

HILLIARE HENDERSON:

OR,

The Secret Revealed.

AN ANTECEDENT TO "THE DEATH MYSTERY."

BY NED BUNTLINE.

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CHAPTER I.

When broad fields of rice waved like a sea of green in front of a grove of magnolia; where, back, and to the right and left, a mass of lofty pines shook their plumes in pride, as the eastern breeze swept in from the sea; where, embowered amid shadowy oaks, stood the chateau of a wealthy Georgian planter; where flowers grew all about, and the air was sweet with their perfume: there my story finds its birth-place.

Within an upper chamber of that same chateau, the windows of which fronted seaward, commanding an ocean-view beyond the rice fields, a young girl paced to and fro; and many a bitter word of anger which came from her lips, as well as her dark, flashing eyes and flushed cheeks, told her to be a child of passion. Young, yet in form and stature womanly—full of that wild, enchanting, fervid beauty, which belongs to those who are born and nurtured beneath a southern sun, where no chilling blasts are known—she was one fit, indeed, to be the heroine of such a tale as that I have to tell.

Her looks and words betokened anger. So I said above. From the latter, perhaps we may learn, in part, at least, the cause.

"Hilliare Henderson is the guardian of my property!" she cried; "but not of my heart or my soul! He can, for a time, control my fortune; but my fate, that—that will I keep in my own hands. He has forbidden Harold the house—told me—me—that I must see him no more. But if he thinks that I will obey him, he looks beyond his power! I love Harold! he loves me! That is enough! Oh, that I were with him in his pretty yacht on yonder blue sea! Then, Hilliare Henderson, we would laugh both orders and threats to scorn, if they came from your lips!"

An abrupt entrance caused her to cease

her soliloquy, and to turn, with a still angered look, to face the intruder.

He was a stout-built man, evidently some years her senior; red-faced—as if to indicate his fondness for liquors of a ruby color—with features which indicated a coarse and sensual nature. Although he was dressed in the garb usually worn by gentlemen, there was no sign in his face or his bearing which would entitle him to recognition as such, had he been suddenly thrown into the society of men of that cast. True, a solitary diamond of the largest size glittered on his little finger; a seal-ring with a family crest on the next; a heavy gold chain, to which a pound, or less, of seals and charms were hung, indicated that he wore a watch; yet coarse was the jeweled hand—coarse, the man in every way.

The young girl looked at him inquiringly, and at the same time angrily, as if she would ask, with her flashing eyes of jet: "Why do you dare to intrude upon me?"

"What's the matter, my little lady-bird?" he said, with a coarse, familiar air, as he advanced toward her. "Has my brother been raising a breeze with you?"

"What he has done or has not done is nothing to you, Gustave Henderson!" said the young girl, bitterly. "You are not my guardian, thank the saints!"

"Not now, lady-bird—not now! But the day may come when I will be!"

"When you—you! Oh, if you knew, sir, how I despised you, you would be meaner than the lowest cur that howls about the negro-quarters, if you ever ventured into my presence, not to speak of any future which could link your fate with mine. Go, leave me. You have no business here. This is my apartment, and I will not be intruded upon!"

"Ah, now, lady-bird, you're too hard upon a fellow that loves you to distraction."

"Mr. Henderson, I have borne your insults long enough—yes, all too long! I have means to protect myself from them!" cried the young girl, the flush in her face dying away into an almost ashy pallor, and her voice becoming low and firm. "One minute, sir," she added, "one minute I give you in which to leave this room. If at the end of it you still remain, you will tarry here until you are carried out! You understand me, sir?"

And with one hand she drew a tiny watch from her bosom, and with the other a pistol from her pocket, which last she cocked, and raised to a level with his breast.

"By Jupiter! I believe the girl means it!" muttered the man. "What a tigress she is! But I'll tame her yet!"

He was in full retreat toward the door as he uttered these words, and he was outside of the door before one-half of the minute had expired.

"Are all men such cowards?" said the girl, bitterly. "If so, how I could despise them—not hate them, for of that they would not be worthy. But, no—not all are like him. My Harold is brave as he is beautiful! O Harold! Harold! why are you not here now, to protect me from insult and sustain me in my trouble?"

The young girl paused before the window, and again looked toward the sea. Taking up a spy-glass which lay upon the window-ledge, as if it was often used, she carefully scanned the offing.

"I see one—two—three vessels; but all so far away that I cannot tell what they are," she said. "If one of them is his, he will yet see me ere the dawn of another day. He bade me be firm and true, and he would claim and take me as his bride. I will, Harold—I will, so help me heaven!"

"Mistress," low and sweet was the voice which spoke that word—a voice coming from the lips of a young quadroon, whose steps had been so light, as she came in, that they were not heard by the heroine of this story.

The quadroon girl was better dressed than most of her class—evidently she was the waiting-maid of the other. Her figure was taller and more fully developed than that of her mistress; and though the red blood coursed beneath a darker skin, she was almost as beautiful as the queenly girl who stood before her. Yet there was not the same lofty dignity in her carriage. Though proudly-formed, she seemed to feel that the shackles of servitude were fastened on her soul.

"Mistress," she said, a second time, in the same low tone.

"Well, Zella, what is wanted?"

And now, from the face of the young girl

the anger-trace vanished—as shadows do when sun-vailing clouds have swept by; and she looked sadly, but kindly, upon the servant who stood so meekly before her.

"Master Hilliare told me to come and tell you to go to him in the library."

Again those dark eyes flashed.

"Go to him, Zella, and say, if he wishes to see me, that he can come here to my own room. I do not choose to go and come at his bidding. I am not—but never mind. Go, my good Zella, and tell him what I say."

"O mistress!"

"What, tears in your eyes, Zella? What is the matter?"

"Mistress, if I deliver your message, he will be angry, and on me his anger will fall. He will beat me and curse me as he did when he saw kind Master Harold say good-bye to me when he went away."

"You shall not suffer, Zella," said her mistress. "I will go and see what the tyrant wants. You remain here the while, and watch—oh, watch closely yonder sea for Harold's yacht! If it is seen in the offing, I know that he will redeem his promise; and soon, my good girl, we will be beyond the reach of those who are cruel to us both."

"I will watch, kind mistress," said the girl. And she knelt down by the window-ledge with the spy-glass in her hand, while her mistress went from the room.

CHAPTER II.

In a spacious room, with a scantily-filled book-case here and there, a side-board well covered with decanters of various liquors, and garlanded around its high walls with some high-colored but very ordinary paintings, sat a man whose age might be forty—not more, if so much. The room might be called library, sitting-room, or refreshment-room—for its furniture partook of the characteristics of the three.

The occupant of the room was tall, rather thin; dressed as Southern planters generally dress at home, with a carelessness suited to the climate, and the independence of one who owns all that is around him. His bronzed complexion, dark eyes, and short, crispy, black hair, also told of his Southern origin. His features told his personal character at a glance. His thin lips, closely compressed, betokened a firmness of purpose which it would be hard to soften; his eyes of jet were small and snake-like in expression, showing craftiness in every glance; his low forehead, had it not been so broad from top to base, would have shown a lack of sense; but sense and cunning there was evidently enough of in that square, massive head. His face was pale as far as it could be in its bronzed hue. He evidently was no devotee at the shrine of

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Bacchus, though the ruby wine and darker *eau de vie* shone upon his side-board.

His dark, serpent-like eyes were turned toward the only door of the room, as if in expectation of a visitor. And one came. It was the young girl with whom we opened the first chapter.

She came into the room with an air that would have become an empress. Cold, calm, haughty; perfectly self-possessed, her great black eyes bent upon him with a glance which seemed to say: "I neither fear nor love you." She advanced to the centre of the room, and said:

"You sent for me, sir—I am here!"

"Sit down, Adele—sit down," said the gentleman. And he pointed to a chair.

"My visit will be brief, Mr. Henderson; I prefer standing," she replied.

His pale face flushed a little; but he still spoke calmly, though a quivering lip betokened a smothered anger in his breast.

"As you will, Adele; though I have much to say to you, and you may weary of standing. My brother has just left this room."

"That is a matter of no importance to me, sir."

"He has informed me that you drew a deadly weapon upon him, and threatened his life."

"For once, sir, he spoke the truth!"

"Adele Dumesle, do you wish to drive me into a passion?"

And now that pale face grew almost purple, though he seemed still to try to chain down the demon of wrath which raged in his bosom.

"I am not particular, sir. It is a matter of indifference to me whether you are angry or not. I am not one of your slaves, and you dare not strike me."

"Girl—girl, beware!" And the planter started to his feet, and looked for an instant as if he would crush her from existence. But her calm eyes met his fiery glance—her proud form did not tremble; she seemed as if she was made of marble, so firmly did she stand.

"Why did you draw a weapon upon him?" asked the planter, more calmly, after a few moments' struggle for the mastery of his anger.

"Because he intruded upon the privacy of my chamber, and dared to insult me with his hated words of love! I drew a weapon, and he fled before it like a sneaking coward, as he is."

"Adele Dumesle, Gustave is no coward among men; but he would not raise his hand against a woman. Let that unknown adventurer, whom I once, fool-like, admitted to the hospitalities of my house, but show his head in this vicinity; let your beloved Harold Morley again be seen, and Gustave Henderson will teach him such a lesson as will prove to you he is no coward!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

The young girl laughed merrily.

"What?" she cried. And her eyes flashed more with pride than anger. "Would you mate your miserable, scottish, soulless, heartless brother with Harold Morley? As well might you mate a jackal against a lion!"

"You will see, girl—you will see!" muttered the planter, as he paced to and fro like an enraged beast within its cage, striving to keep his passion within bounds.

"Have you any further business with me, my gentle guardian?"

And the tone was more sarcastic than the words.

"Yes. You know, Adele Dumesle, that you are completely in my power?"

"I know that you think so."

"You cannot touch one cent of your fortune until you are eighteen years of age."

"Two years, even though spent in misery, is not a life-time, when one sees emancipation's light in the dim distance. Two years of time will free my fortune from your hands—less time may be required to free my person."

"What do you mean, girl?"

Adele saw that she had forgotten herself, and gone too far; had aroused a suspicion which might endanger the plans that she had formed for the future. But though for a moment embarrassed, she regained her composure in an instant, and replied:

"If you do not treat me kindly, I'll hide myself in a convent until I am of age, and am legally permitted to control my own actions and will."

"Hide in a convent, eh? And while you were there, what would hinder me from squandering, if I so willed, every dollar that was left you?"

"Because you dare not. The will of my father is recorded! So is the inventory of every dollar of real and personal property that was left me. And more still, the bond and security given by you when you sought the self-sacrificing position of guardian to a young and helpless orphan-girl, whose fortune doubled that of your own."

"Hell and fury! Who told you all this?"

And the planter strode to and fro, fairly quivering with anger.

"No matter who, sir! It is enough that I, as well as others, know my rights; and I surely will claim and have them!"

Henderson walked to and fro for a few moments, and with a great effort calmed himself so that he could again speak to her.

"Adele," said he, "I would not wrong you out of a dollar, were I this day bankrupt. I have no need of money. I am already rich, and my plantation doubles in value nearly every year. But now sit down and listen to

me for a little while. I will not speak harshly, or get in a passion again."

"To witness such a phenomenon, sir, I will sit down."

And—conscious now of her power over the bad man who stood before her—she sat down, and he took a seat near her.

"Adele"—and he tried to soften his harsh voice down into something like the tone of kindness—"Adele, I am truly your friend, and it was for your good that I forbade Harold—"

"Stop, sir! You must not bring his name into this conversation. You have wronged and insulted him—that is enough. I wish no further allusion made to him in my presence."

And again her dark eyes flashed anger, as thus she interrupted the planter.

He preserved his composure, for a wonder.

"Well, I will not speak of him. There is one, however, whom I will not yet name, who has an ample fortune, almost equal to my own. One who, to my certain knowledge, loves you devotedly. My proposition is, that you marry him, and receive your fortune and your freedom from my guardianship, so distasteful to you, at once. The dismal two years can be swept away by a single word of yours."

"How generous you are, my kind guardian! How generous and delicate, too, to perform my courting and pave my road to matrimony. But you have not named the happy he to whom you wish to give a ward and her fortune. Yet I can imagine. Clarity, it is said, always begins at home. So, I fear, does your new-found generosity of purpose. You would, if you could, free me from your tyranny to place me under that of one whom I despise more and hate almost as much as I do you. Gustavo Henderson—sot, profligate, and libertine—thus keeping my fortune in the family! How noble—how disinterested! But, Mr. Hilliare Henderson, I cannot take advantage of your kindness. I most respectfully decline that and all other matrimonial plans you have formed or may form. My heart belongs to Harold Morley—my head is promised to him; and, if I live, it surely shall be his! Good-morning, sir—with or without your leave—I must retire."

And while, speechless, literally from anger so long suppressed, Hilliare Henderson sat, as if chained to his chair, she rose and proudly walked from the room.

And still he sat there, his face, before so pale, growing darker every instant, as the hot blood mounted up to his throbbing temples. His very breath grew hot; and, at last, with a bitter curse, he sprang to his feet and rushed to the door, from which she had made her exit, as if he would follow her. But there he paused.

"Not yet—not yet," he muttered. "I will conquer her yet!"

Then going to the centre-table, he rung a small bell which was upon it.

A servant came in answer.

"Go and tell Master Gustave to come to me," said the planter.

Then he sat down by the table and bowed his face between his hands, as if to try and calm himself; or, perhaps, to plan out some path for the future.

CHAPTER III.

A pretty picture! What could be prettier! The master-piece of Deity—peerless woman—alone accepted.

It was a schooner yacht, with bows as sharp as a woodsman's wedge, with hull long and low upon the water, broad in the beam, but tapering away in the counter until her stern, at the water's edge and below it, was as sharp as her bow. Her long spars, raking until they looked as if they must fall over the stern, were covered with an immense spread of snowy canvas, which, light as the breeze was—scarce enough to ripple the green waters of the coast—still drove her steadily over them. From the gaff of her main-sail fluttered the starry flag of a then undiscovered Union—from the lofty truck of her foretop mast, a flag of crimson silk was waving, upon which, in golden letters, the name of *ARLEN* could be seen. The same name, in golden letters, wreathed with carved flowers, appeared upon the stern of this beautiful vessel. She was such a craft as a true sailor's eye could gaze upon unwearied for hours. No fault could be traced in hull or spar, in canvas or in rig. She was, "fore and aft" in rig, with no square sails at all, but a very long square-sail yard lay athwart her rails, just forward of the foremast, and furled to it was a square-sail which, when the wind was abaft the beam, would be of vast service in adding to her speed.

We have glanced at her as she "walked the waters like a thing of life," and now we will look inboard, and see how things appear there.

Upon a deck as white as were the sails above it, some ten or twelve neatly-dressed seamen lounged lazily; for the sails were trimmed and there was no work to do. The craft evidently was a peaceful one, from the number of her crew; although amidships, on a railway pivot, a long brass twelve-pounder shone as brightly as if it had been made of gold.

Aft, near the helmsman, stood a man who, by his dress, was evidently an officer; by his looks and bearing, every inch a man and a sailor. His age was probably fifty or more, for his curling locks were tipped with gray, and the beard which covered the lower part of his face was spotted more with white than

black. A leadsman was in the forechains, casting his lead at intervals; and by the interest with which the officer noticed his cry of, "By the mark, seven—by the dip, nine," etc., it would seem that he was either acting as pilot, or else very cautious in approaching the coast, toward which they were standing, and which was now plainly in view ahead of them.

"How do we go, Mr. Perkins—do we near the land fast?" asked a young man—with eyes as darkly blue as the sea-off soundings, and hair like the gold of an autumn sunset—who just raised his head above the companion-way which led from the cabin below.

The officer, who stood near the wheel, touched his cap as he replied:

"We're sliding in at the rate of six knots an hour, sir—the land is looming up fast."

"Very well, Mr. Perkins. When we are so near that you can plainly distinguish houses on shore, call me."

"Ay, ay, sir!" And once more the officer touched his cap to his superior, who returned again into the cabin.

We will follow him. Follow him into an apartment far more spacious than one would think the dimensions of the vessel would permit; furnished and decorated gorgeously, yet with taste. The main-mast passed through it—but a gilded frame of glittering mirrors so surrounded the spar, that no one would suppose it there, unacquainted with the fact. State-rooms were in the rear of the main-cabin, and on the doors of these were masterly paintings. A chandelier of pure silver hung in the centre of the cabin, and its flames, burning even in the day time, threw a soft light upon the curtains of crimson velvet, on the paintings hanging here and there, and upon the costly furniture.

The young man who had spoken to the officer on deck, was in figure full as handsome as in the face we only alluded to above. Slightly but elegantly formed, his face one of that kind which wins upon those who see it, speaking as it does of a heart bold and guileless, of a soul free and fearless, and of a nature generous and unselfish. He was as fit to be the hero of my tale, as is Adele to be its heroine.

"With lightsome brow and beaming eyes, and bright, long, glorious locks which drooped upon his cheeks—

Like gold-hued cloud-flakes on the rosy morn!"

Upon entering the cabin, he rang a bell, and almost instantly it was answered by a man loosely dressed in a sailor's garb, whose tall form, thin as a rail—serious visage, sharp-featured at that—yellowish-white hair, and keen gray eyes, spoke of "away down East" before he uttered a word.

"What might be wanting, captaining?" he

asked, with that independent air so peculiar to the men who wouldn't give a card of gingerbread to shake hands with a king, unless he wanted to buy a clock, or trade jack-knives.

"Nathan, I wish you to put the two state-board after state-rooms in perfect order—if fortune favors me, a lady and her maid will be on board, before morning, to occupy them."

Nathan looked astonished, and expressed astonishment by a prolonged whistle. Then he asked:

"Be you agoin' into the packet business, captaining? Ef you be, I don't want to be steward no longer—for ef I can please you, I can't everybody, specially wimmen folks, for they never took no likin' to me, nor I to them!"

The young captain smiled at the oddity of his steward's thought. The latter was evidently a favorite, or his familiarity would not have been tolerated on board a craft where discipline, as shown on deck, seemed to be strict.

"I'm not going into the passenger trade, Nathan," said the young captain, good-humoredly. "The lady whom I hope to welcome on board this craft, inside of twenty-four hours, is the one whom I hope to call Mrs. Morley yet. My own sweet Adele."

"Why, she's the gal you named the schuner arter?"

"Yes!"

"Well, captaining, I'm s'prisin' glad. I'll go right to fixin' up, though things are about as nice as apple-pie now."

"Would you like to go on shore and help me get her off, Nathan? I may have to fight for her; and from the past, I know how to depend on your courage and coolness!"

"Ef there's to be a skrimmage, Captaining Harold, I reckon I've the best right of any creetur around here to be in alongside of you. Me and Perkins have knowed you since you weren't knee high to a suckin' duck, and s'arved your father afore he ever knew your mother."

"Yes; you have been faithful to my father and to me. On his death-bed, he bade me keep you ever by me, and I will. There's my hand upon it!"

"Thank'ee, captaining, thank'ee! When Nathan Shankland deserts you, may his Maker desert him, and give him over to old eleven-foot. I know I'm as awkward as a frozen-footed hen, and as ugly as a singed cat; but for all that, I kinder think my heart's in the right place, and I'd die for them I like! I'd 'ave died for your good old father, and I'd die for you, Harold Morley—captaining. I mean—I'd die for you, quick as winkin', or 'twould do you any good on nith!"

And the honest old Yankee wiped a tear

from his eyes with the cuff of the snow white duck shirt he wore.

"I know it, Nathan. Now call your boys, and put everything to rights below here, and I'll go on deck to see how we draw for the land. It shoals a long way off at this point of the coast, and I must keep my eyes open: even though our good Perkins is on watch."

And the young captain went on deck.

"Ef there ever was a man—considerin' his years—that Harold Morley is one!" said Nathan, in soliloquy, as he watched the retreating form of his captain. "Handsome, and not a mite proud; rich, and not a bit stingy; afear'd of nothin' that walks on two legs; as good a sailor as his father afore him; and as kind to me as ef I wasn't poor, nor ugly—just as kind, and kinder too, than he'd be to the biggest bug that rides in his coach ashore. The Lord bless him!—that's the prayer of Nathan Shankland every day and night. But talkin' isn't workin'. I must fix up for the winmon. I wonder ef I can cook to suit 'em. Wonder what sort o' fixin's they like. Ef they can go ginge-ribread and dough-nuts and wafels, and broiled chicken, and cod-fish-balls, and biled mack'el and sich like, I can suit 'em to a dot. I reckon we can get some fresh, ashore while we're there, ef the krummage isn't too hot. I must ask the captin ef he wants me to take my outlash and hose-pistols along. But I'll fix up first."

Nathan drew a bontawain's whistle from his pocket, and blew a shrill call.

Instantly two small, neatly-dressed ca'n-boys entered.

"Young creeturs, come into these after stat-rooms. I've work for ye. There's sheets and piller-cases to be changed, and all that. Be lively as crickets, or I may get in a bad humor, and you know I'm troublsome to small enttle then!"

Leaving Nathan to his work, and the schooner to plow her liquid furrow, we will once more speed away on Fancy's swift aerial wings to the shore, and see how Adela, and our other characters prosper.

CHAPTER IV.

"What do you see Zella?" asked Adela, as she returned to her chamber after her interview with Hilliare Henderson.

"Three vessels, kind mistress."

"I saw them before I left the room; but do either of them seem to be coming toward the entrance of the inlet?"

"I cannot tell, mistress; but it must be so, for one keeps looking larger and larger every minute, and the others seem to be growing smaller."

"Your logic is good Zella. One vessel is approaching, while the others are sailing

away. Oh! if that which approaches be but the yacht of my Harold, how happy will I be. I will flee away from the tyranny and persecution which now oppresses me, and remain until two years have passed, where kindness and love will soften the wild passions of a heart made stern and rebellious by cruelty. Then I will come and claim and take my own, and go where wealth and love combined will make me happy! Happy? Happiness is a thing I have heard of, read of, but never known!"

"Was not my sweet mistress happy when kind Master Harold was here?" asked Zella.

"I felt pleasure, Zella, such as I had never known before. I loved, and was beloved; but fear was mingled with my joy—a dread of evil to come to him or me, which would separate us forever. Therefore, I was not happy. Happiness must be without alloy, like pure gold."

"My mistress is wise, and can distinguish where Zella cannot. I felt happy when he stopped to say good-bye to me, and gave me a piece of gold, after he had had high words with Master Hilliare. So happy that I scarcely felt the blows and curses which Master Hilliare gave me afterward. No one ever was kind to Zella but you and he, dear mistress. And yet, I am almost as white as Master Hilliare! Oh, if old Dinah tells the truth, I ought to drink that man's blood!"

And with a wilder fire than it would seem possible for the human eye to omit, did that girl's eyes flash for a moment, while her beautiful form, swelling to its full height, quivered with excitement.

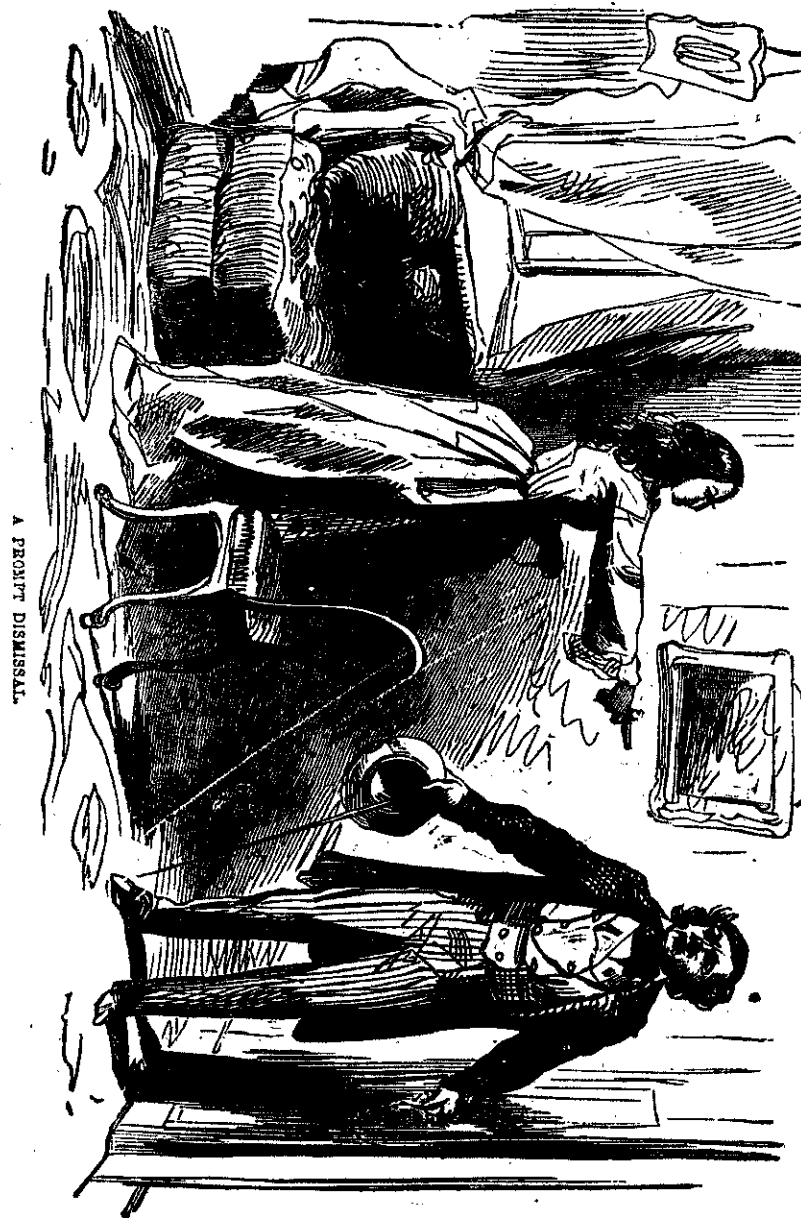
"What did Dinah tell you, Zella, which so agitates you?"

"Something about my mother, whom I never saw, dear lady. But do not ask me now. It makes me wild to think of it; and if I grow more wild, I shall do something terrible. Do not ask me now; some time I will tell you all I know now, and I hope to know more before long. Can you imagine why Master Hilliare permitted me to be with you from your childhood—to be educated as no other slaves are?"

"I once thought he did it out of kindness, that you might, in a measure, afford me companionship as well as service. Do you know any other reason?"

"I cannot say now, dear lady—I cannot say now. But I am upon the track of a secret which may cost some one his life, even if the same blood flows in my veins. Oh, if I were but a pure child of Africa, even a slave, and blessed with ignorance, how much lighter would my heart beat!"

A sound like a quick clap of distant thunder was heard this moment from toward the sea. And looking far away to the vessel nearest



the land, a white cloud was seen rolling up from its side toward the blue sky.

"A cannon! Oh, it is Harry's signal! The spy-glass, quick, Zella, the spy-glass!"

And Adele, trembling with excitement, knelt by the window, and placing the glass to her eye, looked long and steadily toward the now approaching vessel.

"It is—it must be Harold's yacht!" she said, at last. "He told me he would build a swift and beautiful one, would call it 'Adele,' and would come in it to bear me away from this place of torment. He would fire three cannon when off our inlet, to let me know he was there; and that, when night came, if I made the signal he named, he would bear me away."

"There is a second shot, lady," said Zella. "Yes; I saw the smoke before you heard the thunder of the gun. I can see the vessel plainly; but she is very far away. There are two flags upon her. One is red, and the other is the flag of America. And—there is the third gun! It is Harold! O Heaven, I thank thee!"

And those eyes, lately so dry with the fire of anger, were now humid with the holy dew of joy.

"Mistress, if he takes you, must Zella be left behind to die?" asked the quadroon, mournfully.

"No, no, my good Zella. Where I go, there you will go. Harold knows that already. But we must be cautious not to awake suspicion. It will be easy for us to leave this chamber. The strong trellises which bear these honeysuckle vines up about the windows, will easily bear our weights, one at a time, and will serve as ladders for us to descend. He will be here this night. Noble Harold, quickly have you redeemed your pledge!"

"Will he be so bold as to come into the harbor while it is light, do you think, sweet mistress?" asked Zella.

"I do not know, my good girl. I only know that he named a signal, and that I shall make it as soon as it is dark. It is one which can create no suspicion here; for, all unknown to you, I have made it night after night, in hope that he was near."

"I now know what it is, sweet mistress," said Zella, with a smile. "I know why my mistress prefers to sit and read or embroider, in the long night-time, with her lights on this window-ledge, instead of sitting by her table."

"You are right, Zella. You have my secret—keep it!" replied Adele. "And now, my good girl, we must get ready for flight. Such clothing as we can easily carry, all the money and jewelry that I have in my own possession, must go with us. But our prepa-

arations must be so made as to excite no distrust, else the path we take will be red with blood, and I may, in the very dawn of the day of hope, lose my Harold. Then all would be night for me."

CHAPTER V.

When Harold Morley left the cabin of his fairy yacht, and went upon deck, he found Mr. Perkins, his chief officer, scanning the shore ahead with his spy-glass. He was standing forward by the night-head, where the cool ripple of the water, as it was cloyed by the vessel's prow, fell like music on his sea-born ear.

"Well, Mr. Perkins, what do you make out?" asked Harold.

"The mouth of the inlet, quite plain, sir," replied the officer. "Beyond, among the trees, it seems to me that I can see the outline of a house or houses."

"Then we must be near enough for my signal. Let me take your glass a moment."

The officer handed the telescope to the captain, who sprang into the fore-rigging, ascended three or four ratlines high, and took a long and careful look toward the shore.

"It is the place, and we are near enough," he said, as he came down. "Heave the schooner to, Mr. Perkins, and have the gun's crew at their station. I wish three guns fired at brief intervals."

"Ay, ny, sir!"

"After that is done, come down into the cabin; I wish to hold a council with you."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

And Mr. Perkins went aft to obey the orders.

"All awake, boys!" he said, as he went along the deck.

And in an instant every man of the crew was ready for duty.

"Brail up the foresail, and haul down the flying-jib!" he cried. "Haul the jib-sheet well over to windward, and flatten in your main-sheet. Ease down your helm, and bring her up into the wind's eye!"

This was done almost as rapidly as the orders were given; and soon the vessel lay as still upon the gently-heaving waters as she would have done had she been at anchor.

The signal-guns were fired, and then Mr. Perkins descended into the cabin, where he found only his captain and Nathan Shankland—for the cabin-boys had performed their work and been sent forward.

"Mr. Perkins, until now I have never fully informed you of the object of my visit to this southern latitude, though, as an old and tried friend and officer of my father's, I knew you to be worthy of every trust," said young Morley, as he pointed his officer a seat near the table by which he sat.

"Boy and man, sir, on the sea for over forty years, I have learned my duty too well to ever ask my captain what port he is going to, or what he is going for," said Perkins, quietly. "I knew your father's son too well to think his cruise would lend in a dishonorable port, therefore cared not where we were bound, or what for."

"Thank you, for your confidence, Mr. Perkins; but it is fitting that you should know the object of my running into this place, for I shall need both your advice and aid. Upon you and Nathan I know I can depend, as old and true friends."

"Certain," said Nathan, gravely.

"Some time since," continued Morley, "after I had the keel of my yacht laid, but before she was finished and launched, I took a pleasure-trip South, more to observe the manners and customs of the people, and to avoid the chill of a Northern winter, than anything else. Chance threw me into the company of the very planter whose chateau we can dimly discern among the trees on shore. An accident enabled me to do him a favor; he reciprocated by inviting me to spend a few weeks at his plantation, to enjoy hunting, fishing, etc."

"I accepted his invitation; for I wished to see plantation life through my own eyes, and not through the medium of some book written in the flickering light of zeal or fanaticism. But little did I note of plantation life after I got there, though I was forced to join the planter in the hunting and fishing-trips which he planned for my amusement. I found within that chateau a young orphan ward of the planter, an heiress to an immense fortune—one who was more beautiful than any being I ever saw or dreamed of. To see her was to love her. She loved me in return. What wonder? The planter had, until my visit, kept her utterly excluded from the society of gentlemen, and even of ladies—guarded her with a jealous care which I mistook for kindness, until I was undeceived by his conduct when he perceived the state of feeling which existed between his ward and myself. He first hinted to me that she was engaged to be married to his brother—a scottish villain, twice her age—as soon as she arrived at her majority. But she soon undeceived me upon that point. Then he endeavored to keep her away from me at all times, except when he was present. That, too, he found a difficult matter. At last, he became almost insulting, and I removed to the house of another planter near by, whose friendship I had formed, and still continued my visits, avowing myself as a suitor for Miss Dumesle's hand."

"Then came an open rupture with him. For her sake, determined to rescue her from his persecution, after a final interview with

her, I left for the North, launched the yacht, fitted her out, manned her, and here we are."

"I saw! of it isn't as good as a novel!" said Nathan, who had listened breathlessly to the story of his captain. "I mind, when I was a boy, of reading the 'Three Spaniards,'" he continued, "and this is just like 'em, made and provided we carry off the gal."

"What do you propose to do, captain? I am ready to obey any order you can give, and the crew, to a man, are with you. Never was a captain more popular than you, sir. I do not say it in flattery."

"I know you would not stoop to flattery, Perkins. It was to consider our best course of action that I called you to counsel with me. Whether to run in and boldly demand and carry off the lady, in spite of any resistance that might be offered, or, by lying off until night, run in, effect, as I call, a meeting with her, and get her on board without the knowledge of her guardian. Then away to a happier region than that in which she dwells."

"Could you pilot the yacht into the harbor at night, sir?"

"Yes, I think so, easily. For often I have been in and out in a fishing-sloop which belongs to the planter; and if a beacon is lit, which I hope to see to-night, and have seen before—it is in Adele's window—I know I could go in."

"Then, sir, since you ask my advice, I would say, lie off until to-night. Blood is precious, and should not be shed needlessly; there will be less risk of bloodshed at night than in the day-time."

"True, Perkins. Blood is the wine of life, given us by Him whose law is, that it shall not be wasted. We will lie off until to-night."

"I beg your pardon, captain," said a young man, the second officer of the schooner, appearing at the cabin-door, "if I intrude, but I thought it my duty to report that a small sloop is coming out of the inlet which opens on our lee-bow."

"You were very right to report, Mr. Merton," said Harold, a little startled. "Have the flag at the fore-topmast-head hauled down instantly, and the black tarpaulin drawn over the name on our stern. I will be on deck in a moment. Run a union jack up at the fore-topmast-head, in place of the other, to signify that we want a pilot."

"Ay, ay, sir!" And the young officer returned to his duty on deck.

"This will materially change our plans, I fear; but we must act as circumstances may force us to do," said Harold. "I will go on deck to reconnoitre, and be back in a moment."

CHAPTER VI.

Gustave Henderson very promptly attended his brother, upon receiving the message from him, mentioned at the close of the second chapter. He found Hilliare in the same position in which we left him, with his head bowed upon his hands, and his frame still quivering with an excitement which he in vain tried to suppress.

"Well, Hilliare, old boy, did you give the vixen fits? Is she likely to come round? House up! What's the matter? She hasn't bluffed you off, has she?"

This was the salutation which the younger brother tendered to the elder, as he entered the room.

Hilliare Henderson slowly raised his head and looking his brother in the face, said:

"Gustave, you are a fool!"

"Well, that's cool! I believe I'll take a drink on the strength of it!"

And Gustave went to the side-board, and pouring out a brimming glass of liquor, drank it off.

"If you drank less, took more pains to play the part of a gentleman, and looked to your own interest, I should have less trouble to work out a better fortune for you!" said Hilliare, angrily.

"Come, come, Hilliare! I meant no harm. That devilish girl made me a little nervous, and I needed a drop to steady my nerves, and make me myself again. I don't mind standing up at ten paces with a man, for I'm dead sure to pick his eye out at that distance—but when a girl, with 'shoot' blazing out of her eyes, holds a pistol dead on one's heart, he's got more grit than me, if he can stand and take it!"

"I am not blaming you for retreating!" said Hilliare, more calm. "I blame you most for not so conducting yourself as to win, at least, the girl's respect. Here have I, with but one aim, for years, kept her isolated from all society but yours!"

"Yes, but you admitted that infernal Yankee to the house, and that knocked all your plans into less than a cooked hat!"

"He had done me a favor, and I did not foresee the evil effect of my imprudence. But you should have made an impression upon her before that! Had you done it, he never, boy-dandy that he is, could have touched her heart. Had you proved yourself a man, and sought her love by manly acts, you would have had it long ago, and her fortune would not be in our family!"

"It shall be yet—that upstart fool will never come back, and I will—"

"Thunder! What was that?" cried the elder brother, as a heavy booming sound came upon their ears from the eastward.

"Just what you said—thunder, I reckon!" said Gustave.

"No—it was the sound of a cannon. I have heard it more than once! But why one should be fired off our harbor is more than I can imagine! Hark—there goes another. I shall go up to the cupola on top of the house, and see what I can make out through my spy-glass!"

"I'll first take one drink to improve my eye-sight, and follow you!" said Gustave.

But his brother was already on his way to the position from which the best view of the sea could be obtained. Just as Gustave, who had imbibed, reached the side of his brother, the sound of a third shot came booming in from seaward.

"What do you see, Hilliare?" asked Gustave.

"A schooner, which seems to be hove to off our inlet, with some kind of signals flying! For my life, I cannot understand her manoeuvres! No trading vessels ever come here, it is not likely a revenue-cutter can have chased a smuggler in here, for we should have seen her in our little harbor! I cannot understand this!"

"I'll find out for you, if you wish, Hilliare!" said Gustave, whose imbibitions had indeed steadied his nerves. "I'll take your sloop, and run out to her, and ask her what she wants—see, at any rate, what she is!"

"Do, Gustave, and you will confer a favor on me. Take half a dozen hands with you. The sloop is moored to the rice-wharf. When you come back, I will explain what I intended before we heard the cannon. I have a plan which will make Adele your wife in spite of herself—but hurry down to the sloop now, and we will speak of it when you come back!"

"I'm off like a pony in a quarter-race!" said Gustave, and away he went.

CHAPTER VII.

"Lost—lost! He will discover all!" moaned Adele, as from her chamber-window she saw Gustave Henderson unmoor the sloop, and stand out toward the vessel which she felt satisfied belonged to Harold Morley.

"No, mistress—do not despair!" said Zola. "Master Gustave is a drunken fool at best. Master Harold will outwit him; and if he does not, and Master Gustave should once get into his power, I would not give much for his chance of life. Master Harold bears him no good will, you know!"

"But if he should discover who the vessel belongs to—who is on board, and then return, I know Hilliare Henderson too well to think he would leave me here, where there would be a chance of my rescue from his base tyranny!"

"Let us hope, sweet mistress! I know not why, but I feel so strong-hearted now, I feel as if I were already bounding over those waves which we have so often looked upon. Be brave my mistress—be brave!"

"I will try to be, Zella! You are a good girl. If Harold does free us, you shall never regret your change of home. You shall not be my servant, but my sister!"

"I ask no greater happiness than to be your servant, kind mistress. To be ever near you and—"

Zella paused, for footsteps were heard approaching.

Hilliare Henderson entered a moment after, but when he did, Adele was sitting with her back to window, and a book in her hand, while Zella was unloosening her magnificent hair, as if to dress it.

"Ah, how quick-witted these women are!"

"Buoy, Adele? Engaged, eh?" asked Mr. Henderson, as smoothly as if his temper never had been ruffled.

"Not particularly. I am reading poetry, while Zella is dressing my hair. May I read you a passage?"

"I do not like poetry, you know. Such namby-pamby stuff I despise!" replied the planter.

"But my dear sir, just let me read you this passage—it is so applicable!"

And in a tone more bitter than the words she quoted, she read the following:

"Torture thou mayst, but thou shalt ne'er despise me!"

The blood will follow where the knife is driven:
The snake will quiver where the placard tear:
And sighs and cries by Nature grow on pain—
But these are foreign to the soul; not mine
The groans that issue, or the tears that fall;
They smother me; on the rack I scorn thee!"

"I cannot see the application!" said Mr. Henderson, who had become perfectly calm, "but as it is evidently intended as an insult, I will forego the apology for my angry words, uttered a while ago, which I was about to make, and retire!"

And turning upon his heel, he left the room, muttering as he went:

"She has not heard it—it cannot have any connection with her threat of escape!"

"Off the scent, base hypocrite!" said Adele, as the sound of his footsteps died away.

"Zella, he only came to see if we had heard the cannon!"

"Yes, mistress; I am sure that you are right."

"Well, he is now of the opinion that we did not. Now, I will hope in spite of my tiny fears. Let us watch the sloop, and, from her actions, we may judge what our chances will be. I know my brave Harold will dare every risk for my sake."

CHAPTER VIII.

Harold Morley was absent from the cabin but a few moments, when he went on deck to reconnoitre the approaching sloop. Aided by a good telescope, he recognized Gustavo Henderson, and instantly formed his plan of action. Returning to the cabin, he said:

"Mr. Perkins, I must not be seen by the man who will come alongside in the sloop. He is the snotty brother of the planter I named to you. Knowing him and his brother well, and what their feelings are in favor of the slave-trade, I believe we can easily pass the schooner off as a slaver; and you, acting as captain, while I remain concealed, can, probably, make a bargain with them to bring them a cargo from Africa. You may say that you need more water, and so get access to the harbor before night, and the rest of our work will be an easy matter."

"Yes, sir; I obey orders, and understand your plans perfectly. I will go on deck and caution the crew."

"Do so, Mr. Perkins; and when this fellow comes aboard, use my liquors freely. The drunker you get him, the better it will be for us. If possible, get an invitation to the house. A visit there may cover my operations. At least, you can keep the planter and his brother in conversation, while I spirit my lady-love from beneath that hated roof."

"Yes, sir; I understand, and will do it if possible."

"Hain't there nuthin' for me to do, captin'?" asked Nathan, dubiously.

"Oh, yes, Nathan. Help Mr. Perkins to the best of your ability, and you will be helping me. I shall be in one of the back state-rooms. Let this fellow have liquor enough to set him swimming."

"Mayn't I put a little dose of ipecac in his last glass, captin'?" Such a mean creature as you say he is, ought to have some o' the wicked worked out of him."

"He deserves it, Nathan; but play no tricks which might create suspicion. You had better go on deck, Mr. Perkins. Play your game boldly, and all will go well, I feel assured."

"I'll do my best, sir," said Perkins. And he went on deck.

"And me, too," said Nathan. "If, betwixt and between us all, we can't play hoky wit' his ducks, we've forgot a part of our larnin', and ought to go back to the spellin' book agin. But I say, captin', don't forget that, ef there's to be a scrimmage, I'm booked for a seat in the first coach."

"I intend that you shall be with me, if there is the least prospect of danger, Nathan."

"Thankee, captin'. Now you look out with both ears, and see ef I don't soft-sawder

this shore chap nicely, when he comes down into the cabin."

"I will; but be careful not to overdo the thing."

"Let me alone for that, sir. Old Nathan Shankland is no fool, ef he was born where they fodder their cattle on codfish scales."

When Mr. Perkins reached the deck, he had scarcely time to caution the crew and explain the deception he was about to practice, when the sloop under charge of Gustavo Henderson luffed up close alongside, and the last-named individual asked:

"Is that a signal on your foremast for a pilot?"

"Yes; but it will depend upon circumstances whether we want one or not. Come on board and take a glass of wine, or something stronger. If you are a planter, I've something to say that may interest you."

"I'm a planter, sure enough. But your craft looks rather hard. Will a fellow be safe there."

"As safe as where you are now. Vessels that run to the Coast for 'black-birds' are apt to look hard."

"Oh, is that your trade? I'm with you as soon as I can get alongside. Be so good as to let a man throw a rope here, and we can haul alongside in half the time of a quarter-pace."

The rope's end was cast, and in a very short time the sloop was fast at the gangway of the schooner, and Mr. Gustavo Henderson stood upon her deck.

"Come down into the cabin, sir, and we will have our talk alone," said Perkins.

Gustavo followed him below.

"Steward," cried Perkins, while Gustavo stood gazing in silent wonder upon the magnificence of the apartment.

"What mought be wantin', captin'?" said Nathan, as he came in with a visage which would have become a deacon on communion-day.

"Wine, brandy, rum on the table—sardines, and some crackers and cheese," said Perkins.

"Yes, captin'; in a jiffy I'll have 'em on hand."

And soon the table displayed a most liberal allowance of refreshment.

"Your trade must be profitable," said Gustavo, as he, nothing loth, filled a tumbler half full of fourth-proof brandy, and drank it off without winking.

"Rather. What are niggers worth here?" replied Perkins.

"From ten to fifteen hundred dollars for good hands."

"And I can buy them at Congo for a musket a piece—say about four or five dollars—would run the risk and land a load, at five

hundred dollars a head, of strong, able-bodied Ashantees."

"That was what you fired your signal-guns for—to make a bargain with some of us, eh?" queried Gustavo.

"Yes; to make a bargain if I could; for the market in Cuba is overstocked, and I thought I could get better prices elsewhere. Besides, I wanted to get to some place where I could fill my water-casks quietly. I had to leave New York in a hurry, for I wouldn't 'come down' to the marshal, and he would have nabbed me if I'd lain there three hours longer."

"Yes, I see. Well, there's no snigger place in the world than our little harbor to lay and fill your water," said Gustavo. "And I reckon my brother and me are just the men to make a bargain with. We need more hands, and could easily part with any over-plus you brought."

"Well, if you'll pilot me in, I'll fill away and run in. There's no danger of any revenue cutter looking into your inlet, is there?"

"None at all. You see, this is a deep bight in the coast; the water shoals some way off, and few vessels ever allow themselves to get in here."

"Well, take another glass, Mr.—What may I call your name?"

"Henderson—Gustavo Henderson, planter," replied the other, with all the dignity which brandy undiluted could give him.

"My name is Perkins—old 'Perk' for short, my shipmates used to call me. But it is Captain Perkins now; and I'm devilish short on those that forget the 'captain' part."

"Well, here's to your health, Captain Perkins, and luck attend you!"

And Gustavo drank off another glass, and declared his readiness to pilot the schooner into the harbor.

"I say, mister—'cuse me for speakin' to big folks—but don't none of the folks up to your house want any apple sarce, Newtown pippins, nice cranberries, or real Mercer potatoes? I've got a private venture of such things aboard," said Nathan.

"You can come up to the house and see, when we get in," said Gustavo.

"Thankee. Ef I make a dicker I'll give you a barrel of pippins for nothin', exceptin' good-will."

"Very well; come up to the house with me, steward, and I'll speak a good word for you."

"Hada't you better take another glass, mister? The captin' has gone on deck, you see."

"I believe I will. You're a regular trump, steward. If you want to be an overseer, I'll give you a chance any day, with a good salary."

HILLIARE HENDERSON: OR.

"Thankee. I'll think on it. I'm good at catchin' niggers, but never tried drivin' 'em."

Gustave took another drink, and followed Perkins on deck.

Nathan went back to the state-room where Harold Morley, himself unseen, had witnessed all that had occurred.

"Wasn't that last notion of mine cute, captaining?" he asked.

"Yes; and the very thing for my purpose. I will prepare a note, which you will take with you. If you see the lady, you will manage to get it into her hand, unseen by any one. If not, and you see a quaitoon named Zella, a girl almost as handsome as her mistress, she will do as well. She is quick-witted and safe, and will take it to her mistress."

"Yes; I see. I reckon we'll beat 'the three Spaniards' out and out, captaining. Now, I'll go on deck and see how things look, of you please."

"Go, my good friend—go."

CHAPTER IX.

Adela watched the movements of the sloop in which Gustave Henderson had embarked, with tremulous anxiety. She saw it stand off the shore, and at the same time saw the red flag go down from the masthead of the schooner, and a blue one take its place. She could not comprehend the meaning of this; and for a time her bosom was filled with fear and hope alternately. She saw the sloop go alongside of the schooner, and, after a brief time—though it seemed very long to her—she saw the schooner fill away, and stand directly in toward the inlet.

"Joy, joy!" she murmured. "Harold has deceived him in some way, and is coming into our harbor. Oh, now, now Zella, I feel no more fear. Hope conquers all! I feel as if we were free this moment."

And now the young girl watched, eagerly, every motion of the vessel. As it drew nearer, her eye noted, admiringly, its sharp, long hull, its lofty spars, its snow-white canvas; and though she had no seaman's eye to note each perfection, still she thought it a fairy craft, wondrously beautiful.

And when it passed the bar, and ran boldly into the harbor, anchoring within less than a half a mile of the house, she looked with wonder, not unmixed with fear; upon the sailors who ascended to the slender masts, heads to furl the gaff-topsails—which had been set to add to her speed as she came in.

And when all the sails were furled, she looked anxiously among the people clustered on the deck for the form of him who held possession of her heart. For the vessel was so near that, through her glass, she could dis-

tinctly recognize the hated form of Gustave Henderson, and she fondly thought that, in disguise or not, she would know Harold Morley. But she looked in vain. She could see no one whom, even with Fancy's subtle aid, she could transform into the semblance of her lover.

In a few moments after the vessel was anchored, a boat was lowered from the davits, and a crew sprang into it. Then an officer, as his dress indicated, entered; Gustave came next, and a long, lean man, dressed like a sailor, followed.

"Not one of these could be Harold!" sighed Adela.

The boat was rowed up to the landing, and, while the crew remained in it, Gustave Henderson, accompanied by Perkins and Nathan, passed up the broad, magnolia-shaded avenue to the house. They came up directly facing the chamber of Adela; and she who, under any other circumstances, would have avoided the look of a stranger, now stood boldly before the window, and, with daring eye, scanned the faces of the two whom she did not know.

Perkins, who was walking by the side of Gustave, appeared not to notice her—though she thought she detected a single, quick, upward glance of his eye. But, a moment later, she saw a pair of cunning, gray eyes looking full upon her, and the strange-looking man, who walked behind the other two, drew a hand out from the bosom of his shirt, and in that great brown hand, for an instant withdrawn, and as quickly returned, she saw a letter. Zella, too, saw the motion.

"Mistress, he is a messenger from Master Harold," she said. "That man has a letter for you."

"Yes, Zella. Some plan is working for our deliverance. Go you and contrive some means of obtaining the letter, and do hasten to me. I shall fear and hope, and hope and fear, until you return."

CHAPTER X.

"I'm back, Hilliare," said Gustave, considerably flushed with his many potations on board the schooner. "And here is—permit me to introduce him as a capital good fellow—Captain Perkins, of—May I tell your business, captain?"

"Certainly, sir. I have no concealments to make here," replied Perkins.

"Well, Hilliare, Captain Perkins is engaged in the slave-trade, to speak plainly. He says the Cuba market is overstocked; and, as he is bound out for a cargo, he wants to see if one cannot be engaged around here somewhere."

"Take a seat, Captain Perkins. Will you have some wine or other refreshments?" said

CURIOSITY GETTING THE BEST OF HER.



a planter, who, ever-cautious, was scrutinizing his visitor closely. "If so, I will ring for it, or we will adjourn to the library, where my side-board stands."

I should have perceived that the planter, anxious to know who his visitors were, had met them on the latticed verandah which fronted the ground-floor of his house.

"Let's have something to take, by all means," said Gustave. "The captain treated me like a prince while I was in his vessel."

And, without waiting for his brother to do it, he rang a bell, which he picked up from a table close at hand.

A moment after, Zella appeared.

"Bring us some wine and brandy, you molasses-colored beauty!" said Gustave.

Before Hilliard could say a word, and while he, flushed with mortification at the evident intoxication of his brother, remained silent, Zella turned and disappeared.

"Your business must be attended with some risk, captain?" said Hilliard, endeavoring to conceal his chagrin, and to be as polite as possible to his temporary guest.

"It is; but with commensurate profits. I ran a cargo into Cuba, four months ago, and lost my vessel—for I was chased in by a man-o'-war. But I loaded my negroes, cleared one hundred thousand dollars on them, have built a new vessel, and am ready to try my luck again. I had to leave New York in a hurry, and was rather short of water; so I was forced to look in here somewhere for water, and the thought struck me that I could land a cargo here easier than elsewhere, as you have no coast-guard, and man-o'-war would not look out along these coasts as they do in the Cuban waters. Therefore, I was glad to accept the offer of your brother to pilot me in."

"You are quite welcome, Captain Perkins, both to the harbor and my house. How many darkeys could you bring over in your vessel?"

"I could stow about four hundred, or four hundred and fifty. We stow close, and don't mind if we lose a dozen or two on the way."

"What could they be landed at here—or what would you ask for able-bodied men?"

"From four to five hundred dollars—never more. If I had a short passage, and no sickness, even less."

Zella, at this moment, appeared, with a heavy salver laden with wine and liquors. Nathan, who had been sauntering about the verandah, had his back toward her as she entered, and did not appear to notice her. Stepping backward, he struck heavily against the salver, and knocked it from the girl's hands, precipitating its contents to the floor.

"By mighty! I guess I've gone and done it now. Gal, let me help to pick up the pieces," said Nathan, as he bent down to help the terrified girl.

Terrified for a moment; but, as she felt a note passed into her hand while it was beneath the salver, she was terrified no longer—for she knew then that the accident was premeditated.

"Clear out of this, you awkward numbskull, and send a boy!" cried Hilliard, to Zella, while his eyes blazed with fury. "I'll pay you for this in the morning."

"It was all my fault, mister; but I didn't see the gal," said Nathan, taking off his hat, and bowing awkwardly. "I'm Captain Perkins's steward, and came ashore to see if you didn't want some apple-sars, or cranberries, or Newtown-pippens; and I'll pay for all damage I've done; but, by mighty, I didn't mean to do it!"

"The damage is nothing," said Mr. Henderson, with assumed carelessness. "I'll make the girl pay for it. She should have looked where she was going. Boy," he added, as a male servant came in, "clear away that broken stuff, and bring me wine, liquor, and cigars; and see if you can't break something. How long will it take you to go to the coast and return, captain?" asked Mr. Henderson, now the anger-flush slowly fading out of his cheek.

"From three to four months—not more, with any kind of luck."

"Well, sir, I think I can safely say you can find a cash market for a full cargo here, if they are landed in such a way as not to compromise us with the government. We are a good deal out of the way here, but for all that, the utmost secrecy would be required."

"And observed by me, for my own sake, as well as yours," said Perkins. "I have no desire to lose this vessel, as I did my last. She is a beauty, and can out-sail anything that floats."

The servant now came with refreshments, and Perkins, against his ordinary custom, drank a glass of wine, as did, also, Hilliard Henderson, who was the antipodes of his brother so far as drinking went. Gustave, however, went in for brandy, as usual—a matter which Hilliard did not oppose, for he was so ashamed of his selfishness that he hoped he would soon drink himself, as he generally did, into a sleepy humor, and leave their company.

After a couple of glasses of wine, Perkins rose as if to return to his vessel, stating his anxiety to prepare for taking in water in the morning.

But Mr. Henderson insisted upon his remaining to supper; for the shades of night were fast gathering.

To this Perkins assented, but ordered Nathan to go on board and get some fruit and Northern vegetables, as a present for his host.

CHAPTER XI.

Zella yet trembled when, after Hilliare Henderson's harsh rebuke and threat, she reached the chamber of her mistress; and she closed and bolted the door behind her when she entered.

"What is the matter, Zella? Have you not the letter?" asked her mistress, anxiously.

"I have it; but if we are here to-morrow morning, it will have cost me dearly. Here it is, sweet mistress."

Adele took the note, and her hands so trembled that she could scarcely open it.

But when she did, a cry of joy escaped her lips as her eye drank in its contents.

"You need fear nothing, Zella—nothing that may occur to-morrow morning; for ere that morning dawns, we will be far out upon the chugging waters of the azure sea! That schooner is the 'Adele'; Harold is on board; his chief officer is entertaining the Hendersons in the belief that the vessel is a slaver, and is now on shore to pretend to bargain with them to bring a cargo hither from Africa. His faithful steward was deputed to manage the conveyance of this note to me. How can he do it?"

Zella, half-laughing, half-crying, told how the strange-looking sailor-man had staggered, as if by accident against her, making a wreck of drawers and glasses, and then, while pretending to help her, had passed the note into her hand, which she as quickly concealed.

"Why, he must be as original in ideas as he is in looks! Who would have thought of that manner of delivering a note? An expensive one to Mr. Henderson, too," said Adele, laughing. Then she added: "You need be in no fear of Mr. Henderson to-morrow, Zella, for so soon as it is safe for us to leave, we will go. Harold will wait impatiently, from the moment that darkness comes on, until we are there, beneath the orange-tree which leans above the water in the lower garden where we used sometimes to sit. He will be there with a boat and crew, and his officer and steward, who are both armed, will be here to help us, if by any accident we are detected while getting away."

"Brave Master Harold! Kind Master Harold! It is no wonder that you love him so much, sweet mistress!"

"Ah, Zella, you little know of the depth of my love! You know how wildly I can hate—then judge how fervently I can love."

"I, too, can hate, mistress!" said Zella.

She was about to say more, but abruptly paused.

"You was about to say you could love, Zella, if I like me, you had one word to say to me. Was it not so, Zella?"

"No, lady—I hardly know what I was going to say. But see—the twilight is already upon us. It will soon be dark, and we had best be getting ready."

"True, Zella. When once my foot is upon yonder deck—when the low-toned music of Harold's voice falls upon my ear, then I shall feel free, fearless, and happy."

"There comes that strange man up the avenue again," said Zella. "He has a bag upon his shoulders and a large basket upon his arm. He must have been back to the vessel for something."

It was, indeed, Nathan, with the fruit ordered by Perkins. As he came beneath the window, with a dexterity which would have made him a "pitcher" for the "first nine" in a base-ball club, he tossed a large pippin in at the window where Adele stood, and passed on into the chateau.

The apple came a-under as it fell on the floor, and Adele saw that it had been hollowed out, and contained a paper. This she quickly opened and read.

"Bless him!—oh, bless my brave Harold!" she cried. "He says that his officer and steward will so manage as to prevent our being disturbed at all by Hilliare Henderson and his brother, and that, as soon as it is dark, we can steal away from the house and join him beneath the orange-tree. That when we are once on board of his yacht, he will defy the world to rob him of his prize!"

"Does he speak of me?" asked Zella, while her bosom rose and fell like the waves of a disturbed ocean.

"Yes," he says, 'by all means, bring Zella with you.' And, of course, I shall."

"He is very good," said Zella; and her cheek flushed, her lip quivered, and a tear came stealing from either eye.

"It is almost dark. We have not a moment to spare in making our preparations. Go, Zella, and see if Hilliare Henderson and his guests are in the dining room. If they are, we can leave by a side-door, unobserved, and not be forced to go down the trellises. It is not likely, if he is engaged, that any one else will notice our going out."

CHAPTER XII.

Hilliare Henderson, when he chose to be an entertainer, was rarely unsuccessful. He differed from his brother in nearly every point, except in being a cold-blooded tyrant over those in his power—a cool and ambitious planner of such villainies as would advance his own interests, and a man without conscience.

He drank temperately, used the language of a gentleman, was courteous and urbane to those whom he sought to please. He possessed some education, was tolerably well

real, and not at all pedantic. Finding Perkins to be a very sensible man, one who had voyaged all the world over, he insisted, after supper, upon his passing the evening with him in his library; and as Nathan had made his peace by bringing a large quantity of fine fruit, he was invited to remain with his captain. As this accorded with the instructions which he had received from his real captain, when he revisited the schooner and told what he had seen, heard, and done, he very gladly availed himself of the invitation, and soon, by his sayings and quaint good-humor, fully established himself on the "right side" of Mr. Henderson. The scottish brother had long before been assisted to bed in a state of drunken helplessness, and Hilliare had no fear of being disturbed by him again that evening.

When asked to take wine, Nathan, who was very abstemious, tried hard to excuse himself.

"It's agin my principle to tech sperrits," said he. "Though I hain't no airthly objection to seein' other folks enjoy themselves—rather like it, to tell the truth."

"But a glass of wine—a mere glass of wine, no stronger than your cider, can do you no harm," said Mr. Henderson. "One is the juice of the apple, the other the juice of the grape."

"Jest so," said Nathan. "But the juice of the grape made a blessed fool of old Lot. That I've read in the Bible, and I don't like to be more foolish than Natar' has made me."

"You respect the Bible?"

"Ef I don't, I hain't any respect for nuthin'."

"Then do as Saint Paul advised Timothy. Take a little wine for your stomach's sake."

"Well, you beat me a quatin scriptur', and I s'pose I must give in. I'll take a leetle drop with water in it—jest a leetle, ef you please."

And Nathan took a glass of wine with water in it, and listened attentively to a long story which Perkins related to Henderson, about a cruise he once had among the Feejee Islands, which was well told, considering that Perkins had never been within five thousand miles of the islands mentioned; and Nathan knew it.

With such stories, an occasional glass of wine, and fresh cigars at intervals, the evening wore rapidly on; and before either of the party seemed aware of it, a large clock in the room chimed the hour of twelve.

"I must be on board," said Perkins, "for my crew must be watering ship early."

"One more glass, Captain Perkins!" said Henderson. "I'll send a gang of hands to help you water your vessel."

"Yes, another glass, ef it is agin my prin-

ciples!" cried Nathan, filling the glass with his own hand.

Each drank their wine, and then Nathan said he wanted to tell a short story, if the captain would only wait.

Perkins knew there was a meaning in the request, and at once accepted, much to the pleasure of Henderson, who really had enjoyed the evening.

"I ain't much given to story-tellin'," said Nathan, "so you must take my yarn for what it is worth. I never was in love but wunst, and I never want to be agin. Down East—where I was born and brought up till I was big enough to peel my own potatoes—there lived a gal name Matildy Susy Ann, one of the purtiest leetle red-headed or eters that ever muddled pantalettes on a rainy day. Her and me used to go to school together, and we used to change dinners every day, 'cause she thought my mother put up the nicest basket of the two, and I thought hers did the same."

Here the head of Mr. Henderson was seen to droop over the table, and his heavy breathing proclaimed him to be asleep.

"Wall—ef them sleepin' powders didn't work quick, I'm a sinner without hope of grace!" said Nathan, jocosely. "My story is told. Mr. Perkins, and I reckon we'd better go off easy, and let Mr. Henderson have his nap out."

"You drugged his wine, then?"

"Sartain, sir. The captin give me the stuff and told me how to do it; and told me when this son of Judas was sound, to put this letter before him, and then to leave with you."

And Nathan took a letter from his pocket, and laid it beneath the head of the sleeping planter, which was now bowed upon the table before him.

"Very well," said Perkins. "If you've obeyed orders, we'll be off. There will be a pretty gale here in the morning, but we'll be too far off to enjoy the fun or feel the effects of it."

"Most likely—Providence permittin', and the wind fair," said Nathan. And in a moment more, the planter was left alone to his dreams.

CHAPTER XIII.

Darkness had scarcely mantled the earth, when Adele—leaving her lights burning in the window—accompanied by Zella, left her chamber to join her lover at the spot by him appointed. She carried with her only her jewels and such garments as they could easily bear away, for she knew not what watch or guard Henderson might not have placed about the house since she had threatened to flee from his tyranny.

But they went forth unobserved and unob-

strutted. As soon as they were fairly clear of the house, they hurried through a garden hedged in with the broad-leaved Spanish cactus, the bayonet-pointed leaves of which were proof against beast or man. Down through winding avenues of orange and lemon trees, amongst acacias, myrtles, roses, and many another sweet-scented flower, they hurried, caring little for the blossoms they trod upon or sped past.

Passing from the first garden, through a narrower gateway to the second—which was devoted more to vegetables and fruits than flowers—they quickly reached the water-side amidst a grove of orange trees.

Light as were their fear-winged footsteps, a boat was sufficiently on the alert to hear them, and the slender form of Harold Morley was seen emerging from the denser shadows of the grove.

One bound, and he had Adele in his arms. Heart beat against heart, lip met lip—and if there is the bliss of Heaven known on earth, those two congenial souls knew that bliss then and there.

Zella stood trembling with excitement; her great dark eyes filled with tears, looking as if she, too, longed to cast her arms about that graceful form, and pour out the passionate feelings of gratitude which she dared not utter.

"We must not delay, Adele," said Harold, after the first embrace, and the first words of love had been spoken. Then seeing Zella, he said, in a tone of kindness, as he reached out his hand:

"My good Zella, I am glad to see you here; you have taken good care of my sweet Adele."

The quadroom took his extended hand; she tried to speak, but could not. Kneeling down, she kissed his hand over and over again, and burst into tears.

"Come—rise, my good girl; we must hasten from this spot, for fear of some untoward chance. Once on board of my bonny Adele, and we are as free as the eagles of the air. And woe—woe to the vultures who would seek a prey where my prow cleaves the sea, where my flag dallies with the breeze or flutters in the gale!"

And now he gently led Adele to the spot where his boat was in waiting. First, he seated her in the stern-sheets, then lifted Zella just as gently to a place beside her. In a low tone he gave the order to push off; and a moment later, the boat, with muffled oars, was moving rapidly toward the yacht, whose tall spars and thread-like rigging could be plainly seen standing in bold relief against the sky, dark as it was.

But a few moments, and they were upon the deck. Then down into the spacious and

magnificent cabin, where everything blazed with splendor.

A table, laden with cake, and fruit, and wine, seemed to have been purposely spread for them. Harold knew there could be no error, that his Adele would surely sup there that night.

"What think you of your ocean-home, my Adele?" asked Harold, as he watched the lovely girl standing mute with surprise and pleasure.

"I have read of fairy palaces—this is one," she said, at last.

"And you are the fairy queen of it," he said, with a smile. "What think you of it, Zella?"

"It is like heaven; and you are its chief angel," said Zella. Then blushing, as if she felt she had spoken too boldly, she said: "I would die here."

"I hope Death is a long way from us all," said Harold. "But, Adele, I have a surprise for you. Not a soul on board has ever seen what I am about to show you. I have a picture which I vowed never to unveil to other eyes than my own, until you were here to look upon it. Come aft a moment."

They proceeded to the after-part of the cabin, which was draped with heavy curtains of purple velvet, flecked with gold. These, running upon a rod overhead, by simple pulleys, concealed on either side, could be drawn apart.

Harold drew them apart, and revealed a painting which brought a cry of wonder and gladness from Adele—a sign of pleasure from poor Zella. It was a Southern scene—the figure, full length. A young man was arranging a wreath of orange-blossoms, as he sat by the side of a lovely girl, and another girl of queenly form was plucking the blossoms from the trees and casting them down before him.

The portraits were life-like—the painting true to Nature. The young man was Harold Morley—he wrought the wreath for Adele Dumesle—she who plucked the flowers was Zella, the quadroom.

"Was that painted by your own hand, my Harold?" asked Adele, as she stood and gazed upon it.

"No; it was painted by an artist friend, from sketches which I had made of you and Zella, and from descriptions—which show you that never for an instant were you absent from my mind."

"Oh, bless you, my own true, noble Harold! An eternity of love and devotion, on my part, will never reward such faith and kindness."

Zella's sob now attracted their attention.

"Why do you weep, my good girl?" asked Harold, kindly.

"To think that poor Zella was not forgotten," sobbed the quadroom.

"One who has ever been so kind and faithful to my Adele, ought not to be forgotten," said Harold. "But come, Adele, it is time that we thought of something else. A little food and wine will do us good; for, love as we may, hunger and thirst will still have their claims."

And he led the way toward the refreshment-table.

CHAPTER XIV.

Harold had been on board at least five or six hours before Mr. Perkins and Nathan made their appearance. The time had been passed most pleasantly. Adele had found in her state-room a complete wardrobe—a harp and guitar also were there, both favorite instruments in her hands. Zella, too, found that even her comforts had been remembered, and one of them, at least, was as happy as ever bird that caroled on a budding branch in the spring-time. For she nestled beside her heart-chosen mate.

When Mr. Perkins and Nathan made their appearance in the cabin, Harold knew that all was right ashore, yet he asked how they had left the Hendersons.

"I will let Nathan report, sir," said Perkins, "only bearing witness myself that he has obeyed orders and done his duty."

"Well, Nathan, what have you to say?" asked Harold of his steward, who stood like one spell-bound, looking first at Adele and then at Zella.

"The prettiest creatures that ever lived," he said, involuntarily.

Harold could hardly keep from laughing outright. He saw Nathan's bewilderment, and knew that he had not understood his question, and he repeated it.

"Oh!" said Nathan, recovering himself. "You want to know, captain, how we left them miserable creatures ashore?"

"Yes."

"Well, the meanest ones of the two got stone drunk, capting, and they bunked him airy in the evening. 'Tother one held off—kept as cool as a saint undergoing martyrdom, and I had to give him the sleepin' powders. But of he didn't go off quick, then I'm a black sheep in a white flock. He went right into a snooze, and then I put your letter on the table under his head, and we made tracks for the boat. And, in conclusion, capting, here we are at your service, as usual."

"I am glad to see you both. Now, Mr. Perkins, we are ready for you. Permit me to introduce you to Miss Dumesle; and then we will go on deck and up anchor as silently as possible. Adele, did you leave a beacon in your window as I requested?"

"I did, Harold."

"Then I can pilot the yacht out full as easily as Gustavo Henderson brought her in."

Excuse me a little while, Adele. You had better retire with Zella to your state-room and sleep, I must see the schooner safe at sea before I come down again."

"Please let me go on deck with you," said Adele. "I am too happy to sleep, and would so like to see the way you manage your ocean palace."

"Well, be it as you like, dear Adele. You are mistress of your own will here. But wrap yourself up carefully, for the sea-air is damp at night."

"I will. Come, Zella, get shawls for us both, and we will go up."

The orders to get the yacht underway were given in a low tone. The crew understood their duty thoroughly, and almost noiselessly performed it. In a short time the anchor was up at the bows, sail made, and the yacht stood smoothly out over the bar, with a light but a fair breeze. As she left the shore it freshened, and before the golden sun rose from its scarlet couch in the east, the vessel was fairly off soundings, and nearly or quite into the edge of the Gulf Stream. And not until she had witnessed that glorious sunrise could Harold Morley persuade Adele to retire to seek the rest which Nature demanded.

CHAPTER XV.

The bright sun was shining in through the windows when Hilliare Henderson recovered from the stupor into which he had been thrown by the somniferous powders administered by Nathan. A throbbing pain ran from temple to temple in his head—a nausea pervaded his stomach—he felt as if he was waking from a sickening dream. He looked around him, as if he hardly knew where he was. Then his eye fell upon the note before him. It was addressed to Hilliare Henderson; and sealed with a seal which he had seen before. It was a coronet above a shield, with two crossed swords above it.

"From Harold Morley," he muttered, as with tremulous hand he opened it.

Its contents should be known to the reader. They ran thus:

"HAROLD MORLEY, Esq., owner and commander of the American yacht *Adele*, presents his compliments to Hilliare Henderson, Esq., Planter, etc., and thanks him for the civilities extended to his chief officer and steward. Having accomplished the object of his visit, Mr. Morley retires with great gratification; but assures Mr. Henderson that he will return in two years to assist his wife Adele in taking charge of the property left to her by a kind father. Mr. Morley requests to say that he cannot sanction any engagement which his officer may have made to furnish a cargo of the coast for Mr. Henderson, he—Mr. Morley—having a more pleasant cruise in view."

"What can all this mean?" muttered Mr. Henderson, not yet fully awake to the reality of the case.

He read the note over again. Then he rushed up to the room which had been occupied by Adele. He attempted to open the door; but when she left it, she had locked it and carried off the key.

"A tele! Adele!" he shouted, while he knocked heavily against the panels. "Open the door, or I will burst it from its hinges!" he shouted.

No reply came. With a bitter curse he threw his whole weight against the door. The lock yielded and he entered the room. It was untenanted. He rushed to the window and looked out upon the harbor to see if the vessel still was there. She was gone, and though through Adele's spy-glass he scanned the sea far and near, not a speck could he see which he could mentally torture into the semblance of a snail. Curses rolled from his lips like thunder from an overcharged cloud.

He turned to go and arouse his brother, when a note upon the dressing-table used by Adele met his eye. He took it up—it was addressed to him. He read it, and almost choked with anger while he did so. He had some reason—it ran thus:

"MOST AMIABLE GUARDIAN!—Having become surfeited with your kindness, I feel the need of a change of diet. My brave and noble Harold having come for me, I cannot refuse an invitation to make a voyage in his yacht. I know that I shall disappoint you in your benevolent intentions, perhaps induce you to end your mortal career with a razor, and by my disappearance induce your beloved brother to get so drunk that the delirious tremens will carry him off. Should these most desirable ends be attained, I shall not shed so many tears as to affect the tide in the ocean, I assure you. Not deeming it prudent or proper to go to sea with a nice young man unattended by my maid, I have taken Zella with me. So you will have to defer your intended cruelty to her until a more convenient opportunity offers.

"Farewell for two years, my kind guardian. Take good care of my property; for I will hold you accountable to the last cent when I return.

"Your very happy ward,
ADELE DUMESLE."

Hilliare Henderson actually frothed at the mouth, and raged like a madman as he read this sarcastic note. He tore it in pieces, and stamped upon them as he would have stamped upon the writer had she been in his power.

Then he rushed away to the apartment where Gustave yet lay sleeping off the fumes of drunkenness.

"Get up, you cursed fool!" shouted Hilliare, his face almost black with anger; and he shook Gustave fiercely.

"What—what d'ye want?" said the latter, yawning. "What d'ye want to shake a fellow's bones out of joint for?"

"Get up, I tell you, and see what an infernal fool you have been!" shouted Hilliare. "Harold Morley has been here and carried off Adele, right from under our noses, and you have helped to do it!"

"WHAT?"

Gustave was now thoroughly awake in an instant.

"Adele is gone," said Hilliare. "She went in Harold Morley's yacht, the *slaver* that you, fool-like, piloted into our harbor! You might have known the difference between a slaver and a yacht!"

"How could I, who never before was abroad either?" said Gustave, almost humbly.

He never had seen his brother in such a passion before, and he feared him.

"Had you kept sober, and had your senses about you, they could not have carried out their plan! But they fooled you completely!"

"It seems to me that you was on pretty good terms with that Captain Perkins when I came to bed!" said Gustave. "I know I was pretty drunk, but I remember that much!"

"Well, if I had not trusted to your introduction, I should not have been!"

"I should like to know," continued Gustave, who was now up, and dressing, "why you, who are always sober, could let them get ahead of you, and how Adele could be abducted from the house without your knowledge! You must have slept uncommonly sound!"

"It is a mystery to me!" said Hilliare. "I drank a few glasses of light wine, listened until the clock struck twelve to entertaining stories told by the man Perkins. They were about to go—I pressed them to take another glass of wine, we each drank a glass, and I remember nothing from that hour until I woke with an infernal headache, some fifteen or twenty minutes ago, in the library, with a taunting note from Harold Morley lying before me!"

"Brother, that last glass of wine was drugged!" said Gustave.

"It must have been!" replied Hilliare.

"And that accounts for the ease with which they have carried out their plans?"

"You say the vessel is gone from the harbor?"

"Yes, and far out of sight. I cannot see a speck of canvas out to seaward! The keen Yankee has been too much for us!"

"For the hour only—for the hour only!" said Gustave, fiercely. "Hilliare, I have indeed been a fool, but I will be so no longer! I will have Harold Morley's heart's blood for this! I will follow him to the world's end, for that purpose, and to recover Adele Dumesle. I love that girl; and if she cannot be mine, he shall not glory in the possession of her!"

"Now, Gustave, you speak like a man!" cried Hilliare, pressing his hand warmly. "I am with you heart and hand. My aid in money and in every other way you shall have, to carry out any plans you form to that effect!"

"Thank you, Hilliare! You will not see

THE AGGRAVATING LETTER.



me drunk again! Where do you suppose the Yankee has gone with his yacht?"

"I have no idea, Gustave! I will inquire if the vessel was seen after daylight by any one on the plantation, and if so, which way she steered. Meet me at the breakfast-table, and we will then try to lay out some plan of immediate action. For I shall not rest until we have her back again. She has taken Zella away with her, too—my own property!"

"Let me but catch him in a slave State, and he shall pay the penalty of nigger-stealing, as well as his other debt!" said Gustave, bitterly.

CHAPTER XVI.

When Adele, after a refreshing sleep of some hours, awoke, she found Zella sitting by her side, ready to dress her when she arose. And now she saw with what generous and delicate foresight Harold Morley had furnished every appurtenance of luxury and comfort, in anticipation of the certainty which he felt of her rescue.

Her state-room contained every article necessary for the most refined toilette. A neat bath-room adjoined it. There was more elegance and taste displayed in that small space than she had ever seen on shore.

"Let me dress you, sweet lady! Master Harold has awaited breakfast for you!" said Zella.

"I will rise, good girl. How pleasant the motion of the vessel over the waves is! It reminds me of the childish days when I swung beneath the limbs of the great magnolia. I feared that I should be sick, but never before did I feel so well. We are free, Zella—we are free!"

"Yes, sweet mistress!" said Zella, with a sigh.

"Why do you sigh, Zella?"

"Only because I am very happy, my mistress!"

Adele rose, and with Zella's skillful aid, was soon dressed as neatly as she would have been had she expected to breakfast with Harold at the chateau of Hilliare Henderson in the time when they first became acquainted.

When she appeared in the outer cabin, Harold was there to greet her with affectionate respect.

"How fares it with my sweet Adele, this morning?" he asked, as she came forth with a glad smile upon her lovely face.

"So well, that it seems to me like a dream!" replied Adele. "I can hardly realize that I am free from a tyrant's power, and bounding over the blue billows of the ocean with him whom I love more than all else on earth! O Harold, will such happiness last?"

"It shall not be my fault if it does not!"

But come, love, let the substantiality of a breakfast prove to you the reality of your position, and show you that you are not dreaming! My steward, good Nathan, a quaint oddity, but a staunch, and serviceable man, has been 'laying himself out,' as he says, in trying to tempt your appetite! Come, Zella, you are now the companion of your mistress—no longer the slave of Hilliare Henderson. Your mistress will not object that you share our meals!"

"No—not object, but insist that she do so!" said Adele.

Zella would have refused; but when Harold told her that it must be so, she took a seat at the lower end of the table.

"Well, Nathan," said Harold, to the old steward, who stood with his neatly-dressed cabin-boys, near the table. "What is your bill of fare this morning?"

"Chicken broiled, capting, with wafels; fresh fish, boiled and fried; potatoes in all sorts o' shapes, cold fried mutton and ham; eggs just as you want 'em, toast, tea, coffee, chocolate, and claret! Will that do, capting?"

"Yes, Nathan, you are a capital provider; our appetites will do you justice, at least, mine will!"

And Harold, first helping Adele and Zella to the dishes of their choice, fell to work in the battle of hunger with a zeal which proved that he was not one of that half-witted class who can live on love alone.

"Have you any idea where we are going, my sweet Adele?" asked Harold, while they ate.

"Not a thought, my Harold; and I assure you I care not, so long as I am near you!"

"How utterly unlike your sex, whose curiosity is a matter of proverb! But I will inform you. First, I propose looking in at Havana, for which place I cleared when I left port. Next, perhaps, to New Orleans. In Havana, by the time we arrive, the carnival season will be at its height, and in the masquerade and Opera you will find rare enjoyment!"

"Not more than I will find here in your society!" said Adele, with a smile.

"Ah me, I fear you will tire of that in time, my Adele!"

"Harold!"

She only spoke his name, but the reproachful look which accompanied her voice was a sufficient rebuke.

"Forgive me, Adele, I did but jest!" he said. "I will not so err again!"

"Do not, Harold; for my whole soul is bound up in you—my very nature is lost in my deep love for you!"

"Dear Adele, I know it, and will not let a

trifling word throw a shadow on your path! Let us think of some thing pleasant. By the way, how do you suppose Hilliare Henderson will feel when he reads the note which I handed Nathan to leave with him last night?"

"Which he has read that, and one which I left for him, and finds that we are all safely out of his reach, he'll have an anger-fit to be sure, that it may rid the world of a villain whom few would mourn!" said Adele.

At this moment, the second officer came down into the cabin, and said:

"When you have done breakfast, sir, Mr. Perkins would like to see you on deck! The barometer is falling!"

"Ah! I will be there in a few moments. Tell him to shorten sail without orders, whenever he deems it necessary!"

"What does the falling of the barometer indicate?" asked Adele.

"A change of weather!" said Harold. "We have now fair weather, a smooth sea, and a pleasant breeze only. By-and-by it is possible we may have more wind and a rougher sea; but a stauncher craft than this never floated—my crew are all men who know their duty, and it would be, indeed, a terrific gale which would endanger our safety! I know that my Adele will fear no danger while under my care!"

"Now, that I am with you, I have banished the word 'fear' from my vocabulary," she replied, with a smile; and then, with a dulcet voice, she sang a verse from the old favorite:

"The land is no longer in view,
The clouds are beginning to frown,
But with a stout vessel and crew,
We'll say, let the storm come down!
And the song of our hearts shall be:
While the winds and waters rave—
A life on the heaving sea,
And a home on the ocean wave!"

"Bravo, my ocean queen, bravo!" cried Harold.

"If that don't beat all Jerusalem, there isn't nary angel nowhere," said Nathan, sootily.

Harold rose to go on deck.

"If a storm comes on, I shall go up to look at it, for I know it will be grand!" said Adele, as Harold went above.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Well Hilliare, what news?" asked Gustave Henderson of his brother, when he met him at the breakfast table. "Did any one see the schooner go out?"

"No!" said Hilliare. "They must have gone soon after midnight, for not an overseer or hand saw her in sight at daylight!"

"Then there is but one way for me to get upon her track," said Gustave. "She left from a New-haven port, probably New York or

Baltimore. Then, of course, to get proper papers, she had to clear for some other port. I must go North and find what port she cleared for, and sail for that port. Once upon his track, I never will leave it until I have her and Zella again in my power, and have such revenge upon him as my heart burns to take."

"Your plan is good, Gustave. You are more of a man in thought and action, this morning, than I have known you to be for years!"

"Because I have awakened from a dream of drunken folly. I know what I have lost, I will regain it or die! I shall need plenty of funds, Hilliare—I have enough now, but may have to draw upon you while absent."

"Every draft of yours shall be honored, Gustave. But avoid the gaming-table—I know your infatuation there."

"Fear not, Hilliare. The staunch hound which tracks the stag will cross a thousand trails, but never leave that on which it started."

"Right! Be you as staunch! It will be necessary for me to give you papers to reclaim Adele as my ward, and Zella as my slave. These I will have made out immediately. If the abductor has gone South, I will help you to trace him. If he has gone North, I will leave you to deal with him alone. I do not like the North or its people. They are too cold and too moral for me—I like neither them nor their climate."

"No more do I; but were it to the frozen regions of the North, or to the burning line of the equator, that he had gone, there would I follow him!"

"When will you go, Gustave?"

"I will start before the sun sinks to its bed in the West. It will not take me long to prepare, I assure you. Only a few directions to my overseer, the packing of a few articles of clothing, the stuffing of a pocket-book which I shall need, and I am ready."

"Well, to breakfast then, and afterward I will aid you in every way that I can."

CHAPTER XVIII.

When Harold Morley reached the deck, Mr. Perkins, by a quick glance and motion of his hand to leeward, indicated the direction of the rising storm, which the barometer had foretold. He had not yet taken in sail, for a fresh and fair breeze was still blowing.

Harold looked off upon the lee-bow. His eye fell upon a line of black, murky clouds which looked like a range of rugged mountains wrapped in night-like shadows.

"A south-wester, Mr. Perkins," said he, as he glanced toward his officer.

"Yes, sir, it looks like it. Shall I take in sail, and put the crew in trim to stand it?"

THE SECRET REVEALED.

"Of course, and the sooner the better. You had better send down the top-masts. Those clouds rise so rapidly, that I know they ride on the breast of a hurricane."

"All hands shorten sail!" shouted Perkins. "Down flying-jib, and in gaff-topsails, my lads. Reave your mast ropes, and stand by to send down top-masts, and to rig in the flying-jib-boom. Bejively!"

The crew sprang to their work with a will, aided, too, by Nathan and his cabin-crew, or the "after-guard" as he termed them. In a very short space of time the sails were close-furled, the light spars housed, and the vessel standing along under only her mainsail, foresail, and jib.

"Take the bonnets off the jib and foresail, and close-reef the mainsail, Mr. Perkins," said Harold, who still watched that black mountain of clouds which, working up against the breeze, still held by the schooner, now covered more than half the leeward portion of the sky.

This was done, and only done when the wind they had held till then died entirely away.

"Quick, Mr. Perkins, and down and furl mainsail and jib!" cried Harold, as a dull, heavy sound, like the rumbling of a distant train of laden cars, was heard. "The foresail will be all she can possibly bear under that blast."

Barely were the two sails secured, when the shadow of the cloud-mountain lay like night upon them; the roar of the coming storm was like the thunder of Niagara, and the vessel yet heaving, unbalanced by the wind, seemed to tremble in anticipation of the shock.

"Have life-lines rove, quick, Perkins!" said Morley, as he saw the sea coming with the wind, in an unbroken sheet of foam.

Fortunately the officer had already seen the necessity of this, and the men were already passing the life-lines above the bulwarks, from stern to stern.

"Oh, how grand!" said a low, sweet voice, in Harold's ear. "How magnificent is a storm at sea!"

The storm howls madly o'er the sea,
The clouds their thunder accents sing;
The billows rolling fearfully,
In concert with the whirlwind ring!"

"Adele, love, this is no time to quote poetry, or for you to be up here. Do go below, where you will be more safe. Do, for heaven's sake! In a moment more the storm will be upon us."

"Where you are, there my bliss and safety lies. Do not drive me from your side," said Adele.

He saw that it was then too late. Catching a

rope, he quickly fastened it around the waist of Adele and Zella, who had followed her mistress, then took a turn around himself and the main-rigging, beside which he stood.

"Look out all!" he shouted. "Perkins, take the helm, and let her get a full if you can, and then head her to the wind."

The last order was unheard. The storm was upon them with its deafening roar. The sea rolled in upon the deck in one undivided mass. Well was it for the schooner and those on board, that her hatches had been closed—she had she filled on the instant. Crouched close under the low bulwarks, Harold and his charge avoided the force of the sea, yet they were drenched in a moment.

As the wind struck the close-reefed foresail, it filled to its fullest strength in a second, and the vessel, still motionless on the sea, fell over on her side until it seemed as if she must go bottom up. And well was it for one man that she did not move, for that first sea swept Nathan Shankland far away to leeward.

He had secured the end of a coil of rope; but had not securely fastened it, and though he clung to the rope with a death-grasp, it paid out, and when it brought him up he was far away to leeward. But while the vessel, half-capsized, lay on her beam-ends, breaking the sea from him, while Perkins and Morley, themselves helpless to aid him, looked upon him as lost, he hauled himself back hand over hand on the rope, the end of which had been fast inboard; and just as the schooner began to gather a little headway, he regained the lee main rigging, where he took care to make himself more secure.

The vessel, as she moved a little, began to answer to her helm, and as she filled, paid off still more before the wind, righting a little as she went. But a more furious gust than the first now struck her, and in a moment, with a sound like thunder, the canvas split and the strong sail went shred by shred, off upon the breath of the gale.

But the vessel righted, headway enough for her to answer her helm had been given; and Perkins put her away under her bays' spars before the wind. And now, upright, she shook herself free of the water which ran in torrents through her scuppers, and bounded away with almost the speed of the wind, which howled behind her and screamed through the rigging. Now she proved the admirable model of her hull. Bravantly it rode upon the waves, and while the skilled helmsman kept her so fair before wind and sea that she veered not a fathom either way, she drove on with an upright keel, and her people as safe as if they were on shore.

In spite of the shrill screaming of the gale, Adele could make Harold hear her words.

"This is the proudest moment of my life!"

she said. "I feel as if we were bidding defiance to the storm—laughing the warring elements to scorn!"

Nathan, who, like the rest of the crew, had now unshaken himself, came over to the side where Harold stood, and, as composedly as if he had not been in danger, said:

"Captin, about what time would you like dinner to be got ready?"

"As soon as you like now, Nathan," replied Harold. "But what were you doing away off to leeward a while ago?"

"Just stretchin' the kinks out of a soft o' rope, captin," replied Nathan, quietly.

"What did you think of Mr. Shankland, while in that fearful peril?" asked Adele.

"I was thinkin' just then, marm, what I could git to eat to day that would taste good to you. You see we've a'most everything aboard, but I'm not used to eatin' for women folks, and feel bothered. I suppose I ought to have lots of sweet things—preserves, cakes, pies, and all that. I'm not much on any kind of pies, except pumpkin pie; at that I beat all natur'! If you tell me, marm, what you like best, I'll be sure to cook it for you."

"I should hate to have you cook what I like best!" said she, with a smile, as she looked at Harold.

Nathan saw the joke, but he was serious-minded and didn't like jokes. So he thought he'd give her one back at any rate.

"I hain't got any receipt, marm," said he, "for cookin' geese."

Both Adele and Harold laughed heartily at a reply which would have offended an actual human goose.

And Nathan, self-satisfied with his revenge, said:

"I'll go and git dinner anyhow, and do the best I can to please you."

Harold now advised Adele and Zella to go below to change their dripping garments, and when they did so, he went aft to the side of Perkins, who still kept the helm, and who was now looking at the compass in the binnacle frequently, and with an expression of anxiety.

"The wind is veering to the eastward, sir," said he, to Harold. "Driving as fast as we are, I don't like the idea of a lee-shore while it blows so hard that we cannot make sail."

"True," said Harold. "We must not be driven back on that coast. Sail must be made if the wind still hauls easterly."

"With the wind as it blows now, our canvas would be blown from the bolt-ropes in an instant!"

"Yes; but it cannot last so long! This is its first and heaviest breath. There will be a lull by and by."

"I hope so, sir," said Perkins.

But his serious face expressed a doubt while his lips spoke of hope.

"I am going below for a little time. If there is any change, send for me at once," said Harold; "although I know the bonny craft is as safe, even more safe, under your care than my own."

"I'll call you, sir, if there is any need," said Perkins.

"Do so. I will go below and dine, and then come on deck and relieve you, that you may do the same. Merton is a good boy, but has hardly experience enough to be trusted in charge of the deck in weather so heavy as this."

"Very true, sir; but he has the making of a tip-top sailor in him."

"I believe you. Have a man kept aloft to look out for land."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

CHAPTER XIX.

Hilliare Henderson stood in the cupola of his chateau, gazing with a look of demoniac pleasure out upon a storm-lashed sea. He did not heed the wind which howled around him; he paid no attention to the fact that his house shook and quivered from foundation to dome; that the fierce tempest was beating down his broad fields of rice to a level with the earth—rending branch after branch from many of the finest trees, and uprooting others—scattering his fruit hither and thither; nothing recked he of all this; but through his glass he looked out upon that foam-covered sea, and watched a vessel which, in apparent helplessness, was driving in toward the shore.

His brother, all equipped for his journey, having inquired for him elsewhere in vain, at last came and found him in the cupola.

"You need not go," he shouted—for the storm was almost deafening—"you need not go, Gustave; they are there!" And he pointed seaward with his telescope. "Two hours more will see them stranded upon our coast!"

"The news is too good to be true!" cried Gustave. "Let me look."

And he seized the telescope.

"True, by thunder!" he said, after a long and steady look at the distant vessel. "Not a sail set—driving right in! Fortune is on our side, this time!"

"Yes, Miss Adele, if she is not drowned, shall have a firmer taste of my guardianship; and Zella shall know what a good memory I have! I only hope that Harold Morley will fall alive into my hands. He shall then learn that nigger-stealing, in this State, is punished with death. A hangman's rope will serve well to cravat his dainty neck."

"I should like to be hangman on the occasion," said Gustave, bitterly. "I don't wish the fellow to die until I can have a hand in the matter."

"What matters it, so long as he dies, and is out of your way?"

"So much that I could almost die content if I could throttle him to death and whisper in his dying ear: 'This is your reward for stopping between me and Adele Dumeale! This is the satisfaction required and taken by Gustave Henderson!'"

"You are bitter, Gustave; but I do not blame you. I hope that Adele will be saved, even if all the rest are lost; for, let her but once come into my power, and she shall be yours! That is sworn to."

"You said, yesterday, that you had a plan which would force her to marry me."

"True," I said so; and such a plan I have formed. Let her but once fall into my power, and with your aid it shall be carried into effect."

"What is it? Let me hear, that I may judge whether it is feasible or not."

Hilliare Henderson looked around, as if he was fearful that some one would hear his words. Then, bending his head, he put his lips to his brother's ear, and whispered a few words.

They must have been diabolical indeed to have induced an exclamation of horror and repugnance from a man so utterly depraved as was Gustave Henderson.

But such an exclamation did escape his lips. And he said:

"No, no, Hilliare! I'm a devil, but not bad enough for that!"

"Poh! there is no mercy in her heart for you; why should you have mercy on her?" said Hilliare, with a sneer.

"She would proclaim my crime, and the law would claim a terrible penalty."

"Proclaim your crime and her own shame?" said Hilliare, contemptuously. "Never would she be such a fool as that. She would only be too thankful to be permitted to become your wife."

"Well, well," said Gustave, "let us first see if she gets on shore alive, before we speak of other matters. Let us gather a force, and go down to the beach, as if to help them, and watch them as they drift in."

"There is no need of our being in a hurry," replied Hilliare. "They are a long way out yet, and the drift is slow. They may be trying drags or anchors."

"The last would not hold a moment in such a gale; the first, only lessen the speed which drives them to destruction. Canvas only can carry them out of this scrape."

"And that they cannot set while it blows

with such fury. No sail could withstand this gale a minute. Most likely their sails have already been blown away."

"Undoubtedly they have, if they have been set. But I say, Hilliare, I don't like staying up in this confounded cupola. It shakes like a withered leaf on a lone branch in winter. It is not safe!"

"Fshaw! it will stand as long as the house stands. I cannot leave it until I see that there is no chance for their escape; and then I am with you for the beach, so that, when the strands, we can take proper care of the survivors."

"Well, you can do as you like," said Gustave; "I stay here no longer. The whole house shakes, from its foundation up."

And Gustave very prudently descended the steep and narrow staircase which led to the story below.

He had barely reached the floor below, when a terrible gust swept over the house. A crash, as of parting timbers, was heard, and Hilliare leaped through the aperture from above, without pausing to descend by the staircase, while the cupola, swept entirely from the roof, went crashing over among the magnolias to leeward of the house.

"More haste than dignity, that time, brother!" said Gustave, with a laugh.

Hilliare's face was pale as he looked up at the open roof above him.

"'Tis the wildest hurricane that ever blew!" he muttered. "There is no hope for a vessel off this coast now!"

"Well, let us go down to the beach and see her come in," said Gustave. "If we are not there, and any of them escape, they will find friends to protect them. You know what a liking John Simonds took to Harold Morley when he was here first, and how much interest he has since exhibited about Adele, curse him! I have more than once had a mind to invite him to a private meeting, where we might exchange compliments muzzle to muzzle."

"Scarcely a safe operation," said Hilliare, more calmly. "John is as good a shot as you are, and never unsteadies his nerves with drink."

"Well, never mind; I am going to the beach whether you go or not."

"You need not hurry. I will go, since my look-out perch is gone. But I must go to Adele's room to get her telescope. Mine has gone with the wreck of the cupola, and is probably ruined. Tell the overseer to collect twenty or thirty hands to follow us. I will be with you in a moment."

When Hilliare Henderson and his brother

reached the bench opposite to the point where they had last seen the drifting vessel. They found that others, apprehensive of her wreck, had also been drawn to the same point, but with far different motives. A neighboring planter, named Simonds—the same of whom the brothers had spoken as the friend of Harold Morley—was there on horseback, with other friends.

That Mr. Simonds was one of Nature's noblemen, no one who glanced at his fine face and manly form could deny. His air was that of a well-bred man—he sat on his spirited horse gracefully; and in conversation with those around him, evidenced a genial and courteous spirit, which made him deservedly popular.

When he saw the Hendersons approach, though he was not upon the best of terms with them—for he had promptly rejected aspersions which they had cast upon Harold Morley—he supposed them to be upon the same errand of mercy which had brought him and his friends there; and, overlooking all the darkness in their characters, he saw but this one bright spot, and in his kindest tone he said:

"Gentlemen—I am truly glad to see you here. It is a noble thing to see the distress of others bring those together upon the same level who have had differences."

"You had better keep your congratulations for those that need them," muttered Gustave Henderson, between his grating teeth.

"Do you think that there is any chance of safety for yonder vessel?" asked Hilliare Henderson.

"I fear not. The gale is evidently too high to permit her to use canvas, if she has any sails left. The breakers extend, as you see, a full mile from shore—no boat can live in them, and it will be a miracle if a human being can pass through them and live."

"I am glad to hear it," said Hilliare Henderson, maliciously.

"And I, too," retorted Gustave.

"Gentlemen, you astonish me—I thought you were human, and came here upon an errand of mercy, as I and my other neighbors have come."

"You are mistaken, John Simonds! We came here to see a nigger stealer come ashore. It is a pity that he is a friend of yours."

"I would much like to know what you mean, Mr. Henderson?" said Simonds, preserving his temper with that quiet calmness which is an attribute of a brave man and a gentleman upon all occasions.

"I only mean, Mr. Simonds, that the vessel which we see yonder came into my harbor just before dark last night, using as a pretence the statement that she was out of water. Before morning she went to sea, carrying off the

most valuable slave upon my plantation. Providence, you see, is doing the thing back to punishment. If he escapes the sea, he shall not escape me. He shall hang! That is sworn to! And you, John Simonds, with all your influence, cannot save him!"

"Mr. Henderson, when I interfere between the law and a proven negro-thief, it will be time enough for you to deal in intendoes. Until then, I crave, for your own sake, that you will forbear."

"But the owner and commander of that vessel is an old friend and *protégé* of yours, Mr. Simonds," said Henderson, with a sneer. "In truth, it is none other than Harold Morley."

"God help him, poor boy! God help him, if you speak the truth!" said Simonds, looking with a pale cheek and quivering lip toward the vessel now not three miles from shore.

"Is that note in his handwriting?" asked Henderson, with malignant triumph, as he handed Harold's letter to the planter.

"It is; and so Adele Dumais has escaped from your tyranny, and the valuable slave whom you say you have lost is Zella, her maid?"

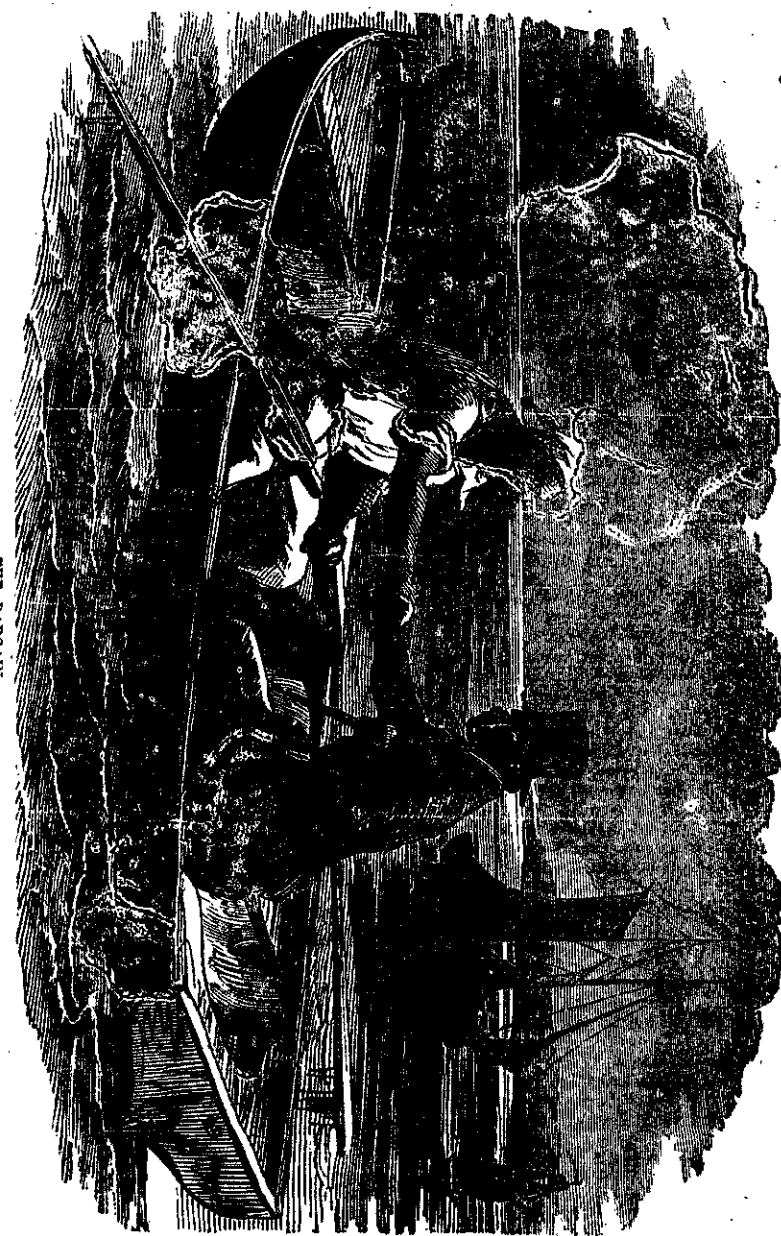
"Yes; and they are there," said Henderson, pointing toward the fitted schooner with a sardonic laugh.

"Now I feel that a just God will yet save them!" said Simonds, warmly. "As to Harold Morley being a negro-thief, you know, Hilliare Henderson, that it is false! Oh, sir, you may frown—I am responsible for what I say! Zella has been with Adele from childhood, and would not now be separated from her. Adele has taken her maid, as she has a right to; and I guarantee in three times the girl's price, that if they pass this peril—and I trust in God they will—that in two years Adele and her husband will come to claim their own, and that Zella, if alive, will be with them."

Henderson dared not trust himself to reply. He was now almost choked with rage. But he knew that John Simonds was a dangerous man to quarrel with; he applied the warning which he had given to his brother to himself. Therefore, without replying, he beckoned to his brother to follow him, and walked down from the bluff where they had been standing to the beach, some three or four hundred yards yet nearer the surf, which rolled in like great drifts of snow upon the shore.

And now, dear reader, we will go back on board the yacht, and share the perils of our friends there.

THE BARGAIN.



CHAPTER XX.

Harold Morley was possessed of a cool head, albeit his was an ardent temperament. He dined in the midst of that terrible tempest as composedly as if he had been on shore in perfect safety—pressed the various choice dishes upon Adele with the air of a gourmand, and ate as leisurely as if they were in the most pleasant part of a smooth and delightful voyage.

When dinner was over, he went upon deck to relieve Perkins, and himself took the helm which the other left, remarking that he did not think the gale would hold its strength a great while—it had begun too strong to hold out well.

An hour passed on, and Perkins was again on deck, when the man at the mast-head shouted:

"Land ho!"

"Where away, my lad?" asked Harold.

"Ahead, sir, and all along on our lee-bow!" replied the lookout.

Harold went forward with his spy-glass in his hand, and ascended the fore-rigging a few feet. From thence he looked long and anxiously toward the land, which he could see even from that elevation. He came down, went aft, and, in a low tone, asked Perkins if he thought it would be possible for the schooner to show any canvas at all in such a hurricane.

"No, sir," replied Perkins. "Were the sails made of sheet-iron, they wouldn't stand it."

"Then we must get out a drag to keep her from drifting, as much as possible, and round her to."

"That can be done, sir; but still, she'll drift fast in this gale."

"I know it; but we must do the best we can. The harbor which we left last night is dead to leeward of us. This gale cannot hold its strength forever—it must slacken up in a few hours; and if we can keep off the coast until she can bear a little sail, we are safe. If not, we are lost!"

"I'll go forward and rig out a drag, if you please, sir," said Perkins. "Will you take the helm, or shall I call one of the hands?"

"I will take it," said Harold. "Be as quick as you can with the drag."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

And the officer hastened forward; and, aided by the willing crew, soon collected all the spare spars, and fastened them securely together with strong ropes. To these he attached a heavy kedge-anchor, by a hawser, but not with sufficient length for it to reach bottom until they should get into very shoal water. It was done to sink the spars as low in the water as possible, to make them drag heavier.

When these were all ready, and the end of

the long hawser attached, and the mass so placed on the bows that the united strength of the crew would be able to pitch it overboard, Perkins hailed his captain:

"If you ease down your helm now, sir, and round to," said he, "I'll have the drag over. We're all ready forward!"

Harold put his helm alee, and the schooner swept swiftly and gracefully around, rolling only for an instant in the trough of the sea, then coming head to it.

As she did so, Perkins gave the order, and when the schooner began to gather sternway, the drag went over her bows. In a minute or two more, paying out hawser to the length of a hundred fathoms or thereabout, the schooner brought up to the drag, and rode as easily as if she had been at anchor in a smooth harbor, though she still kept drifting slowly in toward the land, which could now be seen from the deck quite distinctly.

As Perkins came aft again to relieve Harold at the helm—though no steerage was required—only a watch there if the vessel should chance to break adrift from the drag—Adele and Zella came on deck.

Adele noticed the pale and anxious look which rested upon Harold's face. She glanced toward the land, and knew that the vessel was in danger, though he did not tell her so.

Laying her small, white hand upon his arm, she said:

"If the storm continues, your vessel will be wrecked—do you not think so, Harold?"

He looked in wonder at the perfect calmness with which she viewed the danger. For there was no pallor on her cheek—no sign of fear in her great dark eyes—not a quivering, even, of the lip, to show a terror of the death which must ensue, if the vessel was doomed to wreck upon the surge-lashed shore.

"Yes," he said, at last. "But I feel confident that its fury is nearly spent. Before we can drift to the shore with the cheek which we now have, I am sure that we will be able to carry sail enough to beat off the shore. These fierce hurricanes are never of long duration."

"Upon what part of the coast are we drifting?" she asked.

"Take my glass and see if you can recognize it," was his answer.

She took the telescope and looked at the land, now square astern.

Her cheek was a trifle less rosy, as she answered:

"Yes—I can see the chateau! And I also can see, by the white surf that rolls so high this side of the land, that a vessel which gets within the sweep of those breakers will be surely lost!"

"You look at the danger very calmly, my brave Adele."

"Why should I not? Am I not with you? I had rather perish by your side, Harold Morley—rather perish this day—than to live another week on yonder shore with the surroundings from which I have escaped!"

"Dear Adele! death is a long way from us yet. He who has filled our cup with happiness will not dash it untasted from our lips. I feel a calm and abiding trust in a Providence who hath ever treated me mercifully. We are in danger, but I feel confident that we shall escape it," replied Harold. Then turning to one of his seamen, he told him to leave the boat every five minutes, to test the depth of the water and the drift of the vessel.

The wind still blew with terrible strength, yet now there was an occasional lull of a few moments, which was sure to be followed by a fiercer and heavier gust.

"We have a new forecast in the sail-room, Mr. Perkins," said Harold. "You had better get it ready for bending; for, if the gale slackens, yet so little, I am determined to put the canvas on and beat off the shore. It will never do for us to go ashore hereabout."

"No sir! I'll go and have the sail ready," though the drag checked the drift of the yacht very much, yet the wind, united with the heave of the sea, drove her all too rapidly in. The shore became painfully distinct, and more than one of the crew closely scanned the faces of the captain and his chief officer, to read there what might be the extent of their peril. For, as a child looks to its parent for knowledge of good or evil, so looks the seaman to his officer. Upon his judgment he depends, even as he is obedient to the orders which come from his lips; for he knows that upon the skill of that officer his very existence is often dependent.

But Harold and Perkins both appeared calm and confident; and though a foaming yeast of breakers lay under their lee, toward which they were apparently drifting, helplessly, not one of the crew seemed afraid. They trusted in the courage and the skill of their officers.

"What do you see, Adele?" "You keep your glass fixed upon one point, I observe," said Harold; just after he had stationed the leadsmen in the chains.

"There are many persons gathered upon the shore, apparently watching us. Some are on foot, others are on horseback," replied Miss Dumeste.

"Ah?" "They are there probably to try and aid us, thinking that we surely will be wrecked," said Harold.

"If the Hendersons are there, their wishes will not be for our safety," said Adele.

"The Hendersons are not the only people who can see our position. John Simonds

can see us as plainly from his plantation as they from theirs. Let the worst come, if we but landed in safety, I know that I have more friends than foes on yonder shore," said Harold.

"How much water there?" he asked, of the man at the lead.

"Ten fathoms, sir!" replied the man.

"How does she drift?"

"Dead away for the shore, sir—pretty fast at that."

"Mr. Perkins, don't you think she'll bear the mainsail and jib, close reefed as they are?"

"Hardly yet, sir. We might risk and lose them. If we can hold on a little while longer, I feel sure that the wind will fall. The hulls are longer, and the heavy gusts far less frequent than they were."

"Very well—hold on, it is; but have all ready for hoisting sail and cutting away the drag when the time comes. I will carry the masts out of her before I'll let her go ashore."

"All is ready, sir."

All was silent and steady watchfulness for sometime on board the yacht. The man who hove the lead would occasionally sing out his soundings, but no other one spoke. The steady drift of the vessel toward the breakers, which were not now two miles to leeward, seemed to occupy the thoughts of all, both officers and crew.

At last, Adele spoke to Harold. She had been intently looking at the persons on shore, through the spy-glass.

"The Hendersons are there," she said. "They stand down close by the water-side, apart from the other people. Farther up, I see John Simonds on horseback, with many people around him."

Closer still—more and more near to the breakers, whose roar could now be distinctly heard above the shrill trumpeting of the storm—drifted the apparently doomed schooner.

Harold's face began to look troubled. For himself, he feared not, cared not. His thoughts were fixed upon Adele.

"She is too young—too beautiful to die," he murmured.

"She can stand the jib and mainsail now, sir, I think," said Perkins, at that moment.

"She must!" said Harold, sternly. "Have the sheets of both sails flatted aft before you men the hilliards. It matters not on which track she goes."

It was, indeed, time to make sail, if it ever was to be made. The breakers were not a half-mile distant.

When the sheets were trimmed, and Harold shouted:

"Man the main-throat, and peak and jib halliards—stand by to up mainsail and jib!"

every man sprung to his duty with the light of hope in his eye and the flush of joy on his cheek. Even Nathan and his "after-guard" appeared on deck—Perkins and Merton sprang to the ropes themselves.

"All ready, sir!" shouted Perkins.

"Hoist away with a will, then!" cried Harold.

As the vessel was directly head to wind, though the sails flapped heavily they were raised with comparative ease, for the crew "worked with a will," as if they knew that their lives depended upon the success of the attempt to carry sail. In a few seconds the sails were hoisted, and then, as he put his helm hard to starboard, to act with the rapid "stern-board," which the vessel would be sure to make, Harold gave the order to cut away the drag.

A couple of smart blows from an axe, in the hands of Perkins, severed the hawser, and then the head of the schooner quickly veered off to port and the sails filled. Reefed down, as they were, they caused the schooner to "heel over," until her lee-rail lay level with the water, and for a moment resembled as if the canvas must burst from the broken ropes and spurs with such a terrible strain.

The yacht had drifted with her stern-board into only five fathoms of water, and the breakers were now roaring scarce a cable's length astern.

But slowly the noble craft gathered headway—slowly at first, but surely—then, as Harold gave her the helm, and ordered the sheets slackened a trifle, her speed increased, and cheer after cheer rose from the lips of her glad crew as they saw her dart forward, heading full ten points to windward of land on the lee-bow.

"Hoist the flag of our country at the main, and the signal of the 'Adele' forward!" cried Harold, joyfully. "Let friends and foes ashore see that we are safe!"

With renewed cheers up went the two flags, while from one of the two groups which stood on shore could be seen hats and handkerchiefs waving; and Harold fancied, even amid the noise of wind and waters, that he could hear their glad cheers.

The other group stood, motionless and silent, on the beach, like wolves disappointed of their prey.

The Adele was safe. The wind held steady, falling gradually, and she stood up under her canvas staunchly, beautifully. Each minute she increased the distance from the shore, and the hearts which had trembled a half-hour before now beat fast with joy.

"Well, Nathan, what do you think of this?" asked Harold, as his steward came aft, after the schooner gathered headway off the shore.

"Think, sir? Why, that we're out of a

squally scrape just as slick as goose-grease, capting! And we ought to be thankful orators for it, too. What shall I get for supper, capting?"

"Whatever you like, Nathan; there will be no lack of appetite to-night on board of this craft."

"May be not," said Nathan, as he descended to his duty in the cabin.

Adele was standing near Harold, but her eyes were looking toward the shore.

"What is my Adele thinking off?" asked Harold.

"Of what our fates would have been, had the gale not so slackened that you could carry sail," said Adele. "Of that in part, and also how Hilliare and Gustave Henderson must feel, now that we, whom they thought doomed, are moving from their sight free from the danger which threatened us."

Reader, would not you like to know how the chief villains of our story bear their disappointment? Yes? Well, I thought so. We'll go ashore and see.

CHAPTER XXI.

After Mr. Simonds knew the vessel in distress was the yacht which carried his young friend Harold Morley, and Adele Dumeste, both himself and friends watched her with painful interest. They felt that her doom was almost certain; for they supposed, since she evidently made no attempt to carry sail, that her canvas had all been blown away in the terrible hurricane which was raging.

And while these friends of Harold's were thus suffering an agony of suspense, Hilliare and Gustave Henderson were pacing up and down the beach like two hungry beasts, waiting for a prey almost within reach of their whetted fangs—sure that those whom they so much hated could not escape the fearful fate which loomed before them.

So contented was Hilliare, so convinced that, ere the red sun went down in the west, his revengeful feelings would be gratified, that he sent one of his negroes to the house for wine and other refreshments.

And when the wine came, he sent a bottle with his compliments to Mr. Simonds, telling the servant to say that his master wished Mr. Simonds joy upon the pleasant prospect before him.

Mr. Simonds, of course, sent the wine back unopened.

Henderson laughed scornfully at this, saying that his own appetite for wine and food was never so good before. And he, with Gustave, both ate and drank with a zest which showed their utter heartlessness and the inhuman ferocity of their hate.

As the vessel drew nearer and nearer, the fiendish joy of the two brothers increased;

and when, at last, she seemed to be almost within the grasp of the breakers, Hilliare went up the bluff where Simonds and his friends stood, pale and anxious; and, in a taunting tone, offered to lend the planter his spy-glass, that he might see how white his "brave friend" Morley looked while he faced death.

But at that very moment, something whiter than Harold Morley's face was seen swiftly rising from the dark hull of the endangereed schooner.

With a shout of triumph, Simonds and his friends cried:

"She is making sail!—she is making sail! She'll work off, yet!"

Turning to Hilliare—who, pale with disappointment and anger, stood gazing stupidly at the schooner—Mr. Simonds said, in his blindest tone:

"I will accept the offer of your spy-glass, Mr. Henderson. I wish to see how Harold Morley and his sweet Adele look, side by side, before they stand out to sea."

And he reached his hand for the glass.

"Wait till the wind fills their cursed sails!" said Hilliare, bitterly. "You'll see the vessel turn keel up, or else the sails will go into shreds! She is doomed, sir!—doomed!"

"Yes," said Simonds, quietly, as he saw her sails fill, and noted how she gathered headway. "She is doomed to work out of a bad scrape as prettily and as easily as poor Adele Dumescle worked herself out of the imprisonment in which you kept her."

"John Simonds!" shouted Henderson, utterly beside himself with rage. "John Simonds, beware how you madden me! Beware, sir, for I'll make you account for your insult with your heart's blood!"

"Phlebotomy is a profession which two can practice," said Simonds, coolly. "I am at your service at all times for a trial of skill in that line, with whatever instruments you may prefer."

"You shall hear from me, sir!—you shall hear from me!" cried Henderson, almost frothing at the mouth.

"Regretting that I can hear no good of, or from you, I shall await any message you have to send," said the other, as calmly as when he first spoke to Henderson.

The latter, with a bitter curse upon his lips, turned to leave the spot and rejoin his brother.

"One moment, Mr. Henderson," said Simonds, as if something important was to be said.

"Well, sir, what do you want?" cried Hilliare, turning and looking at him with eyes which blazed with fury.

"Merely to congratulate you upon the safety of your fair ward and her lover!" said Simonds, with a hearty laugh, in which his

friends all joined. "Zella, first the schooner is moving off like a bird, while the gale is growing lighter every moment."

Henderson was too angry to reply, and moved on to rejoin his brother, without making any answer.

The dark clouds which had overspread the sky were now breaking away, and the descending sun gilded their ragged fronts as they slunk off in disorder in the far Western horizon.

When the schooner drew so far from the land that her white sails were barely discernible in the deepening twilight of approaching night, Simonds and his friends left the ground, and repaired to the lordly home of the generous planter, there to drink many a bumper to the "brave who had deserved and won the fair" Adele.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Ten thousand curses light upon them both!" said Hilliare Henderson, as he threw himself into a seat in his library, on his return to the house. "Fate almost threw them back into our hands, and now she has thwarted us!"

"Patience, brother, patience!" said Gustave, who came in with him. You have ever chided me for my recklessness and imprudence; and now that I have grown cool, you seem to have exchanged natures with me, and to have become as violent as I need to be. I have made up my mind to follow Harold Morley to the death! and not one, nor ten, nor twenty disappointments shall either put me out of humor or cause me for an instant to change my purpose! Though thwarted a hundred times, still will I follow him as the bloodhound follows on the scent of gore!"

"Patience—patience!" said Hilliare, bitterly. "Fooled by this scoundrel adventurer, insulted by him and Adele, and then to lose them when almost in my power. It is enough to drive a man mad! And, more than all, I am involved in a difficulty with John Simonds on their account."

"No challenge has passed between you and him?"

"No; but I must challenge him. He has insulted me, and I told him he should hear from me."

"You will not challenge him, Hilliare," said Gustave, quietly. "If he were to fight you, he would kill you."

"I know that."

"Then, under present circumstances, you would be a fool to challenge him. Abide your time, and you'll bring him down yet. But now, when I am about to start upon a journey which shall not end until I have secured Adele Dumescle and Zella, and sent Harold Morley to close his account with the

devil, you must take care of yourself and our joint property. Our revenge upon Simonds will be a thousand times more sweet when I have succeeded, as I surely will, in the objects I have named."

"You reason well, Gustave; but what will those say who heard the words between him and myself?"

"Why should you care what they say? You are independent of them. Do as I advise you: Let John Simonds alone until you can touch him to the very heart and yet be safe! In my angry mood, this morning, I had a thought of a quarrel with him. Then it was you that advised my forbearance. Now take your own warning home to yourself."

"I will, Gustave, and let my contempt, rather than my anger, follow him. And now to other business. Will you still pursue your original intention, to go North, and there to find out whether Morley was bound when he sailed thence?"

"I surely will," replied Gustave.

"But you will defer starting until to-morrow?"

"Not so. I will start within the hour. I was ready, and came round to take my farewell of you, when I found you on the cupola. Had not the vessel been seen, I would have been upon my route long hours ago."

"Well, I cannot say no to your mission, for it concerns me almost as much as yourself. All that I can say is, to wish you good fortune. Draw upon me without reserve whenever you need funds; and let me know by every mail where you are, and how you are succeeding. When I can aid you in person, write for me to come."

"I will," said Gustave.

And the next moment he was gone, and Hilliare Henderson was alone.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Three weeks later, a New York and New Orleans steamer entered the harbor of Havana, running up nearly to the man-o'-war anchorage before it rounded to and dropped anchor.

Upon the fore-castle of this steamer, from the moment she made land until her anchor was fast in the mud, one of our acquaintances had taken post and maintained it. It was none other than Gustave Henderson. Eagerly he scanned every vessel among the multitude that crowded the harbor as the steamer moved slowly and steadily up to its anchorage. And when at last, anchored up among the men-o'-war, as if by special permission, he discovered a beautiful American clipper, with a crimson flag forward, bearing in gold letters, the name of "Adele," a look of savage joy settled upon his hitherto anxious features, and he muttered:

"I have them now! I have them now!"

Soon after the steamer came to anchor, the vessel was boarded by the captain of the port. The passports and landing permits underwent examination, and, after due payment of the proper fees, permission was given for the Havana passengers to land.

Gustave Henderson was too anxious to leave the vessel to wait for the regular boat which was used to transfer passengers to the shore. Leaving directions for the transmission of his baggage to a hotel, with the captain's permission he hailed one of the many boats which ply around the vessels of the harbor and along the wharves for fares, and, when it came alongside, sprang into it. Like most boats of its class, it had a curtained awning over its end to shield its passengers from the sun. This, with the slouched California hat which he had drawn over his eyes, was all the concealment which Gustave required as he made a reconnoitering trip.

Finding that his mulatto boatman understood English tolerably well—a not uncommon thing among those who from childhood are thrown into contact with English and American seamen, he directed him to row toward the clipper-yacht up the harbor.

"Want to go board, Massa Cap'n?" asked the mulatto.

"No; row me near enough to have a good look at her. She is a beauty!"

"Yes, Massa Cap'n; everybody say so. Mo take off heap of peoples to look at her."

"Have you ever been on board of her?"

"Yes, Massa Cap'n; four, five times. Mo carry Yankee steward off last night."

"Ah! What is your name?"

"Pedrillo, Massa Cap'n; but folks call me Pedro, forshort. Mo my own man, too—free! You sabe?"

"Yes—I understand you. All the money you make is your own."

"Yes, Massa Cap'n: him all mine."

"And I suppose you like to make money?"

"Yes, Massa Cap'n; me like um heap."

Gustave examined the boatman closely. His copper-colored face was hedged in by a mass of long hair in braids—braided, probably, to keep the kinks out of tangle. His eyes were small and snake-like; the expression of his face half-cunning, half-ferocious. His form was not stout, but his limbs were muscular, his chest full and brawny. Dressed only in a sailor's trousers and shirt, the neck of which was open, no shoes upon his feet, but a fisherman's cap upon his head, he looked enough of a pirate to have satisfied the most fastidious pit-erotic of the "Old Bowery."

The examination of Gustave was long and critical. And it seemed to satisfy him.

"Had you not rather be employed by me

man steadily, than to run your risk of chance fares, Pedro?" he asked.

"Yes, master cap'n, if um good pay!"

"You need not fear the pay!" said Gustave. "I shall be here some time. I do not know how long! I want you to keep your boat for me, and me only, and to be ready at all times. There is a doubloon to commence with. If you are faithful to me, every day you shall have another!"

Pedro was so astonished that he stopped rowing, and looked at the doubloon full thirty seconds before he reached out his hand to raise it from the thwart upon which Gustave laid it. He even bit the coin to see if it was good.

"*Es oro puro!*" he muttered in Spanish. Then looking at Gustave, with his cunning eyes, he asked: "Does Massa Cap'n mean he give Pedro a doubloon ev'ry day he work for um?"

"Yes; and this day I pay in advance, as you see!"

"Good! Me work for Massa Cap'n till he no want me any more!"

And Pedro again resumed his oars, which he rowed with a skill and ease which betokened long experience.

The boat was now within a half-cable's length of the yacht. Gustave motioned to Pedro to cease rowing, and with a turn of the rudder, threw the boat broadside to the vessel, so that he could peep from behind his curtains at her, without himself being seen.

"Did you see the owner of that vessel when you were on board, Pedro?" asked Gustave.

"Oh, yes! Me see um—me see um all. Me been on board four, five times!"

"Did you see any ladies?"

"Yes, Massa Cap'n! One so han'sum, she make man a'most crazy! Then she got sarvint gal more han'sum than herself! Me like um heap!"

"She would make you a good wife, eh, Pedro?" asked Gustave, watching closely the expression of the mulatto's features, seeking as much in them for a reply as he would in the words which came from his lips.

"A wife? For San Antonio. Massa Cap'n, if I had her for wife, I wouldn't change places with the capitan-general! No, not me!"

And the face of the mulatto all aglow, and his eyes sparkling, told how the hot blood rushed through his veins at the thought.

"Serve me faithfully, and you shall have her, Pedro!" said Gustave. "I think I can trust you, Pedro?"

"Me, Massa Cap'n? Yes, all same as a priest! You confess to a priest, you steal—he no go and tell um! You confess to a priest you kill, he no go and tell um! He make you pay mass-money, tell you no go do so any more; then he forgive, and it's all done gone! Me know, for me try um!"

"I believe I can trust you!" said Gustave.

"And I will tell you a secret about Zella!"

"Zella! Yes, that's her name!" said the mulatto, and he pointed toward the yacht, to indicate whom he meant.

"She is my slave, and ran away from me in Georgia. If you serve me faithfully when I get her back, I will give her to you!"

"Me serve you! Me go to devil for you, Massa Cap'n, s'pose you do that!"

"Well, it is a bargain, and there's my hand upon it!"

And Gustave, aristocrat that he was, reached out his hand, and grasped the thin, bony hand of the boatman. The grip of the latter was like the pressure of a vice—his hand, though the climate was so mild, was as cold as ice.

"You are strong!" said Gustave as, with an involuntary shudder, he drew back to his seat.

"All same like tiger!" said Pedro, with a cunning smile.

"Very good—I like you, Pedro, and shall depend upon you! Now, row me slowly around the yacht. I want to see all that I can without being seen!"

The boatman obeyed orders, and pulled gently along the smooth waters of the harbor, until he had completed the circuit, and again lay upon his oars between the vessel and the city. During the circuit, Gustave had looked anxiously to see the faces of some of those whom he knew; but no persons were on deck but some of the crew, of whom he had no remembrance.

But as his boat stopped, when Pedro ceased rowing, he saw Perkins come on deck, and heard him give some order. In a moment a boat was lowered from the davits, and a crew sprang into it.

Gustave drew the awning-curtains close, and trembled, with eagerness, while he looked to see who would come next. He had not long to wait.

Harold Morley came first, dressed in an elegant undress uniform, and with the most tender care he assisted Adele down the steps of the side-ladder, into the boat. She was followed by Zella.

Gustave ground his teeth in rage, while he looked upon the scene. Never had Adele looked, in his eyes, so beautiful, so happy! Harold Morley seemed to reflect her joy. He, too, looked happy. Even Zella looked more like a lady nobly born than one whose doom was servitude.

"Curse them—curse them!" he muttered. "But it shall not last long!"

"Massa Cap'n no like um?" said Pedro, with a mischievous grin.

"Like them!" hissed Gustave. "Pedro, you see that man?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

When Harold Morley landed with Adele and Zella at the quay which is generally used as a landing-place for passengers at Havana, a large family volante* was seen waiting for them, just beyond the immense shed which covers the quay.

After dismissing his boat's crew, and telling them at what hour to meet him again to take him on board, Harold escorted Adele to the volante, followed by Zella.

Entering the carriage, Harold, as soon as Adele and Zella were seated, told his driver, Benito, to take them out to the "Paseo del Tacon."

The driver mounted the large white mule which stood covered with gaudy trappings before the volante, and with a cheering cry and a smart application of his heavy spurs, at once started the animal off into as great speed as the law would allow in that city, where neighbors often shake hands across the street from their second-story balconies.

Up along the busiest street in Habana, past the palace of the captain-general of the island, on through the unsanctified calle "Obra de Pia," they sped—on past the Plaza de las Armas where the blood of Crittenden, Kerr, and their brave comrades soddened the thirsty earth (blood which yet remains unavenged, but will not always) on through the narrow gateway of the walled city, and past the grand Theatre of Tacon, they were hurried until they reached the "Paseo," or promenade, where all of fashion and beauty that Havana boasts, may be found of a sunny afternoon.

What the Central Park, when finished, may be to New York, that already is the "Paseo" to the gay and careless Habaneros. There is a broad avenue for the passage of volantes, and those who choose to display their grace in the saddle. Flower-bordered and labyrinthine paths meander among the lofty shade-trees; the sound of gushing fountains and rushing water, fall upon the ear—soft accompaniments to the sweet voices of thousands of dark-eyed donnas, who come there to flirt, to chat, to enjoy life as Southern beauties love to do.

Leaving Zella to sit in the volante, as she preferred to do, where she could look at the constantly-moving crowd, Harold and Adele descended, upon reaching the upper part of the main avenue, and strolled off into the grove of trees and flowers, alone. Alone, I said; and so they were, though before, behind, and all around them, moved parties, gay and fashionable.

*The volante is a huge, cumbersome vehicle—looking something like an old-fashioned Boston chair. It is very wide seated—runs on two wheels, and the calacero, or driver, rides the horse which draws it—wearing long boots and immense spurs.

"Yes, me see um now, see um of'n before!"

"Well, I hate him as never man was hated before. I would drink his heart's blood with more pleasure than I would drink the choicest wine in the world!"

"Good! Me like to see folks hate good! Me hate sometimes, then no use this!"

And the mulatto reached within his shirt, and drew from its concealment a long and murderous-looking knife.

"You will suit my purpose, Pedro!" said Gustave, in a low tone. "Pull out of their way, I must not be seen by them!"

Little did Harold Morley, or those who were with him, think that the boat which was rowed just out of reach of their ears, as they passed by, contained a human blood-bound who had now got fairly on his scent, and would track one at least of the a down to the death.

If they had, Harold would not have said so gayly:

"We will have a happy time at the masquerade to-night, my Adele!"

Gustave heard those words—but no more; for the swift boat was in another minute far past them.

"Where is there a masquerade to-night, Pedro?" asked Gustave.

"At the Teatro el Tacon, Massa Cap'n!" said the boatman. "It is carnival now—masqueras there ev'ry night!"

"Those people are going there! How can I find out the dresses which they will wear?"

"Easy that, Massa Cap'n! They have a hire volante on shore. Me know the driver—he wait for me ev'ry time they go ashore. Sometime they dress board the schooner—sometime at the Hotel del Estados Unidos. No matter which, I go to him, ask what dress, what masquera they wear, and Benito, he'll tell me!"

"It is well, Pedro. Find out for me how they dress, so that I may recognize them, and I will add another doubloon to that which is now in your pocket!"

"I'll find out. But where now, Massa Cap'n?"

"To some obscure dock, Pedro, where you can leave your boat, and pilot me to the Posada del Europa, where I have sent my baggage. The people in the boat which passed us, must not know of my presence in this city until my plans are culminated, and I am ready for action!"

"Me sabe well, Massa Cap'n!"

And Pedro rowed him to a narrow dock near the Plaza de la Marina, and there mooring his boat under the bows of an American merchantman, failed his employer, whom he undertook to guide to the hotel which he had named.

For where two souls are linked in love, two hearts are joined as one, then they know no world but that enchanted one which their fancy forms. They heed nothing outside of their own new-fledged joys.

As they walked on, they conversed in a tone both earnest and low—so low that had a government spy been at their heels, he could not have heard what they said—yet the ears of love, ever keen, could hear each syllable that either uttered.

"Adele!" said Harold, "Will nothing that I can urge induce you to forego your resolution? Must I indeed wait until you are of age, before I can call you my wedded wife?"

"Harold," she replied, and her low voice trembled with feeling while she spoke, "you know that it pains me to refuse you anything—know, too, how wholly and devotedly I love you. I have long since banished all maiden reserve, and told you of my love. Utterly disregarding a thought of the world's censure, I have fled away with you from the spot which had been my home from childhood. Now all I ask—you may call it eccentricity, but do not call it cruelty—all I ask is, that our union be delayed until I am mistress of my fortune, and can lay it, with my hand in thine, where I have laid my heart!"

"But wherefore the necessity, sweet Adele?" said Harold, in a tone of impatience. "Were I poor, the case would be different. But I have ample means—that you well know!"

"Yes, Harold, I know it. But I do not feel independent now! Let me but feel independent one hour, and then I will resign all independence into your hands, and become the most docile, as well as the fondest of wives!"

"I can refuse you nothing, sweet Adele. It is I who am the suppliant. But I will not tease you again. It should be enough for me to have you ever near me; yet I have a constant fear of losing you. Were we united by those bonds which no man can sever, I should not feel so uneasy."

"Two years, winged with love, will fly swiftly by, my Harold!"

"Perhaps!" said he, with a sigh. "But do you know, Adele, that—not to speak of years, or months, or weeks—I am already counting the hours?"

"When will you sail for New-Orleans?" she asked, with woman's tact changing the theme of conversation.

"Whenever you like, Adele. Are you tired of Havana?"

"No, Harold; the climate is delicious; the people are gay; the few friends we have made are very kind. But I suppose I am like the rest of my sex. We, you know, could not remain contented in Paradise. Though gayety

and beauty surround us here—though the air is balmy, and all things are lovely, I still look back with pleasure to the hours when, alone in our gallant yacht, no company but our brave crew, we sped away over the azure waters, on the wings of the chainless wind!"

"Well, dear Adele, I will make our stay here brief. We are in the height of the Carnival, it is true; but that is nothing. If it is your wish, I will sail in a week from to-day, or even less time. Perkins wishes to overhaul the rigging, and Nathan to lay in a fresh supply of stores for use forward, as well as in the cabin. In the morning, I will issue orders to them, and then, dearest Adele, we will make the most of the time left to us in this gay city! Let me see—to-night, the masquerade; to-morrow night, the opera; after that, just such places as suit you best!"

"One place, I would visit before we leave, dear Harold!"

"Which is that, my Adele?"

"The cathedral, where, revered almost as the relics of a saint, are deposited the mortal remains of Christopher Columbus!"

"Dear Adele, forgive me that I have not thought of it before. The cathedral is near the governor's palace—not more than five minutes' walk from the spot where our boat lands. If it would give you pleasure, we could easily go there before we go to the hotel to sup and to dress for the masquerade."

"Then let us go, dear Harold. Next to the tomb of the greatest and best of men—that Washington whom Heaven left childless that a nation might call him Father—would I hold in honor his grave who discovered a world of savages, and planted upon its shores the flag of civilization!"

"I honor your feelings, as much as I admire your taste, Adele," replied Harold. "We will return to the volante, and drive to the cathedral!"

CHAPTER XXV.

Gustave Henderson sat in his chamber in the European hotel in Havana. It was the best chamber in the house; for, regardless of price, he had ordered the best, well knowing that a lavish display of money, and a lavish use of the same, would insure good attendance, and all the more certainly endorse his statement that he had come to Havana on a visit of pleasure. He had registered his name as "General Weston, of Kentucky," knowing the great respect which Spaniards entertain for men who have military rank.

He ordered his meals to be served in his room, and when the head-steward came to take his order for dinner, he was much impressed with the taste, as well as the liberality of the "General," as the latter, glancing over his bill of fare, gave his orders. His

knowledge of wines made the steward's eyes sparkle; and when the general, in conclusion, tossed him a dour loon, and told him to make haste, the steward voted him a prince, mentally, and hurried away, not only to serve him, but to tell the landlord what a prize they had in their new guest.

The appetite of Gustave had not been good at sea. He was not proof against that leveler which equalizes landmen—no matter what their shore position may be—when they first try the sea. But now his appetite returned. He felt as if his journey had nearly found a terminus; for that he should fail in his undertaking did not enter his mind. He was in a land where money was almost omnipotent; where desperadoes and assassins in abundance stood ready for hire, and his intended victims, unknowing of his vicinity, were within his reach.

He ate heartily, and drank freely, for the wine was good. But he was careful not to drink so much as to cloud his intellect in the least, or to loosen his tongue or unsteady his nerves.

He had poured out the last glass of wine, when, unannounced, Pedro entered his room. Gustave had told him to do so, whenever he had any news for him.

"Well, my good lad, what news have you?" he asked, blantly.

"Pedro got good news for Massa Gin'ral!" said the bootman, with increased respect, for he had learned below that his patron was a General, instead of a Captain.

"Well—drink this glass of wine, and then out with it," said Gustave, filling him a brimming tumbler of golden sherry.

"Muchas gracias, Massa Gin'ral! Mo been to see Benito about the masquera?" said Pedro, after he tossed off the wine, smacking his lips after the pleasing effort.

"Well—what then?"

"The man you hate, El Señor Morley, will go as an *Muñero Americano*—I mean one American sailor-man—and will wear a mask. The Señorita that is with him, will go like un *gitano*—gipsy, you call um; Zella will go gipsy, too, for her mother."

"How do you know all this, Pedro? They are not dressed yet, surely; it is but just growing dark."

"Because, Massa Gin'ral, that was the way they dressed last night, and Benito heard the Señor Morley say to Zella that they would wear the same dresses to-night!"

"Ah—so? Then your information is probably correct. But you said that Zella was going. Is it a custom here to allow servants to go to the masquerades?"

"Sometimes they let um go, Massa Gin'ral. Who could tell Zella from real lady? She not more black than half the Spanish ladies!"

"That is true. I think I will take you to the masquerade with me, to-night, Pedro!"

"Ola! Massa Gin'ral, you mean that?"

"To be sure! Go to a costumer, and select two dresses; get for me the dress of a gipsy king, a gray wig and beard, and a good mask. Dress you as a gitano, also—get a wig of long, black hair; and then attend me here!"

"Yes, Massa Gin'ral. Ola! Pedro at the masquera, eh? He will dance with Zella! Caramba! but it makes me glad almost to death!"

And Pedro hurried off to procure the dresses.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Tacon theatre—one of the monuments of the rule of General Tacon, the sternest, but the purest ruler that Spain ever gave to the Onbas—larger than any theatre on the American Continent, and probably the largest in the world, was filled to overflowing.

Its huge parquet and orchestra box had been floored over even with the stage; the scenery had been removed, thus forming an immense ball-room; while all of the boxes, four tiers in height, were filled with spectators who cared not to dance, but sat there enjoying the fantastical panorama on the constant move below them.

A band of one hundred performers barely furnished music loud enough to serve the entirety of the vast saloon; and the spectators could see more than three thousand people moving at once to the gay cadence of the waltz, or the slower and more dignified step of the Spanish contra-dance.

Through the centre of the space reserved for dancing, whirled the many who came to dance; but in the corners, in the wings of the theatre, and moving about in the saloons, and in the gardens to the rear of the theatre, were those who came to enjoy the mystery of the mask, and play their farcical parts in the characters which they assumed. Representatives of every known nation, and of some unknown ones, were there.

The genuine down-East Yankee, with his bell-crowned hat, swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons larger than a dollar striped trousers, cow-hide boots, and shirt-collar up to his ears, whistled his stick of pine as he whistled, Yankee Doodle; the prettiest of peasant-girls exhibited small feet, and—limbs that would have killed Elsie with envy; here a mild brigand scowled as if he never had sold lace; and silk stockings in the *Calle Mercaderes*; there a crowned Richard Terrozo moved along, in his hump-backed dignity, forgetting, for the nonce, the bench whereupon he had rolled his twenty thousand cigars that very day; here a gipsy offered to tell your fortune; there a Doctor Sangrado, with

his saddle-bags on one arm, and a basket of cure-all pills on the other, offered his services to the fattest, comeliest, and healthiest of all whom he met, saying, with more truth than most doctors would utter, "if he didn't have a chance to physic them well, there never would be any sick."

Every nation, class and character, had its representative there. But with only five of these, have we anything to do.

The ball had been opened about one hour, when a person entered who merits a description. He wore a robe of black velvet, upon which strange Arabic or Egyptian hieroglyphics were profusely worked in embroidery of gold. Thus descended nearly to his sandaled feet, being only loosely bound around his waist by a sash, which, though made of silk, resembled the high-colored and mottled skin of a serpent; upon his head he wore a kind of crown, which was also covered with emblematic hieroglyphics. His long hair, and immense flowing beard, were white as snow. And his form was bent as if with age. Leaning upon a curious staff, around which the carved form of a serpent was entwined; the old man moved slowly on, followed by another, and much younger person in appearance, who was also dressed as a gipsy; but in far different style, whose swarthy skin seemed also to tell that he was one of that race of wanderers, sons of Ishmael.

Through the tight-apertures of the mask worn by the eldest gipsy, a pair of black, fiery eyes flashed continually, as he looked through the throng, evidently seeking some person or persons. And the hands which grasped his staff shook with the nervousness of passion rather than with the tremor of age.

"I cannot see them, Pedro—I cannot see them!" he whispered, huskily, to his attendant, after he had passed almost entirely around the great hall-room.

"Massa Gin'ral's eyes are not quite so sharp as Pedro's," replied the other, quietly. "Let him look under the box which is draped with the grand standard of Spain, the box reserved for *El Capitan General*!"

And with a significant gesture, the disguised boatman indicated the point which he wished Gustave to observe.

There, arm in arm, stood a young American sailor in mask, with a lady in gipsy dress, whose beautiful form Gustave at once recognized, though her face was masked. And close by her side, somewhat taller, with a form equally perfect, stood another mask, whom he knew equally well.

"Harold Morley, Adele, and Zella," he muttered. "Pedro," he added, "keep near my side; but say nothing, do nothing, without I command you. I wish to talk with those people without being known."

"Yes, Massa Gin'ral. Pedro all same dumb as an burro."

"When you speak, do not call me General—call me *La Torriño*; and speak with reverence. If, by a sign, I give you leave to speak, say that I am King of the Gitanos."

"Yes, Massa—st, *Signor La Torriño*."

Slowly, and acting as if he were merely making the circuit of the room, Gustave approached the spot where Harold and his party stood; he appearing all the time to be watching the dancers, though many a covert glance was bestowed by him upon those whom he sought.

In a short time he stood within a few feet of Adele. Then slowly turning toward her, and confident of the perfection of his disguise, he looked so steadily upon her face and form as to attract her attention. She saw a pair of black, glittering eyes fixed upon her, noted the apparent age, and the strange garb of him who stood gazing at her, and with an involuntary fear clung to Harold's arm, and moved yet closer to his side.

He noticed her agitation, and looking up, at once divined its cause. He looked the old gipsy full in the eyes, and noted that those eyes blazed yet the brighter as he met their glance.

The feeling of hate is intuitive—memorial. Though he had no reason to believe that he had an enemy on the Island of Cuba, yet in that glance he felt, whoever it was that stood before him, that man was, or would be, his foe.

"Come, Adele," said Harold, "let us move on; come, Zella, we'll find a better view, in another place."

He spoke in a very low tone, yet Gustave heard his words.

They moved away, and did not pause until they were upon the other side of the theatre.

"Ola! They 'fraid of you, signor—yet no can see through mask!" said Pedro.

"They have reason to fear me!" said Gustave, bitterly. "But I have not done with them yet! Follow me, Pedro, and observe my caution!"

"Yes, signor."

Gustave now again made the circuit of the room, just as he had done before, and again pausing in front of Adele, fixed his dark, passionate eyes upon her.

She was uneasy—more, she was frightened. Harold saw it, and determined to put an end to the surveillance which so annoyed her.

Advancing to Gustave, he said:

"Bir Gitano, be you what your dress implies, or not, I wish to know what reason you have for following my party around, and staring thus impudently at a lady who is under my protection?"

"She is a daughter of my race!" said Gus-

tave, in a deep, hollow tone, excellently disguising his natural voice. "Why is she under the protection of a house-dweller, when the tents of her people are open beneath the palms?"

"You assume your part well, old man; but let me tell you that she is not a gipsy!" said Harold, warmly. "She comes of no vagrant blood!"

The form of the gipsy king seemed to straighten and dilate with anger.

"Blood that ran in noble veins one thousand years before the Saxon name was known, is not the blood of vagrants!" said he, haughtily, in the same stern and hollow tone. "Young man, you know not the lineage of that orphan girl—I do!"

Harold started as if he had been bitten by a serpent, or had heard words of doom pronounced. Adele, too, trembled from head to foot. Zella alone remained unmoved, intently looking at the eyes of the now-excited gipsy king.

"Perhaps you know me?" said Harold, at last. "If you do, you will be careful how you trifle either with me or those I care for!"

"I am a king among my people, why should I care for the words of a house-dwelling boy, even though he makes his home upon the sea?" said Gustave, sternly.

"Who and what are you?" cried Harold, now much excited; for he was sure that the mysterious stranger knew him.

"King of the Gitanos!" Harold Morley, that is enough for you to know."

And Gustave, whispering a few words to Pedro, turned and moved on amid the crowd before Harold, astonished as he was, could speak again.

But catching Pedro by the arm, he asked: "Who was that man? If you know, a doubloon shall reward you for informing me." And Harold drew a doubloon from his pocket.

"*La Signor Torriño—El Rey de los Gitanos!*" said Pedro, as he reached out his hand and took the coin.

Harold would have asked further questions, but in an instant Pedro had turned and glided through the crowd with the ease of a serpent.

"Master Harold, let us leave this place quickly; I have made a discovery," said Zella—who, before so calm, now exhibited great agitation.

"What discovery, good Zella?" asked Harold.

"I dare not tell you here, Master Harold," she replied. "Let us go to the hotel, or on board the yacht, as quickly as we can, and I will tell you. We are not safe here."

"Did you know the mask who called himself a gipsy king?"

"Yes, Master Harold—but too well; dis-

guised as he was in dress and voice, I knew him."

And as she said so, Zella shuddered.

"We will go, then," replied Harold, "Come, my Adele; fear no evil! No harm can reach you, but through my breast it first finds passage."

And Harold, with his party, at once left the theatre.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Gustave had produced all the effect which his malicious heart desired, in startling Harold and Adele as he did—for he merely wished to annoy them at that moment; but when he saw that the eyes of Zella were fixed steadily upon him, he feared recognition. Therefore it was that he whispered to Pedro:

"If asked, reveal my gipsy name; then retreat and meet me in the left saloon of the first story of the theatre." And instantly after, turned and disappeared among the people who crowded the room.

From amid a crowd in this saloon, he saw the hasty egress of Harold Morley and his party, and felt from this that they must have taken the alarm—perhaps discovered his identity even through his disguise.

He half-cursed his haste; for if they knew him to be near, they most assuredly would be upon their guard, and his attempts to capture Adele and Zella, or to destroy Harold Morley, would meet with many obstacles.

Withdrawing Pedro to a place where their conversation could not be easily overheard, he asked him what kind of a man was Bobito, Harold's *calacero*, or *rolante* driver.

"Like most of his gang, Massa Gin'ral—smart, and a big thief!" was Pedro's reply.

"Does he love money?" asked Gustave.

"Who that has to work for it does not; Massa Gin'ral? Benito loves wine a good deal, but money yet more," answered Pedro.

"Do you think I could bribe him to work for me while he is in Morley's employ?"

"He'll work best for him that pays best," said Pedro.

"Would he be faithful, think you, to me, if I paid him double as much as he gets from the other?"

"Yes, Massa Gin'ral. He would be a fool if he did not; and Benito is no fool!"

"Can you manage to bring him to my room at the hotel?"

"Nothing is more easy, Massa Gin'ral, after he has done driving his *rolante* for the night. I know where he lives."

"Well, Pedro, see that you have him at my rooms as soon as possible. Here are a couple of doubloons to use as per-nuders, or as you like. Only use caution, and be sure that he will not betray me before you bring him."

"Yes, Massa Gin'ral; I bring him all same."

as a clutched under my arm—spurs and all," said Pedro, receiving his golden auxiliaries and departing.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Benito, the *calacero*, was rather astonished when he was awakened from pleasant dreams in his *volante* by Harold, and told to mount his horse; for, though he had fallen asleep, a glance at the lighted shop-windows in the vicinity, told him that the hour was far earlier than that when his employer usually left the pleasures of the ball.

"Where shall I drive, *excellenza*?" was his question, while Harold assisted Adele and Zella into the carriage.

"To the hotel first; there wait until I am ready to go to the boat," said Harold, as he sprang into the carriage.

He did not notice when he spoke that the young gitano, who had told him that the name of the older gipsy was La Torriño, was close at his side. If he had, he might have been more cautious.

Benito sprang into his saddle, and the *volante* in another second was whirling away toward the hotel where he made his headquarters when on shore, having there retained a suite of rooms from the time he arrived in the port.

And securely perched on the cross-piece back of the *volante* rode Pedro, hidden from the view of the occupants by the falling top, which is seldom used except in rainy weather.

In a brief half hour, the *volante* arrived in front of the hotel; and Pedro, the moment it stopped, dropped from his seat, and hurried over into the dense shadow of a house opposite.

"In two hours, Benito, I will be ready to go on board. Be here at that time," said Harold, aloud, as he assisted Adele and Zella to descend.

"I will be here, *excellenza*," said Benito.

A moment after, Harold and his company entered the hotel.

"Hist! Hist, *compañero*!" said a low voice on the opposite side of the street.

"*Quien vive? Who's there?*" asked Benito.

"Come over and see," replied the voice.

"*Diablo!* Who can see in the dark? Come over here, if you want anything of me. Who are you, at any rate?"

"*Un amigo*—an old friend, Benito *mio*. Come here a moment. Es Pedrito, the boatman."

Benito now recognized his voice, and securing his mule to a post, he went over.

"I had reasons for not going over to the light of the *posada*," said Pedro to Benito, as the *calacero* went over to him. "Come with me to Gorgona's wine-shop, and there over a

choice bottle of old *vino de Castilla* and a plate of *patos de Florida*, I'll tell you why I called you, and of good fortune in store for both of us. Do you hear the gold jingle in my pocket, Benito?"

"In truth, I do," responded the *calacero*.

"Gold shall jingle in thine, also, if you give heed to me. Come, will you go to Gorgona's?"

"Yes. I have two hours to spare."

CHAPTER XXIX.

When Harold, with Adele and Zella, was secure in the privacy of his apartments at the hotel, and not until then, did he ask Zella what was the nature of the discovery which she had made at the *masquerade*.

"You talked with him who pretended to be a gipsy king, and yet knew him not!" said Zella.

"I did not know him; but he was impertinent, and I reproved him."

"There was something fascinating, and yet terrible in his dark eyes," said Adele. "I was terrified; yet, for my life, could not but return his glance."

"I knew not only his eyes, sweet mistress," said Zella, "but also a ring, which, when he disguised himself, he had forgotten to take from his finger."

"Who was it?" asked Harold.

"None other than Gustave Henderson, Master Harold," said Zella. "I knew him in an instant."

"Why did you not tell me on the spot?" asked Harold.

"I thought it would not be wise, sir," said Zella. "He thought himself so well disguised that he could pass unknown; and it was well, I think, to let him remain in that belief, while we, upon our guard, prepare to avert any danger which he may be preparing for us—for I know from his eyes that he means evil to us."

"Zella was right," said Adele. "The only wonder is, that she could meet his gaze and retain her composure, when I, who did not know him, could not do so."

"Zella is a brave girl," said Harold. "And now the question is, What course had we better take in regard to the villain? He has tracked us hither undoubtedly with a revengeful purpose. His hot haste of hatred has fortunately betrayed his purpose—or, at least, his presence."

"Let us at once leave the place for New Orleans," said Adele.

"He can follow us there," said Harold.

"But we will be in our own country, where the law will speedily teach him a lesson if he offers to annoy us," said Adele.

"That is true. But I do not like leaving this place without, in some manner, learning

his intentions. He is good at disguise, as we have seen; but I overrate myself greatly, if I cannot so disguise myself as to meet and sound him without any danger of recognition," said Harold.

"I tremble to have you risk it," said Adele.

"Oh, do let us go from the place at once!"

"I will, if you insist upon it, my sweet Adele; but it will take at least two days to get the yacht ready for sea."

"Well, let us go at the end of those two days, Harold."

"I will, Adele. And now I will order supper. By the time that is fairly discussed, the boat will be at the quay, and we will go to our palace of oak, where no danger reach us."

CHAPTER XXX.

Pedro led the way into a private room at Gorgona's, and called for a bottle of wine of the highest price, with a nonchalance which quite astonished Benito, the *volante* driver. And when he added to his order a couple of brace of *patos de Florida*—a small duck of delicious flavor, and thought a great delicacy among the *Habitueros*, especially as it is a high-priced dish—Benito opened his eyes wider.

"Have you found a gold-mine, Pedro?" he asked. "By your dress, I see, that you have been able to afford the *masquera*, and now you order a supper fit for a prince."

Pedro only laughed, and jingled the doubloons in his pocket.

"Bring two bottles, *toate*," said Pedro, to the waiter who brought the bottle of wine. "Gentlemen of our condition can stand two bottles without winking."

And again he jingled the gold in his pocket.

"Do unfold me this mystery, brother Pedro. You know I am a true comrade!" cried Benito, nervously.

"I will, Benito—*amigo mio*—I will, if you will swear on the holy cross not to reveal my secret. Do but that, and listen to my advice, and, as I told you before, gold shall jingle in your pockets, too."

"I have sworn!" said Benito, as he laid his two fore-fingers across each other at right angles, thus forming a cross, and kissing them. "I have sworn by the cross, Pedro; and you know I will not, dare not, break my oath. Now for the secret."

"Well, Benito," said Pedro, as he poured for each a bumper of wine, "the truth is, that I have a generous employer, for whom I work alone. I no longer depend on chance fares in the harbor. I am hired at a doubloon a day, and am, besides, allowed about as much more for pocket-money. As this is my first day, my master has allowed me four doubloons! Do you see them?"

And Pedro produced the yellow coins.

"*Caramba!* The saints are on your side, surely, Pedro!" cried Benito, his eyes sparkling as he looked upon the coin. "Who is this new master of thine?"

"A great general—a prince from Kentucky."

"Kentucky? Where is that?"

"I do not know, exactly. It is somewhere in North America. But he is rich, and as free with gold as the sea is with spray on a windy day."

"I believe you," said Benito, still looking at the gold. "I wish that I had such a master."

"Nothing easier, if I but interest myself for you," said Pedro, as he drank off his glass of wine and refilled it, while Benito did the same. "How much does the man who hires your *volante* pay you?"

"I charge him but half a doubloon a night; and that is good pay—better than we can get from *los pobres Cubanos*."

"True; but my doubloon doubles it; besides, I have my extras!"

Benito looked at the doubloons which still lay upon the table, and sighed.

"I think my master can find use for you," continued Pedro. "But he, too, has his secrets. If I interest myself for you, will you keep his secrets?"

"May I lose my tongue and die without the sacraments, if I do not!" said Benito; and he again formed and kissed the finger-cross.

"Well, we will sup merrily, my old comrade; and then, when you have finished with your employer for the night, we will go and see mine, and you shall talk with him yourself."

"Ah, Pedro, you are too kind. But you ever were a free-hearted fellow; even if you are a little free-handed sometimes, and rather quick with your knife, yet you have a good heart!"

"A good heart for a friend, *compañero*, but a bad one for a foe. But here come the ducks—*chicos preciosos*. Fall to, Benito, fall to, and let them swim in wine. With sixty-eight *pesos* in my pocket, I can't afford to feel stingy."

Benito did not need much pressing, for seldom did he indulge in a feast. His breakfast of coffee and salt fish, his dinner of jerked beef boiled with rice, his supper of chocolate and buiscuit, was as near luxury as he ever attempted to go. As for wine, the common red vintage, which sold at one real a bottle—sour enough, too, to sharpen one's teeth—was the beverage he was most used to; though, sometimes, he took a glass of fiery *aguardiente* when some of his brother *calaceros* invited him to do so.

Pedro had spoken truly when he said that Benito loved money. He loved it so well, that when it was once in his possession, it wrung his heart to part with it, even for the necessities of life.

The two now went at their supper heartily; and, for a time, nothing was heard but the jingle of glasses and the clatter of their knives and forks.

At last, they finished. Nothing but bones were left of their ducks. They had emptied two bottles of wine, and were as contented as a pair of old sailors in a gale with plenty of sea-room.

"When you go to drive your man down to his boat, utter no hint that you think of leaving his service," said Pedro, to Benito, when they had finished and were about to leave Gorgona's. Pedro having paid his bill.

"Of course, I shall not," said Benito.

"I will saunter down toward the quay," continued Pedro; "and after your people have left, I will jump into the *rolante*, and you can drive at once to the *Posada de la Europa*, where my master is stopping."

"Yes; I will go there with you, and if you bring me such fortune as you have found, Pedro, you will not be sorry for it. I will be your friend for life!"

As it was nearly time for Benito to expect Harold's call, he now hastened back to his *rolante*, while Pedro, carelessly sauntered down toward the landing-place.

CHAPTER XXXI.

When Pedro entered the chamber in which Gustave sat, and the latter saw that the *calaciro* followed him, a look of pleasure usurped that of discontent, which had been sitting on his face.

"This is Benito, the *calaciro*, Massa Gin'ral," said Pedro, taking off his cap and bowing very low—an example instantly followed by Benito. "He has sworn up at the cross to keep your secrets, Massa Gin'ral, and mine, also. He dare not break his oath! If he did, my knife and his ribs would scrape acquaintance."

"This, then, is Benito, your friend?" said Gustave.

"The same, *excellenza*," said Benito, speaking before Pedro could reply.

"You are serving an American—one Señor Morley?"

"Yes, *excellenza*."

"Does he pay you well?"

"Not very, *excellenza*."

"You would like to work for better pay?"

"Ah, yes, *excellenza*, for I am very poor."

"That's a lie!" muttered Pedro, to himself. "He is a miser; he owns his own *rolante*, a house, two mules, and has many an

ounce of gold hidden away for the winter of life."

"Suppose that I take you into my employ upon the same terms that I have engaged Pedro, will you be faithful to me?" asked Gustave.

"I will, *excellenza*." And again Benito kissed the finger-cross. "In the morning, I will tell the Señor Morley that I will drive for him no longer."

"You will not tell him so, Benito," said Gustave. "I wish you to work for him just as before, and, at the same time, to obey my instructions concerning him."

"Yes, *excellenza*."

"You are to keep me informed, through Pedro, here, of all his notions and intentions. I must know when he is out of the city, and where he goes. You shall have a call from each day, and I can agree with this one in advance. Do you understand me, Benito?"

"Entirely, *excellenza*."

"Did Mr. Morley give any reason for leaving the opera so early?"

"None to me, *excellenza*; but I thought the young señora was ill—the hotel so. When I left him at his feet, he told me at noon, to-morrow, to come for him as usual at the quay."

"Good. Go there, and by no hint betray that another has employed you. My eye will be upon you when he comes, and I shall follow you in another *calaciro*, driven by Pedro, wherever you go, so disguised that you will only know me by recognizing Pedro."

"Is this all, *excellenza*?" asked Benito, looking at the yellow gold which seemed to burn upon his palm.

"Yes; all for the present. Pedro will convey further orders when I deem it necessary to give them. Take a glass of wine, each of you, and then go. You, Pedro, will be sure to be here at eleven to-morrow, dressed as a *calaciro*, with a plain *rolante*, and a good mule."

"Yes, Massa Gin'ral. Pedro will be here as sure as the tide flows or ebbs."

The two men drank the proffered glass of wine, and departed.

"Things appear to look favorably for a culmination," said Gustave, contentedly, when he was once more alone. "It will be an easy thing to get Harold Morley in some out-of-the-way place, having his driver in my employ. And then, with the aid of Pedro's knife, my accounts with him can speedily be settled. I have the papers to claim Zella; and Adele, in a strange land, will find no one to shield her from my grasp. Hilliare will be astonished when I return with both of them, and inform him that Harold Morley has been measured for his coffin! I'll have another bottle of wine, and then to bed, to



dream of a success which cannot but be mine."

CHAPTER XXXII.

"I know you will chide me for my folly," said Adele, to Harold, when they met at the breakfast-table on board the yacht in the morning which followed their last visit to the masquerade, "but I must tell you of a dream—a fearful dream! which I had last night. I know that you laugh at all things supernatural, and disbelieve in ominous dreams, yet this dream lies like a leaden weight upon my heart!"

"Dreams, my love, are only the effect of a nervousness felt before sleep; and whatever wild, nervous fears or fancies you feel before you sleep, form the burden of what you suppose to be dreams. The truth is, that they are not dreams—they are the same fancies felt while you are in a semi-somnolent state, half-awake and half-asleep. But I will not laugh at you; tell me your supposed dream; and, afterward, we will both laugh when it falls in reality to come to pass."

"I know I was sadly nervous when I retired," said Adele. "It was a long time before I slept. When I did, I thought my spirit was disembodied, and that I was permitted in spirit to sweep through the air and see all things as with my mortal eyes. Half-enchanted with joy, I flew over beautiful gardens, full of fragrant flowers; over lakes which glittered like molten silver; over vine-embowered cottages and splendid palaces; over streams which bubbled and gurgled over sands of gold, and through groves where myriads of birds sang in wild yet dulcet harmony."

"I was delighted. I flew over broad fields of cane, and rice, and coffee; I looked down upon groves of orange, lemon, and lime; I rested on the emerald-crowned palm; I plucked the chiramoya from its stem, and placed it, melting in its juicy ripeness, in my mouth."

"Suddenly I saw a *volante* like that in which we ride, and it halted by the ruins of an old palace. There was but one person in it. I hastened toward it, and came so near that I could see that you were in it, and alone—none but Benito, the driver, near you. You seemed to be curiously looking at the old ruins. And now, when I wished to join you, my wings, hitherto so airy and so swift, seemed to fail me, and I remained like one anchored in the air."

"While I fretted to be free, again, as before, I saw another *volante* driving toward the spot where you were. It stopped behind a half-ruined wall, and from it descended Gustave Henderson. With him was a man, whose dark, ferocious look made me shudder. In his hand, this man carried a dagger. Hen-

derson pointed toward you, and stealthily, like a serpent gliding toward its prey, the murderous-looking man crept toward you."

"I knew his intention—I struggled to fly to your side—alas! I was helpless! I tried to shriek out a warning to you, but my lips were sealed with fear and horror. Closer, closer crept the assassin, while you, heedless of danger, plucked fruit from the trees which grew amid the ruins."

"Oh, the agony which I felt! Now he was close to you, only one tree—a huge palm—between him and yourself. You paused beneath its shade—he was close to your back—his hand holding the glittering steel upraised! With one fearful effort, I broke the dreadful seal of silence, and shrieked:

"Harold! Harold! beware!"

"I woke, and found myself cold as ice with terror, and trembling from head to foot. Now, do not blame me, dear Harold, if I tell you that I do think this dream is ominous; nor chide me when I beg you, for my sake, not in any way to expose yourself on shore. I know what a base, treacherous, revengeful wretch is that Gustave Henderson. He is not a brave and open enemy; the assassin's knife—the poisoned cup—either would he use to rid himself of one whom he hates and fears!"

"There is the foundation of your dream," said Harold, with a smile. "Before you slept, knowing his character, a thousand fears of what he might do tormented your mind. Was it not so?"

"Yes, Harold; yet I know I slept soundly when I dreamed that dream."

"You think so, love; but never mind, let us try to do justice to the breakfast which our good Nathan has provided for us. By the way, do you believe in dreams, Nathan?"

"Do I, captaining? You might just as well ask me if I believed in the Gospel of Saint Luke!" replied Nathan, who had listened, open-eyed and open-mouthed, to the narration of Adele. "Yes, captaining; I do believe in dreams. I dreamed, the only time I ever was in love, that my gal gin me the mitten; and sure enough she did, the very next time I axed her to go to meetin' with me. She said she'd found better company; and she went and took up with Ben Smith, the shoemaker, and she's been his lap-stone ever since!"

Both Harold and Adele laughed at Nathan's story; but Zella remained silent and gloomy.

"What is the matter, Zella, asked Harold, kindly."

"I, too, have had a dream, kind Master Harold," she said; "but I will not tell it to be laughed at. Only I beg you to beware of Gustave Henderson. He is a bad man, and dangerous, because he works in the dark."

The reply of Zella brought a shadow once

more upon the face of Adele. She could not shake off a foreboding which seemed to chill her heart.

The breakfast was eaten in silence; and no one but Harold did justice to the faultless catering of Nathan.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Not long before the hour of noon, Harold told Adele that he was going on shore to visit the various hotels, to see if he could not discover where Gustave Henderson had located himself, so that he could have a police surveillance placed upon him. For Harold had brought letters of introduction to the American Consul-General, who had presented him to the governor, who had treated him with great respect and kindness, especially after enjoying the hospitality of his beautiful yacht. Therefore he felt confident that, if he requested it, the use of the police would be accorded him. Not that he feared any open attack from his enemy—that he was ever prepared to meet—but treachery was to be guarded against.

"Let me go with you, dear Harold," said Adele, anxiously, when he expressed his intention.

"It would scarcely be proper; besides, I shall run no risk. It is daylight, and I will come off before night. Remember, we are to go to the opera to-night. You and Zella prepare your dresses. I took our box yesterday."

"Dear Harold, I cannot keep that dream from my mind."

"Pshaw, Adele! do not let such weak fancies take possession of your mind. Besides, is it not for the very purpose of putting the villain under surveillance that I go?"

"I cannot help my fancies, Harold, and I shall feel no more at peace until we are again on the blue waters of the dear old ocean."

"That will soon occur, dearest. I have given orders to have our vessel ready for sea by to-morrow."

"Thanks, dear Harold, thanks. Do not blame me for my anxiety—your life is far more dear to me than my own. With you, the world is full of sunshine—without you, all would be clouds and darkness. I would be doubly orphaned, doubly widowed then."

And tears came into her great dark eyes while she spoke.

"Cheer up, dearest, I will soon return," said Harold, and with a kiss upon her fair brow he bade her "adieu for but a little while," and went on deck to order a boat to carry him to the shore.

The moment he was gone from the cabin, Adele rung a bell. It was answered by the steward.

"My good Nathan, will you do me a fa-

vor?" asked Adele, smiling through her tears.

"If there is anything on aith that I'd specially like to do, Miss Adele, it would be jest whatever would please you," said Nathan.

"You love Mr. Morley, do you not?"

"Jest as Jonathan loved David, in the Old Testament, only a little more so," answered Nathan.

"I fear that his life is in danger if he goes on shore alone, and he is too brave and proud to take any one with him."

"Jest like him. He was always ventur' some to a digit."

"I want you to make some excuse to go on shore in the same boat with him. Do not let him know that I asked you to go, nor let him think that you go for any purpose connected with his safety. But after you get on shore, do not lose sight of him until he returns in safety to the vessel. Will you do that for me, Nathan?"

"I will, Miss Adele, and the human critter that lifts a hand to harm one hair of his head had better begin prayin' afore he lifts a finger!"

Adele went to her state-room, and brought out a richly-mounted revolver.

"Here is a present for you, Nathan," said she. "It is carefully loaded—use it, if you must, in defence of his life."

"I will, Miss Adele," said he. "I've no doubt that it'll tell a s'arching story of it has to speak at all. I've a pair of boss-pistols in my bunk—flint-locks—that my gran'father used in the battle of Bunker Hill. They're good, but most too cumbersome to carry about by daylight. But excuse me, marm; they're calling away the boat's crew on deck, and I must be off, or lose my chance to go ashore."

And Nathan hurried on deck.

"If you please, capting," he you goin' ashore?" he asked, as he approached Harold.

"Yes, Nathan."

"I've got to see about them small stores, sir, and ef you've no objection, I'll go ashore in the same boat."

"You can certainly do so, Nathan, and remember that we will most likely go to sea to-morrow. Have everything on board to-night that is needed."

"Sartingly, capting—sartingly."

And when the boat was manned, Nathan took a seat in the stern-sheets, near his commander.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

When Harold Morley reached the shore, he found Benito waiting, faithfully, according to orders, as he had always done since he first employed him. Upon landing, Nathan hurried away, as Harold supposed, to visit the

store of Don Juan Cabargas, there to make his purchase of provisions. But Nathan hurried past that store to a *volante* stand near the large saloon known as "*La Longa*," and looking out a driver who understood English, told him to raise the cover of his carriage, while he hired him to follow and keep within sight of the *volante* of Harold, which he described, and which he knew must pass up that street.

When Harold entered his *volante*, he said to Benito:

"I wish you to drive me to each of the hotels in the city, in succession. I expect an acquaintance in the city, and would look at their registers to see if he has not arrived."

"Yes, *excellenza*," said Benito. And he mounted his mule, casting, at the same, an apparently-careless glance at a country-looking *volante* near by, into which a very fleshy man was getting, who looked, with his bronzed face and huge, black whiskers and moustache, his broad-rimmed Panama hat, his loose nankeen coat and trousers, like some sugar-planter from the interior. The *calacero* of that *volante* was Pedro, the boatman, and there was an evident understanding between him and Benito; for as the latter started his mule and drove close by him, glances were exchanged which Harold did not notice.

When the *volante* which contained Harold passed the spot where Nathan sat in his vehicle ensconced well back in its huge top, he was surprised to find another *volante* following the first as closely that his driver was forced to fall into its rear. Cautioning the driver not to lose sight of the *volante* with the white mule, though to keep so far in the rear as not to appear to be following it, he bade him drive on.

From hotel to hotel—Spanish, French, American, and English—Harold rode and carefully examined the registers of each, hoping to find the name of Gustave Henderson; or even if he had registered a false name, to recognize his handwriting, which he had seen more than once.

The last hotel which he visited was *La Posada de la Europa*. Here he saw the name of "General Weston, Kentucky;" and though not certain, thought that he recognized in the handwriting chirography similar to that which he had seen emanating from the hand of Gustave Henderson.

"Where is General Weston?" he asked of the polite landlord.

"Absent, sir. He bade me say, that if any friend called to see him, he had gone out to the Bishop's Garden."

"The Bishop's Garden? Where is that?" asked Harold.

"The gentleman has not been in Havana long, or he surely would not have asked that

question," said the landlord, with a look of surprise. "It is a favorite drive, with strangers especially. Far more attractive, though less frequented, than the *Paseo del Tacen*. It once was more beautiful, and is even now more romantic."

Harold looked again at the handwriting on the register, and in his mind assured himself that the hand of Gustave Henderson had written the name of "General Weston." He thought for a moment of asking a description of the person representing himself under that name, but considering that it might be imprudent, he refrained and returned to his *volante*.

"Do you know where the Bishop's Garden is, Benito?" he asked, as he entered the carriage.

"Yes, *excellenza*—very well," replied Benito. And a gleam of satisfaction shone in his keen black eyes.

"Then drive me there," said Harold. And sinking back upon the cushioned seat, he added, in a low tone: "I will solve my doubts at once, if I can. I will not be dogged around by Gustave Henderson; if he persists in annoying me, he will be apt to lose the number of his mess."

CHAPTER XXXV.

When Nathan, continually following the *volante* of his captain, saw that the one just ahead of him seemed to be doing the same thing, stopping whenever the white mule stopped, and going on again when it moved forward, he grew very uneasy. He knew that Harold was alone, and if the single person in the *volante* was Harold's friend, he would drive up and speak to him.

Several times he thought he would order his driver to pass the suspicious *volante*, and to close up with Harold, so that he could inform him that a suspicious craft was following in his wake; but then, remembering the directions given by Adele, that he was not to let Harold know of his vicinity, but merely to keep so near as to protect him when in danger, he held back.

Gustave Henderson and Pedro were both so intent in watching the *volante* before them, that they took no heed of that which followed.

When Harold, after his visit to the *Posada de la Europa*, ordered Benito to drive to the Bishop's Garden, and the latter set off at a brisk pace toward the gate which opened on the road that led over the *sierra*, Pedro said, in a low tone:

"The mullet has taken the bait, Massa Gin'ral! Benito is bound for the Bishop's Garden!"

"Good!" muttered Gustave Henderson.

"Good! Mr. Harold Morley will soon be bound for a worse place!"

And he sunk back upon the cushions of the *volante* with an expression of savage satisfaction upon his well-bronzed face.

Benito urging his mule rapidly on, soon passed the city gate, then sped away over the *sierra*, and soon was beyond the suburbs of the city, passing through a series of handsome grounds which surrounded beautiful country villas.

"How far is it, Benito, to the Bishop's Garden?" asked Harold, at this time.

"It is a league and a half from the city, *excellenza*. But we will soon be there!" replied the *calacero*.

And driving his huge spurs into the flanks of his mule, he hurried on.

Harold said no more, but gazed upon the beautiful scenery, which continually met his eye, with pleasure.

"I wish I had brought Adele with me!" he said to himself. "She would have vastly enjoyed a ride like this!"

They soon arrived at a gate, which was quite dilapidated, as was also the wall on either side of it. Driving quickly through this, into a grove of various trees, such as palm, cocconut, guava, cinnamon, and others, they came in sight of a building which had evidently once been a noble palace, but which was now almost a heap of ruins. Broken columns, fallen walls, shattered statues, and fountains which seemed long since out of use, met the eye all around. But fruit and flowers grew profusely, and the broken arches were covered with vines and creepers.

"This is the Bishop's Garden, *excellenza*!" said Benito, as he checked his mule.

Harold thought of the dream of Adele, as he looked at the ruins, and for an instant a cold chill went to his heart, while he felt of the weapons which he always carried with him when on shore, and then looked around to see if any one else was near.

But not a person could be seen or heard except Benito, who sat carelessly in his saddle, whistling a Biscayan air.

"I thought this place was much frequented, Benito!" said he.

"It is, señor, later in the afternoon. We are early. Besides, there may be many people in the walks. They extend some ways further, though it is not good driving for the *volante*!"

"Very well—I will wait a while. Keep the *volante* here while I take a stroll!"

"Yes, *excellenza*!" and Benito dismounted, and fastening his mule, waited a few moments until Harold was out of sight. Then he hurried off into a by-path, muttering as he went:

"They may kill him—but I don't want to

see it done. I should be haunted all my life if I did. I have not such cold blood as Pedro has! *Dios me guarde, they are coming!*"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

We will now return to Nathan, and those upon whom he kept watch. The old steward grew more and more nervous as the *volantes* left the suburbs of the city, and when they came in sight of the broken gate-way and the ruined wall, he groaned:

"The dream—the dream! Sweet Jerusalem, but I'm afeared it's coming true!" When the *volante* in which Harold rode disappeared from sight, he would have had his driver pass the other if he could. But the road was so narrow that it was impossible. And he groaned in agony when he saw the *volante* ahead of him drive just within the gate, and there stop, while the man in it descended and walked on with the driver, who dismounted at the same time, so fastening his mule that no other carriage could get by.

Ordering his driver to stop where he was, Nathan leaped from the *volante*, and hurried on through the gateway. In a few seconds he came in sight of the ruined palace.

"O Moses—the dream—the dream!" he moaned, as he hurried on, clutching the weapon which Adele had given him.

Fortunately, for many paths diverged there, he saw the receding forms of the men who had occupied the *volante* ahead of him, as they hurried up one of the paths.

Stealthily as a panther, but swiftly, the old steward followed them, passing the well-known *volante* in which his master had ridden, where Benito had fastened it.

On—his heart beating faster than his pulse, and so loud that it sounded like a drum in his ears, Nathan hurried.

The path was winding, but fortunately it had no branches, for those whom he followed were now out of sight, and had there been diverging roads, he would not have known which to follow, for their feet left no track upon the hard gravel.

He had probably walked and ran a quarter of a mile, though to him it seemed to be treble that distance, when he came to the verge of a small space which was nearly free from trees. In its centre, shaded by a large, royal palm, was a small fountain, which gurgled up through a group of broken marble water-gods. Leaning against this tree, Nathan saw his master, but the other two persons were not in sight.

"The dream—the dream!" moaned the old man, and he was about to rush forward to join Harold, when he saw the *calacero* who had driven the *volante* nearest to his own, appear suddenly on the border of the open space not thirty feet from him. The man was crouched

down, and held in his hand a long, bright-bladed knife. His position was such that he could creep toward Harold's back unseen by the latter.

In a moment Nathan's revolver was held to a "bead" upon the *calacero's* head, with a hand as steady as the finger of Time.

But Nathan did not fire. He watched the motions of the would-be assassin, and at the same time looked for the other man, whom he intuitively knew to be the employer of the first.

"If I could take 'em both, 't would be a clean job!" he muttered.

But the employer did not show his head, though Nathan, who had shrunk back into a clump of guava bushes, thought he saw the small trees shaking strangely, near the spot where he first saw the *calacero* showing himself.

The would-be assassin was now within a few feet of his intended victim. Old Nathan prepared to act with a nerve fitting the perilous need. As the *calacero*, who till now had crept along the ground, rose to his feet behind the palm-tree, Nathan took deliberate aim, and at the very moment when the villain raised his hand, while the steel glittered in the air, there was a sharp report, and without a groan, or an uttered word, Pedro leaped high in the air, and fell dead on his face, burying his knife to the hilt in the soft ground.

"The dream hasn't all come true—the dream hasn't all come true!" shouted Nathan, as he rushed from his place of concealment, and threw his arms around Harold's neck, while the tears streamed down his cheeks.

At the same instant, had he not made so much noise, a bitter curse might have been heard in the bushes on the left, from whence Pedro had crept; and a crashing as if some person had hastily fled away.

"What, in the name of Heaven, does this mean?" cried Harold, in wild astonishment, as he looked first at Nathan, then at the man who lay dead at his feet.

"It means, capt'ing," said Nathan, actually clobbering with joy, "that Miss Adele's dream hasn't quite come true. That creature there was just a goin' to knife you, when I let fly at him. He won't knife anybody any more. I put the ball right through both his ears—aye see?"

And Nathan coolly rolled the body over on its back.

Harold saw the knife clutched in the death-grasp of the corpse, and instantly comprehended his recent peril and the noble service which Nathan had rendered.

"But this man could not have been alone; he must have had confederates—an employer. This is Gustave Henderson's work. Where is he?" cried Harold.

"The tother man must be round here somewhere," replied Nathan. "He came along with this chap as far as I seen 'em. He's been dogging you ever since you got into the *volante*, and I've dogged him."

"Yes, it is Gustave Henderson. He must be sought out, arrested, and punished," cried Harold, as he drew a revolver and rushed toward the spot where Nathan said he first saw the *calacero*.

He found no one there but broken flower-stems, bent grass, and several broken branches, which betokened that some one less cautious than the *calacero* had been there, and that within a few minutes.

Something white clinging to a bush attracted Harold's attention, and upon reaching it, he found it to be a linen pocket-handkerchief. Had he doubted before, here was proof of the late presence of his dastardly enemy. The handkerchief had the name—"G. Henderson, Georgia," marked in one corner.

With renewed eagerness, after this, Nathan and Harold searched the entire surrounding groves and thickets, but without success. At last, Harold determined to return to the *volante*, and see if he could not be found there; and if not, he intended to go at once to the governor-general, and stating the facts of his attempted assassination, to procure an order for the arrest of Henderson as an accomplice of the dead man, and the real instigator of the attempt.

"What shall we do with that poor creature?" asked Nathan, when Harold said he was going to the *volante*.

"Let him lie where he is, until the proper authorities come to take care of his body!" said Harold. "He will probably be recognized; I think I have seen his face before."

"I know I have," said Nathan. "He's not in the same rig, though, that he was then. He has carried me off aboard in his boat; he has a wherry in the harbor—or, least-wise, he had; for I calculate he has got done wherryin' in this world. That was a proper nice shootin'-iron Miss Adele gave me to-day."

"Did she send you to watch over me?" asked Harold.

"Sartin' she did, capt'ing; ef she hadn't, your goose would have been cooked before this time o' day, sure; for I didn't know nothin' about your bein' in danger."

"Heaven bless the angel! To her and to you I owe my life! Heaven bless the angel!"

"Ef I didn't say amen to that, I'd be worse than a Universalist; and my old father, who was a hard-shell Baptist, thought there couldn't be nuthin' worse than them, though his son ain't jest of that opinion," said Nathan, as he followed Harold along the path that led to the spot where the *volante* had been left.

Upon arriving at the place where he had left his *volante*, Harold found it there—the white mule standing tied as Benito had left it.

He shouted for Benito, but neither answer nor man came. But the driver, who had brought Nathan, hearing the shouts, came and said:

"Señor, if you seek Benito, you will not find him here. About twenty minutes ago, he and a large, fleshy man came running out of the garden, and taking a *volante* which was fastened just before mine, turned it, and nearly upsetting my *volante* in passing, drove off at a gallop toward the city."

"The murderers! Even Benito was in the plot," said Harold. Then turning to Nathan, he added: "We must lose no time—can you act as *calacero*, Nathan? I will get into this man's *volante*, and drive to the governor's palace. Can you follow with the *volante* that belongs to Benito?"

"I reckon I can; leastwise, I can try," said Nathan, turning the white mule and preparing to mount, while Harold went on the other *volante*; and tossing its driver a piece of gold, told him to drive with all possible speed to the governor's palace.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

When Harold arrived at the palace and sent his card to the governor-general, he was instantly admitted.

Upon his relation of the attempt to assassinate him, and the death of the man who attempted to commit the deed, the governor instantly ordered one of the officers of his guard to take a file of men to scour the entire neighborhood, and to arrest any persons whom they might find there, also to bring the body in for recognition. And when Harold told him whom he supposed to be the instigator of the attack; and under what false name he thought he had registered himself, the governor at once gave him an officer and a guard of soldiers, with orders to arrest Henderson and Benito wherever they might be found—at the same time ordering the *volante* and mule of Benito to be detained in the government stables.

"If they are caught, the garote is their destiny!" said the governor. "We have an occasional murder in the night-time," he added; "but never since I have ruled upon the island, has such a bold and desperate crime been attempted in the day-time. Let the criminals be secured, and an example shall be made which will strike terror to the black hearts of all others who are like them in disposition."

Harold at once went with the officer and guard to the *Posada de la Europa*, and inquired for General Weston.

"He returned less than an hour ago, paid

his bill, took his baggage, and went away, señor," replied the landlord.

"Did he leave word whither he was going?" asked the officer.

"No, señor," replied the landlord. "He seemed in great haste; though but last night he said he should stay some weeks."

"Which way did the *volante* go which carried him?" asked the officer.

"Down toward the harbor," replied the landlord.

"We will get him yet, señor," said the officer to Harold. "His excellency, the governor-general, will doubtless offer a reward for both the fugitives, and they cannot long escape our vigilance."

Then taking a careful description of Henderson and Benito, the officer returned to the palace to report.

Harold started to return to his vessel, requesting the officer to say to the governor that he would return to the palace in a short time with Nathan, to give any evidence which might be required when the body of the assassin was brought in.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

In a short time, Harold, with Nathan by his side, stood once more in the cabin of his beautiful yacht.

"I never will laugh at your dreams again, dear Adele," said he, as he pressed his lips upon her brow. "To your thoughtfulness and Nathan's courage, I owe my life."

"Then you have been attacked?"

And Adele, as she said this, turned pale.

"Yes; amid rains just as you describe them, beneath a palm. Had you seen the spot before—seen the assassin as he approached me with his uplifted knife, when I was unconscious of his presence, you could not more correctly have described what actually has occurred, than you did when you related your dream. But Nathan, with the weapon which you gave him, shot the vile assassin down at the moment when his hand was raised to drive his weapon to my heart."

"Thank Heaven! O Nathan! I know not how to thank you—how to reward you!" cried Adele, grasping the old man's hand. "In saving his life, you have saved my own."

"Then I've got all the pay I ask for in this world," said Nathan. "I only wish I could have killed t'other one, too."

"Was it Henderson that he killed?" asked Adele.

"No—merely a tool of his," replied Harold. "The chief villain has escaped, for the time; but the authorities are after him, and his life is forfeited if he is captured."

"I hope they will secure him," replied Adele. "While such a villain lives, and, bloodhound-like, is on our track, your life



A FRIEND IN NEED.

will never be safe! Nathan cannot always be near you; I may never again have such a dream. Oh, I pray that he may be captured!"

"He will find it difficult to escape. Under such strict police and military rule, the escape of any well-described criminal is almost an impossibility. And now, my Adele, having come off merely to assure you of my safety, and to thank you for the precaution which you took in sending Nathan to look out for me, I must return to the palace to be present at the examination of the body of the assassin, and to learn if any arrests have been made."

"Nathan will go with you, will he not, dear Harold?"

"Yes."

"Then I am content. He has proved his truth and faithfulness, and I had rather that he were with you alone, than any other twenty men."

"Don't, Miss Adele—don't make me too proud!" said Nathan; and tears of joy stood in his eyes. "Though, to speak truly, I'd rather hear one word of praise from your lips, than all the singin' I ever heard in meetin'; and I used to be mon-trous fond of that."

"Take this, and wear it for my sake," said Adele; and she drew a diamond-ring from her finger, and put it in his hand.

Nathan looked at the golden circle and the glittering jewel. He tried to put it on the end of his little finger. Then, as it failed even to go on the tip of that finger, he burst into a hearty laugh.

"I would take a boss-collar to fit my fingers, Miss Adele," said he. "Please don't think me unmannerly or ungrateful, but I'd no more know what to do with this purty jewel, than a parson would with a pack of playin'-keards! Ef you'll only jest give me one lock of your black, shiny hair, I'll keep it jest as long as I live."

And he handed back the ring.

Adele took up a pair of scissors and severed a long tress of her beautiful hair, and with a voice which quivered with emotion, said:

"Take it, Nathan, and I will yet try to find some better way to reward you."

"Please, Miss Adele, don't talk of it any more. I haven't done nothin' more than my duty, and I'm well paid already. The capting and me understand each other, and there's no danger of there bein' any odds betwixt us at the last reckoning."

"No, indeed, Nathan; but we must go ashore, now, to see what is going on there," said Harold.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

When Harold and Nathan reached the palace of the governor-general, they found that

the party which had been sent to the bishop's garden had returned. They had sought, unsuccessfully, for any persons lurking there, but had brought away the body of Pedro. In his pockets, they had found several doubloons which, the governor said, were undoubtedly the price of blood paid in advance. But there were no papers, or anything else, which could bring home the matter unto Henderson. But the handkerchief which Harold had found, the description of his person which the landlord of the hotel had given, all went to prove that it was Henderson who had hired the assassin.

"I would ask your excellency," said Harold, now, for the first time, thinking of the statement which the landlord had made, "whether the Bishop's Garden is a place of fashionable resort?"

"Quite to the contrary. Very few persons ever visit it."

Harold at once stated what the landlord had told him.

"He must have been in the plot. I will have him before us at once," replied the governor; and an officer was immediately dispatched for that purpose.

In a short time the landlord, frightened almost to death (for he knew not what charge laid against him), stood in the presence of was the governor-general—who, with vice-regal power, holds life and death in his own hands.

"Why did you tell this gentleman, when he inquired after General Weston (so called), that the Bishop's Garden was a place of fashionable resort?" asked the governor, sternly.

"Please your excellency, General Weston, or the gentleman who registered his name as General Weston, before he went away from my house in the morning, said to me that a gentleman, whom he described (and the description answered to this gentleman), might possibly call to see him. He said this gentleman was a friend whom he much wished to see. Also, that he was going to spend the day at the Bishop's Garden—of which I, in truth, know nothing, for I have never been there. He wished his friend to follow him, and bade me tell him, as an inducement, the very words which I used. To oblige my guest, I did so. I had no other earthly reason."

"No knowledge that an attempt was to be made to assassinate this gentleman?"

"Upon my solemn oath, no, sir! I have, fortunately, lived so long in Havana, your excellency, that my character and conduct will bear the closest scrutiny."

"Your explanation appears to be candid and truthful," said the governor. "You can return to your hotel, with the knowledge that you are under surveillance, and must not leave the city without my special permission."

And should you, or any one else, be so fortunate as to find and arrest this General Weston, alias Henderson, or Benito, the *calaceiro*, you, or they, shall receive from my hands one hundred ounces in gold."

Then, turning to an aid, the governor added:

"Let this offer and a description of the persons be published through the city, and I leave the island."

The landlord, now a little more at ease, was permitted to depart; and the governor, turning to Harold with a smile, said:

"Señor, I have been so agitated and excited about this matter, and so anxious to secure the criminals, that I have overlooked courtesy. I have not before taken time to congratulate you upon your escape from the assassin's hands."

"I gratefully thank your excellency for the kind feelings you express," replied Harold. "But in presenting to you this faithful friend and servant, whose good aim and watchful care preserved my life, I feel that I present one whose worth is far above his rank."

"He has done us good service in ridding our island of a wretch unworthy to live upon it," said the governor. "What is his name, señor?"

"Nathan Shandland, your excellency—a faithful servant to my father before I was born, and now equally faithful to me."

"Faithfulness should ever be rewarded," said the governor, kindly. And taking from his pocket a large and magnificent watch, from which hung a chain bearing a massive emerald for a seal, he added:

"Nathan Shandland, accept this from the Governor-General of Cuba, not alone for saving the valued life of your master, but in remembrance of one who values *fidelity* wherever it is found."

Nathan trembled from head to foot with agitation, as the governor handed him the magnificent present. Tears came up in his eyes. He knew not what to say.

At last, he stammered out:

"Please, capting, do just say what I feel. I can't; my heart has come clear up into my throat, and sticks there!"

The governor smiled good-naturedly at Nathan's embarrassment, and asking Harold to take a glass of wine in his private apartments, told an officer to see that Nathan was provided with refreshments.

CHAPTER XL.

We'll join, if you like, dear reader, in a look after Mr. Henderson and Benito, not hoping, however, for any part of that gubernatorial reward. If I recollect rightly, I have stated elsewhere, that knave and conscience-

less as was Gustave Henderson, ever ripe for crime and villainy, he was yet an arrant coward, morally and physically.

When he sent Pedro forward to do the deed which he dared not risk himself, after having cunningly entrapped Harold into that lonely place, he watched the movements of his hireling with tremulous interest. He had no thought of having been followed; and when, at the very moment which he thought would be Harold's last on earth, he heard a shot, and saw Pedro fall dead upon the ground, he was so stricken with terror, that without waiting to see by whom the shot was fired, he fled wildly through the bushes toward the place where he had left the *volante*. He knew not whether Harold had many friends to aid him or not—he only knew and felt that his plot had failed, and therefore, that his own life was in danger.

In rushing through the thicket, he ran upon Benito.

"*Sancta Maria—excellenza!* What is the matter?" asked Benito, himself terrified at the agitation which Gustave exhibited.

"All is lost, Benito!" cried the chief conspirator. "Pedro has been slain, and we must fly for our own lives! Hurry with me to the *volante*—we can reach the city before the alarm is given there; and then when I get my money from the hotel, we can find some place of concealment until we can leave the island. Hasten, my good man, I have plenty of money, and will not desert you if you do not desert me. We are both in peril, for this Señor Morley will follow us to the death."

"I am ruined, ruined, señor!" groaned Benito. "I will fly with you, because I must; not because I wish. If I stay, the *garote* will be my doom!"

By this time they had reached his *volante*, and Benito was about to unhitch his mule.

"No; do not take this! We will gain time by taking the other which Pedro drove," said Gustave. "When Morley and his friends come here, they will see this *volante*, and, thinking you are here, will waste time in looking for you. That time will be precious to us; for in it we may reach some hiding-place that you know of, and be safe until, with my abundant means, we can find a way of leaving the island. Let me but once get back to my own country, and I will make you a rich man, Benito."

Benito sighed, but hurried on; and turning the second *volante*, leaped into the saddle, while Gustave sprang into the seat.

Putting spurs to the mule, Benito dashed by the other *volante*, nearly upsetting both carriages in the passage, and at a swift gallop sped away toward the city.

"To the *Posada de la Europa*, Benito. My trunk there is half-filled with gold!" said

THE SECRET REVEALED.

Henderson. "We must secure that; for in my gold lies our best chance of safety."

Benito answered not a word, but rode madly on until they reached the city, where more temperate speed was necessary, to avoid creating a suspicion which might delay them, if not cause their arrest.

Soon they were at the hotel, where Henderson, or rather, as he was known there, "General Weston," called for his bill, paid it without even a glance at the items, and having his single traveling-trunk tossed into the *volante*, bade Benito to drive on.

The latter still silent, again moved swiftly forward with the *volante*, driving down toward the lower end of the harbor, in the neighborhood of the Punta, into a section mostly inhabited by fishermen.

"Where are you going, Benito?" asked Gustave, at last.

"To the only place in this city where I think we can be safe, *excellenza*. It is a resort for smugglers and hard cases, and it will be the last place where the police or military will look for a gentleman!"

"What is that?" asked Gustave, pointing to something which looked like a huge barber's chair, made of iron, and mounted on a large stone platform.

"It is the *Garote*!" said Benito, with a shudder. "*Dios me guarde*, it is the *garote*!" And he hurried his mule past the dreadful instrument of death, which in Cuba fills the place which the gallows occupies in our more merciful (?) land.

Very soon after this, they came to a narrow and filthy alley, close by the frowning walls of the prison and fort, known as "*La Punta*." Into this, with a coolness and skill that quite astonished Gustave, for the hubs of the *volante* wheels almost touched the walls on either side, Benito drove; and turning a corner, he paused before a dingy-looking house of stone, over the portals of which was fastened a sign, with a fish, a bottle, and an anchor for its emblems.

He knocked against the door with his clenched hand, and it was instantly opened by a hideous-looking negro, who had lost one eye in some way, and who, half-naked as he was, looked more like a devil than a man.

"Pablo, take his *excellenza's* trunk in; we will be your guests for a time," said he, as he sprang from his horse. "Enter, *excellenza*," he said to Gustave; "it's a poor place, but safety here is better than death elsewhere."

And starting the mule on with the *volante*, by a heavy kick, he entered the den with Gustave.

"Will they not track us by the *volante*, if it

is seen near here?" asked Gustave, ere he looked before him to see what kind of place he was entering.

"No, *excellenza*. The mule will go direct to his stable, which is half a league from here. No one will know where we left the *volante*; for, as you see, all is still now in this street. It is only lively in the night-time. The class of people who live here, sleep in the day-time and do their business in the night. Look, *excellenza*."

Henderson looked ahead of him. A long, narrow room, so low that he could barely stand upright in it, contained no furniture but several black and greasy-looking tables and a row of wooden benches by the wall on either side. These benches were occupied by men who were sleeping, and Henderson shuddered as he looked at them. Negroes, mulattoes, and swarthy white men, lay promiscuously there, and ragged, filthy, fierce-looking wretches they were.

Scarcely one of them but carried a knife in the gash around his waist; unshaven and unshorn, they looked like the offshootings of the world.

The place itself was horribly dirty: a stench of garlic, tobacco, and aguardiente, almost stifled Henderson as he advanced to a kind of liquor-bar at the farther end of the room, to which the negro whom Benito called Pablo had carried his trunk.

"In trouble, eh, Benito?" asked Pablo, his one eye shining like fire.

"Yes, Pablo, and you must take care of his *excellenza* and myself until we can leave. You shall be well paid—his *excellenza* will give you a half-dozen doubloons now as an earnest of what he will do, if you will hide us away safely."

"Certainly—there are ten of them, Pablo," said Gustave, handing out the money. "But can you not give us a better room than this and one not so public?"

"Yes," said the negro, as he clutched the gold in his hand, while his single eye burned yet the brighter as he gazed upon it. "Yes, *excellenza*, you and Benito follow me."

And taking up the trunk again, he opened a door which was back of the bar, and so cunningly contrived that the shelves upon which the liquor was placed turned with it, and revealed a room some ten or twelve feet square behind it. In this there was a table and half a dozen chairs, also a couple of bunks, much like those to be found in the fore-castle of an old-fashioned merchant-ship.

"Here, *excellenza*, you will be safe from the very devil himself. You can order whatever kind of food or wine you want—touch this spring, it will ring a bell. Whisper your order at that panel, I will hear and attend to it. When old Pablo gives his word that a

* The same machine upon which the brave but unfortunate General Lopez met his fate.

man is safe, he is safe. The police don't like to meddle with me; for when my friends are awake, they are a hard set to meddle with. Benito knows me well; he did me a favor once, and I have not forgotten it. Give your orders, and I will see that you want nothing."

"Let us have some good brandy and some food, quickly, then," said Gustave. "I am tired and faint."

"You shall have both in a little while, *excellenza*. I will pass them in by a sliding panel, near the floor; for when the door is fastened my bar looks right, and no one will dream that there is a door here. And, *excellenza*," added Pablo, "if you hear a good deal of noise here when night comes on, feel no alarm, for my friends are not very quiet after they wake up. They will drink, and play cards, and sometimes fight a little to keep their hands in. I can't stop them. And now, *adios, excellenza*, I will attend to your orders directly."

Pablo closed the door; and Gustave and Benito were alone in the noisome, windowless den, which was evidently Pablo's "best room," perhaps his parlor.

"This is cursed bad luck!" muttered Gustave. "I thought that I had everything so fixed that Morley could not escape me. How my plan failed, or who was there to aid him, is more than I can comprehend."

"It has ruined me, *excellenza*!" said Benito, with a heavy sigh. "My *volante* and mule, my house—*ven* my poor earnings which lie buried in the cellar—all are gone; for if I return to save anything, they will have me in the garrote. *Ay, ay de mi!* I am ruined!"

"Not so, I tell you!" said Gustave, impatiently. "I am rich in my own land. Let us but escape from this island, and you shall have gold enough to buy twenty *volantes* and mules, and a house besides. I will make you overseer of my plantation, and give you fifteen hundred *pesos* a year."

Benito's lugubrious face grew brighter when he heard this.

"I will manage to secure a passage off through Pablo," said he. "More than half of his customers are smugglers—the rest are worse! Pablo will do what he can for me. Being a house-owner, I went bail for him once, when he was in trouble, and he does not forget it. True, he paid me well for doing it; yet he thinks it was a great favor, and I am content now that he should think so."

Gustave did not say anything for a considerable time, but seemed engaged in a deep study. At last, he started up and said:

"Benito, the class of men who harbor here, would enter upon almost any desperate expedition, if it promised gain, would they not?"

"If the gain was sure, and the project possible," said Benito. "They are men who value life lightly when gold is balanced against it."

"Do you not think that I could get twenty or thirty of them to aid me in taking possession of Morley's yacht, while she is at anchor? He would never dream of such a rash and daring attempt, and probably keeps no watch at night."

Benito was so astonished at the proposition, that for a moment he made no reply, but looked in open-mouthed wonder at Gustave. When he spoke, he said:

"*Excellenza*, I believe you North Americans fear nothing. Do you not know that the yacht lies within-hailing distance of more than twenty men-of-war, who keep sentinels on the alert day and night?"

"True; but boats with muffled-oars could pass them in the dark, and board her without noise."

"Then the government guard-boats," continued Benito, "are rowing about the harbor all night long."

"We should hear their oars and could avoid them," said Gustave.

"But the yacht could not be captured without the alarm being given," said Benito. "It would be impossible, *excellenza*."

"No—not impossible, with cool and determined men. A single blow with a knife would silence the watch on deck, if there was one. I have been on board of her, and know the way to the cabin. I think she could be taken easily," replied Henderson.

"But suppose you had her in your possession, what would you do next?" asked Benito.

"Why, make sail and go to sea," said Gustave.

"*Excellenza*, no vessel is permitted to leave the harbor, or enter it, after sunset, without she is a man-of-war; and even then she must have a permit, or they will fire upon her from the Moro Castle. If the guard-boats did not retake the schooner, she would be sunk before she could pass the Moro."

"I would hardly care, if those I hate were sunk with her!" said Henderson, bitterly.

"Others might value their lives more, *excellenza*."

"Hist—hist!" said a voice outside, and the sliding of a panel was heard.

"It is Pablo," said Benito.

And as he spoke, a large tray was showed into the room through an aperture in the lower part of the ceiling. Benito took it up, and placed it on the table.

"Pablo understands the wants of your *excellenza*," said the *calacero*, as he took first a clean, white table-cloth and spread it on the table, then put from the tray sundry bottles

labeled brandy, rum, and wine, with glasses to drink from. Then came some nice white rolls of bread; a cold chicken, some butter, sardines, pickles, and cold tongue. Also, lemons and sugar, and some fruit.

"He is a better caterer than one would suppose he could be. These things look clean, in spite of the filth which abounds in his place," said Gustave.

"He has sent for them to some first-class *restorador*," said Benito. "Shall I open a bottle of wine, *excellenza*? He has not forgotten a cork-screw."

"Open a bottle of brandy for me, Benito," said Gustave. "It will serve my nerves better than wine. We will eat and drink, and then think over the matter of which I was speaking."

"Very well, *excellenza*. Trouble does not spoil my appetite. Poor Pedro! but yesterday he and I supped merrily. And now he is cold, and will sup no more. Poor fellow! if he had not ever been so willing to use his knife, he might have lived to pull gray hairs from his beard."

While talking, Benito kept his hands busy, and soon had a couple of bottles uncorked, and the food arranged for use. Henderson whetted his appetite with a brimming glass of brandy; and Benito, after asking permission, followed his example.

CHAPTER XLI.

After his interview with the governor-general, Harold returned to the yacht, accompanied by Nathan.

The latter, as soon as he got on board, went to the cabin, and, approaching Adele respectfully, exhibited the present which he had received.

"Please keep it for me, Miss Adele," said the old steward. "It's too nice for me to carry, except sometimes on a Sunday. I'm afraid of losin' it, or breakin' it; and then, besides, there might be a temptation for some one to steal it. I know you'll keep it safe; and then, ef I should happen to get washed overboard, or be sick and go off all of a sudden, I shouldn't like anybody to get hold of it but you and the capting. For 'twas through you that it ever come to me."

Adele told Nathan that she would take care of it for him if he desired.

After saying this, she turned to Harold, and asked:

"Are we going away to-morrow, dear Harold?"

"I intended to, dearest," replied he; "but the governor wishes me to delay a little longer, so that I can appear as a witness against Henderson, if he is arrested."

"I fear that he will not be found. You

know not how I dread this delay," said Adele. "Until he came, like Satan, into our Paradise, I was happy. But now a constant terror oppresses me. If you are absent from me, my fancy conjures up a thousand dangers which seem to beset you. The drink which may pass your lips, the food you may eat, I fear will be poisoned! O Harold, it is agony!"

"It shall not last long, love. If within three days Henderson is not arrested, I positively will sail, whether it pleases the governor or not. I will prefer your pleasure to all other things."

"Thank you, Harold. Do not think me unreasonable. Remember that I am but a weak, nervous girl, and pity rather than condemn me."

"I do not blame you, my Adele. Do you think you will enjoy the opera to-night?"

"If you insist upon my going, Harold, I will try to enjoy it. But I would feel far more happy, enjoy myself a thousand times better, here, if you were to remain on board. We can make an opera for ourselves. Zella with the guitar, you with your flute, and I with my harp. Nathan, can you not play some instrument?"

"Nothin' to speak of, Miss Adele, 'ceptin' the jewsharp. I used to be great on the kittle-drum, when I was young, and went to yearly muster and trainin'; but them days have gone by!"

And Nathan heaved a deep-drawn sigh.

"I will not go to the opera, then," said Harold, pleasantly. "I should not enjoy any music if there was a sadness at your heart. Get us up a good supper, Nathan, and we'll spend a happy evening here, where no danger can reach us, and where the world is all our own."

"I'll do jest that, capting. I got Mr. Morton to put down everything that we wanted in the shape of stores on paper, and I left it with 'Tom,' the head American clerk at old Cabargus', and I find that he has sent everything aboard while we've been scootin' around ashore. I can give you jest as nice a supper as ever was got up at the old Tremount, in Boston; and they used to be some on suppers when the 'deacon' looked out for cupboard matters!"

And Nathan hastened away to his duty; while Harold gladly threw himself down upon a sofa to listen to Adele's dulcet words; for, when she was happy, her voice was like the carolling of a bird.

CHAPTER XLII.

By his watch alone, could Gustave Henderson tell that the day was nearly at an end and night approaching; for the room in which Pablo had placed him and Benito was

windowless, and a lamp hung in the centre a feeble light they had.

He had, however, with the aid of food and liquor, worked himself into a much better state of mind, and had almost reasoned Benito into the belief that the yacht *could* be captured, in the harbor, with a dozen or two picked and desperate men. While they were consulting upon this subject, the secret door was carefully opened, and Pablo made his appearance.

He held two papers in his hand. One was an evening gazette, containing a highly-colored account of the attempted assassination; the other, a proclamation issued by the governor, containing a description of the person of "one Gustave Henderson, alias Weston; and one Benito, a *calacero*," accused of attempting the assassination of a distinguished foreigner; and offering a reward of one hundred doubloons for their apprehension, dead or alive—thus "outlawing" them completely.

"Your excellency sees that the governor places a high value upon you and Benito," said Pablo, with a grim smile, as he handed the papers to Gustave.

"Not so high as I place upon myself," said Gustave, attempting a ghastly smile. "Look you, Pablo, I will give double that amount the moment that I can see my way clear of the city!"

"Two hundred doubloons? *Caramba!* señor, you can depend upon getting away for that sum! I will manage that matter myself. I can disguise you, and get you off in a fishing-boat that will make the passage across to Key West in eight or ten hours, and there you'll be safe from all Cuban laws."

"Perhaps you can so serve me that I can take myself off, and reward you yet more," said Gustave.

"I do not understand, your excellency. One thing is certain, the sooner you are away the better; for such a reward as the governor has offered will set ten thousand pairs of eyes, ten thousand heads upon the constant watch. I know that my place will be ransacked to-night; but the police will never find this room," said Pablo.

"I have thought that, with your aid, I might possibly take possession of a yacht that is anchored in the harbor," said Gustave. "You have men here who would run a little risk where there was a good prospect of gain?"

Pablo shook his head.

"Señor," said he, gravely, "you are in danger enough now, without incurring more. I shall not risk my own head and the ruin of my house in any venture like that. If you will pay well, I'll stake my life upon getting you clear of this island; if not, you can look to your own safety; for I will not betray

you. But attempt no further adventures here, when a price is already set upon your head!"

Gustave saw that he was helpless; and though the spirit of anger burned like fire away down in his black heart, he answered, with forced composure:

"It shall be as you think best, Pablo. I place my fate in your hands, and will abide by your advice. Secure a passage hence for Benito and myself, and the money I named shall be yours before I leave your house."

"You shall be safe out of the harbor by to-morrow night, señor. I will engage my men to-night, and make all ready for to-morrow night. You will have to go over the city-walls by a rope-ladder—which I have used before—and embark a league's distance up the coast; but I will see you safely off."

"Very well, Pablo; I trust in you. Have your preparations made secure; and if you need gold to bind your men to the work, come to me."

"Yes, señor," said Pablo, turning to retire.

"Stay a moment, Pablo," said Benito. "I have over one hundred doubloons hidden in my house. I like not to go away without them. I can easily go off and leave my wife—for she has a sharp tongue and a vinegar temper—but I do not like to lose my gold, nor yet to leave it where it will not benefit anybody; for it is so well concealed that neither she nor any one else could find it, were they to search a life-time."

"Tell me where it is concealed, and I will try to get it for you," said Pablo. "Although," he added, "it is likely that an *espial* is already kept upon your house."

"If there is, I have a way of entering my cellar which no one but myself knows. It is but a few paces to the old church of Saint Ursula; and from one of the deserted vaults I have a passage which I dug out myself, and blocked with flags which I can move. I fixed it so that I might hide my money without letting my wife see it; for she used to take every dollar of my earnings and put it in silks and laces on her own back. Now she has to get along with cottons and ginghamas."

"Maybe, if you was to black yourself like me, and put on old clothes, we might get it. I'll go with you, and help you, if you'll give me half," said Pablo.

"Half is better than none—I'll do it," said Benito.

"Well, you stay here till I go and get my gal to tend bar. It won't take us long, and none of my customers will get very troublesome before midnight. I'll bring the clothes and some lamp-black first, though."

And Pablo departed, carefully closing the door behind him.

"I do not like to have you leave me, Beni-

THE PIT IN THE CELLAR



to," said Gustave, nervously. "If by any ill-chance you should be taken, you would betray my place of concealment to save yourself!"

"Never, señor, never!" said Benito. "I never would be so treacherous as that. Besides, to betray you would never save me, with such a governor-general as we have now. Fear not, señor—fear not!"

Pablo entered, a moment after, with the means of disguise, and aided Benito in so altering his appearance that his most intimate friend would not have recognized him.

"You will do; come quickly—for I do not want to be away long," said Pablo.

And turning to Gustave, he added:

"Keep perfectly still, señor. My gal will be in the bar, and she does not know that any one is here. The lads are waking up, out there, and may be noisy; but do not mind them.

Then, lifting a trap-door, which neither Benito nor Gustave had noticed before, he said to the *calacero*:

"We'll go out this way, Benito—it is the most safe, though not the nicest. Señor, be pleased to shut the trap when we have gone, and by no means attempt the passage yourself, for there is danger in it."

"I shall await your return," said Gustave.

"And I pray you to be cautious; for if you two were lost, my chance for escape would be slim indeed."

CHAPTER XLIII.

The wife who had been linked by the ceremonies of "Holy Church" to Benito, the *calacero*, was not a woman calculated to make him very happy. He had married her when she had reached the sour-cider stage of life, but before she forgot that she had once been good-looking. The consequence was, that when she changed her state of ancient maidenhood for that of a married woman, she thought that she must live and dress up to the full extent of his means—not her own; for, though he supposed her to be well off when he married her, she had not a *peso* beyond what she had expended in jewelry, dress, false hair and teeth, to catch him with.

This did not suit Benito, who was miserly and parsimonious; and long before the usual time allotted for honeymoons had passed, their quarrels were sharp and frequent. Being as gifted of tongue as the eloquent Lucy Stone, with a spice of Xantippe in her humor, having sharp nails and a heavy will, the lady generally got the better of poor Benito, who seldom brought any money into the house which she did not get before he left.

For this reason, he had found a place to hide it in, and a way of secreting it on his own premises, without her knowledge—al-

though she had her suspicions, as the reader will learn in due time.

Having seen Benito and Pablo started on their missions, we will precede them and see how his dame, Cotignola, bore his absence and the news, which had already reached her, of his flight and outlawry.

There was no appearance of mourning in her highly-colored face, as she sat by a table upon which was a bottle of wine and a couple of glasses. On the contrary, her face wore a very pleasant expression. Two glasses were necessary, because opposite to her sat a fine-looking man, somewhat younger than Benito, dressed in the dashing uniform of a sergeant in the "Queen's Lancers"—a regiment always on duty near the person of the governor.

That she was not only on good terms with him, but had known him before, may be inferred from the tenor of their conversation.

"You do not blame me, my dear Cotignola," said the sergeant, as he refilled his wine-glass, "for volunteering to come here when I heard that a guard was to be sent here to arrest Benito if he ventured back? I thought you would rather it would be me, than some other man who would be a stranger to you."

"Blame you, Sergeant Spinola? No, indeed! On the contrary, I thank you with all my heart! And I hope that the fool and rascal Benito will never venture under this roof again. He is my husband, to be sure; but such a husband! Mean, stingy, cowardly—a very brute! My dress—that shows his meanness! Yet the other *calaceros* tell me he has earned more money than any two of them, and never spends a cent for wine or cigars. He has hidden his money somewhere—I'd like to know where."

"Perhaps he has put it in bank," said the sergeant.

"No," replied Cotignola. "I have had inquiries made at every bank in the city. But if he does not come back, or if he is caught and garoted, his *volante* and mule will be mine, and this house, also! I shall not be quite penniless."

"No, indeed, Cotignola," said the sergeant. "His big white mule and handsome *volante* will sell for more than a thousand *pesos*, and that, well managed, with this house, will make you very comfortable."

"Yes," said Cotignola; and she filled for herself a glass of wine, and drank it off with evident gusto.

As she put it down, she heard a noise, which caused her to start to her feet.

"Did you hear that?" she asked; and she look frightened as she spoke.

"I certainly heard something," replied the sergeant; and rising, he drew his sword with one hand, and a pistol with the other. "But

it seemed as if it was under the floor. Is there any one else in the house?"

"Not that I know of."

"No cats?"

"Not a cat."

"It may be rats."

"If so, I never heard them here before. Hark! speak in a whisper. There is some one digging in the cellar. I am sure I hear it!"

"So do I, and I will soon see who it is!" said the sergeant.

"Take off your boots, so that you can walk without being heard," said Cotignola. "I will show you the way to the cellar-stairs." And she took off her own shoes, so as to walk lightly.

"Take another glass of wine before you go," added the woman; "it will steady your nerves. Shoot whoever you see, no matter who it is."

The sergeant took some more wine, and wiped his lips on Cotignola's cheek. Then, whispering to her to lead the way, he followed until she opened a door which led to the cellar. The moment this was opened, a faint gleam of light was seen below, and the sound of some one digging came more plainly to their ears.

With proper presence of mind, the sergeant instantly extinguished the lamp which Cotignola carried in her hand, and putting his finger on his lips, to indicate that she must be silent, he went down the stairs a couple of steps, noiselessly, and then bent his head down to survey the interior of the cellar, if he could.

According to his report as made afterward, he saw a strange as well as a fearful sight. He saw a ragged negro, as he supposed, carefully digging a pit in one corner of the cellar, while the devil, or his image—a black man with one eye, and that in the middle of his forehead—stood, grinning, by his side, holding a light.

At that moment, the man who had been digging said, in a low tone:

"I've come to it—the gold is here."

And the sergeant saw him lift a good-sized bag, and hand it to the being who looked so like the arch-fiend; and he also heard the ring of golden pieces.

At the same moment, the sergeant leaped into the cellar and fired his pistol at the man in the pit. In an instant, while the cellar resounded with a terrible yell, the light went out, and he found himself in utter darkness, while Cotignola was screaming, in a paroxysm of terror, above.

The sergeant hastily groped his way back up the stairs, and scolding Cotignola out of her hysterics, made her relight the lamp.

"What have you seen? what have you shot?" she asked, in a half-sob, half-scream.

"Come down into the cellar and see," said the sergeant, while he reloaded his pistol. "I've shot something, that's sure; and, I hope, got a bag of gold, besides, for my trouble, if the devil hasn't carried it off."

And the sergeant put his sword back in its scabbard, so that he could take the lamp in his left hand. In his right, he carried his pistol; and thus prepared, started again for the cellar, followed by Cotignola, whose curiosity overpowered her fears.

Upon entering the cellar, the sergeant saw the man at whom he had fired stretched at length upon the ground which he had just dugged up. In his hand he still clutched the spade which he had used. But the other person, human or superhuman, was gone, and there was no bag of gold to be seen.

"Is he dead?" asked Cotignola, with a shudder.

"I'll see," said the sergeant; and he turned the body over with a coolness peculiar to surgeons and soldiers only.

"Yes, dead—dead as Christopher Columbus, and—oh? Why, fifty unceas are mine, as sure as I live!" cried the sergeant. "It is Benito, with his face blackened like a negro."

"Benito? Are you sure?" cried Cotignola, without exhibiting the slightest sign of a hysterical attack.

"Yes—look for yourself! When his face is washed, you'll see that it is Benito, plain enough."

"But the bag of gold—you said something about a bag of gold!" cried Cotignola.

"Yes; Benito dugged one up here, and handed it to something, or somebody, that looked more like what I suppose the devil is, than anything else. I heard it jingle, and just then I fired. Now it is gone!"

"Yes, and there is the way it has gone!" said Cotignola, pointing to an aperture in the wall, through which a man could creep easily.

"Well, I shall not follow the thing I saw here," said the sergeant. "I'm not afraid of anything human, but I'll swear that it was not human! I'm going to the governor, to report and to claim my half of the reward for getting one of the fugitives. It may be my luck yet to get the other. Dead or alive, it makes no matter! So the proclamation runs."

"You will not leave me alone, will you, dear Spinola?" said Cotignola, tenderly.

"Why, no. I'll send a neighbor or two in at once, to stay until I come back from the palace."

"And you'll come soon, will you not?"

"Oh, yes. I shall have to come for his body. The governor will have to see that. It must be seen and recognized by the American captain, I suppose."

"And after all is over, you'll come and see me often, will you not? I shall be so lonely, some, my dear Spinola!"

"You will not find me remiss in my visits, *cara mia*. I have not forgotten old times. Now we'll go up. I will take just one glass of wine, send in some neighbors to keep you company, and then hasten to report to his excellency, the governor."

CHAPTER XLIV.

Gustave Henderson felt anything but easy after Pablo and Benito had left him alone. As Pablo had intimated, the "boys" in the outer apartment had begun to wake up. Their harsh calls for liquor, their frequent oaths and brutal language, fell distinctly upon his ear, and although he was not himself always perfectly refined in his language, he felt chilled and shocked at what he heard, even though the languages used—Spanish, French, and Dutch, as well as English—were not all well understood by him.

He felt uneasy, for he feared that if the police or military should come while Pablo was absent, that they might by some accident discover his hiding-place. And again, he feared that Benito might, by some mischance, fall into their hands while out, and in spite of all of his protestations of fidelity, betray him.

More than once—ay, more than a dozen times—did the Georgian find it necessary to resort to the brandy bottle, to stimulate his failing nerves.

And when, suddenly and all unexpectedly, Pablo by main force lifted up the trap-door from below, while he (Henderson) was standing upon it, tossing him over to one side of the room, he trembled all over with nervousness.

For the negro was panting for breath as if he had been hotly pursued, and huge drops of sweat were pouring down his greasy face, like oozing water along the side of a coal-mine.

He flung a large bag of gold upon the floor, and shut down the trap without speaking, and then pouring out a glass of raw rum, drank it off in one swallow.

"What is the matter? Where is Benito?" asked Gustave, pale with consternation.

"The devilish fool is dead, but there's the gold he risked and lost his life for!" said Pablo, almost savagely.

"Good Pablo, be not angered with me, but explain, will you not?" said Henderson, gently, for the ferocious looks of the negro terrified him.

Pablo drank another glass of liquor before he would reply. By that time he had regained his breath, and seemed more calm.

"We went to the house—Benito and me,"

said he, "and got into the cellar through the old church-vault and passage, as he said we could. And we went very still, and I struck a light, and held it for him while he dug up the money. Just as he handed me the money, I got a glimpse of a soldier, who fired a pistol at Benito, who fell, with a death-yell, on the ground, just as I put out the light. The soldier seemed to be as badly scared as I was, for he backed up out of the cellar, and halloed for a light. I stopped to feel of Benito, to see if he was sure dead; for if he had been alive, I would have brought him away. But it was no use—the ball had gone right through his heart. So I kept the money, and got away as fast as I could, and ran all the way home, except when I was near a guard or sentinel!"

"Were you followed?" asked Henderson.

"No, señor, I think not. I did not wait to see, until I was at the entrance of the hidden passage which leads to the trap-door. I listened there, but heard nothing."

"Then you think I am safe yet?"

"Yes, señor. But I shall get you away as soon as I can. There's bad luck with you. Here are two good men gone on your account, and you have failed in what you came for."

"True, Pablo. I wish to get away as soon and as quietly as possible."

"You shall go, sure, to-morrow night, señor. Now I must get in to my bar, and keep the boys quiet. They're getting rough, to-night."

"Take in a couple of doubloons, and say a friend treats them," said Gustave, offering Pablo the money.

"No; I have made enough for to-night," said Pablo, pointing to the gold. "Poor Benito! I would not take more than my half, were he here!"

And Pablo took up the bag of gold, and sliding back the panel through which he had passed the tray of provisions, put it through. Then pointing to one of the bunks, he said:

"Señor, you had better try and sleep to-night, if you can. To-morrow night, you will have no chance, and you will need all your nerve and all your strength. You need not fear any danger. I will be on the watch. In the morning I will see that you have a good breakfast; and by that time I will have seen the men I want to use to-morrow night. *Buenos noches, señor.*"

"Good-night, Pablo," said Henderson. "I will try to sleep, but I fear it will only be a trial."

The negro made no reply, but crept through the panel, which led into a recess close beside his bar, and in a moment he was at his usual post, as Henderson knew by the change of confusion outside. The man evidently had great influence with those whom he called

his customers, for they made far less noise after he appeared.

CHAPTER XLV.

It was the noon of another day. Harold Morley had been sent for early in the morning by the governor-general, to recognize and identify the body of a man said to be Benito, the *calaca*. He knew the body the moment he saw it, as did also Nathan, whom he had taken with him—much to the joy of Sergeant Spinola, who now became entitled to the reward which had been offered for Benito, dead or alive.

Harold inquired if any trace had been found of Henderson, but without success. No officer, either police or military, had found any clue to his retreat.

Reprieving his anxiety to go to sea to the governor, Harold now solicited that the depositions of himself and Nathan might be taken, so as to be used against Henderson, if he was captured, and that he might be allowed to sail for New Orleans, promising to return, as a witness, if sent for by the governor.

The governor-general assented, almost unwillingly, for he had become much interested in Harold, who had unreservedly told him as much of his history as related to Adele and the Hendersons; and the governor, like most of the old chivalric Spaniards who come from the sunny land of Andalusia, had a taste for romance, engendered by the literature of his native land, as well as its eventful history.

Promising faithfully to revisit Havana if he lived, Harold took leave of the governor, after an exchange of presents—recorded as mementoes of friendship—and returned to his yacht.

When he entered the cabin, Adele met him with smiles; for his face, which had been shadowed with care for the past three days, now wore an altered and more joyous look.

"We are going to sea, dear Harold," she said. "I know we are."

"Have you had another dream, my love?" he asked, in a pleasant tone.

"No; but I will make one for you, with my eyes wide open, if that will hurry you off," she replied.

"There will be no need of dreams, dearest," said he. "The reality is at hand. In an hour we will be underway."

"Joy!—joy!" she cried. "Once more we will be."

"Upon the glad waters of the dark-blue sea.

"Our thoughts as boundless and our souls as free."

"Nathan, tell Mr. Perkins that I want to see him," said Harold.

"Yes, captain, I'll do that in a jiffy. I'm even a most as glad as Miss Adele, that we're going to wet our outwater outside once more."

said the old steward, as he went to call the first mate.

The latter came into the cabin in a few minutes, and asked for orders.

"You will hoist the Spanish flag forward, Mr. Perkins, and fire a national salute," said Harold. "After that, we will weigh anchor, and stand out to sea. I am bound for New Orleans."

"Yes, sir; but I fear we will have heavy weather outside, before another day's sun rises. The barometer is away down on the low notches, and the weather signs are all bad," said the mate.

"No matter, if we can make a good offing before the blow reaches us," said Harold, gayly. "We've tried our staunch little craft, and know how she can weather out a storm."

"Yes, sir, she is good; and if we have seven or eight hours start of the gale, we'll be clear of this island and the Tortugas, and far enough into the Gulf of Mexico, for sea-room."

"We'll try it at any rate. Fire the salute as soon as you are ready, and then up anchor. My papers are all right."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

And Perkins went on deck to fulfill his directions.

Soon the heavy booming of the brass piece echoed over the harbor, and sent its sounds rattling through the town. With a regularity which no man-of-war in port with her full battery could have excelled, the gun was fired every thirteen seconds, until the requisite number of the salute was given.

Then, as the flag of Spain came fluttering down from the fore-truck of the schooner, and the crimson signal-pendant, "Adele," went aloft, the American flag was seen fluttering from a signal-staff upon the Castle Cabanas, and its heavy guns thundered back the return salute of the Governor.

And while yet the smoke-wreaths were circling above the grand old fortress, the crew of the Adele were engaged in heaving up her anchor, and loosing her sails to the breeze.

Many an experienced eye looked with wonder at the rapidity with which so light a crew as Harold had, got his beautiful vessel underway; but they knew not what young American seamen, who loved him who commanded them, could do.

In less than an hour from the time that Harold had told Adele he was "outward bound," the gallant yacht, under all her canvass, was standing out to sea under a light but pleasant breeze from the southward and eastward, which allowed her to lay her course with a flowing sheet.

CHAPTER XLVI.

After Pablo left him, Gustave Henderson

threw himself down upon the bunk which Pablo had pointed out, and tried to sleep. But no sleep came to his eyelids, weary as he was. His nervous nature was too thoroughly aroused to be calmed down into slumber. So the long night passed away, and as he saw by his watch, the day returned, finding him still awake, feverish, and half-sick.

At an early hour, when the drunken orgies outside had ceased, and the exhausted revelers had gone to sleep, Pablo made his appearance in the back-room, bearing a tray, upon which a substantial and well-prepared breakfast was seen.

"The señor has not slept well," said Pablo, as he put the tray on the table.

"No; I could not sleep," said Gustave. "I am unused to so much noise. And I am nervous."

"The señor will be in safety in twelve or fifteen hours," said Pablo. "I made my arrangements last night. Two old smugglers, who have been running in salt from the Florida Keys, have engaged to carry the señor over to Key West for two hundred pesos. They do not know who he is, and must not; for with one hundred doubloons staring them in the face, they might betray him! They will be with their boat in the cove I told him of, beyond the city walls, at midnight. I will see the señor safely within their care."

"I know not how to thank you, Pablo—to speak of the money which I will give you."

"Caramba! I want no thanks! You pay me well—that is enough. Now eat your breakfast; then try to sleep. You will need nerve and strength to-night!"

"Is there no danger, in procuring such breakfasts as this, of exciting suspicion?" asked Gustave. "Benito said that you had to send to a *restorador*."

"What of that? I send my gal, who also waits on two rich old maids in the neighborhood. They will not think anything strange. People in Havana, when they are getting money, never ask whose pocket it comes from."

And Pablo, with a grin on his Satanic face, disappeared.

"How the fellow has altered in his respect since he saw the proclamation!" said Gustave.

"Before that, I was an *excellenza*. Now I am but a simple *señor*. Yet I believe I can trust him."

With this expression of faith, Henderson attacked his breakfast with a fair appetite.

Gustave ate his breakfast, and now that all was still, feeling sleepy, he threw himself into a bunk, and soon was insensible to all worldly things or thoughts. He slept soundly and well, until he was awakened by the sound of

cannons being fired. The regularity of the fire soon satisfied him that it was a salute which he heard, and when Pablo came an hour or two afterward, with his dinner, he asked him what the firing was for.

"The American yacht fired a salute, which was answered from the Castle Cabanas, and then she went to sea. I saw her pass out by the Punta," said Pablo.

"Good! The sooner I am upon her track again, the better," said Henderson. "Can you not find out where she was bound, Pablo?"

"Yes, señor, as soon as the *Evening Gazette* is published. It will be out in an hour or two."

"Bring it to me as soon as you can get it," said Gustave. "And then, after I have eaten my dinner, I will pay you the money, and we will conclude our arrangements for my getting away."

"Very well, señor, I will attend you."

And Pablo left Henderson to enjoy his dinner, which he did greatly; for he seemed to feel as if his safety was sure, and that he would now again be upon the track which he had sworn not to leave, until success crowned his efforts.

About two hours passed before Pablo returned, bringing with him the gazette. The paper contained a long account of the death of Benito, which evidently had been gathered from the verbal report of Sergeant Spinola; for it was well spiced with the supernatural. At the end of the statement, the editor remarked that the deposition of the distinguished American, "El Señor Morley," had been taken, and that he intended to sail immediately for New Orleans; but would return if the great *picaro*, Henderson, was arrested.

"To New Orleans!" cried Gustave, as he read the article. "There is where I would like to catch the gentleman. There, I can have him arrested for stealing Zella; and while he is detained in prison, it will be easy to take Adele and Zella back to Georgia. The fool will play right into my hands! Pablo, cannot I engage the men-whom you have spoken to, to carry me direct to New Orleans?"

"I hardly think you can, señor. Their boat is small—it will do for so short a run as that to Key West—a matter of thirty leagues or thereabouts; but to New Orleans is a great ways, and a heavy gale might come on, and down you'd go! From Key West, it will be very easy to get a passage to New Orleans in passing ships."

"Well; I will see. And now for the money, Pablo. Feeling confident that you will do your part, I will at once pay you the two hundred doubloons I promised. They are in

my trunk. I got a great part of my money exchanged into doubloons, in New York, knowing that they would be most useful and handy here."

And Gustave unlocked his trunk and counted out the sum for Pablo. The negro took it, and noticed that quite a large sum in gold still remained in the trunk.

"Has not the señor got a money-belt?" he asked.

"No," replied Gustave.

"He must have one," said Pablo. "We cannot carry the trunk over the wall, and it would not be well to tempt the men, who carry you away, with a heavy trunk, in which they could hear the jingling of gold. I will get you a money-belt, and a quilted vest, with places left for money; so that you can carry your gold without danger of its being known that there is so large a sum in your possession. I am as big a rascal as any of them, señor, without I pledge my word for a man's safety. When I have done that, he is safe, if he bore a million pesos' worth of diamonds upon him."

"I feel that it is so, good Pablo, and will take your word and advice implicitly."

"You may, señor," replied the negro. "I will go and get the belt and vest at once. Your trunk and clothes must be left behind, for we will have to scale the wall, and then walk over rough, rocky ground, without a path for a full league. You cannot carry more than you wear. Keep a full purse in your pocket, so that you can pay the men who carry you away, but be sure that you do not let them think you have any more."

"I will be careful, Pablo."

"For your safety, you will, señor. And now rest all you can—you will need it."

Again Gustave was alone.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The beautiful yacht had not fairly got out of sight of Moro Castle, when the "weather-signs," of which Mr. Perkins had spoken, began to show themselves so distinctly that the veriest tyro in the study of storms could not mistake them. Adele—who, with Zella, had been on deck ever since the vessel had weighed anchor—looked upon them with curiosity and without fear. For, in her short experience, she had seen how the yacht behaved in a storm—how staunch and trustworthy—and, besides, she had an unflinching confidence in the skill of Harold, his officers and crew.

As the "Adele" drew out from the land, the wind, which drew rather off the shore, freshened rapidly; and Harold, who was in no haste, told Perkins that he might as well make the vessel snug, under short sail, and lay her to, for her natural drift would take her out of danger, and she would not roll and

pitch so much as she would scudding before the gale.

This the first officer speedily did, and when, at twilight, Adele went down with Harold into the cabin for supper, the vessel lay, close hauled by the wind, under a balance-reefed foresail, heaving steadily with the sea, and as graceful as a mermaid at sport, or a swan upon the water.

It was far better thus, for there was no straining of hull, rigging, or spars, and the crew had but little to do, but to watch the heave of the sea; excepting, alone, the helmsman, who was obliged to watch for the falling off and coming to.

Everything seemed pleasant to Adele now. Her voice was as cheerful, her smile as bright, as it had been before Gustave Henderson's presence had been discovered in Havana. Harold, too, was fully himself again—Zella seemed quite glad, and old Nathan had hard work to keep down the exuberance of his spirits.

"I sowed to gracious, capting!" said he, as he poured out tea, "that I feel ten years younger since we've left that miserable one-hoss place! Call that a city! with streets no wider than cow-paths, sojers at every corner, and wimmen a smokin' all the time like so many chimneys! Ef I had to take my choice between *living* there and *existing* in a New Bedford whaler, I think I'd go in for the whaler. Though an easy death by hangin' or drownin' would be a heap better than either of 'em."

Harold laughed at the idea, but Adele said that she thought Nathan was quite right. "In truth," said she, "Nathan is always right."

"Ceptin' when he is wrong, Miss Adele," said the old man.

"When were you ever wrong?" asked Adele, with a smile.

"Oh, a great many times, Miss Adele!—specially when I was young. I used to stick crooked pins under the seat of the deacon's trowsers, when he stood up to sing in meetin', for his pew was just afrent of our'n. And I used to put red pepper on the stove at singin'-school, and sneeze everybody out o' doors and cough 'em into fits. I used to be a wild lad; but them days are past."

And Nathan heaved a heavy sigh. After supper, Harold went on deck for a time, accompanied by Adele; but as the storm grew heavier as the hours of the night advanced, they soon returned to the cabin, where Adele, with her music, made all hearts joyous until the usual hour of retiring.

Another day was just dawning. The storm had grown stronger and stronger during the night, and now it blew a perfect hurricane.

But the gallant schooner, laying up close in the wind's eye, rose and fell with the mountain waves, as easily as the gull, which makes those waves her home and resting-place.

Mr. Perkins was the officer of the deck, and was standing near the helmsman, quietly spinning him a yarn about a hurricane he had once weathered on an East Indian voyage; when, with a startling vehemence, the lookout forward shouted:

"Sail ho! Close aboard! Port your helm!"

Perkins sprang forward—it was not yet light enough to see far from the vessel. But before he had reached the fore-mast, he caught a glimpse of a small craft on the crest of a sea, driving right down upon them.

"Port!—port hard!" he shouted to the helmsman.

But it was too late! The next second the small vessel struck the yacht upon her weather-bow, with a concussion which made her tremble from truck to keelson. And the concussion crushed the smaller vessel as if she had been but an egg-shell.

One wild cry, and as the schooner under a full of canvas as her helm was put up forged ahead, the shattered fragments of the other drifted off under her lee.

One man, as the vessels came together, made a wild, desperate leap, and clutched the fore-rigging of the schooner. He would have lost his hold the next instant, for the schooner shipped a sea, had not Perkins, with a giant effort, grasped and lifted him in-board.

At the same moment Harold, who had been startled from below by the concussion, rushed upon deck and hurried forward. As his eye rested upon the face of the man whom Perkins had saved, he cried:

"Great Heavens! it is Gustave Henderson!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"Sound the pump, and see if the schooner leaks!" cried Perkins, not—even in that moment of fearful excitement—losing his presence of mind, or forgetting his duty.

But Harold and Henderson stood facing each other—the first, with a fierce and angry look; the latter, pale, trembling with terror, his knees shaking, his face as white as the foam upon the dark waters. And he was the first to speak.

"For God's sake, spare my life, Mr. Morley!" he groaned. "I have just escaped a fearful death; do not murder me!"

"I am no assassin!" said Harold, contemptuously. "But you are too great a villain to live! Justice claims a victim, and I will not deny her due. Mr. Perkins, put that man in double irons, and have him confined between-

decks. Put one of the crew over him as a sentinel, with orders to kill him if he attempts to escape from confinement. No person must be allowed to speak to him!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Have the vessel laid to the wind again, sir."

"She is up in the wind's eye again, and the carpenter reports all right and sound below, sir."

"I am glad to hear it. When this blow goes down, we will return with the prisoner to Havana."

"Oh! have mercy upon me, Mr. Morley!" groaned Henderson, blanched with terror. "If I must die, kill me here; but do not take me back there!"

Harold made no reply; but turning upon his heel, walked aft—for he saw Adele, who had just come on deck, wrapped in a shawl, followed by Zella.

"What is the matter, Harold? Have we struck upon a rock?" asked Adele. "I heard and felt a terrible shock!" she added.

"No. A small vessel ran against us, and was shattered," he replied. "Our vessel is unharmed."

"Were the people on the other one saved?" she asked, feelingly.

"All were lost but one, and he had better have been lost than to have put his foot on my deck! It is Gustave Henderson!"

"Gustave Henderson!" gasped Adele. "Can it be so?"

"Look for yourself!" and Harold, as he spoke, pointed to Gustave, upon whose wrists Perkins was now engaged in fitting a pair of handcuffs.

"It is! But, Harold, what are you going to do with him?"

"To put him in irons, and carry him back to Havana, where a hasty trial and a certain death awaits him!"

Adele seemed strangely agitated for a moment; then, while tears stood in her eyes, she said:

"Harold, will you be less merciful than God? Vile as that man is, the Almighty has spared him from a fearful death! You know how I dread him—how I hate him; yet now, when he is helpless, I ask you to spare him!"

"That he may again attempt to assassinate me—or perchance do worse, by trying to rob me of you?" asked Harold, with something of bitterness in his tone.

"No, Harold, no! But spare him; put him on shore, somewhere, and if he is human, he will feel so grateful for your clemency that he will never persecute us more."

"I doubt much whether he can be classed as human!" said Harold, deeply moved by her noble appeal. "But I will spare him, because you ask it. Go down into the cabin,

dearest, while I go forward and ask him some questions. Then, after seeing him so secured that he can do no harm, I will join you in the cabin."

"Do, Harold; and there I will thank you for listening to the voice of mercy."

And Adele, with tears streaming from her eyes, went below.

Harold walked forward to the spot where Henderson stood, looking sullenly at his now manacled hands.

"You need not put irons upon his feet, Mr. Perkins," said Harold. Then, addressing Henderson, he said:

"Sir, one whom you have persecuted most cruelly and unjustly, has pleaded with me to be merciful to you. I have not yet decided what course to pursue. Your own conduct will influence my decision. If I carry you back to Cuba, the laws which you have transgressed will demand you as the third victim of your own conspiracy to assassinate me! If I do not take you back there, but at some convenient place land you, what assurance will I have that you will not again try to take my life, or to persecute her who but now pleaded with me to spare you?"

"My honor! Upon my honor, I will go home to my plantation, and never leave it, or breathe your name or hers, or think of, or do, a deed of harm to either of you!"

"Your honor?" and Harold looked coldly upon him. "Men of honor have enmities, but they do not hire assassins to terminate them!"

"My oath! May I be accursed of Heaven and among men, if I do not keep my oath!" said Henderson, imploringly.

"I will take your oath; but mark me, Gustave Henderson, if you break it, I never will spare you again! And until I can put you on shore, you must be content to remain under guard here. Now answer me a few questions."

"Ask them, and I will reply truly!" said Henderson, meekly.

"How long had you been in Cuba when you attempted to have me assassinated?"

"Only two days. I went to New York, found out what port you had cleared for, and followed you."

"How did you escape from the Island?"

"In a fishing-boat, manned by two men, who were to take me to Key West. They went down with their boat, I suppose."

"From Key West, you intended to follow me to my next port?"

"I did."

"Did you learn whither I was bound?"

"Yes—to New Orleans. It was so announced in the Havana Evening Gazette."

"And you now will swear, upon the Holy Evangelists, that if I spare you, you will

cease to follow me and Miss Dumesle—will never attempt to do us harm, and will return, after I have landed you, to your plantation, and will remain there?"

"I will, so help me Heaven!"

"Very well, sir. I will have such an oath written out and subscribed by you. Mr. Perkins will relieve you of your handcuffs, but you will be placed in a state-room, which you must not leave until I am ready to set you on shore. A sentinel will be kept before your door, and his orders will be to shoot you down if you attempt to pass him!"

"I will remain where you place me, sir, and not transgress your orders."

"Very well. Mr. Perkins, you will place this man in Mr. Merton's state-room, and put a trusty man on guard, to be relieved every two hours. The officer of the watch will personally see to the safety of the prisoner once in every hour. Mr. Merton can room in the after-cabin, until we make land. See that refreshments are provided for Mr. Henderson. And the moment the storm lulls so that we can carry sail, inform me; for I shall steer for the nearest of the Florida Keys as soon as possible."

Having thus given his orders, Harold went below, for he knew they would be implicitly obeyed.

"Adele," said he, when he entered the cabin, "at your request, I have spared him, and taken his oath that he will not follow or persecute either of us more!"

"The pizen serpent won't keep it, capt'ing," said Nathan, who had been a witness to the interview on deck, and who had followed Harold into the cabin. "I know he won't; he said so with his tongue, but the devil in his eye lied all the time."

"Well, my word is passed. Spare him I will, this time—but never again, if he breaks his oath and crosses my path!"

"We will hope that he will keep his oath," said Adele. "And now tell me, Harold," she added, "could you, when by such a fearful chance he was thrown helpless into your power, have delivered him up to certain death, without compunction?"

"No, Adele; on calm reflection, I could not have done so, and I thank you as much for your interference, as I honor you for the noble charity which you have displayed toward a fallen foe. You are, in all things, my better angel!"

"You flatter me, dear Harold. I try to be right and to do right. I knew your good, brave heart would second my thoughts, as soon as you took time to consult it."

Mr. Perkins came down at this moment, and said:

"I think, sir, if you especially wish it, that we could edge away for the Tortugas, under

our foresail, and make it before night. If we did, there are almost always vessels there, according to report, from Key West, looking out for wrecks, and we might land the man there."

"That is so, Mr. Perkins," replied Harold. "You can keep the schooner away, if you think it is safe."

CHAPTER XLIX.

The drift of the schooner had been westerly, slightly tending to the north; and when, at noon of that day—the clouds having cleared away, and the gale much abated—Harold took a meridian altitude of the sun, he found by his latitude, and the dead-reckoning of their longitude, that they were not far from the Island of Tortugas.

Sending a look-out aloft, the man, in a moment after reaching the fore-cross-trees shouted:

"Sail ho!"

"Where away?" asked Harold.

"Two points on our lee bow, sir."

"Can you make out her rig?"

"No, sir; but she shows canvass high out of water."

"Mr. Perkins, take your glass and look at her from aloft. I expect it is the light-house. The land is not ten feet higher than the water, and makes no show when you are eight or nine miles off."

Perkins had no sooner got aloft, and leveled his glass, than he said:

"You are right, Captain Morley, it is the light-house."

"I thought so," said Harold.

Turning to the helmsman, he said:

"Keep her off a couple of points. Slacken up the sheets a little more, some of you men, forward there."

The schooner, with more sheet and full sails, dashed onward with increased speed, and in a short time the light-house, and two or three small islands,* almost level with the sea, covered with a few stunted bushes, could be seen from the deck. There was no building except a poor hovel, in which the light-house keeper lived, except when a gale drove him to greater security in the light-house itself. Myriads of gulls, cormorants, man-of-war hawks, and pelicans, were seen circling through the air above the island, often diving into the sea for the fish, upon which they live.

In the inner harbor two large wrecking-sloops laid at anchor; and in the outer harbor, as the Adele neared it, a large, black-hulled, lumber-looking schooner was just getting under way. She looked as greasy and nasty as

* The largest of these islands is now occupied by a United States fortress.

a "station whale-ship," her rigging was clumsy and her sails as black as her masts—which last looked as if they had been scraped the day she was launched, but never after, even if she had been launched in the year one.

Harold ran his yacht under her lee, and rounding to, hailed:

"Schooner ahoy!"

"Hallo!" came back, in a squeaking voice, from a little, dried-codfish-looking man, who stood at her tiller.

"What schooner is that, and where is she bound?"

"The 'Whale,' a wrecker, Conch Thompson master—bound to Key West!" screamed the diminutive human.

"Will you take a passenger?"

"Yes, if he has got any money, and hasn't got the small-pox!"

"He's all right in those particulars," said Harold, laughing. "Heave to, and I will send a boat with him aboard."

"There isn't any need of my heavin' too—it'll be half an hour before the old schooner gits headway onto her."

"You don't make much by speed, then, in your business?"

"Oh no! We go in for luck, and wait till it comes!" said woezen-face.

Harold now went to the state-room where Henderson had been kept.

"I have hailed a vessel which is bound to Key West, and which will take you as a passenger," said he to Gustave. "Have you money enough to reach home with? If not, I will furnish you."

"I have enough, sir," said Henderson, quite humbly: for he had been treated far better than he expected. "I am thankful that you have spared my life—for I did not deserve your clemency."

"No matter—speak of it no more. Keep your oath, and I will forgive you. Get ready to go at once—my boat is waiting. They know nothing of you on board the vessel which I have hailed, and you can explain how you were wrecked and picked up, as best suits you."

"Thank you, Mr. Morley. Your kindness completely unmans me. But I would ask one favor."

"What is it?"

"To see and thank Miss Dumesle for her kind interposition!"

"I will see if she wishes to see you," said Harold. And he went to the after-cabin.

"Oh! that I could rend his heart out, and spit it in her face!" said Gustave, with fiendish bitterness, the moment he was alone.

"Keep an oath forced from me when my life was in peril? Maybe I will; but if I do, may I roast in the hottest furnace in the regions infernal!"

Harold came back, and as he heard his step, Gustave subsided into the same apparent humble mood which he had exhibited before.

"Miss Dumesle does not desire to see you," said Harold. "But she bade me tell you to go and be a better man. As soon as she arrives at her majority—in less than two years—she will return to Georgia to claim her property; and if then she finds that your reformation is complete, she will greet you as a friend. And now, as the boat is waiting, you had better be off. I myself wish you success in all lawful and honorable pursuits."

Henderson made no reply, but followed Harold on deck, and in a very few minutes stood upon the deck of the "Whale," which had just begun to gather headway.

Having shipped his passenger, Harold now bade his helmsman to put the helm aweather, and bore away on his course to the westward again.

"Take your bearing and distance, Mr. Perkins, and lay our course for the Balize," said Harold, cheerfully, after speaking to the helmsman.

Seeing Nathan standing by the cabin hatchway, looking gravely toward the schooner, he asked the old man what he was thinking of.

"I'm awful glad, captin', that *Jonah* has left us and gone into the *Whale*!" said Nathan. "And ef the *Whale* never spued him ashore ag'in, the world would be better off. That's what I was thinkin' of, captin'!"

Harold laughed at Nathan's not incongruous idea, and went below.

CHAPTER L.

"How far is it to Key West?" was the first question which Gustave Henderson asked, when he got on board the schooner, "Whale."

"A matter of seventy-five or eighty miles," said the shriveled-up skipper.

"When will we get there?" asked Gustave.

"If it blows hard enough, in a couple of days," said the skipper.

"Two days? Why, a crab could crawl there in that time!"

"Yes; a crab would have the advantage of us in goin' to windward. But we're in no hurry; and the old schooner is comfortable, if she is ugly, and isn't fast. You can't capsize her; and when she once gets agoin', she keeps agoin' till you drop her mud-hook, and bring her up! We've plenty to eat and drink, and that's about all that a man wants in this world. D'ye chew tobakker, mister?" And Captain Thompson pulled out a huge plug, and extended it toward Gustave.

"No, thank you," said Gustave.

"Maybe you drink rum? I've got some capital old Jamaica down below. Took it from a wreck up on Carysfort reef, five years

ago. Had four puncheons—used 'em all up but one. Come here some of you and steer—I'm going below to treat the passenger."

Having been relieved from the tiller, skipper Thompson led the way down into what he called the cabin. It was a dark, greasy-looking hole, about twelve or fourteen feet long, by six or seven wide, just high enough for a man to stand up in, with two bunks on each side, filled with blankets and quilts, which looked as if they had never been injured by contact with soap and water.

In the after-end of this den was a greasy table, set firm against the stern timbers, and over it a lot of shelves, with ledges in front to keep the dishes from sliding off.

The captain took a couple of tin cups from one of these shelves, and a broken bowl half-full of Muscavado sugar; also, a couple of pewter ten-spoons. Then he inserted his arm into a side-locker, just abaft the sternmost bunk, and drew out a jug.

"Take hold, mister," said he, to Henderson. "This ere Jamaica is just as mellow as honey, and don't need no water, though I like sweet'nin' in it."

Henderson poured out a cup of "Jamaica," added a little sugar, and drank it off, surprised to find it really good—far better than liquor of that kind which he had paid a high price for.

When he spoke of this, Skipper Thompson said:

"It's good, for two reasons. First, I've had it a good while, and most likely 'twas pretty well on in years when I got hold of it. Then, it always improves liquor when it is carried aboard ship. The jouncing up and down, and stirring about, makes it richer and mellow, I think. Churns it, you see."

"Probably," said Henderson; and he tried a second "nip." "By the way, captain, what is my passage?" he added.

"Well, seein' that you like rum, as I do, and aren't like to be stingy, I'll leave it all to yourself," said Thompson.

"Will that do?"

And as he spoke, Gustave took a doubloon from his pocket, and laid it down on the table.

"Yes; with a thankee on my side to boot, and jest as much rum as you can drink, and all you can eat till we get in, if it's a month from now!" said the skipper, pocketing the coin.

"If I had not met with bad luck in the gale last night, I should have been in Key West sooner!" said Gustave.

"Bad luck? How was that?" asked the skipper, as he refilled his cup.

"I left the island of Cuba in a fishing vessel, bound for Key West. The schooner which hailed you ran us down in the night.

THE SECRET REVEALED.

and I only was saved from the wreck. She went down with her crew and all."

"What a pity! Now, if she had only come ashore where we could have wrecked her, 'twould have been consolin'." 'Twould have done us good, even if the crew went under; for we should have saved somethin' out of her. Take another drink, mister. Rum is jest as cheap as wat'r aboard the 'Whale.' Wouln't you like a bit of pickled king-fish, or some cold, stewed conchs, or a cold, b'iled craw-fish, just to give you an appetite for supper, which we'll have in an hour or two more?"

"No; thank you," replied Henderson. "Do you suppose I will find any vessels in Key West bound to New Orleans?"

"Perhaps you may; but it is no ways certain," said the skipper, taking down an old black pipe from among the dishes on a shelf and filling it. "If you are goin' to New Orleans, though, you'll be sure to get an airly chance to Apalachy, or Saint Marks; for the weekly packets from New York always stop at Key West and run through the Nor'-west Passage inside of the Mule Keys and Tortugas, savin' the Gulf Stream and a hundred miles or more of distance. From them places you can go on the railroad, so I've heard tell—though I never saw a railroad, and don't exactly know what it is like. Is'pose you've seen 'em?"

"Oh, yes; and rode upon them often." "They're not built any like a rail-fence, are they?" asked the skipper.

"Not exactly," said Gustave, laughing.

And then he described a railroad, its cars and locomotives, for the benefit of the skipper.

The latter listened with great attention until Gustave spoke of a speed of forty miles an hour. Then the skipper shook his head.

"I can believe all you said about the iron rails and wheels, and wagons as big as houses, and steam-engin's to draw 'em," said he; "but when you come for to go for to say they'll run forty miles an hour, mister, you pile it on most too thick. Why, a dolphin couldn't do that and keep it up. Jest say twelve or fifteen, now, and take another drink, and I'll believe you jest as much as if you'd sworn to it."

Gustave did not think it necessary to endeavor further to convince the captain, who probably would not have believed anything but his own eyes in the matter; so he took the proposed drink, and then lighting a cigar, went on deck to try and get some fresh air—for the cabin smelt rather rank of bilgewater, grease, tobacco-smoke, etc.

CHAPTER LI.

The passage of the "Adele," from the time she lost sight of Tortugas until she made the

light-house at the Southwest Pass of the Balize, was as pleasant as could be desired. Nothing of interest transpired on board, but everything went "merry as a marriage bell."

Shortly after the "light was made," in sea-going parlance, and while the yacht lay in a dead calm, gently heaving upon the long-rolling ground-swell, a large steam tow-boat was seen coming out over the bar with a merchant-ship alongside.

"I think I shall have to buy a breeze, Mr. Perkins," said Harold, who had been walking the quarter-deck with Adele, looking for a pilot to come off, and hoping for wind enough to take him to an anchorage in the Mississippi. "Have the gun cast loose. I will signal the steamer to come alongside as soon as she casts off from the ship."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Perkins. And he called the gun's crew to quarters.

"Had I not better get the sail-covers up from the store-room, also, sir? If we don't have them on, our canvas will be so blackened with smoke that we'll look like a coal drogher out of Newcastle."

"By all means put on the covers, Mr. Perkins," said Harold.

"Must we be towed all the way up the river to New Orleans?" asked Adele.

"We would be a very long time in getting up under sail; for the river is crooked, the current strong, and the navigation unsafe," replied Harold.

"We will not have a very good opportunity to enjoy the river scenery, of which I have heard so much," said Adele, "while that huge black steamer is puffing by our side."

"We will not have her alongside, love. I will have her make fast to us with a hawser, so that we can tow astern. Besides, it is above, and not below, New Orleans that we will find charming scenery. While we are there I will take you up the river on a trip, so that you can see the beauties of the great Garden of the Southwest."

"The steamer has got the ship over the bar, sir, and the latter is making sail," said Perkins, at this moment.

"Then fire the gun, and hoist the Union Jack forward at the same time," said Harold.

In a minute after the pivot-gun of the yacht sent its thunder-voice across the waters, and the blue Union Jack fluttered from the fore-topmast head.

The steamer, which had just cast loose from the ship, now heeded for the yacht, and in a short time rounded to close alongside. She was a powerful New York built boat—the "Gladiator" her name.

"I wish you to send out a hawser, make fast, and tow me to New Orleans," said Harold, to her captain, who appeared upon the wheel-house, and asked what was wanted.

"Do you wish to be towed up alone, sir? or will you wait for some of the other vessels in sight outside? It will lessen the expense."

"I care not for the expense; take only this yacht, and make the trip as quick as you can."

"Very well, sir."

And soon the Adele was making the foam fly beneath her bows, without a sail set, in tow of one of the most powerful steamers on the river.

In a little while she was in over the bar; the steamer slackened up her speed, the Custom-house officer came aboard and finding all correct, gave her the usual permit to proceed.

Adele found nothing in the low, sedge banks of America's Nile to interest her—the smoke from the steamer came surging down in black clouds upon the deck; and she was glad to follow Harold's advice, and to go below with him into the cabin.

"Will our stay in this city be long, dear Harold?" asked Adele.

"No longer than it is pleasant to you, my dear Adele," he replied. "Though I should like to remain long enough to communicate with my property-agent in the North; for I propose a longer voyage when we next sail—nothing less than a cruise up the Mediterranean."

"Oh, how delightful that will be!" said Adele, with enthusiasm. "To visit that land

"In the East, where they talk in flowers. And tell in a garland their loves and their cares, Each blossom 'tis said, in their garden leaves, Up its leaves a mystic language bears."

"O Harold! such a voyage will make me too happy! To think that we shall together glide upon Venetia's silver tide—wander among the relics of fallen Greece—tread where Byron trod—Harold, you are too good to such a wicked little good-for-nothing as I!"

"Adele, your joy is the light of my life!" said he, pressing her little hand to his lips. "That which gives you pleasure, is delight to me. As soon as I can make my preparations for such a lengthened voyage, we will sail. Meantime, we will see all that is to be seen, and enjoy all that is to be enjoyed in the Crescent City. It is a gay place, differing much from Havana, and like—only itself. Your knowledge of French will come in play there; for more than half its people are of French descent, and preserve the language and, to a great degree, the customs of their fathers."

"If they are as gay as the Spanish beaux and belles whom we left behind us in Havana, there will be no danger of our dying of ennui," said Adele.

"Fully as gay, they are," replied Harold. "And better yet, not half so treacherous. I

am sure that you will enjoy yourself. And I hope Zella will," added Harold, kindly. "Why do you seem so sad of late, Zella?" he asked of the beautiful quadroon, who sat near them, silent, with her eyes fixed upon some embroidery, upon which she was working.

"I try to be cheerful, kind master Harold. You and Miss Adele are too good to me, but shadows—shadows keep coming into the sunshine; and I cannot help but feel their influence. Do not mind my sadness—it will wear away."

And while Zella spoke, pearly tears gathered in her great black eyes and rolled down her rich, dark cheek, like dew upon the transparent rind of the pomegranate.

"We will try to chase away those shadows," said Harold. "I will have no unhappiness on board my petted yacht. All here should be gladness and music, joy and pleasure."

Nathan came in at this moment to ask what his master would prefer for dinner.

"Frogs and catfish, by all means, Nathan. We are in a latitude where they are considered delicacies!"

"Frogs, capting! Did you say frogs?"

"Yes, to be sure. A Frenchman thinks there is no better dish on earth."

"Wall, capting, a Frenchman may keep on thinkin' so, till his thinkin'-box is all worn out; but when I cook a frog, or eat one, a Frenchman is welcome to eat me! Sweet Jerusalem! Precious Gilead! Jest to think of eatin' frogs! They'll go for eatin' monkeys next, and they're their first cousins!"

Harold laughed heartily at Nathan's ideas of frog-eating, and mentally promised to have the old steward taste a dish of well-fried hind-quarters, without being aware of what they were.

"Havin' no frogs, nor nary catfish aboard, capting, I s'pose some mutton out of the ice-box, and some of them Cuba pigeons in a pie, and a biled ham, with vegetables, will do to keep from starvin' on," said Nathan.

"Oh, yes!—anything, Nathan! We will dine at the 'Saint Charles,' to-morrow: give us what you like, to-day."

CHAPTER LIII.

"Tired of New Orleans, already, Adele?" said Harold, just two weeks after their arrival, as he sat in their private parlor at the "Saint Charles," one of the most princely hotels on the American continent.

They had been obliged to take rooms on shore; for the schooner was being overhauled and re-fitted, thoroughly, preparatory to making her voyage to the far East.

Harold's remark was caused by a sigh from Adele's lips, and a murmured wish that they were at sea again.

CHAPTER LIII.

At the same hour when Harold Morley was conversing with Adele, in regard to the place of amusement which they would patronize that evening, two other persons were holding converse concerning them, which was of a far more serious nature.

One of them was Gustave Henderson, who, disguised, and under the false name of Albert Durand, had arrived that afternoon in the Mobile boat, via Lake Ponchartrain, and who had met, at the "Verandah," a man whom he knew to be base enough and sufficiently desperate to enter upon any enterprise which would pay.

This man, who was the second party alluded to in the first paragraph of this chapter, was a slave-trader and black-leg by open profession, and in that business had made acquaintances from Maryland to Texas, and had more than once fallen in with both the Hendersons, and been quite intimate with Gustave in Georgia.

But so well was Gustave disguised, that Mr. Yancey, the slave-trader and black-leg, when spoken to by him, did not recognize him.

Gustave, who usually wore exuberant whiskers, and long hair, had been closely shaved. His hair was cropped quite close; he wore a pair of green spectacles, and was dressed in a full suit of sombre black. A black fur hat, with quite a broad brim, and a stiffly-starched white cravat, with a face blanched by a proper application of pearl-powder, made him look like anything but what he was. His "make-up" was intended to represent an itinerant preacher; and as such he would have passed among nine-tenths of the half-observants whom one meets in travel.

"Have you no room here, friend Yancey, where I can see you in the way of business? Let us be alone a moment, and I will convince you that we are old friends," said Gustave to the trader, when he met him in the bar-room of the Verandah.

"Yes—I room here; but curse me, if I know you. You are rigged like a preacher, and they're not my friends by any manner of means. You're not a preacher—are you? or a traveling-temperance lecturer, broke down and wanting help?"

"Order a bottle of brandy and two glasses up to your room and see," said Henderson.

"Well, curse me if I don't! If you've any business, I'm on hand; for it is as dull here with me as playin' whist with old women for a fippeny-bit a corner."

"Or coon-hunting in Georgia when Master Zip has taken water," said Gustave, laughing.

"By the mule that kicked Baalam, I believe I know you! Come up to my room anyway, stranger," said Yancey. "I'll ring for the liquor and cigars when we get there."

"I know, I'm a troublesome, dissatisfied creature," said she. "But, Harold, you can hardly imagine how I detest the hollow-hearted, ceremonial, fashionable world! The women in it—two-thirds of them, to say the least—seem to think that dress and flirtation is the chief end of life. The men, that to swear some, smoke a good deal, drink gluttonously, and make love to the silliest of the opposite sex, is to be accomplished!"

"You are sarcastically severe, Adele." "Not half so much so as truth and justice demands," said Adele. "Though remember, dear Harold, I do not class you with such men, any more than I would class myself as a fashionable woman. You know that I have not been reared in a fashionable atmosphere. Left alone almost altogether from childhood, I am only what Nature and books have made me."

"Yes, Adele, and I thank Heaven for it! It was the purity and grace which Nature gave you which first won my heart. Were you like the fashionable women whom I, as well as you, despise, you would not, as now, reign queen over my undivided heart."

"I know it, Harold; and were you like the men I have described, you would not possess the undying love of Adele Dumesle, as you now do."

"Upon that point we are both agreed, then," said Harold. "Now let us lay out a programme for the night. They give 'La fille de Regiment' at the French theatre to-night. At the American, Spalding and Rogers exhibit what Nathan calls the 'horse opera.' At the Saint Charles, the bills announce Julia Dean Hayne, Adah Isaacs Menken, Edwin Booth, and others. There's a choice—talent, beauty, genius, and all that! Where will you go, Adele?"

"Just where Captain Harold Morley prefers. I am entirely at his service—that is, for this Saturday evening. But to-morrow night I will not go to the theatre. I am not a *bourgeoise*, but I will not attend places of amusement on Sunday, even if it is fashionable here!"

"I shall not ask you to, my Adele. I remember too well the lessons of a Christian mother, not to pay a proper regard to the Christian Sabbath—much as I disregard the fanatical ideas of the Pharisees, who would make it a day of penance, instead of a day of worship. But let me think—I propose we witness 'La Fille de Regiment' at the Theatre Francaise. It is a touching little piece, full of life, with good music. And then Mademoiselle Ada, whom you thought so *spirituelle*, dances there."

"I shall be happy there, or anywhere by your side," said Adele; and she pressed her red lips upon his white brow with a fondness more than sisterly.

And he led the way to the second-story of the hotel and great auction-mart, where his room was located.

When they were in the room, and Yancey had rung the bell and ordered brandy and cigars; Gustave removed the green spectacles from over his eyes, and said, in his natural voice:

"Have you forgotten our last game of euchre at the old Pulaski, Yancey?"

"Why, curse me if it isn't Gus Henderson!" said the trader, in astonishment. "Why, man, have you been in a mad-house? What are you rigged out in that outlandish style for? You have sacrificed the best pair of whiskers that ever grew in Georgia except mine."

And Mr. Yancey soothingly stroked down his own glossy-black beard and moustache.

"It is a long story, but I must let you have it; and then if you'll help me in a matter which I have on hand, and we carry it through, I'll put ten thousand good dollars in your pocket as sure as my name is Gus Henderson."

"You are good for that and plenty more, Gus. Wait till the brandy comes, and then I'll hear your story and see what I can do. One thing is sure—I'm spoiling for something to do. Niggers are down, and greens are scarce, or else so sharp with the news of tricks put out by the cursed newspapers, that a fellow can't catch a half-dozen in a life-time."

The brandy and cigars were soon on hand, and then Gustave related minutely the whole history of Harold Morley's first visit to his brother, and all the subsequent events as known already to the reader, not omitting a single point. For he knew that in procuring a future adviser and co-operator in Yancey, it was best that the latter should know exactly how Morley had acted, so that he might be the better fitted to match him in future.

Yancey listened quietly, taking now and then a sip of brandy—he was too cautious to be a hard-drinker—and smoking his "regalin" until Gustave had finished by saying that the yacht was bound for New Orleans when he left her at Tortugas. Then the former said:

"She is here now, Gus—I saw her to-day. I have a friend who has fitted out a clipper for the coast of Guinea, and she lays in the stream close beside her, and looks as much like her as another vessel can, only she is nearly twice her tonnage. The yacht, however, has had her sails unbent, and is being repainted and refitted."

"Then Morley is staying on shore?" said Henderson.

"Yes. Most likely at the Saint Charles—there's where the big-hags stop. Have you chosen a hotel yet?"

"No. When I do, I shall register the name

I used at Key West, and on my passage over here—Albert Durand."

"Well, room here with me, Gus. I'll have your name registered below as Albert Durand, and then we'll go to work in this matter. I'll earn that ten thousand dollars, or you may black me up and sell me for a nigger! I've got a plan in my mind already."

"Let me hear it," said Henderson.

"You say that you have the proper papers for reclaiming Zella, proving her to be a slave, and all that?"

"Yes."

"And an order for taking Adele back to her natural—or, rather, her legal—guardian?"

"Yes."

"We shall only need them to save ourselves, if in any way my plan miscarries—not otherwise," said Yancey.

"Well, let me hear your plan," said Gustave, rather impatiently.

"Keep cool—keep cool, and touch the brandy lightly," said Yancey. "We can do nothing to-night; but if we work things right, we can do all to-morrow night. My plan is this: During this evening and to-morrow, we can find out where this Morley stops. To-morrow night we will inveigle him out of his hotel in some way by a false message, and then have him arrested for stealing Zella. He can get no bail on Sunday night; I will see that the officer shoves him into a cell, and keeps him there until examination-hour comes on Monday. When he is jugged, we can get Adele and Zella into a carriage by sending a messenger to say that Morley has fallen and broken a limb on board his yacht. They will go off in a boat without any hesitation, thinking they are going on board the yacht; we will get them on board the clipper of my friend, who is to be towed to sea to-morrow night at any rate, and I can get him to run into your place, for it will be but a few hours' run out of his course. Once on board his vessel, with you and me to guard them, they will be as safe as if the devil had them."

"By Jupiter! Yancey, you are a king at contrivance. Your plan cannot fail. There is but one thing in it which I do not like."

"What is that?"

"If we do not appear against Morley on Monday, he will be dismissed, will he not?"

"Of course! But what of that? Before he is free we will be at sea—he will have no trace of us; and if he loves the girl as much as you say he does, ten to one he'll go crazy and blow his brains out."

"Perhaps not; and then he will come to Georgia and kick up a fuss."

"If he does that, you can blow his brains out for him, and that will be an end of it!"

"I'd rather do it here," said Gustave, bitterly.

"You could not without spoiling my plan entirely. And besides, Gus—I mean no reflections, though—I'm most decidedly opposed to shooting anybody that wears a gentleman's clothes without giving him a fair chance for a pop at me. If you want my help, you must take my plan just as it is, without additions or amendments. If not, say so, and I'm done with the matter—though we'll be friends as fast as heretofore."

"You know, Yancey, I could not do without you. And I accept your plans without a thought of amendment. I have over five thousand dollars with me to work on—besides a letter of credit from Hilliare, indorsed by bankers in New York, for ten thousand more."

"Good! With such tools in hand, we can't find the word *fail* in any of our papers. Now, put on your spectacles again, and we'll take a walk over town, look at the hotel registers, get some oysters, drop into the theatres, pick up my friend who is bound for the coast, make the bargain with him, and then come home and turn in for the night to dream of action on the morrow."

"Good! I am with you, and completely under your directions. Take that purse—it is full of gold; use it freely—it is your own."

And Gustave handed Yancey his purse.

"I'll use it in the common cause," said Yancey, with a laugh. "I have a pocket-book; but I deposited the most of its contents in a bank last night."

"A faro bank probably," said Gustave, with a smile.

"To the best of my recollection, that was the bank in which I deposited my funds," said Yancey, quietly. "If we have time to-night, however, I may make a draft and get it cashed at the same bank. But put on your specks, Gus, and let's travel."

CHAPTER LIV.

Harold Morley was sitting quietly with Adele in their parlor on Sunday evening, listening to her dreamy anticipations of the pleasures they would find in their accidental voyage, when one of the waiters said that a person wished to see him below.

"Who is it?" asked Harold.

"One of your officers, I understood him to say, sir," said the servant.

"Very well—I will go down in a moment. Excuse me, Adele—I expect it is Perkins, waiting for orders about the work to-morrow. I will be back in a few minutes!"

And Harold took his hat and went down into the bar-room.

"Where is the officer?" he asked of the servant, who had called him.

"I saw him on the front steps as I came down, sir," replied the waiter.

"Come and show him to me!" said Harold.

"There he is, sir," said the servant, as Harold stepped out of the door; and he pointed to a short, thick-set man, who was an entire stranger to Harold, and who at that moment was speaking to a couple of other men whom Harold knew, by their dress and emblems, to be members of the city police.

"Did you wish to see me, sir?" said Harold, addressing the man whom the servant pointed out.

"Your name is Harold Morley—is it not, sir?" asked the gentleman, politely.

"Yes, sir," said Harold, frankly.

"I have a little business with you, sir, of a private nature. May I ask you to walk with me a short distance?"

"I do not wish to be detained long, sir, but I will walk a little way, if you will state your business!" replied Harold, moving up the street with the stranger, who, with what seemed to him singular familiarity, took his arm.

And had Harold looked around, he would have seen that the two policeman who had been spoken to by the stranger, had followed close upon his heels.

When they had passed beyond the crowd which usually loitered around the great hotel, Harold paused, and said:

"If you have business with me, sir, you can state it here, without making it necessary to extend our walk!"

"I am sorry to say, sir, that we must extend our walk, without you choose to order a carriage!" said the stranger, politely, but firmly. "To be brief and to the point, Mr. Morley, my name is Stoker—I am one of the detective police, and I hold a warrant for your arrest upon a criminal charge! I hope that you will make no resistance; for I have help at hand, if it is needed!"

And as he spoke, the other two officers ranged up alongside of him.

"What is the charge, sir?" asked Harold, as soon as he recovered from a surprise which, at first, made him dumb.

"Negro-stealing, sir—a very serious matter in this State!" said the officer.

"May I see the warrant?"

"Yes, sir, as soon as we arrive at the city prison! There I will give you a copy of it!"

"You will permit me, at least, to return to the hotel to acquaint my friends of my position—will you not?" asked Harold, in agony, for he knew that his prolonged absence would frighten Adele, terribly.

"It would be against all rule, sir!" said the officer. "It might cost me my place! You can easily send to them in the morning, for your examination before the Recorder will take place at an early hour. I am sorry for you, sir, but I must do my duty!"

"At least let me send a note back!" said Harold.

"No, sir," said the officer, firmly.

"If you write an open note, which will not in any way compromise me, after we get to the prison, I will deliver it!"

"Since I am your prisoner, on what I assure you is a false charge, sir—for I have the means of proving my respectability, I must of course yield to your own terms, until I can do better!" said Harold. "Move on, sir, I respect the law and its officers. Criminals only have cause to fear them!"

"That is so, sir!" said the officer. "And I truly hope, sir, that you will be acquitted upon examination. It is not a pleasure to me to arrest a gentlemanly person like yourself."

Harold made no reply, but walked on with the officer until they reached the city prison. Here he was ushered into the office, and for the first time saw the warrant which had been issued for his arrest.

It was based upon the affidavit of Gustave Henderson, planter, of Georgia, that Harold Morley had stolen a quadroon slave-girl from his brother, Hilliare, whose property she was, and that the said Morley had brought her to New Orleans in his yacht, and that she was now in his possession at the Saint Charles Hotel, in said city.

"This is my reward for sparing the wretch when he was in my power!" groaned Morley in anguish.

He then asked for pen, ink and paper, and wrote a hasty note, addressing it to Miss Adele Dumesle, at the Saint Charles Hotel. In it, he told her that business detained him from her, and it would not be likely that he could return to the hotel before ten or eleven of the clock on the next day. And he implored her to keep her room closely, and to keep Zella with her, for Gustave Henderson might have forgotten his oath, and yet be lurking around. This, he thought was sufficiently guarded, and he handed it to the officer, with a request that it might be carried at once to the hotel.

The officer looked at the superscription, and shook his head.

"Mr. Morley," said he, "it pains me to refuse a favor to a gentleman in trouble, but in case the girl mentioned in the warrant should be missing in the morning, they would say that I carried a letter to the hotel, which warned her or your friends of this trouble, and I should be held responsible. You will have to bear your confinement, sir, in silence, until the Recorder takes your case in hand; then my responsibilities cease, and I will do anything that I can for you."

And Mr. Stoker handed the officer in charge of the prison the warrant for committal.

The latter calling the turnkey, bade him conduct the prisoner to a cell by himself, and to make him as comfortable as he could; just as if a man, well-bred, sensitive, and proud of

heart, could for an instant be comfortable in a felon's cell, no matter how spotless he stood in conscious innocence.

CHAPTER LV.

Patiently Adele waited ten, fifteen, twenty minutes for Harold's return. But he did not come. Impatiently she waited an hour longer, and then both herself and Zella became exceedingly nervous.

Adele rung the bell, and asked for the servant, who had called him out.

The waiter came.

"Where did you last see Mr. Morley?" asked Adele.

"He went away with the gentleman who sent me after him, madam," responded the waiter. "That was the last I saw of him."

At that moment another servant came up in a hurry, bringing a man in a boatman's dress, who said that he had been sent by Mr. Perkins from the yacht, to ask Miss Dumesle to come on board as soon as possible. Mr. Morley had fallen from the deck into the fore-hold, and received a severe injury.

"Quick—quick, my hat and shawl, Zella—and get yours also," cried Adele, upon hearing this.

Now she thought she knew the reason of his delay in returning. Not for an instant did she doubt that the message had not come direct from Perkins. She even thought that the boatman was one of the crew of the yacht.

"Order a carriage—I will ride to the river," she added. Poor Harold, how wrong was I to blame him for his delay! O haste, my Zella—haste!"

Not five minutes had elapsed after she received the message, before Adele and Zella, with the boatman riding beside the driver, were hurrying at the fastest speed of the horses, to the river-side.

It was dark upon the water, but Adele heeded it not, and handing the carriage-driver a piece of gold, she sprang into the boat which waited at the edge of the levee.

It was rowed by four men, and rapidly it swept over the dark waters. Soon they were alongside of a vessel which she supposed to be the yacht, and without waiting for aid proffered by the boatman who pulled the after-oar, Adele caught hold of the man-ropes and sprang over the side. Followed by Zella, she hurried to the cabin-door, rushed down the steps, entered the cabin, and in an instant saw that she was not on board the "Adele."

She turned to look at Zella, and her eyes met the fiendish gaze of Gustave Henderson, and two men who were utter strangers to her.

"Trapped!—trapped, at last!" cried the fiend in human shape—Gustave Henderson.

Adele looked at him but one instant, and

with a moan of agony, fell senseless at his feet.

Zella, whose eyes, burning like fire, had been fixed upon Gustave Henderson, knelt now by the side of her mistress, and tried to bring her to life—for she thought she was dead.

"Carry the lady into the after-cabin," said one of the men who stood by Henderson.

"She has only fainted."

Henderson bent down to lift Adele up.

"Back! you villain!—back! If she must be carried, I will carry her myself!" said Zella, lifting her mistress up and carrying her to a sofa, which the man who first spoke had pointed out.

"I'll pay you for your sauce, my wench, when I get you back on the plantation!" said Gustave, bitterly. "I'll take your pride down, or cut your heart out!"

Zella made him no reply; but when the person who, by his authoritative tone, seemed to be master of the vessel, brought some wine and water, used it to endeavor to recover her mistress. And not without effect, for soon Adele heaved a faint sigh, and then her eyes slowly began to unclose.

"Take her into that stateroom," said the captain, pointing to a room. "Take her in there and attend to her. No one shall harm you or her, if you do not attempt to escape. Such an attempt will be useless, for you are guarded, and will only cause you to be treated more harshly."

Adele, though not yet fully in her senses, seemed to comprehend a part of what the captain said, and, aided by Zella, tottered into the large stateroom which the captain had pointed out, and sunk upon a couch therein.

The next moment the door was closed, and Zella heard a bolt shoved across on the outside.

Adele heard it, also, and burst into tears. For a long time she sobbed and wept; and both Zella and she trembled when they heard the heavy puffing of a steamboat alongside, and felt, from the jar, that the vessel which was their prison was moving, and, undoubtedly was being towed to sea.

CHAPTER LVI.

It was a terrible night to Harold Morley—that night spent in the city-prison. Though confined in a cell by himself, in which the furniture consisted of an iron bedstead, a straw mattress and a couple of blankets, he could hear the howlings of some drunken women on one side of him, and the fearful curses of some drunken rowdies on the other. Had not his mental agony been so great as to banish slumber from his eye-lids, he could not have slept with those terrible sounds ringing in his ears.

There, in darkness and wretchedness of mind and body, he paced the narrow limits of his cell, and counted the hours as he heard them tolled by some distant steeple clock, until the gray dawn stole, yet darkly, in to show him the grated horrors of his dungeon.

And then still he had to count the hours. For not until eight did a human being come near him. Then a coarse, repulsive-looking negro came along, carrying a basket filled with coarse bread, and another followed with a basket of tin cups and a can of water.

As they passed each cell, they thrust a piece of bread through the bars, and set in a cup of water, and hoarsely cried: "Breakfast, dere," and went on.

Nine o'clock came and passed. By his watch it was a quarter to ten when the same officer who had arrested him came with the turnkey, who opened his cell. Then Mr. Stoker requested him to go with him to the office of the Recorder, and promised to use his influence to have the Recorder examine him in a private room, and not before the public.

Even this seemed a favor to Harold, who shrank from appearing before the public under the accusation of crime, however unjust it was; and he endured the agony of waiting in a private room until the Recorder had disposed of the cases of drunkenness, theft, and vagrancy, which daily come up before him, before his Honor could see him.

It was twelve—full meridian—before Harold was visited by the Recorder and the prosecuting attorney.

"Where is the complainant in this case?" said the Recorder, as he looked first at the warrant and then at Morley, whose genteel looks seemed to impress him favorably.

"He has not shown himself this morning, sir, though he told me last night that he would be on hand early," said the officer.

"That is strange," said the Recorder. "A man who makes a charge like this should be on hand to substantiate it."

"The villain knew that it was false, sir, and has caused my arrest, I fear, only to cover another crime of his," said Harold.

"If you have anything to say relating to the charge, you can say it, sir," said the Recorder, kindly. "At the same time," he added, "I would caution you against making any admissions which may criminate yourself."

"I am no criminal, sir," said Harold, proudly. "Permit me the use of pen and paper for a few moments, and let me give the names of gentlemen resident here, whom I wish sent for to vouch for my position in life, and to assist me in proving not only my innocence of the charge, but the conspiracy which has made me a victim."

The Recorder himself handed Harold the required articles. The list was soon made out.

"Be pleased, sir, to send at once for those gentlemen," said Harold.

The Recorder glanced at the names with a look of surprise. The first men in the city—bankers, merchants, and judges—were upon the list.

He instantly sent an officer with the list, and then asked Harold to take a glass of wine.

This he did; for he was sick at heart and faint with long-continued agony.

And gaining strength, Harold then related the history of his connection with the Hendersons—the attempt of Gustave to have him assassinated at Havana—how he subsequently spared him, and all.

The story seemed almost improbable to the Recorder, but soon Harold's friends came flocking in and satisfied the Recorder that Harold's tale was true. An officer was dispatched to the Saint Charles Hotel, by the request of Harold, to see if Adele and Zella still were there.

He soon returned, and told that they were gone, and also what message had decoyed them away.

"Lost! lost!" exclaimed Harold, in utter despair, when he heard this news. "The wretch has decoyed them away! My Adele is lost!—lost!"

And he sunk, insensible, to the floor.

Of course the Recorder dismissed the charge, and urged upon the officers an immediate search for Adele and Zella; and also gave orders for the arrest of Henderson wherever he might be found.

Meantime, the friends of Harold had him removed to his hotel, and called in the best physicians in the city; for the blow had been fearful, and when he recovered from his swoon, he raved in wild insanity.

His cry was for "Adele," one moment; the next, he uttered fearful curses against Gustave Henderson.

Perkins and Nathan came up from the yacht when they heard of his trouble; but he didn't recognize either of them, and the physicians were obliged to calm him by the administration of strong opiates.

CHAPTER LVII.

Poor Adele lay sobbing and weeping for many hours, after she and Zella discovered that the vessel on board of which they had been so cruelly entrapped, was moving. Zella in vain strove to comfort her. She would not but believe that Harold had been assassinated by, or through Gustave Henderson; and she mourned for him with all the sorrow of a widowed heart—mourned as mourns the dove

whose mate has fallen before the cruel sportsman's gun.

And not until hearing Gustave Henderson's voice in angry conversation outside the state-room, and learning that, even if she had not a friend on board, there was one who was man enough to protect her from unmanly outrage and cruelty, did she begin to so recover her faculties as to be capable of thinking what had been done, or could be done with her.

She heard Gustave Henderson say, in bitter tones:

"Captain Rhett, I will see the girl. I tell you she is to be my wife; and there is no use in her fooling about it, and shamming off sickness."

"Mr. Henderson," said the one whom he spoke to, in a stern tone, "you force me to remind you that I am captain of this vessel. You, sir, are but a passenger. I took this lady and the girl on board to oblige my friend Yancey, and agreed, for a certain consideration, to land her in Georgia. That I will do. But sir, I will not allow her to be persecuted here. You, over your liquor last night, said enough to convince me that you were a cowardly, heartless scoundrel; and I advise you to bear yourself quietly on board of my schooner, or your passage may be shortened considerably. I have borne with you for the sake of my friend Mr. Yancey, until I am out of patience. Now, sir, you understand me. We are at sea, and the lady is safe. Offer either by word or deed to annoy her, and you will find your father's son in trouble."

Adele, who had listened intently—and oh, how gratefully to these words!—now heard the retreating footsteps of some one. It was evidently the captain, for the next moment she heard a strange voice say:

"You had better heed what he says, Gus. When Rhett's temper is aroused, he is a whole team; and if you don't walk a chalk-line with him, you'll spill your pan of fish into the fire."

"What business, Yancey—what business, I say, has he to interfere between me and the girl?"

"He chooses to do so. That is enough for you and I to know, Gus. Like me—though he catches niggers and deals in them, as I do—he has a tender spot in his heart, and some little quantity of that scarce commodity known as honor left in his bosom. He probably remembers that he once had a mother—may have a sister to think of. I don't believe that you ever had either, Gus; upon my word I don't, judging from the flinty character of your heart. Now, take my advice, and let 'well enough' alone; when you get the lady and the quadroon on your own ground, why, then, you can do as you please. Here you cannot."

"So it seems. But they shall curse the day when I have them fully in my power: I'll flog the wench to death with my own hand, and Adele shall envy her her fate. Come to my room and get some brandy—come! I must drink, or go mad."

"Thank Heaven, we can rest for a few days!" murmured Adele. And, wearied with sobbing and weeping, she fell asleep with her head resting upon Zella's breast.

CHAPTER LVIII.

For many weeks Harold seemed forever lost to the world and his friends, so far as reason was concerned. But, at last, through the incessant care of well-paid physicians and the attention of devoted friends—not least among whom were Perkins and Nathan—he so far recovered his senses as to completely comprehend his situation.

And though he was very weak, he insisted upon knowing every particular in regard to the manner in which Adele had been induced to leave the Saint Charles Hotel, while he was chafing in a prison-cell.

He was so calm, and so earnest, that they told him all. With a strength of soul which astonished his attendants, he bore the information quietly, and said:

"Henderson has carried her and Zella back to Georgia. I will be calm, and grow strong, and go there and recover her. Bring me a little wine and some light food; my strength will come to me gradually, and in body as well as mind I shall be myself again. I feel that I am very weak, and that this has been a long night for me."

They dared not tell him how many nights and days he had lain there, the taper of life flickering in the socket—how long he had known no light, but had tossed in the black oblivion of madness.

Within a week he grew so strong that he could sit up and write. And he wrote a long letter to John Simonds, detailing all that had occurred, and suggesting to him what to do for the protection of Adele and Zella, if, as he supposed, they had been brought back to Henderson's plantation.

"Write to me the instant you receive my letter," continued Harold to Simonds, "and let me know if Adele is there. Fear not to tell me all that you know and can learn. I have been fearfully ill—for weeks a raving maniac, I am told. I am now well in body and mind, but need strength, so that I can travel. By the time that your letter reaches me, I will be able to bear that fatigue, and shall start for Georgia as soon as I receive it."

Having dispatched this letter, Harold resolutely set to work to nurse his strength, and to recover his physical and mental energies.

He did not permit himself to despond, took such medicines as his physicians prescribed to allay all nervousness, and slept all that he could.

With but one idea—one aim before him—the recovery of his lost Adele, it is not wonderful that when, two weeks after, he received an answer to his letter from John Simonds, he was almost himself again. Strong enough, at any rate, for travel, and as clear in mind as he had ever been.

Simonds wrote to him that Gustave Henderson had been home for some time, though no one had seen or heard anything of Adele or Zella. "Yet," said Simonds, "I am sure that they must be here, from the manner of both the brothers. They, of course, are not now visited by any of our society, but they wear an air of content, and even triumph, which betokens that they have succeeded in some deviltry or other."

"Come to me as secretly and as quickly as you can. Bring the certificate of your dismissal from the charge made before the New Orleans Recorder; for, if I understand the law, you cannot twice be arraigned for the same offence, and we must be ready for any tricks of these double-distilled, super-extra scoundrels."

"You will find all of your old friends and many new ones ready to help you, and none more so than John Simonds. If the Hendersons bark too loud, or try to bite, I'll shoot them both as I would a pair of mangy cures, and stand before a jury conscious of acquittal, on the plea that hyenas are hybrid, and injurious to the community, and ought to be removed."

Harold determined to start on the succeeding day after receiving this letter. The previous evening he devoted to taking farewell of his kind friends at his rooms, and to arranging his pecuniary matters. He paid all his bills, and then caused his lawyer to draw up a deed of gift and transfer, making over the yacht to Perkins and Nathan Shankland, if by any mischance he should not return to them.

Both of them volunteered to go with him—Nathan, with tears in his eyes, insisted upon it. But Harold, after showing them the letter which advised him to go as secretly as possible, firmly refused to let either of them do so.

"If I succeed," said he, "I will come back with Adele, and go, as I intended, in the yacht on a cruise to the Mediterranean. If I fail, it will be because I am dead. In that case, the yacht is yours; and my will, drawn up this day in original and duplicate, properly witnessed, signed, and sealed, will show how much I love and value you for your faithful kindness."

Both of those good men wept as Harold thus talked to them; and it was with difficulty that Harold could induce them to say "good-night" and "adieu," so that he could get some rest before starting for Georgia in the morning.

CHAPTER LIX.

Adele Dumesle had been landed in safety by Captain Rhett at the plantation of Hilliare Henderson. Arriving off the harbor at night, the captain of the slaver, who all the way had protected her from insult and persecution, had landed her and Zella in his own boat, while Gustave and Yancey followed in another.

But the Adele who landed there then, was but a shadow of that Adele whom we have seen so happy in almost all the chapters of our story.

She was so weak that she could not stand unsupported; and if Zella was not every instant by her side, her nervous terror was so great that she would fall into hysterical paroxysms.

Hilliare was overjoyed at the final success of his brother, but terrified at the situation of Adele. When he had seen Captain Rhett paid off, and the latter had departed with Yancey, who, with ten thousand dollars in hand, concluded to try a trip to the "coast" himself, Hilliare held a consultation with Gustave in regard to both Adele and Zella. Gustave wished at once to begin his work of revenge upon Zella, by flogging her and putting her into the rice-field to work with the common hands. But Hilliare, who did not wish Adele to die before his ends were accomplished, advised a different course.

"Let her nurse and attend upon Adele, until she has recovered sufficiently for us to force her marriage with you, as I once proposed, and then you can treat Zella as you like, and I will not interfere," said Hilliare.

"We will keep their arrival a profound secret from every one. I will attend upon them myself, aided, perhaps, by old Dinah, whom I know I can depend upon; and, if we do not alarm or annoy her, Adele will soon come around and be well again. Kept securely in the house, not a prying neighbor will dream that they are here. For the vessel you came in was not seen off the coast before dark, and now, long before it is light, she will be far out at sea."

Gustave, impatient as he was to wreak his cowardly hate upon the defenceless, now completely in his power, could not but acknowledge the wisdom of these remarks; and, therefore gave his cold assent to Hilliare's propositions.

It was some weeks later. Quiet and the

tender care of Zella had so far restored Adele, that she could walk about her room; and on two or three occasions—in the nighttime only—Hilliare Henderson, who seemed strangely kind to her, had assisted Zella to take her out of the house into the garden, where the fresh air, and the fragrance of the orange-blossoms, and other flowers, might aid in giving life to her almost dormant vitalities.

No person but an old Guinea negress, named Dinah, had been permitted to hold communication with Adele or Zella, besides Hilliare; and the poor girl knew that his forbearance and kindness was but a cloak to conceal some ruinous plot.

"Oh, if she could but hear from Harold!—know that he yet lived!"

That was her constant thought.

One evening, old Dinah, who, whenever her master was not present, spoke kindly and pityingly to Adele—a manner exactly contrary to that which she exhibited in his presence, said, as she was alone with Adele and Zella:

"Will de child be quiet, if ole Dinah tell her some good news?"

"Oh, yes! Yes; if, indeed, you have good news to tell me!" said Adele, eagerly. For in her heart she felt a presentiment that the news was from Harold.

"Be quiet, den, chile, and I tell you. Massa Harold is at Massa Simonds'. Dis chile has seen him sheself. Dar, now! what you tink of dat?"

And the old negress assumed an air of immense importance.

"Did he send me no message?—write me no letter?" asked Adele.

"He was agwine to, but Massa Simonds say no—him unprudent. So he tell me say you go out in garden, to-night, like I tell him you done before, and he'll come and take you and Zella away, if it cost his life. And he say he'll buy old Dinah, too, and not let her work never no more. Ki! won't dis chile be glad when dat day comes?"

It was hard for Adele to keep quiet when she heard this, to her, glorious news.

Oh! had she seen that the outer door was ajar while the old negress was talking—had she seen the flashing of Hilliare Henderson's eyes, as he listened to every word, brief, indeed, would have been the gleam of sunshine which seemed to come from heaven to warm her poor sorrow-chilled heart.

But she did not; and he withdrew in utter silence, to communicate what he had heard to Gustave, and to form a plan for decisive action—a plan to rid them of a dangerous foe, at once and forever.

CHAPTER LX.

Night came on—soft, dreamy, balmy moonlight. A gentle breeze rippled the distant waters, and the waves were dimpled with silvery gleams from above. The low wind rustled through the leaves and flowers, sighing as young girls sigh when they are happy. It was a lovely evening—too lovely for any of God's creatures to think of marring its beauty by deeds of darkness.

Hilliare Henderson had visited Adele shortly before night came on, and in the kindest manner had asked after her health. He had, to her great joy, though by her unsolicited, proposed a walk in the garden during the evening; and she could hardly conceal her wild emotions of joy when she assented.

He seemed in no ways different from usual. Ah, what a consummate actor a villain can be, when he is such by Nature, and not by force of circumstances!

Adele had counted the minutes after Hilliare left, until he came again. She had drank several glasses of wine to strengthen both nerves and body for the occasion; and when Hilliare did come, he found her with a flashing eye and flushed cheek. But he did not appear to notice it, but simply told Zella to get a shawl and hat for her mistress, and, with him, to assist her in walking out.

Adele trembled with agitation, and not from weakness, as Hilliare pretended to think when they walked out upon the graveled paths of the beautiful garden.

They walked on for some distance in silence, for Adele dared not trust herself to speak.

At last, they paused while they listened to the sound of a night-bird peculiar to that section, which seemed to be perched in an orange-grove near them. Upon one side of the graveled path where they stood was a hedge of the bayonet-pointed cactus—on the other, a hedge of acacia in full bloom.

Adele reached out her hand to pluck a flower from the hedge, when she heard footsteps beyond it, and her name distinctly pronounced. At the same instant she saw a blinding flash of fire flying from the hedge, not ten feet beyond her—heard the loud report of a gun, and a cry of agony from the same well-known voice which had pronounced her name.

With a wild shriek, she bounded through the hedge, and the next second she was upon her knees by the side of Harold Morley, who was struggling in the agonies of death.

"God!—God! of Heaven!" she shrieked, "save—O save my Harold!"

"Adele!—dear—bless—Adele—my will—friends!" he incoherently gasped; and as John Simonds and many friends rushed up on one side, and Hilliare Henderson and Zella on the other, he looked but once at them; then his head fell back and he was—DEAD!

"Hilliare Henderson, you have murdered this man!" shouted Simonds.

"It is false!" said Henderson, whose face was white as snow. "Miss Dumesle and this girl can prove that it is not so!"

"Then your accursed brother Gustave has done it! Neighbors, some of you search him out and arrest him. I will stay here with the body until you return."

Several of the planters started to obey the directions of Mr. Simonds.

What was Adele Dumesle doing all this time?

She had shrieked but once. Now she was calm—fearfully calm. Her face was pale as the magnolia flowers which bloomed above her head.

She took Harold's hands and folded them upon his bloody breast. She bent over and kissed his white brow. Then, in a tone low, but terribly distinct, she said:

"Hear me, high Heaven! Widowed in heart and soul by the cruelty of man, I will be man's foe forever! Harold, every drop of your blood is a precious jewel!—I will set them in a coronet of revenge! If your spirit can look down from Heaven, it shall see how true to this vow will be Adele Dumesle!"

"And Zella, too," whispered the quadroon, as she knelt by Adele's side. "For Zella loved—in silence and in grief—but yet she loved, and hers will be the vow of revenge, too!"

The gentlemen whom Simonds had sent to arrest Gustave Henderson, returned with him, and said that they had found him asleep in bed in the room which he usually occupied in his brother's house.

Hilliare Henderson now felt easy. He knew no proof could fix the dastardly deed upon himself or brother. He therefore said, in a haughty tone:

"If you are disposed to pursue this matter any further, Mr. Simonds, you can go and get out warrants for myself and brother. We shall not shrink from an investigation."

Before Simonds could reply, Adele arose, and, with a supernatural calmness, said:

"Hilliare Henderson, you will escape the laws of men, but not the vengeance of Heaven! Mr. Simonds," she added, "henceforth I place myself under your protection, and let him claim me, or my girl Zella, if he dares! Let him or the fiend Gustave now try to hold either of us one instant, and they will learn a lesson which will be ended down—down in hell! Take my Harold home to your house, Mr. Simonds. Come, Zella; we will go there, to-night."

The Hendersons glared like hungry tigers after the departing girls. But they saw too many angry faces to dare an attempt to detain them. They were permitted to return

to their own house, while the surrounding friends of poor Harold bore his body back to the good planter's home.

Reader, my story is so nearly done, that a few words will link it with the "Death Secret." The Hendersons could not be proven guilty of the murder; but proof went so far, that

fearing the result of a trial, they gladly gave up to Adele Dumesle her own property, and gave Zella her freedom. Adele was, by his will, sole heiress to all of Harold's wealth. Her subsequent career, after she left the South, was told in the "Death Secret."

[THE END.]

Adel