

THE
BANDIT OF THE OCEAN;

OR,

THE FEMALE PRIVATEER.

A Romance of the Sea.

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CHAPTER I.

"Upon the sea with earnest gaze they looked."

Marblehead—The Maldens—Black Sambo, and his Mysterious Letter.

CONSPICUOUS among the many sea-port towns of New-England, in furnishing brave and hardy mariners for our ships of war and privateers, especially during the struggle for naval superiority which occurred between the United States and England, at the time of the Revolution, and the War of 1812, stands Marblehead, a place built upon a peculiar spot, and inhabited now, as it ever has been, by a quaint and peculiar race of people.

One of the strongest and most prominent features of this people's peculiarity, consists in a sort of rough honesty, and an openness of character, which is the distinguishing trait of a genuine Marbleheadman, and is quickly noticed as such, even by the most careless and superficial observer.

Following closely the lead of this prominent peculiarity, is a spirit of indomitable bravery, and cool contempt of danger, which has caused Marbleheadmen to become noted among sailors during the wars just referred to as being first to face the enemy, but last in consenting "to surrender the ship."

Situated upon a rocky neck of land, which juts boldly out into the very bosom of the broad Atlantic, the town of Marblehead is well calculated to be, what it emphatically is, the great New-England nursery of the fishing business, which annually employs between one and two hundred sail of small vessels, manned with from eight to fourteen men each. These generally cruise upon the banks of Newfoundland, during the summer and autumn of each year, making two trips, the first commencing in March or April, and the last in the latter part of August, or first of September.

Marblehead is famous for other things too, beside its fisheries. Bob Jones

the worthy poet-laureate of our Essex-County fishermen, has quaintly spoken of it in this wise—

"Danviss is a muddy town,
Salem is a sandy,
But Marblehead is famed for rocks,
And Yankee-Doodle dandy."

Aye, and from the midst of those very rocks, dear reader, came forth, during the two wars between this country and Great Britain, many brave and iron-hearted men, panting with valor in their country's holy cause, and eager to be foremost in fighting its battles both on land and sea.

Here and there among these famous rocks, were also to be found some grassy eminences, dignified in title as hills; and it was at the foot of one of these, that a small, wooden, weather-stained house, stood single and alone, in the month of September, 1813. This hill, and the building just referred to, is situated in the north part of the town, about half a mile from its centre.

Towards the close of a beautiful afternoon in the first part of the month alluded to, the front door of this house, which opened upon a rough and rocky carriage-path, leading into the town, swung slowly back upon its hinges, and disclosed to view the little and graceful forms of two young girls, who, after quickly ascending to the summit of the hill, gazed intently out upon the placid waters of the harbor, as if watching for the appearance of some long looked for and deeply interesting object.

One of these girls, and the tallest in stature of the two, whom we shall call Clara Winslow, was, at the time chosen for the commencement of our story, a beautiful brunette, eighteen years of age, and the supposed granddaughter of old Arthur Lane, who occupied the house which she and her companion had just vacated.

Clara's beauty was of that queenly and majestic description, which would be likely to captivate the affections of a brave man, and bring him a willing suitor at her feet, long ere he could find time to study well her interesting character, or discover the violent passions which lay dormant in the deepest recesses of her strong and powerful mind.

Far different, though by no means inferior, was that of her friend and companion, the gentle and affectionate Alice Carr, who, though somewhat older than Clara in years, and somewhat shorter in stature, possessed a form faultlessly proportioned, and features pre-eminently regular and handsome. Her eyes were of a deep and sparkling blue, very prominent, and shaded by long dark lashes, contrasting finely with Clara's, which though small, were black as night, brilliant and fiery in expression, and keenly piercing in the every look and motion.

Clara's hair was black also—black as her brilliant eyes—and thus in color different from her companion's, which was of a bright auburn hue. Here, however, the contrast in this respect ended, for in fineness of texture and profusion of quantity, nature had made them equal. Both of these fair and beautiful beings seemed also to possess the same degree of florid health, which gave a deep carnation hue to Clara's cheeks, rendering her brown complexion richly redolent with brilliant beauty, and made those of Alice appear like two pictures, whereon the shades of bright and blushing red, and pure and snowy white, seemed to have been stamped in equal and fair proportions.

Such is a brief personal description of two gentle beings, whose characters were as different in shade as were their personal complexions—Clara's being chiefly composed of those strong, romantic, yet deep and artful ingredients, which conspired to make her at once an object of attraction and danger to such of the opposite sex who were competent to become suitors for her hand and heart.

The character of Alice was, on the other hand, open, sincere, and patient,

which rendered her attachments, though slow in reaching a tangible shape, when that point was once attained, strong and lasting in endurance, and constant and unchangeable in their very nature.

Clara was the first to break the silence, which the two girls kept for some moments after they attained the summit of the hill, which she did as follows:—

"Oh, Alice, how I wish I could be a sailor."

"Or a sailor's wife; would not that suit you as well?" said Alice, somewhat archly. "But why, dear Clara, do you wish to be a sailor?"

"Because," answered Clara, "there seems to be something noble in the very thought. Indeed, the idea of going out upon the deep ocean; talking to the wild waves, and holding converse with the stars, seems to me sublime."

"That is all very well, dear Clara," responded Alice "but it is only the romance of the business, after all. The reality of a sailor's life (if what my brother John has told me about it, be true), is of the hardest, and most dangerous description. They are exposed to all climates and all weathers. Death to them is ever near. For months together, but a single plank intervenes between them and eternity. Their work is of the most laborious nature, and like women's is never done. And now it is war-time, their danger is doubled, and I shudder when I think of that which must surround my brother and father, who are now both on board the frigate Constitution."

"And I deeply regret," resumed Clara Winslow, "that the proprieties belonging to my sex preclude me from sharing their toils and dangers on the same element and in the same vessel."

"Ah, you are a strange girl, Clara, or at least your conversation often makes you appear so to me. You seem to fear nothing, and enjoy everything."

"To use the words of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, as laid down by my favorite author," replied Clara, "I know not *seems*, yet I have that within that passeth show."

This was said with a melancholy smile, which passed quickly, and a sad, strange look usurped its place upon Clara's expressive features.

"Now you have begun to quote Shakespeare," rejoined Alice, "I think it time to speak of something else. Here we have been gazing for nearly an hour out upon the dark blue waters of the harbor, expecting to see a sail, but as nothing of the kind appears likely soon to greet our vision, and the sun is getting low, I think it best to return again to the house."

"Stop!" answered Clara. "I think I hear the sound of scrambling footsteps, as though some person was coming up the opposite side of the hill."

"And some one is approaching," exclaimed Alice, as she turned her eyes towards the direction intimated. "As I live, too, it is black Sambo, from the haunted house."

As she finished speaking, a very short and very stout negro boy, dressed in a pea-jacket, so long that it reached nearly to his heels, and wearing a tarpaulin hat in a sort of saucy, sailor-like manner, upon his woolly head, having reached the top of the hill, shuffled along towards the spot occupied by the young ladies, and spoke as follows:—

"I've got a present for one ob you, I has."

"Is it for me, Sambo?" inquired Alice.

"I radder tinks it isn't," replied Sambo, showing his handsome teeth through the bold medium of a broad grin.

"Then it must be for me," interposed Clara.

"Yes; dat is if Sambo likes to gib it to you, missus."

"You will not hesitate to do that, if the present you speak of is sent to me," said Clara.

"No, missus. Sambo doesn't hesemate, as you call him, at all, but some-

times," rolling his black eyes significantly towards Alice, who was again gazing out intently upon the sea; "he kind ob halts atween two 'pinions, speshully when his business is only 'rected to one ob 'em."

At this moment, Alice, apparently attracted by the approach of a person who was then observed to be coming up the carriage-path towards the house, suddenly started, and ran lightly down the hill, without uttering a word to those she so unceremoniously left upon its summit."

"Dat gemblum," remarked Sambo, as his quick eyes caught sight of the stranger, "has arrived heah at a berry convenient time. Here's a paper for you, Missus Winslow," he continued, as he took a letter from one of his capacious pockets, and held it out to Clara; "but I doesn't know what's in him, kase my mudder neber learnt dis niggah how to read. I tinks, do, dat it's sumfin berry portant, kase my missus looked and spoke so kind ob earnest when she gib it to me, an tole me not to let noboddy see it, 'cept yourseff, and to wait till I got a answer from your lubly mouf."

Without showing that she appreciated, in the least degree, the compliment Sambo expressed concerning her mouth, Clara took the proffered letter eagerly from his hand, and finding it unsealed, opened it, and read as follows:—

"Dear Clara,—

"Come to the haunted-house to-morrow evening after dark, as I have that to communicate, which to you is of the deepest importance. Reply verbally by the bearer.

"In great haste, your affectionate friend,

"ERNESTINE."

After placing this strange and laconic epistle inside the bosom of her dress, Clara turned to the negro and said—

"Tell your mistress I will come."

"Yes; and den I s'pose I can go," replied Sambo, as he started and ran off the hill with a velocity that Clara, judging from the unwieldy appearance of his form, thought to be most marvellous.

A moment or two afterwards, Clara also left the hill, and slowly, and with a thoughtful countenance, re-entered her supposed grandfather's house.

CHAPTER II.

The Shooting Star—The Yankee and the Captain—Amusing Interview—The Stranger and the Embarkation.

ABOUT midway between the end of Long Wharf, in Boston, and the shore on the opposite side of the harbor, there lay at anchor, on the day specified in the previous chapter, a topsail schooner, which the nicest connoisseur in maritime affairs would have at once pronounced a craft far superior in model and general appearance to any vessel of whatever description then within the precincts of Massachusetts Bay.

To the spectator, whose fortune it was to view her on that day from the end of the wharf, she showed a long black hull, the sombre appearance of which was relieved by a narrow though bright streak of white, and two long slim masts, that raked aft in a manner well calculated to convey at once to the experienced mariner a favorable impression of superior sailing qualities, and the excellent practical seamanship of the person who had superintended her original rigging and fitting for sea, as every stay seemed to have been

tautened to its exact degree of required tension, and her fore and main shrouds appeared to have been set up with an equally exact degree of seamanlike precision.

The appearance of this vessel's deck, also, on the day just referred to, most clearly showed that the same careful supervision was extended over the minutest details of her internal management and discipline. Every rope of her running-rigging was handsomely belayed and coiled upon its appropriate pin; the long brass gun that was mounted upon a pivot amidships, shone like a polished mirror, as did also eight iron six-pounders, four of which protruded from as many port-holes that opened from each side of this fast-sailing and beautiful schooner.

This, kind reader, was the privateer schooner *Shooting Star*, that had arrived in Boston harbor about a fortnight previous to the time last alluded to, from a successful cruise off the West India Islands, and having been refitted during the interim, was now only awaiting the enlistment of her full complement of men, to enable her once more to sail upon another of her peculiarly daring and perilous enterprises.

Conspicuous among the many spectators who had on the day in question visited the wharf for the purpose of examining this handsome vessel, was a very tall and stout individual; the homespun and peculiar quality of whose dress, combined with the queer look of wondering curiosity with which he seemed to regard everything he saw, denoted him to be a genuine New-England backwoods Yankee.

Perceiving a man not quite so tall, but very near as stout as himself, standing with his back against a sugar-hogshead, our Yankee stepped up and saluted him thus—

"I say, yew?"

"Well, what do you say?" returned the stranger, as he looked good-humoredly round upon his inquisitive companion.

"Yew don't know nothin' about that ere darnation nice lookin' vessel off there, nor no heow, I s'pose, dew yew?"

"I think I ought to, as I happen to command her," replied the stranger.

"Show-w, yew don't say so. Why, how dew yew dew? Jest the identical critter I wanted to see, if yew ain't I'll be darned. I say, yew, that ere's a wessel what goes out and fights the Brittaners, and brings back hull cart-loads of sewgar, merlasses, tea, chucyewlate, and so forth, ed-cettera, and so on, ain't it?"

"She is a privateer," answered the captain, "and has taken several prizes of the kind you just mentioned."

"*She!*" repeated our Yankee, in a tone of wondering astonishment; "yew don't call a wessel a *she*, dew yew?"

"They are thus, as a general thing, commonly denominated," replied the captain, who began to feel somewhat amused in listening to the curious inquiries of our Yankee friend.

"They air, hey! Kind of cewrious neow, ain't it? I s'pose, though, that the reason they're called so is, cause they're so darnation hard to manage."

"I find no trouble at all in managing the *Shooting Star*," said the captain.

"She ain't like some *shes* I know of then, that lives up in our parts, for the old scratcher himself couldn't manage some of *them*. I say, yew, yew don't want tew hire a man, a chap like me, tew go out in your wessel and help fight the Brittaners, dew yew?"

"I am looking after a man now," replied the captain. "Have you ever been to sea?"

"Wall, no, I rayther calculate not," answered the Yankee. "I never saw salt-water afore I got deown here tew Bostown, yesterday. I've been a powder-monkey, though, in the Belchertown Artilleree. Liked it tew, tip-top."

"What shall I call your name?" inquired the captain of the schooner.

"Wall, my name's Ezekiel P. Snodsgrass,—P. for Parkins, yew know—commonly called Zeke. My dad's name is Jonathan, without the P. He's of some consequence deown in our parts. He's selectman of the teown, over seer of the poor (and darnation poor himself by the way), and field-driver."

"What occasioned you to think of going to sea?"

"Wall, sevrul things in ginral, and some in partiewelar. Neow I'll tel yew all about it. Yew see, dad's got a brother in New York, who has sumethin' or other tew dew with the post-offiss, so neow and then he senda dad a newspaper. Wall, he sent one last week. It came in the evenin', and as I was the fust tew get it, it natrally follers that I was the fust tew read it."

"Fust I red the deths, then the births—no, the births wasn't in it, but the marridges was, so I red them, then I red sumethin' they called missallaneous; and then I red a piece that told about heow tew thousand Brittaners and Injuns, arter fightin' hard for tew howrs and a haaf with some tew or three hundred Americans, killed and skelped nearly the hull lot, away upon the Lakes. Then I threw the paper slap deown ontew the floor, and swore right straight eout afore dad and maam both. I did, by jingo! Says I—"

"DARNATION!" and then I scratched my head like all Jehew.

"Why, what on airth ails eour Zeke?" said maam. "Look, fayther, and see heow he's scratchin' his head, as if there was sumethin' in it bitin' on him like all natur."

"Arter this I blurted right straight eout, and says I—"

"Jest as sure as to-morrow mornin' comes, jest so sure I'm goin' off deown tew Bostown, to list in the sogers, and go fight the Brittaners."

"Yew'd better go a privateerin', Zeke," said dad, "and then yew'll get better pay (if you get anything), and if yew happen tew get killed, it won't cost nobody nothin' tew bury yew."

"What dew yew mean by privateerin'?" says I to dad.

"Why, goin' eout tew sea in a wessel," said dad, "and takin' other wessels that belongs tew the enemees, that's chock full of tea, chookelet, and so on; and then coming home, sellin' out the cargoes of the prizes at public vendew, and dividin' the proffitts between all hands."

"If that's what yew call privateerin'," says I, "darned if I don't go."

"That is to say, if yew kin git a chance," said dad.

"If I can't, it shan't be because I don't try," says I; so, next mornin', I got up bright and airly, took what few things I had in the way of clothes, got intew the male-stage, that goes by eour house, rid all the way deown tew Bostown, and here I've been lookin' eout for a chance ever since, to go a privateerin'. I say, yew, are yew goin' tew give me one or not?"

"What I must require," answered the captain of the privateer, "is, at this time, good, able-bodied seamen; but, as you seem to be anxious to try your luck in this adventurous business, and I am inclined to think that you will make up in strength and resolution what you lack in experience, you can go on board in the boat which you now see is approaching from my vessel, sign the papers, and then return to the shore, and get your clothes."

"It's a bargain, by jingo!" exclaimed the delighted Yankee. "I'm eternally ableeged tew yew, Capen. Hallo, who in thunder's this? A female gal, by all that's grashus!"

The individual whose sudden approach had caused the utterance of the latter clause of our Yankee's characteristic speech, now came forward, and confronting the captain of the privateer, spoke as follows—

"I have been informed that you are the commander of yonder graceful vessel. If it be so, I would speak a word with you in private."

Looking up whilst the stranger spoke, the captain of the Shooting Star saw that the person who had thus unceremoniously introduced herself to his notice, was a tall, dark-complexioned, and handsome featured girl, whose dress, though it seemed costly in fabric, and elegant in *matériel*, appeared to

have beer recently put on, and was so carelessly adjusted as to render its fair wearer liable to be considered partially, if not wholly, insane.

So at least thought the captain of the privateer, but he kept his suspicions to himself, and after directing his newly engaged recruit to tell the coxswain of his boat, which was now close to the wharf, to await his return, which would be as quick as might be convenient, he turned to the stranger, and said—

"Follow me."

So saying, the captain walked a short way up the wharf, closely accompanied by his fair companion, who, after stopping in the rear of a large building that excluded them both from the curious observation of the crowd, spoke thus—

"I have come to you for shelter."

"From whom, or what?" asked the captain, speaking almost involuntarily.

"Him who would *murder* me, or do what is worse."

"Who is he, and who are you?"

"This is neither the place nor time to answer either of your plain interrogatories," answered the stranger, speaking in a tone of voice at once wild, hurried and impressive; "therefore, at present, I can speak of them no further. I know that your vessel is soon to sail from this place. I am also aware that she is about to cruise, on this, her second voyage, off the West Indian Isles. Now, if you are a man, and willing, as such, to save a poor weak girl from dishonor, shame, and death, give me, I conjure you, a present shelter on board of your beautiful vessel."

As she paused a moment, as if expecting a quick reply, the captain, said—

"This is a strange, singular and unexpected application, and I must consult."

"Consult no one!" eagerly exclaimed the stranger, "for even now the seeker of blood is upon my track. Grant me the boon I ask, and tears of gratitude, with fervent prayers for future prosperity and success, shall be your reward. Refuse it, and here, in your very sight, I will plunge myself into the sea, and end, at once, my sorrow, and your suspense."

"That suspense no longer exists," responded the noble privateersman. "That you are a female distressed, and in need of protection, is enough to ensure all the shelter I am capable of giving. But beware of deception. That is what I cannot brook, either from man or woman."

"To deceive in not my nature," hurriedly resumed the fair stranger, "though I am but too well aware that as much cannot be truly averred of many of my sex. But this is not the time to bandy words. Shall I follow you to the boat?"

"If you please, yes," answered the captain, who thereupon, without further parley, conducted the stranger to the end of the wharf, where he found our Yankee friend, and addressed him thus—

"Is the boat here?"

"Wall, I calcenlate it is," replied Zeke, pointing with an indignant countenance to a very handsome little gig, manned by three men (the coxswain and two seamen), which lay uneasily rocking upon the water near the end of the pier, "and I told the feller that sets away eout in the further end of the ternal thing, jest what yew told me tew, and what in thunder dew yew spose he said?"

"I am sure I can't tell," replied the captain, with a smile.

"Wall, confound his picter, he told me, says he, 'Belay yewre sawtacklin, take a bottle hitch with yeur leg reound the capstons of the wharf, and go tew the devil, flewkin.' Now, cap'an, I want tew know what in darnation he meant by all that ere!"

"Oh, nothing at all," answered the captain, "he was only joking, as all sailors do with green hands."

So saying, the privateersman ordered the boat to be taken to a place convenient for the embarkation of his strange passenger, which being immediately done, the female was gallantly helped by the captain into the stern sheets, where our Yankee friend, having, in the meantime, taken summary possession of the bottom of the gig, the commander gave the usual signal, the boat moved swiftly over the unruffled water, and the whole party soon found themselves safely standing upon the clean, white deck of the gallant "Shooting Star."

CHAPTER III.

"The ship is here put in."

"La Santa Maria," and her Captain—The Lord and the Officer—The Mysterious Mistress—A Singular Story—An Arrival.

ABOUT the same time upon which the events last recorded were transpiring in Boston harbor, a large square-rigged brig lay becalmed upon the waters of the broad Atlantic, some twenty miles E. by S. from Cape Cod. All her canvas was set, except studding sails, but the booms were out, evidently awaiting reception, if the expected breeze should happen to blow from a favorable quarter.

This vessel sailed under Spanish colors, and was called "La Santa Maria." At the time referred to in our story, however, she was commanded by a rough old sea-dog, who was an Englishman by birth, and who rejoiced in the euphonious name of Herringbone.

Fifty years was now the sum-total of Captain Herringbone's age, and his vessel was nearly half as old as himself. He was stout, burly, and clumsy in form, and so was "La Santa Maria," which was his *beau idéal* of maritime beauty. Not that the worthy captain was at all deficient in nautical experience or excellent seamanship, but, as he himself was wont to declare, when exhilarated by sundry draughts of ale, of which substantial beverage he was, by the way, extremely fond, he had been in her so long, and she was in model, build, and rig, so very like his own dear self, he could not help looking on her as decidedly the best and handsomest craft that ever sailed salt water.

At the time specified in the beginning of this chapter, Captain Herringbone was standing near the brig's taffrail, scanning, with his dark, heavy-looking eyes, the clear horizon, and giving vent to his thoughts in something like the following words—

"To be becalmed in this way, after thirty-five day's passage from Havana, and a market, is too blasted bad. It's awful. It's lucky I wasn't a married man, and got a wife in Boston a'-speeting me home. Blowed if it ain't. She'd a gi'n me up for shark's-meat long ago, and a-gone and got spliced again. And she wouldn't be much to blame, either. Aha, I think I smell a breeze.—Montano!"

The last word of the worthy commander's speech was addressed to a tall, dark-whiskered man, much younger than himself, whose sallow complexion and peculiar features denoted him to be of Spanish origin, and who, from the main-hatchway, near which he was standing, responded thus—

"Do you want me, sir?"

"Yes, come aft here," replied the captain.

"Well sir, here I am," said Montano, as he reached the quarter-deck.

"So I see," responded Captain Herringbone, drily. "What's your hopinion about the wind?"

"That it's devilish light about this time," said Montano.

"Nonsense—that hain't what I meant," resumed the captain. "I thought I smelt a puff just now, coming out from the south'ard."

"There does appear to be a slight breeze coming from that quarter," replied Montano.

"Enough already to fill the top-gallant-sails," continued the captain, "so I think we shall soon have it steady. Trim the yards to a N.N.W. course, haul the main sheet aft, and set stunsails on the weather side."

"Ay ay, sir," responded Montano, who was the brig's first officer, and thereupon went forward to his duty.

A moment afterwards, another and quite different personage from either of those just mentioned, came out of the brig's cabin, and familiarly seated himself on top of the gangway. This was a young man apparently not more than thirty years of age, who, as was evident from the respectful manner in which he was treated by the captain, was a passenger of more than usual consequence. Tall in stature, yet slim in form and figure, this young gentleman could not be termed handsome, although a fine head of nut-brown hair, combined with a fresh and glowing countenance, and a handsome pair of blue eyes, rendered his general appearance, to the fair sex at least, peculiarly interesting and attractive.

Soon after he thus appeared on the quarter-deck of La Santa Maria, the young man in question addressed the worthy commander of the brig, as follows:—

"According to the orders I heard given to Montano before I left the cabin, I presumed there was some prospect of a fair breeze."

"Yes, my lord," respectfully answered the captain, "and you see I am preparing to make the best of it."

"That is right," responded the nobleman, "especially as a fair wind is not in these latitudes, or on this infernal coast, for any length of time, to be depended upon. Come hither, Captain."

In compliance with this request, the brig's commander approached the gangway, when his lordship said:—

"I wish to give you a word of warning, Herringbone, as regards the manner in which you generally see fit to address me."

"Why, my lord," replied the captain, "I try to be as respectful towards your lordship, and those connected with you, as the nature of my rough calling will permit, and"—

"Yes," interrupted his lordship, "and rather too much so to suit a Yankee meridian. You know very well, Herringbone, that I happen to hold a commission in our gracious majesty's royal navy, and also that I am about to risk my life in an enemy's country, for a very particular object. Therefore I would have you, at least until we find ourselves safely upon blue water again, address me only as plain Henry, or Mister Warton."

"Very well, your lord—a—Mr. Henry Warton, I mean," replied the captain, "you may be sure that your lord—I mean your commands—on this subject, shall be implicitly obeyed."

By this time the wind had freshened so as to fill the brig's topsails, and cause her to move sluggishly through the water, at the rate of about three knots, or miles, an hour. Upon observing the headway which his "beauty," had thus obtained, Captain Herringbone again called his first officer to the quarter-deck, and accosted him thus:

"You must take charge of the brig, Montano, whilst I go below, to obtain

a little refreshment and rest. Let her run as she goes for about an hour, and then luff her up, N.W. by W."

Having delivered these brief orders to his inferior, Captain Herringbone retired immediately to his cabin.

"If this breeze lasts for any length of time," said Warton, speaking to Montano, as the captain left the deck, "we shall stand a fair chance of reaching Boston by to-morrow evening. This, as far as I am concerned, is a consummation most devoutly to be wished."

"And also as far as every one else on board this vessel is concerned, I think," interposed Montano.

Here the discourse between Warton and the first officer of the brig was suddenly interrupted by the low and plaintive, yet inexpressibly sweet sound of a rich female voice, accompanied by the music of a Spanish guitar.

"Hark!" whispered Warton, as he perceived Montano was about to speak, "and listen to Loretta's voice."

And they both listened silently, whilst the fair musician thus sang forth her thoughts:

"As the tired sea-bird seeks its nest,
My weary soul seeks Heaven's rest,
Where it will far more happy be,
Than either on the land or sea."

"There, Montano," said the Lord Warton, as the singer suddenly ceased to be heard, "what do you think of it?"

"Of what?—the song, or the mistress?" rejoined Montano.

"Of the song, of *course*," resumed Warton. "What the devil have you to do with the singer?"

"Nothing," answered Montano, as he suffered a slight sardonic smile to flit across his swarthy features. "As for the words, I thought they sounded rather ominous."

"Of what?"

"Suspicion," replied Montano. "Have you not noticed how unhappy this maiden has become since we have reached this coast, and she has known we were fast nearing the port of our destination?"

"Yes, I *have* noticed something of the kind," resumed Warton, "but, as yet, I cannot see what reason she has had to suspect the truth."

"Perhaps your own bearing towards her has become somewhat altered from what it was when you were first *married*," suggested Montano.

"It may be so," responded the young nobleman, "but if it is, the alteration you refer to must have stolen upon my manner quite insensibly. I wish that this suspicion, if, in truth, the poor girl has imbibed any, was turned to stern reality."

"It is in your power, my lord, to do your own pleasure in this matter at any time."

"Aye, but 'tis not my inclination, good Montano. I was villain enough once to deceive her, but"—

"You have not the courage that will enable you to undeceive her," interrupted Montano.

"I have the courage to do what any, aye, even the bravest man honorably may," answered Warton; "but I am not yet so far gone in villainy as not to shudder at the idea of confessing to a wronged woman's face, the deep, deliberate, and deadly shame, my previous conduct has cruelly brought down upon her devoted head."

"And yet, at some future but not very distant day, this unpleasant truth must become known to her," suggested Montano.

"Aye, but not through the medium of my lips," resumed Warton. "You, Montano, must be my agent in this delicate affair, as well as my assistant in others of a different nature."

"I must know, first, what the details of these affairs refer to," said Montano.

"In order, then, more fully to explain them," continued the young nobleman, "I shall be obliged briefly to relate to you some dainty portions of a noble family's private history. You know me now, simply and only as Lord Henry Warton. This title I inherit from my father, who departed this life about five years ago, in London. He left behind him two sons younger than myself, and two brothers of his own, one of whom is a worthy peer of the realm, famous only for his long speeches and light purse, whilst the other, having for some deep and weighty cause forsworn England in his youth, emigrated to America, and became in due time a citizen of Boston, where he settled, turned merchant, and managed to accumulate a large fortune. Notwithstanding this worthy man's professed republicanism, he had still strong, though secret, longings for the flesh-pots of Egypt, which appear to his soiled imagination in the shape of noble titles and baronial rights of landed property, which it is the darling wish of his heart to unite with his mercantile riches, by a formal union between myself and a certain niece of his, whom I have never seen, and therefore only know by reputation."

"And you are now, I suppose, on your way to Boston to consummate this romantic union," said Montano, taking advantage of a convenient pause in Lord Warton's interesting story.

"Exactly so," replied the noble lord.

"I can see, therefore, the necessity that compels you to rid yourself of your present wife," resumed Montano.

"Why do you call her by that sacred name, Montano, when you know, as well as I, that my pretended union with her was but a mere sham and subterfuge, to enable me to obtain the easy gratification of my criminal passions?"

"Merely out of courtesy to your lordship, that is all," replied Montano, with a peculiar and sarcastic smile. "But do you think you can really love the wife your worthy uncle has seen fit to choose for you?"

"No, for I have already formed a deep and unalterable attachment to another," answered Warton, "and it is in the serious matter of her abduction that I require your excellent counsel and assistance."

"And if I render the required assistance, what shall be my reward?" inquired Montano.

"Any reasonable price in money you may see fit to ask," answered the noble lord, "together with Loretta for your future bride."

"For all of which I confess myself your humble servitor, and most obedient assistant, my lord. Has your lordship yet matured a plan for abducting this fair unknown from the home of her friends?"

"Yes," responded Warton; "but I cannot give you its details till we safely come to land in Boston. Hark! I think I hear old Herringbone coming up the cabin gangway."

"Drunk as usual, too," said Montano, as the worthy captain reeled on to quarter-deck, thoroughly inebriated, and singing at the very top of his voice, the following words:—

"Old King Cole
Was a hearty old soul,
And a hearty old soul was he,
And he called for his pipe,

And he called for his bowl,
Signed papers, and went off to sea,
If he didn't, may the d—l blow me, blow me,
If he didn't, may the d—l blow me.'

"T-there's a s-song for you, Mr. Mo-Montano. Hey, your Honorship, good, w-wasn't it. I s-say, Montano, how does the beauty head? old boy, hey! D—n ny eyes, how she s-scuds. S-sails like a w-water-spout, too. You? better reef the foretopsail down snug, d'ye hear, Montano?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Well then, I s-say, Montano, I believe something's the m-matter with me. Blast my timbers, if I-I d-don't believe I'm s-sea-sick. I g-guess I'll g-go below and turn in."

So saying, the intoxicated captain started towards the cabin gangway, upon arriving at which he made a mis-step, and pitching head foremost over the stairs, rolled in the cabin, from whence he was dragged by his steward to his state-room, and deposited in his berth, where he slept soundly till the next morning.

By the efforts of Montano and the brig's crew, aided by a fair though light breeze, the Santa Maria was safely moored in Boston harbor about six o'clock next evening.

CHAPTER IV.

"It was a quaintly-built, and ghostly-looking edifice."

The Pirates' Cove—The Haunted House and its History—The Maiden's Interview—The Midshipman.

On the shore of a small cove, and near the road that runs from Marblehead through Lower Swampscot to Lynn, there stood (at the period of time commemorated in our story) a large wooden building, which had been erected some forty years before, by a very rich and eccentric old gentleman, who, with no one but a maiden sister for his companion, occupied it till his death, which took place some fifteen years afterwards. Some two years previous to this, however, the old man's family was enlarged, by the addition of a young man, apparently a sailor, accompanied by a youthful female, supposed to be his wife.

About two years after the old man's death, his sister died also, leaving the sailor and his wife sole occupants and owners of the house, which, from its isolated situation, and the peculiar habits of its eccentric inhabitants, had attracted the curiosity, and at the same time repelled the personal approaches, of the good people who resided in its neighborhood.

As the young owners of this isolated and mysterious building appeared, like their predecessors, inclined to keep themselves secluded from the intrusive visits of their curious neighbors, their conduct soon excited among those who dwelt on the region round about, vague suspicions that the strangers had chosen to reside in this singular retreat for purposes incompatible with either morality, religion, or virtue. In the course of time, those surmises ripened into a religious belief among the honest fishermen of the neighborhood, that both the house and its occupants were under the peculiar care and supervision of that very orthodox personage vulgarly termed the "devil."

Some three years previous to the time chosen for the opening of our story, an event occurred that fully established this belief in the minds of all those

cognizant with its attendant circumstances. This was nothing less than the sudden and mysterious disappearance of the sailor and his reputed wife from the house and vicinity in which they had so long resided.

As a small, but suspicious looking schooner had been observed to hover about the cove, a day or two previous to that on which the absence of the sailor and his wife was accidentally discovered, it was currently supposed by the fishermen, that the man himself was a pirate, the suspicious schooner was his vessel, and that the house in question was nothing more nor less than a general rendezvous for the piratical rovers, who were known at the time to pay frequent visits to the North American coast.

For some time after this, the mysterious building remained without inhabitants, but, finally, a hardy fisherman finding himself, after an unsuccessful cruise in his business, "pinched" for the means wherewith to pay house-rent for his large family, resolved from motives of economy to establish himself as its rightful tenant upon its mysterious premises.

This worthy individual had been in the house but a single week, when his peace of mind and that of the other members of his honest family, was disturbed by sundry, unearthly sounds and noises, such as loud knockings, wild shouts of hoarse laughter, and loud, shrill screams of agony and distress. When, on the morning after these alarming sounds were first heard, the worthy fisherman, after searching the house from cellar to attic, without being able to discover any natural cause for the effects that had transpired only a few hours before, he solemnly adjudged the whole proceedings to be the work of the devil and his imps, and immediately removed his family back again to their previous residence in the town of Marblehead.

From time to time, other families endeavored to reside permanently in this extraordinary house, but were permitted to occupy it only for a short period, when the recurrence of the original ghostly sights and unearthly sounds, would be sure to drive them away also. At length no one could be found daring enough to occupy a building supposed to be under the infernal supervision of his Satanic Majesty, and the HAUNTED HOUSE was suffered to remain uninhabited, till about two years previous to that referred to in our opening chapter.

Then came a woman, accompanied only by the black boy introduced in our first chapter, who quietly fixed her abode in the haunted house, and soon became known in its immediate neighborhood as a remarkable fore-teller of future events. This woman was apparently forty years of age, tall and majestic in stature, and possessing features which, though they were deeply marked by wide lines of sorrow, disappointment and suffering, were still regular in their outlines and singularly interesting in their general expression.

The reputation which this extraordinary person soon gained, as a true prophet of the future, drew to her isolated place of abode many fair maidens from the adjoining towns, who, under any other circumstances, would on no account whatever have trusted themselves within its mysterious walls.

But that strong yet undefinable feeling which causes us all, in a greater or less degree, to pry into the hidden secrets of our future destiny, gave to females even of the most timid and retiring dispositions, a certain kind of courage that would have impelled them to visit places of a more questionable character than that generally ascribed to the haunted house of the cove.

Among others who had many times visited this remarkable house, during the time previous to that chosen for the commencement of our story, was Clara Winslow. Led thither, as it seemed, in the first place, by a love of wild and romantic adventure which appeared to be a part of her very nature, and finding in the lone fortune-teller of the cove, a person possessing a disposition in many respects similar to her own, Clara could not forbear repeating her visits upon every convenient occasion that offered.

On some of these visits, Clara had been accompanied by Alice Carr, whose disposition was also deeply tinged with romance, although its natural tendencies were usually controlled and regulated by a mind much stronger than that possessed by her passionate and wayward companion.

After receiving the note of invitation from Ernestine (by which name only the tenant of the haunted house chose to be known), alluded to near the close of our first chapter, Clara Winslow retired to her own chamber, or that which she and Alice occupied in common, where, seating herself near an open window, she thus soliloquized,—

"To the haunted house at the time specified, I must merely go to hear something which Ernestine says is to me of the deepest importance. I wonder what it it can be. She may have news from!"

"Ah, dear Clara," interrupted Alice, who at that interesting moment abruptly entered the chamber, "I was not aware that you was here. I thought I left you on the hill, holding a private conference with Sambo of the haunted house."

"You left me with very little ceremony at all events, but I *thought* I saw the cause," answered Clara, somewhat pointedly.

"In the shape of the gentleman, I suppose, you mean," continued Alice, blushing, as she spoke, to her very temples, "who happened at that time to be coming up the avenue."

"Such is the fact," replied Clara, "and, as I have accidentally ascertained that much, I cannot stop short of inquiring who this strange gentleman, the intimation of whose appearance has been sufficient to crimson my fair sister's cheek, *is*?"

"Listen, then, and you shall soon know as much about him as I do," resumed Alice. "His name is Alcott; he is a passed midshipman in the American navy, and has come hither to bring my grandfather news from his son."

"And you have seen him before?" said Clara, with a steady and piercing glance at her companion's still blushing countenance.

"Only once," replied Alice, "and that was whilst I was visiting at my uncle's, in Boston."

"And during that 'once' he found time to ingratiate himself deeply in the affections of fair Alice Carr, did he not?" answered Clara, with the same penetrating glance still fixed upon her companion's features.

"Clara," replied Alice, in a tone of voice at once impressive and deeply serious, "as long as we have both resided under the same roof, the few secrets of my heart have been to you as an open book, with perhaps"—

"One exception," interrupted Clara, as her fair companion seemed to hesitate, "and that is the last page, which being the page of embryo love, has been very properly and perhaps purposely, heretofore kept back from my curious inspection."

"That I feel towards Arthur Alcott," answered Alice, in the same serious and impressive tone as before, "a strong and peculiar interest, different from what I felt towards any other stranger of the same sex, I shall not attempt in your presence to deny, although in terming it *love*, I think you go far beyond what this feeling now is, or, perhaps, ever will be."

"Perhaps I do," replied Clara, smilingly, "for I only judged by the depth of the blush that crimsoned your fair cheek, on a mere allusion to his appearance, something of the depth of the interest you might feel towards him."

"If you only could see, and hear him converse once," continued Alice, "I think you would become nearly as much interested in him as I have."

"By the mere glance I had of him as he came up the avenue," said Clara, "I should judge he was quite a good-looking young gentleman; but I cannot express my opinion of his conversation till I have heard it."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice, as Clara thought somewhat enthusiastically, "he talks so eloquently about the sea, and the battles he has helped to fight thereon, and expresses so much feverish anxiety to fall in with and conquer a certain pirate, whom he calls the BANDIT OF THE OCEAN, who has, as he says, done more real damage to our shipping and seamen, than our open and declared enemy, and speaks so modestly of himself withal, that I am sure you could not help listening to his peculiarly interesting conversation with mingled admiration, respect, and delight."

"Where is this prodigy of yours—this hero of the sea, and pink of modesty?" rejoined Clara, in a tone of playful sarcasm. "Tell me, sweet Alice, that I may hasten to his presence, and revel in the pleasure of his eloquent conversation."

"He has gone, Clara," replied Alice, seriously. "He left the house just as I came hither."

"Not to procure the marriage license I hope," said Clara, in the same tone of playful badinage as before.

"Why, Clara! your conversation grows stranger to me every day. How can you speak so lightly of so serious a thing as marriage?"

"Perhaps, dear Alice, because I consider it so far removed in my own case, and perhaps"—

"Because you think it as far removed from mine. Say, is it not so, dear Clara?"

"Yes, Alice, if so you wish to have it. Now we will talk of my particular affairs. You saw Sambo present me with a note yesterday, did you not?"

"Yes," answered Alice, "and I heard also a portion of the remarks which he saw fit to append to his presentment."

"And thereby discovered that its contents were for no other eyes but mine," continued Clara. "That was enough to drive you from the hill, without the appearance of Mr. Alcott. The substance of the note is just this: Ernestine requests me to visit her house to-morrow evening after dark. I feel that I *must* go, and you must go with me."

"I do not wish to go, where it is quite evident, on this occasion at least, I am not wanted," replied Alice; "neither do I wish you to go to that mysterious place alone."

"Then, consent to go with me, sweet Alice, and trust to my sagacity in removing all objections to your company from the mind of Ernestine."

"I cannot refuse you anything, fair cousin, so you have my consent that I will go."

"Thank you, dear Alice," responded Clara. "Now tell me what Mr. Alcott said about your grandfather's son."

"Merely that he left him well, when he (Alcott) was sent home in charge of a prize, which the frigate he was in was so lucky as to take, a few weeks ago, off the West India Islands."

"So your midshipman came home as prize-master, and that accounts for his visit here, and his absence from his ship," remarked Clara. "It appears to me he was in a great hurry to leave us."

"He said he was obliged to be in Boston, to-night," replied Alice, "time enough to go out to sea again, in the privateer schooner *Shooting Star*."

"I cannot see what business a midshipman can have on board a privateer," said Clara.

"From Alcott's story," resumed Alice, "it appears that, while on his way to Boston with his prize, he was pursued by the celebrated Bandit of the Ocean, and was only saved from being taken by that blood-thirsty monster, by the providential occurrence of a thick fog, which coming up at nightfall, baffled his pursuers, and enabled him to reach his port of destination in

safety. He has good reasons for thinking that this pirate and his vessel is even now hovering about this coast, and he goes in the Shooting Star as a sort of pilot, hoping to be of service in finding out this rover's rendezvous."

Here the voice of Mrs. Carr called the girls to their evening meal, which being soon dispatched, they returned again to their common chamber, where at an early hour they retired to rest, little dreaming it was the last night they were destined to pass together, under their present circumstances, beneath the quiet roof of a fisher's humble dwelling.

CHAPTER V.

"Before the freshing breeze she gaily sails away."

The Lieutenant and the Yankee—A Pugilistic Encounter—The Captain and the Midshipman—A Boat from Shore—The Merchant's Threat—Sailing of the Privateer.

Soon after Captain Robert Selwyn, of the Shooting Star, reached the quarter-deck of his vessel, as recorded at the close of our third chapter, Mr. Brown, his first lieutenant, stepped up, and touching his hat, spoke thus,—

"A prize, sent in by the Constitution, arrived here last night, sir, and the prize-master is now below, anxiously awaiting your appearance."

Taking his officer aside, and out of the hearing of the strange lady, the captain replied,—

"I will go to this prize-master immediately. He is in the after cabin, I suppose."

"He is, sir," responded the first lieutenant.

"Then whilst I go thither, you will show that lady, standing there by the gangway, into the forward cabin, where I will soon join her. I suppose you observed that big fellow whom I brought off with me, stowed away in the bottom of the boat, did you not?"

"I did sir," replied the officer, "and a queer looking chap I thought he was, isn't he?"

"Aye, as a 'yellow cabbage,'" responded the captain, "but he's pluck, through to the backbone. Now, I wish you to go forward and see that the old salts there don't impose upon him. If they do, he is one of that kind who will be sure to fight."

"The 'chaps' will have their joke with a greenhorn, sir," said Mr. Brown; "but you may depend upon my seeing that they do not carry it too far."

So saying, Mr. Brown went forward, and placing himself in a convenient position near the fore-rigging, commenced his observations upon a somewhat amusing scene, that was going on upon the fore-castle deck.

In the centre of a circle, formed by some half a dozen regular old salts, stood our Yankee friend, Zeke, curiously surveying everything within range of his vision, and patiently answering all the quizzical questions that Tom Dokes, the spokesman of the aforesaid circle, saw fit to ask him.

The first salutation Zeke received from this worthy son of Neptune (who had privately expressed his determination to quiz the new comer as soon as a fair opportunity offered) was as follows—

"Hallo, old chap, how are you?"

"Tolerably well, I thank yew," rejoined Zeke, "how's yewrself?"

"Hearty as a buck, old boy. How did you leave your ma'am?"

"Cleverly, I thank yew, and so was dad tew, when I left hum."

"You think of goin' a cruise a privateerin, with us I spose?" asked Dokes.

"Wall, I *dew* calculate on somethin' of that sort," replied Zeke.

"Afore the mast?" continued Dokes.

"Afore the *which*?" repeated Zeke.

"The mast," returned Dokes. "That is, I want to know if you are goin' as a common sailor?"

"Wall, no," said Zeke, quite innocently, "I rather guess not. I shall be rather an uncommon sailor the first ten miles. I say yew, where does a feller go tew here, when he wants tew sleep?"

"In the lee cat-harpings of the weather foretop," replied Dokes.

"Where in thunder's that?"

"Four points on a tangent abaft the binnacle.

"Oh, git eont, neow, with yeour confeounded cat-harp-strings, and top-pints of tanned bunnacles," said Zeke, who began to have a strong idea that Dokes was quizzing him, though he could not exactly tell how, "and talk plain English, if yew know heow tew."

"Oh, I forgot you was green," replied Dokes.

"Green, hey? what in darnation dew yew mean by that 'ere?"

"That you don't know nothin', that's all," answered Dokes.

"It is, hey?" coolly responded Zeke, "about enough tew I calculate. It's considerable more than I shall stand, any how. Can you fight?"

"Do you want to know whether I can, or not?"

"Wall yes, I thought I should," answered Zeke, as he deliberately divested himself of an old jacket of green baize, and a sort of half apology, for a straw hat, which he wore upon his head, and placing himself in a belligerent position towards his antagonist, continued:

"Neow, pick eout any six of yeour comrades that yew think kin help you most, and cum on."

"If I had the least idee, I should want any help in lickin a greenhorn like you are, I'd jump over board in a minute."

"Then yew'd better jump whilst there's breath enough in yew tew keep yew from sinkin," replied Zeke, who thereupon raised his brawny arm, and darting quickly forward, struck Dokes a tremendous blow in the breast, that sent him pitching and reeling, into the schooner's lee-scuppers, and saying as he did so—

"There, confeound yeour etarnal picter, heow does that ere set on yeour stummach—hey?"

At this interesting point of proceedings, Mr. Brown thought proper to interfere, which he did by stepping forward, and addressing our Yankee friend as follows—

"Young man, I now give you to understand, once for all, that no fighting is to be done on board this schooner, unless by express command of the Captain."

Looking up, and judging as he did so, by the wide band of gold lace around Mr. Brown's cap, that he was a man of authority on board, Zeke answered him thus—

"Wall, I didn't want tew fight, nor dew nothin' wrong no way; but when any body says I don't know nothin', like that feller down there did, jest afore I settled his breakfast for him, I *must* fight, and *will* fight, darned if I don't."

"Put your jacket on, and keep quiet till you hear from me again," said the lieutenant to Zeke, and then turning to the crew, who had been watching the result of the previous contest, with a good deal of interest, he continued,—

"Now boys, mind what I tell you. The captain has shipped this man to go this cruise; therefore he is one of you; and though he has never been to sea, and of course knows nothing of a sailor's life by experience, yet, take my word for it, he'll soon learn, and then there won't be a better man, I'll venture to say, on board the vessel. Now, the first one that imposes upon his inexperience, shall have his grog stopped for a week."

Having delivered this characteristic speech in behalf of our Yankee friend, Mr. Brown walked aft, and Zeke remained upon the forecastle, unmolested for the time, by any further impertinence from the schooner's crew.

Meanwhile, the captain having repaired to the cabin, pretty soon after he had been made acquainted with the fact that a stranger there waited his appearance, found seated on the transom, a young man, apparently not more than twenty-three years of age, dressed in the uniform of a passed midshipman of the United States navy, who arose from his seat, as the captain entered the after-cabin, and bowing politely, said,—

"I presume I have the honor of addressing the commander of this vessel?"

"You presume rightly sir," rejoined Captain Selwyn, "and I am happy to welcome an officer of our glorious navy to the hospitality of my schooner."

"Which is a vessel a senior commodore might be proud to have under him," replied Alcott. "I have no time, however, to partake of the hospitality you have alluded to at present, though the urgent business which has now brought me hither, leads me to hope, that its favorable consideration on your part, will make me for some weeks at least its grateful recipient."

"Will you allow me to ask the nature of the business you refer to?" said the captain.

"I will tell you briefly what it is," answered Alcott, "and then you will be able to form a correct opinion of its importance. I suppose you have already been informed by your lieutenant that I have lately arrived here as prize-master of a vessel taken by our frigate off the West India Islands. A few days ago I was fallen in with, and closely chased by a piratical schooner, which, according to the accurate description I had previously heard, was no other than that commanded by FISCARA, who is generally known better among seamen as the Bandit of the Ocean. Hearing that your vessel was ready to sail, and feeling sure that this audacious rover must be hovering about this part of our coast, I have come to offer you my feeble assistance in seeking out this villain and bringing him to condign punishment."

"I have often heard of this pirate," replied Captain Selwyn, "and have as often wished to fall in with him, but, as yet, he has never crossed my track. I will add, that as my second officer is sick and unfit for active duty, your services in his place, will, if it does not interfere with the duties of your official station, be by me gladly accepted."

"To tell the truth, captain," answered the young midshipman, "I was sent home in the prize because I had been invalidated by our surgeon for a complaint, from which I have since recovered, and have had six months' leave of absence granted me on the same account. So you see, sir, I can as well go with you as not. How soon, sir, do you think you will be ready to sail?"

"I intend, if possible," answered the captain, "to sail with the night-tide. I have been delayed a day or two for want of men, and the schooner is now without her full complement; but, as there seems to be but a slim chance at present of obtaining any more, and I feel very anxious to meet your troublesome pirate, I shall, as I before said, sail if possible to-night."

"In that case," rejoined the midshipman, "as I have a great deal to do, and but little time to do it in, I will now leave you with a promise of returning time enough to go to sea."

So saying, Mr. Alcott immediately left the cabin, and the schooner; after which he obtained a fleet horse, rode to Marblehead, held a short interview with old Arthur Lane, renewed his former acquaintance with fair Alice Carr, and returned to Boston, in time to rejoin the Shooting Star at an early hour the same evening.

As Captain Selwyn, soon after the midshipman's departure, was about to join his fair passenger in the forward cabin, Mr. Brown came down from the schooner's quarter deck, and addressing the commander, said,—

"A boat has come alongside from the shore, sir."

"Ah, who is in it?" inquired the captain.

"Two 'longshoremen, and an old gentleman in the stern-sheets who is rigged like a merchant."

"Has he boarded us?"

"No, sir; I asked him if he wouldn't come, and he answered by saying, he wished to see the captain immediately."

"If that's the case, I'll go on deck again," said the captain, which he immediately did, closely followed by his first officer.

As he looked over the schooner's side into the strange boat, Captain Selwyn saw, comfortably seated in the stern-sheets, a stout, portly-looking man, who appeared as though he might have lived through some sixty winters with the summers annexed, and who, when Selwyn inquired his business, replied,—

"My niece, sir, Helen Winchester, sir, left my house this morning in a state of insanity, sir; and I have been told, sir, by many persons on the wharf, who saw her get into your boat, sir, that you brought her here, sir, and that here she now is, somewhere on board your vessel, sir."

"May I ask your name, sir," said Selwyn.

"Certainly, and recollect at the same time, that I ask for my niece, sir, and I mean to have her, sir. My name is Scoville, sir, and I am a merchant in the West India trade, sir."

"Won't you be so good as to come on board the schooner, sir."

"No, sir," replied the old gentleman, who had, apparently, been working himself into a passion from the time he started from the wharf, and had now succeeded in getting it up to a very high pitch, "I shall *not* be so good as to do any such thing, sir, for you have kidnapped my niece, and may take a notion to serve me in the same way, sir. Is my niece on board your vessel, sir?"

"You first assert she is, and then ask me," said the captain; "but, to cut the matter short, I will inform you, that I met on the wharf, this morning, a young woman, who asked from me a shelter from the persecutions of those whom she solemnly declared were about to murder her, or do what she considered to be even worse than that. All the shelter I could offer, was here on board my own vessel, and here she is, not to be removed whilst I live, unless by her own free will and consent."

"And, I suppose, you are well aware, sir," rejoined Scoville, "that this consent she will never give."

"I cannot speak with certainty about that, until I converse with her further upon the subject. If you will wait where you are, a few moments, I will bring you her final decision."

Without waiting for any reply, from the old gentleman in the boat, Selwyn hastened into the forward cabin, where he found young Helen Winchester, seated upon a chair, and weeping bitterly.

"There is a boat alongside, Miss Winchester," said Selwyn, as soon as he appeared in her presence, "in which is a person who not only claims to be your uncle, but has also made a formal demand upon me for your person."

"That shall never be given up, to his cruel keeping, so long as its wearied heart throbs with life," exclaimed Helen, as she started wildly up from her seat, and looked eagerly towards the open door, as if about to fly, she knew not whither.

"Enough," said Selwyn. "Remain quietly where you are, and whilst I live, you are safe."

After speaking thus, the captain returned to the deck, and, speaking to Scoville, said,—

"Your niece, sir, will not accept your proffered protection."

"I did not suppose she would, sir," answered the merchant, "whilst she was under a pirate's thumb, and in his keeping, sir: I shall now go on shore, sir, and apply for a warrant and officers to search your vessel, and arrest you, sir, for kidnapping my niece, sir; so, sir, you may depend upon hearing from me again, sir, in the shortest possible time, sir."

After delivering this speech in a tone of pompous vehemence to Captain Selwyn, the baffled merchant ordered his boatmen to pull back again to the wharf, and this order they appeared very cheerful to obey, as they neither seemed to have liked Selwyn's determined manner, nor the close proximity in which they stood to the schooner's shining guns.

Casting a contemptuous smile at the receding boat, the captain of the Shooting Star, turned to his lieutenant and said—

"See that every thing is in readiness so that we may sail by seven o'clock."

"Ay ay, sir," responded the first officer, who so efficiently superintended the execution of this order, as to be able to report at precisely the appointed time that the anchor was a-weight. Then the captain ordered sail to be made, which being quickly done, the Shooting Star left her anchorage, and with her white wings spread gaily to the freshening breeze, sailed majestically out of Boston harbor.

CHAPTER VI.

Ernestine and Sambo—The Signal—The Pirate's Chamber—Clara and Alice—The Bandit of the Ocean—The Sailors—The Abduction.

EARLY on the morning of the day appointed for Clara Winslow's important visit to the haunted house, Ernestine left her lowly habitation, and accompanied by Sambo, who was her constant attendant, repaired to a high hill near by, from the top of which, in clear weather, could be obtained a wide and extensive view, not only of the line of sea-coast extending from Cape Cod eastwardly to Cape Ann, but also of Boston Bay, and the deep and dark blue ocean that stretched far away beyond its narrow limits.

No two individuals could possibly be imagined, who contrasted so strikingly to each other, as the mistress of the haunted house, and the grotesque looking black boy, who, from some unknown, but probably some capricious motives, she had chosen to be her only general, and almost inseparable companion. Ernestine, as we have before stated, was tall and commanding in stature, and generally dressed, so as to give this advantage on her part, its utmost effect; whilst Sambo was short and stout, with a round shining black face, containing in its general expression a great deal of malicious cunning, and which was over-topped by a head of the most woolly (and to coin a word), Hottentotish description.

"Does a missus see any ting off dar on de watah," said this curious looking negro, as he looked up, and saw Ernestine yawning wistfully out upon the sea.

"I cannot say that I do," replied his mistress, and yet it is full time that something should be in sight. Do you see any thing, Sambo?

"I tink I does, Missus."

"What is it?" exclaimed Ernestine, eagerly.

"De watah and de sky, Missus," answered Sambo, looking up into Ernestine's face with a grin calculated to show his ivory to its fullest extent.

"Trifle not with me, thou dark imp and off-shoot of an accursed race," said Ernestine, as she looked down upon her black servitor with unutterable contempt, "if thou dost, I will put thee once more in thy master's power, and let him take thee off to sea again."

"Oh, Missus," exclaimed poor Sambo, as he dropped on his knees before his strange and eccentric companion, "promise not to do dat, and I'll nebber say nottin' funny agin, if I can possibly help it. Golly! I tinks I feel de lash ob massa's cow-hide eatin' into my back now. Yow." And Sambo shuddered, and shook his woolly head, as though the recollection thus recalled was any thing but agreeable to his mind.

"Look off sea-ward again, said Ernestine, and see if you can't observe something in the distance that looks like a sail."

"Hi-yah!" exclaimed Sambo, after looking for a moment out in the direction indicated, "I does see sumfin now Missus, and no mistake; I rudder guess he's a sail, too."

"So it is," rejoined Ernestine, as the broad white fore and main sails of a small schooner loomed gradually into sight from the dusky haze of the far off southern horizon; "and I think it must be Fiscara's sylph-like vessel."

"Yes," muttered Sambo in a low undertone, "dat is Massa's *syll*-like wessel, ~~were~~ enough. I wish to de Lord her bottom would fall out, and let ole Massa down to de bottom ob de sea, whar dey say de dibbil libes in clover."

"Run to the house, Sambo, quick," continued Ernestine, "and bring hither that white signal, that I may set it on the hill-top, and thus let your master know that all is right on shore."

Without waiting to hear the last part of this speech, Sambo started off for the house, from which, however, he soon returned, bearing in his hand a long and slender staff, around the top of which was rolled a white silken flag. Soon as this pure white signal was unrolled, Ernestine thrust the peaked end of its staff into the turf that covered the top of the hill, and the beautiful flag appeared to woo the gentle breeze that then was blowing to assist in waving its silent information to the approaching vessel.

"Now, Sambo," said Ernestine, after the signal was thus well displayed; "you will stop here until the schooner gets into the cove, whilst I return to the house and prepare for company. As soon as you see your master's boat leave the vessel, you will come to the house and let me know of it."

"Yes, Missus," replied Sambo, "I'll take berry good care to watch Massa Fiscara, or any body else you set me to, if you will promise nebber to send me off to sea again."

"If you behave well, and serve me faithfully in all that I require, as you previously have done, I will keep you with me and protect you, as you know, all that I can, from the consequences of your master's displeasure; but if you do otherwise, if you betray my confidence in the least minute particular, I shall turn you unconditionally over to his tender mercy."

Having in a deliberate and impassive tone of voice, thus spoken, Ernestine immediately left the hill.

"Golly," soliloquised Sambo, when he thought his strange mistress was fairly out of hearing, "dat's a hard woman, dat is. Old man is a debblish deal harder, though. I hab seen him kill white folks afore now, without winkin' his eye, and ob coase he'll kill a nigger wid em *shut*. Now, Missus Ernestine, she treats me pretty well most ob de time, and don't nebber strike me, no how; so I'll stick to her, if de white folks does say that she deals wid de debble. If dey only knowed what I do now, dat is if dey only knowed de whole truff, hi-yah, wouldn't dar be fun in de wigwam?"

Here Sambo stopped talking, indulged himself in a few more comic hi-yahs, and then resumed his meditations in a state of watchful silence.

Meanwhile, Ernestine having reached her mysterious dwelling, proceeded to enter one of its principal apartments, which was furnished with almost oriental splendour and magnificence. Its chairs and tables were of the most costly mahogany, and complete specimens of the best and most curious workmanship of the day. A large *ecritoire* of black ebony, highly polished, and beautifully ornamented by diamonds of inlaid pearl, stood on one side of the room, whilst a large and splendid mirror embellished the other. A Turkish carpet of the richest and most beautiful variegated colors covered the floor, and two luxurious ottomans finished a *tout ensemble* of the most gorgeous and superb description.

Throwing herself listlessly down upon one of these last named articles, the mistress of the haunted house gave utterance to the thoughts of her heart in something like the following words:—

"My schemes at present seem to be working well. Fiscara is here, and if I do not overrate the influence I have over Clara Winslow, she will soon be here also. Oh, 'tis a dark and dangerous game, this that I am playing, and a wrong cast of any of its dies will bring dishonor on my name, and death upon my soul. But the alternative is pressing. The Bandit of the Ocean has wealth untold, in foreign isles, and this girl is its only rightful

heir. She can only be acknowledged as such by going where it is. I know Foscara is a villain of the deepest dye, but still I fear him not, thanks for a woman's heart which has gained an influence over his strong but superstitious mind, to which he is constrained to bow, even in his most violent and fitful moods. Clara must go with him, and with him too, will I go; and should he ever dare to do her harm, I will crush him to the earth, and revel in the awful writhings of his last mortal agony. For the present, however, I must curb my rising passions, and, as usual, appear humbly submissive to Foscara's will."

Speaking no more, but thinking none the less, the mistress of the haunted house, rose from her luxurious seat, and commenced a critical examination of the apartment's splendid furniture preparatory to its final adjustment for the reception of her expected visitor.

Leaving this mysterious woman thus busily engaged, we will, with the reader's permission, return to the humble abode of old Arthur Lane, where, on the morning referred to at the opening of this chapter, we shall find Clara and Alice in their own apartment, each engaged in endeavoring to conjecture the probable issue of the day's anticipated events.

Silently they thought for a time, and then Clara commenced conversation as follows:

"Alice, dear, you look pale this morning. Are you not well as usual?"

"Physically speaking, I presume I am," answered Alice, with a deep sigh.

"Something I am sure, then, must trouble your mind," continued Clara, "or you would never look as you now do."

"You are right, dear Clara: something *does* trouble my mind, and has kept me from sleeping during the past night. A sad presentiment haunted me through my feverish dreams, and at length fastened itself like a substantial phantom upon my disordered mind."

"A presentiment of what, sweet Alice?"

"Of evil from our proposed visit to the haunted house, this day."

"Why Alice," responded Clara, with a troubled smile, "I never thought before that your strong mind was susceptible of harboring such vague and indefinable things as presentiments. The credit of the romantic, the fitful, the passionate and the superstitious, has always heretofore been mine,—that of the real, the good, the true, and the substantial, has been yours. I shall begin, by and by, to think that in our several dispositions we both have a fair modicum of each."

"I at least have long thought so," answered Alice Carr; "but this presentiment I speak of *still* hangs heavily upon my mind."

"If so it is, dear Alice, perhaps you had better stay at home, and not accompany me to the haunted house."

"Clara," rejoined Alice, in a tone of deep earnestness; "I think we both had better stay at home."

"If you can show me any good and sufficient reason for so doing, I certainly will remain here," replied Clara, "if for no other purpose than to set your fears at rest."

"I have, as yet, seen no good and sufficient reason why you *should* go," said Alice.

"Did you not see Ernestine's note? and did you not read there that I *must* go to the haunted house to night?"

"Yes, but *must*, you know, is a strong word from one who has no authority to speak it."

"But it sometimes appears to me," resumed Clara, that she does speak with an authority I feel bound to obey; so I must visit the haunted house, this evening, sweet Alice, despite the presentiments which I fear will keep you at home."

"No, Clara," replied Alice earnestly; "if you go, I shall go with you."

"Now, Alice," resumed Clara Winslow, apparently with a view of turning the conversation into another channel, "I will tell you what kept me awake last night. I was thinking of my unknown parents, of the mysterious circumstances attendant upon my infancy, and the dreadful uncertainty which consequently exists concerning my present position in society. Whether, indeed, my dear Alice, if the secret of my parentage was known, I should ever be a fit companion for you."

"You speak in enigmas, my sister," replied Alice; "and I know not what you mean."

"Then I will tell you," rejoined Clara. "Whilst I was conversing the other day with your grandfather, he spoke to me in the following manner:

"'Clara,' said he, 'you know that under the promise of secrecy on your part, I informed you some time ago, that when an infant, you was taken by my daughter from the Alms-house in this town, and you were led to suppose that your parents had been inmates of the same establishment. This was not so. Some eighteen years ago, an infant, apparently not more than three weeks old, was found carefully wrapped up in the finest of linen, deposited in a wicker basket near the Alms-house. Soon after the report of this strange occurrence reached the ears of my daughter, she applied to the overseers, and took this infant to bring up as her own. That infant was yourself. Nothing that could lead to the discovery of your unnatural parents has ever been found, except a portrait, and that is by no means satisfactory.'

"Then, sweet Alice, your good old grandfather (Would to heaven I could call him mine!) placed in my trembling hands the miniature of a man of light complexion, and fair, ruddy, and expressive features. It was painted on fair white paper, and enclosed in a black ebony frame, of the most curious and elegant workmanship. On the bottom of the paper was found written the following words:

"'The original of this portrait is this child's father.'

"And now, Alice," continued Clara, as the tears gushed profusely forth, from her beautiful eyes; "I can truly say that since your grandfather told me this story, and showed me the portrait, I became possessed with but one idea, and that is, that through the agency of Ernestine I shall, at some future time, be able to find my long lost parents."

"But what reason have you, dear Clara, to suppose that Ernestine can possibly exercise any agency in this matter?"

"None," replied Clara, smiling through her tears, "except a strong *presentiment* that such will prove to be the fact."

"If you have found a presentiment to counteract mine, I think we had better for the present," said Alice, "drop the subject."

It was dropped forthwith, and not again resumed until they started, hand in hand, just before night-fall, upon a journey of some three miles over a lonesome road, leading towards the haunted house.

The somewhat erratic course of our story takes us back again to Ernestine. After she had finished preparing the principal apartment of her isolated house for the reception of her extraordinary visitor, this singular and remarkable personage descended into a lower room, furnished with the most plain and simple materials, and set herself quietly down to await the first intelligence of her expected guest.

Her patience, however, was not doomed to be very heavily taxed; for she had not been in the position just indicated, more than a quarter of an hour, ere Sambo made his appearance, saying as he did so:—

"De wessel hab come, Missus."

"Come where?"

"Into de cobe, as you calls it."

"Has she come to an anchor?"

"I radder tinks he isn't, cause he's got his sails flyin'," replied Sambo. "I saw one lower de boat though, an I saw Massa, or at least I 'spect 'twas Massa, gittin' into it."

"Then will he soon be here," said Ernestine.

"Dat's a fact," replied Sambo, who was looking through a window at the time, "for dar he is now."

For a moment, a dark shadow crossed the sunlight that streamed through the open window upon the floor, and directly afterwards the tall figure of a man enveloped in the folds of a rich Spanish cloak, entered the room.

Seating himself quite familiarly upon the first chair that came to hand, the stranger, with one quick motion of his hands, divested himself at once of the cloak that enveloped his form, and the hat which covered his head, showing to great advantage, as he did so, the full and fair physical proportions of the far-famed BANDIT OF THE OCEAN.

In stature, this remarkable person was over six feet high, and proportionally stout in figure, which, combined with a peculiarly commanding aspect of countenance, gave to him an appearance at once majestic and impressive. His complexion, rich, dark, and swarthy, plainly indicated his Spanish extraction; and the violence of his passions when roused to action, fairly illustrated the cruel and revengeful spirit of his country.

Leaving out his cloak, which seemed only to be worn as a sort of partial disguise, Fiscara, as he generally chose to be called, was dressed, on this occasion, in a common sailor's garb, the only ornament of which, was a broad and richly chased morocco belt, through one side of which was thrust two small pistols of the most elegant workmanship, whilst the other side contained a long Spanish stiletto.

Such, kind reader, is a brief description of Fiscara, the Bandit of the Ocean, as he appeared at the haunted house, on the time just referred to, and after a short silence, addressed his Mistress thus:—

"You see I have come, madam, according to my promise. Here, however, I can remain but a very short time. When will my precious freight be ready to go on board?"

"I expect Clara will be here shortly after dark," said Ernestine, "and then I shall be ready to accompany her on board of your vessel."

"From which I presume you will soon be ready to return to your kennel," said Fiscara, with a malignant smile.

"No; I intend to go to sea with you," laconically answered the Mistress of the haunted house.

"Then I can briefly inform you that your intentions and mine are very different."

"I am sorry for that," replied Ernestine, "as it will place me under the disagreeable necessity not only of thwarting your wishes with regard to Clara Winslow, but also of placing both yourself and vessel at the mercy of the legal authorities of the place."

"Woman, do you think to frighten me with threats," rejoined Fiscara, as his right hand nervously sought and grasped the hilt of his stiletto,—then after relapsing into a moment's thoughtful silence, he continued:

"Well, let it be as you list; but the consequences be on your own head. Is the chamber ready for my reception?"

"It is," was the brief reply.

"Then will I go to it," and suiting the action to the word, the Bandit of the Ocean retired to what he was wont to term his apartment of state.

Here he remained without interruption till near dark, when he returned

to the lower room, where, finding Ernestine and Sambo together, he addressed the latter as follows:—

"Go out, and see if any one is in the road."

"Yes, Massa," and exit Sambo from the house.

He came back again, a few minutes afterwards, and speaking to Fiscara, said:

"Dar ar two sailor men, Massa, most heah, and dars two young ladies, way off behind de hill, dat seem to be coming heah, too."

"Two?" repeated Ernestine.

"Two!" exclaimed the Pirate, "that is more than I bargained for."

"If you please, sir," interrupted a hard looking old sea dog, who, at that moment entered the house, "here's Phibbs, and I come ashore with the boat, 'oordin' to orders."

"And to await further instructions, which are briefly these," promptly responded Fiscara. "Do you, Jordan (to the first speaker), go behind that clump of bushes that you saw on the inland side of the road, before you entered the house. And do you Phibbs, get behind another clump on the opposite side. Pretty soon you will see two girls coming towards this house. When they get between you both, you will rush from your coverings, each at the same time, seize both these girls firmly, and without harming them, and take them to the boat in the quickest possible time. Do you hear?"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the obedient and unscrupulous seamen, who, thereupon immediately proceeded to their respective stations, without being discovered by Clara and Alice, who, a few minutes afterwards, were seen by Fiscara through the window of the house, approaching hastily towards it.

Another moment of death-like silence elapsed,—then came a loud and appalling shriek,—then a slight struggling was heard among the bushes, and all was still again.

"They are seized,—they are mine,"—exclaimed the Pirate, who had narrowly observed the proceedings of his two subordinates from the window, "and I must needs follow in their wake."

"And I too," said Ernestine, as she prepared to follow Fiscara from the house.

"Hi-yah! and I too," muttered Sambo, who stood ready to lock the door on the outside, as soon as the house was empty.

Headed by the Bandit of the Ocean, this curious trio, hastened to a miniature cove where, sheltered securely from observation by a thick growth of tall brushwood they found the schooner's boat.

On it was first discovered the pale face and insensible form of Alice Carr, rudely supported by Jordan, and then Clara was observed, seated pale and trembling, yet silent, in its stern sheets.

"Give me that girl, and take your oar," thundered forth Fiscara, as he sprang lightly into the boat.

Sambo, quickly followed his master's example, and so did Ernestine.

"Pull for your lives to the schooner," exclaimed Fiscara, as with Alice Carr's still inanimate form resting in his arms he familiarly seated himself beside Clara Winslow.

The well disciplined seamen silently obeyed their captain's order,—the light boat moved swiftly with its precious freight over the transparent waters, and the abduction was complete.

CHAPTER VII.

"As I have loved the shadowy ideal,
So will my love be given to the real."

The Shooting Star at Sea—The Sea-sick Yankee—A Cure—Selwyn and Ernestine—Singular Development.

THE evening upon which the Shooting Star sailed from Boston (which was the one previous to that referred to in our last chapter), was, for the season of the year, remarkably warm and pleasant. Innumerable stars studded Heaven's broad canopy with sparkling diamonds, and the bright moon, which had nearly attained its monthly fulness, shed a serene and silvery radiance over hill, and valley, and the wide blue sea.

As the Shooting Star gracefully swept by the Islands of the Bay, and gained an offing in the open ocean, Captain Selwyn appeared upon the quarter-deck, and after carefully scrutinizing the fair horizon, thus addressed his first officer.

"The wind seems inclined, I think, to blow steadily from the westward."

"Yes sir," answered Mr. Brown, "and it has freshened considerably since we passed the Islands."

"How are you steering now?" asked the captain.

"East by south half south, sir."

"You will keep her so till twelve o'clock, and then if the wind is at the North West, which I am quite sure will be the case, you will luff the schooner up as close to it as possible."

"Ay ay sir! You don't intend to go far out to sea, I perceive."

"Not until I have thoroughly searched the coast from Cape Cod to Cape Ann, in quest of that piratical villain Fiscara. The last Mr. Alcott saw of him, he was no farther off than the other side of the Gulf; and he therefore judged, and reasonably too, I think, that this rover must be bound somewhere here, upon the eastern coast."

"In that case sir," replied the officer, "I think the Shooting Star is bound to spy him out."

"Keep a strict look-out, Mr. Brown, in every direction," rejoined the captain, "and be sure and report to me forthwith the first discovery of a sail, or anything else, which may be made during the night."

"Ay ay, sir," answered the first lieutenant, and then captain Selwyn retired to his cabin.

To speak in sea-parlance, there was, about this time, considerable of a sea on, and the schooner was consequently rendered quite uneasy, as she gallantly fitted like a thing of life, over its broad and wind-beaten surface. But this uneasiness was not alone confined to the vessel, as was clearly evident by the pale looks and despairing appearance, not only of Helen Winchester, who still remained in the forward cabin, but also of our former worthy acquaintance, Ezekiel P. Snodgrass of Belcher town, who was lying in an almost helpless condition, under the weather bulwarks on the fore-castle deck.

When the Shooting Star showed the first symptoms of the peculiar uneasiness above referred to, Zeke first began to feel sea-sick, which, being

observed by the schooner's boatswain, a bluff but good-natured wag of a sailor, that worthy individual, who rejoiced in the euphonious cognomen of Ben Bangs, addressed our friend from Belchertown, as follows:

"I say, old boy, what's the matter, eh! you don't stand straight. Ain't got your sea-legs on, eh!"

"No, but I've got a darnation nice pair of cowhide boots on, though?"

"Why the d—! don't you stand up on 'em then, and not go to pitchin' and tumbling about like a scared gull in a gale of wind. I guess you've been takin' a little drop too much of the 'O be joyful,' eh."

"If any thing," replied Zeke, "I should calcewlate from the way I feel neow, that I'd been partakin' pretty freely of the 'O be miserable,' for I'll be darned tew the utmost limits of darnation if ever I felt so all firedly and completely used up in the hull course of my nateral life."

"You had better sit down," said the considerate boatswain, as poor Zeke, nearly lost his balance, "afore you fall."

"I guess I better had," answered Zeke, as he immediately placed himself in the position indicated.

"Neow, old boy," said the boatswain, as he seated himself familiarly beside our Yankee friend, "I'll jest tell you what's the matter."

"Will you? so dew, I'm much obleeged. What in thunder is it?"

"Why you're getting squeamish."

"What is't?"

"Squeamish, that is sea-sick," answered the boatswain.

"Showw, dew tell if I—Wall, I thought I was kinder gettin some kind of sick, and I calculate if I keep on gittin, as I have since I begun, I shall darned soon arrive at the pint of death."

"I think if the case was mine," resumed the boatswain, "I should rather arrive at a pint of Connecticut whiskey. Keep up a good heart though, and you'll be better afore mornin'."

"If you call bein' dead better," responded Zeke, in a tone of ludicrous despondency, "I calculate I shall."

"Nobody never died with sea sickness, that ever I knowed of," said the boatswain, "so cheer up old boy."

"I should like tew know heow in thunder I'm goin' tew dew that, when I'm a dyin'."

"But you aint a dyin'," replied Mr. Bangs.

"Git eout, I tell yew I am. Why my head feels, as though it was chock full of tarnation great spiders, and every one on 'em sick to their stum-macks, and my stummack feels like a steam-ingine, with the steam up to the highest notch, and no chance to let it off. Take me off deown stairs, dew, and let me die in peace."

"You'll get better sooner," replied the sympathizing boatswain, "if you stop on deck in the air."

"Better, be darned. I tell you I shan't be a tarnal bit better if I stay here tew all etarnity. Oh dear, I shouldn't ever have thought of goin' to sea, if it hadn't been for Jerewshee Williams."

"Rooshy what? who's he?" inquired the boatswain.

"Wall, she aint a he at all, I calcewlate," replied Ezekiel faintly. "She's a female critter, if I'm any judge of the ginyevine article. Oh, she was the slickest, the slyest, the fastest, the prettiest, the freshest, the beautifullest, the darndest, and the confoundedest critter in all Belchertown."

"What had she to do with you goin' to sea," asked Bangs.

"O Lord, don't ask me!" ejaculated Zeke, who was now growing sicker every moment, it's a darned long story, but if I live tew—tew grow up, I'll tell you all about it. Oh dear, what on earth shall I dew."

"As you seem to be a pretty clever chap, I'll tell you," answered the boatswain.

"Dew then, quick, afore I'm a past hearin'," impatiently replied our sea-sick yankee.

"Well then," resumed the boatswain, "I'll jest tell you. I'll go to the pork barrel, get a good rasher of fat pork, reeve a lanyard through one end of it, cover it over thick with molasses, and then bring it to you."

"What for," ejaculated Zeke.

"Why to swaller, what d'ye think."

Bangs was not obliged to go for the pork, as, ere he had spoken his last word, the safety valve of Zeke's steam engine flew open, and the steam, as if rejoicing in its sudden escape, and as if it also recognized the unlucky boatswain as its cause, showered itself down upon his bulky person in most unpleasant profusion.

At first the worthy boatswain seemed inclined to swear oaths most abominable to ears polite, but after a minute's silent consideration, he divested his clothes of the surplus of Zeke's steam, as well as he could, and good naturedly said:—

"Blast my top-gallant eye-brows, if I don't think I can cure sea-sickness quicker than any man-of-war surgeon that ever closed a commodore. Feel better now, don't you old boy?"

This last clause of Bangs's speech, was addressed to poor Zeke, who thus answered:—

"Darned little, if any," replied our sea-sick Yankee, "I don't think I feel quite so *heavy* though, as I did."

"Afore you bust your biler and scalt my new duck trowsers with the steam," interrupted Bangs. "Never mind, I don't keer a great sight for the trowsers, seein's the ship's good for more duck, and these rough flippers of mine are good for tailerin'. I think you had better go below now, and turn in, old boy, and I'll venture to say, that when you turn out to-morrow mornin', the very first thing you'll look arter, will be a piece of salt junk, that'll weigh about eight or ten pounds, for your breakfast. Come, try to stand up a little, and I'll try and help you down the fore scuttle."

After trying pretty hard, our Yankee friend discovered he could stand much better than he had previously expected, and with the boatswain's efficient help, he soon managed to get below, where he immediately turned into his berth, and soon fell into a deep and heavy sleep.

Meanwhile, Captain Selwyn having entered his main cabin, after delivering to his first officer the final orders of the night, called to his side an interesting little negro girl, whom he had previously bought out of slavery in the West Indies, and thus addressed her:—

"Well, Rosa, how is the white lady in the forward cabin?"

"Bery sick, Massa, I guesses," answered Rosa, "but she doesn't say so."

"Then how do you know she is sick?"

"Kase dar aint no red in her cheeks, same as dar was when she fust come in the wessel," said Rosa.

"Has she gone to bed?"

"She hab gone to bed, Massa, but I doesn't tink she'll rest a good deal."

"Why not?"

"Kase she's sick and pale, and cries sometimes, and says she's glad and she's sorry."

"About what," inquired the Captain.

"Well, she doesn't say dat, Massa," replied Rosa.

"Go to her, then," resumed the Captain, "and see that you serve her faithfully so long as she remains here."

"Yis, Massa," replied Rosa, who was about leaving the main cabin, when her progress was arrested by the appearance of Helen herself, who, as she entered the captain's presence with a firm step, spoke to him, thus:—

"If you are at liberty, kind sir, I would like to hold some private conversation with you."

"Be seated, Miss, and proceed at your convenience," answered the captain. "You look pale, are you sea-sick?"

"No, sir," rejoined Helen; "that is, I am not much so. Occasionally during the evening I have been slightly oppressed by nausea, but as I have before been upon the ocean, I do not fear an increase of its effects. The paleness you speak of is undoubtedly caused by the distressed state of my mind, occasioned by the strange and exciting scenes through which I have been lately called to pass. It is in order to explain these scenes I have sought this early interview."

"Perhaps," suggested Selwyn, "you had better postpone this explanation until your health is better, and the state of your mind more composed and calm."

"My mind cannot be more composed, until it is relieved of at least one of the many weights that have nearly crushed it out of earthly existence. I know," she continued, speaking in the same hurried and yet singularly impressive manner that had distinguished her first conversation with the Privateer Captain, "that the night waxes late, that I am intruding my sorrows upon that portion of your time that should be allotted to rest; and I know, also, that the delicacy natural to my sex requires, nay, compels me to take this, the first opportunity that offers, to explain what I know must now appear to you, as a very singular, unaccountable, and suspicious position for a female like myself to have so unceremoniously assumed."

"I have as yet thought but very little about it, as in fact I have had no opportunity to do so," replied the Captain, as Helen paused and looked earnestly upon him.

"I am glad of it," resumed Helen, "although this absence of thought concerning me, on your part, furnishes another strong ground for immediate explanation. This includes the relation of my previous history, which shall be as brief as may be consistent with its truth. Shall I relate it now?"

"If you please," answered Selwyn, "who began to feel a peculiar and undefinable interest in the fair being who had so singularly thrown herself upon his protection."

Having thus gained access to the captain's willing ear, Helen thus proceeded:—

"Eighteen years ago, I was born in the city of Havana, on the Island of Cuba. My mother was a native of that place, but my father was an Englishman, whose business rendered it necessary that he should reside in Havana, where its principal branch had become permanently located. My misfortunes commenced with the death of my mother, which occurred before I had reached the sixth year of my age. By this providential dispensation I was left to the care of my father, who, being deeply immersed in the cares of his extensive business, considered himself inadequate to fulfil the delicate duty thus committed to his sole charge, and finally concluded to send me to Boston, there to be educated under the supervision of his sister, who was the wife of a rich merchant, named Scoville.

"During the first six years of my residence in this uncle's family, I was treated as kindly as if I had been their own child, both by Mr. and Mrs. Scoville, who spared neither pains nor expenses in their efforts to make me an excellent and accomplished scholar; and I was progressing rapidly in my studies, and my mind, which was naturally of a strong and romantic nature, was just beginning to develope its energies, under the tuition of the best masters, when I received the sad tidings of my father's death.

"As I was his only child, and of course his heir, I was in the course of a few weeks duly notified by his attorney, that my immediate presence was required in Havana; and I was without loss of time sent thither in one of my uncle's vessels. Soon after my arrival in this queen City of the Antilles, I took up my abode with an elderly Spanish lady, a former friend of my father's, whose house was often resorted to by English and American sea-captains, as a convenient boarding place whilst they remained in port.

"With this lady I remained until I reached the sixteenth year of my age, when, as I was one day walking down one of the quays, as was my usual custom, my foot slipped as I stood upon its edge, gazing out upon the waters of the harbor, and losing my balance I fell into the sea. A stranger jumped into the water immediately afterwards, and through his generous exertions, I was at length rescued from a watery grave. Soon as I found myself safe landed upon the quay, my first impulse was to thank my strange deliverer for the noble and successful effort he had made in my behalf. As I looked eagerly around for the purpose of carrying my grateful resolutions into effect, I discovered that the object of my thanks had disappeared, and I learned from a person standing by, that he had hastily left the wharf, as soon as he was well assured of my safety.

"Immediately after I reached the place of my residence, I caused every possible means to be put in requisition for his discovery, but in vain. Every effort proved fruitless, and I was therefore obliged to keep the almost overpowering feelings of gratitude his heroic action had called forth, securely locked within the deepest recess of my young and passionate heart. There, strange as it may seem, they remained increasing in intensity, and growing in strength, until at length they ripened into a deep, fervent, and enduring love, for that mysterious and unknown one, who had been at once their object and their cause.

"Oh, sir, you cannot imagine the joyous delight, the inexpressible pleasure I have since experienced, in the picturing to myself, a form and features, and indeed a whole physical resemblance, consistent with the noble nature of this brave unknown, which, I could in secret, cherish, worship and adore."

Taking advantage of an abrupt pause, which Helen chose to make at this interesting point of her simple narrative, Selwyn said—

"You have undoubtedly invested this ideal phantom of your imagination with many more real graces, and a much higher degree of personal beauty, than any *reality* can possibly reach."

"If ever I am fortunate enough to discover the reality, I can and will so shroud it with my ideal, as to destroy all its defects, or at least hide them for ever, from my loving eyes."

"I fear you trust too much to your imagination in the present instance," replied Selwyn. "But in order to ascertain whether or not my fears are correct, I must make you acquainted with a single, but important fact."

"Any fact or facts which you may see fit to make known to me," answered Helen, "will of course be most gratefully listened to by the unfortunate being now in your presence."

"In that case," answered Selwyn, and his voice trembled with ill-repressed emotion, "I will merely say, that the humble individual who saved you from a watery grave when you fell off the quay, in Havana, some three or four years ago, was no other than ROBERT SELWYN, commander of this vessel, and at present a very willing listener to the voice of Helen Winchester!"

Upon hearing this strange and unexpected announcement, Helen, almost entirely overwhelmed with the natural confusion caused by the great variety of emotions which agitated her troubled bosom, rose from her seat, and,

without daring to trust her eyes in the direction of Selwyn's countenance, said—

"My preserver must excuse my further extension of the present visit."

"Without a prospect of its being renewed again, the first favorable opportunity?" inquired the Captain.

"If you say so, yes."

"But if I do not?"

"Then let it be as you say," faintly responded Helen, who, thereupon, followed by Rosa, retired without loss of time to her state-room.

Soon after, the captain followed his fair friend's example, and dreamed, as he slept that night, of love, and Helen Winchester.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Heading to land a sail appears in sight."

Sail O!—The Flying Fox—The Yankee Waked up—The Skirmish—The Wounded Captain—The Watcher.

ABOUT one o'clock next morning, Captain Selwyn was suddenly awakened from his pleasant dreams by the voice of his first officer, speaking in low but distinct tones, the following words:

"Strange sail in sight sir, on our weather bow."

"Ah, what is she."

"Appears to be a small top-sail schooner sir."

"How does our vessel head?" asked the captain of the Privateer, as he turned out of his berth, and hastily dressed himself.

"North-north-east, sir."

"How is the strange schooner heading?"

"She appears to be coming down directly upon us," replied Brown.

"Then I must go on deck, and see what she looks like," said Selwyn, who, followed closely by his first officer, immediately left the cabin.

On reaching his quarter-deck, Selwyn, after taking a deliberate survey of the approaching stranger, through his night-glass, turned to Brown and said,

"Muster all hands with as little noise as possible, and clear ship for action. Yonder vessel is built after our exact model, and I feel convinced that she is the Piratical craft we are in search of, and is commanded by the celebrated Bandit of the Ocean."

"Mr. Bangs," said the first lieutenant of the Shooting Star, to the boatswain, who happened to be at the time upon the main-deck, "rouse all hands, with as little noise as possible, and report to me as soon as they are on deck."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the boatswain, who thereupon proceeded to the execution of his superior's order, with the quickest despatch.

In the meantime, Selwyn had returned to the cabin, and aroused Mr. midshipman Alcott from his quiet slumbers, who as he joined the captain hastily inquired, if there was anything in sight.

"Nothing but a schooner," replied Selwyn, "which I am persuaded is no other than the Flying Fox, commanded by a no less celebrated personage than our mutual friend Fiscara, the Bandit of the Ocean."

"Then it is, indeed, time for me to be up and doing," resumed the young midshipman, who thereupon signified his readiness to go immediately upon deck, and assume the duties of the second lieutenant, who was still confined by sickness to his state-room.

After expressing his glad acceptance of the aid thus proffered, Selwyn and his new made officer repaired to the deck, where the crew of the schooner, found to have been already mustered, each man being at his particular station, quietly awaiting such farther orders, as their officer might, from time to time, feel disposed to give.

As soon as word was passed into the fore-castle, that all hands were

wanted upon deck to clear ship for action, an old salt, who was usually known among his shipmates as Bill Bowline, happened, in the course of his progress towards the deck, to pass the berth of our Yankee friend, who was at that time snoring away most lustily.

"I say, old boy," said Bill, as he passed, and gave poor Zeke a violent shake, "what are yer about, layin' here and makin' noise enough to frighten the captain's geese overboard for, when all hands are called to fight the English, or the Devil, I don't know which, and in fact I don't keer."

"Fight, hey," exclaimed our honest Yankee, as he tumbled about half asleep out of his berth; "dew yew want tew fight?" he continued, as he opened his eyes upon the stout form of Bill Bowline; "if yew dew, jest wait till I wake up, and if I dont give yew one of the confoundest lickins ever yew heern tell of, my name aint Zeke Snodsgross."

"I dont want you to fight me," replied Bowline, with a good natured laugh; "but the captain wants you to come on deck, and help to fight the English."

"Oh, the darned Brittaners have come, have they?" rejoined Zeke.

"I expect somebody's come," answered Bowline, "or all hands wouldn't be roused out to beat em off."

"I only hope it's the Brittaners that have come," continued Zeke, "because I feel jest as though I could fight them 'ere fellers with a darnation good relish."

"You don't feel quite so sea-sick now, as you did when you turned in last night, do you?" interrogated Bowline.

"Wall, no," replied Zeke, who was now busily engaged in putting on his clothes, "I don't exactly feel sick, but I feel dreadful weak, and most confoundedly hungry. I say yew, I don't spose a feller could git a chance tew pick up a little snack of sunthin' tew eat, nor nothin' nor no heow, now, could he!"

"You'd better hurry upon deck, or the boatswain will find a chance to pick you up with the cat-o-nine-tails," suggested Bowline.

"Cat-o-what-tails?" inquired our Yankee, who was totally ignorant of the nature of the instrument in question.

"Nine tails," answered Bowline. "Don't you know what that 'ere is?"

"Can't say for sartin that I dew," responded Zeke. "I've heern of cats with nine lives, but I'll be darned if ever I heerd of one with nine tails before. Must be a sea-cat I guess."

"Blast my eyes, then, if you ain't guessed right, the first time," replied Bowline, "it is a sea-cat, and one that bites devilish hard too, sometimes."

"Wall, I dont care how hard a cat bites," said the Yankee, "if she don't claw."

"But this sea-cat bites and claws, both," replied Bowline.

"Bad as some wimmen, I've heerd on," continued Zeke, who with his companion was the next moment startled by the hoarse voice of the boatswain, who called out, down the gangway—

"Any idlers there below?"

"No, sir," shouted Zeke, as though he felt somewhat nettled at Bangs's broad insinuation.

"Hallo! is that you, old Belchertown," resumed the boatswain?

"Wall, I aint quite sartin whether it is me or somebody else. I don't raily think I've been exactly sartin of anything, since I left, boatswain."

"If you aint any better than you was when you turned in," said Bangs, "you had better, I think, stay where you are."

"Shaw, you don't say so though, dew you," muttered our shrewd Yankee. "Want me tew stay down here, and be killed by the Brittaners, without a chance of killin' any on 'em back agin, hey? No yew don't."

So saying, Zeke, without further delay, made the best of his way on deck,

whither Bowline, after lagging behind a little, in order, as he expressed it, to shy clear of the boatswain, followed him.

It had become, by this time, clearly evident that the commander of the strange schooner intended to speak the Shooting Star, which, in strict accordance with Selwyn's orders, had been hove to, as soon as the crew were mustered; and now lay uneasily upon the water, under a fore-sail and jib, silently awaiting the stranger's approach.

"Looks jest like sisters, don't they?" said Bowline to one of his shipmates, as the beautiful schooner, whose graceful hull was now in full sight, came curvetting over the waves, like a war-horse eager for the fiery fray.

"Yes," replied Bill's shipmate, "but I don't think they'll act much like 'em."

Here the conversation between the two seamen was suddenly interrupted by the sound of a strange voice from the deck of the approaching vessel, from whose tones, as they rose loud and clear above the wild moaning of the freshening night-wind, the following words were readily distinguished:

"What schooner is that?"

"The privateer schooner Shooting Star," was the prompt reply.

"Where are you bound?"

"On a cruise for prizes."

"Who commands that vessel?"

"Robert Selwyn."

This answer was immediately followed by an interrogatory from Selwyn, similar to the first received from the stranger.

"What schooner is that?"

"The clipper schooner Flying Fox!"

"Who commands her?"

"FOSCARA, the Bandit of the Ocean."

"Then, in virtue of my commission, I order you to heave to, and send a boat with your papers on board the Shooting Star, forthwith."

The only answer received to this peremptory summons, was a loud unearthly laugh, or rather yell, which seemed to proceed from the combined voices of at least a hundred men. "He don't seem inclined, sir," observed Mr. Brown, to his superior officer, as the Flying Fox, having ran across the stern of the Shooting Star, luffed up in the wind directly under that vessel's lee "to take any notice of your commission or yourself either."

"Then I will endeavour to make him," promptly replied the Captain of the Privateer. "Is the brass gun amidships all ready to fire?"

"Ay, ay sir," answered the lieutenant.

On hearing this, Selwyn jumped from the quarter-deck, and after pointing the long brass gun amidships, with his own hand, in the direction he thought well calculated to do material damage to his enemy, he stepped back and exclaimed

"Fire!"

This was instantly followed by a bright flash and sharp report; then for a moment all was silent—and then came again the sound of the same discordant and derisive laugh that had so contemptuously answered Selwyn's previous summons.

"We've shot away his main-sail, at any rate," observed the first lieutenant of the Shooting Star, as soon as the smoke from the long gun had passed over the strange vessel, and left her again in full view of her brave antagonist.

"Something must have been in my right eye, then," answered Selwyn, "for I aimed at the mast."

"Shall we fire our larboard broadside, sir?" resumed the worthy lieutenant

"Not just yet," replied Selwyn. "Wait a little, till we see what the Pirate is going to do."

Scarcely had Selwyn uttered these words, ere a shot from the Flying Fox, struck the bulwarks of his vessel, scattering huge splinters in every direction, as it whizzed swiftly across the deck of the Shooting Star, and finally fell into the water a long distance off her weather beam.

One of these splinters struck Selwyn in the side, who, as he staggered and fell back under the crushing weight of the blow, faintly exclaimed:—

"Brown, I am hurt. Let me be taken directly below, and do not let the men know of my misfortune, if you can possibly help it. If that fellow to leeward seems still inclined to fight, give him enough of it; and if he chooses to run away, chase him as far as you think prudent. I believe I am fainting."

By this time the wounded captain was closely surrounded by his officers, two of whom, Alcott and the boatswain, at a sign from the first lieutenant, took Selwyn in their arms and bore him to the main cabin, where the surgeon, after having carefully examined his wound, addressed them thus:—

"Gentlemen, this seems to be at present a very serious case. Our captain's wound is both deep and dangerous, but —"

Here the surgeon was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Helen Winchester, who, as she entered the apartment, wildly exclaimed:—

"Is he dead, is he dead!"

"No, miss," replied the surgeon; "but he is severely wounded, and lies at present in a great deal of danger; but I hope, that with great attention and careful nursing, he may be possibly again restored to health."

"I will take the responsibility of his nursing upon myself," replied Helen, "as in common gratitude, I should. Every possible effort will I put forth in his behalf, and a constant and patient watcher will I be over his couch of weariness and pain."

"Hush! who's there? who speaks?" murmured Selwyn, as he opened his eyes, and glared about him with a vacant stare. "I thought I heard an angel's voice. Get out your grapnels; prepare to board. Mind your helm, there; steady, off a little there, so. Let go the halyards, and let the main-sail come down. Gibe over the main-boom. Come to me, Helen, my more than sister. Oh, God—my head—my head."

"He is delirious," said the surgeon, as the captain sank back exhausted upon his bed; "and I think, miss, your presence disturbs him. If you will retire whilst I adjust his bandages, I will let you know when he is more calm."

With this assurance, Helen felt obliged to repair to her state-room, on reaching which, she threw herself without undressing, upon her couch, and there remained listening eagerly for the worthy surgeon's first report from the apartment of the wounded captain.

Immediately after Selwyn was conveyed below, Mr. Brown discovered to his great surprise, that the crew of the Flying Fox had, with almost incredible activity, unbent the remnant of the old, and bent a new mainsail, and that the vessel was now going off in most gallant style, dead before the wind.

Turning to Alcott, who at that moment came out of the cabin, the first-lieutenant said:

"That confounded Pirate is either better acquainted with the depth of the water in these parts than I am, or else he intends to run his vessel aground; I don't know which."

"Perhaps," suggested Alcott, "she draws a foot or two less water, and is running off towards the land for the purpose of drawing us into a snare."

"Then, I suppose, you do not think it safe to follow her?"

"With my experience of the coast in this vicinity, I should, if called upon, feel constrained to advise a different course."

"I agree with you in that exactly," replied Brown, who thereupon ordered the mainsail to be set, had the schooner luffed up close to the wind on the westerly tack (the wind being north-west at the time), directed the watches to be reset, and then went below, leaving the deck in charge of Mr. midshipman Alcott.

After listening for a long time without hearing anything from either the doctor or his patient, Helen left her state-room, and entering the main cabin, just as the surgeon was about to leave it, she said:

"How is he now?"

"Sleeping," replied the surgeon, in a low whisper.

"Then will I watch with him through the remainder of the night," replied Helen.

Feeling that with such a watcher his patient would be in good hands, the surgeon, after giving the necessary directions to be observed, in case the captain should wake during his absence, left the cabin, whilst Helen Winchester seated herself beside the sufferer's couch, and gazed upon his noble and handsome features, until her heart was filled with love, as were her eyes with bitter tears.

CHAPTER IX.

"Revenge was in her countenance,
And sorrow in her heart."

La Santa Maria again—Thrilling Interview between Lord Warton and Loretta—A Boat from Shore—The Captain and the Owner—A Yacht Excursion.

As every river has its smaller streams, to which it is indebted for the substance of its deep and ever-flowing channel, so, our humble story has its collateral branches, each of which, as it tends to subserve the interest of the whole, must be brought forward and elucidated as fast as may be consistent with the general progress of this romance, and its principal incidents.

With this apologetic or rather explanatory paragraph, we proceed to call the reader's attention to the Spanish brig *La Santa Maria*, which (as will be found by recurring to the close of our third chapter) arrived in Boston harbor on the same evening that the *Shooting Star* sailed upon her second cruise for prizes.

Soon after the brig's anchor was down, and her sails furled, Montano repaired to the main-cabin, where, finding Lord Warton busily engaged in getting ready to leave the vessel, he addressed him thus:

"Does your wife know that we have arrived in port, my Lord?"

"Montano," answered Warton, quite earnestly, "if you wish to be considered among the number of my friends, do not longer speak of *her* as my wife."

"Well, then," resumed Montano, "will you allow me to ask if *she* knows that our vessel is now in port?"

"If she does, the knowledge has not been obtained from me, for I have not seen Loretta since you and I last conversed together."

"Then, you see her now!" exclaimed a female, who at that moment entered Warton's presence from an adjoining state-room.

This was Loretta, the disgraced—the sorrowing—the ruined victim of Warton's unhallowed and vicious passions.

At the time of her introduction to the notice of our readers, this unfortunate young lady was about twenty years of age, and though slim and not very tall in form, was, as far as features were concerned, very beautiful. Being of Spanish extraction, her complexion was dark, and her hair black as the wing of the raven, whilst her eyes were large, dark, lustrous, and almost voluptuously handsome. Her passions were almost unconquerably strong, and her nature, when fairly roused to serious action, was at once proud, enduring and revengeful.

To the exclamation uttered by this fair yet injured being, as she entered his lordship's presence, that worthy individual deigned to return the following answer:—

"Yes, I do see you now, Loretta, but I must beg leave to add, not very willingly."

"You need not tell me that," replied Loretta, "for it is nothing new. For a week or more, you have not only appeared to shun my presence, but you have also seen fit to treat me with neglect and cool contempt whenever we have met. Of this conduct, I now require an explicit explanation."

"Then, allow me to say," sneeringly replied Warton, "that you had better require it of some one else, as I do not choose to explain either my conduct, or the motives which prompted it, to any living person."

As these cool and contemptuous words reached Loretta's ears, a deathly pallor overspread her beautiful countenance; she pressed her fair hand for a moment convulsively against her heaving bosom, then with a quick, light spring, she darted towards her faithless betrayer; a stiletto gleamed for a moment in the flickering light, upheld nervously in the air, by the hand of an injured heart, and then, just as the fatal blow, prompted by woman's revenge, was about to descend with swift velocity to the betrayer's heart, Montano seized from behind the fair girl's arms in his iron grasp, drew her back from her fell purpose, as though she were a mere infant, and dashed her violently to the floor, saying as he did so:

"Spanish all over—love one minute, and revenge the next; such is our national motto."

"Which makes it somewhat dangerous for a cool-blooded Englishman to fall in love with your country's fair and bewitching innamoratas," said Warton, as he hastily stooped and picked up the stiletto, which had dropped from Loretta's hand as she fell to the floor, where she was now lying in a state of insensibility.

"You have known, my Lord," answered Montano, "how a Spanish girl can love, and I fear the remaining part of your life will be spent in learning how she can also hate."

"She must be henceforth kept out of my way," muttered Warton, speaking as if in soliloquy.

"Or put out of it! which shall it be, my lord?" whispered Montano.

"I counsel no violence," resumed Warton, "and yet I scarcely see how such extremity can, under the circumstances, be avoided."

"Leave all to me, my Lord, and all will yet be well. That I bear no love towards this fair but haughty countrywoman of mine, you know full well, for she has always treated me with proud contempt and bitter contumely, which at length has stirred up my revengeful nature to a pitch that requires full satisfaction."

"Which I will leave you to obtain in the best manner you can," replied Warton, who thereupon left the cabin, and shortly afterwards the vessel also.

Soon after his Lordship had thus abruptly taken his departure, Montano repaired to a small apartment between the brig's forward-cabin and steerage, where he found a young Irish girl, whom Loretta had accidentally fallen in with before she left Havana, and had employed as an appropriate attendant during her voyage to Boston.

By means of trifling presents and uniform good treatment on the passage, Montano had so far ingratiated himself into poor Bridget's confidence, as to feel well-assured that in any affair in which he might be concerned, she would prove his fast and faithful friend, even if such an affair should appear likely to compromise the honor, or even the life, of her young and unfortunate mistress.

On entering the presence of this very respectable daughter of the Emerald Isle, Montano said:—

"Bridget, I am sorry to tell you that your mistress is crazy!"

"Bedad, sir," replied Bridget, "and I have been thinkin' that same for more nor a fortnight back."

"What caused you to think so?" inquired Montano.

"Her actions and her spache, both," rejoined Bridget.

"How has she acted?"

"Faith, an' its well I know," resumed Bridget, "but I don't know

how to tell it to yez. Sometimes, within a fortnight, my young lady (Heaven rest her) has cried and laughed, sung and prayed, talked to no livin' soul but herself, hour after hour, laid awake night after night, and acted jist for all the world like a crazy person entirely."

"She is crazy, sure enough," continued Montano, "and her insanity has at last assumed a very dangerous aspect. Only a few moments ago, she endeavored to kill both me and her husband."

"Is it the truth yer spakin' now, or is it only jokin' you are?" replied Bridget.

"It is true as I am a sinner," answered Montano.

"Thin, ov coorse, it *must* be thtrue," resumed Bridget. "O, the poor crathur. An' did yer say she'd kilt her husband?"

"No, only that she tried."

"An' bad luck to him, the divil a care would I care, if she had kilt him, clane out."

"Why, don't you like him?"

"Yis," answered Bridget, sarcastically; "I likes him as the divil loves good angels—as a pig likes to go hungry, or as a cat loves a rat. Bad luck to him; an' if it wasn't for the law, I'd a kilt him myself long ago. Och, the murtherin' villain, may the curse of the twelve motherless pigs follow him to the end of the world—amen."

"I see very plainly," rejoined Montano, "that you like this upstart English lord pretty near as well as I do. Now, mark me; we must both, for the present, at least, keep our dislike, or hatred, if you will, a secret from its object. You must now go to your mistress. You will find her in the main cabin, where I left her as I came hither, in a state of insensibility. Revive her as soon as you can; take her to her state-room, and give her a strong draught of laudanum,—not enough to hurt her, but a quantity sufficient to make her sleep."

After listening earnestly to these directions, and promising faithfully to execute them, Bridget repaired immediately to the main-cabin, and Montano went upon deck.

Here his attention was soon arrested by a report from one of the foremast hands, of the following tenor:

"There's a boat alongside, sir!"

"Very well; throw a rope to its crew," replied Montano.

"I have already done so, sir," rejoined the seaman.

"And here comes the coxswain, I suppose," said Montano, as a stout, portly-looking gentleman came puffing and blowing upon the quarter-deck.

"Where's the captain, sir?" was the first query propounded by this worthy personage to the mate of La Santa Maria.

"Below," was the laconic reply.

"Sick, is he, sir?"

"Not sick, but sleeping," answered Montano.

"Then, sir, I wish you would be so good as to wake him up, sir, and tell him that I wish to see him, sir."

"Who the d—l is *he*?" asked Montano, not at all liking the supercilious and arrogant manner in which the stranger spoke.

"I, I am Mr. Scoville, sir, the owner, sir, of this vessel and her cargo, sir."

On hearing this, the first officer of La Santa Maria, called the steward, and as that worthy official appeared upon deck, in the shape of a withered and cadaverous-looking Portuguese, accosted him as follows:

"Is the captain awake?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell him to hurry on deck then, for the owner of the vessel is here, and wishes to see him."

"I can see him below, as well as here, sir," interposed the merchant.

"Very well, go below then, and see him," replied Montano, as he abruptly left the quarter-deck, and walked forward.

Preceded by the withered, and cadaverous looking steward, Scoville entered the main cabin, where he was soon joined by the worthy Captain Herringbone, who, although he had awoke but a short time before perfectly sober, had managed by dint of a pot or two of his favorite porter, to be in, what he called, a very comfortable state, or what others would term, nearly half-seas over.

"Captain," said Mr. Scoville, as soon as the worthy commander had seated himself upon the transom, "I am glad to find that you have at length arrived here, safely."

"So am I," bluffly replied Herringbone; "and I am very glad to find you well and hearty."

"Thank God," replied the merchant, with great emphasis, "I am well and hearty, and mad, too, sir."

"Mad, what about?" inquired Herringbone.

"About my niece sir, Helen Winchester. Where is Lord Warton?"

"Gone a-shore, I believe sir."

"Yes, sir," resumed Scoville, "he has gone on shore, sir, to see his intended wife, sir, but he is doomed to be disappointed, for she's gone sir,"

"Gone where? Run away?"

"No sir, she has sailed away."

"Ah, where bound?"

"To the devil sir, for all that I know," replied Scoville; "but I'll catch the rascal sir, or you shall, if it costs me ten thousand dollars."

"Who did she go with, and how did she go?" inquired the captain.

"Listen, and I will tell you all about it sir," replied the excited merchant.

"I wanted this niece of mine, to marry Lord Warton sir, and I told her so. Fond of being contrary, like the rest of her sex, she told me that she neither could, nor would marry the young nobleman. Then I told her, without any farther ifs and ands, that she both must, and should. Soon as she heard this, she cried, and I stormed; then she swooned, and I swore: and finally the vixen went into the worst kind of hysterics. After this, she seemed to get more calm, but the very first opportunity that offered, she left my house, and going on board that confounded privateer vessel, called the Shooting Star, threw herself immediately upon the protection of the schooner's captain. Soon as I found this out, I went directly to the vessel after my renegade niece, but the captain drove me away, and last night sailed out of the harbor, taking my niece, Helen Winchester, in his company. There sir, what do you think of that?"

"I think, if I was in your place, and could," replied Herringbone, "I should follow her."

"That is what I resolved you should do, the moment I heard of your arrival. My plan is this. My pleasure yacht, the fast-sailing little Alice, you know her well, is now lying at the foot of Long-wharf, all ready for sea. There are now on board of her, four stout and good sailors, who are only waiting for a competent commander, to take them and the vessel out to sea. Now, I wish you to take immediate command of the Alice, and set directly out in quest of the villain, who has kidnapped my niece. Judging from the hurry in which he went away, I am of opinion that this privateer does not mean to go far out to sea, but only intends to repair to some sea-port on the coast, there perhaps to land this renegade niece of mine. What do you think of that sir? Are you willing to go, or not?"

"If it will oblige you any, I will certainly go," replied the captain of the *La Santa Maria*,—but I am inclined to think it will prove a wild goose chase after all."

"Never mind, so long as the gander is well paid," was the characteristic reply. "Now sir, the quicker you go, the better. Come, I will take you to your new vessel in my boat."

After signifying his acceptance of this invitation, Captain Herringbone drank a social glass of wine with his mercantile companion, and then followed him to his boat, which was in waiting along-side the brig, and a short time afterwards found himself on the favorite deck of the yacht *Alice*, which, under his efficient orders was soon underweigh, and quickly proceeded in gallant and graceful style to sail out of the harbor, and along the coast, in quest of the *Shooting Star* and *Helen Winchester*.

CHAPTER X.

Interview between Clara Winslow and the Bandit of the Ocean—Interruption—Clara, Alice, and Ernestine—A Sudden Alarm.

THAT men, generally speaking, possess more physical courage than women is a truism we shall not attempt to deny, although in justice to the opposite sex, we feel constrained to assert that in moral fortitude (a far higher grade of courage, in our estimation, than the utmost extent of mere physical daring) and patient endurance of all the various and inevitable ills to which both alike are subject, women are the superiors of their self-styled lords and masters. We speak of this as being generally the case, though we cheerfully admit that there are many exceptions.

Thus (as the reader will find by recurring to the close of our 6th chapter), the gentle and timid Alice Carr, when seized by the ruffians placed in ambush by Foscara for that purpose, shrieked, and swooned away, whilst her more courageous companion, seeming to perceive at a single glance, that resistance of any kind would, under the then existing circumstances, be worse than useless, resolved, to make an almost supernatural effort to stifle the strong feelings of fear and dread naturally enough caused by their sudden abduction, and to look out, as calmly as possible, for any chance of escape, that a merciful providence, as she fondly hoped, might throw in the way of herself and her fair companion.

In this Clara so far succeeded, as to appear comparatively calm, and be able to afford her more timid companion such assistance, in her utter helplessness, as the circumstances permitted.

Immediately after she found herself in the power of Foscara's ruffianly follower, Clara addressed him who held the insensate form of Alice in his brawny arms as follows:

"What has that poor innocent done, that she should be thus seized and insulted?"

"Can't say Miss," replied Jordan, who happened to be the individual thus appealed to—"nothin' about it, only that we are acting under our captain's orders."

"Did he order you to take our lives?"

"No, Miss," answered Jordan, gruffly, but with as much respect as he was capable of assuming; "but he told us to take you to our boat, and that is just all we are going to do."

"Allow me, then, to take in my own arms the form of my dead sister."

"No, Miss, I can't allow you to do any such thing; because, in the first place, we are in a great hurry, and in the next, why, this young lady's weight will be far more than you can bear. I'll hold her quite easy, although it is a kind of business I ain't much used to."

So saying, Jordan led the way to the boat followed closely by Clara Winslow, and his shipmate, who kept closely behind the latter in order to impede any attempt she might make to escape; and nothing further passed between the fair girls and their captors, until they reached the deck of the Piratical Schooner Flying Fox, and Clara found herself in the presence of the celebrated Bandit of the Ocean.

At a silent yet significant signal from Foscara, Ernestine took the still inanimate form of Alice Carr from Jordan's arms, and bore it off into the

schooner's cabin. Clara was about to follow when her progress was suddenly arrested by the Pirate Captain, who accosted her thus—

"You need not fear for your companion, Miss—she is in good hands."

"She is *not* in good hands, sir," answered Clara, firmly; "and I must follow her. She is dearer to me than a sister; and where she goes I must and will go also."

As Clara spoke these words, all fear seemed for the moment to have left her bosom, for her bright eyes kindled, and with form erect and countenance undismayed, she essayed to pass on towards the cabin.

Placing himself directly in Clara's way, so that she could pass no farther until he saw fit to move, Foscara said—

"Stop, maiden; before you go there, I must hold farther converse with you. I like your brave and noble bearing, and therefore am not disposed to treat you otherwise than with respect."

"Then will I cheerfully take you at your word," responded Clara. "If it be your intention to treat me with gentlemanly respect, allow me to pass on to the succor of my unfortunate companion."

"Not till you tell me," replied Foscara, speaking in a low but terribly impressive tone of voice, "whether or not your affections are pre-engaged!"

After regarding him for a moment with a look of the most bitter scorn, Clara said—

"Away, sir! I know not what you mean, nor do I wish to."

"By heaven you *shall* though," exclaimed Foscara, as he made a step forward, and partially outstretched his arms, as if to encircle her fair form within their iron grasp,—but at that moment his fell purpose was frustrated by a cry from one of the seamen, like this—

"Sail O!"

"Where away?"

"Off the weather beam sir."

Taking his night glass, Foscara eagerly scanned the seaward horizon, and soon discovered the sail in question, which appeared to be a schooner, running directly into the cove, as if for the purpose of anchoring within its limits.

Turning to a stout, bull-necked, and very ferocious looking individual, who was acting at the time in the capacity of first officer, Foscara said,—

"Do you see that sail, yonder, Shute?"

"Perhaps I could if it wasn't night, sir."

"I forgot your eyesight was getting dim," replied the Pirate Captain, somewhat sarcastically; "here, take my glass and see what you can make of her."

"Looks to me," replied the first officer, after having gazed silently for some moments through the proffered glass, "like that feller we fired into last night."

"That is also my opinion," resumed Foscara, "and if we are both right, we shall be obliged to fight; so, Mr. Shute, you had better see the decks of the Flying Fox cleared immediately for action."

Leaving Foscara and his efficient first officer busily engaged in the superintendence of the execution of the above named order, we will again turn our own and the reader's attention to Clara Winslow, who, as soon as Foscara was obliged, by the announcement of a sail in sight, to leave the spot, wherein he had sought to stop her progress, took quick advantage of his providential absence, and escaping from the deck, took refuge in the main cabin.

Here she found Ernestine busily employed in administering restoratives to fair Alice Carr, who, having by this time partially recovered her consciousness, was able to recognize Clara, whose presence she acknowledged by faintly articulating these words.—

"Oh, Clara,—my sister,—come to me, I—I have had a horrid dream."

"You must not talk, my child," interposed Ernestine, addressing her words to Alice, "at least, not now."

Clara, having had just time to observe that the apartment in which she now found herself was, though comparatively small, elegantly furnished, and that her companion was reclining upon a soft and luxuriant couch, which would in her estimation have been a fitting ornament for a queen's bed-chamber, sprang towards it, as Ernestine ceased speaking, and grasping Alice's poor white hand, spoke thus,—

"I am with you again, sweet Alice, and no power on earth shall ever part us more."

"Clara Winslow," said Ernestine, with startling emphasis of tone and manner, "if you have the least regard for the future safety and well being of either yourself or your companion, you must at least for the present, cease to interrupt or impede the operation, either by speech or action, of the means I am using for the recovery of this fair sufferer from her recent illness."

"Woman," replied Clara, as she cast upon the troubled features of Ernestine a look of bitter and contemptuous scorn, "can you think for a moment that, with the cruel deception you have practised towards me, fresh in my recollection, I shall willingly consent to leave my more than sister singly in your care?"

"That I have practised towards you seeming deception," replied Ernestine, "is true, but when, as one day you will, you come to learn the cause, no word of chiding will fall from your fair lips, but you will bless the hand that even then hath snatched thee from the grasp of one who would have sold thee soul and body."

"How is it," responded Clara, "that in this, as well as many other conversations that have passed between us, you speak of danger from a hidden source, then pause and speak no farther? What and where is this source from which danger has for at least the last three or four years been thrown seriously around me?"

"You ask me questions, child," responded Ernestine, "I cannot at present answer. The time, however, will soon come, when you will know all."

"All what?" asked Clara.

"All that you should know," replied Ernestine, who, as if to change the tenor of the conversation, continued—"Open that door (pointing with her finger to the entrance of a state-room near which Clara was standing), and assist me, if you please, in conveying this fair companion of yours in thither."

After opening the state-room door, in accordance with Ernestine's request, Clara returned to the assistance of her friend, who had now so far recovered from the sad effects of her previous fright, as to be able, with the help of Clara and Ernestine, to walk into the small apartment, which had been set apart by the latter as a convenient and private sleeping room for both the young ladies, whom the mistress of the haunted house intended to watch over and guard with the utmost vigilance, and most devoted and careful solicitude.

"As your friend seems almost entirely to have recovered from her recent fright," said Ernestine to Clara, "I will cheerfully leave her in your kind care and keeping."

Thinking that Alice was too weak to walk, Clara, who was herself much fatigued with the extraordinary exertion the peculiar events of the day had caused her to make, laid herself down (as Ernestine left the room), in the couch beside sweet Alice Carr, and in company with that pure and gentle being, soon sank into an unquiet and troubled slumber.

After sleeping thus, for the space of two hours, they were both suddenly

awakened by the loud booming of guns—and soon after, as they lay listening almost breathlessly, loud shouts, horrid oaths, and dreadful imprecations fell upon their ears, mingled in strange confusion with dying groans, and loud wild shouts of demoniacal laughter. These unearthly noises, combined with the scuffling sound of heavy footsteps on the deck, and the hoarse creaking of the schooner's rigging as it was blown about by the wind, frightened even the courageous Clara, so as to deprive her for a time of the power of speech, and cause her to nestle closer to the bosom of the sweet and gentle Alice Carr.

CHAPTER XI.

In which we return to the Shooting Star—The Lieutenant and Surgeon—Difference in Beauties—Bowline's Love Adventure—The Yankee's first Breakfast at Sea.

HAVING left the Shooting Star on the night preceding that on which occurred the events last commemorated, in the position and manner described at the close of our eighth chapter, we will again turn our attention to the farther adventures of that favorite vessel, her officers and crew, as they transpired throughout the succeeding day and night.

As morning dawned upon the white sails and clean deck of this beautiful schooner, she lay almost becalmed about fifteen miles S.S.W. of the high and rocky promontory of Nahant. The wind, which blew pretty fresh at midnight, had gradually subsided, until its breath had almost ceased to be felt.

Mr. Brown, who happened to be the officer of the deck on the morning now alluded to, was leaning, about daylight, over the weather-rail, watching the golden halo in the eastern horizon, as it heralded the rising of the glorious sun, when he was suddenly roused from his pleasing reverie by the voice of the surgeon, who, having just came out of the cabin, thus addressed him:—

"This is a fine morning, Mr. Brown."

"It is," replied the first-officer, "and its present appearance seems to indicate fine weather throughout the day. How is the captain, this morning?"

"Much better than I thought he would be when I left him at midnight," answered the surgeon, "though he is still very weak, and is by no means free from danger."

"What do you think of his nurse?" inquired the first-lieutenant, with a significant smile.

"On so short an acquaintance as that which I have had with her, I can hardly tell what I do think. One thing, however, I am quite certain of, and that is, she is deeply in love with our brave and noble captain."

"And he with her, hey?" replied the lieutenant.

"Very likely," answered the surgeon.

"Well, I don't much blame him," continued Brown, "for she's a handsome girl, and has a most interesting and expressive countenance."

"Rather dark-complexioned, though," resumed the surgeon.

"She's none the worse for that, in my estimation," responded the lieutenant. "I hate your white-livered beauties."

"That seems to me to be a new kind of beauty."

"Well, I've seen hundreds," replied the matter-of-fact lieutenant, "of girls in my time, with light hair, light-blue eyes, and faces as white as a piece of new duck, and who seemed altogether so light and delicate as to make it pretty certain that the first heavy puff of wind would blow 'em chock out of water. Such girls as them, of that particular style of beauty, I don't fancy."

"Then you and I can't agree," replied the surgeon. "I like light-complexioned beauties. They look so soft, so feminine, and so womanly. But these dark-eyed beauties, I'm a little afraid of. There's too much of the

devil, as a general thing, in their eyes. Then, again, they are apt to be passionate and artful, and altogether too masculine."

"As far as art is concerned," responded the lieutenant, "I think that each and every beauty, of whatever description, possesses a good share of it."

At this point, the conversation between the two officers was interrupted by the appearance of the steward, who, addressing the lieutenant, said:

"The captain wishes to see you, sir."

"Very well, I will go to him immediately," replied Brown, who thereupon followed the steward into the cabin, leaving the deck in charge of the boatswain.

As he entered the captain's state-room, the latter said:

"How does the schooner head now, Mr. Brown?"

"North-north-east, sir."

"Is there much wind?"

"Very little, sir."

"Have you seen anything of the Flying Fox since daylight?"

"No, sir."

"What do you think has become of her?"

"I think, according to the course she was steering when I last saw her," replied the lieutenant, "she has run either into Lynn harbor, or some one of the many small coves adjacent to it."

"Then you had better put the Shooting Star on the other tack," resumed the captain, "and keep as close as possible in with the shore, so as to discover his hiding-place. If we are so lucky as to find him, we will lay off-and-on till night, and then attack him with our boats. Don't you think this mode of proceeding the best?"

"Most certainly I do, sir," replied the lieutenant. "How do you feel this morning?"

"Better, but very weak," answered the captain; "so much so, that I feel great difficulty in talking. Therefore, for the present, I will dismiss you. You will carefully observe the orders I have given, and report to me as soon as you discover the hiding-place of the Bandit of the Ocean."

Soon as the wounded captain ceased to speak, his worthy lieutenant repaired to the deck, ordered the schooner round upon the other tack, and when this was done, all hands were piped to breakfast.

Although we are well aware that, according to the common and well-established rules of etiquette, we are liable, in watching the gastronomic operations of any person, to be charged with a breach of politeness almost unpardonable, we cannot, in justice to our Yankee friend, Mr. Ezekiel P. Snodsgross, and our numerous readers, refrain from watching and reporting his adventures from the time he left his berth, at daylight, until the close of the morning meal.

The intelligent reader will, doubtless, recollect that we left our Yankee hero on the schooner's deck, eager to take a conspicuous part in the expected fight between that vessel and the Flying Fox. As, however, it soon became apparent that no serious encounter would be likely, at that time, to take place, the watch was ordered below, and Zeke, considering himself included therein, repaired with the rest to the fore-castle, where he turned into his berth, and slept soundly until daylight, when he was aroused by the hoarse voice of Bangs, hailing him thus:—

"Come, wake snakes, old boy, and call the lizards. Rouse, and bitt."

"Bitt," muttered our Yankee friend, as he slowly opened and rubbed his large blue eyes, "bitt what, bitt who? I don't know as I've bitt any body."

"He meant you should turn out and get your bitters," interposed Bowline, by way of explaining the last clause of Bangs's characteristic speech.

"Yew don't mean tew let on that yew treat a feller here, every mornin when he first wakes up, dew yew?" inquired Zeke.

"Sometimes, when we comes across the right kind of a chap," replied Bowline.

"Then I calculate I am one of *that* particyawlar kind, sort, qualitee, and description," resumed Zeke, "and, therefore, I'll take a small swallow of black strap."

"Perhaps a taste of *rope* strap would suit your case better," suggested the boatswain.

"Don't think I ever drank any of that ere. How on airth does it taste?"

"There aint a great deal of taste in it," answered the worthy boatswain, "but it makes a chap feel all over in one spot."

"Shaw, yew don't say so," responded Zeke.

"Won't you try a little of it?"

"No, I thank ye," replied Zeke, who judging from the wry and comic looks of both his companions, thought that something must be wrong, although for the life of him, as he afterwards declared, he could not tell what it was. "I think I'll take the *black* strap, I know, yew see, what that ere's made on."

"You *shall* have a nip, since we've carried the joke so far," said Bowline, who, thereupon, mixed some rum and molasses together in a small pewter tumbler, and gave it to Zeke, who after swallowing it, with great gusto said—

"That's first-rate, by jingo."

"If you like it, turn out and get your breakfast," said Bangs.

"Shaw, and yewre goin' tew have breakfast are ye. I'm darnation glad, for I'm almost starved tew death. But where's the table?"

"The what!"

"Why the table, what yew set the dishes on."

"Oh, that's up in the drawing-room," replied Bangs, winking significantly at his companion.

"No, it aint," chimed in Bowline, "for they moved it yesterday into the ante-room, to have it cleaned and varnished with the rest of our furniture."

"Then we shall be obliged to do without it this morning," rejoined the boatswain.

"Well, if we can't set the table," said Bowline, "we can set the jib and fore-sail, and that, I guess, will suit the captain just as well."

Here, the boatswain was called on deck, and Zeke was left to the tender mercy of our friend Bowline, who, observing that Snodsgross was, as he expressed it, up and dressed for all sorts of music, addressed him as follows:—

"Come, old boy, this is a good time for you to commence your yarn."

"Yarn! what in thunder is that ere?"

"Why, the story that you promised to tell me last night, about your gal, Soosy Williams, as you called her."

"Oh, Jerewsha Williams, yew mean. Well, I dunno, but somehow or other it makes me feel awfully dredful about the gizzard, every time I think of her."

"And still you can't help it, can you?" said Bowline.

"No, I'll be *thunderationally* darned if I can."

After saying this, Zeke relapsed into a state of melancholy silence, which Bowline soon broke, by saying—

"It seems to me you said that this Soosy Williams had something or other to do with your coming to sea, didn't you?"

"Wall, yes," replied our Yankee, "I rayther guess I did. Yew see, the amount of the hull story is jest this, she gave me the mitten, thumb and

all, jest as slick as grease. She did by thunder. Darnation seize her ugly,—no I can't say that; I won't lie about her, if she did jilt me; but I say darnation seize her *beautiful* picter.

"So I say," renewed Bowline, "only a little stronger; the devil take all their beautiful picters."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Zeke, "if some tarnal gal-critter or other, had served yew the same sarse as Jerewshy served me. Darnation seize her."

"You're about right there, shipmate," replied Bowline, with a melancholy smile, "for I *did* haul up alongside a tight little female craft once, and even went so far as to offer my services as consort for life. She kind of blushed at this, and pursed up her pretty lips, and looked sheepish, and all that, and then told me that whilst I was gone on the next voyage, she'd think of it, and make it all right when I came back. Blast her eyes, she did think of it, with a vengeance, that is, she thought so much of it as to go off on the opposite tack with a militia corporal, who was wise enough to pilot her into the port of matrimony without losing headway, where, when I got home off the last voyage, I found 'em both securely anchored. Did'n't I swear, though, when I heerd on't. Why I let out a string of oaths as long as a main-top bowline. Then I went on a three drunk, got the delirium trimmins, and got into jail, got out agin, got sober, and then forgot all about it. What do you think of that for a love scrape?"

"Well, it sounds kind of nateral," responded Zeke, "but I think yew took a darned cewrious roundabout course tew forget it. Seems yew didn't forget it neither, arter all."

"Don't say as I *have* forgot the facts," continued Bowline, "but I didn't think nothin' about the disapp'intment, --w, nothin' at all."

"I don't like tew say," resumed Zeke, "that you don't tell the trewth, but I will say, and I dew say, that I believe, that this disapp'intment yew speak of, is, eatin' intew yewre very witals, now, and will keep on eatin' intew 'em, till they are all eat clean chuck up. But where in thunder's the breakfast?"

"The cook will send it down directly," replied Bowline.

"Spouse'n he does," resumed Zeke, "where in thunder are we going to put it?"

"I don't know what you'll do with your's, but I think I shall put mine into my stummurk."

"Don't yew set no table, nor nothin'," said Zeke, "nor have no dishes tew eat out of?"

"We have then 'ere tin pans, yew see up there in the locker," said Bowline, pointing to a small wooden cupboard, that was nailed up in the forward part or eyes of the fore-castle.

"Wall, I'll be darned if that 'ere don't beat about anything ever I heerd tell on," said Zeke, "eatin' out of tin pans, and drinkin' tew, I s'pose, out of the same things?"

"Oh, no," replied Bowline, "sailors gin'rally drink out of quart pots."

"That sounds a little more hewman like, than eatin' out of tin pans," said Zeke, "but where in thunder's the knives and forks?"

"In the cabin," replied Bowline; "I gin'rally eat with a jack-knife, and use my fingers for a fork."

"O Lord, I can't dew that, no how yew kin fix it," resumed Zeke. "I warn't brought up in no sich darnation heathenish kind of way. I *must* have a knife and fork."

"You had better go to the first lieutenant, and get it, then," suggested Bowline.

"So I will, afore I'll eat with my fingers, darned if I don't," said Zeke,

who immediately afterwards left the fore-castle, and, as he reached the quarter-deck, where he found Mr. Brown, thus addressed him, —

"Good mornin', Mr. Offisir, how dew yew dew?"

This was spoken so innocently, and the familiarity which it indicated was so good-naturedly put forth, that Brown could not forbear smiling, as he said in reply, —

"I am quite well."

"And I'm darnation glad tew hear it," replied our honest Yankee. "How's the cap'n?"

"He is very weak, but better than when he was first hurt."

"Pshaw, yew don't say. Wall, I'm sorry he's weak, and darned glad he's better. If yew like, yew kin tell him I say so. Now, Mister Lieutenant, seein' it's about breakfast-time, I thought I'd jist ax yew tew give me a knife and fork tew eat with."

"Haven't you got any?" asked Brown.

"If I had, I shouldn't ax yew for 'em."

"I have none except what I use," continued Brown, "therefore you must get along as well as you can with a jack-knife and your fingers. You had better go forward now, and get your breakfast, as I shall soon need your services on deck."

So saying, the first lieutenant turned away and walked aft, whilst poor Zeke, after a moment's consideration, went slowly towards the fore-castle, muttering as he did so —

"The darned critter laafed when I axed him for a knife and fork; but I don't think it's any laafin' matter, by jingo. The idee of handlin' fat meat with a fellow's fingers, — Jehoshaphat! it eenamost makes me sick tew think on't. I wonder what Jerewshy Williams would say if she knowed it. I calcewlate she'd laaf some. Wall, I s'pose I shall hev tew dew it, and make the best on't, for I'm all-fired hungry."

Having by this time reached the fore-castle, where he found the crew busily engaged in discussing the merits of a large pan of fried beef, and a lot of sweet but very hard biscuit, Zeke left off talking and fell to eating with a voracity which at once astonished his messmates, and conclusively showed that in this particular department he tid fair to distance each and every one of his more experienced competitors.

CHAPTER XII.

A Tremendous Appetite—The Yacht Alice—The Merchant and his Niece—A Singular *Inc. & crew*—Sail O!—Preparations for a Night Attack—Departure of the Boats.

HIGHLY amused with the gastronomic feats so nonchalantly performed by our Yankee friend, during the breakfast hour, Bowline could not refrain from interrupting Zeke's peculiar operations quite often during their continuance, by expressions like the following, —

"Blast my top-gallant eyebrows, and tarry top-lights, if you ain't lost your appetite and found a squadron's. Gracious! there's a mouthful. That scupper of your's beats the devil amazin'ly. I think you must be the same man that boarded at a tavern one day, where the landlord failed the next."

"Not as yew knows on," replied Zeke, "for I never boarded at a tavern."

"It's lucky for the keepers that you didn't," resumed Bowline. "Don't be afraid of the beef—there's forty barrels more in the hold. If you fight as well as you eat, you'll whip the crew of a frigate. I'll be blasted if you can't play possum round a duff kid with any six men I ever saw. By the time you have been away from home two months, your father'll be a rich man."

"Pshaw! yew don't say so. Wall, I hope he will," interrupted Zeke. "But what dew yew want to bother a feller for? Why don't yew let him eat what little he wants in peace?"

"He means by the piece, I guess," said one of the crew.

"If he calls eatin' a whole carcass of salt-horse and a barrel of bread a little, I hope he'll never calculate on eatin' a *great deal*, whilst I'm in the schooner," resumed Bowline.

"Yew don't s'pose I'll eat yew, dew yer?" said Zeke.

"Arter what I've seen this mornin', I shouldn't be surprised at your scoffin' anything short of the vessel itself," rejoined Bowline. "I guess you'd better take your dinner alone arter this. If any of the crew should happen to be suddenly missed, I shall jist give the lieutenant a hint, so that he can tell where they have gone to. Did that gal of your'n ever see you eat?"

"Wall, no," answered Zeke. "I dunno as she did ever see me eat a reg-yewlar meal; but then I've took a small snack of luncheon at her house, a darned many times."

"I guess them *snacks* frightened her," resumed Bowline, "and it was on their account she turned you off."

"No, I'll be darned if it was any sich thing, now. She turned me off on account of Bill Spriggins, confound his eternal pieter tew thunder and lightnin', and if ever I ketch him in any place where there's a chance for fair fistin', I'll wallop him within an inch of his life."

"So I would, if I was you," said Bowline. "Come, now, tell us what it was, how it happened, and all about it."

Before our Yankee friend had time to answer, the boatswain's hoarse voice shouted down the gangway,—

"Below there!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Tumble up here, all hands, and tack ship."

"I wonder what the d—l the old 'huff' wants to go about again for," muttered Bowline, as he slowly prepared to obey the boatswain's order.

"This makes the second time he has wore round within the last two hours."

"It's about as well for us tew go up and see, I calcewlate," responded Zeke.

"Here's go, then," said Bowline, as, followed closely by his Yankee companion, he went quickly up the ladder, and from thence to his usual station on the main deck.

The cause of this manoeuvre which the first lieutenant of the Shooting Star had now resolved to execute, was the appearance of what he judged to be a pilot-boat, then directly astern of the schooner, and about a mile distant.

Thinking from the course the stranger was steering, that his object was to overhaul and speak the Shooting Star, Mr. Brown ordered all hands called to tack ship, which being done, brought the strange boat a couple of points on the schooner's lee bow.

"Keep her off a little," said Brown to the helmsman.

"Off she goes, sir," was the brief response.

"Steady, now," exclaimed the first lieutenant, as soon as the Shooting Star headed directly for the stranger.

"Steady it is, sir."

"Do you think she is a pilot-boat, sir?" said Mr. Alcott, who had, just as the above orders were given, come on deck from the cabin.

"She is either a pilot-boat, or a yacht, certain," replied Brown.

"So I think," resumed Alcott, "but what can she want of us?"

"I can't think, unless they wish to apprise us of something to our advantage."

Whilst this conversation, and more of a similar nature was going on between the two officers of the Shooting Star, the strange boat being to the windward, and within speaking distance of the schooner, was hailed by Brown as follows,—

"Boat ahoy!"

"Hallo."

"What boat is that?"

"The yacht Alice, of Boston."

"Where are you from?"

"Boston."

"Where bound?"

"On a pleasure excursion along the coast. What schooner is that?"

"The Shooting Star."

"Who commands her?"

"Robert Selwyn."

"I have news for your captain," said the gruff voice of Herringbone, who had been the spokesman on board the Alice, during the previous nautical salutations, "and if you do not object, I will board your schooner."

"All right, board away," replied Brown.

On hearing this, Herringbone spoke a few words to the crew of the yacht, two of whom, directly afterwards, cut loose from its lashings a small clov. which lay on the Alice's deck, and launched it quickly into the sea. This being done, Herringbone, accompanied by his mercantile friend, Scoville, entered the light boat, when the former, seizing the oars, plied them vigorously until he found himself alongside the Shooting Star.

Meantime, the conversation which had passed between the two vessels, had been reported to Captain Selwyn, who ordered his first officer to conduct the stranger to his presence, as soon as the latter arrived on board.

In accordance with this order, Herringbone, very soon after he left his boat, received with his companion an invitation to visit the schooner's captain, which they accepted, and soon thereafter were both ushered, with but little ceremony, into Selwyn's presence, who addressed them thus,—

"Gentlemen, I am happy to see you. Mr. Scoville, I think we have met before."

"Yes, sir," replied Scoville, "that is true, sir; and now we have met again, sir."

"I regret, that on account of my present weakness, caused by a severe wound lately received, I am unable to do the honors of my vessel to such distinguished strangers in my own peculiar and particular fashion."

"I don't want any apology from you, sir," interrupted Scoville, who felt an undefinable suspicion creeping over his mind that all was not right, "but I want my niece."

"If she sees fit to return to your protection," answered Selwyn, "I shall not interpose the slightest objection. Rosa," continued the captain, speaking to the little black girl, who happened to be in attendance upon him, "go and tell your mistress, that I should like to see her in my state-room."

"And, you can just mention, too," said Scoville, "that her uncle would like to see her also."

"Yes, sah," said Rosa, and off she went to her mistress.

Entering Helen's presence in a hurried and important manner, Rosa said—

"Massa Capun, tell me, Missus, he wants to see you in his state-room berry much, and dere's an ole man dar, says he's your uncle, he wants to see you berry much, too; den dar's a nudder great big white man dar, wid a face like an open firkin of butter, but he don't say nuffin'; so I dunno wedder he wants to see you or not."

Telling Rosa, with a smile, to stay where she was until she returned, Helen repaired directly to the captain's room, on entering which, Scoville accosted her thus:—

"Ah, so you have come, Miss, hey, when you couldn't help it. A very obedient young lady, indeed. What do you think, captain?"

Conceiving that the question with which Scoville had ended his speech, was addressed to him, Herringbone, who, through the medium of various strong potations, in which he had previously indulged on board the Alice, was now more than half intoxicated, thus responded:—

"I-I didn't know about her obedience, Mr. Scoville, b-but she's devilish g-good lookin', if t-that's anything to do with it. Ey, yes, as black as a c-coal, and a b-brow w-white as a new t-topsail, if they aint d-double dam-me. C-come, Miss, I forgot the n-name, and sit down alongside of-of old Tim Herringbone, and h-have a yarn, won't you?"

"You drunken villain," exclaimed Selwyn, who, notwithstanding his weakness, had early left his bed, and was now sitting in his arm chair, "if you dare utter another word of your disgusting ribaldry to this young lady, sick as I am, I will blow your English brains out."

"Y-you're a devilish pretty fellow, to talk in that way; you b-blasted Yankee," replied Herringbone, who had become thoroughly enraged, not only by the manner and words of Selwyn, but also by the withering look of dignified scorn with which he was looked upon by Helen Winchester. "Damme, sir, what do you mean by saying that you would blow my brains out?"

"Simply what I said," replied Selwyn, with a contemptuous smile. Stung

to the quick by the calm and scornful manner with which the Privateer Captain had treated him, Herringbone sprang from his seat, and rushing towards Selwyn, was about to dash him to the deck, when he himself was suddenly seized from behind, and his bulky waist secured by a pair of arms, which were as sinewy, and could hold a grasp equally vice-like with his own."

This sudden seizure of the infuriated Englishman, was accompanied by the following words:—

"What in darnation are yew goin' tew dew, hey, yew confounded varmint? Goin' to bull a sick man, hey? Darn your everlastin' picter, I don't know what yew are, but I shouldn't be afeared tew bet twenty-five cents clean cash, that yewre a Brittaner. No other Christian man would dew sich a thing. Keep still now, and don't yew squirm, if yew dew, I'll turn tew and give yew the darndest lickin' ever yew heern tell of. I will, by jingo."

"Let that man alone, fellow," exclaimed Mr. Scoville, as our Yankee friend seemed about to throw Herringbone to the floor, "or I'll knock you down, sir."

"Shaw, and yew don't say so. Have yew took leave of all your relations? Are yew all ready tew take a flyin' leap, chock intew the middle of kingdom come?" You must be in a confounded hurry tew shake hands with your brother, the devil, if yew seriously think of knocking me down. O, yew get eout. Sit still and mind your own business, and yew shan't be hurt. Its darned lucky I happened tew be sent down here of an errand, for if I hadn't appeared just as I did, yew *would* have bulled our captain, sure enough."

The noise produced by Zeke's scuffling with the partially intoxicated Englishman, together with the loud talking necessarily resulting from the whole proceeding, had by this time reached the deck, and caused the sudden appearance on the scene of action, of the first and second lieutenants.

With the aid of these officers, Herringbone, who had now become furious, was overpowered, and by Selwyn's orders, put in double irons, and confined in the schooner's steerage; whilst Scoville, at the earnest entreaty of his niece, was allowed to remain in the cabin, with the promise of being kept under the strict surveillance of our Yankee friend, Zeke, whom Selwyn had considerably detailed as the merchant's body-guard.

Being informed by the Captain of the Privateer, that he was not at liberty to retire with his guard to the main cabin, Scoville said:—

"No, sir, I shall not go, sir, until, at least, I am satisfied concerning my niece, sir."

"As I said before," replied Selwyn, "your niece can speak for herself. She is now here. If she chooses to return to your protection, she is at perfect liberty to do so. Let her decide."

"Well, Miss, what do you say?" resumed Scoville, addressing himself to Helen, "will you again place yourself under the care of your only legal guardian and protector?"

"Protector!" interrupted Helen, as a rich red flush crimsoned her fair cheek, and her black eyes flashed with honest indignation, "how can you dare, in the face of high heaven, to assert the slightest shadow of a claim to that sacred name. From what, sir, have you ever protected me? Say, rather, that guided only by the mean and grasping spirit of a sordid and miserable avarice, you have studiously and strenuously endeavored, by forcing me into a union, repugnant at once to my feelings and desires, to ruin me, soul and body. Return to your protection! No, sir. Sooner than that, I will throw myself into the sea, and seek far beneath the wild waves upon its troubled surface, a peaceful, quiet, and untroubled grave."

"You have heard your niece's decision," said Selwyn to the merchant, as Helen ceased to speak, "and with that you must remain satisfied."

"No sir," vehemently replied the exasperated merchant, "I will *not* remain satisfied."

"As you please," resumed Selwyn, "but one thing let me tell you is certain. You will remain here, a close prisoner, until this vessel again reaches her port of destination. Zeke," continued the captain, addressing our Yankee Friend, "take this gentleman into the main cabin, tell the steward to attend to all his wants, let him go on deck, or where he pleases, except into the steerage; but keep your eye on him, and if he attempts to escape, shoot him down."

"I kin hardly keep from doing that if he *don't* try tew run away," muttered Zeke, then addressing his prisoner, he continued—"Come, old feller, git out of this,—come now, quick time, eyes right, hay foot first, on your post, forrard, march." Following these words with a gentle push at the prisoner's back, Zeke fairly moved him into the main-cabin, where he seated himself on the transom, and remained for some time in a state of glowing silence.

Nothing occurred of farther importance in connection with the incidents of our story, till just before night fall, when the schooner, being as close in with the land as was deemed prudent, the man stationed as a look-out upon the fore-castle, shouted—

"Sail O!"

"Where away?"

"About half a mile a-head sir."

As the Shooting Star was heading at the time directly into a small cove, it was soon discovered by Alcott, who was well acquainted with all the land and water marks in that peculiar vicinity, that the strange vessel a-head was no other than the Flying Fox, which lay anchored between the schooner, and the building as well known to experienced sailors, as to landmen and our readers, as being the haunted house.

These discoveries being promptly reported to Selwyn, together with the fact that the water was shoaling fast, as the schooner ranged a-head, he ordered the first lieutenant to bring her immediately to an anchor, then get out the boats, man each of them with picked crews, take command of one himself, give Alcott the command of the other, and then leaving the boatswain in charge of the Shooting Star, Mr. Brown was directed to attack the Flying Fox in such a manner as in his judgment might seem most advisable.

The preparations involved in these orders being soon made, the two boats, one being called a launch, and the other a pinnace, and our friend Zeke, having, at his earnest request, received permission to join the expedition, being allowed to be one of the crew of the first boat, the expedition, left the Shooting Star about nine o'clock in the evening, and proceeded, the boats being propelled by muffled oars, to the desperate task of boarding the beautiful floating home of Foscara, the celebrated Bandit of the Ocean.

CHAPTER XIII.

On the good schooner's narrow deck,
The fight goes bravely on

The Attack.

WHEN the boats of the Privateer had cleared about half the distance which intervened between the belligerent vessels, Mr. Brown, who was in command of the foremost boat, ordered his men to peak their oars, so that the boat might be kept stationary, in order to give Alcott in the pinnace a chance to come up with him.

"Having settled the plan of our future operations," said the first lieutenant to Alcott, as the two boats ranged alongside of each other, "I have concluded to inform you of its details before we proceed farther. In the first place, then, we must try to get near enough to board the Pirate, without being discovered from her decks. Therefore, every thing must be kept as silent on board the boats as our progress will permit. Not a man must open his mouth to speak, until after the order is given to board. We must all be silent, and keep a vigilant look out. Now, Mr. Alcott, you will keep your boat along side of mine, until we get under the Pirate's bow, when you will station yourself on his starboard side, whilst I run him on board on the larboard. Let our watchwords be vigilance, caution, and courage. Now, men, with as little noise as possible, pull away."

Again the boats of the Privateer, propelled swiftly by the long and well regulated strokes of the light muffled oars, moved swiftly and silently on, until they reached the Pirate's bow, when Mr. Brown, armed like every one of his boat's crew, with a light cutlass and brace of large pistols confined around his waist with a leathern belt, jumped with a loud shout on board the Flying Fox, exclaiming as he did so—

"Down with the Pirates! strike for your lives!"

This was followed by the loud voice of our friend Zeke, who had reached the schooner's deck almost as soon as his commander, shouting thus,

"Damnation seize the pirates, give em Jesse. Come on boys, quick time, mark time, on your post, forrard, march."

Zeke's reminiscences of his former exploits as powder monkey in the Belchertown Artillery, were so vivid as to cause him, in all times of extraordinary excitement, to fall back upon the various military phrases and words of command they suggested, which he considered to be the *ne plus ultra* of all fighting tactics, on land and sea.

Although the discipline of the Piratical schooner, was, when that vessel was at sea, such as is readily recognized and obeyed by the best seamen (and none could be found as far as professional capacity was concerned, superior to those enlisted under Foscara's command), but, like all other freebooters, as soon as the anchor was dropped, and the sails of their vessel furled, all discipline was at an end, and drunken carousals and wild debauchery usurped its place.

Such being the state of the pirate's crew on the evening just referred to, it is not to be wondered at, that the approach of the Privateer's boats was not discovered until their crews leaped upon the Pirate's deck, and easily surprised the drunken and ferocious wretches, whose bacchanalian orgies, when once fairly commenced, could not, until suppressed by their own destroying strength, be controlled even by the despotic power of the Bandit of the Ocean.

The surprise at first occasioned by the appearance of Brown and his brave followers on the deck of the Flying Fox, soon gave place to a sort of wild desperation, which caused the Pirate's crew to rally and dispute with eager ferocity every inch of ground, or rather deck, with their cooler, yet not less courageous assailants. The legitimate consequence of this rally, was a brief but bloody skirmish, during which, the pirate's guns were all fired at random over the water, as if they might haply intercept any aid that might be dispatched to the aggressors from the Shooting Star.

It was the noise made by the discharge of those guns, which added to that occasioned by the oaths and imprecations uttered by the conflicting parties, and the dying groans of the wounded, frightened Alice Carr, and Clara Winslow, so that they were obliged to nestle as close to each other as possible, and were for some time afterwards unable to speak.

Meanwhile, the fight upon deck raged with unabated fury, for the space of twenty minutes. Whilst that length of time was passing, Foscara, at the head of such of his desperadoes as were not too much intoxicated to fight, rushed, sword in hand, boldly into the midst of the little Spartan band, who were advancing slowly but steadily across his main deck towards the cabin.

As, blinded by rage and desperation, he rushed furiously on, the Bandit of the Ocean was soon recognized by Alcott, who immediately singled him out as a fitting object wherewith to engage in a single combat. In a moment their opposing swords clashed sharply together, and for some moments thrusts were made and parried by both parties, without bringing or carrying any serious results to either. Both were experienced swordsmen, but both were not equal in strength. Foscara was stronger and stouter every way than his antagonist, and had he possessed the same coolness, would very soon have been Alcott's conqueror. Victory, for a long time balanced itself between the two, but at length the young and agile midshipman wounded the Bandit of the Ocean in the side. He staggered, fell back, and the chances seemed to be in Alcott's favor. Infuriated to madness by the smart of his wound, Foscara concentrated together, in a moment, all his remaining energies, rushed madly upon his opponent, grappled with him at the expense of a heavy sword cut on the arm, and the next moment, they both together, locked fast in what appeared to be a death embrace, tumbled down the main hatchway.

During the continuance of this strife upon the schooner's deck, a conversation of the following tenor was commenced by Clara, who, being the first to recover from the surprise and consternation occasioned by the noise of the fight above, thus addressed her trembling companion:

"Tremble no more, dear Alice, for I feel a strong presentiment that the time of our deliverance from this mysterious bondage is close at hand.

"Alas," murmured Alice, "I wish I could think so, too."

"And why canst thou not, dear one," replied Clara. "I always thought thy spirit was more hopeful than mine." "But you only saw its feeble workings, kind sister, in times of safety, when no danger was near, and when its hopefulness was only called into action by the absence of some dear and much loved friend. For the return of such a one, I could hope confidently; but here in the midst of tumult, consternation, and even death, I can see no good cause to hope for anything."

"Lay still there, sister," replied Clara soothingly, "whilst I go into the main cabin, to learn if possible what has occasioned the present horrid tumult."

So saying, Clara immediately left the state room, whilst poor Alice, unable to stop her ears against the various sounds that reached them from the scene of action, laid back in anxious dread and expectation upon the couch, where, after remaining for a short time alone, her acute hearing detected, among the many cries of anguish that resounded from above, a familiar voice, which, in apparent mortal agony, uttered these words—

"Oh God, I am wounded."

To this succeeded the distant sounds of grappling, followed by a heavy fall, then the groans seemed to come from beneath the floor of the cabin, and all was still.

For a moment after the sound of those agonizing words fell upon her ear, Alice listened breathlessly for their repetition, but hearing them not again, she sprang quickly up from her couch, and whilst dressing herself in the utmost haste, exclaimed—

"That voice, I know, was Alcott's. He is, he must be on board this vessel, and in distress. Seek, I must and will."

In a minute, as it were, Alice, seemed to become transformed from the timid, trembling, and dependent girl, to the determined, hopeful, and active woman. Suddenly she appeared to be over-shadowed by a power, that not only made her wish—nay resolve to act, but also took away her fear, and caused her to become at once calm, resolute, and firm. This was the power of love! and nothing short of it, could have completed this singular and sudden transformation.

Dressing herself quickly, Alice stepped boldly into the main cabin, thinking there to find Clara, but to her great surprise, she found the room totally dark, and the loud calls she raised for her friend were unheeded and unanswered.

Stopping in the midst of the dark cabin, Alice listened eagerly, for a moment, and then cautiously groped her way towards what she supposed must be the outlet to the gangway leading upon deck. Being however entirely unacquainted with the precise situation of this mode of egress, she passed by the foot of the stairs, which ended near the cabin door, and still going on, soon reached that part of the schooner's steerage, directly underneath the main-hatchway.

Suddenly her attention was arrested and progress stopped, by the sound of Alcott's voice, which, from its apparent close proximity to the place where Alice was standing, spoke thus—

"Oh, for some friendly hand to pass me a cup of water."

"Is it Alcott's voice I hear?" exclaimed Alice.

"It is,—oh God, who speaks!" replied the wounded midshipman.

"Hush, it is me, Alice,—Alice Carr," answered the maiden, scarcely hearing what she said.

"What! angels, in this dark and dreary abode," murmured Alcott.

"Aye and devils! exclaimed a voice, which Alice at once recognized as Foscara's.

Immediately after he had thus spoken, the Bandit of the Ocean, smarting under wounds, though not so severe, were more painful than Alcott's, sprang up from the deck, and seizing Alice in his iron grasp, exclaimed—

"Speak your last word of love, now, Mr. Alcott, for this is your last opportunity. Come, Miss, the sea is deep, and once safe beneath its waves, your troubles are at an end."

So saying, Foscara, with his fair burden struggling in his arms, immediately left the steerage.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Darkly arise upon the air,
The storm-clouds of the night."

Conclusion of the Attack—The Female Privateer.

THE disappearance of Foscara from the schooner's deck, in company with his single antagonist, instead of dispiriting his ferocious crew, when the knowledge of the fact became disseminated amongst them, had a contrary effect, making them more desperate than ever, and more fully resolved than they had been before, to expel the Privateer's men from their ill-starred vessel, or heroically die in the attempt.

Although, in point of numbers the pirates exceeded their assaulters nearly two to one, yet, the cool, sober courage of the smaller party appeared at first quite likely to prove more than a match against the larger numbers of the pirates, and the drunken fury that impelled them to rush heedlessly on to their speedy and certain destruction. Thus, at the time of Foscara's disappearance, victory seemed about to crown the Herculean efforts of Brown and his hardy companions, with quick and glorious success, when a loud and appalling cry burst forth from the midst of the pirates, of which these words were the burden,—

"Foscara, the Bandit of the Ocean, has fallen! Let his followers AVENGE him!"

"Press the villains aft!" shouted Brown, "and the victory is our's."

At this critical moment, when the announcement of their leader's misfortune caused the pirates to hesitate for an instant, as if they were undecided between surrendering at discretion, or continuing the sanguinary contest, a tall, stout, dark-whiskered man was observed to spring from the rail to the deck of the schooner, with the salt-water dripping from his clothes, as if their wearer was some minor sea-god, delegated by Neptune himself to take an active and conspicuous part in the deadly strife then progressing on the surface of his dominions.

Leaping, sword in hand, into the very midst of the irresolute pirates, this strange individual, brandishing his weapon high over his head, exclaimed,—

"Come on, sons of the Ocean! Come again to the fight. Beat down your paltry opponents. Give no quarter. If Foscara has fallen, Montano still lives!"

Soon as these words were uttered, loud and clear rose the shout from two score ferocious throats, of—

"Lead us on! MONTANO and VENGEANCE!"

Springing quickly out from the midst of his revengeful and desperate comrades, Montano led them on in solid phalanx against the still undaunted privateer's-men, the leader of which, as he observed their quick approach, heroically said,—

"Be cool, boys, and resolute. Let not the sudden appearance of that

mysterious demi-devil (pointing to Montano) alarm you in the least. Stand for the present on the defensive, and God will preserve the right!"

"That's it, cap'n," shouted the sharp loud voice of honest Ezekiel Snodgrass. "Give 'em johnny-cake and 'lasses chuck up tew the hub. Come on, my Yankees. Who's afeard? We can't lose but one life a-piece, any heow, and what's that in comparison with bein' beat by a darnation set of blood-thirsty, beastly, heathenish-lookin' pirates. Confound their picters, they're almost as bad as reg'lar right up and deown Brittaners. Come on, neow. Who's afeard?" With this pithy and curious exhortation, Zeke sprang ahead of the remainder of his brave companions, and meeting Montano, was about to engage him valiantly in single combat, when he unfortunately stumbled over the bleeding body of a dying pirate, and in trying to recover himself, fell over the low rail of the schooner into the sea. "There goes the Yankee's best man," exclaimed Montano, whose eagle eye had narrowly watched Zeke's former proceedings, "so come on, boys, and the day will soon be all our own."

Darting forward, as he uttered these words, Montano encountered the first lieutenant of the Shooting Star, who immediately commenced a furious assault upon the pirate with his cutlass, which, if the latter had possessed no other weapon, would soon have decided the contest in Brown's favor, but, luckily for himself, Montano had a pair of loaded pistols in his belt, one of which, after parrying off two or three of the lieutenant's vigorous sword thrusts, he drew from its resting-place, and firing at Brown, laid the latter wounded and bleeding upon the deck.

The little band of heroes from the Shooting Star, who from the first were only thirty strong, had by this time dwindled down to less than twenty, and finding themselves without an effective leader, were each about to separate, and seek their own safety either in flight or surrender, when to their utter astonishment, the tall figure of a woman, fancifully dressed in a silk tunic, and Turkish trowsers of the same rich material, and armed in a like manner with themselves, suddenly stalked into their midst, exclaiming loudly as she did so,—

"Rally lads, rally, I say, and fight to the last under the guidance of the FEMALE PRIVATEER!"

"Follow her lead, boys," responded Bangs, the boatswain, "for he who would not spill the last drop of blood for a second Joan of Arc, like this, deserves to be pitched overboard in short particular metre."

"Woman or devil! your heart's blood shall be mine!" shouted Montano, as, springing forward, he aimed a heavy blow with his naked cutlass at the mysterious person who had thus summarily assumed command of the Privateersman.

"Not yet, then, worst of villains," replied the Female Privateer, as she sprang quickly aside, and thus caused the whole weight of Montano's blow to fall upon an unoffending brass carronade that lay in the way, and the resistance of which shivered the sparkling steel of the pirate's deadly weapon into a dozen pieces.

Foaming with rage, and blinded to all consequences by the fury and disappointment which had taken full possession of his very soul, Montano fumbled at his belt for his second pistol, but his female antagonist, having warily watched his movements, and quickly anticipated his murderous intentions, drew a similar weapon from the girdle that encircled her slender waist, and, after taking deliberate aim, fired!

The ball took effect in the Pirate's breast; and he fell in close proximity to the wounded first lieutenant of the Shooting Star.

Completely panic-stricken at the loss of their second leader, and regarding the mysterious interposition of the Female Privateer with a superstitious

awe peculiar to themselves, the pirates, observing their leader to fall prostrate and bleeding upon the deck, scattered, and fled in every direction, some leaping overboard in wild despair, whilst others threw down their arms, and sullenly surrendered themselves to the mercy of their brave assailants.

In the midst of the confusion naturally attendant upon these latter proceedings, the Female Privateer (as she chose to term herself), as she cast her eyes towards the main-hatchway (the covering of which had been removed some time previous to the beginning of the present contest), discovered, emerging therefrom a man, bearing in his arms the struggling form of a young and lovely girl. "Stop!" exclaimed our female captain, in a tone of loud command.

"Who dares speak that word to the terrible Bandit of the Ocean?" replied the man in question, who had now gained a firm footing upon the schooner's deck.

"One who has the power and ability to enforce the command she has thus given."

"Save me, oh God! save me, if you are a woman," shrieked the struggling girl, whom Foscara still held within his iron grasp.

"Earthly salvation will avail you nothing now," muttered the Pirate, from between his clenched teeth, "and, if possible, I will cut you off from heaven's also."

So saying, this remorseless freebooter rushed with his burden to the schooner's side, then a stifled shriek rose through the calm night air, a sullen splash was heard, and the Pirate, relieved of his precious burden, faced about, and, with the expiring glimmer of a flash of light together with the sharp cracking report of a pistol, staggered, reeled, and fell.

Immediately after she fired at Foscara, the Female Privateer turning to Bangs, addressed him thus,

"That murderous villain has thrown somebody into the sea. Take some men with you into a boat, and try to save her."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded Bangs, using precisely the words that he would have uttered in reply to an order of Captain Selwyn's.

Having thus put forth every effort in her power for the rescue from a watery grave, of the person Foscara had thrown into the sea, our Female Privateer, stepping up to the latter individual, said,

"Tell me, villain, the name of the unfortunate being thou hast endeavored ruthlessly to destroy?"

Without answering this hurried question, Foscara clutched eagerly at the commanding form before him, but in vain.

Stepping back out of his reach, the Female Privateer, seeing two or three men belonging to the Shooting Star standing by, addressed them thus,

"Take this villain below, and bind him fast, but let his wounds be dressed and cared for."

In answer to this order the men in question, after a hard struggle on the part of the ferocious pirate, succeeded in seizing and taking him into the storeroom, where two stood by him as a sort of guard, whilst the other went into the cabin to obtain a light.

During the progress of the events specified in this and the preceding chapter, the light of the moon which shone brightly at the commencement of the evening, was obscured by thick piles of dark grey clouds, which denoted the rapid forth-coming of a violent and terrific storm. Amid the deadly strife of passion and fury and fight, however, of which the deck of the Flying Fox had become the principal theatre, the rising of the clouds, the ominous moaning of the wind, and the occasional flashes of vivid lightning, which ever and anon illumined momentarily the deepening

gloom, was, by the mass of living beings there congregated, totally unobserved and unheeded.

But when the fight was over, and those who remained living and well on that ill-fated vessel's deck, could find an opportunity to collect their thoughts, and look beyond the narrow confines of their frail tenement, the wild howling of the wind which had now increased to almost a gale, startled even the boldest of these hardy mariners, and caused faces that had not blanched at the pirates' deadly sword to pale and quiver before the wild and increasing strife of God's universal elements.

"It must blow almighty hard out to sea, I think," said one of the sailors addressing his companion.

"Yes," replied the other, "and it's blasted lucky—but what the devil is the matter with the schooner?"

"Good God! she's adrift," exclaimed the first, as the head of the Flying Fox swung suddenly off before the wind.

"Some rascal must have cut the cable, then," said Dokes.

"Take the helm, one of the crew of the Shooting Star," shouted the Female Privateer.

"Ay, ay, take the helm, it is," exclaimed Dokes, as he repaired quickly to the station thus indicated.

"Hoist the jib and fore-sail," was the next order given by the mysterious female who had assumed the command of the Flying Fox, and it was, as quick as possible, duly obeyed.

The next object of the Female Privateer was, to look eagerly around, as well as the increasing darkness would permit, for the boats belonging to both vessels, which she well knew were alongside the Pirate schooner, when the fight commenced.

She looked in vain; they were not to be seen.

On going forward for the purpose of looking out ahead, this extraordinary personage was, as she reached the schooner's fore-castle (to speak in sea parlance), taken flat aback, by the grotesque appearance of a tall figure clinging to the bowsprit, from whose shaggy hair and uncouth dress, the water was dripping like rain upon the deck, and who, as she approached, spoke thus:—

"Don't be afraid, I ain't the leastest bit of a ghost."

"Who in heaven's name are you, then?"

"Ezekiel P. Snodsgross, about tew-thirds drowned, as wet as a pickled rat, and as hungry as a darnation starved black-bird."

"Come in on deck then, and help work the schooner."

"For the bloody darnation Pirates," replied Zeke, "No, I'll be darned if I dew. I'll let her go chock down tew Jerewsaalem first."

"She is under the control of the Privateersman at present."

"Shaw, and yew don't say so; wall, that alters the case, then, by considerable. Hurra for corn cake and lasses, we've beat the Pirates, the Brit-tanners, and the devil, and I'm tarnation glad of it." So saying, our honest Yankee rolled in upon deck, and did good service in helping hoist the fore and mainsails, which being set, close reefed, gallantly wooed the raging north-east wind, and strongly impelled by its giant force, bore the beautiful Flying Fox swiftly out of the sheltered cove into the wild and open sea.

CHAPTER XV.

"At night we'll seek the humble r-st,
And take therefrom the dove."

La Santa Maria, once more—Warton and Montano—A Plot.

NOT wishing to incur the serious charge of neglecting, for a longer time than the natural elucidation of our story's varied incidents has rendered necessary, the interests and adventures of any of its principal characters, we will once more turn our own and reader's patient attention to the conduct of Lord Warton, who (as our readers will find by referring to the first part of our ninth chapter), immediately after he was rescued by Montano from the avenging dagger of the deeply injured Loretta, abruptly left the Spanish brig, La Santa Maria, and went directly on shore.

The first person our worthy young nobleman visited after landing upon the wharf, was Mr. Scoville, to whose place of business, situated at the head of the pier, he lost no time in wending his eager way.

On arriving thither, Warton found the very respectable merchant alone, and pacing the floor of his office, in a state of nervous and indignant agitation.

Stopping short in his walk, as he recognized in Warton the affianced husband of his persecuted niece, Scoville saluted the astonished nobleman, as follows:

"Your presence here, sir, at the present time, is anything but welcome."

"Why so, sir? please explain," said Warton, half imagining that the unfortunate issue of some unlucky speculation had deranged poor Scoville's intellect.

"In one word, sir," resumed the merchant, "my niece, Helen Winchester, has—has—"

"What?" exclaimed Warton eagerly.

"Run away, decamped, vamoused, deserted her uncle, and gone off, sir."

"Where?" mechanically inquired the young nobleman.

"To the devil, sir, for all that I know," was the abrupt reply.

"Sit down, my dear sir," responded Warton, "and try to calm yourself a little."

"Perhaps, sir," answered Scoville, "when you have been made acquainted with this whole affair, you will find as much difficulty in trying to calm yourself, the next two hours, as I have during the last."

After thus speaking, the worthy merchant seated himself, and in as calm a manner as his outraged feelings permitted him to assume, related to the astonished nobleman the particulars of Helen's sudden and peculiar disappearance. This statement of facts he followed up with the details of the plan he had formed, in order to recover his recreant niece from the protecting hands of the brave captain of the Shooting Star; and which he proposed to carry into prompt and immediate execution.

Judging at once, from the character he had heard of Captain Selwyn,

that Scoville's proposed expedition, would, if undertaken, result in total failure, Warton strove to dissuade the exasperated merchant from his purpose; but in vain, as Scoville vehemently declared he would listen to nothing of the kind, and indignantly remonstrated with the young nobleman because he refused to join him.

Finding that his judicious advice was likely to be wholly disregarded, Warton soon took leave of the merchant, and as soon as he was well out of the latter's hearing, thus soliloquized:—

"This is what I call being *non-plussed* with a vengeance. It begins to look squally, as Herringbone would say, all around. First, I made a fool of myself, this morning, by coming to an open rupture with Loretta; then, as foolishly left the vessel without agreeing with Montano about abducting my Marblehead beauty; and now last, but not least, I find I have been most egregiously *jackass*ed by the beauteous, and I must add, sensible Helen Winchester. As to old Scoville's getting her out of Selwyn's hands—if he has a mind to keep her, and she a mind to stay under his protection, that's all moonshine. So, as the game seems to be up in that quarter, at least for the present, I must see what further can be done, regarding Clara.

Turning his steps towards the brig, whilst his mind was agitated with reflections of a similar nature with those just recorded, Warton stopped not until he reached the vessel's deck, where the first person he encountered being the waiting maid, Bridget, he thus addressed her—

"Where's your mistress?"

"Faith sure, an' she's in her bed, sleepin'."

"And Montano?"

"He was here a minute ago; but it would puzzle the ould divvle himself to tell where he is now."

"He may be in bed, and sleeping, too," replied Warton, mimicking as well as he could the tone and manner of his Irish companion.

"An' what do you mane by that, sir?"

"Nothing," replied Warton, "only I think it looks rather suspicious."

"Faith, thin," continued Bridget, as Montano stepped at that moment out of the cabin gangway, "here he comes, and he can spake for himself."

"Ha, my lord," said Montano, as he approached near to the young nobleman, "you have soon returned, it seems, from your visit to the city."

"Yes, and I suppose you know the reason, Montano, of my quick return."

"Can't say that I do," was the laconic reply.

"Has Mr. Scoville not been here during my absence?"

"He has," answered Montano, "and with the captain, one of the boats, and two men, has gone away again."

"Do you know where?"

"No, I cannot say that I do."

"Then, as my knowledge on the subject is more extensive, I will give you the benefit of it," said Warton, who, after beckoning Montano out of Bridget's hearing, related to him in substance the conversation he had held with Scoville, and concluded by saying, "Now, Montano, I wish to make immediate use of your valuable assistance towards abducting Clara Winslow from her house and home in Marblehead."

"She, I presume, is the person you alluded to in our conversation out at sea."

"The very same," answered Warton.

"You spoke then to me of a plan you had formed for her abduction," resumed Montano, "in the execution of which I promised to aid you."

"And the details of which I will now briefly lay before you," responded Warton. "In the first place, we will both repair on to-morrow evening to this girl's residence, leaving Boston in season to arrive thither just after nightfall."

"Does she reside with her parents?" interrupted Montano.

"I think not," answered Warton. "The only inmates of the family where she resides, or rather did reside, when I first became acquainted with her, consisted of an old fisherman, called Arthur Lane; his son, who, I suppose, follows the same simple, yet meritorious calling; and wife; and a young girl, apparently, about Clara's age, whom I imagined to be their daughter. Who Clara's parents are, or how she became domesticated in this fisherman's family, is to me a mystery."

"How and when did you first become acquainted with this fair inamorata?" interposed Montano.

"I first knew her," resumed Warton, "about a year ago, when, in company with Mr. Scoville, I visited old Arthur Lane's abode. Struck with the superior beauty of her person, and the extraordinary, yet simple elegance of her manners, I soon found myself deeply in love with one who saw fit to receive all my advances with a contemptuous indifference, which led me to suppose that her affections were preoccupied, and, therefore, I could hope for no present return. Being unwilling, however, to restrain myself from pursuing a loved and coveted object by a mere supposition, I improved the first opportunity that offered in declaring to Clara Winslow, the true and lasting passion her charms of mind and person had kindled in my susceptible bosom."

"What sort of an answer did she return to that sacred declaration?" inquired Montano, as Warton came to a momentary pause.

"A devilish candid one," replied the nobleman. "'My affections,' she said, 'are unalterably fixed upon another; and even if it were not so, I could never regard you with any other feelings than those induced by a common and friendly esteem.'"

"How did your lordship relish that cool rejoinder to your honorable proposals?" interposed Montano.

"Not well, by any means," answered Warton; "but I succeeded in disguising my vexatious disappointment, and I resolved forthwith to leave, and forget its cause. This interview took place in the evening. Next morning, whilst I was making arrangements for my departure from Marblehead the same day, I accidentally overheard the two girls, Clara and Alice, conversing together about a certain fortune-teller, who, as I soon learnt by dint of careful listening, dwelt in a wild and secluded habitation near the sea-shore, about three miles from the old fisherman's cottage."

"With a vague idea that this fortune-teller might be hired to exert an influence over Clara, in my favor, I resolved to visit her, which I did on the same afternoon. She appeared to divine my business as soon as I mentioned Clara's name, and then informed me that the fair girl was betrothed to a Lieutenant Lester, of the American Navy, who was then attached to a squadron that had just sailed on a three years' cruise to the Pacific. In addition to this, she told me that my love for Clara was altogether hopeless, as her's was a heart that never changed, and much more sentimental nonsense of the same romantic tenor, which I soon cut short by a question concerning Clara's birth and parentage. To this she answered generally that Clara was a foundling, and her parentage unknown even to the girl herself, but darkly intimating at the same time, that she (the fortune-teller) knew more about these mysterious affairs than she saw fit to divulge."

"Finding I could make no advantageous arrangement with this confounded Witch of Endor, I left her in disgust, returned to old Lane's cottage, took an indifferent farewell of Clara, and abruptly departed for Boston. Ever since that time, the image of that fair girl has haunted my dreams at night, and been present to my mind by day; and, although my indiscretions have been multifarious, and my character has upon it stains of what rigid moralists

would term crime, I verily believe, if it were possible for me to win Clara Winslow's love, I could repent, reform, be virtuous and happy."

"But, suppose you may not succeed in winning her love! what then?" interposed Montano.

"There is no such word as *not* in any case of that kind, in which I am concerned," replied Warton, "for I am determined to succeed—peaceably, if I can, forcibly, if I must. Now, listen to my plan. Soon after we arrive at the fisherman's cottage, I will, under some imaginary pretence, get both the young ladies to take a short walk with me, down the avenue leading from the house to the main-road. This avenue is fenced in on both sides by a high stone wall, behind which (at a point I shall indicate when we arrive thither) you will conceal yourself, and keep in readiness to obey the signal we shall agree upon for seizing our fair prize. In case I succeed in getting her safe on board this vessel, one thousand dollars shall be paid you immediately."

"Enough, my lord," replied Montano. "I have helped you before, and be assured I will not fail you now. To-morrow afternoon, at five o'clock, we will proceed together in a chaise, to the corner of the avenue leading to the fisherman's cottage. Leaving the vehicle there, you can proceed to the house, get the girls to walk with you down the avenue. When you arrive at a certain point, which we will agree upon on our way, you will clap your hands three times, as a signal. I appear, the girl is seized, conducted to the chaise, placed therein, then we drive off, the prize is your's, and all is right, secure, and safe."

In strict accordance with the details of the plan thus laid open to the reader's notice, a chaise was procured by Montano the next afternoon, in which he and his noble companion seated themselves, just after five o'clock, and proceeded leisurely along upon the road to Marblehead. Instead, however, of going directly through the town to Lane's cottage, our two travellers, after arriving in Lynn, took the by-road leading from Swampscot along the sea-shore, intending, at Warton's suggestion, to pay a short visit to the Haunted House, and the celebrated fortune-teller, supposed to be residing therein.

As they were obliged to wait some time in Lynn for supper, it was late in the evening before they arrived at Ernestine's residence, which, to their great surprise, they found untenanted.

After an unsatisfactory search for the fortune-teller, which resulted in nothing but disappointment, our two travellers were about to leave the Haunted House to the rats, which appeared at that time to be its only occupants, when the loud booming of a gun caused Montano to exclaim,—

"There's a gun!"

"And there's another!" replied Warton, as a second report reverberated through the gloomy air of night.

"Some vessel must be near this place, in distress," said Montano. "Let us leave the house, and reconnoitre the waters of the bay."

So saying, Montano led the way, and Warton followed him to the sea-shore, where, by the wavering light given by the moon, as she occasionally peeped through the interstices of the thick clouds that darkened the sky, the former saw the Flying Fox laying at anchor only about an eighth of a mile from the shore.

"There's fighting going on there," said Montano, as the noise of the conflict between the pirates and freebooters, then at its height, reached his ears. "I know the schooner, too. Oh, for a boat, to enable me to reach her, so that I can take a part in the fun."

"Rather hard fun, I guess it will be," replied Warton; "but look, Montano, your wish is about to be gratified—there's a boat."

"Where?" inquired Montano, eagerly. "Ah, I see it," he continued, as a

gleam of friendly moonlight illuminated momentarily the distance between the shore and the vessel, and discovered to the travellers' view a light boat, containing three persons, which appeared to be rapidly approaching the land.

Darkness again ensued—but the sound of oars plashing in the water grew more and more distinct; a few moments of time elapsed, and the bottom of the strange boat grated harshly against the sandy shore.

CHAPTER XVI.

An Arrival at the Haunted House—A Scene upon the Beach—Another Abduction—Its Consequences.

"Who are you, and where have you come from?" said Montano, addressing himself to the first of the boat's crew, as he landed with his two companions upon the beach.

"I've heard that voice before, or else I'm devilishly mistaken, Tom," said one of the sailors, speaking to his companion.

"You are not mistaken; you have heard my voice before: I am Montano!—your former lieutenant."

Cordially shaking both the sailors by the hand, Montano continued then.

"Are there not three of you here?"

"No; only two of us."

"I thought I counted three in the boat," resumed Montano.

"Aye, sir, we understand you now; the third one you mean is the woman we picked up out of the water. Never mind her, sir; you are just the man that's wanted on board the old Flying Fox, for the devil's to pay there, and no pitch not."

"I thought there was trouble there—what is it?" said Montano.

"The fact is, sir," replied the sailor, "that our vessel has been suddenly boarded by a band of Yankee devils, that call themselves Privateer's men. As our chaps were pretty much all drunk when they came alongside, and owing to that their approach was undiscovered until they came on board. They fought hard; and in the very first rush they made aft, managed to disarm me and Bill here, and seeing they would show no quarter, I jumped overboard, and Bill here, you see, lost no time in following my example. It luckily so happened that our boats had not been hoisted in, and were consequently alongside, and after we found ourselves in the water we got into one of 'em quicker than a gun-flash, and just as we were about to put away for the shore, the young woman that you saw with us grappled the boat, and, of course, we took her in."

"And she has took herself off," said Montano, as, on looking around, as well as the increased darkness would permit, he found, somewhat to his astonishment, that he could see neither the unknown female, nor his noble and distinguished friend, Warton.

"What say, sir? shall we pull you off to the schooner?" asked the sailor who had first spoken.

"Yes, shove off, and pull ahead," exclaimed Montano, who, having by this time become highly excited by the sound of the distant battle, that was still in progress on the deck of the Flying Fox, leaped lightly into the boat as he spoke, and being followed by the two sailors, was soon on his way to the scene of strife, in the midst of which he so suddenly appeared, in the manner related in the course of our fourteenth chapter.

With the kind permission of our indulgent readers, we will turn our attention once more to fair Clara Winslow, whom our story left at the beginning of the fight, in the act of leaving her state-room for the purpose of discovering the cause of the loud and horrid sounds that had awakened

both Alice and herself from the troubled sleep into which they had but a short time before reluctantly fallen.

The first object that met our heroine's vision as she reached the schooner's deck, was the manly form of Alcott, struggling in mortal combat with the athletic person of the ferocious Bandit of the Ocean.

Although Clara had no personal acquaintance with Alcott, and had never seen him except on one occasion, she, nevertheless, recognized him at once as the acknowledged and betrothed lover of fair Alice Carr. She saw that he was in danger, too, and imagining that she could help him at this critical point, when he seemed about to be overwhelmed by the great odds against which he was bravely contending, seized a naked cutlass that had fallen just before from the hands of a wounded Pirate, and heroically rushed forward to the midshipman's rescue.

Unfortunately, however, her movements were observed by two of the Pirates, who, in the hurry and excitement of the occasion, sprang between her and the combatants—one knocking the cutlass from her hand with a blow aimed at her from his own, whilst the other seizing her fair form with his brawny hands, lifted her from the deck and threw her with great force over the vessel's side into the sea.

Luckily, after sinking to a considerable depth in the water, our heroine rose directly alongside of a boat, the gunwale of which she clutched as the only hope between her safety and a watery grave. Being quite as anxious to prevent the boat's being capsized as they were for the safety of the person who was thus innocently endangering their lives, the two sailors who happened at the time to form the boat's crew, roughly, but speedily, took the drowning girl on board, and after placing her carefully down in the stern-sheets, pulled with all practicable swiftness to the shore.

Springing lightly to the land, as soon as the boat struck the white sand of the beach, Clara, after stepping a little aside from the spot occupied by the boat's crew, saw the tall figure of a man standing directly in her path, which she addressed as follows,—

"I am sorry, sir, to be obliged to ask protection from a stranger, but under the peculiar circumstances of my present situation, I feel compelled to implore, to ask your assistance in conducting me to a place of at least temporary shelter."

"You speak of me as a stranger, Clara," answered Warton, for the person in question was none other than he; "is it possible you can so soon have forgotten?"—

"Who?" involuntarily interrupted Clara.

"Warton, your former, nay, your *present* lover!"

"Oh God!" murmured Clara, "is it possible that from such as thou art, I have been impelled to seek assistance?"

"I know of no one who would more willingly render it," answered the young nobleman, "for," he continued, in a tone of bitter sarcasm, "even such as I can forget and forgive words of scorn and cutting contumely, when they are uttered by much-loved lips."

"Leave me, sir,—I understand you not," replied Clara. "Leave me, I say, or I will shriek for help."

"As there happens to be no sort of human help within calling, you must for the present content yourself with such feeble aid as it is in my power to offer."

"Never! I will die first," replied Clara.

"Perhaps not," resumed Warton. "However, as the peculiar circumstances of your late situation seem to have turned your brain, so that you do not hesitate to insult him who would freely lay his life down at your feet, he will constitute himself your guardian, thus—"

So saying, and before the astonished and bewildered girl could divine his intentions, Warton rudely seized her, and taking her in his arms, carried her by main strength to the chaise, which was standing near, and, after placing Clara, who by this time had ceased to struggle, safely therein, sprang in himself, and taking the reins, drove rapidly off on the road to Boston.

The peculiarly strange and exciting nature of the events through which poor Clara had passed, in the short space of four hours, coupled with the almost superhuman exertions they had compelled her to put forth, destroyed for the time being her uncommon fortitude, and finally left her, bereft of strength and motion, in the complete power of her relentless persecutor.

Having thus obtained possession of his long-coveted prize, Warton, busily engaged himself, whilst on the road, in revolving through his active mind, various schemes for the regulation of his future conduct, as regarded the final consummation of the diabolical plans he had formed against the honor of the fair victim, whom a capricious freak of fortune seemed to have temptingly placed at his supreme disposal.

"Now," thought he, in the course of these agreeable musings, "everything seems prosperous; Clara is in my power; and ere twenty-four hours have passed away, she must be mine. As it is now late at night, and the atmosphere exhibits every indication of a violent storm, I will, on reaching Boston, drive directly to the wharf, take my prize on board the brig, and to-morrow remove her to the house of one of my shore-ladies, who will see that every attention is bestowed that her situation may seem to require."

Meanwhile, poor Clara, having partially recovered from the terrible surprise into which the sudden appearance and violent conduct of Warton had naturally thrown her, endeavored silently to devise some means of escape from the power of one on whom she had looked with contempt and disgust ever since their acquaintance had first commenced.

Her first impulse, as a correct idea of her present defenceless situation dawned upon her mind, led her to shriek as loudly as her exhausted physical strength would permit, for help; but alas, her wild screams were only heard by the winds, which only sent them back again in mocking echo to the listening ears of the distressed being, who had, in the extremity of her distress, piteously sent them forth.

Finding shrieks of no avail, the distressed maiden next sought amongst the folds of her damp dress, as if hoping to find some friendly weapon wherewith to avenge her bitter wrongs, by taking on the spot the life of her ruthless abductor; but she sought in vain, and then resigning herself as calmly as she was able, to the fate which no human power appeared likely to avert, she maintained, during the remainder of that dreary ride, a dogged and profound silence.

Urging the high-spirited animal attached to his vehicle, at the top of his speed, Warton reached the end of Long Wharf in Boston, about an hour after he left the Pirates' Cove.

Addressing himself to Clara, as he stopped his horse, Warton spoke thus,—"After a short harbor excursion in a boat, Miss Winslow, we shall have arrived at the end of our journey."

On hearing this, Clara, exerting to the utmost her feeble strength, shrieked wildly for help.

"Shriek again," muttered Warton from between his clenched teeth, and clutching at the same time, his victim's arm, "and I will throw you into the sea! You have called for help, and no one has answered. You are therefore completely in my power. Keep quiet, obey my directions, and no harm shall come near you. It is worse than useless to fight against fate, therefore you must uncomplainingly submit to your destiny. You will please remain in the chaise until I can procure a boat."

So saying, Warton jumped from the chaise, and after taking the wise precaution of fastening the horse to a post, commenced searching around the side and end of the wharf for a boat, soliloquising as he did so, thus:—

"Some of the brig's crew must be on shore, and their boat must be in this vicinity. I can't see it, and if I don't find it, I shall be obliged to take Clara directly to Mrs. Harris's. At present, however, that is just what I don't wish to do. A scene, with a woman for principal, and a dozen others as lookers on, is what I detest; but if I take Miss Winslow to that house now, I know one, and that, too, of not the most agreeable description will inevitably take place. Hal! what is that I hear, he continued, as a confused sound of voices and approaching footsteps reached his ears. Some of the brig's crew, I know by their talk."

He judged aright, for a moment or two afterwards, four men, all apparently more or less intoxicated, approached him, one of them speaking as follows:—

"Hallo, shipmate, who the d—l are you, sailin' round here like a gull in a fog?"

"D—m my eyes, Bill," shouted another, as he discovered the horse and chaise, "if here aint a shore boat with sail all set. What say for a cruise in her, around the city, hey, boys?"

"For God's sake, don't trouble that," exclaimed Warton eagerly, "but take me and my companion off to the brig, and you shall all have a guinea a-piece to drink my health with, when you come on shore again."

"That's the talk boys," replied the first speaker; "don't trouble the shore-boat, but look after the other, and let's take the young gentleman off to the brig."

"Stop a moment, boys," said Warton, "and hear the whole story. There's a young lady in that chaise—a relation of mine—a poor thing who has partially lost her reason. Now, in case she don't see fit to go on board the boat peaceably, I wish two of you to put her there. Do you understand?"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the sailors.

Taking one of their number aside from the rest, Warton engaged him to convey the chaise to the stable where it belonged; and then, stepping up and speaking to Clara, said:—

"You will greatly oblige me, Miss Winslow, by accepting my assistance in leaving the chaise."

"I need no assistance, sir," replied Clara, as she quickly left the vehicle in question, and stood beside Warton upon the wharf.

"Is the boat ready?" asked the latter of one of the sailors standing by.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Follow me, if you please, said Warton," attempting to take Clara's hand.

"Touch me not with your unhallowed hands," replied the distressed maiden, "and I will follow you, trusting that God will protect my injured innocence."

So saying, Clara followed her relentless persecutor to the place of embarkation, and soon found herself seated in the stern-sheets of a clumsy jolly boat, which, with considerable exertion on the part of its crew, owing to the violence of the increasing gale, was finally rowed alongside of the brig, on board of which, our unfortunate heroine mechanically followed the cold-blooded villain, in whose power she had been mysteriously placed by the force of circumstances over which she had no control.

Bridget being called, soon after Clara reached the brig's deck, immediately made her appearance, and after a few moments' conversation, held in a whisper with Warton, addressed Miss Winslow thus:—

"If yez please, Miss, to come along wid me, it's a room and a bed I'll show yez, so that yez can slape if you like."

Willing to go to any place where she might be relieved of Warton's company, Clara followed Bridget into the cabin, where she was shown into a state-room containing a small bed, to which, after dismissing her officious attendant, and locking the door, she immediately retired.

By this time (it being full midnight), the wind had increased to a high gale, which caused a heavy sea to rise and rage even in Boston harbor, where the brig in question lay at anchor. The violence of this furious storm, passed, however, unheeded by the crew, who, having no officer to control their movements, were making merry over some liquor they had stolen, in the fore-castle, until the vessel's unusual motion, together with a loud crackling noise, as if of a falling spar, called the most sober of their number on deck.

There they discovered, to their utter astonishment and dismay, that the main-topmast had been broken by the violence of the wind, and was now hanging by its shrouds over the side, that the cable to their only anchor had parted, and their vessel was **ADrift**.

CHAPTER XVII

"'Tis a sad, strange tale,
Showing that truth is stranger far than fiction."

ERNESTINE'S STORY.

LEANING over the cabin gang-way of the Flying Fox, as that handsomely modelled vessel, driven by the irresistible force of this terrible north-west gale, literally leaped and danced over the boiling waves, stood Ernestine, that mysterious and unfortunate woman, who had, at the most critical point of the previous combat, when the total extermination of the brave lads from the Shooting Star seemed to be inevitable, suddenly appeared, announced herself impressively, as the Female Privateer, and having assumed the command of the few assailants, who still remained, notwithstanding the loss of their officers, unvanquished, soon turned the battle's tide, and led the gallant privateer's-men on to a quick though bloody victory.

Looking from the strife, just ended, to the sublime warring of nature's elements, Ernestine saw the vivid lightning flash, heard the deafening roar of its accompanying thunder, and the wild whistling of the raging wind, as it drove the white and foaming billows, in grand confusion, over the surface of the troubled sea.

As the Female Privateer gazed, in sad silence, on this terrific and appalling scene, the deep groans of the wounded and dying fell upon her ears; and as the indomitable courage that had sustained and enervated her, during the progress of the previous human strife, for a time forsook her breast, the woman once more gained the supremacy, and she wept like a very child.

Suddenly the wind lulled, and a few moments of dark unnatural calm succeeded the howling tempest. Then a low, distant rushing sound was heard, and the wind struck the devoted schooner again, but it came from the opposite quarter, and blew, and roared, and raged, with more than redoubled violence.

In the height of this latter portion of the storm, which resembled a heavy squall, the foremast of the schooner, cracked, toppled, and fell. At the same time the main-sail was blown away, and the Flying Fox lay a drifting and unmanageable wreck upon the waters.

"That was worse than a whirlwind," said Dokes, who happened to be at the schooner's helm at the time.

"'Tis a darnation sight worse than any thing ever I hearn tell on," replied our Yankee friend, who, with the remainder of the available seamen on board, had fled to the quarter-deck as the safest place under the circumstances. "It seemed tew me, when that ere wind struck us, and broke the mast down, sumthin' like what I used tew read in Scripture, about heaven and airth's comin' tewgather. It did, by jingo. But, I wonder what's got tew be done now?"

"We've got to drown, I suppose," said one of the sailors quite despairingly, "I don't see what else can be done."

"Wall, thank the Lord," said Zeke, "I kin dew that ere on a pinch, and without much grumblin' tew, seein's I've got partly used to it."

"Used to what?" asked the other.

"Why drowndin' as yew call it. Yew see I fell overboard once tew night, and I was so tarnaal heavy I sunk like a stone."

"Did you touch bottom?"

"Darned if I know," replied Zeke, "but I was long enough underneath the drink to see *green* every time I opened my eyes, and git tarnaal short-breathed intew the bargain. Howsumever I didn't get a darned bit skeered, and if I hadn't thought of dad, and ma'am, and Jerewshy Williams, and kinder felt as though I'd like tew see em once more agin, afore I went tew kingdom come, I'd jest as lives drowndid then and there, as not."

"Cut away the mainmast!" exclaimed the Female Privateer, "or we shall capsize."

"If we dew that ere, we shant have nothin' tew get home with," muttered Zeke.

"And we shall have somethin' to take us to bottom if we *don't* do it," replied a sailor, standing by.

This being obviously the case, axes were soon put to work near the foot of the devoted mast, which in a few moments, being cleared of its rigging, cracked, toppled, and followed its companion in a random pilgrimage over the sea.

With the passing off of this last mentioned squall, the wind again shifted to the north-west, and although its fury had in a great degree abated, still it blew strong enough to drift the wrecked hull of the Flying Fox over the waves at the rate of nearly three knots per hour.

Meanwhile, the three men who had been selected at the close of the fight to care, as well as the circumstances would permit, for the wounded of both parties, had attended to that benevolent duty in the most careful and expeditious manner. As many of these unfortunates as could be accommodated in the schooner's cabin were taken thither, amongst whom was Alcott, and Brown of the Shooting Star, Montano the former lieutenant of the Flying Fox, and Foscare, the celebrated Bandit of the Ocean.

A renegade Englishman, who acted in the capacity of surgeon general to the Pirates, who had picked him up somewhere on the coast of Cuba, after a careful examination pronounced the wounds of Foscare to be mortal, and then, with professional coolness, told him, "If he had anything to say he had better be about it as he could not possibly survive more than three hours longer."

Just as these words of awful import left the surgeon's brutal lips, Ernestine entered the cabin, and being recognized by the dying Pirate, he thus addressed her:—

"Woman, traitress, devil, I am dying. In a few short hours, I shall be revelling with my master and yours amid the glowing fires of regions deep, dark and infernal."

"Repent, thou wretched man," said Ernestine, "and ask God's forgiveness now, whilst there is yet time."

"Repent," repeated the Pirate captain with a wild and horrid laugh; "repent say'st thou! Ho-ho, that is what I never did, through forty years devoted to crimes of the deepest and blackest dye; that important word was never uttered by my lips, nor its true meaning even felt in my cold and callous heart. And yet," continued the wretched man, in a tone of mournful bitterness, "I, even I, can look back upon the time, when, in the innocence of early boyhood, I sat upon my mother's knee, received her sweet maternal kisses on my pure white brow, slept in her arms, and dreamt of beauteous angels. Then rose up in terrific darkness before me, an ocean of sin and crime and misery, into which I plunged with fatal boldness, and

floundered and ~~swam~~ and floated until now, when I am about to sink and be lost in its unfathomable depths forever."

"God's love is infinite as is his justice," answered Ernestine; "and there is still a blessed and a glorious hope, even for a wretch like you."

"A wretch like me, ha! ha!" repeated the Pirate; "that epithet comes with an equivocal grace from one like you. Have you not betrayed me to my very death,—you that have slept on my bosom, whispered in my ears words of love, and borne children who should have called me father?"

"And it is for one of these, that I have this night turned upon and against one whom I once loved dearer than life," replied Ernestine, with unassumed calmness of tone and manner.

"What child?—who? speak, explain, I conjure you," exclaimed the Pirate, partly rising in the extreme of his agony, from the couch where he had been previously placed.

"She whom you knew as Clara Winslow," replied Ernestine, impressively, "she, whom as I plainly saw you were about to ruin, soul and body, under the specious plea of passion and illicit love."

"And she my daughter?"

"Aye, and mine," responded Ernestine.

"Where is she?" wildly exclaimed the dying Freebooter; "bring her to me; let me beg her forgiveness, and hear her say to me once, Father, before I die."

"Alas," replied Ernestine, "she is not here. Search was made for her as soon as the fight was over, but she could not be found. Frightened as I suppose by the language you spoke in her unpolluted ears, shortly after she came hither, she must, in a fit of deep despondency, have thrown herself into the sea, and sought beneath its troubled surface, that rest and peace she could hardly expect in this heartless world ever to realize."

"Tell me, then," resumed the Pirate, as he sank back overcome by fatigue and pain upon his couch; "where you have kept her since her birth, and why you have never told me its secret."

"Aye, the time has now come when I feel it is fitting to tell you briefly, everything connected with my passionate, erratic and, I must say, too criminal life. You are dying; and something whispers in my ear, that the sands of my life are nearly all run out. Listen, now, to my story. I was born in England forty-eight years ago. I am the illegitimate daughter of him who was once Lord Warton. This fact I learned from my mother, who died when I was sixteen years of age, and who revealed to me the secret of my birth on her death-bed. Some years previous to her death, she had, passing as a widow with one child, married a respectable tradesman then residing in London. His name was Winchester. As his matrimonial union with my mother was not blessed with children, all the excess of his paternal love was lavished upon me. In the height of his fondness he wished me to take his name,—I did so, and thus became Ernestine Winchester. At the time my mother died, I was what the world termed beautiful. This, coupled with the fact that my reputed father was very rich, and I was likely to become his heir, brought crowds of suitors at my feet.

"But I looked upon them all—the dissipated sons of noble fathers, seeking for wealth with which to support their titled dignity, the young but honest tradesmen, who sought me only that my wealth might be added to theirs, and scores of others, who sought me, as I thought, from the same motives of interested cupidity—with cold, scornful, and contemptuous disdain—all, save one, and he was the eldest son of a rich merchant named Scoville. At that time I was young, beautiful, passionate, and I loved that man with a wild and fervent fondness, and, notwithstanding all that has since passed, I love him still. But I anticipate.

"Although this man was my superior in everything except riches and beauty, my father, for some strong reason, which he did not see fit to give opposed our acquaintance, and finally forbade Scoville's visiting his house. This high-handed proceeding, on the part of a father who had always loved me so well, filled me, at first, with grief and despondency, which, however, soon gave way to a dogged obstinacy of spirit, which always formed a large part of my wayward and passionate nature, and caused me to rise up in earnest opposition to my father's will. This led, first, to clandestine meetings between my lover and myself, and then, to an elopement and private marriage.

"After this marriage we emigrated to America, and settled in Boston. Here my husband established himself in business,—here my first child was born, and here commenced that dread career of sorrow, and grief, and sin, through which I have progressed with fearful rapidity, until, at length, it has brought me near the end.

"Just before the birth of my second child, which took place about three years after my settlement in Boston, my husband's treatment of me changed from what had been kind, affectionate, and respectful, to that which was now cruel, suspicious, and insulting. As I gently upbraided him for this sudden and inexplicable change in his general demeanor, my husband (alas! no longer worthy that sacred name) broadly declared that the love he had previously expressed for me, was assumed for sordid purposes,—that his affections had long been placed upon another, and that, as our marriage had been private, and no available witness could now be brought forward to prove it, he should, after having made a suitable provision for my future pecuniary wants, unscrupulously dissolve the matrimonial connection which then existed between us.

"Cruel words were these, and their utterance from his lips sent a chill to my heart which has never since been removed. But they were spoken,—coldly, calmly spoken,—and when their last bitter echo reached my ears, a dark cloud of hopeless despair enveloped my mind in its dense and dreary folds; my brain seemed filled and fired at once with dark visions of revenge and blood—and I became a maniac. Four weeks of time passed after the deceptive villainy of Scoville had thus been made apparent, during which existence was to me a dull, dark, cheerless blank. Then reason came again, and with it the tidings of a new birth, that of my second child, which I was told occurred one week after my heart had been turned to ice by him who should have cherished its warm life-blood as his own.

"I was told, too, that I was just recovering from a severe attack of brain-fever, and that, whilst this was at its height, and I was hovering between life and death, Scoville had, under the ostensible plea of settling an important mercantile lawsuit, sailed for the West Indies. Thither, as soon as my physical strength permitted, I resolved to follow him,—not to win back his recreant love, not to seek from his grudging hand any pecuniary aid,—but for the purpose of wreaking upon him the vengeance I considered due for the fatal and irreparable wrong I had received at his hands.

"Upon my inquiring for my babe of the nurse who had attended me in my illness, I was told that the child had been taken away from the house by Scoville's order, soon after its birth, and carried no one knew whither. As I was searching one of his writing-desks a short time afterwards, for some articles of jewelry which had been my mother's, I found a sealed note, directed simply to Ernestine, and, on breaking it open, found its contents read in substance thus—

"Madam. When you receive this, I shall probably be far on my way to Havana. If you recover, as I hope you may, from your present illness, you

will see that I have considerably left in your charge our eldest child. The youngest, however, I have seen fit to remove from your care, as, if it lives, I intend, when I return, to take it under my own especial protection. Hoping that, henceforth, you will consider yourself as I do, fully absolved from all matrimonial bonds and engagements, and wishing you much joy in any other connection you may hereafter form of a similar nature, I subscribe myself,

"Yours, &c.,

"HENRY SCOVILLE."

"On my bended knees, with this letter laying open before me, and its contents searing and withering what had been a woman's, but was now a demon's heart, I swore an oath of vengeance against that man, and to devote the remainder of my life to its dread, unhallowed cause. Resolving not to be impeded in the pursuit of my vindictive object by the least incumbrance, I determined to sacrifice my only remaining child, the last cord that bound me to humanity and love, on the altar of my stern revenge.

"In strict accordance with the spirit of this last resolution, I placed that sweet and innocent child under the care of an humble fisherman, exacting a solemn agreement, on the part of himself and his wife, never to divulge, until they should hear of my death, the secret of its birth and parentage. These poor, but simple and honest people, took the dear child as their own,—gave to it their name, and, until this fatal day, have acted towards it as its own parents."

"At this point of her singular, yet interesting narration, Ernestine suddenly paused, and then, as her face grew lividly pale, and her whole frame trembled with her heart's wild emotion, she glared upon the pallid features of the dying pirate, and in a tone of voice piercing and impressive, almost beyond expression, thus continued,—

"Antoine Foscara, you have this night cruelly murdered that child."

"'Tis false!" replied Foscara, faintly.

"Die not with a lie upon thy lips," resumed Ernestine. "In the midst of the fight, did I not see you emerge from the main hatchway, with a struggling girl shrieking in your arms? Think you the mother could not recognise the voice of her still beloved child? Did I not see her hurled like a thing of nought into the boiling waves; and then, ha-ha!—did I not revenge myself speedily upon her murderer?"

"Before God, I say," replied Foscara, "that I knew not the relation that existed between that unhappy girl and yourself. I knew her only as the humble companion of Olara Winslow, who, by placing herself madly between me and my enemy, threw herself without the pale of Foscara's mercy."

"Wretch," exclaimed Ernestine, "you have murdered your daughter and mine. Listen yet again. I, too, am wounded and dying like yourself. In a struggle with Montano, who suddenly appeared in the midst of the fight, as though he was the legally constituted representative of the infernal regions, supernaturally sent hither to take his master's place, I received a wound, which, I feel well assured, will, ere to-morrow's sun has set, prove mortal."

"Aye, and long before that time," exclaimed Montano, as he sprang from his couch, and taking a stiletto from his girdle, essayed to rush at one bound upon Ernestine.

Two steps sprang the ferocious villain forwards, and then the red blood gushed simultaneously from his mouth and nose—he staggered—reeled—fell—groaned—and died at the feet of the FEMALE PRIVATEER.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Continuation and Conclusion of Ernestine's history.

DEATH was in the cabin of the Flying Fox, and for a moment every voice in its awful presence was hushed, and every eye was as it were involuntarily turned upon its immediate victim.

Ernestine was the first to break this solemn silence, which she did by speaking thus—

"There are those now in my presence, who, if saved from the wild fury of the raging elements, will undoubtedly soon recover from their present situation, and live again amidst the mingled pleasures and sorrows of the wicked world. Some of you, may hereafter meet one or other of my dear children. It is this consoling thought, which has impelled me, whilst yet life and strength are mine, to relate at this strange time, the brief particulars of my wayward and terrible history, which I humbly pray may be transmitted to my children, if either of them haply survives this night, by any one of your number, by whom they may happen to be hereafter discovered."

As Ernestine again paused, Alcott, who, notwithstanding the extreme pain occasioned by his wound, had listened eagerly to the foregoing part of her romantic narrative, addressed her thus,—

"Is the fair and lovely girl, who, as you have said, that dying wretch (pointing to Foscare), threw into the sea during the fight, your daughter?"

"She is," responded Ernestine.

"And she is, or rather was," continued Alcott, "the reputed grand-daughter of old Arthur Gane?"

"The same."

"And her name?"

"She was called Alice Carr. Have you known her?" inquired Ernestine.

"Aye, and loved her too," replied the young midshipman, "as fondly as ever man yet loved woman."

"And did she love you?" asked Ernestine.

"Our acquaintance was but casual," replied Alcott, "we met only three times, and yet I flattered myself that she looked not upon me with indifference. O, Alice," he continued after a minute's pause, "is it possible that thou art lost to me forever? I cannot think so, and yet I can imagine no way by which she can have escaped."

"There were boats alongside," said Ernestine, "when she was thrown into the sea, and possibly she may have been taken into one of them."

"Did they get adrift from the vessel?" asked the young officer, as a gleam of hope rose up in his mind.

"Yes, but it was in the midst of the storm," answered Ernestine; "and therefore I fear they must have been lost. But God may have saved her nothing with Him is impossible, and you, her acknowledged lover may meet her again. If you do, I conjure you to bear her the blessing of her dying mother, and to tell her the secret of her birth and parentage, as you have heard it from my lips this night. And if it should ever be your lot to

become united by the holiest of all human ties to that fair Lily of the vale, I adjure you, by the solemn authority of a dying mother, to cherish her fondly, protect her manfully, and love her fervently, that you may pass through this life in happiness and peace."

"You have alluded to a connection between yourself and that wretched Pirate," said Alcott, as Ernestine ceased to speak, "is he?"

"Listen; and whilst I have strength I will explain our connection," interrupted the Female Privateer.

So saying, Ernestine resumed and concluded her history, as follows—

"Scoville is the father of her whom you have known as Alice Carr. Some two months after I had given her up to the fisherman's wife, having in the meantime made ample provision for her maintenance and education, I took passage in a small vessel at Boston, and immediately sailed from thence to Havana in Cuba. On reaching this place, I learned that my recreant husband had united his fortunes with a rich and beautiful Creole, and with her, only two days previous to my arrival, set sail again for Boston.

"Finding myself thus baffled in this, my first effort for revenge, I set myself busily to work, in order to devise some feasible plan for its further prosecution. Whilst thus engaged, I was introduced by an acquaintance to the bleeding, dying wretch, now in your presence, and whom you have previously heard me address as Antoine Foscare. He was at that time, handsome in person, engaging in manners, agreeable and fascinating in conversation, and from the first fatal moment of our acquaintance devoted himself to me with the greatest assiduity and apparent respect.

"Soon did he manage to learn, from my reluctant lips, the sad particulars of my previous history, which he craftily turned to his own account by a pretended show of respectful sympathy, and, in so doing, reached the heart of the deserted and injured wife by the only avenue her former griefs and sorrows had left open. The heart being thus reached through sympathy with its bitter sufferings, pretended love followed close in its train, and was, alas! in an evil hour, admitted also. Three days after our acquaintance first commenced, this villain, on his knees, talked to me of love, and begged me to return it.

"Feeling myself wronged and cruelly betrayed, and utterly disappointed at the important result of my first effort for revenge, and being alone and unprotected in a strange land, was it strange, think you, that I listened with a favorable ear to Foscare's words of love? Strange or not, I *did* listen to them, strove to return his pretended passion, and finally, without deliberation, and realizing what I did, I united my fate, as I thought, irrevocably to his.

"Shortly after this unhallowed union was consummated my new companion coolly informed me, that he was by profession a pirate captain, and was about in that capacity to proceed on a cruise, whither it was his sovereign wish that I should accompany him.

"Situated as I was at that time, his will was, of course, my law, and I was introduced a few days afterwards on board of his vessel, of which this is, or rather was, its exact counterpart. That same night the schooner sailed upon a cruise, with the particular details of which I will not shock your sense of humanity. Sufficient to say that, during its continuance, many vessels were taken and robbed, and the crews of which were never suffered to escape with life, that they might tell the horrid tales of blood.

"Having established a general rendezvous on the island of Grand Cayman, the Pirates, after a three months' cruise, repaired thither, and after spending three or four weeks in drunken revelry on shore, they sailed again for the North American coast, accompanied by an old grey-headed Pirate, Foscare's father, as he called him, who had agreed to pilot the freebooters to a secure

rendezvous near Boston, which he had himself established several years before. The place I now refer to, is no other than the celebrated haunted house, situated on the margin of the little cove or bay, from which to-night we have been driven by the storms. This house, being occupied at this time by Foscara's brother and his wife, who took good care to keep up its ghostly reputation by various expedients, among the simple-minded inhabitants of its immediate neighbourhood, formed a very convenient depot from whence to supply the Pirates, whilst on the coast, with provisions, and for the safe keeping of any such surplus of their ill-gotten treasures, as they might find inconvenient to keep on board.

"After cruising some four or five months on the coast, during which several vessels were robbed and captured, Foscara ran the schooner on a dark night into this cove, which was known amongst his men as the Pirate's Cove), where he landed, and with myself proceeded to the Haunted House. There, about a week afterwards, my last child was born, and there it was I resolved that this poor innocent should never know the crime-stricken parents from whom its existence was derived.

"In order safely to carry this resolution into effect, I visited Mrs. Carr, and there and then had the inexpressible pleasure of meeting my sweet Alice, and pressing her fair form once again to my throbbing bosom. The humble fisherman's wife was of course greatly astonished at my then present appearance and situation, and the recital of its concomitant events. Being poor, however, and having no children of her own, she was readily induced to take my last infant into her maternal care, upon the same conditions under which she had previously received Alice.

"This important affair being thus satisfactorily adjusted, my next object was to flee for ever from the presence of him by whom I had, a second time, been basely deceived; but where was I to go? Could I who, for the last year, had been among horrid scenes of blood, and in the company of earth's worst of villains, with the foul taint of dark dishonor resting upon my name, bear to exist in the society of the good, the honest, and the pure? No, thought I, that I cannot do. My fate is fixed. My destiny is for ever clouded. With such bitter thoughts as these, gnawing at my heart, I returned to Foscara, and in his vessel soon sailed away from all that was dear to me in the wide world.

"Again, after a short cruise, we arrived at our old rendezvous in the West Indies, from whence I was allowed by Foscara to proceed to Havana, where, according to his will, I took a large house, and lived for years in miserable splendor. Every thing that money could procure was mine; but my heart still yearned towards my children in another land, and I was unhappy and wretched beyond conception. O God, how I have suffered. But I will not murmur at heaven's righteous retribution, which, as sure as God's sun is set in the azure sky, will assuredly fall on all those who set at naught its inestimable blessings.

"After being some three months established in this new abode, Foscara paid me a clandestine visit, bringing with him a little girl about three years of age, whom he introduced as his brother's daughter. She had no mother, he said, and as her father was one of his officers, and wished to have his child well educated, he had prevailed upon him (Foscara) to place her under my charge. To this plan I joyfully yielded a ready assent, and took the little motherless Loretta immediately under my care and protection. With me she remained until she was twelve years of age, during which time, being apt at learning, she obtained a good common English education.

"About the time she reached the age just designated, her father appeared, and stating that he had married again, chose to take his child in his own

keeping. He did so, and as I had loved Loretta with almost a mother's love, her departure seemed to fill my cup of sorrow to its very brim.

"Soon after this, I left Havana, and joining Foscara, whose cruel exploits had made it necessary for him to extend his voyage to a more distant part of the world, accompanied him to the Pacific Ocean, where, cruising among its beautiful islands, and on the Chilian and Peruvian coasts, we remained more than seven years. Thinking that, by this time, his bloody adventures on the Atlantic were well nigh forgotten, and longing to revisit his old haunts, in the West Indies and on the American coast, Foscara returned thither once again. After stopping a short time at Grand Cayman, he proceeded northward, and paid a visit to the Pirate's Cove, in the vicinity of which I was glad to find the Haunted House still remaining.

"Finding this secluded building deserted by its former occupants, and wishing once more to see and abide near my beloved children, I resolved at once to make it my permanent residence. Having done so, I assumed a singular and mysterious bearing, and pretended to be a fortune-teller, in order to ward off any inconvenient suspicions that the character of the House and its former inhabitants might naturally have engendered in the minds of the neighboring people.

"For the purpose of keeping more carefully from my children the secret of their birth and parentage, I visited their supposed mother's house in my newly-assumed capacity of fortune-teller, and finding them both well, and grown up to be fair and beautiful girls, I had no difficulty in getting them soon to return my visit. Thus was formed between these children and their unknown mother, an intimacy which was continued at convenient intervals during the last two years. During this time I conceived a plan, the object of which was to take Clara with me to the West Indies, where I possessed the means in my own right of making her wealthy beyond what her most sanguine anticipations had ever led her to expect. Seeing no feasible way of consummating this cherished plan, except through the agency of Foscara, and knowing that he intended to visit the Cove about this time, I despatched a note to Clara a few days ago, inviting her to come to the Haunted House, on this eventful evening. She came at the appointed time, but not alone, as I supposed she would. Alice came with her, both were seized by Foscara, in accordance with our previous arrangements, and taken on board this vessel, where the villainous intentions of this Bandit of the Ocean towards his own flesh and blood were soon betrayed.

"Then, I resolved to shield those dear ones from his power, and had succeeded only so far as to gain them a temporary respite from his disgusting importunities, when his vessel was suddenly attacked by your boats, and I seized the opportunity thus accidentally offered, to interfere in behalf of my children against the criminal machinations of the ferocious Bandit of the Ocean.

"Thus, when I found the pirates rallying to a second attack, under Montano, and I saw your small but brave band of privateersmen about to be overwhelmed by superior numbers, I hastily assumed my present dress, took arms in my hand, and knowing well the influence of *effect* on the minds of men, under certain circumstances, I suddenly appeared at the head of your heroic companions, and, under the assumed title of the Female Privateer, led them on to final victory. They fought for their lives, I for my children; but, O God! in vain—in vain!"

Here Ernestine paused, and covering her face with her hands, wept bitterly. After this, a short space of awful silence intervened, which, however, was soon broken, by the appearance of our friend Zeke, who, as he hurriedly entered the cabin, spoke thus,—

"How d'y'e dew? I thought I'd jist step deown here, and tell yew that

there's a darnation big wessel, that looks as though 'twas comin' right deown slap agin us. If it hits us, the way we shall all go tew eternal smash, in a leetle less than a wink of lightnin', will be a caution tew people gen'rally."

Before Zeke had finished speaking, Ernestine was on deck, where she distinctly saw, on the schooner's weather-beam, and not near an eighth of a mile distant, the black hull of a brig, which, as it loomed grandly up through the dim haziness of the atmosphere, appeared like a vast, colossal ocean-tomb, about to open wide its horrid doors, only to close them again upon the devoted schooner and her wretched company

CHAPTER XIX.

Thrilling Scene on board the Spanish Brig—The Storm and the Wreck—The Collision—The Death.

ALTHOUGH the crew of La Santa Maria, were, with some few exceptions, partially intoxicated, and consequently in a disordered and undisciplined state; yet, when they found their vessel adrift, as recorded at the close of our sixteenth chapter, a natural instinct of self-preservation, sobered them in a slight degree, and compelled them to put forth strenuous efforts for the safety of the vessel, whose loss, in the midst of the violent storm then raging, would involve that of their own (to themselves at least) precious lives.

These exertions, which, from the absence of the officers competent to command, were irregular and confused, were brought at length to a definite result, through the agency of an old weather-beaten English boatswain, who, with the advantage of being completely sober, was almost as well acquainted with the harbor and its outlet, as were many of the regular branch-pilots of the place.

Seizing the captain's speaking-trumpet, this old sea-dog, as he found the old brig drifting rapidly down towards the narrows, exclaimed, through its medium,—

"All hands, ahoy! Where are you all? Work for your lives! Aloft, there, two hands, and loose the foresail. Take the helm, one of you. Loose the main jib, another."

Whilst these orders were in process of execution, the old boatswain took the helm himself, and sent the man who had had it previously aloft to loose the foretopsail.

The loosing and setting of these sails, which, notwithstanding the violence of the wind, occupied but a very short time, brought the vessel immediately under command of the helm, at which the boatswain still continued, steadily directing the course of the brig towards the open sea.

During the time of these active occurrences on the vessel's deck, Warton had retired to the main cabin, where, finding Bridget, he thus addressed her,—

"Where is the young lady, Bridget, who last came with me on board the vessel?"

"In her bed, the dear tremblin' crathur," was the prompt reply.

"In which state-room is she sleeping?"

"An' why do yez ask that?"

"Because I am weary, and would rest too."

"Bad luck to the likes of you; what do yez mane?" inquired Bridget.

"Good God!" exclaimed Warton, at the same instant, "who is coming now?"

Whilst he was speaking, the door of a state-room, leading into the main cabin, opened, and Loretta, dressed in pure white, calmly entered Warton's presence, and confronting him closely, spoke thus,—

"Your time has come. No earthly aid can help you now. You must die."

"Pshaw, girl, you are joking—you are a little beside yourself. Take a composing draught, and go to bed."

"My bed is beneath the ocean wave," said Loretta, "and you see I am already arrayed for it."

"Come, come, Loretta," resumed Warton, with an assumed cheerfulness which rather equivocally comported with his quivering lip, pale face, and trembling voice, "this foolishness has gone far enough. Stop it at once!"

"Aye, that I will," responded Loretta, in the same calm, unnatural tone of voice she had assumed throughout the previous conversation;—and then, as with the rapidity of thought she drew a loaded pistol from beneath the folds of her dress, she continued:

"By you, Warton, I have been deceived,—betrayed,—ruined! Now I am REVENGED."

As she spoke these last words, Warton fell upon the deck, shot through the brain!

The report of the pistol, and the last loud groan uttered by Warton, as he lay weltering in his blood upon the cabin floor, alarmed poor Clara Winslow, and yet impelled her to leave the couch whereon she was reclining, and repair to the awful scene of action.

"See what I have done," said Loretta, pointing, as Clara entered the cabin, to the dead body of Warton (for so effectual had the shot proved, that he lived but a moment or two after it was fired); "see the dread result of a Spanish woman's vengeance."

"Vengeance is the Lord's," replied Clara, "and to him you should have left it."

"Aye, and left you, too, perhaps, to suffer as I have. Listen, lady. That man was my husband. He deceived me, it is true, with a false marriage, but as I was not a party to that cruel deception, I considered him morally and truly my husband. I knew of your coming here,—heard him talk of it only a few hours ago, with another villain like himself. I heard them deliberately plan your ruin, as, I have no doubt, they had previously planned mine. Soon as I overheard this, I resolved to kill that man, and would have done so then, had he been alone. But Montano was with him, and, as I had attempted the deed once before in the morning, and he had thwarted my intention, I feared he would do so again. Therefore I deferred the execution of my vengeance till a more convenient season. It has come,—passed,—and been fatally improved. Lady, I have done,—I am going now to rest."

Calmly, and without showing the least emotion, Loretta, as she ceased to speak, left the cabin.

Partly divining her intentions, from the unnatural calmness of her manner, Clara hastily followed her to the deck. She reached it in season only to catch one fitful glimpse of the white drapery fluttering wildly in the solemn night wind,—to hear one loud, deep, piercing shriek, and a dead, sullen plunge in the water. Then all was still.

Sickened at heart by the awful scene fate had thus compelled her to witness, the effect of which was heightened by the loud roaring of the wind, the furious foaming of the billows, and the swift flying motion of the vessel, to a pitch of wild sublimity, Clara retired again to the main cabin, where Bridget, who still remained there, thus accosted her:—

"And where did yez lave my mistress?"

"Alas," answered Clara, "she has thrown herself into the sea."

"Och, hone! och, hone!" exclaimed poor Bridget, as the tears gushed swiftly from her eyes; "it's meself that's left alone now in the wide world. Bad luck to the day that iver I saw the say, or a ship, or that devil's own man, that's lyin' dead there on the flure. His master, the devil, has got his sowl this blissed minnit, and much good may it do him, and may it plaze him to kape a long lase of it. Bad luck to yez," she continued, apostrophizing Warton's senseless body, "ye desaved the swatest and best and

blessedest crathur that ever brathed, ye villair, an' I've a grate mind to kill yez agin, dead as ye are."

"Instead of talking in that way," said Clara, "you should pray God to have mercy upon his sinful soul."

"Faith, an' it's meself knows yez spake thrue," replied Bridget, "but if I *should* do as you say, for the blessid life of me I *can't*. Didn't the murtherin' villair come to me wid his blarneyin' tongue when we was away upon the salt say, bad luck to him, and when I made as though I'd do jest as he wanted me to, because I was afraid ov him, seein' I was a lone woman, didn't he as much as tell me to pisen her, so he did. But I told my mistress all about it, and after that she was more like a crazy woman than anything else, and pined away, and muttered in her sleep, and wint round with *death* in her eye, all the time. An' now she has kilt this villair, and a blessed dade it is for more nor her; and then she must go and throw her own blessed life away widout confessin' to the praste, or takin' the holy sacramint. Och, hone! woe's me the day! och, hone!"

With this characteristic exclamation, Bridget ended her desultory speech; and, as a fresh burst of tears came opportunely to her relief, she left the main cabin, and found silence and solitude in her own apartment.

Whilst these singular and exciting scenes were in process of enaction in the brig's cabin, the old boatswain who, in this hour of emergency had assumed the vessel's command, still retained his post at the helm, steered her steadily on, until, as he supposed, she was well clear of the islands, and had obtained sufficient sea-room in which she might ride out the remainder of the storm in safety.

Then, and not till then, did the worthy old seaman resign his responsible situation to one of the sailors, saying as he did so:—

"Keep her about E. S. E., Bill, whilst I try to get the yards braced a tittle to the wind. Come, boys," he added, speaking to two or three seamen who still remained on deck, "man the larboard fore-brace."

At this moment the wind suddenly lulled to a complete calm.

"Hold on, boys, avast hauling a bit, and stand by for what comes next."

"It looks blacked black and bad there in the sou'-west," said one of the sailors, as he pointed to a thick and intensely dark cloud in the quarter indicated.

"We're goin' to have a squall out of that feller, sartin," replied the boatswain.

"There's wind in that, and plenty of it," said another.

"And it's coming here, too, for I heard it whistle," observed a third.

"We can't run afore it," muttered the boatswain, "that's sartin—if we do we shall go ashore. Brace up boys, cheerly!"

Before this order could be executed, the squall burst upon the devoted vessel so furiously, as to render it in an instant, as it were, totally unmanageable. The first heavy puff of wind that came, blew away the foresail, and the loss of the fore-topsail immediately followed. The scene which succeeded was at once terrific and appalling. Cloud upon cloud seemed to have piled themselves together, as if to exclude the clear sky for ever from the mariner's eager vision. From the midst of these dark clouds, came forth loud thunder, at first roaring and crashing, then reverberating round the horizon with a noise resembling the distant, but simultaneous discharge of ten thousand parks of artillery. Ever and anon the pitchy darkness of the night was momentarily relieved by the vivid flashes of sulphureous lightning, which, as it fitfully passed away, left it shadowed over the ocean, more intense even than before. Amid all this, combined with the terrific and howling wind, which seemed to whirl and blow from all points of the compass at once, the brig's foremast, creaked, snapped, and fell into the boiling sea.

Luckily for all within the scope of its influence, the squall subsided almost as suddenly as it had arisen, so that, in the space of fifteen minutes from the time it burst upon the brig, its only visible traces were a rough sea, a light breeze from the S.W. and her own black and unsightly wreck.

"We are done for, now, that's sartin'," said sailor Bill to the boatswain, as soon as the violence of the squall had in a measure subsided.

"Yes, Bill," answered the old sea dog, "We've got to go ashore some where, that's a fact, if the wind holds from sou'west, as it seems likely to do."

"Whereabouts should you judge the old brig's about, now?" asked Bill.

"I can't say for sartin'," answered the boatswain, "for it's been so blasted dark the last half hour, that I haven't been able to get an observation. I think though, the old craft must be somewhere between Chelsea beach and Nahant."

"Then I spose all we've got to do now, is to let her drift," replied Bill.

"That is about all we can do, sartin'."

"That being the case I'm goin' below," said Bill.

"What for?"

"To get ready to go ashore, to be sure."

So saying, Bill, with the rest of the sailors went below to look after their dunnage, leaving the old boatswain, as they expressed it, to take care of the deck or follow them, they didn't care a d—m which.

The boatswain chose to remain on deck, but being wearied by the uncommon physical exertions, the dangers of the night had called forth, he soon sank down beneath the bulwarks, and buttoning his pea-jacket close around his body, fell asleep.

After sleeping about half an hour, he was suddenly roused from his slumbers, by a loud voice, which seemed, as he afterwards said, to be hailing him from the clouds, and uttered the following words:—

"I say, yew! hallo, the vessel. What are ye about?"

"Hallo yourself," involuntarily answered the boatswain, who, in jumping to his feet, discovered the dark hull of a schooner, directly under his lee. What do you want?"

"What?" replied the same sharp loud voice that had spoken before, "wall that's darnation cute, any how. Don't yew see that your vessel is runnin' right slap down agin our'n. Your're bigger than we are, and if you hit us, we shall all go tew kingdom come, co-swollop, in one bunch. Say, yew, can't yew back your team eout a little?"

Perceiving, at a single glance, that a collision between the two vessels was inevitable, unless the schooner could be got off immediately before the wind, the old boatswain replied:—

"Put your helm hard up."

"Our rudder is gone!" answered a voice from the schooner.

"So is ours," replied the boatswain. There's no help for it, we must come together. The wind's light though, we shan't strike hard. Stand by all of you, to jump on board the brig as soon as there's a chance.

The next moment, a dull, heavy, crashing sound, announced that the collision had taken place. A short scene of indescribable confusion immediately followed. For the space of a few minutes the two vessels remained so close together, as to seem both merged in one. This short period of time was eagerly improved by those on board the schooner, who still retained their ordinary powers of locomotion, in getting the best way they could on board the brig. Even the wounded were impelled by their vivid sense of the supposed danger, to put forth the most incredible efforts for the safety of their own precious lives. Among this latter class of unfortunates, was Ernestine, the Female Privateer, who, notwithstanding her mortal wound,

was the first, through the aid of an almost superhuman effort, to reach the deck of the La Santa Maria. Thither she was immediately followed by Alcott, our friend Ezekiel, and as many of the schooner's company (Mr. Brown of the Shooting Star included), as were able to escape from their wreck.

Soon as the Flying Fox was struck by the drifting brig, the concussion reached the ears of the dying Bandit of the Ocean, as he still lay weltering in his blood in her main cabin. At that time, death was struggling hard to obtain its final mastery over his strong nature. Collecting for one last grand effort, all his expiring energies, the wretched man sprang like a wounded bear from his couch of pain, rushed upon his own deck, gained the brig's bulwarks, where he endeavored to poise himself upon his feet, gasped, reeled, and fell at the feet of Clara Winslow!

Some time previous to this, our Yankee friend, Zeke, having jumped with surprising agility from the schooner to the brig's deck, addressed the old boatswain, who happened to be the first person he met, as follows:—

"Say yew."

"Well, say on," was the gruff response.

"Are yew the capun of this vessel?"

"No, I am the boatswain."

"Yees, wall—that's a kind of squire, like, I s'pose—where is the capun?"

"The last I see of him he was going ashore."

"Shaw, you don't say. Then 'twant him, that answered me jest now, when I squawled eout so like all natur, was it?"

"No,—it was me."

"You don't say. You've got an amazin' strong voice, that's a fact. I should think you might be well calculated for a methodist preacher. Sinners would be obliged tew knock under tew you, unless they was mighty fond of thunder. Couldn't back your vessel eout, as I axed yew tew, I see?"

"Back her out, where?" asked the boatswain.

"Wall, I didn't keer much where, if yew only got the darned thing out of our way."

"Who are you, any-how?" said the boatswain.

"Wall, my name's Snodgrass—Ezekiel P. Yew don't know anybody of that name, I s'pose, dew yew? It's kind of a scarce name all round. Dad says it's in the Scriptor somewhere, but I ain't never feound it."

"You ain't been to sea long, I guess," said the boatswain.

"Wall, no—only abeout tew days and a haaf, and that's three longer than ever I'll be gone ag'in. I ain't known who, where, nor what I was, the hull time. Fust, I was sea-sick, and then I thought I should die, sure enough. Arter that, they sot me tew eatin' fat beef with my fingers, and that eenamost killed me. Then I got a fightin' with a passle of darnation pirates, who'd as soon eat a feller as look at him. Then I fell eout of the tarnal vessel, co-slap intew the water; got darned near drowndid, and soaked clean threw. Then, tew crown all, yew must run your infernal big team ag'in our'n, and come so near killin' the hull lot, that there's no fun in it. And I don't see neow, but that we're nearly as bad off as we was afore. Where dew yew s'pose we shall get to next?"

"Ashore," replied the boatswain.

"That's jist where I want tew go, by jingo. If ever I'm so lucky as tew step my foot on solid greound ag'in, afore I'll go tew sea, I'll plant myself six foot under it—I will, by thunder."

"Stick to that, old boy," replied the boatswain, "and you'll be right as a brick."

So saying, he turned and walked aft, leaving Zeke, either to converse with himself, or remain silent for want of an auditor.

But Zeke was cold and cheerless, and was resolved to get a warmer berth than the brig's deck, if there was one to be had. He, therefore, with that peculiar instinct which is the characteristic of his countrymen, managed to find his way to the captain's room, in which were creature comforts enough to enable him to forget the hardships of the last few hours. Of these he speedily availed himself, and having mixed a stiff "night-glass" he threw himself, feet included, on a settee, and endeavored to find forgetfulness of his late troubles in the perusal of the following tale, which happened to catch his eye in an open volume, no doubt the property of the betrayed Loretta.

THE CAPTIVE.

It was on a November morning of the year —, and about half an hour before daybreak, that the door of an obscure house in the Calle St. Agostino, at the Havannah, was cautiously opened, and a man put out his head, and gazed up and down the street as if to assure himself that no one was near. All was silence and solitude at that early hour, and presently the door opening wider gave egress to a young man muffled in a shabby cloak, who, with hurried but stealthy step, took the direction of the port. Hastening noiselessly through the deserted streets and lanes, he soon reached the quay, upon which were numerous storehouses of sugar and other merchandise, and piles of dyewoods, placed there in readiness for shipment. Upon approaching one of the latter, the young man gave a low whistle, and the next instant a figure glided from between two huge heaps of logwood, and seizing his hand, drew him into the hiding-place from which it had just emerged.

A quarter of an hour elapsed, and the first faint tinge of day just began to appear, when the noise of oars was heard, and presently in the grey light a boat was seen darting out of the mist that hung over the water. As it neared the quay, the two men left place of concealment, and one of them, pointing to the person who sat in the stern of the boat, pressed his companion's hand, and hurrying away, soon disappeared amid the labyrinth of goods and warehouses.

The boat came up to the stairs. Of the three persons it contained, two sailors, who had been rowing, remained in it; the third, whose dress and appearance were those of the master of a merchant vessel, sprang on shore, and walked in the direction of the town. As he passed before the logwood, the stranger stepped out and accosted him.

The seaman's first movement, and not an unnatural one, considering he was at the Havannah, and the day not yet broken, was to half draw his cutlass from its scabbard; but the next moment he let it drop back again. The appearance of the person who addressed him was, if not very prepossessing, at least not much calculated to inspire alarm. He was a young man of handsome and even noble countenance, but pale and sickly-looking, and having the appearance of one bowed down by sorrow and illness.

"Are you the captain of the Philadelphia schooner that is on the point of sailing?" inquired he in a trembling, anxious voice.

The seaman looked hard in the young man's face, and answered in the affirmative. The stranger's eye sparkled.

"Can I have a passage for myself, a friend, and two children?" demanded he.

The sailor hesitated before he replied, and again scanned his interlocutor from head to foot with his keen grey eyes. There was something inconsistent, not to say suspicious, in the whole appearance of the stranger. His cloak was stained and shabby, and his words humble; but there was a fire in his eye that flashed forth seemingly in spite of himself, and his voice had that

particular tone which the habit of command alone gives. The result of the sailor's scrutiny was apparently unfavorable, and he shook his head negatively. The young man gasped for breath, and drew a well-filled purse from his bosom.

"I will pay beforehand," said he, "I will pay whatever you ask."

The American started; the contrast was too great between the heavy purse and large offers and the beggarly exterior of the applicant. He shook his head more decidedly than before. The stranger bit his lip till the blood came, his breast heaved, his whole manner was that of one who abandons himself to despair. The sailor felt a touch of compassion.

"Young man," said he in Spanish, "you are no merchant. What do you want at Philadelphia?"

"I want to go to Philadelphia. Here is my passage money, here my pass. You are captain of the schooner. What do you require more?"

There was a wild vehemence in the tone and manner in which these words were spoken, that disposed the seaman still more against his would-be passenger. Again he shook his head, and was about to pass on. The young man seized his arm.

"*Por el amor de Dios, Capitan*, take me with you. Take my unhappy wife and my poor children."

"Wife and children!" repeated the captain. "Have you a wife and children?"

The stranger groaned.

"You have committed no crime? you are not flying from the arm of justice?" asked the American sharply.

"So may God help me, no crime whatever have I committed," replied the young man, raising his hand towards heaven.

"In that case I will take you. Keep your money till you are on board in an hour at furthest I weigh anchor."

The stranger answered nothing, but as if relieved from some dreadful anxiety, drew a deep breath, and with a grateful look to heaven, hurried from the spot.

When Captain Ready, of the smart-sailing Baltimore-built schooner, "The Speedy Tom," returned on board his vessel, and descended into the cabin, he was met by his new passenger, on whose arm was hanging a lady of dazzling beauty and grace. She was very plainly dressed, as were also two beautiful children who accompanied her; but their clothes were of the finest materials, and the elegance of their appearance contrasted strangely with the rags and wretchedness of their husband and father. Lying on a chest, however, Captain Ready saw a pelisse and two children's cloaks of the shabbiest description, and which the new comers had evidently just taken off.

The seaman's suspicions returned at all this disguise and mystery; and a doubt again arose in his mind as to the propriety of taking passengers who came on board under such equivocal circumstances. A feeling of compassion, however, added to the graceful manners and sweet voice of the lady, decided him to persevere in his original intention; and politely requesting her to make herself at home in the cabin, he returned on deck. Ten minutes later the anchor was weighed, and the schooner in motion.

The sun had risen and dissipated the morning mist. Some distance astern of the now fast-advancing schooner rose the streets and houses of the Havannah, and the forest of masts occupying its port; to the right frowned the castle of the Moro, whose threatening embrasures the vessel was rapidly approaching. The husband and wife stood upon the cabin stairs, gazing with breathless anxiety, at the fortress.

As the schooner arrived opposite the castle, a small postern leading out upon the jetty was opened, and an officer and six soldiers issued forth. Four

men, who had been lying on their oars in a boat at the jetty stairs, sprang up.

The soldiers jumped in, and the rowers pulled in the direction of the schooner.

"*Jesus Maria y José!*" exclaimed the lady.

"*Madre de Dios!*" groaned her husband.

At this moment the fort made a signal.

"Up with the helm!" shouted Captain Ready.

The schooner rounded to; the boat came flying over the water, and in a few moments was alongside. The soldiers and their commander stepped on board.

The latter was a very young man, possessed of a true Spanish countenance—grave and stern. In few words he desired the captain to produce his ship's papers, and parade his seamen and passengers. The papers were handed to him without an observation; he glanced his eye over them, inspected the sailors one after the other, and then looked in the direction of the cabin, expecting the appearance of the passengers, who at length came on deck, the stranger carrying one of the children and his wife the other. The Spanish officer started.

"Do you know that you have a state-criminal on board?" thundered he to the captain. "What is the meaning of this?"

"*Santa Virgen!*" exclaimed the lady, and fell fainting into her husband's arms. There was a moment's deep silence. All present seemed touched by the misfortunes of the youthful pair. The young officer sprang to the assistance of the husband, and relieving him of the child, enabled him to give his attention to his wife, whom he laid gently down upon the deck.

"I am grieved at the necessity," said the officer, "but you must return with me."

The American captain, who had been contemplating this scene apparently quite unmoved, now ejected from his mouth a huge quid of tobacco, replaced it by another, and then stepping up to the officer, touched him on the arm, and offered him the pass he had received from his passengers. The Spaniard waved him back almost with disgust. There was, in fact, something very unpleasant in the apathy and indifference with which the Yankee contemplated the scene of despair and misery before him. Such cold-bloodedness appeared premature and unnatural in a man who could not yet have seen more than five-and-twenty summers. A close observer, however, would have remarked that the muscles of his face were beginning to be agitated by a slight, convulsive twitching, when, at that moment, his mate stepped up to him and whispered something. Approaching the Spaniard for the second time, Ready invited him to partake of a slight refreshment in the cabin, a courtesy which it is usual for the captains of merchant vessels to pay to the visiting officer. The Spaniard accepted, and they went below.

The steward was busy covering the cabin table with plates of Boston crackers, olives, and almonds, and he then uncorked a bottle of fine old Madeira that looked like liquid gold as it gurgled into the glasses. Captain Ready seemed quite a different person in the cabin and on deck. Throwing aside his dry say-little manners, he was good humor and civility personified, as he lavished on his guest all those obliging attentions which no one better knows the use of than a Yankee when he wishes to administer a dose of what he would call "soft sawder." Ready soon persuaded the officer of his entire guiltlessness in the unpleasant affair that had just occurred; and the Spaniard told him by no means to make himself uneasy, that the pass had been given for another person, and that the prisoner was a man of great importance, whom he considered himself excessively lucky to have been able to recapture.

Most Spaniards like a glass of Madeira, particularly when olives serve as the whet. The American's wine was first-rate, and the officer seemed to find himself particularly comfortable in the cabin. He did not forget, however, to desire that the prisoner's baggage might be placed in the boat, and, with a courteous apology for leaving him a moment, Captain Ready hastened to give the necessary orders.

When the captain reached the deck, a heart-rending scene presented itself to him. His unfortunate passenger was seated on one of the hatchways, despair legibly written on his pale features. The eldest child had climbed upon his knee, and looked wistfully into its father's face, and his wife hung round his neck sobbing audibly. A young negress, who had come on board with them, held the other child, an infant a few months old, in her arms. Ready took the prisoner's hand.

"I hate tyranny," said he, "as every American must. Had you confided your position to me a few hours sooner, I would have got you safe off. But now I see nothing to be done. We are under the cannon of the fort, that could sink us in two seconds. Who and what are you? Say quickly, for time is precious."

"I am a Columbian by birth," replied the young man, "an officer in the patriot army. I was taken prisoner at the battle of Cachiri, and brought to the Havannah with several companions in misfortune. My wife and children were allowed to follow me, for the Spaniards were not sorry to have one of the first families of Columbia entirely in their power. Four months I lay in a frightful dungeon, with rats and venomous reptiles for my only companions. It is a miracle that I am still alive. Out of seven hundred prisoners, but a handful of emaciated objects remain to testify to the barbarous cruelty of our captors. A fortnight back they took me out of my prison, a mere skeleton, in order to preserve my life, and quartered me in a house in the city. Two days ago, however, I heard that I was to return to the dungeon. It was my death-warrant, for I was convinced I could not live another week in that frightful cell. A true friend, in spite of the danger, and by dint of gold, procured me a pass that had belonged to a Spaniard dead of the yellow fever. By means of that paper, and by your assistance, we trusted to escape. *Captain!*" said the young man, starting to his feet, and clasping Ready's hand, his hollow sunken eye gleaming wildly as he spoke, "my only hope is in you. If you give me up I am a dead man, for I have sworn to perish rather than return to the miseries of my prison. I fear not death—I am a soldier; but alas for my poor wife, my helpless, deserted children!"

The Yankee captain passed his hand across his forehead with the air of a man who is puzzled, then turned away without a word, and walked to the other end of the vessel. Giving a glance upwards and around him that seemed to take in the appearance of the sky, and the probabilities of good or bad weather, he ordered some of the sailors to bring the luggage of the passenger upon deck, but not to put it into the boat. He told the steward to give the soldiers and boatmen a couple of bottles of rum, and then, after whispering for a few seconds in the ear of his mate, he approached the cabin stairs. As he passed the Columbian family, he said, in a low voice, and without looking at them,

"Trust in Him who helps when need is at the greatest."

Scarcely had he uttered the words, when the Spanish officer sprang up the cabin stairs, and as soon as he saw the prisoners, ordered them into the boat. Ready, however, interfered, and begged him to allow his unfortunate passenger to take a farewell glass before he left the vessel. To this the young officer good-naturedly consented, and himself led the way into the cabin.

They took their places at the table, and the captain opened a fresh bottle, at the very first glass of which the Spaniard's eye glistened, his lips smacked. The conversation became more and more lively; Ready spoke Spanish fluently, and gave proof of a joviality which no one would have suspected to form a part of his character, dry and saturnine as his manner usually was. A quarter of an hour or more had passed in this way, when the schooner gave a sudden lurch, and the glasses and bottles jingled and clattered together on the table. The Spaniard started up.

"Captain!" cried he furiously, "the schooner is sailing!"

"Certainly," replied the captain, very coolly. "You surely did not expect, Señor, that we were going to miss the finest breeze that ever filled a sail."

Without answering, the officer rushed upon deck, and looked in the direction of the Moro. They had left the fort full two miles behind them. The Spaniard literally foamed at the mouth.

"Soldiers!" vociferated he, "seize the captain and the prisoners. We are betrayed. And you, steersman, put about."

And betrayed they assuredly were; for while the officer had been quaffing his Madeira, and the soldiers and boatmen regaling themselves with the steward's rum, sail had been made on the vessel without noise or bustle, and, favoured by the breeze, she was rapidly increasing her distance from land. Meantime Ready preserved the utmost composure.

"Betrayed!" repeated he, replying to the vehement ejaculation of the Spaniard. "Thank God we are Americans, and have no trust to break, nothing to betray. As to this prisoner of yours, however, he must remain here."

"Here?" sneered the Spaniard—"We'll soon see about that, you treacherous!"

"Here," quietly interrupted the captain. "Do not give yourself needless trouble, Señor; your soldiers' guns are, as you perceive, in our hands, and my six sailors well provided with pistols and cutlasses. We are more than a match for your ten, and at the first suspicious movement you make, we fire on you."

The officer looked around, and became speechless when he beheld the soldiers' muskets piled upon the deck, and guarded by two well-armed and determined-looking sailors.

"You would not dare"—exclaimed he.

"Indeed would I," replied Ready; "but I hope you will not force me to it. You must remain a few hours longer my guest, and then you can return to port in your boat. You will get off with a month's arrest, and as compensation, you will have the satisfaction of having delivered a brave enemy from despair and death."

The officer ground his teeth together, but even yet he did not give up all hopes of getting out of the scrape. Resistance was evidently out of the question, his men's muskets being in the power of the Americans, who, with cocked pistols and naked cutlasses, stood on guard over them. The soldiers themselves did not seem very full of fight, and the boatmen were negroes, and consequently non-combatants. But there were several trincadores and armed cutters cruising about, and if he could manage to hail or make a signal to one of them, the schooner would be brought to, and the tables turned. He gazed earnestly at a sloop that just then crossed them at no great distance, staggering in towards the harbour under press of sail. The American seemed to read his thoughts.

"Do me the honour, Señor," said he, "to partake of a slight *dejeuner-à-la-fourchette* in the cabin. We will also hope for the pleasure of your company at dinner. Supper you will probably eat at home."

And so saying, he motioned courteously towards the cabin stairs. The

Spaniard looked in the seaman's face, and read in its decided expression, and in the slight smile of intelligence that played upon it, that he must not hope either to resist or outwit his polite but peremptory entertainer. So, making a virtue of necessity, he descended into the cabin.

The joy of the refugees at finding themselves thus unexpectedly rescued from the captivity they so much dreaded, may be more easily imagined than described. They remained for some time without uttering a word; but the tears of the lady, and the looks of heartfelt gratitude of her husband, were the best thanks they could offer their deliverer.

On went the schooner; fainter and fainter grew the outline of the land, till at length it sank under the horizon, and nothing was visible but the castle of the Moro and the topmasts of the vessels riding at anchor off the Havannah. They were twenty miles from land, far enough for the safety of the fugitive, and as far as it was prudent for those to come who had to return to port in an open boat. Ready's good-humour and hearty hospitality had reconciled him with the Spaniard, who seemed to have forgotten the trick that had been played him, and the punishment he would incur for having allowed himself to be entrapped. He shook the captain's hand as he stepped over the side, the negroes dipped their oars into the water, and in a short time the boat was seen from the schooner as a mere speck upon the vast expanse of ocean.

The voyage was prosperous, and in eleven days the vessel reached its destination. The Columbian officer, his wife and children, were received with the utmost kindness and hospitality by the young and handsome wife of Captain Ready, in whose house they took up their quarters. They remained there two months, living in the most retired manner with the double object of economizing their scanty resources, and of avoiding the notice of the Philadelphians, who, at that time, viewed the patriots of Southern America with no very favourable eye. The insurrection against the Spaniards had injured the commerce between the United States and the Spanish colonies, and the purely mercantile and lucre-loving spirit of the Philadelphians made them look with dislike on any persons or circumstances who caused a diminution of their trade and profits.

At the expiration of the above-mentioned time, an opportunity offered of a vessel going to Marguerite, then the head-quarters of the patriots, and the place where the first expeditions were formed under Bolivar against the Spaniards. Estoval (that was the name by which the Columbian officer was designated in his passport) gladly seized the opportunity, and taking a grateful and affectionate leave of his deliverer, embarked with his wife and children. They had been several days at sea when they remembered that they had forgotten to tell their American friends their real name. The latter had never enquired it, and the Estovals being accustomed to address one another by their Christian names, it had never been mentioned.

Meantime, the good seed Captain Ready had sown, brought the honest Yankee but a sorry harvest. His employers had small sympathy with the feelings of humanity that had induced him to run the risk of carrying off a Spanish state-prisoner from under the guns of a Spanish battery. Their correspondents at the Havannah had had some trouble and difficulty on account of the affair, and had written to Philadelphia to complain of it. Ready lost his ship, and could only obtain from his employers certificates of character of so ambiguous and unsatisfactory a nature, that for a long time he found it impossible to get the command of another vessel.

In the autumn of 1824, I left Baltimore, as supercargo of the brig Per-

severance, Captain Ready. Proceeding to the Havannah, we discharged our cargo, took in another, partly on our own account, partly on that of the Spanish government, and sailed for Callao on the 1st December, exactly eight days before the celebrated battle of Ayacucho dealt the finishing blow to Spanish rule on the southern continent of America, and established the independence of Peru. The Spaniards, however, still held the fortress of Callao, which, after having been taken by Martin and Cochrane, four years previously, had again been treacherously delivered up, and was now blockaded by sea and land by the patriots, under the command of General Hualero, who had marched an army from Columbia to assist the cause of liberty in Peru.

Of all these circumstances we were ignorant, until we arrived within a few leagues of the port of Callao. Then we learned them from a vessel that spoke us, but we still advanced, hoping to find an opportunity to slip in. In attempting to do so, we were seized by one of the blockading vessels, and the captain and myself taken out and sent to Lima. We were allowed to take our personal property with us, but of brig or cargo we heard nothing for some time. I was not a little uneasy; for the whole of my savings, during ten years' clerkship in the house of a Baltimore merchant, were embarked in the form of a venture on board the *Perseverance*.

The captain, who had a fifth of the cargo, and was half owner of the brig, took things very philosophically, and passed his days with a penknife and stick in his hand, whittling away, Yankee fashion; and when he had chopped up his stick, he would set to work notching and hacking the first chair, bench, or table that came under his hand. If any one spoke to him of the brig, he would grind his teeth a little, but said nothing, and whittled away harder than ever. This was his character, however. I had known him for five years that he had been in the employ of the same house as myself, and he had always passed for a singularly reserved and taciturn man. During our voyages whole weeks had sometimes elapsed without his uttering a word except to give the necessary command.

In spite of his peculiarities, Captain Ready was generally liked by his brother captains, and by all who knew him. When he did speak, his words (perhaps the more prized on account of their rarity) were always listened to with attention. There was a benevolence and mildness in the tones of his voice that rendered it quite musical, and never failed to prepossess in his favor all those who heard him, and to make them forget the usual sullenness of his manner. During the whole time he had sailed for the Baltimore house, he had shown himself a model of trustworthiness and seamanship, and enjoyed the full confidence of his employers. It was said, however, that his early life had not been irreproachable; that when he first, and as a very young man, had command of a Philadelphia ship, something had occurred which had thrown a stain upon his character. What this was, I had never heard very distinctly stated. He had favored the escape of a malefactor, ensnared some officers who were sent on board his vessel to seize him. All this was very vague; but what was positive was the fact that the owners of the ship he then commanded had had much trouble about the matter, and Ready himself remained long unemployed, until the rapid increase of trade between the United States and the infant republics of South America had caused seamen of ability to be in much request, and he had again obtained command of a vessel.

We were seated one afternoon outside the French coffee-house at Lima. The party consisted of seven or eight captains of merchant vessels that had been seized, and they were doing their best to kill the time, some smoking, others chewing, but nearly all with penknife and stick in hand, whittling as for a wager. On their first arrival at Lima, and adoption of this coffee-house as a place of resort, the tables and chairs belonging to it seemed in a

fair way to be cut to pieces by these indefatigable whittlers; but the coffee-house keeper had hit upon a plan to avoid such deterioration of his chattels, and had placed in every corner of the room bundles of sticks, at which his Yankee customers cut and notched, till the coffee-house assumed the appearance of a carpenter's shop.

The costume and airs of the patriots, as they called themselves, were no small source of amusement to us. They strutted about in all the pride of their fire-new freedom, regular caricatures of soldiers. One would have on a Spanish jacket, part of the spoils of Ayacucho—another an American one, which he had bought from some sailor—a third, a monk's robe, cut short, and fashioned in a sort of doublet. Here was a shako wanting a brim, in company with a gold-laced velvet coat of the time of Phillip V.; there, a hussar jacket and an old-fashioned cocked hat. The volunteers were the best clothed, also in a great part from the plunder of the battle of Ayacucho. Their uniforms were laden with gold and silver lace, and some of the officers, not satisfied with two epaulettes, had half a dozen hanging before and behind, as well as on their shoulders.

As we sat smoking, whittling, and quizzing the patriots, a side-door of the coffee-house was suddenly opened, and an officer came out whose appearance was calculated to give us a far more favorable opinion of South American *militaires*. He was a man about thirty years of age, plainly but tastefully dressed, and of that unassuming, engaging demeanor which is so often found the companion of the greatest decision of character, and which contrasted with the martial deportment of a young man who followed him, and who, although in much more showy uniform, was evidently his inferior in rank. We bowed as he passed before us, and he acknowledged the salutation by raising his cocked hat slightly, but courteously, from his head. He was passing on, when his eye suddenly fell upon Captain Ready, who was standing a little on one side, notching away at his tenth or twelfth stick, and at that moment happened to look up. The officer started, gazed earnestly at Ready for the space of a moment, and then, with delight expressed on his countenance, sprang forward, and clasped him in his arms.

"Captain Ready!"

"That is my name," quietly replied the captain.

"Is it possible you do not know me?" exclaimed the officer.

Ready looked hard at him, and seemed a little in doubt. At last he shook his head.

"You do not know me?" repeated the other, almost reproachfully, and then whispered something in his ear.

It was now Ready's turn to start and look surprised. A smile of pleasure lit up his countenance as he grasped the hand of the officer, who took his arm and dragged him away into the house.

A quarter of an hour elapsed, during which we lost ourselves in conjectures as to who this acquaintance of Ready's could be. At the end of that time the captain and his new (or old) friend reappeared. The latter walked away, and we saw him enter the government house, while Ready joined us, as silent and phlegmatic as ever, and resumed his stick and penknife. In reply to our inquiries as to who the officer was, he only said that he belonged to the army besieging Callao, and that he had once made a voyage as his passenger. This was all the information we could extract from our taciturn friend; but we saw plainly that the officer was somebody of importance, from the respect paid him by the soldiers and others whom he met.

The morning following this incident we were sitting over our chocolate, when an orderly dragoon came to ask for Captain Ready. The captain went out to speak to him, and presently returning, went on with his breakfast very deliberately.

When he had done, he asked me if I were inclined for a little excursion out of the town, which would, perhaps, keep us a couple of days away. I willingly accepted, heartily sick as I was of the monotonous life we were leading. We packed up our valises, took our pistols and cutlasses, and went out.

To my astonishment, the orderly was waiting at the door with two magnificent Spanish chargers, splendidly accoutred. They were the finest horses I had seen in Peru, and my curiosity was strongly excited to know who had sent them, and whither we were going. To my questions, Ready replied that we were going to visit the officer whom he had spoken to on the preceding day, and who was with the besieging army, and had once been his passenger, but he declared he did not know his name or rank.

We had left the town about a mile behind us, when we heard the sound of cannon in the direction we were approaching; it increased as we went on, and about a mile further we met a string of carts, full of wounded, going in to Lima. Here and there we caught sight of parties of marauders, who disappeared as soon as they saw our orderly. I felt a great longing and curiosity to witness the fight that was evidently going on—not, however, that I was particularly desirous of taking share in it, or putting myself in the way of the bullets. My friend the captain jogged on by my side, taking little heed of the roar of the cannon, which to him was no novelty; for, having passed his life at sea, he had had more than one encounter with pirates and other rough customers, and been many times under the fire of batteries, running in and out of blockaded American ports. His whole attention was now engrossed by the management of his horse, which was somewhat restive, and he, like most sailors, was a very indifferent rider.

On reaching the top of a small rising ground, we beheld to the left the dark frowning bastions of the fort, and to the right the village of Bella Vista, which, although commanded by the guns of Callao, had been chosen as the headquarters of the besieging army—the houses being, for the most part, built of huge blocks of stone, and offering sufficient resistance to the balls. The orderly pointed out to us the various batteries, and especially one which was just completed, and was situated about three hundred yards from the fortress. It had not yet been used, and was still masked from the enemy by some houses which stood just in its front.

While we were looking about us, Ready's horse, irritated by the noise of the firing, the flashes of the guns, and, perhaps, more than anything, by the captain's bad riding, became more and more unmanageable, and at last, taking the bit between his teeth, started off at a mad gallop, closely followed by myself and the orderly, to whose horses the panic seemed to have communicated itself. The clouds of dust raised by the animals' feet, prevented us from seeing whither we were going. Suddenly, there was an explosion that seemed to shake the very earth under us, and Ready, the orderly, and myself, lay sprawling with our horses on the ground. Before we could collect our senses, and get up, we were nearly deafened by a tremendous roar of artillery near us, and at the same moment a shower of stones and fragments of brick and mortar clattered about our ears.

The orderly was stunned by his fall; I was bruised and bewildered. Ready was the only one who seemed in no ways put out, and with his usual phlegm, extricating himself from under his horse, he came to our assistance. I was soon on my legs, and endeavoring to discover the cause of all this uproar.

Our unruly steeds had brought us close to the new battery, at the very moment that the train of a mine under the houses in front of it had been fired. The instant the obstacle was removed, the artillerymen had opened a tremendous fire on the fort. The Spaniards were not slow to return the

compliment, and fortunate it was that a solid fragment of wall intervened between us and their fire, or all our troubles about the brig, and everything else, would have been at an end. Already upwards of twenty balls had struck the old broken wall. Shot and shell were flying in every direction; the smoke was stifling, the uproar indescribable. It was so dark, with the smoke and dust from the fallen houses, that we could not see an arm's length before us. The captain asked two or three soldiers who were hurrying by, where the battery was; but they were in too great haste to answer, and it was only when the smoke cleared away a little, that we discovered we were not twenty paces from it. Ready seized my arm, and pulling me with him, I, the next moment, found myself standing beside a gun, under cover of the breastworks.

The battery consisted of thirty twenty-four, and thirty-six pounders, served with a zeal and courage that far exceeded anything I had expected to find in the patriot army. The fellows were really more than brave, they were foolhardy. They danced rather than walked round the guns, and exhibited a contempt of death that could not well be surpassed. As to drawing the guns back from the embrasures while they loaded them, they never dreamed of such a thing. They stood jeering and scoffing the Spaniards, and bidding them take better aim.

It must be remembered, that this was only three months after the battle of Ayacucho, the greatest feat of arms which the South American patriots had achieved during the whole of their protracted struggle with Spain. That victory had literally electrified the troops, and inspired them with a courage and contempt of their enemy, that frequently showed itself, as on this occasion, in acts of the greatest daring and temerity.

At the gun by which Ready and myself took our stand, half the artillerymen were already killed, and we had scarcely come there, when a cannon shot took the head off a man standing close to me. The wind of the ball was so great that I believe it would have suffocated me, had I not fortunately been standing sideways in the battery. At the same moment, something hot splashed over my neck and face, and nearly blinded me. I looked, and saw the man lying without his head before me. I cannot describe the sickening feeling that came over me. It was not the first man I had seen killed in my life, but it was the first whose blood and brains had spurted into my face. My knees shook and my head swam; I was obliged to lean against the wall, or I should have fallen.

Another ball fell close beside me, and, strange to say, it brought me partly to myself again; and by the time a third and fourth had bounced into the battery, I began to take things pretty coolly—my heart beating quicker than usual, I acknowledge; but, nevertheless, I began to feel an indescribable pleasure, a mischievous joy, if I may so call it, in the peril and excitement of the scene.

Whilst I was getting over my terrors, my companion was moving about the battery with his usual *sang froid*, reconnoitring the enemy. He ran no useless risk, kept himself well behind the breastworks, stooping down when necessary, and taking all proper care of himself. When he had completed his reconnoissance, he, to my no small astonishment, took off his coat and neckhandkerchief, the latter of which he tied tight round his waist, then taking a rammer from the hand of a soldier who had just fallen, he ordered or rather signed, to the artilleryman to draw the gun back.

There was something so cool and decided in his manner, that they obeyed without testifying any surprise at his interference, and as though he had been one of their own officers. He loaded the piece, had it drawn forward again, pointed, and fired it. He then went to the next gun, and did the same thing there. He seemed so perfectly at home in the battery that

nobody ever dreamed of disputing his authority, and the two guns were entirely under his direction. I had now got used to the thing myself, so I went forward and offered my services, which, in the scarcity of men (so many having been killed), were not to be refused, and I helped to draw the guns backwards and forwards, and load them. The captain kept running from one to the other, pointing them, and admirably well, too; for every shot took effect within a circumference of a few feet on the bastion in front of us.

This lasted nearly an hour, at the end of which time the fire was considerably slackened, for the greater part of our guns had become unserviceable. Only about a dozen kept up the fire (the ball I was going to say), and amongst them were the two that Ready commanded. He had given them time to cool after firing, where most of the others, in their desperate haste and eagerness, had neglected that precaution. Although the patriots had now been fifteen years at war with the Spaniards, they were still very indifferent artillerymen—for artillery had little to do in most of their fights, which were generally decided by cavalry and infantry, and even in that of Ayacucho there were only a few small field-pieces in use on either side. The mountainous nature of the country, intersected, too, by mighty rivers, and the want of good roads, were the reasons of the insignificant part played by the artillery in these wars.

Whilst we were thus hard at work, who should enter the battery but the very officer we had left Lima to visit. He was attended by a numerous staff, and was evidently of a very high rank. He stood a little back, watching every movement of Captain Ready, and rubbing his hands with visible satisfaction. Just at that moment the captain fired one of the guns, and, as the smoke cleared away a little, we saw the opposite bastion rock, and then sink down into the moat. A joyous hurra greeted its fall, and the general and his staff sprang forward.

It would be necessary to have witnessed the scene that followed in order to form any adequate idea of the mad joy and enthusiasm of its actors. The general seized Ready in his arms, and eagerly embraced him, then almost threw him to one of his officers, who performed the like ceremony, and, in his turn, passed him to a third. The imperturbable captain flew, or was tossed like a ball from one to the other. I also came in for my share of the embraces.

I thought them all stark, staring mad; and, indeed, I do not believe they were far from it. The balls were still hailing into the battery; one of them cut a poor devil of an orderly nearly in two, but no notice was taken of such trifles. It was a curious scene enough; the cannon balls bouncing about our ears—the ground under our feet slippery with blood—wounded and dying on all sides—and we ourselves pushed and passed from the arms of one black-bearded fellow into those of another. There was something thoroughly exotic, completely South American and tropical, in this impromptu.

Strange to say, now that the breach was made, and a breach such that a determined regiment, assisted by a well-directed fire of artillery, could have had no difficulty in storming the town, there was no appearance of any disposition to profit by it. The patriots seemed quite contented with what had been done; most of the officers left the batteries, and the thing was evidently over for the day. I knew little of Spanish Americans then, or I should have felt less surprised than I did at their not following up their advantage. It was not from want of courage; for it was impossible to have exhibited more than they had done that morning. But they had had their moment of fury, of wild energy and exertion, and the other side of the national character, indolence, now showed itself. After fighting like devils, at the very moment when activity was of most importance, they lay down and took the *siesta*.

We were about leaving the battery, with the intention of visiting some of the others, when our orderly came up in all haste, with orders to conduct us to the general's quarters. We followed him, and soon reached a noble villa, at the door of which a guard was stationed. Here we were given over to a sort of major-domo, who led us through a crowd of aides-de-camp, staff-officers, and orderlies, to a chamber, whither our valises had preceded us. We were desired to make haste with our toilet, as dinner would be served so soon as his Excellency returned from the batteries; and, indeed, we had scarcely changed our dress, and washed the blood and smoke from our persons, when the major-domo reappeared, and announced the general's return.

Dinner was laid out in a large saloon, in which some sixty officers were assembled when we entered it. With small regard to etiquette, and not waiting for the general to welcome us, they all sprang to meet us, with a "*Buen venidos capitanes!*"

The dinner was such as might be expected at the table of a general who commanded at the same time an army and the blockade of a much-frequented port. The most delicious French and Spanish wines were there in the greatest profusion; the conviviality of the guests was unbounded; but although they drank their champagne out of tumblers, no one showed the smallest symptoms of inebriety.

The first toast given, was—Bolívar.

The second—Sucre.

The third—The Battle of Ayacucho.

The fourth—Union between Columbia and Peru.

The fifth—Hualero.

The general rose to return thanks, and we now, for the first time, knew his name. He raised his glass, and spoke, evidently with much emotion.

"Señores! Amigos!" said he, "that I am this day amongst you, and able to thank you for your kindly sentiments towards your general and brother in arms, is owing, under Providence, to the good and brave stranger whose acquaintance you have only this day made, but who is one of my oldest and best friends." And so saying, he left his place, and approaching Captain Ready, affectionately embraced him. The seaman's iron features lost their usual imperturbability, and his lips quivered as he stammered out the two words—

"*Amigo siempre.*"

The following day we passed in the camp, and the one after returned to Lima, the general insisting on our taking up our quarters in his house.

From Hualero and his lady I learned the origin of the friendship existing between the distinguished Columbian general and my taciturn Yankee captain. It was the honorable explanation of the mysterious stain upon Ready's character.

Our difficulties regarding the brig were now soon at an end. The vessel and cargo were returned to us, with the exception of a large quantity of cigars belonging to the Spanish government. These were, of course, confiscated; but the general bought them, and made them a present to Captain Ready, who sold them by auction; and cigars being in no small demand amongst that tobacco-loving population, they fetched immense prices, and put thirty thousand dollars into my friend's pocket.

To be brief, at the end of three weeks we sailed from Lima, and in a vastly better humor than when we arrived there.

* * * * *

As the thick, dark storm-clouds of this eventful night, slowly grew thinner, and gradually dispersed from the face of the sky, the pale moon strug-

gled forth from their gloomy midst, shedding her ghastly partial light, over the grim and contorted features of Foscara, the Bandit of the Ocean.

As we have before stated, he fell at the feet of Clara Winslow, who had reached the brig's deck, but a moment or two previous. A moment more, and Ernestine, the Female Privateer, was standing at his side.

There were father, mother, and daughter, as yet unknown to each other, but well known to Him who ruleth all things—thus strangely brought together in the midst of death—on the very threshold of eternity.

"Hark!" exclaimed the dying wretch, in a choked and husky voice—"hear the devils howl—hear them laugh—see them spit fire, and gnash their teeth at me. Shout, ye devils—and make hotter the burning flames of your burning regions, for a master spirit is coming among you."

"Pray—pray," said Ernestine, as she strove to support his fevered head upon her arm, "to God for His forgiveness."

"Away—mock me not, here in my dying agonies. Were such a blackened, sinful soul as mine admitted in heaven, 'twould scare the very angels from their pure white thrones! Away, I say again, and let me die as I have lived—scorning, trampling upon, defying all that is pure, and good, and lovely, till the very last. The—who's here?"—continued the wretched man, as he looked up, and saw Clara's pale face looking down sorrowfully upon him,—angelic spectre, why tauntest thou me?"

"'Tis your daughter, Foscara," exclaimed Ernestine, "our child!"

"My daughter? Oh God!—too much—too much—too much. There's—an ocean—of blood—before me—and—from its midst—a—snow-white form—appears. It is my—child!"

No more words spoke the man of sin, and crime, and blood; but he uttered one deep, agonizing, horrid groan, his eyes became set with their death-glare still fixed on Clara, and the Bandit of the Ocean was no more.

CHAPTER XX.

The wages due each hideou. *etc.*,
Must soon or late be duly paid.

Morning—The Landing—A Recognition—Rejoicing, Reunions, and Death—Thrilling Denouement—Conclusion.

As the last breath of life departed thus reluctantly from the Pirate's body, Ernestine gently laid his head upon the deck, and turning to Clara, said,—

"He is gone, Clara,—my child, attend to your mother!"

So saying, the wretched mother fainted, and ere Clara could render her any support, fell upon the deck, beside Foscara's corpse.

"She is dead," murmured Clara, as she stooped to try and raise her up.

"Not quite so bad as that, Miss," said the old boatswain, who had by this time arrived at the scene of action, and was kindly assisting Clara, in raising her mother's head. "She breathes yet. I'll take her into the cabin. You needn't try to help, Miss, 'cause the job's too heavy for you altogether. I'll call one of the sailors."

"Wont a feller abedout my size, dew yew?" inquired Zeke, who, with the greater portion of the two crews, had made his way also to the quarter deck.

"Yes, you'll do," replied the boatswain. "Bear a hand here, and help take this poor woman into the cabin."

"If it's a female woman wants help, by jingo, I'm there," answered Zeke, who thereupon eagerly volunteered the necessary aid towards getting Ernestine into the cabin, from whence, in accordance with Clara's suggestion, she was immediately taken into an unoccupied state-room, placed upon a bed, and left for the time being to her daughter's sole care.

As Zeke was in the act of deliberately following the boatswain from the cabin, he heard his name faintly called. Looking around the main cabin for the cause, and seeing no person there, he said—

"Did anybody call Zeke?"

"Yes, come here, for Heaven's sake," replied a voice which proceeded from the captain's state-room, which was opposite to that in which Ernestine had been placed.

"Hallo, Mr. Alcott," said Zeke, as he entered this apartment, and saw the person in question, reclining upon the bed, "why, how dew yew dew? How in thunder did yew git here?"

"Indeed, my kind friend, I can hardly tell. All I know is, that when the vessels came together, I scrambled for my life, and by a great and painful exertion was enabled to reach this brig's quarter-deck. As I did so, my wound which had previously stopped bleeding, burst forth afresh, and then I sought this place for the means of binding it up. A strip of one of these sheets answered the purpose admirably, but the pain attending the operation has made me faint, feverish and thirsty. Can you get me a little fresh water?"

"Most certainly I will, if there's any to be had," answered Zeke, who immediately departed in search of the genial beverage, which he soon found, and conveyed to the suffering midshipman, who after swallowing a large draught, it revived him: so that he felt able to go on deck.

* * * * *

Morning dawned at length clear, bright and beautiful, over the sea and land. The storm clouds of the previous night had given place to the blue ethereal sky of glorious day. Dread signs however still remained in and about the Pirate's Cove, to show that the night's wild storm had bravely done its legitimate object. On the beach, a short distance below the haunted house, and nearly high and dry in the sand, was seen the hull of the Flying Fox, which, being the lighter vessel of the two, had, after drifting clear of her belligerent sister, been driven rapidly ashore, where she struck, about half an hour before daylight.

Farther up in the cove, and about half a mile distant from the shore, was also seen the large unsightly hull of La Santa Maria, whilst some two miles out towards the open sea, the white sails of another vessel were just discernable.

Here and there, too, on that beautiful morning, dead bodies were found laying upon the beach, by the neighboring fishermen and others, whom the news of the night's bloody carnage, had there caused to be collected.

The bright dawning of this day, was hailed with eager delight by all those comprising the company and crew of La Santa Maria. Luckily, she had one good boat still hanging by its davits over her stern. This, by the cheerful exertions of the brig's crew, who voluntarily acted under the boatswain's orders as they would have done under their captain's, was soon lowered into the water, and hauled alongside for the reception of passengers. At the same time two boats were observed to be coming off from the shore, thus showing a fair prospect of conveying all those on board, ashore in safety.

Meanwhile, Clara had an examination, found a severe wound on Ernestine's left breast, which she supposed to have been inflicted with a dagger or some sharp-pointed weapon of a similar description. This the fair girl dressed with her own hands, and then employed herself busily in endeavoring to restore the wretched woman once more to consciousness. Her judicious efforts in this respect were soon crowned with success. Then Ernestine opened her eyes, looked wildly upon Clara, and spoke thus—

"Oh, Clara, I have had such a dream."

"Hush," dear mother, remonstrated Clara, and do not try at present to talk more. Morning has dawned and we are near the land—near the place from which we were abducted. At least I have been told so. Boats too, they say, are coming to take us all ashore, and I wish you to collect and keep fast all your strength that you may be enabled to go on shore with me. Once there, I hope that, through the agency of careful nursing, and skilful medical aid, you will again be restored to health and to your children.

"Clara," replied Ernestine, mournfully, "that may not be. My wound, though not large, is deep, and I feel *sure* that the dagger of the ruffian will prove fatal. Even were it not so, there is a weight, a deadly weight of sorrow and sin upon my soul, which this poor frail body of mine cannot, after what has passed this night, long sustain. All I wish for now, is, that God may give me strength once more to reach the land, that I may from thence be borne to my house, to die in peace.

So saying, the Female Privateer remained silent with Clara watching faithfully by her side, until the boatswain appeared at the door of their apartment, and addressed the latter as follows—

"If you think the sick lady can be moved miss, me and my men are ready to assist in placing her in one of the boats, which is now all ready to go ashore."

"I think," interposed Ernestine, "that I shall need no farther aid than what Clara and yourself can render."

So saying, she rose from her couch, and with the assistance of Clara and

boatswain, managed with some little difficulty to reach the deck, from whence she was placed in the same boat with Mr. Brown, Mr. Alcott, and all the wounded persons who had escaped from the Flying Fox.

The sum total of the brig's company being now embarked in this and the two shore boats, they were rapidly rowed by the sailors to the beach, where a large number of men, women and children, comprising nearly the whole population of the adjacent village of Swampscot, were waiting to receive them.

The first boat that touched the beach happened to be that in which our Yankee friend Mr. Ezekiel Snodsgross had taken passage, and from which that worthy individual was the first to reach the land.

As he jumped eagerly on to the white sandy shore, Zeke nearly overturned a bevy of young damsels, some three or four in number, and one of whom particularly and at once attracted his undivided attention.

This was a stout good natured looking girl, with very red cheeks, and hair of the same color.

Standing upon the spot where he first landed, as if he had been suddenly transfixed by some invisible dart, Zeke, as he gazed wildly on the fair, yet terribly substantial being, thus briefly described, spoke confusedly forth the following interjectional sentences—

"Wall, I swow it is! No, tain't. Can't be, by Jewdas." Then, as if he had suddenly become convinced of an important fact, Zeke stretched out his arms, made a bound forward, clasped the red-haired lady round the waist, and continued in this wise—

"Jerewshy Williams, how dew you dew?"

This was followed by words of similar import by the half-smothered damsel in Zeke's arms.

"Why Ezekiel Snodsgross, how air yew?"

"How be I," replied Zeke. "Right as a wooden clock, old gal. But yew don't want tew know, though, dew yew?"

"If I didn't I shouldn't ax," replied Miss Williams. "I don't want yew tew squeeze my waiste so tarnal hard, though."

"Yew don't, hey? Then I wont. Why Jerewshy, yew're the sweetest, rewbyst, tarnalist critter ever I've hearn tell on. Yew air by gravy. Shouldn't I like tew kiss yew! Oh, Jerewsalem."

"If yew should," announced our modest maid, "Why on airth don't yew dew it!"

"Wall, there," replied Zeke, "if I ain't een a most reddy tew *bed bug* now, arter hearin' that ere, then I won't say so."

So saying, our Yankee hero boldly snatched from fair Jerewshy's lips, a loud sweet kiss.

"Say, Zeke, what dew yew spouse Bill Spriggins would say, if he was tew see yew dewin' that air?"

"What air?" said Zeke.

"Why a kissin' me. Aint yew ashamed?"

"Shamed, get out, no. But what in thunder dew yew want tew mention Bill Spriggins's name for, now. He be cussed, and that's about the wickedest word I ever used. If it hadn't been for him, consarn his eternal picter, I shouldn't have gone eout on the mighty deep, and done water on a great business."

"Done what, Zeke?"

"Why, bisness on the great waters is what I meant tew say; but my feelins is so kind of *blum fudgeoned* all up in a heap, jest now, that I hardly knew what I am sayin'. But how in thunder did yew come tew get down his way, Jerewshy?"

"Come along away, then, from all these folks here, and I'll tell yew all about it," replied the maiden.

As they both stepped out of the hearing of the crew collected upon the beach, Jerewshy said—

"Yew recollect the last Sunday night when you came tew set up with me, don't yew, Zeke?"

"Wall, I calculate I dew, and always shall as long as I live on the airth."

"Yew know I treated yew dredful bad that night, tew. Now, what dew yew think I done it for?"

"Wall, I thought 'twas because yew liked Bill Spriggins better than yew liked me."

"And that's jest what I tried tew dew," continued Miss Jerewshy. "Thinks I, Zeke's a leetle jealous, and I'll see if I can't make him a darned sight jelluser. Jest then, yew know, Bill Spriggins popped in, and I kind of let on that I should like have him come an pay 'tention tew me the next Sunday night instead of yew. Then the way yew took your hat and streaked it for hum was a cawtion tew hoss-racers. But I felt kind of sorry the moment yew was gone. I didn't say but little tew Bill, and pretty soon he went tew, and I raked up the fire and went tew bed. Couldn't sleep, though, no how I could fix it. I felt bad in my inwards, kind of what the minister calls conscience-struck, and I knew I had not done right. Finally I concluded tew run right over tew your housen, next day, and make it all up, slick as a whistle. Somethin' or other happened next day, so I couldn't go, but next day arter that, bright and early in the mornin', I put my things on, and off I went. When I got tew your housen, your maam, she right up and told me, that yew'd got all firedly riled up by somethin' yew'd red in the newspaper, and had gone down tew Boston, tew list in the sojers tew go fight the Britanners. Then the tears biled out of my eyes the most distressingest loud, and I went home miserable. I couldn't work, nor dew anythin' only jest think of my trow lovyer. Jest then, a cuzzin of mine, from Swampscot here, came tew our town, tew buy some cattle; and when he cum back, he axed me tew come tew. Wall, I started an' cum. I only got here last night jest afore dark, and here I am in my trow lovyer's arms this mornin'. Trewth is stranger than lies. It beats all the novills and romances ever I read."

"So it does, Jerewshy. So it does, and no mistake. Here, in less than three days time, I've been tew sea, got bulled, and frighten the Britanners, got shipwrecked and drownid, came tew life agin, and found my gal. I'd like tew see any novill beat that air. I'd buy it, if it cost one and sixpence, clean cash. I would, by gravy. Come, Jerewsh, let's go up tew the big housen there, where they're carryin' all the sick folks, and see how matters and things is coming out."

So saying, our re-united lovers walked lovingly together from the beach to the Haunted House.

On reaching the shore, Ernestine, again exhausted by the exertion necessarily attendant upon her removal from the brig, again swooned, and was borne in a state of insensibility to her former residence, whither she was followed by the wounded officers of the Shooting Star.

As the door, which formed the front entrance of this mysterious mansion, swung slowly back upon its hinges, and a female appeared, who, as she recognized Clara at the head of the approaching train, ran hastily down the steps, and the next moment was in Miss Winslow's arms. "Alice!" "Clara," were the words that fell simultaneously from each other's lips.

"Aye, and Alcott, too, who, in the unspeakable joy of this moment, forgets the pain of the past," exclaimed that young officer, as he sprang forward, and joined eagerly in the sisters' fond embrace.

Meanwhile the boatswain and his assistants had borne the still inanimate form of Ernestine into the Haunted House, whither it was followed, almost immediately by the children who had thus become so strangely reunited. By Clara's direction, the wretched woman was quickly removed to Foscar's chamber, whilst a messenger was despatched for the nearest physician.

After dismissing the honest boatswain and his worthy associates, with thanks and promises of future reward, Clara and Alice placed Ernestine in bed, and assiduously put in operation such means as they were able to command, in order once more, if possible, to restore her to consciousness.

An interval of about half an hour elapsed, and then the efforts of Clara and Alice were crowned with success.

"Clara," murmured the poor woman, as she once more opened her weary eyes upon the world, "am I there—am I at home?"

"You are where you wished to be, dear mother, before you left the vessel."

"And who—who is she—that angel—at your side? Is it a dream, or is it—"

"'Tis Alice Carr, dear mother," interposed Clara.

"Oh, my poor brain!" continued Ernestine, "how wildly it has of late been wandering! I had heard, or did I dream, that Alice was drowned—had been thrown into the sea, and—"

"I was thrown into the sea," interrupted Alice, "but luckily, when I rose to the surface of the water, after sinking some distance beneath its boiling waves, I was observed by two noble sailors from a boat then laying near the vessel's side. By their efficient aid, I was taken into the boat, and soon landed upon the beach, from whence I immediately came hither, as this house was the nearest place of safety and shelter I could find."

"Come hither, my daughter," said the wounded woman, as Alice ceased to speak, "and embrace your mother."

On hearing these words, Alice looked wonderingly at Clara, as if she would inquire their meaning. Then Alcott, who had entered the room just in time to hear the words of Ernestine, addressed Alice thus,—

"Embrace your mother, Alice, for such, in fact, that dying woman is. She has this night confided to me the history of her life. Ask no questions now, but take my word for it, that hereafter all will be explained."

Need we add that ere he finished speaking, Alice was folded in her mother's arms.

A moment afterwards, Mrs. Carr entered the apartment, accompanied by black Sambo, who, at the commencement of the fight between the Privateersmen and Pirates, had in the extremity of his terror jumped overboard, and been rescued from drowning by the sailors who afterwards picked up sweet Alice Carr.

The appearance in Ernestine's chamber of these two personages was immediately succeeded by that of Captain Selwyn, of the Shooting Star, Helen Winchester, and Mr. Scoville!

The wild glance of Ernestine's eye, as it roamed from one to the other of these strange visitors, rested finally upon Scoville.

"Thank heaven! it is—it is my husband! Come hither, Henry Scoville!"

Without uttering a word, Scoville approached the bed, and the dying woman, grasping his hand tightly in her's, spoke calmly thus,—

"Scoville, I am dying; and yet, notwithstanding the wrongs I have received at your hands, I love you to the last. We have both sinned—both gone widely astray—both wedded criminally with others—and both met again, in this chamber of retribution and death. Truly God has worked in a mysterious way, in bringing about this solemn and interesting reunion." Here she paused, and placing her hand upon Alice's hand, continued—"Acknowledge, Henry Scoville, your first-born daughter."

Surprised and agitated by a thousand conflicting emotions, Scoville, in the midst of a death-like silence, which was observed by all in the room, tremblingly beckoned Alice to his side, took her hand in one of his, and standing between her and Helen Winchester, he said solemnly,—

"Ye are both my daughters. Helen, till now I have purposely kept from you till this eventful night, the knowledge of your true mother. I never meant you should know this woman as such. But God has willed it otherwise, in bringing us once more strangely together. This woman is your mother."

"Scoville, come hither again," interposed the dying Ernestine, "and you, my children, stand close around me also. Henry, can you forgive your erring, but now repentant wife?"

"It is me that needs to ask your forgiveness."

"And it is granted!" replied Ernestine. "May God forgive us both."

"Amen!" responded Scoville.

The next moment he fell to the floor—a corpse!

"Oh God!" exclaimed Ernestine, "he is gone before me—but I shall soon follow him. Remember, my children, that in this solemn scene, you see exemplified God's holy truth, which, speaking from the Bible, says,—**THAT THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.** May He have mercy on your parent's soul. Henry—I—I come!"

With this last word, she fell back on her pillow.

The wages she had spoken of were duly paid. The Female Privateer was DEAD!

CONCLUSION.

On a beautiful summer evening, about two years after the events just related, the Haunted House was thoroughly illuminated for the celebration of a double wedding. The officiating clergyman, having arrived in good season, was conducted by black Sambo, and Bridget, into what was still termed the Pirate's Chamber, where, in the presence of Captain Selwyn, and Helen Scoville, Mr. Brown, and the two servants, as witnesses, he forthwith united Henry Alcott and Alice Scoville—Charles Lester and Clara Winslow, in the holy bonds of matrimony.

Just as this interesting ceremony was concluded, Bridget announced—

"Misther and Misthress Snodsgross," and the next moment, our old friend Zeke, and his beloved Jerewshy, entered the wedding apartment.

Stepping up to Alcott, and grasping his hand without ceremony, Ezekiel said,—

"I give yew joy. I dew, by jingo. And so does my Jerewshy. She belongs tew me neow. She's my property. We got married about three weeks ago, and we've cum deown here to spend the *hungry* moon with Jerewshy's cuzzun, here in Swampscot. We only arriv there this afternoon, and then hearin' what was goin' on here, we concludwed tew cum over and look at the old house and the new people. New married, I mean. It don't look like it did that day arter yew and I and the rest of us got home from sea, Squire. That was an awful day. Every time I think, heow Jerewshy and I crept up over the stairs that mornin', and looked into this 'ere room, and yew and the ladies bending over one dead body, whilst another laid on the floor, and saw that little nigger there, standin' lookin' on tew, I shudder and tremble eenamost reddy tew drop. But, I say, Squire, yew ain't a goin' tew keep on livin' here, air yew?"

"No," replied Alcott, "myself and wife, and Captain Lester and his lady, are going to remove to Boston, where both families will occupy one house. When you come this way you must call and see us."

"I shall dew that, most sartinly," answered Zeke. "Hollo, here's my old Captain, here," continued Zeke, turning to Selwyn. "Boss, how d'ye dew? Where's that tarnal pretty vessel of yourn?"

"Safe and snug in Boston harbor."

"Say Boss, yew ain't married nor nothin', I spose, air yew?"

"Yes, and this is my wife," he continued, presenting Helen Scoville.

"We have been married about two months."

"Shaw, yew don't say so. Give yew joy. I'm glad tew see that every thing's turned out right, in spite of that infarnall **BANDIT OF THE OCEAN**. Good night, and pleasant dreams. Jerewsh and I are going home."

And home they went immediately.

Kind reader, our task is ended—our story is concluded.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

The physician who had been summoned to attend Ernestine, arrived at the Haunted House shortly after she breathed her last. On a post mortem examination of the body, he discovered that the wound she had received in her breast occasioned her death, which sad event was, however, hastened by an inward hemorrhage, caused by the extraordinary excitement attending her last moments. A sudden attack of a disease of the heart, with which he had been at intervals afflicted for many years, occasioned Scoville's death.

On searching Scoville's papers, after his decease, a letter of instructions to his brother was found, which was delivered to the latter by the nurse, in whose charge the infant Helen had first been sent to the West Indies. After acknowledging, in this epistle, his relationship to the child, and stating his reasons for sending it to Havanna, he instructed his brother to bring the child up as his own, and draw on him for whatever expenses this arrangement might incur. Unfortunately, this brother's wife died, when Helen was six years old, when as related in our seventh chapter, she was obliged to return to Boston, where Scoville received her as his niece.

The daughters, on searching their mother's private *escritoire*, found a MS. history of her life, written by her own hands. It was found, substantially to agree with the facts related in her conversation with Mrs. Alcott; and some parts of it were corroborated by the testimony of Mrs. Carr. The portrait alluded to in the fourth chapter of the story, as having been shown to Clara by old Arthur Lane, had been given to Mrs. Carr, some time previous, by Ernestine, who represented it as having been the portrait of Alice's father. By some means unknown, the old fisherman, then in his dotage, obtained the portrait in his daughter's absence, and knowing that a certain mystery hung about Clara's parentage, and that she was very anxious to get some clue to it, gave it to her, with the story that had been purposely told him, as her father's.

Thinking that some of our readers may be curious to know what became of Captain Herringbone, we are able to state, that after being freed from the irons which had been put on his wrists on board the Shooting Star, he managed to find his way into the spirit room, where he literally drank himself to death.

Bridget became a domestic in the family of Mr. Alcott, as did Sambo, in that of Captain Lester, and they have often amused the children of both families by their marvellous stories of the celebrated BANIT OF THE OCEAN.

THE END.