My sweet pretty maid;
Thy hand in my hand,
To the plaintain's shade.
Together we'll fly
To the sunny south sky,
And dwell mid the flowers,
Of dark orange bowers,
Where——’”

"Oh, Miss Mary! oh, mistress! you have frightened me to death!" cried Hetty, interrupting her with a shriek. "'Ow did I know? 'Ow did I know vat vas in the 'orrid song?"

"It is dangerous to ask a foreigner to sing to us a song in his own tongue unless we comprehend it, Hetty," said Miss Fielding, smiling.

"What shall I do? And I hasked him to sing it hover more than four times one day! hand hall this while he vos ha-making love to me, hand I vas hinnocent has the babe hunborn! Do, Miss Mary, tell him 'ow it vos!"

"I'd make it all up, Hetty. Don't be terrified!"

"But somebody, it vos Dirk Harder, said he'd just has leves kill hanybody has heat a happle if he vos mad against 'em!"

"Do not fear, Hetty. Pedro is not so bad, I dare say, as they would have you think he is. Do you see that boat?"

"What one, Miss Mary! I can't see any for tears in my eyes. Now I see it!"

"Isn't it running seaward, or is it coming in?"

"It is steering from the Beacon 'ead straight for the frigate, as vell as I can see!"

"So I thought! Did not father say that he saw Dirk Harder in the boat going down the bay shore?"

"Yes!"

"And that is Dirk Harder's boat now got outside, and is running for the frigate, I am convinced, while all other craft are flying from her. There is mischief in this errand that way: Hetty!"

"Mistress?"

"I have a message that will please you! Forget all about Pedro, and think and act for me! Go to the rock cottage and send William to me! If he has not yet come in from fishing, tell his mother to bid him hasten to me as soon as he comes home!"

"I don't think he is 'ome, because——"

"—Because he would have been by your side, hey!"

"He did promise to see me this evening, Miss Mary," she answered demurely.

"Then don't speak to him of either of your lovers, David or Pedro!"

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"Now you make merry hon me, Miss Mary. But I'll go to the cottage and soon be back; for it will be too dark shortly for me to find my way if I stay!"

"And if William is not there you will be sure not to loiter, Hetty," said her beautiful mistress, as the maid tripped off in the direction of the cottage. This dwelling, as we have already described in the opening of our story, was situated or rather hung mid-way the cliff, and perilous of access either from the verge above or from the snow-white beach beneath. Its distance from the villa was about ten minutes' walk along the top of the bluff, which bent round where it overhung the dwelling, so as to place it in full view of the villa, and nearly opposite to it.

Hetty moved along the cliff-path with the step of a hare, and soon reached the stair-like rocks that descended to the vine-embowered cottage. A faint pencil of blue smoke was curling upward from the chimney and sailing off level on the twilight air like a veil floating on the wind. All around was romantic beauty, with the enclosed bay sleeping calmly below, the blue hills beyond, the open sea over the promontory southward, and the soft glory of the evening heavens.

Hetty did not linger to admire the scene, or even cast a glance at the topsails of the distant frigate just to be seen over the beacon's ruins from the spot where she was, but, bounding down the well-known steps in the cliff-side, she soon reached the door of the cot. It was ajar, and a light push led the little cockney into a neat sitting-room with white curtains fringed, a dresser of shining crockery, and a dark old bureau piled with ancient books, and an old leathern arm-chair, with other comforts, nay luxuries, that were little to be expected in such a dwelling. The floor was as white as linen with scouring, and the spirit of neatness and homefulness reigned. The windows looked down upon the calm bay, and in one of them hung a cage in which were a pair of Canary birds, one of which welcomed Hetty with a merry burst of song.

"It is Hetty, I knew, for Frank always sings for you and Miss Mary, but your step is quicker than hers, and I was sure it must be you, child. How do you do, and Miss Mary?"

These words, in a pleasant voice, were spoken by some one in an inner room, who now made her appearance, as neat and lady-like in person as the inside of her cottage promised.

"We are hall well, Mrs. Gardner, but 'alf frightened to death hat the frigate-o'-war and the 'orrid firin'. But master ses it's ha Henglish ship, hand so you sees we needn't fear nothin'. Hif hit 'ad been one hof the orful Yankees, I should ha died with fright; for they do say the 'Mericans heats their prisoners! Vot 'orrid wretches!"

"I am sorry, Hetty, you dislike us so! But if the ship is English, we are in more danger than if she were American. One of our country vessels would protect rather than harm us. I heard the firing, and sent Pipa over the hill to see what it was."

"Where is—is—I mean to say, Miss Mary wants to see Villiam particularly, Mrs. Gardner." And Hetty smoothed down her silk apron, and looked as if she, herself, did not want to see William at all; as if William was the most indifferent person to her in the world. Mrs. Gardner smiled quietly, for she knew that William and Hetty liked one another; for the former had made his mother confidant of his attachment to the pretty English girl; and although Mrs. Gardner did not oppose it, she advised her son to wait and not be too hasty, for he might see other lassies in the world he would love better than he did Hetty; but William's passion was too profound and fixed to be swayed, and so she yielded her discretion to his happiness. As for Hetty, she was a great favourite at all times with Mrs. Gardner, who liked her for her mirthfulness, good-nature (always saving Pedro not declaring love to her), and her hundred little ways to please and make herself useful, and so lighten her own labours.

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Mrs. Gardner was a widow of one of that class of hardy men on the coast of Maine, who farm in winter and take to the sea in summer. He was an honest, brave, industrious man, owned his own sloop, with which he used to ran between the adjacent towns to Boston, taking as freight lumber, corn, and apples, and returning with goods. His son William, a bold, skilful sailor, was his second in command ere he was in his eighteenth year; and there was another and elder one (an adopted son, who is yet to come upon the stage), who, crained to the sea, had at twenty commanded a trading schooner in the service of Mr. Fielding.

Three years before the time of our story, Captain Gardner had been shipwrecked in sight of the beacon; and, although William made almost superhuman efforts to save his father, yet he was unsuccessful, and only saved himself by the daring and skill of his adopted brother, Norvel Hastings, who had seen the wreck from the land, and perilled his life to rescue those on board.

Since the death of his father, William had not left his widowed mother save for a day or two at the time to go off fishing, or to run to Wiscasset or Bath in the Kennebec with and for small freights, in a little two-masted xebec which he by Norvel's aid, with their united earnings, had purchased.

"William has not yet come in, Hetty. He went out this morning after mackerel, and I saw his vessel at noon full eight miles to the south. I dare say he has lingered to see the ship-of-war pass!"

"Dears me, Mrs. Gardner, it didn't pass, but stops stoek still hout on the hocean, not more than four miles hoff from the Cliff 'Ead! I hope they wouldn't take him prisoner, oh, if they should!"

Mrs. Gardner's cheek paled at this thought; but her good sense returned to her comfort, and she replied, calmly,

"Ships of war would hardly trouble themselves about a fishing-boat, Hetty!"

"But I heard master say the war was brought on because the Henglish King would 'ave sailors hout of Hamerican vessels, and the Hamericans 'ave made this war bout it. Perhaps the frigate might stop Villiam and make him a sailor—and then, and then, oh——"

"Don't be distressed, dear child! Heaven will protect him. William is prudent, and would not go into danger. Let us go up the cliff and try and see if he is in sight!"

"Here's Pipa! Oh, Pipa! good Pipa! did you see Mister Villiam's zebec?" exclaimed Hetty, with the rapid questioning her fears gave impulse to.

"Did you go to the Beacon, Pipa?" asked Mrs. Gardner, more composedly.

The third person they thus addressed was a small, undergrown negro lad, with a monstrously large head, a slender neck, narrow shoulders, long, apish arms and hands, knock-kneed lower limbs, and feet like an ourang outang's for length and flatness. He was dressed in a boyish suit of bright red flannel, for nothing else would he wear, but would tear in pieces any other colour with which his young master, Norvel, invested him. He was bare-headed and bare-footed, wore huge circles of gold in his ears, and on each of his wrists were two silver bracelets. His spine was slightly curved, which lowered his height, and gave him a stoop forward. His head was the most remarkable part of the little monster, as it ought to have been. Twice too large for his body, it was a giant's in appearance. The top was bald and glistening, but about the ears the hair was long, and bushy, and coarse as wire. His ears were diminutive and hairy, his brow high and smooth and intellectual, but his eyebrows were arched and thick, and were the base of a Jewish Roman nose large and strong, and his eyes were oriental, Chinese more than African. His mouth

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was large and hideous, and seemed to be made like a brute's, rather for devouring than for talking. The colour of his skin was jet black.

He came into the cottage without a sound to indicate his presence, as if his soles were shod with velvet. On seeing Hetty, his vulture-like eyes brightened, and his whole form, before listless and loose, became animated and changed; while his face expressed childish delight. He ran up to her, and standing before her, crossed his hand on his hairy breast, and said—

“Pipa grad thee prettle Hettle! Prettle Hettle brink Pipa rosy?” and he extended his ape-like hands towards her. Hetty drew back a half-step, and said, with a timid reverence, for she had not in two years got over her first terror at sight of him, though she knew him to be harmless, faithful, and overrunning with all kindness and affection; and who challenged love in spite of his almost terrific deformity: for the soul will speak and declare its beauty, even if it were imprisoned in a brute's form; and the gentleness and love of Pipa's inner spirit shone through his cell of flesh, as light is emitted from the most pestilent fens.

“I didn't bring any roses for you to-day, Pipa. Have you just come from the cliff?”

“Yay. Pipa thee bigga thip—fire bigga gun! Thip makee fire bigga gun at little thip—little thip run.”

“You have been very quick, Pipa,” said Mrs. Gardner.

“Did you look for William's boat?”

“Yay. Pipa thee it. Pipa thee naughty bad Dirkee go in boatee out to de thip! No goodee!”

“Where was William's boat, Pipa?” asked Hetty.

“Pipa thee Mather Villy's boatee comen fatht homee. He den stopee—he lookee at bigga gun thip: he den thail leetle way to it; den he thtoppee: den he put up him hem, an' thteer for to comee in de Bay.”

"Then he will be here soon. Stay to tea. Hetty and you will be sure to see him. Pipa, make the fire for Master William's supper."

The dwarf, with his characteristic docility, went out, and brought in a few pieces of kindling-wood, and laid them, with great care, across each other upon the hearth, struck a light with a tinder-box apparatus, and proceeded to blow up the fire.

"I can't stay, Mrs. Gardner, indeed I can't. Miss Mary is halone hon the cliff, and it is getting so late that I am hafraid hif that wicked Pedro should meet me; for, because I won't let him fall in love with me, he shakes 'is 'ead, hand mutters things hagainst me!"

"Pedro won't harm you, Hetty."

"Pipa killee brackee Pedro—killee dead. He hurtce prettle Hettle!" exclaimed the dwarf, rising to his feet.

"Pipa lovee Hettle much deal!"

"There's hanother!" cried out the pretty maid, in a tone of absolute affright and loss of patience. "Hif Pipa goes to fall in love with me, I'll take laudanum, hand die hat once. Oh, you monster—you ugly, black bear!"

"Pipa thorry Hettle make angry. Goodee Hettle, poor Pipa! Pipa kissee you shoe!"

"Oh, Mrs. Gardner, keep him from me!"

"Hetty, you are foolish. Pipa is as harmless as a kitten. He did not mean he loved you as Pedro does; only he expressed, in his poor and few words, his devotion to you. He would not crush a spider. He seems to love, and cherish, and be delighted with everything that has life. The very sheep come up and lick his hand, and the cow will let him hang about her neck, and rub her head against his. If he opens the cage and whistles, the canaries will fly out and light on his shoulders, and sing in his ear their prettiest songs. He can't talk our language well, and uses but few words; but Norvel, who knows his native tongue, the Spanish, says he

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"I know he is good; but I can't imagine what Master Norvel, such a 'andsome young gentleman has 'e is too, if he is a poor coaster, could 'ave brought him from the Hinjees for!"

"Gratitude and humanity were the motives, Hetty. When four years ago Norvel was in Cuba with his vessel, getting freight to bring home, he was on shore and saw this poor Pipa (who had now gone out for more wood) in the hands of the people, who were about to burn him at a stake for a wizard. Norvel learning that he had done no harm, and having three of his sailors with him, he rescued him and took him on board his vessel."

"Mister Norvel is so brave always."

"Brave and just. Now see the reward of his humanity. The dwarf informed him that, as he lay hid in a cave where he mostly dwelt, three days before, he had overheard some buccaneers forming a plan to take and rob his richly laden vessel, and that very night was set for it; and that he had been seized by the populace on his way to convey intelligence of it to Norvel."

"Then he 'ad seen Mister Norvel before?"

"No. His own goodness led him to wish to save the vessel. So the people seeing him abroad raised a hue and cry, and would have burned him if Norvel had not rescued him; and sure enough, that very night, the robbers came off in three boats to plunder him, but, taking advantage of the information Pipa gave him, he set sail soon as it was dark; but with his glass, as he lay-to three miles off, he could see into the port and discover the long black boats full of buccaneers rowing about as if in perplexity. Norvel brought Pipa home and has never regretted it. Indeed, he is so useful——"

Here the dwarf re-entered, and Hetty rose to go.

"It is quite dark, Hetty!"

"Then I must run the faster! Tell William to come straight to Miss Mary soon as he gets in!"

"I will; but he will regret he did not see you here himself. It is late for him to stay."

"When Pipa thee hee Mather Villy hee tree mile off, it takee mosty half hour moree to getee homce," said the dwarf.

"De windy fair. Hee come by-bye!"

"Good night, Mrs. Gardner."

"Good night, dear Hetty. I will send him at once."

"When do you expect Master Norvel?" she asked, lingering a moment in the door.

"He should be here to-morrow or next day, as he has been absent eight days, and he has sometimes been up to Boston and back in nine! I feel anxious about him, with hostile war-ships on the sea!"

"You may well, Mrs. Gardner. I know *one* as is werry perticular hanxious," added the little maid significantly.

Mrs. Gardner softly shook her head: "I understand you, Hetty; but there is no need for me to look in that quarter with an eye of hope for my noble Norvel. We are humble, William looks no higher than yourself (though you are very good and suitable for him), how then should the lady Mary look towards my adopted boy?"

"Norvel loves her with all his 'cart, Mrs. Gardner, I know that better than you do, perhaps?"

"Yes; the poor man may look upon the sun! but it will ever be out of his reach. Miss Mary is my kind friend, and I love and honour her, and believe she is the best and noblest of women. But she will mate with her own! Norvel has never spoken to me of his daring love, but I have seen it sparkle in his eye, glow in his cheek, tremble on his lip, when in her presence; and I have pitied him, for I knew such high love would end in disappointment. It is not possible she can

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have been aware of his passion, or she would not visit me as she does, so often and so frankly. If she knew it, I should see her resentment expressed in her manner and absence. She was here only this morning, and her visit was so sweet. She carries sunshine wherever she goes. Poor Norvel!"

"Master Norvel need not despair, Mistress. I think Miss Mary knows he loves her, and is not hangry at it. I'm in love, hand houghtn't I to know what love is! Vell I knows by her ways she's in love with Master Norvel, or somebody helse! And I guess *who* it is!"

With these words Hetty hurried away, and disappeared rapidly over the top of the cliff on her way to rejoin her young mistress, upon the sacred secrets of whose heart she had been so positively passing her judgment: with what accuracy, the reader will know in due time.

CHAPTER V.

PERHAPS the reader is pretty well assured that this chapter will bring him into the dark and star-lit inlet with a description of which our story opened, and that he is now about to follow the adventures of the two mysterious personages in the boat which was creeping so stealthily up the little river under the blackness of the darkness of its over-arching branches. But it is not a part of the arrangement of our story to bring in the continuation of that scene at present; as we have first to do with other persons and other scenes, whose adventures, circumstances, and positions with relation to each other have a direct bearing upon the movements of the two men in the boat.

We shall, therefore, now take our readers on board a small vessel which since the sunset has been in sight from the Beacon, and which Pipa pronounced to be Master Willy's fishing-boat. As the dwarf had said, the little *lateen* rigged craft had been steadily making for the entrance of the bay, when it suddenly luffed and lay perfectly still upon the water. It then filled away again, and after running a quarter of a mile nearer the frigate, came to the wind, and again remained stationary.

The boat we will now take the reader on board of. You see that it is a small, but well built little craft, with two masts lateen rigged; for William Gardner had once made a voyage to the West Indies, and had rigged his fishing vessel after the

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fashion of the luggers he had seen in the south seas. The huge leg of mutton fore-sail is now brailed up, and the jib and mainsail only set, the former filled aback to keep her steady. The colour of the lugger is black outside and red inside. It has a half-decked fore-cuddie large enough to hold two persons in a rain.

Two persons only are on board. One of these is a stout, well-built young man of twenty, with long light locks blowing about his browned cheek. His eye is a clear blue, and his face good-looking and has pleasing features. He wears a straw tarpaulin, painted red, and fastened to his jacket button by a lanyard of spun-yarn. His jacket is blue checked linen, his trowsers duck, and secured by a leathern belt in which is stuck a serviceable knife in a sheath. His checked shirt is fastened in the bosom with an arrow piercing two hearts; and upon the little finger of his left hand is a thick, plain gold ring; while a bracelet of hair, that looked exactly like the pretty Hetty's, was neatly tied with a true love knot about his wrist; on which were devices of a fowl anchor, a female weeping over a tomb, a wreath of roses, and a ship, done with taste and skill in India ink—a species of tatooing much in favour with certain sea-going folk. Altogether, William Gardner, for such is the person we are describing, was a dashing young skipper, a little foppish in his way, and sentimental, perhaps, but on the whole, a bold, skilful, generous-hearted, and loveable young sailor; at least such was the private opinion of the handsome little cockney maid; and certainly she showed good taste in the selection of her lover; for William was without question worth five hundred of David Cracklewood, the snaggle-toothed old manager, and a ship load of such amatory swains as the glittering-eyed, song-chanting Pedro.

The other personage in the lugger was a slim youngling of seventeen, ill put together, as if his joints were tied in their sockets, and suffered to swing *ad libitum*. He was full six

feet tall as he leaned listlessly and in an ungainly attitude against the fore-mast; and if he had stretched himself to his full uprightness, he would have stood at least four inches taller. Across the shoulders he measured a boy's breadth, and his face was that of a beardless lad, as in fact he was. His jacket was too short, and his jean trowsers left half his naked and bony leg and ankle visible. He had a hand like Goliath of Gath, and his feet were encased in old shoes of an enormous number. He was chewing spruce gum.

The bottom of the lugger was filled with mackerel, with a few cod and halibut mixed with them, in all not less than a hogshead full; while cod-lines and various other fishing-lines hung about, wound on their frames of wood.

"Wal, Master Gardner, I kind o' guess it is Dirk's craft enny how! It's got the fore-sail full o' patches, and the gaff is jist a leetle bit shorter nor the main, and that's what makes me know it's him."

"It is very odd he should be steering dead for the frigate, 'Siah, when the best thing to do is to give her a wide birth."

"Perhaps he's goin' to sell her fish! Them ar' British officers have a powerful sight o' cash, and don't mind what they buy or give! I'm sort o' thinkin' if we'd run under her lee, they'd give us plaguy site more for our fish than they're worth!"

"I don't want to sell 'em for more than they are worth, 'Siah! I am sure that is Harder's boat; and there is something strange in his coming out of the bay and steering for the frigate. Let us keep away again, and see if he boards her. It is getting so dark we shall lose sight of his course here!"

"If there's any mischief to be done, or enny body to be harmed by his goin' out to her, you may be sartain he'll be quick on the heft to do it. I never seed sich a tarnal ugly bad critter in my born days as that Dirk. If the born devil

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aint in him, then he never was in nobody. He don't like you mazin' well, Master Bill!"

"Haul aft the sheet! Another pull on the fore-halyards! That's it! I don't care a finger snap for Harder's hate. He's a bad fellow, and never forgives an injury. But I never harmed him! He took care to keep from crossing my track."

"He's a pesky coward, as enny body must be as is as wicked and swears so orful as he does. I've knowed him run a mile round arter night to keep from going by the lone graves where them nine shipwrecked men was buried, down by the Beacon."

"He isn't much afraid of living folks, Josiah. I never knew so reckless and daring a fellow, when his blood is up!"

"I guess there's one person he's mortal fraid on!" remarked 'Siah, coiling up the slack of the halyards, and hanging the coil on a pin.

"Who is that, Josiah?"

"Your brother Norvel! I seen Norvel once take him rite up by the nape o' the neck and throw him over a stun wall, coz he struck old Pipa for nothing."

"Dirk deserved it. I dare say he doesn't like Norvel much. But look sharp through the gloom—his boat is close up with the frigate!"

"Yes, and running nearer!"

"He goes as straight to her as a bird! Whatever his business is, I hope they will press him, and rid us of him. Can you see her now?"

"Not a bit! He's run right under her guns!"

"Then he means to board her. There is no good to come out of that. Let us stand in now for home! I promised Hetty I would see her to-night. Haul aboard the tack—more yet. Give a pull or two on the main-sheet. Belay! Now we fly through the water merrily. How grandly the old pile of stone on the Beacon Head towers up against the sky! See the surf combing on the beach, and how fine its music sounds!"

and here the expectant lover, from very joy, struck up the chorus of a familiar song:

“ A sailor’s life, a sailor’s life,
A sailor’s life for me, sirs ;
Without a care, blow foul or fair,
A sailor’s life for me, sirs !”

His fine voice mingled pleasantly with the ripple of the wave and the hoarse roar of the surge a-beach ; and in ten minutes the fleet lugger passed between the two cliffs that led to the inner bay, and, rounding the Beacon rock, ran half a mile along the winding shore of the bay, and came to anchor a hundred yards from the shore directly opposite the cottage, midway the cliff. A light sparkled in its lattice, as if to guide his bark in the evening shades, and to welcome him.

Leaving him to go on shore and to receive the message left for him by Hetty, we shall now follow the bark which had first attracted the notice of Mr. Fielding, stealing out before night the same way the lugger had just come in, and which was discovered outside by Gardner, standing boldly for the British frigate.

The Manager was not mistaken in fancying the xebec was hugging the shore to escape notice. A few moments before Mr. Fielding’s eye fell on it, it had issued from behind a jutting rock half way between the hanging cottage of Mrs. Gardner and the Beacon Head. This jutting rock sheltered a narrow scop of deep water, about an acre in extent, which formed a safe anchorage for two small craft, its usual occupants, which were concealed from the villa by the shoulder of the cliff, which also hid all but a corner of the roof of a miserable hut built close to the water. When the frigate first appeared in the offing, there were two persons in this hut, and the two craft were at anchor within stone’s-throw. The two persons were father and son. The former, a broad-chested

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man, and once powerful in physical strength; but his strength had gone from him by intemperance, and he sat in the door upon a rum keg, a miserable wreck of a man, with hollow cheeks, staring red eyes, wild and fearful in their expression, stony temples, pale and blue streaked with veins, bony hands, and a trembling frame. His locks, gray and unkempt, straggled over the pent-house within the awful shadow of which his eyes glared like two coals. There was a mingling of the grovelling brute, the fierce devil, and the puling sot in the man, that rendered him an object now of pity, now of fear, now of disgust. He was clad in rags. The hut was also as drunken and ragged as its master, a miserable shed, destitute of one comfort.

One of the two craft in the pool before the hut was as old and dilapidated as the dwelling. It was unseaworthy, its bows grown with barnacles and weed, its cracked masts without sails, its cordage dry and peeled, its sides gaping and warped, and its upper works cut away as if for fire-wood. It was a wreck, but not by wind nor wave, by rock nor breaker, but by idleness and ruin, like her master.

The other craft was rough and untidy, looked as if no care was taken to make it look well, but yet had a strong and serviceable appearance. It was a xebecca, or as the coasters pronounced it, a gebacca-boat, with a swallow-tailed stern rising high above the helmsman's place, two-masted, with a jib, and its mainsail only half the size of its foresail. It was about sixteen tons burden, and had evidently seen service. Unlike Gardner's lugger, it was unpainted and wholly destitute of ornament. It had a sharp cut-water, and looked as if it would sail remarkably well. It could be managed by two persons, though on a craft of her size a boy was sometimes added to look after tacks and sheets, and cook the skipper's messes.

The second person in the hut was a young man of unpre-

possessing appearance. He was short, compact, bull-headed, with an ox neck, and was one of that class of beings occasionally to be met with, who are left-handed and are double-jointed, both signs of immense strength. His hair was red, short, and grew low on a narrow, square brow, which was more animal than intellectual. His eyes were light gray, small, and lively in their motions, but wanting in all other expression, save a settled one of suspicion and dislike. His complexion was very fair, his nose small, and turned up viciously, his mouth narrow and thin-lipped, his chin square and broad, indicating great resolution and obstinacy of will. He wore a red woollen shirt open at the collar, displaying his girlish white neck, and thick pilot-cloth sailors' long trowsers, of a drab colour. He wore no belt, but carried his sheath-knife in his bosom like a Spaniard.

When the report of the frigate's guns, as she fired at the American schooner-of-war, reached his ears, he was walking moodily up and down the earthen floor of the hut, his arms folded and his eye bent to the earth, and engaged in meditations that were of no pleasing nature, if the fierce contraction of the eyebrows, the oft-bitten nether lip, and, from time to time, the deeply enunciated execration, were any indications by which an opinion could be formed.

"A gun!" he exclaimed, "A cannon! There must be a frigate in the offing!" he added with surprise, as the deep boom of the discharged piece reverberated above his head among the cliffs.

"Yes, *that's* a gun and no mistake, and a big gun too!" said the father, his watery eyes brightening for a moment as he lifted his ear to listen. "Where are you going, Dirk?"

The young man made no reply, but with rapid steps hastened from the hut, ran swiftly round the border of the pool, and, coming to a break in the steep cliff, he ascended to a jutting shelf about ten feet above the level of the water.

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Along this shelf he ran, crept, climbed, and dragged himself, according to the nature of the obstacles to be overcome in his path along it. At one moment he was hanging over the deep water of the bay, at another clambering along crags, this moment ascending, the next descending. He continued to proceed in this way for about ten minutes, leaving the hut full half a mile in his rear, when the shelf began to assume more the form of a steep path, and to incline towards the top of the hill. Following it to its termination, he found himself upon the flat summit of the promontory. Behind him, across the curving bight of the bay, was the villa, a mile or more distant in a direct line, but two miles by following the sweep of the promontory. His hut was visible half a mile off and lying close to the water; while, apparently perched over it, half way up the precipitous rock, was the cottage of the Gardners. In the remoter distance, as his eye took the direction of the narrow and secret inlet, a description of which opened our story, the turret of the warehouse could be distinguished above the trees that bordered the shores of the little river Weconnett, on which it stood.

But Dirk Harder did not stop to gaze upon a scene every feature of which had been from boyhood familiar to his eyes. The open sea before him at once fixed his attention. But he could see nothing save two or three small craft, as the walls and tower of the old beacon hid half the sea; for he came to the top of the cliff within a hundred feet of the sea-beaten tower. He hastened round it, so as to command the open roadstead without obstruction; and his eyes danced with delight when he beheld the noble dimensions of the war-ship lying so close to the land. He also discovered the American schooner to leeward; and heard the frigate again fire to bring her to.

There was a sort of fierce joy visible on the face of the young man as he saw this play of war; as if the darker and

most hostile emotions of his being had been called up, and moved deeply by the sight and sounds of battle. This feeling lies deep in every human bosom ; and a battle-chord responds in every human heart to the human war-ery or iron war-gun. In some it is stronger than in others ; but yet even in women it is not wanting. But there are some corrupt and animal natures in which it finds its full and fierce echo ; and such a nature was that of the young man who now listened and gazed on this novel and exciting scene. He strained his eyes in vain to make out the nation of the frigate ; and at length, as her colours flaunted out in view, he recognised the flag of England. With the keenest interest he watched the baffled chase, and his heart leaped at every discharge of the naval artillery, which was reflected from the wall of the beacon-tower with startling distinctness. When he saw the frigate abandon the pursuit, his small, vicious-looking features were lighted up by a redeeming smile. He was evidently too patriotic, too much of an American, to desire one of his own country's vessels to become a prey to the English.

“The schooner's heels have the best of it, and the lubberly frigate may stop and fasten her shoes on before she catches that clipper-looking chap. I'd like to know what craft that is that sails so like a gull.”

While he was thus soliloquizing, and wholly absorbed in watching the frigate as she beat back to her former position, a woman—if such an object could be called by so hallowed an appellation—clad in rags that scarcely served to cover her, crept from an opening in the ruined Beacon, and shuffled towards the young man with a sliding limp that produced a gait that added, if possible, to the hideousness of her aspect and form. She came close up to him unseen, and suddenly clapped her skinny hand upon his shoulder. Harder had too iron a nerve to be surprised or startled, and turning round his head, he no sooner saw who thus accosted him, than he shook

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her off, and with his hand pushed her from him so rudely that she fell to the ground. She rose unhurt, and fastened her flashing eyes upon him with imbecile revenge, while she shook her shut hands powerlessly at him.

"You will be hanged for this! You'll be hanged with hemp! and the hemp is sown that will twist the rope, Dirk Harder!"

"Don't talk to me, old woman! I'm not in a humour. You know I'm dangerous sometimes, and this is one of the times! So keep quiet!" said Dirk Harder, fiercely.

"I'll not keep quiet; but I'll keep far enough off, so that you shan't hit me! I guess I can tell what makes you look so black! Ha, ha! You are in a bad humour, and I know what makes it! If I am called a witch, I aint one; and yet, Dirk Harder, I know something more than people think, and yet the old One don't whisper it in my ear. I haint sold myself to him, and mean to keep from doin' it, for I've got a soul to save as well as you; but yours never'll be saved: so I've got a soul to save better than you! A brave war-ship! How grand the guns sound! Oh! I have heard war before in my day! I'm fifty-eight years old, and I've lived in the old war! But I won't talk o' by-gones! By-gones makes me cry, and I'm too old and wretched to cry! I can't look back—oh, my life was once so happy—so happy—so happy! I was young and fair, and——"

"Hist with your gab, will you! *You* young and fair! The foul fiend! Will you go away!"

"No. This is my home! The old tower is old Nan's home now! Oh, it's a brave old home! The winds roar o' nights about it, and the thunder roars a-top o' it, and the surf roars below! Oh, some nights I hear a dance o' deils on the tower-floor; and then—oh, it's fearful, Dirk Harder!—then I cower and creep under the boards, and try to pray. But as fast as my heart puts the words on my tongue, the old One

puts other words in place, and so I curse when I would pray! It is dreadful! It will be so till I die; and then I expect angels will take me to Heaven! Do you believe in Heaven, Dirk? It is all gold, and green birds, and angels, music, and love! Love! I used to love once. But nobody loves now! Don't strike me."

"Then go away. I want to see what this ship is doing. There is tobacco. Go, now!"

"Ah, I knew you'd have to pay me!" she mumbled. "Tobacco is both bread and rum! How black your heart looks in your face, Dirk Harder! And I know—I know!" she chanted wildly, keeping at a safe distance from him, "I know—I know what makes your heart so black in your face!"

"Will you leave me; or shall I pitch you into the sea?"

"Dirk, you must not have my blood on your soul! I can serve you if I live. Don't you want a thought I have? Give me more tobacco!"

"I have nothing to give for your thoughts!" he said, gloomily.

"Well, I'll give it to you. Your heart, I'm thinking, is black in your face, because you love the proud Mary Fielding, the rich Manager's daughter; and she will none o' your love! You hate her now! I know all!"

"How do you know? What do you know?"

"I have ears! Nan is where people don't think she is, and when they think they are alone. Ha! ha! I would laugh if I was not afraid you'd kill me! I saw and heard!"

"What did you hear?" he demanded fiercely, yet with evident curiosity to learn what she had discovered.

"I heard you in the walk from Ma'am Gardner's cabin to the big house, when you met her three nights ago!"

"You saw me!"

"Yes. Do you think Nan can't see? I was roaming to

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and fro the earth, and walking up and down it, and looking at the moon, and talking to it, and trying to keep up with it, for I can never sleep o' moonshiny nights, so I heard a step, and I hid in the wheat, stooping low, for I knew whoever saw me would hurt me; for I have no friend but the good, pretty Mary.—I was once pretty, too! But leave by-gones! So I hid, and who should it be but the sweet maid herself. My heart danced to see her trip along, with the moonlight laying like silver dust on her brow, and her step so youthful and light.—I was once youthful! But leave by-gones!—So I would have rose, and spoke to her, to hear her kind voice, when I heard another step, and out you jumped from behind a rock, and stood plumb before her!"

"You saw that, you hag!"

"Ay, did I! and she did not scream—not she, but stood firm and didn't seem afraid, as any one ought to be, Dirk Harder, to meet you alone by night, or by day, for that matter, and she asked you calmly, as if she had been at home by her own hearth-stone,

"Dirkman Harder, what do you desire?" Oh, how brave and sweet she spoke! It seemed to dash you a bit, and I laughed to see Dirk Harder dashed. But I was determined, if I had to kill you with this here knife, you should not harm her; so I kept quiet—looked on!"

"Take care of my knife, witch!"

"You dare not kill me! No, no! Nan don't fear you! You then said you loved her, and that she must be your wife! She then told you plainly you need have no hopes of such a thing; when you swore an oath that she should love you; for you said you had loved her with all your soul for years! When she tried to pass as if she had done with you, oh, I saw you then try to seize her hand to hold her; and then I began to feel the edge of my knife. But she commanded you so proudly to let her go, that you obeyed like a slave! I saw

it! I saw the devil then leap up into your eyes and glare out o' them! You swore that you knew Norvel Hastings was your rival, and that it was for love of him she rejected you! You then took an oath——”

“What oath did you hear, woman?”

“I heard it all! I! My ears were sharp! You swore to her, like a coward, you would be the death of young Norvel for thus crossing your loves. And I heard her words—weren't they proud ones, and didn't they cut you, Dirk Harder! She answered that Norvel Hastings, like other brave men, could defend himself from wild beasts, should they come in his path! Oh, how you gnashed your teeth, and would have killed her for that speech, if at that instant Pipa, the good Pipa, had not been heard coming up, and calling the maiden, saying he had come after her to escort her home. Then you quit her with a threat of a vengeance that you promised her should make her repent that hour of scorn! Hah, ha! Didn't I hear it all? Haven't I told the tale straight? I have your secret, Dirk Harder! If harm come to her or Norvel, I know where to lay it, I! I! What'll you give me not to tell it again?”

“Give you?” he muttered through his shut teeth, while the horrible spirit of murder shone in his dark looks; “I'll give thee thy deserts! Go and tell it to the fiends!” And springing at her throat, he hurled her light, attenuated form out at arms' length, and then releasing her let her drop! A hundred feet below she struck the beach, and her mortal shriek echoed in the ears of the murderer some seconds after the body was dashed to pieces.

“She deserved it! She was of no use to any body! She deserved it! She maddened me to it! May the infernal Satan take her! It'll be supposed she fell over. No one saw me do it! She deserved it, and brought it upon herself! Confound the wretch! I wish I had not seen her! But let her go!”

With this struggle between his conscience and his crime, the hardened young man hastened from the spot, looking back more than once as if he expected to see, even in open day and the bright sunshine, the menacing ghost of the murdered! He scarcely stopped to glance at the frigate again, which he saw was just coming-to in the offing, as he disappeared down the path that led to his hut. But the last look he got of the frigate brought an idea into his head which made him for the moment forget his late victim, and to smile with malicious satisfaction. "I will have my revenge, and completely. The haughty girl shall feel my power; for it is her wealth that puts her above me, and I will beggar her! Ho, then, for action! I will make her a beggar, and then thy scornful looks, vain girl, will be humbled; and you may yet be glad of the love of the despised Dirk Harder! I will at one and the same blow defeat this Norvel Hastings's aim, which is her gold! Come, haste thee, haste, good Dirk! Time waits, and revenge is ripe! My vengeance shall light upon the whole house. They shall know that I am not to be despised, if I am a poor coaster's lad!"

CHAPTER VI.

DIRK HARDER was not long in regaining the hut which he had left to ascertain the cause of the unusual firing he had heard.

He entered the cabin with a step and air that was so much more than usually determined that his father noticed it, and said in his tipsy tone,

“Wha-at’s the mat-ter with yer, Dirk?”

The response was an oath so terrible that the drunkard started and raised his eyes to look at him with a vacant stare: “Don’t swear at-at your fa-fa-ther, Dirk, son-ny! What are you do-in’ with the til-til-ler? You aint going to fish outside to-night, hey?”

The young man, who was busily engaged in making preparations that evidently had in view an excursion in his xebec, here replied by an execration that brought the drunkard to his feet, and an echo of the execration from his lips more emphatic than the original one. It was fairly shrieked! His hands clenched and his eyes flashed fire, while the veins in his forehead were convulsively knotted like a nest of snakes writhing there. A demon looked out of his eyes! Every nerve in his body seemed converted to steel! He caught up a broken oar, and brandished it with a giant’s strength.

“Swear, will you! I’ll swear too! I hear them swear sometimes down *there*! You can’t beat *them* at it, boy! Don’t

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swear at me!" This was spoken with terrific menaces of look and action, as if his whole spirit was awake and wild with frenzy.

"Sit down, old man! sit down, I say! Don't begin one of your capers! I can't stay to keep you from hurting yourself. I'm off. Sit down!"

But the drunkard did not heed him! He seemed to see something in the darkness of the hut, something in the air between him and his son, something unspeakably dreadful for mortal vision to behold! His eyes seemed starting from their sockets! His face grew black! His teeth chattered! His fiery nostrils dilated quick and short! And awful horror had him enchained to the spot. What sees he? If the place where the doomed suffer had opened before him and displayed all its dread secrets of woe, so would he have looked. We know not what vision was before him! But hell was reflected in his face! He shrieked! he talked to invisible shades! he thrust out his hands to keep off invisible things! He trembled with supernatural terror. He implores! he deprecates! he curses! he frantically entreats to be let alone!

"Don't drag me away! don't hurl me into that fire! Save me! they lay hands on me! they burn out my eyeballs with red-iron! they are pouring melted lead on my brain! they are tearing my heart out! Help! help! Dirk! help! mercy! mercy! They have me——." And here his son, unable to bear more, suddenly caught him in his strong arms, threw him down, and with his knee pressed upon his mouth to confine his cries, held him thus, till, exhausted by his delirium, the wretched creature lay helpless, and with scarcely a sign of life.

"So, lay still there, old man!" said Harder, as he rose to his feet. "I shall be back before morning if all works well, as I expect." He now went out, taking the tiller, an oar, and

some rigging, and closing the door, he fastened it on the outside. Then springing into a small black skiff that was tied to a stone near the doorway, he shot out from the shore to the xebec, which was but a few rods distant. Springing on board, he slipped the hawser which secured it to a buoy, and then with a pole shod with iron, pushed the xebec out from the pool into the bay. Here he hoisted the jib to catch the light wind, and, taking the helm, he steered as closely under the cliff as he could with safety. Every few minutes he would cast his eye backwards and upwards, to see if he could be seen from the villa; but as he advanced farther down the bay he grew bolder, hoisted the main-sheet, and steered straight for the opening that connected the bay with the ocean. He once thought he could see the form of Mary Fielding on the cliff, and his countenance assumed a look of defiance and triumph.

“Pretty beauty! we will see who conquers! When I complete my revenge on Norvel Hastings and thee, I shall forgive you both for humbling me as you have! Norvel Hastings no! the man of all men I hate! But his time shall come! A plague on that witch! that yell keeps ringing in my ears and reminding me of her! I rid the earth of a nuisance! She had lived long enough! Confound her! I wish I could forget her! How the old Beacon seems to look down and frown! Hark! somebody said *murder!* No, it was the cry of that gull wheeling about the tower! I am afraid I shall hear that shriek, or see her walking on the water after my boat, if I am ever at sea in the night!”

The boat was now rounding the Beacon point, and required his whole attention to manage her; for, though it was comparatively calm outside, the wind drew strongly through the gorge. For a few moments the xebec dashed on her passage through with spray under bows; but in five minutes she was

outside, the Beacon towering astern and the open sea before, upon the long shining swell of which, the little vessel rose and fell with graceful motions. His eyes turned once in spite of himself, as if a spell guided them, and caught sight of a mass lying in a heap at the base of the cliff, just where the sea came. He shuddered, and catching his breath, sought to divert his mind by giving his attention to the xebec, and fixing his gaze upon the frigate, towards which he steered without hesitating, as if he had previously fully resolved in his own mind his course of action.

The sea was comparatively smooth, and, with the light wind that moved across its dark blue surface, the little bark glided easily along. As the day drew to its close, and he neared the frigate, which was majestically returning to her former position, his face wore a more decided expression. His mind seemed to gather strength and energy with the approach of the crisis which he was seeking. He saw the frigate come to again, and her men aloft resume their labours of replacing the lost top-gallant mast. As he sailed on, the ports became more distinct, and he counted twenty-four on the side next to him, he therefore knew her to be a forty-four gun-ship. As his eye, by chance, fell on the lugger which contained William Gardner and Josiah the tall Yankee lad, he seemed for an instant to be annoyed; and he watched them earnestly to ascertain, as it seemed, if he were observed. When he saw the lugger twice come to, and once keep away as if to near him, his look of anxiety was changed to one of reckless hardihood.

"What care I if I am seen! They will never know what I do! or if they do, what is it to me? I fear no man—not I! I answer to no man for my acts—not I! Besides, he is too much in a hurry to sun himself in the little English girl's eyes to look after my motions, if he suspected anything. And

what can he suspect? The idea is in my own head, and no one has shared with me. So, speed, good bark! Speed my revenge, and lower the topsails of those that sail too high aloft for their ballast! In ten minutes I shall know my fate. It is a risk to run to put myself in the hands of John Bull; but if I can serve him he will use me. So, fly away with us, good boat! May the fiend have that old woman! I thought I saw her then standing on the bows!"

Leaving the xebec, visibly haunted to the murderer's conscience by the spirit of the murdered witch-woman, to pursue its course through the shadows of twilight to the frigate, we will now take our readers to her warlike decks.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE frigate lay-to with her head north-east, and distant from the Beacon about a league. She was slowly drifting towards the entrance of the bay on the first flood, but with scarcely perceptible progress. Upon her quarter-deck several officers were grouped, and on the fore-castle were men and midshipmen, as well as in the top and on the yards. Activity pervaded the whole interior; from which came the shrill boatswain's whistle, mingled with the tramp of the seamen, as they walked round with the capstan-bars, in sending aloft the new top-gallant-mast. These sounds, with the stern voice of the lieutenant of the deck giving orders, and the cheery reply from forward or from aloft, fell upon the ears of Dirk Harder with stunning effect.

The approach of the xebec was not unperceived by the quarter-master, who had reported it some time before to the officer of the deck; as also the lugger, and everything else, as was his duty, that moved upon the ocean within vision. The lieutenant of the deck, who was standing on the arm-chest, glanced only an indifferent eye to the little vessel, which resembled a score of others the frigate had passed that day; for the coast was inhabited by fishermen, who pursued their daily vocations without molestation by ships of war.

"That chap is coming aboard, sir," said the quarter-mas-

ter, removing his spy-glass from his eye. There is but one person in her, and he means to board or hail us!"

"Perhaps the Yankee wants to sell us smoked herring caught to-day;" said a forward midshipman.

"Or he may be coming off with proposals of peace from Jonathan to his majesty," observed another.

"The fellow means to demand our business here on the coast of his universal nation. We had better beat to quarters!" This witticism proceeded from a youth of sixteen, with flowing locks like a girl, a delicate hand, and handsome, rosy face—a sprig of nobility, evidently, from the laughter with which the rest, and especially the white-headed old quarter-master received what he said.

"That is a handsome villa inland we have had in sight these last five hours," said a lieutenant, with a glass at his eye. "I shouldn't wonder if there was beauty there!"

"Beauty and booty, both;" responded a handsome young officer, in undress uniform. "I fancied all would be wild as Scotland on this coast; but the scenery about that bay shows civilization and wealth."

"The Yankees are rich enough; and as they wander all over the world, they know how to use it, from seeing how other people live. They are the greatest imitators of any people on earth!" said an old lieutenant with a red nose.

"Ye may well say that, dear," answered an Irish marine captain, gayly attired; "show them a frigate and they'll make a better one jist like it, and carry more guns! It is a botherin' shame that spalpeen of a schooner got away from us so aisy!"

"That schooner plainly thought we were a friend," answered the lieutenant before named. "She walked up to us so boldly, and she scampered so quickly when she saw our metal, and found out what we were!"

"The craft is coming aboard, sir!" reported the quarter-master.

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"Ay, ay! I'll see what he wants;" and the officer of the deck, taking his trumpet, went to the larboard gangway port and hailed the xebec, which was now within cable's length.

"Ho, the smack, ahoy! Come alongside! Luff and lower your mainsail! Stand by there on the gangway ladder, to throw him a rope! What is your business?" demanded the officer, as Dirk laid his little vessel skilfully alongside, and yet far enough off to keep her masts from striking the projecting guns.

"I wish to speak with the captain."

"Ay, ay! come aboard. Three or four of you go down and fend off and keep her from carrying away her masts, and taking the laequer off the guns."

Dirk, with a bold brow and an active step, climbed the frigate's gangway ladder, passed the sentry, and stood upon the deck among his country's foes; but his patriotism was buried, for the time, beneath the vindictive emotions of revenge. He looked round upon the imposing and warlike array of cannon, with a sort of elevation of spirit. Full six hundred men were around, most of whom were in sight, grouped in messes at their suppers, their faces lighted up by the lanterns. He had never before trod the deck of a ship-of-war, and for a moment he was bewildered. He was overpowered with the idea of power which all he saw conveyed to his mind.

"What is your business with the captain?" asked the officer of the deck, haughtily.

"I can tell it only to him, sir," answered Dirk, firmly.

"If it is only to sell fish, man, you need not apply higher than the master cook."

"It is not to sell fish! It will be for your interest to get me speech of him."

"Can you tell us where we can cut out a Yankee frigate, my man?" demanded the red-nosed lieutenant.

In the meanwhile, word had been passed by the officer to

the captain, who sent his orderly to escort Dirk to his cabin. The young coaster, sneered at and twitted by the middies and loblolly boys as he went aft, only replied by a look of defiance, and, following the messenger, he was ushered into the superb cabin of Lord ——, captain of His Majesty's ship Hellespont. His lordship, a young and effeminate-looking person, was reclining at length upon an oriental couch, when Harder was announced. The state-room was throughout furnished like a boudoir, rather than like the cabin of a fighting ship, very far removed from the plain style in which some of the stout fighting captains kept their cabins. But Lord —— had taste—loved luxury, read, painted, drew, played the flute, and waltzed with himself in a full-length mirror to admiration! Yet with all his effeminacy, his lordship had courage, and fought his ship like a lion, indeed had the reputation of being a hard fighter; though his officers complained that he would appear on deck in the midst of an engagement in kids, and give orders with a bouquet in his hand instead of a sword. The conservatory from which he culled these floral luxuries, Dirk passed through on his way to the inner cabin, and not without wonder at seeing "a garden at sea."

"You have a—a—wish to a—a—see me, eh?" and Captain Lord —— levelled a lorgnette at the young man with deliberate inspection. "Bad face—don't like his looks," he muttered almost audibly. "What is your country?"

"American."

"Your pursuit?"

"Coasting and fishing."

"Your business with me? Are you not afraid to—a—a trust yourself on board this ship?"

"No, sir. I came for your interests as well as my own."

"Let me hear how you can effect our interests, young man!" said his lordship, with an indolent sneer on his fine lip.

"Fewer the words the better, I suppose, sir. I can inform

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you where you can obtain rich goods landed on American ground within the month past, that are worth more than one hundred thousand dollars!"

"Ah!" with animation exclaimed Lord ———; for he was not over-opulent for a noble, and depended more on his pay as captain than on his income as a peer. "What is that you say?"

"I can guide your boats to a point, where in one night they can carry off these bales and boxes I have spoken of, and without molestation, if the affair is prudently conducted, and those you send with me are quiet."

"What value, say you?"

"Twenty thousand pounds."

"This is worth picking up in our cruise! What say you, Audley?" he added, turning to the surgeon who was seated near him.

"It will be a fair seizure in the enemy's country; and the officers and men will be compensated for the loss of that Indian the Yankee sloop-of-war kept them from taking possession of last week."

"Where say you this treasure is hid?" demanded the captain, whose indifference had given way to that interest which acquisitiveness, when aroused, will produce in the most indolent minds—even in the mind of a man made out of fine porcelain clay, as Lord ——— was.

"It is not far from where you are now laying-to, sir," answered Dirk Harder, whose positiveness and boldness, wholly destitute of awe at the presence of so great a personage, surprised his lordship. "But I will guide you to it only on condition——"

"Condition us no conditions, fellow! Do you know we are not used to be dictated to."

"He is an American without question, my lord. His brass shows it," was the audible remark of the surgeon, who was

amusing himself with turning a wine goblet into a musical glass, by revolving his finger wet with wine, rapidly round the rim; for the dinner was just through.

"Very well, my lord (for I hear you called so), I can keep my own counsel!" answered Dirk almost savagely, as he turned to go.

"Stay, fellow! Do you think you are free to go? You have placed yourself in my power, and at my fingers' movement you are in chains, a prisoner; or if I will it, turned forward among the men, a pressed seaman. You can't leave the frigate without my will!"

"Nor you possess my secret without my will."

"Send him to make acquaintance with the boatswain's mate, my lord," said the surgeon.

"Nay, Audley," responded his lordship *sotto voce*; "I see the fellow is game! There is no use driving or intimidating, I see. We must conciliate bull dogs, not bait them, or we shall get worsted. He evidently has something to tell us worth the hearing. We will humour the bear. So, what then is thy condition?"

"That you keep secret the source from which you get your information——"

"That I am willing to do."

"And that you give me five hundred pounds in money when you shall have the whole in your possession."

"So, then, it is avarice that hath made thee play traitor?"

"It matters not what motive, my lord."

"Very well. If you guide my boats' crews to a treasure of bales of merchandise worth twenty thousand pounds, your conditions shall be agreed to. But what proof have I that you will not lead my people into a trap?" and Lord —— fixed his usually quiet eye upon the eyes of Dirk Harder with the searching gaze of the war-eagle.

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"I will accompany the expedition, and if I betray you, you can take your revenge."

"Good! Thou shalt go between two marines, who shall have orders to shoot thee if there is treachery. Wilt consent to this?"

"I care not."

"How far distant is this merchandise?"

"Not two hours' rowing."

"That is near! Can we go in and do this work under cover of night?"

"You can be back by morning with all safe on board."

"The thing, then, is settled!" exclaimed the nobleman.

He then sent a message to his two lieutenants of the highest rank, and made known to them the contemplated expedition. He directed four boats, two of them empty, to be made ready, and only half a boat's crew appointed to each of them, in order to leave room for stowage. A detachment of six marines he directed to go in one of the boats; and his secret instructions to the first lieutenant, to whom he gave command of the expedition, was, to guard their guide closely, and put him to death, should they fall into an ambuscade instead of finding merchandise. In all, thirty men were detailed for the boats, to which the gig was finally added as the fifth. Harder, while the officer went on deck to get all ready, now explained fully the direction in which he was to lead the boats.

"It is," he said, "three miles to the entrance of the bay; and from the Beacon, four miles to an inlet which conducts to a small creek, a mile up which are the warehouses and mole. I would advise that the frigate sail as near the inlet as possible."

"Is there deep water in the bay?" asked the Captain.

"Twenty fathoms anywhere. If you go in the bay, you will have, sir, a long pull in and out for the boats."

"That is true. Are you a pilot?"

"I know every part of these waters, my lord! I can take the frigate in and out."

"It is a risk to trust you!"

"My life shall answer for it, if I do not steer her safely."

"What is your life to the safety of this noble vessel?"

"My life is all to me!"

"True. I will trust you; but we will trust the lead, also. Mr. Bentley, how are the men getting on with repairing damages?"

"The top-gallant yard is across, sir, and all as complete as before the squall;" answered the second lieutenant, who that moment came to the door of the state-room.

"Very well! Make sail on the frigate, and lay in for the land. I will be on deck in a moment. This young man will stand by the helmsman, and direct the course of the frigate; but depend most on your leads, and keep two men in the chains."

In a few minutes, the frigate was in motion, and slowly ploughing her way over the star-sparkling seas, towards the opening between the Beacon Head and the cliff east of it. The night was now so far advanced, that the land looked like masses of cloud ahead; but a distant light trembled from the midst of the heavy shadow, which Harder, as he directed the course of the ship, knew, shone from one of the front rooms of the villa. As the frigate came more under the land, this light was hidden; and soon afterwards, the noble ship passed between the headlands with a "deep lead line," and came to anchor within a mile of the inlet, just as nine o'clock was struck by the bell in the warehouse turret, two miles farther north of her anchorage. On ship-board, however, all was silent, even to muffling the strokes of the half-hour bell.

"You have brought us in handsomely," said the captain to Harder. "I have more confidence in you! You will now go in the leading boat with me, for I have resolved to lead the expedition. What mansion is that seen indistinctly on the height of land a mile or so to the west?"

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"Poor man! I fear he will find himself a loser by this war, for one!"

The boats were now reported ready. In ten minutes afterwards five of them, with the xebec leading, silently left the frigate. The xebec, at Dirk's suggestion, run in first to see that the inlet was clear, and to report anything that might threaten a discovery. In the xebec, besides Harder, were the third lieutenant, the same handsome young officer alluded to in the first part of the preceding chapter, two midshipmen, two marines to watch the guide, and four seamen. The xebec run in under her jib slowly but with certainty, and, dark as the night was, made the exact mouth of the inlet. The conversation the officer had with Dirk as they were sailing along, removed from his mind all suspicion of ambuscade, and he only feared that something might prevent the merchandise from being reached by them undiscovered. In order to make all sure, he proposed, as they reached the narrow inlet, that he should embark with him in the skiff and pull up the winding river to the warehouse. To this precautionary course Dirk could not object; and, as the skiff would hold but four persons, he took only one of the marines with him and a sailor, and leaving the xebec in the mouth of the inlet, they pulled silently up the inlet. They reached the river-mouth, and here, the skiff leaking badly, the two men were compelled to quit it, while the officer, ordering them to return by the shore to the mouth and bid the flotilla delay till his return, with his sabre drawn, directed Harder to paddle the skiff up the rest of the way, until they should find the warehouse; for the darkness and secrecy of the inlet began to awaken suspicions that led him to resolve to see with his own eyes whether the warehouse and goods were a reality, or only a fiction invented by treacherous Yankees to entrap John Bull through his acquisitiveness.

It is at this crisis of affairs that the first chapter of our story opened. We shall, in the next chapter, proceed in the regular order of events from this period.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE skiff wound its way in darkness along the windings of the little river, and without further interchange of words between the two persons in it, the lieutenant and Dirk Harder, until an abrupt bend of the river brought them in full sight of the tower and dark walls of the huge warehouse. A light gleamed in a lantern that always hung in the brick arch that led from the mole into the yard of the building.

"There, sir!" pointed Harder in the direction of the warehouse and pier; "I have deceived you, have I? As it is for no love for you that I have guided you here, I wouldn't take the trouble to do you good or evil. I hope you are satisfied now?"

"Yes, as well as I can see by the star-light, the buildings are large; and if they are full of bales, it will be a rich haul!"

"Don't speak so loud! we may be observed; and as a ship of war is known to be near, watch will be kept. Lie close and keep quiet, and I will paddle in and look about, and see that all is safe for the barges to come up." This was said in an under tone, and at the same moment he drove the skiff to the stairs of the quay. It was much lighter here than it had been in the river below, as the water was not shaded by trees. Harder leaped ashore, but the officer was at his side with his pistol at his breast.

"What now!" demanded Dirk, sullenly.

"I don't mean you shall leave me! I shall stick by you, my fine fellow, like a barnacle to the keel of an old hulk. How do I know but there may be five hundred Yankee militia in waiting in some of these black cliff-shadows, to pounce upon the boats! It is a part of a sailor's business in war to be suspicious. So take no offence!"

"I am willing you should keep as close to me as you please," answered Harder, moodily. "If I were not serving myself in this matter, I would not aid you another step. But come with me, and let us walk round the buildings."

All was still. Not an indication of the lingering presence of any of the usual labourers of the day was apparent. They walked quite around the walls, and Harder pointed out to the English officer the bales and boxes piled up under the eaves of the projecting roof, and guarded by a strong wooden lattice, which was unlocked.

"This is strange," said Harder.

"What is strange?"

"To find this unlocked. Mr. Cracklewood, who is the head clerk, is usually very careful and watchful; but he seems to have left the place to-night without protection for your benefit."

"It may be a trap!"

"Then you English must find courage enough among yourselves to break through it! You seem to expect to get along in this war without fighting. But you need not fear here. I see that the way is open. All you have to do, is, to bring up your boats and men and take what you please. Here are the India goods in this end of the warehouse. On the south side are the English and French piled up to the ceiling. In the centre are spices, sugars, &c., everything from the West Indies."

"Enough! Now let us return."

"Not so noisily. There may be men about who will hear us! Mr. Fielding has full one hundred men in his employ,

who live scattered about his estate, and a tap of the bell would rouse them to the rescue!"

"Fair and softly then, my lad! We will walk like cats! Here is our boat. In, and let us hasten down to the barge!"

In much less time than the skiff had taken to ascend the river, it descended to its embouchure into the inlet. Here the xebec and the five boats were all drawn up, the men lying on their oars. The lieutenant reported to the captain of the frigate what he had seen; and orders were at once given to advance up the river. The xebec was towed by one of the boats, as her open deck would render her serviceable in stowing the anticipated plunder. The captain took the lead in his gig rowed by four men. In it was Harder acting as guide, while the lieutenant who had been his companion, took command of the next boat immediately astern.

After a little more than half an hour's silent rowing, the warehouse with its tower, the quay, and the cliff above, were all in sight. One after another the boats came up and landed at the mole, and the whole party disembarked with arms in their hands; for the English captain, who had fairly entered into the spirit of the expedition, omitted no healthy precautions against surprise. Men were stationed on the cliff, at the head of the road, and on four sides of the warehouse, to watch against sudden surprise, and to give alarm, should any signs of an ambush be discovered. These precautions were displeasing to Dirk Harder, whose vanity was not a little humbled by such open suspicion of his integrity. But he swallowed his resentments, and chewed the cud of his revenge, of which, like their master, he was making the English the instruments.

We will not delay the reader with a particular account of the proceedings of the next four hours upon the quay and in the warehouse. Let it suffice to say, that Mr. David Cracklewood would have been greatly amazed had he witnessed the celerity with which the plethoric warehouse was emptied, and

the contents transferred to the boats. Never had the wharf or the yard shown such activity, even in the busiest day of landing a rich cargo. The forty English tars worked diligently and well, and, by midnight, every boat was filled to her gun-wales, the xebec crammed above her bulwarks, and even the noble captain did not disdain to receive into his velvet-lined gig, sundry baskets of costly wines that should have graced the festive board of the governor of Canada, and a few boxes and packages of Canton crapes and Italian silks.

The videttes were now called in, the boats were pushed out into the stream, and floated down with the ebb, for they were so heavily crowded that oars were almost useless. In one hour's time they reached the frigate and discharged into it, and a second expedition of four boats being started, were just before day loaded with the last bale that remained of the rich merchandise which had been so carefully stored for the usual winter transportation by sled through to Quebec.

While the last parcel was being placed in the last boat, the seamen were startled by a cry and a shout, that led them to hasten matters.

"Jump aboard, men! let us be off!" cried their officer.

"The Yankees have waked up!"

The sailors leaped into the boat, and shoved off from the steps of the quay. At the same instant the bell in the turret rang out its loud and quick notes of alarm!

"Give way, men! pull for your lives, my lads!" cheered the officer in command of the hindmost boat, the others being already some distance down the stream; "they will fire on us from the banks, if we are not in a hurry to get out of this place! Bend to your oars like tigers! That is it! now we move merrily! What a clatter that bell makes! We shall have the whole country about our ears!"

The barge, propelled by eight oars, was soon beyond reach of musket shot from the quay, and in a few seconds disap-

peared round a turn of the river. The tower bell still rung out its hurried peals, ever and anon mingled with a terrible cry, in a voice which sounded, to the ears of Harder, who was in the last boat, like that of David Cracklewood. There were no articulate words, only a wild terrific yell, as if the utterer were under the influence of mortal terror and surpris.

It was the voice of David, and it was his hand that was making such a clatter with the warehouse bell; but all too late to do any good. It will be remembered by the reader that the evening before, he was in Mr. Fielding's little back parlour, drinking a glass or so to the confirmation of the great bargain and sale which had been mutually transacted between them. For purposes of his own, Mr. Fielding plied him closely with glass after glass, until the effect which he sought to produce in the brain of his chief clerk was realized. After the seventh glass, David's wits grew muddled, and he made himself very foolish, told his secrets, and professed to have been a dangerous man in his youth. The eighth glass placed him quietly on the carpet, with his head on the seat of his chair, and his body in a state of profound tipsy repose.

"That is as I would have him! He is quiet for the night!" remarked the scheming manager. "Now I am free to act, without his prying nose into all my movements. If I am a friend to England, and a foe to the Yankees, it is not safe just now to blab it. A wise man will keep his own secret when his head is in danger. I will trust nobody; not even my child! So! Lay there, Master Cracklewood, till morning!"

He then left the room, locked the door, and walked into a room opposite, with the candle in his hand. Here was a handsome Chinese secretary, at which he seated himself; and then, taking from his pocket some papers (the same he had held in his hand when we first beheld him, pacing up and down the gallery), and began to re-read them carefully. We

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will look over his shoulder; but first we will copy, for the reader's eye, a letter written by him two weeks before, to which the one he now holds in his, and which had been brought to him by Master Westcap, the skipper, in the tarpaulin, who came and went so mysteriously in the queer-looking Halifax scudder-boat, was a reply. The letter ran thus:—

To Sir George _____, FIELDING'S BAY, Maine, Aug. —, 1812.

Admiral of the Red, Halifax.

My dear Sir George,

It is years since we met in London; but my long sojourn in the States has not rendered me less an Englishman than when you knew me, and less oblivious of my friends. This war, which has just broken out between the Yankees and his Majesty's crown, has placed me, with a large property in my possession, in a very unpleasant position; and I write you, by a special messenger, to ask your protection, and that of my flag.

You are, I believe, aware, that the estate I hold was bequeathed by my uncle. To increase its value, I connected with it a quay and port of commerce, by which I have been greatly enriched. I have, however, now in my warehouses, sales of merchandise, which I can have no opportunity of disposing of; and as the Yankees, I fear, suspect me of toryism, I may lose it all—that is, be compelled to leave the country in haste, and leave it behind, when it would be forfeited; or, as we are very much exposed on the open coast to invasion by sea, an English armed ship might at any moment land, and despoil me of all my wealth. Therefore I desire your protection, and beg you will instantly send me a ship, not only to remove me and my family, but all my merchandise. There is enough to load a brig of 200 tons, therefore, if you send an armed vessel, you had best let her be accompanied by a trans-

port to hold the goods. I will personally remunerate you for any inconvenience or expense you may be at in executing my wishes. As I may at any moment be visited by an English cruiser, some of which I hear it reported are in Massachusetts Bay, I wish you would send me by the bearer, under safe seal, an English Protection that may save me from spoliation from any of your ships; and before the Yankees make up their minds to trouble me, I hope to be, with all my possessions, in security on the deck of an English man-of-war.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

Your friend and countryman,

CANNING FIELDING.

This letter was sent to Halifax by a Newfoundland fisherman, who promised, for large pay, to place it in the hands of the English admiral. The reply, however, was despatched by a Halifax man, especially selected by the admiral. We have seen this personage under the tarpaulin hat, and witnessed the nervous solieitude of Mr. Fielding to get him off again before he could have any communication with his dependents; for at such a time, the story that the Manager was corresponding with Halifax would have flown with wings over the surrounding country; and the suspicions at which he hinted in his letter would have ripened into the certainty of his English predilections; in which case, he would, most certainly, have become a victim to popular feeling; we do not mean murdered, but compelled to leave the country, in which case, the result he apprehended would have followed, the forfeiture of his goods.

We will now look over Mr. Fielding's shoulder and read the reply brought that day by Westeap.

His Majesty's Ship, Behemoth, }
HALIFAX, Aug. —, 1812. }

Canning Fielding, Esq. :

Sir—Your letter came safely. The protection you desire you will find enclosed. The frigate Euphrosyne, which is now

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at sea, but expected in port to-morrow, shall be at your disposal, as soon as I can despatch her to you. I will also order a transport brig to accompany her. I regret that the fortunes of war have such a disastrous bearing on your interests, and congratulate you on your adhesion to merry England after so many years abode in a republic. As for this war, we shall whip the Yankees, and they will have to give us New Orleans and Portland, two key cities (the latter especially to our Canadas), to have peace.

Your daughter has doubtless grown to be a fair woman. It so, commend an old sailor to her. Hoping to see you here safely in the course of two or three weeks, I remain

Yours, &c. &c.,

GEORGE ———.

The Protection enclosed in this letter ran in these words :

“To all and several of the Captains of His Majesty’s ships cruising in the American seas, greeting :

“Whereas, it being made evident to the Commander-in-chief of the American squadron, that Canning Fielding, Esq., a resident some time in Maine, at Fielding’s Bay, so called, is a loyal, leal, and faithful subject of His Majesty, you are hereby commanded to extend to him the protection due to a British subject on an enemy’s soil, to refrain from injuring him or his goods, or his interests; but, on the contrary, befriending and aiding him in any need or strait wherein he may require your assistance.

“Given under my hand and seal, this — day of August, A. D. 1812, on board of His Majesty’s ship, Behemoth, Halifax.

“G. WELLESLEY PARKS, Admiral, &c.”

Mr. Fielding having read and re-read for the third time, both the letter and protection with mercantile precision, was satisfied of their accuracy and of their value to him.

“Now that to these papers, I and mine are safe! And

the frigate is already in the offing! It must be the Euphrosyne, or why is she here? I am as certain of it as if I had been on board of her. And every moment I expect to hear that a boat is landed. One would, no doubt, have come off before dark, but they have no doubt been cautioned by the admiral not to compromise me. So they wait till night. Hark! I thought I heard a man's footfall in the hall. It is Pedro. But I suppose they will wait till late, when they can send a boat in without observation. I will be patient! Cracklewood is too sound to be in the way if they should want to begin to remove the goods from the warehouse for me to-night. I will walk out and watch from the cliff, and see if there is any sign of a boat coming to the land."

With this intention he placed the protection and other papers carefully in the secretary, locked it and put the key secretly under a heavy vase on a marble table, and went out. It was already night. The last glow of the western sky was fading into the deep blue-black of the rest of the heavens. All was still about the house, and no one was seen even in the dining-room, the open door of which he had passed in going out of the villa. He gave a momentary thought to the absence of Mary, of Hetty, and his own servant Pedro; and then hurried onward, glad that he had no one of them to observe him. He walked on until he reached the path which conducted to the bay shore, and here he stood and gazed peer-ingly into the darkness that veiled the sea. He could see no object moving. He listened, there was no sound of oars coming up to him from the water. He descended the path and walked along the beach, carefully listening and watching as he went; for that the strange frigate was the one to be sent to him by the admiral, had fully taken possession of his mind, and perhaps very naturally too, when the unusual coincidence of the presence of the Hellespont in the offing with the looked-for Euprosyne is taken into view.

At length he came to the hut of the intemperate man, Dirk Harder's father. All was quiet. No one stirred about it. He listened at the door, and even called to see if the old man was awake, or his son had returned. But there was no response. He would have asked them if they knew what the frigate was in the offing for; but receiving no reply, he bethought him of looking for a skiff and paddling out far enough to look through the straits, and see if he might not meet some boat coming in. But Dirk had taken the only skiff. Mr. Fielding then thought he would climb the Beacon path, and take a view of the sea from there. This impulse he obeyed, and gained the top with some difficulty. But his surprise was unbounded when he saw the dark form of the frigate almost directly beneath him, moving with stately motion into the bay. His joy at this sight was unbounded! He rubbed his hands with animation, and audibly pronounced encomiums on the friendship and patriotism of his friend the admiral, in so promptly coming to his relief. He felt thankful the frigate had come in so secretly by night.

"This is as it should be!" he said; "this is as I would have it! I will now hasten home to receive the captain, for doubtless he will come to anchor, and come to land to confer with me. Admirable Admiral Parks!"

With these words he walked as briskly homeward, along the top of the cliff, as the darkness of the night would permit; and frequently stopping to observe the obscure form of the ship-of-war which advanced as he advanced. By the time he reached the villa, the frigate anchored a mile from it, and opposite the inlet, as we have seen. Mr. Fielding's impatience would not suffer him to remain long within, and after awhile he resolved to go down to the beach and wait there to receive a boat—"For," he said, "they may not be able to find the way to the house when they land. I will be there to meet them; and besides, it will be safer for me to hold my confer-

ence there than here; for I do not wish to trust any of my household with the secret that I have held communication with a frigate of the enemy."

He was once more pacing anxiously up and down the sands, sometimes, in his impatience, stepping into the very waves which flowed about his feet. At length, after waiting full two hours without seeing or hearing any signs of a boat, he determined to take a small boat that belonged to William Gardner's lugger, and board the frigate. He got into it with one oar, and shoving off, sculled himself out into the bay. Nearer and nearer he came to it, and even could make out the masts and spars, when an unfortunate misstep in looking round, caused him to lose his balance, in endeavouring to recover which he lost his oar. It darted beyond his reach, and in the darkness it could not be seen, even if he had any way to make progress towards it. He saw at once the peril and helplessness of his situation. The tide was at its ebb, and the boat began to drift seaward with its alarmed occupant. He rose, and shouted and waved his hat to the frigate, but darkness and distance rendered both signs of distress alike undistinguishable. Steadily, irreversibly, wave over wave the little boat swung oceanward. Fainter grew the outlines of the frigate; fainter became the square form of the villa on the distant cliff-top; nearer drew the ruined height of Beacon tower, and louder sounded, and louder still, the moan of the surge on the outside. Mr. Fielding wrung his hands with despair! He believed he should be borne for ever away from all his wealth, from his daughter, from life. As the boat drifted past the Beacon point, he elevated his voice hoarsely, and called, with almost frenzied emphasis,

"Nan—good witch—good mother Nan! Help! help! It is me—Mr. Fielding—me! the Manager! Oh, send and give the alarm! Tell William Gardner! Tell Dirk Harder! Tell anybody to come after me! I will give a hundred pounds! I

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am drifting to sea! Oh, good Nan—good Nan! Save me! Help! If a storm comes up I shall be lost! I shall starve! I shall die of thirst! Give the alarm! You shall have two hundred pounds! Help! No one hears me! She is deaf! She is asleep! Help! Mercy! Help! Oh, I shall perish!"

The ground-swell now lifted the little helpless boat on their broad backs and tossed it like a feather, each movement sending it farther from the land; while the poor rich man on his knees, in despair gazed round on the black ocean, above on the far, far off heaven, heard, appalled, the breaking rush of the surges, and beat his breast in anguish and horror unutterable. "My child! my goods! my child! What will become of me! By morning I shall be miles at sea—and there is water in the boat! there was none in it when I got into it! It leaks! It leaks! I shall sink! Mercy, oh, mercy!" and the rich tory merchant fell on his knees and raised his hands to pray; but all he could utter was that part of the prayer avarice most fastens on, "Give me this day my daily bread!" He then buried his face in his hands and moaned.

CHAPTER IX.

LEAVING the tory Manager drifting ocean-ward in his frail bark, more helpless, with all his wealth, than the poorest fisher's lad would have been in like circumstances, we will now return to the villa and to David Cracklewood, in order to explain his sudden appearance at the warehouse just before dawn.

David, all unused to table indulgences, slept long and heavily, slept until he had thrown off the effects of his bibous indulgences, when with a stretch and a sigh he awoke, feeling very badly about the temples, a little feverish and dizzy. He nevertheless got to his feet, and tried to ascertain where he was. At first he believed himself in his counting-room, but a moment's reflection brought to his mind that his last consciousness was experienced, wine-glass in hand, in the little back parlour of the Manager.

"I'm here noo then and nae meestake," he said audibly. "This is unco wrang doings, Maister Deevide Cracklewood, for sic a respectabeel mon as ye are. Here I've made a date beastie o' mysel', an' i' the Manager's own hoose. He's gane aff to bed and left me to sleep aff my wine. It's weel ashame' ye ought to be, Deevide! I'll een get aff as easy as I can and slip doon to the warehouse! Wha kens what o'clock it might be? I ha' left my watch, an' if I had it it's too dark to speer the hoor. It canna be late, though. Here's the window,

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and I'll jist slip oot and walk to the counting-room; and in the morn I'll tell Maister Fielding his south wines are nae canny for a weak North countrie head like mine! Ah, Deevide," he added solemnly, as he crawled out of the window, "ye ha mak yoursel' a brute beastie!"

When he got out he took his way straight to the warehouse, his steps quickened by seeing from the stars that it must be past midnight some time. As he came near the warehouse, he fancied he heard voices, and this led him to hurry on, for his conscience smote him for being absent, and the idea of thieves was connected in his mind with the sounds he heard. He soon reached the yard, and found the gates wide open, and though it was but star-light, yet his eye, familiar with all the details, saw the gaping vacancies where had been piled costly merchandise; and running to the grated piazza, and finding that empty and the warehouse doors open, and men on the quay, and a boat near it, the dreadful certainty that the warehouse had been plundered while he lay sleeping the sleep of the drunkard, overwhelmed his soul. Lifting up his voice, he gave utterance to the startling cry we have alluded to as hastening the departure of the last boat of the plundering expedition. His next act was to fly to the bell-rope and ring the alarum, which, pealing loud and high, was heard even at the frigate. The boat succeeded in getting out of the river, and pulled towards the ship after its companions. They all reached it in safety, transferred their freight to the decks of the frigate, were hoisted to their places, and the ship weighing anchor, with Dirk Harder at the helmsman's side to direct her course out of the bay, moved seaward.

"We have made a good night's work of it, my lord," said the first lieutenant, approaching the captain, who stood on the arm-chest, gazing in the direction of the villa, which could just be distinguished from the dark masses of wood and cliff a mile distant.

"Yes. Our skipper has proved trustworthy! This will make a noise among the Yankees, I *guess*. But what light is that?"

"It looks like a bonfire on the beach!"

"No. It blazes up! It is a hut on fire! We can see the shape of it now! The roof and door is in flames!" said the quarter-master.

"Give me the glass, quarter-master."

The nobleman looked a few moments, and then exclaimed, with an expression of horror,—

"There is a man in it burning up! Call the first cutter! Bring the ship to! We will help him if we can."

Half-a-dozen glasses were levelled at the burning cabin, the light of which shot up redly into the sky, and flashed far over the water, reflecting its lurid ray upon the faces of all on board; and showing, like a picture, every spar, rope, and block in the ship, but with a wild, crimson flush.

"Let me see that spy-glass a minute!" said Dirk Harder, with a voice whose tones made them stare. He snatched, rather than received, that which the officer of the deck held, and presented it for an instant to the blazing pyre. His face became pale, even in that red light; and, compressing his lips, he muttered,

"It is the old man! He has set the hut a-fire, and burns himself up in it, like a madman as he is!"

"Why don't he run out?" asked an officer, whose heart sickened as his glass revealed to him the horrible struggles of the man in the flames.

"He is tied!" coldly responded Harder.

"Who is he?" questioned half-a-dozen voices.

"Who is he? My father!"

"Your father!"

"Drink has made him mad; so I chained him, to keep him out of mischief. The old fool has got to the fire, perhaps,

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dragged it out of the ashes with a boat-hook, and then blowed it up, and set the rookery a-fire !”

This was spoken in such a callous, unfeeling way, that the officers looked upon him with amazement; and the captain audibly uttered,

“Bête! What a diabolical son, to see his father burning up, and manifest no more feeling! Young man, what is your heart made of?”

“Rock—if that is hard enough for your taste;” responded Harder, with unparalleled effrontery. The captain turned away from him with disgust.

“As soon as we get safe outside,” he said to his first lieutenant, “pay that young fiend his five hundred pounds and shove him into his smack post-haste—for with such a monster on board the ship ’ll sink !”

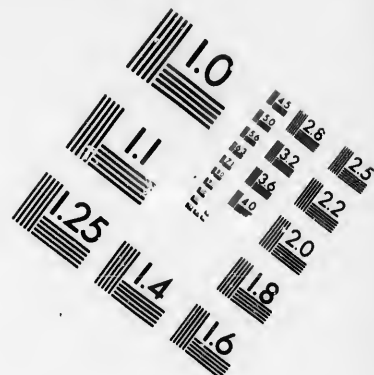
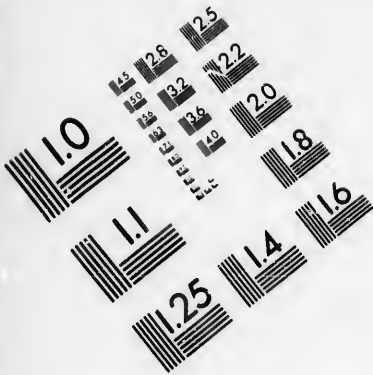
The frigate had been brought to, and the cutter lowered; but the quarter-master, who alone could command nerve enough to watch the progress of the flames about the burning man, having reported first, that he saw the man burn blue, and a moment afterward, that the roof fell in upon him and hid him in its fiery mass, the order for the cutter to put off was countermanded, the yards braced again, and the ship kept on her course. As she passed out of the bay the smouldering fires of the consumed hut were fading in the light of the coming dawn. Half a mile outside of the Beacon, Dirk Harder said that his services were no longer needed, as the coast was safe. The captain then called him to his cabin, paid his price in gold, and gave in writing his pledge to keep secret his agency in the expedition.

“Young man, I advise you to wear a broad iron collar around your neck,” said his lordship, as Dirk was quitting the state-room.

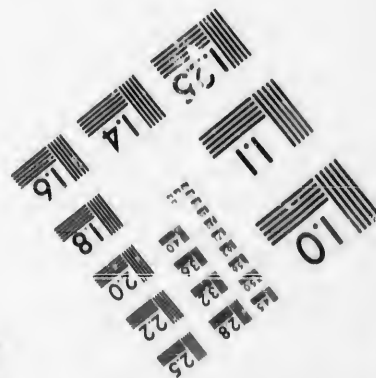
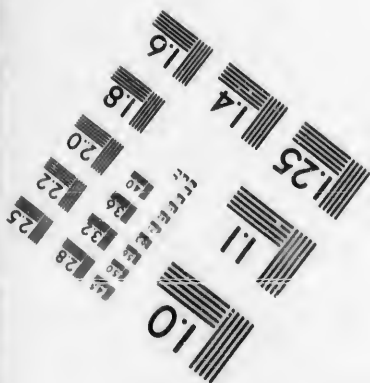
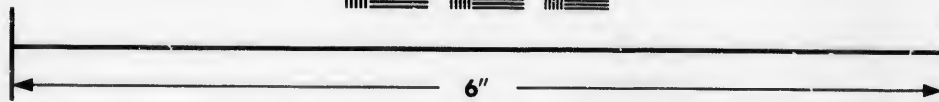
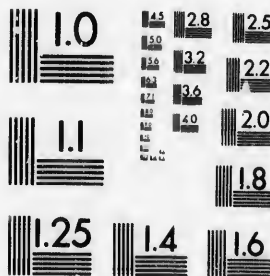
“Why?”

“To keep a hempen one from choking you !”





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Harder threw a glance of defiant rage at the speaker, and if he had followed the fierce impulse of his spirit, he would have leaped upon him. But discretion tempered revenge at such a time and in such a place. He left scowling and moody, descended to his xbee, which was brought alongside, and sailed away from the frigate, leaving behind him an impression by no means flattering to his humanity, to his filial love, to his patriotism, or to his moral excellencies.

The frigate filled away again, and laid her course with the wind four points free on her larboard quarter for Halifax. The xbee steered for the bay, the entrance to which it approached just as the day broke, it having been yet quite dark when he quitted the ship's side. Here the young man once more caught a glimpse, through the obscurity of the morning, of the mangled body of the woman he had flung from the cliff. He shut his eyes and shuddered. Then he thought of his father burning in the hut, whose writhing face he had clearly distinguished through the glass, but without being moved to pity or horror, for hatred, not love, was the domestic element in which the two had dwelt together; and in his heart he was glad of his father's death. The horrible manner of it made no impression upon him.

"So, he'll never trouble me no more! He might as well be dead as alive! better too! It was no hand o' mine! He must have dragged fire out as he has done before, and set himself a-fire! He's tried to do it before! What is that? The old woman moves! She—no! It is the wind blowing her rags! How my heart jumped! Hark! that is her ghost I hear behind me!" he chattered with fear, as a terrible cry—a wail of despair—fell on his ears, and seemingly coming from amid the dark, rolling waves astern. He looked furtively—clasping the tiller nervously, could see nothing—yet he thought he could! He turned away his eyes, and again came borne on the wind that fearful outcry! It pierced to his inmost being!

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He shut his eyes—he trembled like a coward—the drops of sweat oozed from his forehead and the backs of his hands. He stopped his ears and sat crouched like one overcome with supernatural dread; and the wailing sounds heard there at the silent hour of the darkling morning, away on the sea, the murdered corpse of the woman in sight, and stirred by the wind as if with life, the sighing breeze, and hoarse echo of the waves in the hollow of the beetling cliff overhanging him with its gloomy tower, were enough to rouse with fear of judgment the hardest and guiltiest soul. With just enough consciousness to guide his boat, he steered into the bay; and, when the body of the witch-woman was no longer seen, and the lightening up of the dawn revealed objects more distinctly, his fears vanished, and his features resumed their characteristic hardness of expression. The sun had risen when he ran his xebec into the little pool. Instead of the hut a smouldering mass of black ashes lay before him; the old hulk, which had caught fire from the sparks, had also been consumed to the water's edge, so that the inebriate with his wretched cabin and his decayed craft, had alike perished in the same conflagration. Dirk gazed from his xebec upon the desolation, and for an instant a look of sorrow passed over his face. But it passed off, and pushing ashore, he leaped to the land and examined the remains of his home. Curiosity led him to look for his father's bones, which, with the extremity of an oar, he stirred from the ashes. He gazed on them for a few moments, and then covering them again, turned from the spot without a tear or a sign of regretful sadness; the expression of his eyes seeming to indicate rather regret at the loss of his home, wretched as it was, than at the loss of his father.

"There is now my only home," he said, glancing at the xebec. "It shall not be my fault if, in the chances this war will turn up, and with the gold I have, I don't change it for

a better one! I will lounge up to the villa, and see how matters stand after the night's business. But here come men down the path! They are the farm workmen: I have no fears of them! Who knows my secret! I will face them boldly."

"Ah, Master Harder, this has been a strange night," said the foremost, who was habited like a farmer, and carried in his hand a flail-handle. "Did they set your house a-fire too?"

"Yes," answered Dirk, glad to grasp an idea that would be opposed to any suspicion of his having participated in the plunder of the warehouse. "They did not get enough, and came for mine. They burned the old man up too!"

"The old man! Burned?" were the exclamations that were uttered by the horror-struck farmers.

"There lie his white bones!"

The men gazed a moment, and then gave vent to their indignant emotions.

"They have taken all the goods from the warehouse, and Master Fielding is nowhere to be found! Poor gentleman! Master David thinks he hath gone mad with his losses. We are hunting him everywhere."

"Dirk," said William Gardner, now making his appearance, "I am sorry for your loss. You mistake in thinking the British burned it. I saw the fire break out, for I was up and looking out of the window, and at once came down; but it was too late to do anything. Your father was already dead!"

"I saw you through my spy-glass——" Dirk betrayed himself before he was aware, and stopped short and coloured.

"What? Saw me? Spy-glass? I didn't know you had one! Where were you?"

"Where? Well, if I must give an account of all my movements, I will say I was out in the bay. I ran out to watch the motions of the frigate!"

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"Well, I am sorry for your loss, Dirk."

"It is of no consequence. I shall go somewheres else."

"You can stay at my mother's cottage till——"

"William Gardner, I want no favours at your hands, nor the hands of anybody else," answered Dirk, coarsely and impatiently.

William smiled and left him without another word. The others also went away, some taking the way along the beach, in search of the Manager, and others up the cliff to the tower, while others went in a third direction. In all, there were eleven men who had been sent out by David Cracklewood, in search of Mr. Fielding.

CHAPTER X.

WE will now take our readers back to the time on the evening before, when Mr. Fielding left his daughter on the cliff, and walked to the villa with Mr. Cracklewood, whom, as we have seen, he afterwards made tipsy there.

Mary, having sent the pretty cockney after William, as we have shown, remained for some minutes, thoughtfully gazing in the direction which Hetty had taken. She sighed more than once, and seemed sad at heart. Her eyes looked seaward, and filled with tears.

"I fear that some danger has delayed him. He should have been here, if successful in his mission, two days ago. There are so many perils that this war throws in his path. He will sail hither at the risk of being taken; for frigates are cruising about, and his vessel cannot cope with one of them. But it is in vain for me to strain my eyes, to penetrate the darkness that has settled on the sea! I must have patience! Noble Norvel! If thou knewest how much I loved—how much I thought of thee—how like a woman I tremble for thy safety, thou wouldst feel flattered! Yet thou knowest it; I have not hid my heart's secret from thee; nor thou thine from me! We are one! In vain my pride would reason against my love for one so lowly! Thou art lowly in nothing but thy birth; and that—who knows what that may be! An orphan—picked up at sea from a wreck, by the good-hearted

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skipper, who adopted thee as his son, how knows one that thy birth is not equal to mine—nay, higher! But wert thou the worthy widow's son—wert thou William's elder brother, as he calls thee, I should love as I do now! What generosity, what frankness, what tenderness, what cheerfulness, what courage, what humanity, what respectful gentleness, what devotion! And so noble-looking!—so princely in air and carriage! Nay—nay; I am running away into folly, to let my fancy play so wildly! Would that he were come!"

Impatiently she walked forward, and advanced towards the Beacon Head. But the increasing darkness recalled her to herself, and she returned slowly and thoughtfully upon her steps, her eyes fixed upon the evening star, that hung like a blazing jewel in the west: a star which the lovers had promised to look on at that hour when separated far. Thus meditating on the sweet love-thoughts that have so holy a place in a true maiden's heart, she reached the head of the path just as Hetty gained it, from her errand to Mrs. Gardner's cottage.

"William is not yet come 'ome, Miss Mary. Oh, vot a 'orrid, ugly creature, that Pipa is! I have run 'alf frightened to death, fearing he vas just behind me!"

"Pipa is unsightly, but he cannot help his looks. He is faithful and good—that is enough. He feels keenly any indications of fear or dislike in others, and you should not show such."

"Do you think such a 'orrid hobject can feel? It's my hopinion he don't feel no more than a hape—them hapes I've seen hin the menagery in Lonnon."

"Where is William?"

"He 'ant come in from the fishin' ground yet. Look there! There is his boat now! Faint as it his seen, I know it!"

"They say, Hetty, love has eyes that match the seven-league boots! You must have such eyes. Well, be happy, you and William! You are a good girl, only a little wayward and self-willed."

"William likes me hall the better for it, Miss Mary. He says it is vhat the salt is to the sea! That's vot I call a werry 'andsome poetical himage. How nicely he sails his boat in! He makes her turn round like a lady a valtzing, for hall the world. If I can make him go to Lonnon vhen we are married, and set up a boat on the Thames, 'ow proud I should be o' him! Don't you mean to go to Hengland, Miss Mary?"

"I don't know, Hetty. I should like to see my brother George."

"He's been away from you so long you'd never know him. It's twenty years he has been in Hengland, isn't it, Miss Mary?"

"He was born there twenty-two years ago, and has never left it, unless he is now at sea; for my father had a letter from him two years ago, that he was in the navy. I was born here, you know, and have never seen him. I sometimes fancy how he looks."

"He can't care for you much, or he would come to see you!"

"Father seldom hears from him. He is adopted by my father's brother the Earl of Fin Loeh, and gives little heed to his American family. But there lands William. He will soon be here. Let us wait for him—unless you choose to go and meet him!"

"You say that to laugh at me, Miss Mary! but I will go!" And the light-footed maid bounded down to meet her sailor-lover. In a few minutes she returned with him where Mary stood.

"I am glad to see you back, safely, William. We feared for you."

"You mean the British frigate!" said the sailor, smiling. "They hardly notice such craft as mine."

"William, I want to speak with you; come this way. Don't be jealous, Hetty! Walk towards the house, I will follow."

Hetty obeyed, though casting many a glance backward at her lover and mistress, as they talked in a low voice together.

"There is no danger, Miss Mary: he is too good a seaman to be taken. Besides, do you know that I believe the American war-schooner that was chased off by the frigate was Norvel's vessel!"

"Do you think so!" exclaimed Miss Fielding with delighted surprise, which was instantly changed to an expression of alarm. "I could say I hope not; for the frigate may yet capture her."

"No; the schooner has knowledge now of her presence, and will act accordingly. I should not be surprised to see her run in again during the night, and that you will see Norvel before morning."

"Shouldn't you! But I hope he will not be rash. And yet it may not be his schooner."

"I am confident it is. I was within four miles of it, and it answers exactly the description he gave me of it: heavily sparred, a very square mainsail, fore and main gaff topsails, two jibs and foresail across, with her maintopmast full ten feet higher than her fore."

"If I was only sure!"

"Well, we shall know by to-morrow. I wish he could have got here a day sooner, and then we could have had the guns mounted on the cliff in front of the old Beacon, and with the six twelves he is to bring, we could keep a frigate from entering the bay, as we could fire right down upon her decks with grape. I don't much like the looks of this English frigate so near us."

"It is therefore I have sent for you to ask you to keep up to-night, if you will, and watch. It is barely possible they may come ashore to the villa, in which case I should depend on you to give me timely warning, that I might take horse for a safer place."

"I will keep watch; I promise you I will not sleep."

"And also look out for the schooner, should she run in towards the land in the night."

"I will, Miss Mary. Siah and I will keep our four eyes open! Pipa will gladly watch with us."

"Thanks, good William, thanks! I will tell Norvel how kind you are. Now good-night!"

"Let me speak a word with Hetty."

"Two, if you will! But do not detain her long, for it were best such times as these all persons, save such as watch against danger, should be safely housed."

Miss Fielding soon overtook the lingering Hetty, and passing her left her with William, with the injunction to come soon in. As the half-hour's conversation of these lovers has no bearing upon the elucidation of our story, we will not record it, but let it pass into the oblivion in which so many tender tête-à-têtes have been buried. William parted from her at the gate, and went to inform his companion Josiah Silby, and Pipa, of the duties he had volunteered for them for that night.

Mary Fielding, trusting to William Gardner's faithful watch, went to her room, and, after Hetty's appearance, retired for the night; but only in partial undress, in order that at any moment she might rise, either to fly from danger or meet her lover. Through the whole night both slept undisturbed by the events that transpired. It was morning, and the sun just rising, when they awoke to learn that the warehouse had been pillaged by the frigate's boats, and the miserable end of Hugh Harder in the flames of his own hut. Her father's room was immediately sought by her, but the unpressed pillow showed her that he must have been abroad all night. David Cracklewood was nearly beside himself at not finding him, to make known to him what had happened. His daughter took the alarm, and search was made at first about the villa, then to a more extended range. By eight o'clock, full fifty men, armed with such weapons as they could collect, had joined in the search. Every part of the estate was visited, and still the report returned to Mary's ears was, that he was nowhere to be found.

David now ventured to assert that he had been taken off in

the frigate as a prisoner. Hetty stoutly asseverated that "in 'er hopinion the Creole, Pedro, had murdered 'im and 'id 'is body!" But Hetty found no supporters to this suspicion, as Pedro was present, and was quite as much distressed at his master's mysterious disappearance as anybody. William Gardner had kept faithful watch all night, and had seen the frigate enter the bay; but as it was too far and too dark to discern the boats that left her and came to her, he did not suspect her object in anchoring, supposing that morning would reveal it. Pipa, who had been watching from the Beacon for the schooner, which William had led him to believe contained his beloved master, had seen the frigate go out just before day, and the xebec quit her in the offing and stand in. It was too dark for him at first to distinguish the xebec, but as she came nearer, and with the growing dawn, he knew her to be Dirk's vessel. This fact he made known to William, though not till after the interview of the latter with Harder over the ashes of his father.

"That man then piloted her in and out, for I saw him board her last night," exclaimed William Gardner with indignation. "I will have my revenge."

He knew from Hetty that Miss Fielding refused to his sworn revenge because she had been id addresses, and he now strongly suspected that the agency in the pillage of the warehouse. But, for the hour, he kept his suspicions to himself.

Leaving the dwellers at Fielding Manor to renew their fruitless search, the country-folk for leagues around to arm and hasten to the scene of the outrage, Mary to suffer at the prolonged absence of her father, David Cracklewood to walk from the house to the warehouse and back again like a demented man, Dirk Harder to putting his xebec in repair as if for some cruise in prospect, with Pipa, unseen, watching all his movements, we shall leave the land, and once more place our readers at sea, on the deck of an armed vessel.

CHAPTER XI.

It was about four o' clock in the afternoon of the day which followed the pillage of the warehouse, that a schooner of about one hundred and eighty tons burden might have been seen in that part of Massachusetts Bay which is south of the coast of Maine. She was painted black with a red stripe or band running round her waist, and pierced for eight guns; but she carried ten, the ninth being an eighteen-pounder amidships, and the tenth a long brass Spanish swivel which carried a six-pound ball, rigged upon a pivot on the taffrail. The form of the schooner was very beautiful to a nautical eye, and the rake of her masts had the peculiar, bold inclination ait, that pleases a man-of-war's man. Her yards were painted black and very square, while her mainsail, as the tars say, "spread an acre of canvass."

She has the wind from the south-west, blowing an easy six-knot breeze, and her course is due north, the direction, twenty miles distant, of Fielding's Bay. Although the wind was but a "six knotter" for an ordinary craft, yet the schooner got full seven out of it by carrying everything aloft and aloft. Her jib, foresail, squaresail, topgallant and royal, her mainsail, gaff-topsail, and even a starboard foretopmast studding-sail, were set and all drawing. She was evidently doing her best to make speed, and gallantly she moved along, dashing the severed billows from her sharp bows in high crests of spray. The sky

was clear, the sea blue and tolerably smooth, and she went on her way like a bridegroom rejoicing. No other vessels were in sight, save a small mackerel-catcher a mile or two ahead, and a cape coaster to the south, running eastward, either for Portland or Portsmouth.

The decks of the schooner were neat and seaman-like. The guns were newly lacquered, and shone like japan waiters. The inside of the bulwarks was painted a bright vermillion, so that when the eight ports were thrown open, they presented a brilliant row of scarlet squares to the distant spectator. There were at least seventy men on board, the most part of whom were forward of the midship gun, some lounging and looking over the sides, some grouped, idling their time with talking, others at work on the rigging, a few asleep, some were dressed as seamen, some as landmen; the whole presenting a varied and not uninteresting sight to an eye unaccustomed to behold the interior of a "saucy Privateer. Amidships were four or five men, mostly young, who seemed to be officers, rather from the part of the vessel in which they stood, than from any outward badge, save one of them, who wore a naval button on his cap and an undress naval jacket. These persons were all smoking, one of them had a spy-glass in his hand, and one had a chart spread out upon the capstan, which he was examining.

On the quarter-deck were but three persons, besides the steersman. One of these was a short man, in a blue coat, with anchor-buttons, and an old chapeau on his head, which was gray. He was pacing up and down the larboard side of the deck, with a tarnished sea-telescope beneath his arm, which, from time to time, he would bring to his eye, and sweep the horizon with it. His countenance expressed good-humour—was bluff and weather-beaten; and his whole appearance was that of an "old salt-sea man." His rank was that of second lieutenant. The next person to be described,

was a man much younger than this one; tall and angular, with a shrewd, business look, and the air more of a trader than a sailor. His dress, too, was of the fashion of the shore, rather than of the sea; consisting of a narrow-brimmed white beaver hat, much worn, a swallow-tailed blue coat, long in the skirts, strait gray trowsers, yarn stockings, and shoes tied with leather thongs. His hands were stuck in his capacious pockets; and he walked up and down the deck, whistling, with his thoughts plunged deep in calculation. This personage, whose outer man so little harmonized with the deck of an armed vessel, was the chief owner of the privateer; and sailed in her as a sort of supercargo, and miscellaneous assistant to the captain. This superior officer we have yet to describe.

He is standing on the weather-side of the quarter-deck, near the main-stay; his elbow resting on a gun—his attitude careless, yet firm. His age is not more than three or four and twenty. His figure is tall and noble in its carriage, and the expression of his fine face is that of united courage and calm resolution. His dark, hazel eye beamed with a quiet light, soft as the dark eye of woman. But the manly elevation of his features, the firm and determined compressure of the well-cut mouth, took from the face all effeminaey. It was altogether bold and manly, and strikingly handsome.

He was attired in a simple roundabout jacket of blue cloth, with a gold strap upon the left shoulder, white sailor trowsers, with a black silk scarf knotted loosely about his neck. His foot and hand were small, and remarkably elegant in form. His eyes were fixed steadily upon the northern horizon, with an expectant gaze.

"We must be pretty well up with the coast by this time, sir;" said the gray-headed lieutenant, touching his hat, as he addressed the youthful captain.

"Yes. We shall see the Waldeboro Hills before two bells," answered the captain, sending a keen glance into the

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autumnal haze that hung on the verge of the sea, giving an Italian softness to the expanse of sky and sea. "If it were clear, we should see the land."

"He knows the coast well, I'll warrant," remarked the tall, narrow-shouldered owner, with a twinkle of confidence in the captain's knowledge gleaming in his small gray eyes. "It's a great pity we couldn't have found the frigate! But better luck next time. I wonder if we shall find the Englishman off the bay again?"

"It is possible; but he is probably cruising, and may be off Portland or the Kennebec now," responded the young captain. "If we could have brought the American frigate up with us, she would have given a good account of her. Keep a good lookout there aloft!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered a man from the main cross-trees.

"Ay, sir!" responded a second from the fore-topgallant yard.

"Ay, ay!" came from the fore-castle in a strong and cheery response, as if every soul was alert to watch for land or foe.

The schooner now came up with the mackerel-catcher, which was dancing up and down, with her naked mast rocking to and fro with the motion given to it by the rolling sea. It contained a man and a boy. The captain sprang into the rigging, and holding on with one hand waved the other, and hailed.

"Ho, the smack!"

"Hilloh!"

"How long have you been out?"

"Three days."

"Have you seen to-day anything of a strange frigate in these waters?"

"No, sir," responded the man in a voice that might have come from Neptune's chest. "But I saw yesterday morning an American frigate steering sou'-by-west, as if going into Boston."

"Yes, yes! We met that same vessel-of-war yesterday, and have been cruising in search of her, but without finding her again. We saw yesterday a British frigate off Fielding's Bay, and were fired into by her, for we stood close to her, supposing her to be the same American ship we had seen in the morning. We escaped, and have been after our own frigate to let her know there is an enemy on the coast, but falling in with a coaster, he has run for Boston with the news. If you should see her, tell her the British frigate is a 44, and was last seen at five yesterday, four miles south of Fielding's Beacon."

"Ay, ay, sir! Why bless me," added the old fisherman, with a recognising smile, "isn't that Master Norvel?"

"Yes, my good Denny."

"Is that a privateer?"

"Yes."

"If you aint full, let me and Josh go with you? I am an old man, but I can fight!"

"Well, we shall be in the bay a couple of days to make up our crew, and if you run in, we'll see." The schooner had by this time passed beyond hearing, and the next moment the cheering cry rung out from the main cross-trees,

"Land ho!"

"Where-away?" demanded Norvel Hastings, with a happy lighting up of the eye.

"Right ahead! Beacon point bears one point, one point open!"

"Do you see any sail? Look sharp, all eyes!"

"No, sir!"

Norvel, not satisfied, took a glass and mounted to the fore-topgallant yard. From this elevated position, he could see the blue land stretching along in an irregular line for many a league. With his glass to his eye, he could make out the Beacon and the white front of the villa, though so distant

none but a lover's eye could have detected it. His heart throbbed, and his cheek deepened its colour, as his imagination pictured the form of Mary Fielding watching for him, invisible to his straining vision, yet before him. He wished for wings, was impatient with the wind, and he seemed to think his vessel was creeping like a snail beneath him, though she ploughed along full seven and a half miles an hour.

With his glass at his eye, he now carefully swept every inch of the encircling horizon, in search of the English frigate; but there was nothing visible on the ocean, not even a fishing boat, save the mackerel-catcher he had left astern, and which, with hoisted sail, was sailing after the schooner with her best foot foremost.

"What see you, captain?" hailed the supercargo, Mister Jeremy Longhead, from the quarter-deck.

"Nothing; the frigate has left this part of the coast."

"Wal, I'm not a bit sorry. I don't care about fighting a British 44 the first cruise out in the 'Dark-Eyed Mary,' and short-handed at that!"

"That young captain of ours, Mister Longhead, is every inch a sailor, and knows how to command a vessel as if his head had twenty years more over it," remarked the old lieutenant in an under tone to the supercargo.

"That he does! I knew what I was about when I put him in captain, though the other two owners objected; and so did some o' the men on board, because he was young. But I've seen his seamanship before, when I went passenger with him to Havanna."

"You have been to Havanna, sir? I thought this was your first trip on salt water."

"Not it; I have been twice to Havanna with my own freights, and once to Halifax; but before this war, of course. It was in my trip to Havanna, I took such a liking to our captain here. We had a pesky stormy time of it, and he was on deck

doing his duty, storm or dark, at all hours. It seemed to me he never got a wink o' sleep from the time we was off Cape Cod till we run in past the Moro Castle; if he did, it was on his feet. Then we were chased by pirates, and would have been captured if he hadn't worked his vessel so skilful to windward as to come the weather gage over 'em, and leave 'em out o' sight to leeward. He saved me that time my goods, worth ten thousand dollars, and perhaps my neck! Look at him, calm as he sits astride that to'gallant yard: he is a perfect lion for fighting. In Matanzas, one of his men—for you know he commanded a trading schooner for the rich Squire Fielding, and run regular to the 'St Indies—one of his men was thrown into the calaboose. He wouldn't go without him, for he knew he had done nothing wrong, and as the authorities wouldn't give him up, why he took his crew and the crews of four other Yankee vessels, and led them on, broke open the calaboose, tied the guards, and released his man."

"A brave fellow!"

"Aint his equal nowhere. So you see when this war broke out, I detarmined to fit out a privateer, as I was thinking who I should get as captain, I met him on Long Wharf in Boston; That's my man! said I; so offered it to him. He said he would give me an answer in a few weeks, in full time before I should have the schooner ready for sea. So four weeks ago he sent me word he would accept, and ten days ago he comes up and tells me he is ready to take command. But he said that I must let him take on board some of his young friends in Fielding's Bay, who want to try their fortunes with him; for no doubt hundreds would follow where he would lead!"

"I am willing to for one, for I liked him from the first," responded the honest old lieutenant, bringing his hard hand down upon his knee with an emphatic slap. "But what are these guns stowed away in the hold for?"

"They are freight to man a battery at the entrance of the bay. Through my influence, government has loaned them to him for the purpose."

"You have a good deal of influence, Mr. Loughhead! People say you are a very rich man."

"Poor, sir! poor! If I were rich I should not be risking my life out to sea in a privateer! Poor, sir!"

"Why, you own nearly all this vessel, pay nearly all the crew (for not twenty are regular prize-sharers); and this takes a good deal of money. If I owned the schooner I should feel confounded rich! I hope I shall get prize-money enough in this war to make me comfortable. I want to live and die on a little farm."

"You sailors are always wishing for a farm! I never had a captain sail in my employ that didn't intend one day to quit the sea and buy a farm."

"I suppose the storms of the sea make us covet the repose of the country. But here comes the captain to the deck. No frigate, sir?"

"No. She has left perhaps to watch for vessels running into the Kennebec or Penobscot. The wind seems to lull. Bear a hand there forward, and taut haul the fore halyards a low and aloft. Make every stitch of canvass do its work in drawing! Keep full!"

"Full-and-by," responded the helmsman; for the wind had hauled, and the schooner was having the wind less free than at first; so that she had to be braced full three points.

The land now loomed grandly in the northern board, and began to show its details of hill and vale, cliff and beach. The opening of Fielding's Bay was visible from the deck; and with the glass, the villa could not only be seen, but its columns were revealed distinctly to the eye. Norvel's keen vision was strained to make out, through the spy-glass, the form he believed was upon it.

"That mackerel-boat astern, with the old man and boy, seem resolved to catch us! But they lie to the wind a point closer than we, and will make the land a couple of miles to windward of the bay."

"The old man dwells in a cove that distance from the bay, Lieutenant Breeze," said Norvel, casting an eye astern at the boat, which was stretching more to windward than the schooner, and about half-a-mile astern. While his eye was upon her, he saw her sails flap in the wind, and then saw her tack, stand a few minutes on the opposite course, then luff and come to.

"They are picking up something," said Norvel, levelling his glass.

"It is a man, sir," cried one of the young officers that were idling about the capstern, and who also had his glass levelled at the mackerel-catcher.

"Yes; it is a man they are dragging out of the water," said Norvel. "He seems dead. They have got him in."

"Can we have lost any person overboard?" inquired the supercargo.

"No. They are not in our wake, but full a third of a mile to windward of it," answered Norvel. "The man is not dead; he raises his arms. I can see planks, or a raft he was floating upon, alongside the mackerel-boat. He must be some shipwrecked sailor, who has kept himself afloat."

"Perhaps some man knocked overboard from the British frigate, in the squall, yesterday," observed the quartermaster.

"That is it," answered the lieutenant. "The frigate lost her top-gallant yard, and no doubt, one of her people went over with it. Poor fellow; he has had a long float of it! I once was two days floating on a hatch, in the Bay o' Biscay, before I was wached ashore!"

"He is in good hands with the old man. He will take care of him. I can see that he is already rubbing life into him. Keep her away! Steady as you are!"

The last words were addressed to the steersman, who, forgetting his duty in his curiosity to look off the quarter at the mackerel-boat, set the fore-topgallant sail shivering.

The schooner now laid her course straight for the bay, the entrance to which was about a league off, just as the sun went down. Leaving her to make her way into the bay, with the American flag aloft, we will precede her, and place our readers once more on the land.

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Bay o' Biscay,

CHAPTER XII.

THE day had passed at Fielding Manor in the greatest excitement. The continued absence of Mr. Fielding was unaccountable, save with the suspicion that he had either been murdered, or fallen from the cliff, or been carried away by the English frigate. The search, which was carried on under the direction of William Gardner, resulted in the discovery of the "witch-woman Nan's" body, mangled at the base of the cliff. This horrible event was not calculated to dispel the gloom that settled on all minds; though it was supposed her death had been accidental. The mind of Miss Fielding was heavily oppressed with the circumstances that involved her, and she wished for the presence and counsel of Norvel. A hundred times in the day did she search the horizon with her eyes for a sign of his coming. At length, about an hour after we introduced the reader on board of the schooner, she discovered it coming in from sea. Doubtful whether it were the vessel she was looking for, she sent for William and placed the spy-glass in his hand. His nautical eye at once recognised the schooner he had seen the day before in the offing.

"And do you think it is his?" she asked with thrilling earnestness.

"I am sure of it now, or why should she come back again? Evidently she wants to make the bay, and what schooner but Norvel's is looked for here?"

"True, true! Oh, that I may not be disappointed!" My poor father! The mystery that hangs around him overwhelms me! Some one told me, William, that you missed your skiff."

"Yes, but——" here the young man coloured and hesitated, and Hetty put her finger on her lips and shook her head warningly. This telegraphing caught her eye.

"What do you mean, William, by hesitating. Hide nothing from me. What do you suspect?"

"I did not like to mention to you the absence of the skiff, Miss Mary, because——"

Here Hetty frowned, but William overcame his embarrassment and went on.

"Because some hinted what I could not believe, and what would displease you——"

"Speak out!"

"Why, then, as your father can't be found on the place, and my skiff disappeared last night, it seems to be the opinion of some that he is safe on board the frigate!"

Miss Fielding understood. The gleam of hope these words awakened for his life was darkened by the reflection that such safety would have been purchased with infamy to his name.

"It cannot be! No, no!"

"I told the people so; but they shake their heads. As for Master David, he is very angry at the thought, and will not hear it spoken of before him."

"He is right! I too will defend my father from such suspicion as this you hint at. If he is on board the frigate, it is by force he has been taken! Your skiff might have drifted away, Master Gardner," she added with some severity.

"It is true, though I fastened it well."

"Oh, that Norvel were here! On him is all my dependence. His cool judgment, his courage and his energy would avail everything." These words were rather thought aloud than spoken. "Does not the vessel move very slow?"

"No. She walks in fast," answered William. "When I first came here I could only see the lift of her foresail, now I can see her hull. This breeze will bring her in an hour."

With the deepest interest they stood and watched the seemingly slow advance of the now clearly defined vessel. The sun set, and she was yet four miles off; but the twilight was bright and long, and they could see her as plain as before, approaching nearer and nearer, with the American flag flying at the peak. The men were at length visible on her decks. Her guns could be counted. With a swift and stately movement she entered the strait of the bay, disappeared a few moments to their eyes behind the Beacon, and then reappeared within the bay. Nearer and nearer she drew to the anchorage below the villa, and just as the twilight was deepening into the starry night, she dropped anchor within a hundred fathoms of the shore—so near the view of those on the cliff that they could look down upon her decks.

Mary's heart beats violently as she sees a boat leave the schooner's side, and in the obscurity of the shadows upon the water fly shoreward. She sees one person leap to the land, and then flies to the villa—flies from meeting him whom she had so long been yearning to behold.

'Bid him come to me! I cannot meet him here, Hetty!' she had said to her maid as she left the cliff.

Hardly had she reached the villa when a rapid and well-known footstep was heard behind her. The next moment Norvel Hastings had all he loved dearest on earth clasped to his joy-beating heart.

"Oh, Norvel, Norvel! Now that you are here I am strong again! But in what affliction have you found me!"

"I heard it briefly from William, who met me as I landed and came along with me to the gate. This is most extraordinary news!"

"But my father—my dear father?"

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"It is mysterious. Tell me all you know. Every moment is precious when there is so much to be done! When did you see him last?"

Mary Fielding then related all that she knew of her father's absence, of the pillage of the warehouse, and the departure of the frigate that morning eastward. William Gardner now came in, and also David Cracklewood. These both related what they had witnessed.

"There is nae doot he is ta'en prisoner by the frigate," said David, shaking his head after he had given his account. "Eeh! Maister Norvel! It is heavy sorry to us all! Ain hundred thousan' dollars all gano in ane night to the enemy, and the Manager disappeared, and auld witch Nannie foond stark dead at the foot o' the Deacon tooter, an' drunken Harder burned like a martyr in his ain hoose! Unco doings, unco uncannie doings, young Maister Norvel Hastings!"

"It's my opinion that Dirk Harder piloted the frigate in and out," said William, positively; and he proceeded to give the grounds of his suspicions.

"I believe with you, answered Norvel. "Where is Dirk?"

"He was on board his xebec at dark; but was reeving and patching as if he expected to put out ere long."

"If he piloted the frigate out, he knows whether Mr. Fielding was on board. He must be arrested at once. Ah, here is Pipa! How goes it, Pipa, my child?"

The dwarf laid himself on the ground and embraced Norvel's feet, kissed his hand, and betrayed the liveliest emotions of delight at seeing him again.

"Pipa, where have you left Harder?" demanded William.

"Leftee going' way in him theebeck! Me comee tellee you —me comee quicke tellee Dirk him go!"

"Then no time is to be lost! Mary, I will be back in a few minutes. If Harder was in the frigate, he knows whether your father went on board. If he is not there——"

"If he is not there he is dead!"

"No—do not give way to despair, Mary! I will stop this Dirk Harder, and learn of him what he knows."

He left her and hastened to the beach. The xebec was visible making her way out of the bay. In a few minutes Norvel was on the deck of the schooner.

"Is the rigging clear of the starboard guns?" he quickly demanded of the gunner.

"All clear, sir!" responded the gunner with a look of surprise.

"Stand clear of the guns, men all!" he shouted through his trumpet. "Now bring the forward gun to bear on that xebec you see scudding out of the bay!"

"All ready, sir!"

"Fire! but over her!"

The gun spoke loudly, and echoing among the cliffs, sounded like prolonged thunder. Norvel kept his glass on the xebec. She kept on, bearing away more, as if determined to escape.

"Starboard, bear upon the boat!"

"Ready, sir!" responded the gunner.

"At her masts—*fire!*"

With his night-glass at his eye, Norvel watched the effect of this shot. It carried away both masts low with the deck.

"Man the second cutter."

In less than a minute, it was ready to obey the will of its master. "Pull for the xebec. Board her, and bring the prisoner on board. Pull in shore, to cut him off, should he be swimming from her to make the land. Cheerily, men!"

The lieutenant took command of the cutter, and was soon far from the schooner with her. Norvel saw him board the xebec, and then impatiently paced the deck until the boat's return. It at length reached the schooner, bringing Dirk Harder a prisoner, wounded and bound. He was laid on deck, and Norvel approached him.

"Harder, you are known to have boarded the frigate the

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night before she came into the bay, and were seen to leave at dawn. The inference is, that you were her pilot in and out. I do not wish to demand of you whether you were or not. But I wish to know whether you saw Mr. Fielding on board?"

"I know nothing about him. I want to know what right you have to fire into my vessel, and sink her; for she's gone to bottom."

"The right of war; for you have aided an enemy's ship in pillaging the warehouse, and you are a lawful capture. I shall turn you over to the laws of the land. By them you will be condemned or acquitted—not by me. If you know whether Mr. Fielding was on board, tell me, at least to relieve the anxiety of—of his daughter."

Harder's face, as the lantern shone upon it, assumed an expression of infernal derision as he replied,

"She! The fiend get her and you! She would not lift her finger to favour me! Let her go to you for comfort! What are you going to do with me?" he demanded, with a fierce execration.

"Keep you in irons till we reach some port, where a stout prison will release us of your charge," answered Norvel.

"Send him below. Is he badly wounded, lieutenant?"

"His arm is broken."

"Let him be attended to by the surgeon, and safely kept."

Dirk was taken below, gnashing his teeth with impotent rage, and venting such fierce curses upon Norvel that the gunner gagged him, without orders to do so.

Norvel soon rejoined Miss Fielding, and reported his want of success in getting any information from Harder.

"I am assured, if he had been on board, Harder would have told it; because such intelligence would go against Mr. Fielding, and lead to the worst suspicions. We must look for him about home longer and more thoroughly. But here comes Mr. Cracklewood, in the greatest excitement."

"Some new evil!" exclaimed Mary, as she caught the expression of the Scot's countenance. It was eloquent with amazement and indignation. He held open papers in his hand, and came bursting into the front room like a catapult.

"See! see these! Wha would have believed it! Treason and treachery! Ech, sirs! ech, Miss Maree! Wha would ha' thought it; an' sich a douce gentleman, and sich a fair daughter, to mak a traitor o' himsel!"

"What have you discovered? Who do you speak of?" demanded Norvel.

"Speak of! ye may weel ask that, man! Ye'll ne'er believe it! But here's the pappers! It's all out, now. It's easy tell'd where your father is now, Miss Marie, puir child!"

"Where is he? Explain your words, Mr. Cracklewood!"

"Read these pappers! Read this letter, Master Norvel! I say nae mair! Read baith o' ye! Judge for yer ainsel! My opinion I ha' speered at ye! Oh, that I should ever live to see sich a fall!"

Norvel had already taken the copy of the first letter which Mr. Fielding had addressed to Admiral Parks, and was reading it with looks that expressed his emotions at the facts it was unfolding. He then read the reply of the Admiral, and ended with the perusal of the "Irotection." Until he had finished the third paper he did not open his lips. He then thrust them into Mary's hands with "Read, read! know the worst!" and sitting down, covered his eyes with his hands to press back the tears that rose into them. David Cracklewood's face did not soften from its severe and indignant expression. Miss Fielding read, almost blindly, but still read through to the last word the papers Norvel had placed in her hands, and then stood like a statue of marble, with a white cheek and fixed eyes, stunned by the blow.

"Oh, it—it cannot be!" she at length hoarsely whispered. "Yet these do not lie!"

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"They tell all the sad tale, Mary," said Norvel, going to her and endeavouring to comfort her. "Your father has not been robbed! He has himself taken his goods away and left in the frigate with them!"

"And deserted me, his child! Traitor two-fold! It is impossible!"

"Doubtless he will send for you."

"I will never obey him!"

"Henceforth, then, dear Mary, give to me the right to be your protector!"

"I have no other, Norvel, I desire no other! But my father loved me, he could not thus voluntarily have left me!"

"How did you come in possession of these letters, Master David?" asked Norvel.

"Why, ye see, I went to the secretary to look if he hadna left ony papper behind tilling where he had gane, for ye ken, Miss Mary, he used often to leave his notes and orders and the like for me there, when he would be gone for a few days, an' besides, I would look to ken if he had left the bill o' exchange I gave him for the place I bought, to the amount o' ten thousand pounds."

"Bought what place?"

"The Manor, Miss Mary. I gave him last evening ten thousand pounds for it, as he said he wished to sell it, and by and by retire from business; so I bargained, and here is the deed all proper and legal, as ye will see."

"You the owner of Fielding Manor?"

"It is true, Miss Mary."

"And my father's warehouse emptied! Then I am helpless indeed, for I have neither home nor means! Norvel, you find me a beggar! I give you back your pledge; you are free!"

"Free, Mary! Your grief has overcome you! You know not what you say! If it is true that you are poor, then, if it were possible, I love you more than when you were rich. Your heart—your love, Mary, this is all I ask!"

"These are thine, noble Norvel; they are all that is left me to bestow! I would have enriched thee, and I was happy in the thought that I had it in my power to bestow wealth on him on whom I had bestowed my heart—but that dream is passed!"

"Till this moment, I knew not how to prize you, Mary! Will you, for the present, take my foster-mother's protection till I can bestow on you mine?"

"Na—na—do ye think Davy Cracklewood is a tattooed Omadhoon, baith o' ye, that ye are treatin' him this gait, and ganging to lave the hoose as if it were a-fire, as puir drunken Harder's was the morn' ? Tho' I bought the place (and it was at yer father's sore urging), it's your ain, Miss Mary, as lang as ye'll live in it."

"Your goodness I deeply feel, but I will accept the shelter of Mrs. Gardner's home, good David. I need her kind sympathy."

"Wal, I ne'er could ha' thocht yer father would ha' done this. When I foon the key and opened the secretary, and lit on these pappers, it almaist made the bluid turn to water in my body! It's all plain as my hand now, why he wanted to sell yestereen, the frigate being at hand to tak aff his goods."

"Master David," said Norvel impressively, "if you respect the daughter, do not speak of the shame of the father!"

"I'll ne'er do it—I'll ne'er do it, Miss Mary!"

"Thanks, David! This night I will remain your guest, but to-morrow——"

"To-morrow you shall be my wife—na; dear Mary?"

The maiden made no reply. David took his leave, saying he was going to the warehouse to sleep as usual; Norvel soon took leave of his affianced bride and sought his mother's cottage, where he sat long talking over the events of the day, with William on one side of him, and Pipa, crouching lovingly at his feet, looking up into his face with his eyes full of affection and gratitude.

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CHAPTER XIII.

WE will now return to the hapless merchant and tory, Canning Fielding, Esq. It will not have been forgotten that we left him drifting seaward in the leaky skiff which he had taken from William Gardner's landing, in order to go out to the frigate. We left him in a state bordering on despair, his head bowed on his breast, his hands clasped in agony, and the whole man almost overcome and stupified by the dreadful danger in which he was placed.

What availed, in these pitiable circumstances, all his treasures of bales and boxes, crates and packages, his warehouses, his large estate, his stately villa, his money at interest, his money in his pocket-book, the ten thousand pound draft which he had in a side-pocket of his coat! How bitterly was he being taught the lesson that riches are not the happiness nor the source of power for man! At this hour they availed him not. It was as if they never had been! But we do not ourselves love to pick out the moral meat from the nuts we give our readers to crack, so we will stop moralizing.

It might have been half an hour that Mr. Fielding remained in this stupified state of mind, of a mind exhausted and prostrated by fear and despair, and the dread of death. At length the water rising to his knees in the boat, roused him to a lively sense of self-preservation. He began to bail the boat with his hat, and ever and anon to pause and shriek out his

terror to the darkness and the waves. He saw the frigate when she came out—he saw the xebec in which Dirk left her to run back into the bay; the latter passed near him, and his screams were heard by the young man, but he thought them

“The shriek of the murdered man
He had sunk in the deep, deep sea.”

The water gained upon him, the boat drifted farther and farther from the land, and day broke, and the sun rose and smiled on sea and land, but rose only to show him no help near, and the wide waste around him a grave ever heaving its blue billowy arms to embrace him.

“Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! this is dreadful!” he at length groaned, sitting down in the stern of the boat, from very exhaustion. “I must die, I see it plainly. I must drown in sight of my house! I can see it even here. Oh, that they could see me! Mercy! the water has nearly filled the boat. I can throw no more out! When it fills, I shall sink with it! Oh, my house! my child!” he cried, stretching his hands in the direction of the villa, from which he was full five miles distant, being at least four miles from the Beacon. “When shall I see you again? Oh, my soul! I have sins! I have sins! The water rushes in faster! It comes in at the row-locks now! I have a good many sins! I can’t remember! Oh, mercy! I shall perish in my sins! From all conspiracy and heresy and schism—no, that is not it. From the flesh, the world, and the devil! Yes! good Lord deliver us! Oh, I forget how to pray! I have thought more of my ledger than the Liturgy, and now I am drowning! Mercy! Is there no boat—no ship—no rock! She sinks—she is going down! Oh, save—sa—mer—” and the boat filled with water, suddenly sunk beneath him with his weight, and both disappeared beneath the surface of the sea.

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ocean of a man being upon it, when his arms and then his head reappeared, and he swam blindly, with the fear of death written on his face in the most dreadful characters that horror ever drew. His hand struck a board—he grasped it, it was one of the thwarts of the boat. Another and another was seen floating around him. He reached four of them, and placed them together. They supported him, and he untied his cravat and bound them together, and then he felt that he could be buoyed up without swimming! A ray of hope illumined the death-stare of his eyes. But he was a league and a half at sea. There was no succour in sight. He felt that he was released but temporarily from death; for the ebb tide was still setting him oceanward! A thousand horrid thoughts came into his soul! He thought of men being bitten in two by sharks, and he wished he had drowned with the boat; but the idea of death—not of death either, it is not *that* men fear, the idea of the world beyond—of God, of eternity, of judgment to come—this is the death that men fear.

All that day he floated upon the waves, at one moment miserably praying, at another confessing with stuttering tongue half-forgotten sins. Then, the sense of his situation coming over him, he would shriek with despair. The sea-gulls soared and darted above his head and mocked his cry! The sun declined in the west. He watches it with the eyes of a man who feels that it is the last time he shall behold it. He then looked around the horizon as if he were taking farewell of the circling sky and sea; for the keenness of his anguish had passed, and his spirit was blunted and dulled by the stretch of fear that had been upon it. The reaction was inanity; like the sentenced criminal, the first shock of the doom pronounced over, he meets the gallows with calmness, indifference, inanity; conditions of mind too often referred to penitence, piety, resignation, or courage. So with the merchant. He had ceased his outcries; he had ceased his wild screechings around for

and; he had ceased to confess his wickednesses; but with a half-dead look, a face that scarcely expressed love of life, he hung upon his little raft, and in a mental stupor waited the death to which he had resigned himself, from inability longer to struggle or expect life.

But this last, dull look which he slowly sent around him as the sun went down, was suddenly transformed into an expression of life, hope, joy! Oh, what a change, so wonderful and complete!

"A sail! A vessel! I shall be saved!" he cried; and life was re-born in him. He waved his almost palsied hand, but feebly; he tried to shout, but his voice came back weakly to his ears. He knew they could not hear him; he hoped they would see him! He threw water up high with his hand, he tried to raise himself from the surface to be seen. But the schooner came, passed by within a third of a mile of him, and when he saw her stern-posts, he fell over on his face with a bitter, wailing, indescribable cry, and lay like a dead man, the raft only upholding his head and keeping him afloat.

"Jake, what is that are? Look sharp, boy, it may be a seal! Put your helm up and keep away for it," said the old mackerel-catcher, as he came in sight of the merchant's head above the water.

"It's a man, dad, a dead man," answered the lad.

The old man sent a keen glance to leeward, saw the waves lift and sway the gray hair over the collar of the dark coat. He caught the tiller, tacked and run the vessel directly up to the spot, luffed and brought it under his bows. The next moment he had a rope around it, and, by the aid of the boy, drew Mr. Fielding on board.

"He's dead, dad!"

"No; turn him over! Why it is Squire Fielding. Bless us and save us all! Jump, boy—the run! He's got life in him, for he's warm! Squire Fielding a drownin' out here! What has been the matter? Quick, boy!"

"Here it is, dad."

"Help me pour some of it down his mouth. There! It makes him breathe! He ha'n't swallered no salt water; that is one good thing. What in airth brought him here? He can't speak yet. Rub him, boy!—rub his hands and neck! Let me pour some on his head—that's it! So, squire, it'll do you good!"

The rescued man opened his eyes into which the rum had run, for the honest souls had given him a profuse rum-bath in their officious humanity, and he began to look about. He soon revived, and was able to sit up and to be conscious of his remarkable preservation. He recognised the old man, and overwhelmed him with expressions of gratitude for saving his life. But he forgot his gratitude to God, whom many men like Mr. Fielding think people have nothing to do with except in the article of death, and also the lesson against trusting in riches, which had been taught him in his danger, for he immediately examined his pocket-book to see if his notes were safe, and especially the bill of exchange given him by David Cracklewood for his lands.

The fisherman, who was steering towards his own cot, proposed that he should keep on in that direction, to land his fish, and prevent his family from being anxious at their absence, before going round into the bay. To this course Mr. Fielding had no objection, as he needed sleep and rest, and he would at once lie down to get them, and he was soon buried in profound slumber in the stern of the little vessel. In an hour afterwards, the mackerel-boat was moored in the rock-girt cove opposite its master's stone cabin, built near the water. He would not disturb the merchant, who still slept; but, leaving him on board in charge of his son, he went to sup with his family, who, one after the other, went down to peep at the sleeping great man, whose fame for being rich had reached even their childish ears. It was ten o' clock at night before

Mr. Fielding awoke. He was much refreshed, and a good supper cooked by the good wife made him himself again. He was now anxious to reach home, to which it was a three miles' sail round the coast. The old man embarked with him, and the wind being fair, they soon were running under the Beacon and gliding into the bay. The conversation which he had with the fisherman as they sailed, made known to him who commanded the schooner he had seen from his raft at sea, and which he now beheld at anchor in the bay. His eyes searched for the frigate, and not seeing her, and as the old man could give him no account of her, he believed she had left altogether, when he had seen her coming out of the bay an hour before the dawn. But why had she gone without seeing him? Perhaps they had sent for him, and not finding him, had left! Such were the kind of inquiries that entered his mind as they approached the beach where he was to disembark.

"Come to me to-morrow," he said to the fisherman, "and I will give thee gold for thy service."

"Nay; I will never take pay for saving a man's life, and taking him home to his family," answered the fisherman, stoutly.

"Not money?"

"I have better pay than money, sir—the recollection of having saved the life of a fellow-being. Good-night, sir. If I could ask any other reward, it would be to see your daughter when she meets you! But I must home to my little ones. Good-night, sir."

The boat put off from the shore on its return; but, hailed by the schooner, boarded her for a few minutes, and then made sail again. Mr. Fielding made his way up the cliff-path, but with some difficulty; as he was much weakened by what he had undergone since, about the same hour, the night before, he had descended the same path, to embark in Gard-

ner's skiff, on the eventful expedition from which he was now providentially returning.

Norvel was still up, talking with his foster-mother, with William and Pipa listeners; now discoursing of his prospects as a privateer captain; now listening to wonder at the disappearance of Mr. Fielding, whom he himself believed to be on board the frigate; now speaking of his contemplated union with Mary; and many other subjects, which the recent events naturally brought up; when the door burst open, and in bounded Pedro, the Creole, with his eyes lighted like lamps with the splendour of the news he had to communicate.

"Master Fielding come! El Señor maestro come! Me see him! Me shake him! Me talk him! Run—vamos— todos! He up de house!"

Pedro scarcely remained to give utterance to these words when he disappeared. Norvel and William were at his side as he flew back to the villa. But he could tell nothing more. He had only seen El Señor, and then hastened to make known the tidings.

Norvel was, in a few minutes, in the presence of the returned Manager, whom he found with his daughter still locked in his paternal embrace. The merchant—the first questions of surprise and curiosity answered—now related how he had gone out in a skiff to examine the frigate whose appearance in the bay aroused his suspicions, and losing an oar, he had been driven out to sea. Save in the motive, which he had stated falsely, that led him to get into the skiff, he gave them a full account of his sufferings, and his final rescue by the mackerel-boat, (which Norvel then said he had seen taking him from the water.)

The news of the return of the Manager, in its flight, reached David Cracklewood, who soon made his appearance. He now recounted the pillage of the warehouse, and watched Mr.

Fielding's face, which betrayed secret pleasure and satisfaction rather than grief, and *David knew why!*

The Scot now sat gloomily and silent. The narrative of Mr. Fielding's sufferings did not move him. Norvel now took Mary's hand to congratulate her upon her father's return, when Mr. Fielding with a frown of haughty surprise said, "You forget your place, young man—this young lady is my daughter! My late danger does not break down all barriers! You should know your place, fisherman! I have suspected something of this before!"

Mary Fielding coloured, but it was an angry flush on her beautiful features, at this open insult to Norvel. He stood quietly and said nothing; for the insulter was *her* father. But David Cracklewood did not keep silent. He rose up, advanced a pace, and elevating his tall guant form before the merchant, he said in a stern voice,

"Ye should know *your* place, Maister Fielding! Ye ha' coom bock, and the Lord be thankit for your bonnie chield's sake; but ye ha' no cam bock to play this high game wid this gallant! Hech! ye need na' froom an' look black in the e'e at me—I ha' ceased to hoold ye in enny respec' or consideration! I'm a plain mon, and ye'll get a plain mon's mind, an' ye listen weel."

"What does this mean? Do you insult me in my own house?" exclaimed the merchant with indignant demand.

"Ye ha' insulted a better mon than me an' that is Master Norvel here; an' as for ain hoos, I ha' in my pocket the deed o't that mak's it mine."

"Fool! Leave, sir!"

"Nay, ye sall stay in the hoose as lang as ye like to, but it's na' that I'm speerin' about. Ye best keep patient, gude sir! Since you left we ha' discovered yer letters to the Admiral, and I ha' your British Protection in my pocket! Ye may weel turn pale! If it wore na' for your sweet bonnie

daughter, I would ha' ye handed o'er to the magistrates as a traitor. It's all oot—we ken what the frigate came in here for, and all about it! Hech, sirs! But it was na' your fault ye lost yer oar, an' could na' get on board to sail away wid your goods!"

"You have broken open my desk, robber."

"That's na here nor there. There's a hundred an' fifty Yankee militia-men camped not half a mile fra' the warehuse, all under arms. I ha' only to send to their captain to ha' ye put under arrest for what ye ha' doon. Now keep quiet, and let this brave young Norvel and your bonnie daughter make a wedding end it a'."

"I'll die first!"

"Vera weel! I'll let ye ha' the opportunity o' trying whilk is the casier death, drowning or shooting!"

"David Cracklewood, you are too severe on my father!"

"Nay, leave him to me! I ha' a right to speak in my ain hoose. Wull ye consent to their marriage?"

"Nay, do not force my father!"

"He'll ne'er consent without, Miss Mary, dear."

"Do you wish this union, Mary?"

"Yes, sir." This was spoken in a low, but distinctly clear tone.

"Then I consent, but call you all to bear witness, by force."

"Then we'll force a little mair. Ye'll give the maiden

the bill for £10,000 I gave you, as a dowry."

"You will rob me at my throat."

"You maun do it, Master Fielding," said David, determinedly. "You are in my power. If you do not consent, neither the tears o' your daughter, nae the sword o' young Norvel would save you from the Yankee guard-house. Gie the bill to her, and then ye shall gang where ye will, to Halifax after your goods, or to England!"

Mr. Fielding found that he was in the power of the indomitable David, whose indignation at his treachery had crested a

contempt for him that overmastered all former respect. He felt the imminency of his danger. He knew that to fall into the hands of the Americans after what had happened, would be perilous to his life. He was convinced that his daughter loved the young privateer captain, and that he had no power to prevent their union. He calculated, that, without the bill of exchange, his fortune from the sales of his merchandise, which he supposed was on its way in the frigate to Halifax, to await him there, would be ample for his wants; and so, influenced by these several considerations, he drew from his pocket-book the bill for £10,000 and placed it in Norvel's hand.

"There, young man, take that, and take my daughter! But only on condition that you surrender to me that protection and the letters, and promise to give me passage to-morrow early, in your schooner, to the first English territory — to St. Johns, or Halifax

"I promise it, Mr. Fielding. Here are the papers you ask," answered Norvel, placing the bill in Mary's passive hands as he spoke; "but not for reward, but because you have consented to my union with Mary. I can now do anything for you, sir; though my patriotism revolts at your treason against your adopted country."

"I may be excused for this, perhaps," answered Mr. Fielding, deprecatingly. "I am an Englishman by birth and prejudices. It is natural that I should wish to remove my property and my person from the country at war with England. But I see by your countenances that I have no sympathy in what I have done. I will therefore depart; but I protest against the force which has compelled me to act as I have done. Only the fear of arrest has made me yield my daughter to you, young man; though I had been told, long since, of these love passages between you. Go, my daughter, and be happy with this peasant. I am satisfied that your tastes are low, by the choice you make. I therefore the more easily cast you from my bosom."

"Nay, my father; do not cast me off!"

"I have a child—a noble son—in England; and to him, Mary Fielding, will I henceforth transfer the affection I had for you. Master David Cracklewood," added the merchant, with a sneer, "am I at liberty now to go?"

"Yes, sir. You have done all I asked you. The sooner you quit this country, ye ken, the safer will it be for your life, sir."

"But first I would know that my daughter will be honourably married. Though she have but a serf for her husband, she should be wedded."

"Sir!" cried Norvel: but, before he could say more, Mary and David both checked him: the one by looks of pleading, the other by placing his large hand across his lips.

"Na ane word, young callant! The least — the sooner mendit. The minister will be here the morn, sir. I kenned weel enough how the young folk would like to ha' it, as matters stood; and I bid twa o' the people gang to the next toon for the gude mon, and bid him hither soon the morn."

"That is satisfactory. I will see the unfilial child wed ere I leave."

"How have I been unfilial, father?"

"By not following my fortunes."

"I am an American girl, and I love my country too well to leave her at such a time, to seek shelter in the land of her foes. Wealth and rank — honours may await me there, but I would prefer an humble hut on my native soil to a palace in England. I love and honour you, sir; but the discovery of this night of your letters to the British Admiral, and of your English protection, has produced such a shock in me, that I seem to look upon you as a stranger. I cannot realize that my father, who has held honours, been esteemed, taken the oath of allegiance to the government at Washington, should forget all and side with the foe against the land of his adoption!"

"Enough, child! What I have done I have done without consulting thee, and will abide by it. I hope, at least, in my son to find that filial devotion which I seek for in vain in you. Master Cracklewood, as this is your house," added the merchant with cold irony, "I must crave your hospitality till morning."

"It is na my hoose, but your daughter's, sir; and here I gie her the authority to be mistress of it, maid or wife." As the generous and honest Scot spoke, he placed in Mary's hand the deed of the estate. "This, my bonnie Mary, makes ye the owner o' the land and all upon it. Na ane word! not ane syllable. I ha' eight thoosan' poonds mair, and bein' a lone mon without a wifey, it's enough for David Cracklewood, an' ane o' these days I may be giving that to yer bairns—wha kens?"

With this speech the large hearted David strode, a full cloth-yard at a stride, out of the room, and his tall, gaunt figure was lost in the darkness without, before Mary could recover from her confusion to protest against such munificent generosity. Norvel followed him, as he saw Mary wished to be alone with her father.

"I will go to my room, Lady Hastings, with your permission," said the merchant, into whose cold and unfatherly heart Sathanas seemed bodily to have entered. Here may we ask—would death, the mere passing out of life, when a few hours ago he was exposed to it, would it have altered the soul of that man? would he have had a better heart and a better spirit in the other world, had he been there now instead of in this? It seems a delusion, this notion that the mere transition of a man from this life to the one beyond death, produces also a transmutation. Doubtless, most men go into the other life with the same hearts, tempers, indomitable wills, that they have here. In our merchant's case, we see nothing in death that would have made him a different

being in character than he is at this moment. But we leave these questions to metaphysicians and theologians.

"My dear father, you mistake me, when you suppose I am unfilial," said his daughter, with tears.

"Then prove it! prove your devotion to me by accompanying me in my flight from this country—by renouncing your low attachment for this young man—by——"

"Father, stop! I cannot listen to such speech as this, even from your lips. Norvel Hastings is my betrothed husband; and you must speak of him with respect! For my sake, at least, spare your harsh words."

"You have no claim to ask forbearance. But I cannot talk with thee. Good-night."

Thus speaking, he hastily retired from the room, and sought his own apartment. Here he was engaged all night in packing his papers, and such articles as he proposed to take with him. Mary slept not. Her father's harsh treatment had deeply grieved her; and the thought that she might never behold him again after the morrow, affected her to constant tearfulness. Towards morning, she sought his room, to ask his blessing, and be reconciled to him. But he rudely thrust her forth. From that moment, Norvel had all her heart! It bent over to him for that support and sympathy it once found on the paternal bosom.

An hour after sunrise, the minister arrived. He was conducted to the villa by David, who was in his best array, with a white neckcloth and white gloves, in honour of the bridal. By nine o'clock, the preparations were to have been completed; but Hetty, who was assisting her mistress in her toilet, went out and in so many times, and seemed to be so busy generally, that Mary, although sad in her joy, smilingly said,

"One would think two weddings were going on instead of one, you make such a parade, Hetty!"

The pretty little cockney maid smiled archly in her turn, but was mute.

At ten o'clock, the parties were assembled in the hall; so that the large crowd of retainers of the farm, the fishermen, and not least, the officers and crew of the privateer, might all witness the marriage of the handsome Norvel with the beautiful heiress of Fielding Manor. The Manager was present, with a dark and dissatisfied countenance, which he made an effort to make express cheerful assent to what was going on. Pipa was there; his dwarfish face, lighted up as it was by his happy eyes, was fairly beaming with angelic beauty. Mrs. Gardner was there—calm, and placid, and matronly; fully sympathizing in the happiness of her adopted son. Pedro was there, dressed in the height of Creole dandyism, with laced wristbands, scarlet vest, bell-buttons on his embroidered jacket, flowers in his breast, and a bouquet in his hand. He looked pleased, smiled constantly, showing his white teeth, and seemed to be everywhere at the same moment. Hetty thought he looked very handsome, to be so dark as he was; and wondered he could be so happy after she had broken his heart as she had done. She did not think he was so wicked as she imagined; and was disposed to forgive and forget his threats; for Hetty was just then in the state of mind to forgive everybody and to love everybody. William Gardner was also there, in a handsome suit of marine blue, with small gilt buttons thickly set on the front of the jacket, a white vest, and a new tarpaulin hat, adorned with a wide black ribbon, jauntily set on one side, showing the brown curls Hetty had often wound lovingly about her little finger; and as bold, dashing a looking sailor-lad as a lassie of taste, like Hetty, might look for all over the seas, and never meet the like again.

David Cracklewood gave the bride away, and the ceremony passed off without aught to mar its felicity, save the dissatisfied

looks of Mr. Fielding, who, the moment the minister said amen to his long prayer, quitted the hall, and shut himself up in his chamber.

But the ceremony of the morning was not yet concluded.

"The other couple will please step up and be married," said the reverend man, looking inquiringly through his round owl's-eye spectacles at David, who had notified him that there would be two weddings, a secret which the worthy Scot was let into through Mrs. Gardner.

To the surprise of the happy bride and bridegroom, to the evident astonishment of Pedro, and to the delight of all the lookers-on from the doors and hall, William Gardner, taking the blushing Hetty by the hand, led her to the space in front of the minister, just vacated by the hero and heroine of our story. The little cockney gipsy cast her pretty eyes down to the floor, as if 'orridly frightened, and lisped "yes" as timidly as a young kitten. William responded full and audibly; and they were married. David got the first kiss, and Hetty didn't slap him this time in the face.

After the congratulations were over all round, the young cockney wife cast her eyes about for Pedro, in order to enjoy over him the triumph of the moment; but he was missing; but in the course of a quarter of an hour he came in and drew towards her. She saw him and tried to meet his eye. He came up to her, and with a smile on his lip that had no answering expression in his eyes, he handed her a bouquet as a present.

"I can take this now, Pedro," she said with a happy laugh, "for it don't mean hanything now!"

"No, señora. Pleas take it—smell sweet! Pedro hab noting better."

"A bouquet is a very proper bridal gift, Pedro," said Mary. "I will take it if Hetty hesitates."

"No, no, no! You no take it—I bringee you one! You keep dat, Señora Hettie! smell it—vera good parfume!"

"It is very 'andsome, Pedro," answered the bride. "I am so glad you have got hover your anger!"

Pedro smiled like a gleam of lightning behind a cloud, and stepped back, and went out with the stealthy, noiseless step which characterized him.

"A pretty bouquet, Hetty," said Norvel, who approached her. "You and brother William took us by surprise! Well you deserve each other! How pale you look, Hetty! You are ill! How wild your eyes! What is the matter, Pipa?" demanded Norvel of the dwarf, who, keeping constantly near him as if his affection lived only in his close presence, fixing his eyes on Hetty, suddenly caught the bouquet out of her hand, and tearing it in pieces, exposed in the centre the flower of the *Sombre de Muerte*, a West Indian plant, whose fragrance long inhaled is fatal. Norvel recognised the flower, which he had himself brought from Havanna for Mary, on account of its remarkable beauty, yet aware of its poisonous qualities, which were harmless, except when the flower was broken off and inhaled by contact.

"Pedro! Pedro es vilano, señor. Pedro wish kill!" cried Pipa, with vehemence.

"Did Pedro give you the bouquet?" asked Norvel of Hetty, who was supported by William—who believed his bride about to be snatched from him by a fearful death; while Mary hastened for restoratives.

"Yes," faintly responded the poisoned girl.

"Bring camphor!" called Pipa. "Camphor save from dis poison!"

The camphor was applied to the nostrils, and forced into the mouth—the teeth of which were being firmly set, as if spasmodically. In a few minutes, she revived—breathed more freely; the colour came back to her cheeks, and softness to her eyes. In a short time longer, she was quite well, save a severe nervous agitation, that kept her shivering like

an aspen-leaf. Norvel had search immediately made for the Creole; but he could nowhere be found.

Believing that his revenge would be successful, he had left instantly in a skiff, and skirted the coast till he reached the mouth of the Kennebec, twenty miles eastward; where he found a coaster that picked him up, and left him on the quay at Portland; from which place he finally took shipping for Cuba, where all further trace of him disappears.

At noon, on the day these events transpired, Norvel took leave of his bride of an hour, placing her under the protection of his mother and brother, and eke David—honest David Cracklewood—and set sail in the privateer, to convey his father-in-law to St. Johns, as he had pledged. On the passage, Dirk Harder, whom he took with him, till he could give him up to the laws, succeeded in escaping overboard at night, as the schooner was passing near an island; but, as he was heavily ironed, it was believed he sunk instantly to the bottom; as it was pronounced by all on board impossible for a man to swim or float a minute, manacled and fettered as he was.

After a week's absence, the privateer once more reached her anchorage; and the young husband flew to meet his bride. He informed her, that he had left her father in a pilot-boat off St. Johns, whence an English vessel was the next day to sail for Halifax, in which he was to embark.

We might lengthen our tale by dwelling on the disappointment of our merchant on reaching Halifax, and learning there the appalling *truth* touching the pillage of his warehouse. He found himself a beggar. The English captain of the plundering frigate refused to surrender what had been legally obtained; which, he said, was not his to restore, it belonging to his officers and crew. Unable to obtain redress at Halifax, the almost frantic merchant took passage for England, and made an appeal to the Court of Admiralty; but it was decided

against him. Beggared, and broken in spirit, he sought for his son to ask relief; but learned that, after running through with an estate by gaming, he had, two months before, fallen in a duel in France. Without means—with a branded name even among the English, who regarded him more as an American than an Englishman, he irresistibly turned his thoughts towards the land he had proved traitorous to; and gladly would have sought it, to throw himself upon his daughter's protection in his old age, if he had dared. But while the war lasted, the land where alone he could find shelter, and open hearts to receive him, he knew was locked to him. Too proud to write to Norvel or his child, he yielded to the dark spirit of his soul, and miserably died by his own hand!

The war prevented the regular transmission of intelligence, and it was two years before Mary learned the fate of either her father or brother; but all that her father suffered was never revealed to her. She only knew that he died broken-hearted at the disappointment caused by the loss of his property under circumstances that seemed to insure its safety.

David Cracklewood became manager of the estate and of the warehouse business after the war. Norvel distinguished himself by several brilliant captures during the war, but was glad, when peace was declared, to return to the society of his lovely wife, and devote his time to overseeing the estate. In the mean while, Mary had upon her mind one cherished wish, which he promised ere long to gratify; and that was to go to England, to visit the grave of her father and brother, and honour them with suitable monuments of marble, and to endeavour to discover the parentage of her husband, whom she secretly believed must be noble born; and by one or two articles found with him when old Skipper Gardner picked him up at sea, she hoped to be able to trace his lineage to its source.

Should we learn that this voyage ever was taken by our hero and heroine, we pledge ourselves to report the discoveries

which transpired touching the origin of the former, should we be permitted to have access to the records which contain them. But in our opinion true nobility is in the man, not in his father; in the soul, not in the scrolls of the herald office; and whether Norvel Hastings turn out to have been a Duke's heir or a peasant's heir, we shall think neither more nor less of him than we have done from the knowledge of his own qualities of mind and heart.

THE END.

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