

SUSAN WYLIE,



OR

THE SMUGGLER'S BRIDE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WILL WATCH," "DELAWARE DICK," "BLACK CRUISER," "PINNACLE JACK," ETC



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CHAPTER I.

"Fill the can—about ship wheel it."

THERE is, working at all times, a governing instinct in human nature, that revolts from shedding blood. The mind, conscious of the first principle of self-preservation, recoiling from a violence that would subject it to a similar visitation, is naturally tenacious of the principles of peace, and seeks its own safety in that of others. In all nations, even the most barbarous, a distinction is made between man-quelling and murder. Savages slay their enemies; the crime of murder is rarely known within their tribe. It is only when the fiercer instincts of mankind are roused into action that, forgetting the milder prescriptions of humanity, they close their eyes against remorse, and sanction murder by necessity.

It is not wonderful then, that, educated in the principles usually current in civilized and well-regulated society, Watch should sicken with horror on viewing the carnage around him. He was not, as yet, inured to the crime of bloodshed, nor was he naturally possessed of the more brutal instincts of our nature; for though brave, even to the extremity of daring, there was a tenderness that clung about his heart, and allied him to the milder spirits of creation, stripping his character of that savage barbarity with which society is too apt to invest men living in open violation of the laws. Removed from his present calling, his conduct had dignified a more elevated condition, and, differently placed, our bold smuggler might probably have taught society a lesson on the

folly of condemning crimes without charitably considering circumstances.

The appearance of the deck immediately after the conflict—which we have described, at length, in the work entitled "Delaware Dick; or The Chase of the Wasp," and which resulted in the sinking of that vessel, and the death of its brave commander and gallant crew,—was, indeed, enough to affect a person of the toughest nature, even in cases where long habit had performed its office in reconciling the mind to such sights. It is true, the number of the slain was small—not exceeding fourteen; but the mangled and ghastly appearance of the corpses was enough to touch the sternest nature with compunction—with remorse. The fierce expression of the countenances of the recent combatants, in some of which the nervous agitation arising from suppressed agony, ungovernable rage, or the mixture of both, which boils and bubbles within the hellish feelings that mingle in the human breast in the moment of bloody feud, had not yet become paralysed by the icy gripe of death; and took from its quiet obstruction a part of its saddening effect, by awakening a deep emotion of horror, that men, from no other cause than a blind obedience to the will of others, should be lashed into such an utter forgetfulness of the charities of life—hurrying themselves and others to His bar who causeth the earth to teem for all alike, and desires no more than that man should enjoy the bounty he hath bestowed in the spirit of peace, and harmony, and good-will.

The Lieutenant, commander of the cutter, tall beyond the usual height of men, two inches, or it might be more, about six feet, with a frame developed to accord with his gigantic stature, in his bloody habilaments, lay pale and motionless upon the deck. The sharp edge of the negro's sword, dividing the integument, had cut through the muscles of the neck in an oblique direction, in such a way as to produce a depression at the corner of the mouth, which gave it the resemblance of a haughty smile, as if, in the moment of his departure, his unsubdued spirit had spoken out in scorn of the hand which had crushed him. His hat had fallen off, and the ebon ringlets that still clustered round his marble forehead, drenched with the cold sweat which attends the final effort of nature to retain the principle of life, strongly contrasted with his pale and rigid features, and his closely-set teeth showed his last struggle to have been hard.

Rowcraft had fallen across the seaman's body whose skull had been crushed in by the coward Bladen, in his desperate effort to rescue the smuggler chief from the destruction which, for the moment, impended over his head, and the mass of gore and of brains which bespread the deck, turned the bold smuggler sick at heart. The space betwixt the main and foremast, nearly a midships of the schooner, was literally a pool of blood, and he shuddered with horror, as, raising his comrades one after another, to examine their wounds, and ascertain whether life had yet departed, ere they consigned their bodies to the deep sea, they fell plashing in the ruddy puddle on the deck, inert, and unconscious of the attention of those with whom, but a few minutes before, they had commured in health and friendship.

The smugglers, or such of them as were unwounded, who assisted in turning the bodies over for the inspection of their leader, like men in similar circumstances, endeavored to repress the feelings of horror which inwardly shook and paralysed their nerves, by a glee unsuited to such an awful employment, hiding the terror which the presence of death inspires, under the semblance of a mirth in total variance with the occasion; uttering such coarse jests as assorted with their less refined nature as they handled their deceased companions, and laughing as loudly as if their motionless shipmates had been snug in their berths below, and they engaged in planning, in the spirit of devilment properly belonging to the sons of Neptune, what is called, in the lofty language of the fore-castle, a bit of a skylark at their expense.

Watch looked upon this revolting scene with the feelings of a man not only endowed with the brute principle of courage, but possessing a mind capable of giving direction and control to the wilder energies of physical force in the moment of action. His grave and somewhat solemn demeanor better assimilated with them or unful task at which he was assisting, than the wild laughter and ribald jests of the companions in his desperate courses. His mind depicted a thousand reminiscences of his lost companions with a fidelity that brought back the yesterday of life, and disposed the milder feelings of his nature to lament their untimely fate.

Even Rowcraft, against whom he had so recently been tilting in mortal combat, cold, stark, and inert, scornfully stern even in the obstruction of death, the enemy he had destroyed, inspired his soul with compassion when he glanced at his manly and well-proportioned figure. The feelings of victory were swallowed up in a momentary regret that the necessities of the whole crew should have so imperatively called for the destruction of his brave and magnanimous opponent. All thought of their desperate struggle had departed from him; the still and solemn consciousness which betokens the presence of death—of that tyrant to whom all nature must bow down—had obliterated every trace of recent enmity. The smuggler looked upon his fallen foe with a deep contrition, regretting that such an action should have been forced on his hands by the daring impetuosity with which the deceased officer had persisted in the chase.

Other feelings were there also which mingled with the deep thoughts of that time; nor did he lack the thought of the dangers by which he was still surrounded, notwithstanding the success attending his temerarious daring; could he have done so, he would have recalled the events of the last few hours, for reflection, which had been lost in the excitement of the combat, now plainly pointed out the dark cloud which his late successful struggle had thrown over futurity. Yes, apprehension was awakened within him, and when fear once begins to cast her shadows on the mind, the sun of hope declining in the horizon of the soul, invests them with the proportions of a giant.

This apprehension called forth the immediate exertions of the smuggler chief for the safety of his craft and crew. He was too near the shore to be altogether at his ease, and the country people who, called

together by the firing, studded the strand, inspired a feeling of misgiving, lest the coast should be alarmed, and his schooner pursued and taken; in which case his own death and that of his companions would be the inevitable consequence. The wind still blew on shore, but it had lulled, and now came in those sullen, fitful gusts which usually betoken the presence of a counter-pressure in the air, and a consequent variation. Still, while he felt the danger of waiting for the change which he expected, nay almost knew was approaching, could not, from the crippled state of his rigging, attempt to beat out an offing. Such a manœuvre was utterly impossible; though could he wear his vessel off, the action taking place betwixt Colchester and Harwich, there would be every probability of escaping to Holland, where he would have an opportunity to adopt ulterior measures to secure his own safety and that of his daring associates.

Our bold smuggler was not a man to dream of individual safety when his friends were exposed to danger. A wild species of generosity had grafted itself on the reckless habits of our hero, which, leading him to abandon selfish considerations when the safety of his companions was at stake, was probably more nearly allied to true nobility of principle than the demi-virtuous properties that, revolting from the inhumanity of vulgar strife, uphold a cowardly morality to distinguish the gentlemen of modern growth. The safety of his companions was as dear to him as his own, and a like feeling pervaded the hearts of those whom he commanded; wherefore the active and penetrating mind of the contrabandist was already busied in framing projects for the future, could he escape the dangers impending over the eventful present.

His first effort were directed to repair his crippled shrouds and mast, which he did by rigging out a couple of additional stays, and splicing the splinter of his mainmast to enable it, at least for the present, to sway up against the wind; and every hand on board was soon at work, and as busy as so many bees, in repairing the damage they had sustained. Bladen now became one of the most efficient hands on board, and in their present emergency his services were invaluable, performed as they were with a celerity unequalled, and a knowledge of his business rarely exceeded—a proof that bravery in fight does not at all times enter into the composition of a thorough seaman. He was everywhere with inconceivable rapidity, and seemed determined to disarm his companions of the coarse raillery which his recent cowardice, it should seem, had drawn down upon him, by exertions directed to the safety of the schooner and her crew.

When this miserable apology for repair had been completed, Watch, though well nigh afraid of trusting to the support they had been able to give the crippled mast, took the helm, and endeavoured to beat out to sea, not deeming himself safe till he should be completely out of sight of the land. Luckily for him the looked-for change in the wind took place before he was picked up by any straggler; and the schooner went on bounding over the billows, and long before sun-down had lost sight of the shores of Essex, leaving the gaping countrymen staring in mutual wonderment at what the struggle they had witnessed on board the schooner could mean, or how it ended.

As the land and all the objects on it faded on their view, till the low coast of Essex barely loomed above the water's edge, like a streak of fogbank, the spirits of the smugglers proportionately increased. They now set about shotting canvas, and lashing it to the knees and bodies of the slain, committing them to the deep, without funeral rite or prayer; yet, withal, bestowing on them as much respect as they would have experienced at the hands of a packet skipper, with far greater pretension to legitimacy of character.

The coagulated blood through which they tramped while performing this act of necessity, brought a sickening sensation to those who had been engaged in the combat, and they could hardly help shuddering as, one by one, they slid the bodies into the ocean. For, notwithstanding what they had done had been done fairly, and in open fight, and in self-defence, so strongly impressed are social regulations, that even when thus engaged, they could not help mentally recurring to the principles implanted in boyhood, and holding themselves accountable for murder.

Having committed the bodies to the deep, their next care was to remove every trace of the recent, but, while it lasted, terrific conflict, and the first gush of clotted, and ropy, and coagulated blood and water was sickening to look upon, and indeed, made the stoutest heart on board the contrabandist to heave. Although they still endeavoured to rouse themselves from the heavy feelings their work inspired, by calling to their aid the usual resource among desperate and daring characters, ribald remarks, lewd and unseemly jesting, with all those practical manipulations which serve seamen of all denominations in lieu of the refinement of wit.

The reek of blood, though shed ever so recently, leaves a fault upon the air, perhaps more disagreeable than any other effluvia. The clear and refreshing gas, therefore, which spontaneously detaches itself from water, breathed an invigorating influence on the surrounding atmosphere truly grateful to the senses, and contributed more than anything to revive the sinking spirits of the crew. Watch himself, whose previous excitement had been succeeded by a degree of morbid listlessness, seemed glad to breathe the fresh air after the horrible carnage at which he had been assisting; nor were his feelings reconciled to the past, until every trace of blood had been removed. He leaned over the taffrail, and apparently engaged himself in watching the foam which was thrown on the surface by his gallant craft, but, in reality, breathing trembling and repentant aspirations for the enormity he had committed, and rendering thanks to heaven for the victory he had achieved.

In the mean time, Binnacle and Bladen attended to the wants of the wounded smugglers, getting up strappings of adhesive plaister, of which they had always plenty on board, and in lack of which the tough practice of the former would have led him to apply boiling pitch, as a succedaneum, rather than suffer a shipmate to bleed to death when scalding would prevent it, and forming bandages with strips of shirting as if they had been used to hospital practice all their lives.

In this duty the rough-spun Binnacle gave directions to his more timid companion, who obeyed orders with a meek spirit, that disarmed him for the present, at least, of the ridicule which, to Binnacle's mind, seemed merely a just punishment for the cowardice he had evinced during the battle; and which, though it had utterly disqualified him from taking an active part in a fray, admirably fitted him to play that of a tender and humane nurse when the conflict had subsided.

The fresh cuts were soon bound up, and put into progress of cure, being left, as is usually the case amongst smugglers, gypsies, and other equally respectable characters, who are compelled to draw their lessons from the book of nature, to heal by the first intention; while such as had been shot were bound up and put into their berths until the schooner should make some port in Holland, where they might obtain the care and attendance of more regular practitioners than the present circumstances afforded. All the wounded had been looked to, when their leader called to Binnacle, and desiring him to cut off his coat and shirt, and examine the upper part of his shoulder, a wound was developed which caused the weak and nervous Bladen to shudder as he approached to examine it.

It was a deep cut from the sword of Rowcraft, and gave mute evidence of the strength of arm and firm intention of mind of the deceased officer. Had his weapon fallen in the direction in which it was first aimed, the contrabandist had as certainly met the fate of a brave fellow as many others who have escaped the evils of life in a similar manner; but, turned off by the guard of the smuggler, it glanced from mid-head, outside the trochanter of the left arm, and cut sliveringly into the flesh, inflicting a wound about seven inches in length, whose gaping lips, clotted up with coagulated blood, terrified the weak and timorous Bladen to look upon.

The rough-hewn Binnacle, who, however, was altogether a bird of a different feather and bolder a brood, surveying it as he took dimensions for the strapping which was to hold it together, observed—

"It's an ugly cut, Master Watch."

"And very painful," returned the smuggler chief.

"You should have had it looked to afore," continued the rough-hewn son of Neptune; "I don't half like to clear away this clot after it's been so long a dryin', seein' as it's the best plaister I know of for sword-wounds; and yet I don't think as the edges are safe to be left gaping as they do at present. Howsomever, Bladen, bring me some warm water. We must remove this here thick stuff, an' then close it up in the best way we can. Bear a-hand with the water—do you hear? You are well plucked, Captain, to have stuck to it, with such a wound as this to teach you what you have to larn in sword-play."

"The gallows was a-head, Master Binnacle," said Watch, with a melancholy smile; "and that, I take it, is sufficient to make a man forget pain and every other thing, save the opponent he contends against."

"Still you should have had this looked to afore," said Binnacle.

"I had other duties to perform," returned Watch; "and am not the

mean skulker to attend to my own case when others want assistance. Do you think me such a one, eh, Binnacle?"

"May I perish if I do!"

"Yet," continued Watch, "I can't help feeling sorry for this day's work."

"Sorry, Captain?"

"Ay, for worse may come on't than we imagine."

"We have conquered, Captain!" exclaimed Binnacle, in a tone of exultation; "nor does a single enemy live to betray us, or tell who sunk the Governmenters. There is life in that mussel, I take it."

"'Tis so, Binnacle!" observed Watch—"tis so, indeed! But still there is a secret and mysterious dread that hangs about my heart and shakes my courage. Such a feeling I had when my poor mother died. I look upon it as a warning, nor can I shake it off, with all my efforts. Awhile ago, I looked on the lieutenant's body, stiffened in his own blood, and almost envied him a fate which left behind it an impression stern enough to fill his conquerer with dread."

"Psha, Captain!" returned Binnacle, "all this here comes from the megrims; an' then there sort of things only arise from the loss of blood, and that like. Why, Lord bless your soul, when I've made a stop-gap of lint and strappin', and put you to bed with some nice skilly and a go of rum, you'll be quite another thing, I'll warrant."

"I think not."

"Lal I know it," observed Binnacle, triumphing in his own experience; "you ain't the first I attended as have been taken with the comicals in this way—it's a common occurrence. Everybody begins to talk about repentance, an' sich like nonsensical matters, when the blood's a-flowing, and they think they're going to croak it."

"My thoughts are not so light as you imagine, Binnacle," said Watch; "this is our second deed of blood; and it seems as if fate, after having so long held favorable, were pursuing us to destruction. 'Tis the second deed of blood we have committed since we took up the roving trade we follow. The first led me into an imprudence, to avoid suspicion that might otherwise have attained our craft, and marked us objects of notice to the revenue cruisers. The present is a deperate and daring deed, which not only calls for vengeance, but calls upon a power fearful to contend against by men like unto us."

"Never fear a horse of that color, Captain," observed Binnacle; "we must cook up our craft to show another face upon the matter. Do as them land-sharks at the 'Chickens' in Westminster do—turn black into white—change the color of our hull and canvass, and rechristen the little Witch, Betsey. The Betsey 'll do as well as any other name on a map; for them fellers as could say anything, we've thrown 'em overboard, and they lie too deep, and double-shotted to boot, to peach agin us. But yonder comes Bladen, hopping along like a frog on a holiday. Come, bear-a-hand, d'ye hear? The Captain wants to scald the blue devils!"

And Bladen having come up, Binnacle, sponging out the coagulated blood with warm water, set the wound bleeding afresh, as a matter of

course; when, directing Bladen to bring the lips of the wound into apposition, he strapped it up as he might, and converting Watch's neck-erchief into a sling to rest the crippled limb, assisted him down the companion ladder, and led him to the cabin to take immediate and necessary repose.

Watch now recalled the condition of McWhat, whom he had forgotten amid the bustle that prevailed aboard the schooner after the termination of the recent conflict, desiring Binnacle to see that he was released, and supplied with such attendance as might be deemed necessary to make his present state of duration less disagreeable. Bladen then spread a hammock on the cabin floor, on which the smuggler stretched himself, to endeavor to lose the sensation of pain, consequent on the re-opening of his wound, in repose. His two attendants then left, to join the ungalled hearts on deck.

The scene in the waist was of a description that might be expected amongst men whose lives were passed in violating social laws, and who sought, in the moment of victory, to lose all recollection of the past, and anticipations of the future, in gross and brutal intoxication. Every tub and bucket had been pressed into their service for seats, while such as had not been fortunate enough to help themselves to a more elevated position, stretched on the deck at their full length, lay listlessly enjoying the wild scene about them, without thought or care beyond the present moment, without a single recollection of the companions who had so recently preceded them to their last long home; and the excitement engendered during the late conflict was roused into a sort of wild and savage delirium, as each repeated, or exaggerated his individual heroism, taking more than his due share of credit in bringing about the success which crowned the day.

Their unsheathed swords, all bloody as they were—for few blades were unstained in that day's work—lay strewed about the deck, ready at hand, when drink should excite the spirit of quarrel, to be used against each other, plainly denoted that their blood was still up. The fierce storm of human passions roused within their breasts, had not yet subsided to a calm, but still boiled within their veins—as the sea continues to rise and fall long after the violence of the wind has ceased to vex it.

The negro was, notwithstanding the severity of his wound, the first amongst the revellers; leading the laugh in sheer defiance of all surgical rule, and subduing the fever in his blood by adding to its fire. Accordingly, when Binnacle, who was sensible of the danger of such indulgence, shook his head in token of his disapproval of Dick's present enjoyment, the latter met and answered his gravity with a loud laugh, exclaiming, as he pointed to a seat just rendered vacant—

"Nebber min', Massa Binnacle! rum is good to dry op de blod. So git on de big tob an' gib os a 'peech. Oo dere, eh, Massa Bladen? oo know bot peer is, a reck'n."

Bladen, shrinking from this remark, which was most like to be caught up and sent round amongst the crew, took his station timidly,

and at some distance from the negro, swallowing his share of the grog in quiet, amid a clattering of tongues, wherein all were contributors to the stock of knowledge, lost in a hubbub which left not a listener.

"A song!—a song!" shouted the negro, as Binnacle took his seat on the tub, and restored a little order. "Poor Bill Ashton! him gone dis las' bout; him neber sing again, no more!"

"Poor Bill Ashton!" hiccuped another, with an approach to the maudlin tenderness usually characterising excessive drunkenness, "he was an excellent leader!—let's drink to his memory!"

"And sing his song," observed another; "for poor Bill was the only poeter we ever had amongst us."

"Brabo, brabo! he not dead yet!" cried the negro, in a voice that betokened the latter stage of drunkenness; "lat's hab him song before all tings, an' I jine chorus."

And with this preface, several voices struck up with a harmony by no means contemptible—

The thunders rolled, and the lightnings flew
Athwart the heavens on wings of blue;
And the whirlwind's voice woke the ocean's roar,
And the yesty waves lashed the rock-bound shore
And the dark expanse, where the blue had smil'd,
Did shake with the tumult fierce and wild;
And the waters as mountains seemed to be,
When the Spirit of Freedom was born at sea.

Above the tempest he reared his head,
And the storm-fiend shrunk, and before him fled,
And the winds at his bidding were lull'd and hush'd,
And the turbulent waves of the ocean crush'd;
And the sun look'd out from his clouded tent,
To cheer his offspring wherever he went;
For thron'd on the globe-gathered water is he,
And the Spirit of Freedom doth govern the sea.

Like him we spurn at the slavish chain,
And ride on the crest of the swelling main;
No power we own but the WILL that all
Appoints to maintain, or dooms to fall;
And 'mid tempest or war, or the scatheful glare
That fiercely contends in the storm-vext air,
Unblenching! uncheck'd! we'll proudly be,
Or die with the Spirit of Freedom at sea!

"Poor Billy! him neber sing no more," said Delaware Dick, as the singers had concluded their song.

This remark, simple as it was, roused some half-dozen drunkards, who, with dropped jaws and half-closed eyes, sat nodding to the tune, until their sympathies for their deceased companion's loss were raised to such a pitch, that, thinking of their prisoner by a concurrent love of mischief, and being lifted far above the sphere of humanity by the potations they had taken, they, like the heroes and demi-gods of by-

gone days, determined on sacrificing the unfortunate Scotsman to appease the ghost of their departed friend. Whereupon, on a second person following up the negro, by remarking—"Never! He was knocked down by a pistol bullet afore he could get a single slap at 'em; else Bill had certainly had one for one, and that's only fair play."

On hearing this, the leader of the infuriate drunkards, who had mentally come to the classical conclusion of sacrificing their prisoner upon the tomb of their murdered companion, started up, exclaiming—

"What should prevent our giving Bill Ashton a little one in, by way of a sweetener? There's the Scotsman in the boat."

"Hold, my friends!" cried Binnacle, interposing, desirous, for the sake of Watch, to divert them from their present intention. "Hold, my friends! remember the strife is over, and do not slay in cold blood."

"Who gave you any right over us, I should like to know?" demanded the foremost of the party.

"My own arm, if you are insolent," returned Binnacle, with a fierce look, which only exasperated the drunkard the more, and who, therefore, snatching up a cutlass, proceeded—

"If you talk in that way, Master Binny, we'll soon make you food for fishes yourself. Do you think we don't know how to serve out an enemy without coming to you for a lesson?"

"Oo sharn hurt Massa Binnacle!" cried the negro, starting up and facing some half-dozen of the drunkards, who, with drawn swords, were preparing to make onslaught on Binnacle, who stood with his hand on the hilt of his cutlass, ready to spring on them should they attempt to put their threat in execution. "An' oo, Massa Binnacle, bot de debble hab oo to do bid de 'cot'man? dough a duzzen ob dem trown into de sea."

"Ah, what, indeed, Massa Dick!" shouted several other, who had drunk just enough to relish the brutal proposition of their companions. "Let's have him out at once, and send him to Davy."

"I have the Captain's orders to save him," said Binnacle, drawing his sword, and retreating to the boat, while he held them at bay, "and will do my duty in spite of you!"

CHAPTER II.

"Help! hold his brows—he'll swoon!"

LEAVING our hero and his brother smugglers exposed to the uncertainties and perils of the narrow seas, on which, as every reader cognizant of the nature of law in general, whether national or international, well know, to adopt the phraseology of our admiralty courts, that he and they had become a pirate and pirates by firing into a government cutter, without bearing a letter of marque from a belligerent power, properly qualified under the game laws—war seeming to be only a kind of *game*, the pursuit of which requires the sanction of something be

yond mere natural right—we will return unto the Three Jolly Anchor-smiths, in the ale-room of which we left the ancient maiden-mistress of the hostlery, the Irish maiden, maid therein, as before mentioned, and old Moll Purley; who, judging from the pleasure qualification of gipsies in general, might, probably, be assigned unto that class of equivocal characters described amongst the knowing in worldly matters, as properly, being neither maid, wife, nor widow.

Elated by the success which had attended the first operation of her scheme, old Moll, who was an excellent actress in her way, assumed an air of the deepest astonishment, looking on in silence, while Mistress Margaret Pardo and Bridget Mullaghney gave free vent unto their grief; the maiden lady laboring to suppress her sobs, which, indeed, almost stifled her, shedding bitter tears, while the energetic emotion of the Irish woman, though more noisy, was comparatively dry-eyed.

But, however disqualified by nature for the production of tears, Mistress Bridget could yell like an American Indian, and had, besides, acquired from long practice, a ready knack of pumping up an appearance of feeling well adapted to any mournful occasion that happened to call it forth; which operation she performed by dropping the jaw in the first instance, then reclosing her lips, and gulping at nothing, compressing the œsophagus and distending the tympanum, so as to force the combinate senses of hearing, touch and taste, to pay a visit to the eyes, embodied in the form of a drop of sympathy, which, with sentimental people, is much the same as a drop of comfort.

While Mistress Margaret, therefore, was weeping and sobbing, ready to break her heart, Mistress Bridget sat, making as many faces as a chimpanzee under the effect of a smart dose of *sacchrum saturni*, och-loning, and worr-a-dowing a thousand of her own country interjections, and snapping her eye-lids to catch and exhibit the solitary tear-drop on the lash, in all the triumphant agony of grief—a trick much in use among widows whose husbands have left them little cause to bewail their departure.

Moll Purley, who was not one of those sentimental characters that put on a stock of expression of features, and utter set phrases of condolence unto the afflicted on every occasion, and at the shortest possible notice, was not slow to inquire of Mistress Bridget the occasion of the hubbub; which she did by the following question:

"What do you make such a row about?"

To this question, couched in language the inelegance of which may, perhaps, be excused on account of its comprehensiveness, Bridget recovered herself sufficiently, to make answer, though in that peculiarly whining tone which seems common to all, save the really heartstruck, when they have occasion to express a sense of grief or pain.

"Is it a row you talk av, Mistress Purley? Troth, thin, and its yer-silf 'ull be makin' av' a row whin you larn that the divil has been borrowin' yer body to be walkin' abrad in!"

"My body!" exclaimed old Moll, with an appearance of great surprise.

"The divil a thing else," returned the Irish woman; "an' settin' aside

the brimstin' and fire, widout which he nivr pays a visit, it was as like you as one p'a is like another."

"What do you mean?"

"An' is it you that wants to know my m'uin'?" asked Bridget;—"troth and I'll engage you know it well enough, at the prisint, widout axing any furdur. Sure, the whole neighb'rhood is full av yer thricks, an' yer bewitchments, an' yer divilments, and may be, after all, yourself riz it, an' so sint it to frighten the life out av us!"

"Riz what? sent what?—what is the meaning of all this?" demanded Moll Purley, putting on an appearance of passion that cowed even the Irish woman; who, indulging in a belief common to her country people, in devilry and witchcraft of all kinds, invested Moll with powers more than natural, and almost trembled in her presence; while her mistress, though less superstitious, was equally impressed with the "supernatural soliciting" of the old gipsy, as, indeed, were most people in the neighborhood; wherefore she took up the conversation by drying her tears, and observing—

"Bridget says you appeared to her last night."

"I told you before it was impossible."

"I saw you myself!" exclaimed Mistress Margaret, but immediately dropping her tone, she continued—"or *some* body very like you. Yes, like you, even unto the patched mantle and the rod you carry."

"You must have been deceived—"

"Is it desaved?" cried Mistress Bridget, sending a look as far heavenward as the ceiling would permit, and then assuming that peculiarly solemn expression with which people usually impart matters that the enlightened, who think little because they know nothing, are apt to denounce as superstitious; "is it desaved, Mistress Purley? Then it's I that can tell ye that, though he be the father av lies, he hasn't desaved us this time, at all, at all. Didn't I see you last night wit' my hone eyes?"

"No!"

"Thin I saw somebody as shall be nameless."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Is it likely I'd be makin' mintion av a bad name, when the thing I spake av might be at yer elbow this very minit. Sure, I know meself better than that—"

"Better or worse," exclaimed old Moll, sturdily, "you saw me not!"

"Then I saw—I *know* what!" said Bridget, with a smile of self-satisfaction, which plainly showed she determined to keep that portion of her knowledge entirely to herself.

"Oh! Mistress Purley!" said the elder maiden, "you appeared to us last night just as you are at present, in those very habiliments—with that very rod in your hand—standing as you do now," continued she, as old Moll raised her arm with affected impatience, apparently to check her speech, but in reality to represent the figure more vividly—"pointing as you do now: and it spoke words which filled us all with sudden grief, for they imported that our poor Susan should—should—should

"Should what?" demanded the old gipsy.

"Die!" returned Mistress Margaret, renewing her grief.

"This is delusion."

"'Tis true as you stand there."

"A strange delusion is it," again observed Moll Purley, as if in the act of musing over what she had just heard. Both females, however, burst out simultaneously—

"It is not a delusion at all, Mistress Purley; and if we ha'nt seen you we have seen an evil spirit."

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, Mistress Purley!"

"Yet, as I said before, it is strange you should have been both deceived into a belief you have seen me at a time when I was fast asleep on my hard bed in Copeswood Dell."

"Don't think it a delusion, Mistress Purley; for we got up and hunted all round the premises; but, alas! all our endeavors," concluded the hostess, "were to little purpose, for we found—"

"Nothing of ccourse," observed the old gipsy, concluding her sentence for her.

"Nothing!"

"Nor any mark of footsteps?" questioned the old woman; "for the dew which falls in the October nights might retain the mark of any mortal being who pressed upon it methinks."

"I never once thought of that," exclaimed Mistress Margaret; "how could I be so foolish?"

"Faith, thin," observed Mistress Bridget, with a peculiarly cunning look, as if determined to lay claim to a sagacity not properly pertaining to her, "if you forgot it, I did nat, for I looked partic'lar."

"Did you, Bridget?"

"Troth, an' I did, marm; an' Gad be betune us an' harm, not the smallest thrace av a fustip did I see atwix' this an' the smithy, though I examin'd all the way."

"It must have been a spirit then."

"As thrue as death, marm," said Bridget.

Old Moll smiled.

"It's no laughin' matter," observed the Irish woman, "an' manes death to some av us; but what's the use av talking to the likes av you, who hav'n't no more faith than a cannibal!"

"I have some faith here," followed the gipsy.

"Then fhot made you smile?" demanded Bridget. "Do you think it pleasant to be laughed at for believin' in a matter as we know to be thrue, an' by an infallible mortyal like ourselves?"

"Be not offended, Mistress Bridget," said the old gipsy; but if I smiled, it was not to ridicule a belief that, I can't help bearing witness, may exist—ay, and be true; for what you have related tallies with a dream I had last night, and which has brought me to the Anchorsmiths this morning, or you had never seen old Moll."

"A dream!" exclaimed Mistress Margaret.

"Arrah! none av yer sliveen tricks," cried Bridget; "but tell us

nayther more nor less than Gad's truth. Have you had a thrame in rale arneat, an' nothin' ilse?"

"Why should I deceive you?"

"I am sure it would be most cruel in anybody," replied Mistress Margaret.

"When did I deceive?" asked the old gipsy, turning a fierce regard on the Irish maiden. "Was it when I read the heart-break, and the sorrowful fate of the miller's daughter, whose fortunes I forespelled two whole years before they happened, and over whose grave the wild flowers have blown in the minster ground this many a long day? Wherefore should old Moll Purley speak a lie?"

"Arrah, now! did I say you spoke one?" questioned the Irish woman, as if to conciliate the apparent wrath of the old gipsy. It produced, however, but little effect, for the latter continued—

"Was it when I, by casting the magic lead, told old Dame Costard to beware of the stranger, who afterwards seduced and stole away the daughter whom she loved so well?"

"Faith, thin, it's no grate boast," said the Irish woman, tossing her head twice or thrice in quick succession—"it's no grate boast to say that ye told a thing well known to everybody in the parish besides."

"Call it!" cried old Moll, "would you bring down my hard word upon your future fate? Consult your own heart, and ask whether it be swine's flesh or swain's flesh it most dotes on at present!"

Bridget turned pale with fright, for she thought the secret of her heart was known to nobody but herself. This sudden allusion, therefore, of old Moll to the very name of her lover, though couched under the mysterious symbol of swine's flesh, suspended her faculties, and rendered her senses still more plastic to receive an impression that her powers were supernatural, than would an appeal to all the miraculous doings and sayings of her past life, though, to say the truth, they had purchased her the reputation of a witch throughout the country.

"Would you that I should speak good or ill—you wot well of whom?" asked the old gipsy, pursuing the advantage she had gained over the minds of both females.

"Nayther, Mistress Purley, nayther!" exclaimed the Irish maiden.

"You acknowledge my truth?"

"I do."

"Then listen to my dream!" said the old gipsy, impressively, "mark every word, for what you have now told me hath given it an interest, even with me, who believe not many of the sayings that have made mankind unhappy for the last thousand years. Listen to what I say for attention to it behoves you."

"Mistress Purley," cried the maiden mistress of the hostel, "Mistress Purley, you terrify me, indeed you do."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the old gipsy, almost working herself into a belief in the oracle she was about to deliver; it is no wonder, therefore, that she produced a similar effect on her auditors. "Who should be terrified at what must come, or faint under what must happen? My voice is the voice of another world, where stars that shine with fires un-

quenchable sparkle with truth beyond the human tongue, and read the fate of mortals every hour. Fate, awful and heavy!—fate gleesome and blithe!—never-ending, ever varying fate—wringing her flight from the dying man to rest upon the infant straggler first brawling into life."

"Sure I know you are gifted beyont other mortyals," said Mistress Bridget, duly impressed with the astonishment that this rhapsody of old Moll was intended to inspire.

"Listen, then," continued the old gipsy. "I dreamt, as I lay upon the cold and dewy ground, that Susan Wylie was at my side, and begged of me to forecast all her life, from her nativity to her dying hour; and I had prepared the yarn for reeling, and was knotting the breaks upon the reel, when a man in black garments, having buckles at his knees, and in his shoes, and powder in his hair—it might be about the height of old Mister Jeremiah—stood ready with a knife to cut the thread."

"Gracious goodness!" cried Mistress Margaret, turning on the Irish maiden a look of astonishment; "gracious goodness! did you ever hear the likes of that?"

"Sure it must be Docthor Cullsimple you were seeing," observed the Irishwoman.

"Who?" demanded old Moll.

"Docthor Cullsimple, of Canterbury," observed Bridget.

"I speak of whom I saw in my dream," said the gipsy.

"And that no doubt was Docthor Cullsimple," said Mistress Margaret, "it exactly answers his description—the powder, and the buckles, and the height, even to the color of his clothes!"

"I know not the man of whom you speak," said the old gipsy woman.

"That makes the matter more astonishing," observed Mistress Margaret.

"Procade wid your thrame, if you plaise," urged Mistress Bridget, with the deepest reverence impressed upon her countenance; "for thot yov'e already tould 's as wonderful a thing as I ever heerd av."

"The remainder is soon told," said the old gipsy; "for when I saw the stranger in black approach with a bare knife to cut the thread, I started from my seat, and grasping him by the wrist, 'forbear thy hand!' I cried; 'forbear thy hand. On a matter so slender as this thread of flax depends a mortal maiden's life!'"

"Thim same 's the very words, if you mind, misthress," exclaimed Bridget; "the very words, or self-same similar to thim, spoke by the apparition. Let me see, what were they?"

"I should know them if I heard them again," quoth the maiden mistress of the inn.

"I had thim on my pilly all night, misthress," continued Bridget, "though I can't for the life av me bring thim to my ricollection jist at the prisint. Och! by the hokey, I have thim at last:—

"Tis reel'd and read

By the windin' thread,
But a gypsy's hand may restore the dead.

"Thim's the words, mistress."

"Exactly!" said Mistress Margaret.

The reader will readily conceive the triumphant feelings that swelled within the bosom of the old gypsy, on the success which attended her crafty endeavor to obtain access unto Susan Wylie during her present illness, and which seemed likely to afford her means of commanding the abduction of Watch's betrothed, whensoever she should be in a condition for removal.

It is needless, perhaps, to say, that the simple Mistress Margaret believed all that had fallen from the gypsy's lips, or, that the scarcely less simple Bridget, after her own mysterious hint at her own private inclinations, as well as the relation she had just heard, could look no less than a mingled feeling of astonishment and admiration; or, that both ladies should be impressed, more deeply than ever, with the feeling that the old gypsy was subject to visitation from spirits of another world; a belief to which, perhaps, the Irish maiden might be most prone of the two, tallying as it did with the superstitions so notoriously rife amongst her country people in general.

Indeed, there are many persons in the world, possessing much higher pretensions to wisdom, who would have been in like manner unable to keep their wits about them under the artful practice of Moll Purley, who, added to a ready faculty of invention, in different phrase, an easy adaptation of words depictive of things that were not unto circumstances which were, a dead eye, in which, from her habit of looking through the thoughts of others, she found means to mask her own. But, in the present instance, Moll was assisted by circumstances she could not by any means have anticipated, for, just as she finished her relation, the noise of a horse trotting at a smart pace to the door of the hostel broke on their ear, and the next moment the Canterbury Esculapius appeared before them.

"The man in my dream!" cried the old gypsy, in a well counterfeited astonishment.

"The Canterbury Docther!" exclaimed the Irish maiden.

"Doctor Cullsimple!" followed Mistress Margaret.

While the individual subjected to such rude treatment, stepping backwark a single pace, threw up both hands, and gave utterance unto a marked note of admiration.

"The apparition of last night!"

For a moment all parties in the ale-room looked mutual astonishment—the Canterbury Esculapius not being the least astonished of the party, reflecting, indeed, the expression of the female faces before him like a mirror, while he wondered what the several exclamations of the several ladies—we call them so for courtesy—meant. Yet, not having any doubt, from their tenor, that each several exclamation was called forth by himself, though unconscious by what means he had occasioned such general admiration, he put an end to a feeling which is never very

pleasant, namely, a consciousness of being stared at, by enquiring after the state of his patient.

"Oh, Mr. Cullsimple!" exclaimed Mistress Margaret; "oh, Mr. Cullsimple!"

"Dead!" cried the doctor, with greater astonishment than ever in his countenance. "Dead! I could hardly expect that so early."

"You *did* mane to kill her thim!" cried Bridget Mullaghaney.

"I—I kill her!" cried Cullsimple, in greater astonishment than ever.

"Yes," continued Bridget; "but you're disapp'inted for wonst in yer life, by a miracle; an' the devil a fut you shall stir over the thrashold, if I can hilp it."

"Why, if the young woman's really dead," said Cullsimple, "there's little use in any body's seeing her; although her demise is certainly more sudden than I expected it would have been."

"She is not dead, doctor," observed Mistress Margaret.

"Then I must see her immediately."

"You shall niver see her ag'in, if I have any say in it," observed Bridget. "Sure, didn't you say you didn't think she'd die *quite* so soon, and after fhot we've heard jist now—"

"What does all this mean, madam?" questioned the Canterbury Esculapius, in ire. "Who has been daring to defame my medical reputation? What have you heard about me, madam?"

And Cullsimple walked up and down in violent chafe, while Mistress Margaret quietly responded—

"Quite enough to put us on our guard."

"Zounds, madam! what *have* you heard?"

"That you wanted to cut her thread," blubbered Bridget.

"The devil take her thread," cried Cullsimple, in dudgeon.

"Will you let him see my young misthress afther that, marm?" asked the Irish maiden.

"After what, you simpleton?" cried the Canterbury Esculapius. "I tell you plainly, madam, I never saw any thing at all of the thread you mention, and I declare solemnly, on my honor, I never did—"

"You know fhot I mane," said Bridget.

"I wish I may be shot if I do," asseverated the doctor.

"How can you say that, when you know you wanted to kill her!"

"I wanted to kill her!"

"Nothing less."

"Why you impudent libeller of my reputation, what do you mean by such a cruel assertion?" questioned Cullsimple with increased warmth. "How have I deserved so gross a calumny on my professional practice. Man and boy have I mixed medicine in the High-street, Canterbury, for twenty-five years, and to be accused of wanting to poison my patients after potioning them so long! To be denounced as wishing to destroy, when my whole practice proves my sincere desire to make my patients *endure* life. It's too much!—it's too much, madam! D—n, it, madam, I say it's too much! Little did I think the thread you spoke of now was the vital thread."

"You can't think I wish to have my niece sacrificed!"

"Madam," said Cullsimple, "your niece has been placed in my hands, and if death ensues in consequence of your taking her from under my treatment, I'll have you tried for manslaughter."

"Hoo! do you call killing my young mistress manslaughter?" cried Bridget. "Look to that now, and see 'fnot a bull he's made wid all his Parnin'. Manslaughter, indeed!"

The affair was, however, with some difficulty, compromised, by Moll privately offering to fulfill the office of nurse to Mistress Susan, in which capacity, she alleged, her supernatural appointment might counteract the unbeneficial influence likely to arise out of the attendance of the doctor, who otherwise might give the dream an awful denouement.

It was further necessary to complete this matter before Old Jeremiah Pardo should have an opportunity of interfering; he was not quite so likely to be imposed on by dreams as the weaker vessels, on whose fears and whose feelings Mistress Purley had so successfully practised; and in a very short time the old gypsy had convinced the maiden mistress of the hostel that the doctor, or bad fate, could not do much if the good fate of Susan Wylie were present to prevent it, and soon had the satisfaction to find herself by the bedside of her intended victim, in the character of a nurse.

Susan still continued in the deep slumber which had followed her delirium, when Cullsimple and Old Moll entered the neat chamber in which she reposed, the latter to commence attendance in her new capacity, and assist in restoring the betrothed of Watch to health, though neither to friends, to fortune, nor to love. A deathlike paleness had succeeded the glow of health that usually overspread her animated and speaking countenance, and the attenuation of her wrists and hands shewed that, though the fever had been of short duration, her sufferings had been extreme.

Cullsimple, on perceiving the stupor which still continued to involve the faculties of Susan, shook his head. It was one of those kind of shakes which might possess a meaning or no meaning, neither affirming nor denying anything, and, therefore, leaving the matter involved in as much doubt as ever; the more particularly, as after giving his head the shake, or brace of shakes, above mentioned, he paused with an air of ponderance, as if engaged in balancing accounts betwixt death and the lady, and then placing his forefinger on the side of his nose, screwed his features up to an expression meant to convey something without saying anything. He then left the room, followed by Mistress Margaret, deeply convinced of his skill, because he had as yet said nothing to betray his ignorance.

Now Cullsimple, though he had a most extensive practice, had an infinite deal of inconsistency; and though he quoted Sydenham's opinion on fever, he followed the humeral pathologists in practice, endeavoring to overcome febrile obstruction by increasing the heat of the body until a porous exudation was produced, when, as he rightly considered, the fever would disappear; wherefore, he had caused the bed

to be heaped up with blankets, which old Moll, on being left alone with her patient, very unceremoniously threw aside, and even went so far as to open the window and let in a little cool air, which soon produced a favorable effect.

Thus did the first day of Moll Purley's attendance at the hostel waste itself. Evening came, and with it brought Cullsimple, and also, as much to the annoyance of old Jeremiah Pardo as the gratification of Mistress Margaret, the little sheriff, and, still more to Bridget's satisfaction, her own Hogsflesh accompanied him, perchance to aid her in making slip, or assisting in any of those endearing little offices to which none know better than women how to place their devotees. But Hogsflesh felt happy, and so did Bridget. Various tastes require variety of enjoyment; and, if the sheriff's man found happiness in the simple operation of beating eggs, inhuman must be that heart who could look upon his occupation derisively, or condemn the apparently ignoble employment with a sneer.

Little know such lofty persons the delight which a lover takes in beating eggs at the desire of his mistress. The eggs cannot resist him, and his heart, therefore, swells with a feeling of heroic devotion, without a particle of fear in it; his mind expands with extatic gratitude as he perceives the furtive glances of the object of his holiest aspirations. He sees a stolen look, and deems himself beloved. Then rises before his mind the sublime beauty of a blameless attachment; the pure emotion of a passion, above every other consideration, save the happiness of its object.

Hogsflesh, no doubt, felt all this, and even more; and accordingly, when his master arrived at the door of the hostel, his heart leaped up into his mouth with the anticipation that he should again have the happiness of conversing with his Bridget, whose heart had no doubt leaped pretty nearly into the same place on her side of the question; for their lips met the very moment the door of the ale-room closed, and with such a clamorous how d'ye do, that the hearty smack reached the ear of the little sheriff, and for the first time inspired him with a suspicion that something more than a zealous attachment to his fair person occasioned the prompt attendance of Hogsflesh in his evening rides.

Desirous of ascertaining a fact of such importance, the little sheriff turned quickly on his heel to retrace his steps to the door of the ale-room, when, hearing a noise behind him, he turned again, and his eyes rested on the figure of Moll Purley, descending the stairs. Deeming her appearance nothing less than supernatural, the sheriff's hair began to stand on end, while the sharp puncturing sensation that precedes a cold perspiration, shot through every fibre of his frame—an universal tremor shook him; he laid his hand upon the latch—

"Mur-ur-ur-urder!" cried he.

Bridget opened the door. "F'not does the man mane?" said she.

"Th-th-the apparition!" said the sheriff, falling into the ale-room.

While Bridget exclaimed, as she pressed his clay-like and clammy forehead—

"Bring me some cold wather—sure, it's faintin' he is!"

CHAPTER III.

"Into the air!
And what seem'd corporeal did melt itself
Into thin air——"

WHEN Muddlepuddle Williams called out murder, on seeing what he imagined to be a supernatural visitant at the Three Jolly Anchorsmiths, he set the whole inn in a state of tumult. Mistress Margaret and Jeremiah rushed out at the door of the little bar-parlour, craning their necks as they looked onward into the dark hall before them, the doctor tip-toeing behind, so as to look over their shoulders, but none of them evincing the slightest inclination to interfere further to ascertain the occasion of such an outcry, save and except the venerable master of the venerable hostel, who loudly called, "Clink! Clink!" with what chance of waking the dormant faculties of the latter the reader is already acquainted; for had he bellowed until doomsday, the probabilities are, he would have failed in conveying an intelligible sound unto the object of his invocation.

Mistress Bridget, however, who, it should seem, delighted in doing good, had taken on her to restore the little sheriff to himself; and soon, by the aid of burnt feathers and brown paper held under his nose, and other restoratives, as vinegar, not forgetting a glass of brandy with which she was feasting her lover, but which she now forced down the oesophagus of the county dignitary, producing thereby an instantaneous re-action, which caused him to sneeze several times, and restored him as it were marvellously, from swooning to a sensate condition.

Now, though the faculties of Muddlepuddle Williams very often left him under sudden fright or other similar emergencies, to the credit of his mental qualifications, it must be affirmed, they always came back again without sustaining much injury in their partial aberrations; so that shortly after he had sneezed under the effect of the brandy administered by the brawny Irishwoman, he sat upright, and rubbing his eyes, stared round the room several times, with evident marks of tremor in his manner, and then turned an appealing glance unto Bridget—

"Where is it?" he exclaimed, "where is it?"

"Arrah, shot d'ye mane?" questioned the Irishwoman.

"That!" said the sheriff, with a look of intelligence. "That!"

"Arrah, now! shot's that?" asked Bridget.

"What's what?" said the county dignitary.

"Sure I know *that*," observed the Irishwoman; "I've been taught shot's shot before to-day, though I'm a little at a loss to comprehend yer m'anin at the prisint."

"What has happened to cause your deplorable illness?" asked his man.

"Oh, Hogsflesh! I have seen the apparition again."

"Then, of a surety, the house is 'aunted,'" said Hogsflesh.

"I never believed in such things before," observed the sheriff.

Hogsflesh shook his head.

"There's nothin' in it," said the Irish maiden; "it's on'y the mag-rims as yer honour's got from long study."

"If I stand here I saw it," said the sheriff, involuntarily quoting Macbeth, and assuming an attitude which might have served as a model for the best living illustrator of our never-dying dramatist.

"Saw what, my good sir?" interposed Hogsflesh.

"The apparition which so alarmed us all last night," responded the sheriff.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed his man.

"Never will I presume to doubt again on such matters," said the county dignitary, with a look befitting the solemnity of the occasion. "No doubt as they exist they exist for a wise purpose."

Mistress Bridget had she been disposed, could have satisfied the sheriff that what he had seen was no apparition, but real *bona fide* flesh and blood, rather older and a little more worse for wear than herself, but every inch a woman. She preferred, howbeit, to leave him in his present state of blessed ignorance, because Mister Jeremiah Pardo, her ancient and honorable master, knew nothing of old Moll being in the house, and, what's more, would not have consented to her remaining there if he had.

The two females, from a superstitious anxiety highly creditable to their feelings, had determined, as the reader has already been informed, to retain the old gipsy in the house, notwithstanding the well-known antipathy which Jeremiah Pardo had to her gang, even when compelled to meet them on business, setting them all down as thieves, in which opinion he was not very far wrong. To effect their purpose, therefore, Mistress Margaret and Bridget concurred in the necessity of concealing her presence from the old innkeeper altogether; and when two women are bent on deceiving one man, the chances will bear an infinitude of multiplication, and the odds be immeasurably long against the poor devil to be duped, who generally stands his fate with the most edifying spirit of endurance, and shuts his eyes because he must submit.

Jeremiah Pardo, though he loved his niece, was a careless man, and fond of his ease; wherefore he seldom suffered his sympathies to travel out of the way, contenting himself with simply enquiring after her, and leaving the doctor and nurse to their respective offices in restoring her to health. Mistress Margaret, therefore, had little reason to dread a detection from a man of her brother's habits; nay, she even flattered herself that he should be minded and desirous to visit, inspect, regard and behold the progress of his amiable niece towards convalescence, she could still disarm him of such a purpose; for, thought she, I can always tell him it's inconvenient at the moment, and his habit of

forgetfulness is such, that the next minute he will not remember he ever desired to see her.

It is no wonder, then, that under these circumstances Mrs. Bridget should have prudently held her tongue, and thus left the sheriff to hammer out the uneven metal of his imagination, without offering any elucidation of the seeming mystery, even by blowing the bellows on the forge of his fancy, wherein the metal of which superstition is usually composed was already above welding heat, and rapidly approaching a state of flux, which would probably absorb the entire mass of reason inhabiting the baser part of the brain. No, Bridget was too true a woman to prove incontinent of the secret of one of her own sex, when there was no particular reason for being so.

The little sheriff was, therefore, suffered to remain in ignorance of the real state of the case, though, to do Bridget ample justice, she communicated it unto her lover, and had a hearty laugh at that individual the moment he quitted the ale-room; which he did with pallid look and trembling limbs, immediately afterwards—retraversing the passage, that had so recently been the scene of a second visitation, with a palpitating heart, which prove that ghostly have a deadening effect upon animal spirits.

"Good even to you, Mistress Margaret," said the little sheriff, bowing before that antiquated link, just serving to connect the past and the present, and rising again with a smile, bearing a close resemblance unto that depicted by Hogarth on the face of the redoubtable Hudibras; it was a smile of self-satisfaction at finding he was so far out of danger.

"Good even, sir, good even," returned Mistress Margaret, recurring naturally to the cause of the late disturbance; "I am glad you have come—we have just been disturbed by a cry of murder."

"It proceeded from me, madam," said the sheriff, in a melancholy tone; "it proceeded from me."

"Good heavens!" cried Mistress Margaret anxiously, "what could have occasioned you alarm in this house?"

"Madam," said the sheriff, in a bolder tone than he had been capable of assuming since he fainted in the ale-room; "Madam, I trust my bearing last night proved what I could dare in the presence of actual danger; but when we have to deal with immaterialities the case is materially altered, and I solemnly assert that this inn is subject to supernatural visitations."

"Impossible!" cried Jeremiah Pardo; "at least I never saw anything here until last night, which I still incline to believe was a trick of old Moll Purley to frighten us all."

"Don't tell me of tricks, Mr. Pardo," said the sheriff solemnly, "for I assure you I was never less inclined to play tricks in my life, and as sure as I stand here I have seen it again this night."

"Seen what?" cried Jeremiah Pardo.

"Seen what, my dear sir?" chimed in Cullsimple.

"What have you seen?" requested Mistress Margaret.

"The very woman!" said the sheriff, mysteriously; "the same woman, arrayed in the same manner, surrounded by the same mystery, and leaving the same smell of sulphur behind her when she vanished."



CAROUSAL OF THE SMUGGLERS.

"Had that been the case, all must have smelt it."

"Do you mean to doubt my veracity?" asked the county dignitary.

"I'd rather doubt that than my own nose," observed Jeremiah.

"I smelt it, and my organs are as fine as yours," said the sheriff, somewhat angry at having a doubt cast upon his word by an inn-keeper.

"Finer," continued Jeremiah, with a chuckle that always accompanied his jokes; "considerable finer, for you see and hear what neither is, nor ever had an existence."

"I say I saw it," again asserted the sheriff.

"And I say it is an illusion," said Cullsimple, who being in the secret very honorably kept it, and thus established himself in the good graces of Mistress Margaret.

Mistress Margaret thanked the doctor for his forbearance with the most expressive looks which the rude hand of time had yet left her the power of putting on, and, as medical men are proverbial for preserving family secrets inviolable, the doctor, in the present instance, notwith-

standing the bickering of the morning, continued to deserve well at the eyes of the maiden mistress of the hostel. The sheriff, however, was in no mind to have his assertion doubted, although in drawing on his imagination for the usual brimstone accompaniment to apparitions, he himself had thrown the greatest doubt, by asseverating the presence of that which would have been apparent to every body. Nevertheless, although conscious he might have asserted what was not strictly true with regard to the mephitic, he would not submit to the assertion of Cullsimple, and own his senses to have been the mere victims of an illusion or nonentity, and, therefore, observed, in a sharp tone,—

"I beg to say it was not an illusion, Doctor."

"And I beg to say," observed Cullsimple, "without personality, that you must have been the dupe of your imagination, acted on by a morbid secretion of the juices, which, indeed, should render you rather tenacious in trusting to the evidence of your senses, until you have undergone a regular course of medical treatment."

"Psha!" said the sheriff, with a lofty look of contempt for every profession but the law. "What effect could medicine possibly have in a matter of this nature?"

"A great deal, a great deal!" answered Cullsimple; "medicine is wonderfully efficacious in cooling the fancy."

"Rot the fancy, sir," said the sheriff, in considerable dudgeon; "do you think I have a fancy for anything of this kind, or, if I had, how would med'cine correct it?"

"By generating a laudable chyle," returned Cullsimple.

"Sink the shop, Doctor," said Jeremiah.

"And mollify the acerbity of the juices," continued the doctor.

"Curse chyle, and send the juices to Jericho," said the sheriff in high dudgeon. "What I said I've said I will stand to, without flinching from my assertion. I say this inn is haunted."

"And I say 'tis not," said old Jeremian.

"I never remember it to have been so before last night," said Mistress Margaret; "and certainly what all saw all must believe—nothing particular has been seen to-night."

"Madam!" said the sheriff, with a marked and peculiar look.

"At least by no person save yourself," continued the lady.

"I had deemed my character —," said the sheriff.

"Quite sufficient to warrant a belief in your veracity," observed Cullsimple; "but we are all subject to mental illusion—indeed, I would say, unto occasional aberration of the mind."

"Zounds, sir," said the irascible little man, in a high tone, "do you mean to insult me?"

"No," coolly observed the doctor.

"Why, you said I was mad."

"I said no such thing," returned Cullsimple; "I said that all men were mad at times—an opinion older than the Augustan age; for your classical reading must surely have acquainted you with *nemo mortaliū*, &c., and surely what Horace said generally cannot offend anybody—that is, any body in his senses."

While these scenes were taking place in the ale-room and bar-parlor, Moll Purley, who had retreated to the room of the sick girl, on catching the first glimpse of the sheriff in the hall, sat watching by the side of Susan, little dreaming of the fright wrought by her sudden appearance and departure.

She, indeed, was as frightened as the sheriff himself could possibly be, for she dreaded lest Jeremiah Pardo should discover her presence in the hostel, and so put an end to her project of bearing Susan off to some gypsy station, and thus obtaining her desire in forcing Watch to marry her grand-daughter, whose feelings he had so grievously slighted.

For awhile she sat listening with such deep attention, that she almost started at the sound of her own breathing, converting the lightest rustling of the garden trees that waved backwards and forwards in the front of the chamber window into sounds of approaching footsteps, and more than once started up to seek concealment from the supposititious approach of the ancient host of the inn; till, after waiting half an hour in the most anxious state of suspense, the old gypsy grew more calm in her feelings, and her fears altogether subsided, believing she either must have escaped the sheriff's observation, or have been taken by him for another inhabitant of the inn.

Night had already far advanced, and the moon shone in her resplendent majesty, the queen of a thousand lesser lights, and therefore more beautiful to mortal eyes than the sun, who, shining in his solitary splendor, observes a myriad of worlds, and rules and reigns in single magnificence. Old Moll sat at the window, looking on the stars, and admiring their brightness and the glory of the shining orbs, which, according to her belief, and the belief of her people, formed the destiny of mortals.

Many thoughts, even in this moment of solitude, and perhaps now and then a natural emotion of pity, would obtrude itself on the feelings of the old woman in favor of the poor and sickly girl, whose future life she had devoted to her son. There is something truly touching in sleeping weakness, and the silent night, aiding its effect, almost wrought a feeling of compunction in the heart of the stern gypsy-woman, and led her to regret the part she had taken, and the revenge she had determined on; but she thought of the passions and their fierceness in her grand-daughter's breast, and nerved herself against all human pity.

"Why should I cherish commiseration?" thought she. "Who would commiserate the fate of the forlorn gypsy?" Does not the outlaw scorn us, and hold himself as far above our tribe as he's degraded in his own! Why should I hesitate then to dash his happiness with poison, who has despised my offspring? Yes, by the bright Orion and the wain and harp, by Venus, whose benignant warmth inspires our swarthy race with fires that burn forever, I will have my revenge! Better else had my daughter's dagger drunk her blood; but I spared her for Bernard—for Bernard—for my boy. Alas! I know not yet if he be dead or living."

Her reflections, however, were disturbed by a knocking at the chamber door, and shrouding herself behind the ample furniture of the bed, the door opened, and Mistress Margaret and Bridget entered the apartment to take farewell for the night, of the insensible object of their care and solicitude. The aunt took her hand.

"Good night, my child," prayed she; "good night, and may heaven soon restore thee to thy health."

"There is much hope in youth," observed the gypsy.

"The Lord save us," said Bridget, "the Lord save us from such a mischance; but fhot hope have the best av us, whin he's pleased to call upon us, except to go to heaven!"

"Foolish woman," said the gypsy in a low tone, "what hope have you beyond your miserable day of life! The same stars that silver the dark blue face of heaven now, silvered it a thousand years ago; they increase not, nor yet diminish: and where else should man be destined, if not to form a portion of that bright community which note his earthly lot?"

"Arrah, now, isn't heaven above the stars?" asked the Irish maiden, with an air of triumph.

"Peace, Bridget," said Mistress Margaret, who was breathing a low and charitable prayer for the recovery of her niece. "And you, Moll, give not way to such irreverend talk; it befits not the presence of—it may be death to-morrow."

"God forbid!" fervently ejaculated Bridget.

"Amen!" devoutly repeated the aunt.

And the mistress and maid quitted the room.

Again left to her meditations, Mother Purley sought the window to muse on the most feasible means of carrying out her desire. Watch was expected to return in three weeks; but within three weeks what changes might take place! within three weeks, aided by the gypsy gang, Susan Wylie would be for ever placed beyond rivalry with Frontibelle. Placed by marriage with her son Bernard—and she then shuddered as her reflection presented the picture of what might happen there to reverse her calculations—to destroy her daughter—the favored of her race—to murder Watch, and blight the hopes of Susan Wylie for ever. She shuddered as she drew this picture, and, led by an involuntary prompting, again approached her victim, when the sight of her pallid features and dishevelled hair moved the stern old woman to a feeling approaching compassion.

The jactitation usually attending violent fever had caused Susan to throw her arms over her head, and tear open her night jacket, displaying a neck that might rival the ivory for whiteness and for polish. On her neck lay the picture of Watch—that picture which Frontibelle had so coveted as to be prompted even to murder her rival to obtain it.

She had raised the picture, and was leaning over it in a fit of contemplation, when the poor girl evinced, for the first time since her illness, returning sensibility. Her eyes rested on the gypsy's countenance; for a moment her confused perceptions precluded all recol-

lection of the past; the next the whole of her struggle with Bernard, and the consequent occurrences became perceptible to her mind's eye. She could now entertain no doubt she was in the gypsy's power.

Covering her face, therefore, as if to shut out the appearance of a being so horrible, she uttered a piercing scream, and sunk on her pillow in a state of insensibility.

The scream of Susan awoke her aunt and Bridget, who slept in the next room, and who were, in less than a minute, at the door of the sick girl's chamber.

"Arrah! fhot's the matter, that my poor girl's screamin' in this way?" said Bridget, putting on the affectionate tone of a nurse, in the proper use of which the Irish are seldom exceeded; "arrahl fhot's the matther, avourneen? Fhot's the matther a gramachree? The collogue shan't be tased by any av them."

And the Irish maiden tip-toed to the side of the bed, and raised the senseless girl on the pillow, while Moll Purley explained to Mistress Margaret that it was only a paroxysm, and that after it had subsided it would probably leave her niece another thing in the morning—that, indeed, she viewed it as the crisis of her fate, and would, therefore, be better pleased to have the patient left to herself, rather than, by an untimely interference, the zeal of her friends should cause a relapse.

Thus dismissed by the peremptory old woman, Mistress Margaret and her maid Bridget again sought their chamber, but sleep was utterly denied them.

While Mistress Margaret and Bridget were thus vainly trying to close their eyes, Moll Purley used every means to restore the faculties of her patient. Sensible of the necessity that existed of coming to an explanation before Susan had an interview with her friends, lest she should betray the part herself and Frontibelle had acted on the morning she followed her lover to Copswood Cottage, and also the conduct of Bernard Purley, and the punishment he had received at the hand of Watch, Moll tried every art to restore her.

Hitherto Susan had had no opportunity of communicating with her friends, having been in a state of alternate stupor since her return to the Jolly Anchorsmiths. Could she succeed, therefore, in stopping her tongue until she was fit to be conveyed away, the cunning old woman felt herself secure. As Susan, therefore, evinced signs of returning sensibility, the old gypsy leaning over her while she chafed her temples with vinegar, took occasion to mention her name at intervals, in a modulated whisper, so as to convey to her a gradual knowledge of her presence without producing alarm.

Susan at length heard—at length indistinctly caught the whisper, and the figure of the old gypsy woman busied in applying restoratives. Shudderingly she reclosed her eyes.

"Where am I?" she inquired.

"Here I amongst friends?" returned the gypsy woman.

"They may not be friends, and I have had most horrible dreams since they laid me here," said Susan; "dreams of struggle, and persecution, and agony" —

"Fear not, girl! you are at the hostel of your uncle."

"How came I there?" cried the overjoyed Susan.

"Be composed, and you shall know every thing."

"Well?"

"You owe your safety to me, Susan Wylie!"

"To you!" said the amazed girl.

"Yes, to me!" re-asserted the old gypsy; "and do not think I could save you without a struggle. Bernard"—

"Alas! what has become of him?"

"He's dead!"

"It was not of my seeking, mother."

"I know it, girl," said the old gypsy—"I know it. I also know by whose hand he was slain. I know all this—and, contrary to my usual wont, I have forgiven it."

"How deeply will I reverence you for that, mother!"

"That's a folly I do not lack at thine hands," said the old woman, "for in my actions I have but followed the blind impulses of a direction over which I have no control."

"Oh, good mother!" exclaimed Susan, gratefully, "it was not a fate 'twas your own goodness."

"Be it so; I do not ask your gratitude."

"You shall have it nevertheless."

"I ask your silence respecting Bernard's insult and the violence of Frontibelle. Promise me this, and I require nothing further. I wish not to have strife at the hostel. I have known your uncle many a year, and would know him still, till we both are gathered to the earth we are made of," said the old gypsy.

"I promise you."

"I am satisfied. A few days, and you will be restored to health."

"What gratitude shall I feel?" cried the deceived girl; "and Watch too? I can bear witness how deeply he lamented the shot which destroyed your son."

"Did he, girl?"

"He loved Bernard, mother."

It is easy to conceive how imperceptibly the systematic falsehoods told by Moll Purley to the innocent Susan, would obtain the ascendancy over her mind, and dispose the latter to a confidence in the gypsy's promises of friendship. Having once obtained this ascendancy, Moll felt no further doubts for the success of her plan. She could now triumph in security. The only being that could put her friends on their guard was safe—was, in fact, her own. She felt herself rewarded for her toils.

Nevertheless she knew the necessity of quiet to her patient in her present state, and, therefore, mixing up some opiate medicine, and, administering it to Susan, the latter was soon buried in a deep and untroubled slumber; while old Moll, exulting in the prospect she now cherished of commanding the future actions of Watch and Susan, withdrew to the window, where she sat watching the glories of the firmament, until, fatigued with the cares of the day and night, she fell fast

asleep in the chair, and slumbered for the moment, while her mind, wakeful as ever, depicted the future in her dreams.

Moll slept soundly. The distant clock had warned a neighborhood where few were watchers at such unseasonable hours, that midnight had arrived, long ere slumber had bent her eyelids with its leaden weight. Yet, notwithstanding the fatigue she had endured in watching over her son, she had borne up against sleep with a perseverance known only unto women; who indeed, in circumstances that call upon them to undergo privation of any kind, exhibit powers of endurance and fortitude far beyond those qualities in the opposite sex.

She had slept some two hours, when a light step sounded in the garden below, and a youth appeared beneath the balcony. Several efforts followed, which he directed towards the window of the sick room, endeavouring to catch the attention of the gypsy nurse, but without avail. The gypsy slept too soundly to be awoken by such low signals as the youth gave; and he did not dare to venture on a noisier mode of announcement, lest he should disturb inmates in the hostel whom it were better should continue slumbering.

Tired of the vain endeavour to rouse old Moll, the person seeking communication with her, walking to the end of the corridor, a part of the railing of which had been torn down and used for firewood, by aid of the projecting balustrades and clefts, contrived to climb high enough to obtain a footing on the gallery, that ran round the upper part of the hostel, and was soon at the window before which the old gypsy lay sleeping.

After pausing for a moment, as if questioning the propriety of forcing his way further, the youth began to try the window, which was fastened in the inside. Vexed that so slender an obstacle prevented communication with the old woman, he gently shook the window to acquaint the sleeper of his presence, but in vain. Moll slept too soundly to be aroused by any signal that would not at the same disturb the house. A moment afterwards, however, and the button of the window dropped, when the full draught of air, blowing in the old woman's face, awoke her. She started from her chair, and, seeing a stranger youth entering by the window uttered a loud cry.

"Mother, 'tis I!—Frontibelle!" exclaimed the disguised gypsy.

"Away, then! You have alarmed me, and I the house. To-morrow night, at twelve."

And the footsteps of Mistress Margaret being heard, Frontibelle dropped from the corridor, and had soon cleared the garden of the hostel.

CHAPTER IV.

"Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes!"

THE enraged drunkards, with whom we left Binnacle at bay, brought to a stand by the cool and deliberate determination with which he presented himself, all single as he was, in opposition to their fury, paused for a moment, regarding his audacity in silent astonishment. By exerting a complete command over his own fears, he was enabled to control the feelings of his comrades, for rage is generally accompanied by weakness, and so suspend their immediate movement. Without using his sword, he literally looked them into momentary quiet. He dreaded, however, to strike a blow, as that would be a direct appeal to their resistance, and might lose him the advantage he had obtained; he, therefore, abstained from multiplying irritating circumstances, and prudently withheld his hand. By this calm and deliberate bearing he kept down the odds against him, and reduced it, notwithstanding the number of his opponents, nearly to an equality. They saw the quick and threatening glances of his eye, and, unable to calculate on whom his attack might fall, were each held in pause, lest by striking the first blow they might afford the advantage to their brave opponent. In this emergency Binnacle stood before his brother contrabandists, as the lion is said to stand, when driven to the toils; he boldly faces his hunters, holds them in check, and makes them quail beneath his threatened assault.

He knew that the slightest hostile movement on his part would lead directly to a *melee*, which, in the present excitement of the schooner's crew, must necessarily expose him to the hazard of sharing the fate of the unfortunate man he endeavored to protect; for though the intention of the drunken smugglers was suspended for the present by the courageous deportment of Binnacle, they had not abandoned it; their hesitation as already stated, arising rather from an anxiety each felt to guard himself against the first blow of their undaunted comrade, than any faltering in their avowed and brutal design against McWhat.

Old Boltrope, less intoxicated than the rest, wishing to quell a strife amongst the contrabandists which could lead to no good end, now interposed to accommodate matters betwixt Binnacle and the exasperated crew of the schooner. He had taken no part in the quarrel himself, and was astounded by the sudden and impetuous feeling which had swept away every trace of the harmony prevailing amongst them a few moments before. Gathering the cause of their wrath rather from the words of Binnacle than the angry and incoherent ebullitions of his opponents, the old steersman, starting in betwixt the infuriate

crowd of smugglers and their undaunted opponent, made a proposition that, for the present, at least, appeased their rage, and put an end to hostility.

"What d'ye mean by such caterwauling nonsense as this here?" said he; "you're a pretty set of sailors, arn't ye? and ye ought to be good 'uns too. I've worked the same craft with ye, man and boy fifteen years, and now for to go at your time o' life to fall out over a drop of grog, like a set of lousy lubbers of landmen: I'm ashamed of ye!"

"It's Binnacle's fault," cried one.

"Why does he oppose us?" said another.

"Hav'n't we as much right in the schooner as he has?" said a third.

"It's Binnacle's fault; and why does he oppose us? and we've as much right aboard the schooner as he has," said old Boltrope, repeating his words with a nasal intonation, as if to sneer them from their purpose. "And suppose it be Binnacle's fault, is that any reason for a dozen of ye to fall on him at once, like a set of cowardly swabs and lubberly loblollies over their first mess of salt junk? What! I suppose his duty to Captain Watch is too knotty for ye to chew, and so ye draw sword a doz'n agin one. O, you're a set of brave 'uns, I'm blarm'd else; if you ain't asham'd of yourselves, ye ought to be."

"Why don't he give us the Scotsman then?" cried one.

"Ay, ay! why don't he give us the Scotsman?" repeated several.

"It's you as I'm talkin' on," continued Boltrope, "not the Scotsman, who I don't care the prick of a marlin spike for. Rather than you should hurt our old friend Binny, I'd give you leave to hang a dozen of them there, and then give a little 'un in to make up the baker's number; a set of stone-skinning, crowdy-cramm'd, coal-carrying sons of —"

"Then let's have him out at once," cried several voices, drowning the last words of the old steersman by their clamor for the immediate gratification of their vengeance.

"Then have him out!" said the old steersman. "Mind, I don't say nothin' agin that there; but don't go for to shew a new face to an old friend, as we've navigated it with through the roughs and smooths, tempest and fair weather, of life."

"He denies us yet," said the ringleader.

"Certainly, and will to the last drop o' my blood," said Binnacle, stoutly maintaining his intention.

"O!" said Boltrope, in dudgeon, "if so be as you talks in that sort of exasperating way, I've done with you altogether. Howsumever, I had got a sort of summat to propose as I thought might heve accommodated all tempers in this here margency."

"What is it, Master Boltrope?" cried several.

"It is to call a court-martial, and give the poor devil a fair trial."

"Our leader's orders are to spare him," observed Binnacle.

"Hold your tongue!" said Boltrope. "Why will you still endeavor to make bad worse in this manner? What do you say to my proposal, eh, my messmates?"

"Agreed, agreed!"

"Then let's draw lots for the judge."

"I'll call up the captain, he's the fittest person to preside in such a matter," said Binnacle, walking toward the companion slide; but before he had time to take three steps for such a purpose, four or five of the crew, rushed towards the boat and laid hands on the trembling McWhat, while the remainder secured the slide, and locked Watch in the cabin.

During the brief respite obtained for him by Binnacle's honest perseverance in his duty to the smuggler chief, McWhat lay at the bottom of the boat listening with the most painful emotion to every word, hardly daring to hope for preservation, yet clinging with instinctive tenacity unto existence, while the excitement of time seemed to swell his heart and brain to bursting; and he remained well nigh unable to breathe, and exhausted by the terror arising from the prospect of certain, inevitable death.

All the past arose before his mind in that awful moment; every fault he had committed throughout his errant existence became plainly present, crowded, yet distinctly palpable to his mind's eye. He shrank and shuddered at the picture. He tried to reproach heaven with the fate he had brought on himself; but eternity seemed to near unto him, and his heart sunk under the impiety of such a thought. The vanity of human reason could no longer afford justification, and conscience invested words and deeds, which in the lustihood of life, had appeared light in his estimation of right and wrong, with an importance they had never before attained to, rendering his approaching end more bitter to contemplate.

When, therefore, he felt the infuriate smugglers seize him by the collar and drag him from the boat—when he found himself placed upon the deck and ungagged, all his faculties seemed to leave him. For some moments he stared about him with an insane look, as devoid of sensation as he was powerless of motion. His eyes remained fixed upon the savage-looking men before him, receiving, however, nothing but the presentiment of an indistinct mass of objects, of which his senses were incapable of taking any rational cognizance. At length he felt a ringing in his ears; a dreadful chill crept through his veins, and he recovered to a new sense of the horrors of his condition. Uttering a loud cry, he averted his eyes, as if to exclude the thought of what he had to suffer.

Filled with violent emotions, and the contending feelings of self-reproach, and shame, and anguish, the wretched McWhat found it impossible to preclude from his mind, in this moment of heartfelt misery, a recollection of the hopeless ruin to which his self-seeking spirit had devoted the men who had now obtained an ascendancy over his fate, and he abjectly quailed beneath them, recoiling from their regards as if their eyes were endued with the murderous fascination which is fabled of the basilisk's.

Could he even have indulged a hope to save his life, the present fury of his enemies, increased as it was, by drunkenness, to an ungovernable pitch, would have been sufficient to have crushed it in its birth. Where-

fore, he stood before his judges, tremblingly alive to the terrors of his situation, shrinking from the scrutiny of the men he had aimed to betray, while his pusillanimous mind pictured the present as the crowning crisis of his fate; heart-crushed, despairing, spiritless, he stood upon the deck, while the crew bustled about to get up the mockery of a court-martial, rather to aggravate the sufferings than to afford him chance or prospect of escape.

This was a perilous moment to the unfortunate McWhat, and how much soever he felt his spirit rebuked under the ascendant genius of Will Watch, he would have given all he had in the world, save his life, to have seen the smuggler leader on his schooner's deck, convinced that he was not the man coolly to enact the part of a murderer, notwithstanding the grievous provocation he had received. Howbeit, there was no chance of such occurrence, and nothing short of a special intervention of providence seemed capable of snatching him from his impending danger.

While McWhat continued a prey to these conflicting feelings, the crew of the schooner, wantonly scoffing at his evident emotion, proceeded to collect such materials as might serve for the seats of the functionaries who were about to sit in all the solemn mockery of a trial, on the question of a fellow-creature's life or death, and by the aid of a spare grating and an old sail, they managed to rig out the semblance of a table, at which the pretended court-martial were to sit.

The foresail was hauled up to give those madmen room enough in the waist for the solemnity they were on the point of enacting. The table was spread with pens and paper, more for ornament than use, as might have been affirmed by the total absence of any liquid bearing the most distant resemblance to ink; nor would they have thought on the necessity of providing pens and paper, had it not been for one of their body, who having matriculated in an English country theatre, had caught the spirit of whim which seems to grow amongst the children of Thespis spontaneously, and is rendered so peculiar to their characters, that such as have once devoted themselves to the eccentric profession of the stage, seem totally demarked by a line of separation from more orderly and regular departments of human life.

Better acquainted than his less experienced companions with the requisitions of form, and duly impressed with the philosophical consistency and truth of that ancient and venerable maxim, "the wisdom's in the wig," our Thespian smuggler, in his full relish for glee, had disappeared through the fore-hatchway on the first proposition to hold a court-martial, in order to ransack his sea-chest. From this repository of miscellaneous lumber he produced the paper and pens necessary, in his mind, to crown their proceedings, whatever they might be, with an appearance of form—that form which, in higher and more imposing tribunals is so often made to sanction injustice; while, to prevent any undue interference on the part of Mr. Boreas and his lesser vent-pegs, each sheet was severally held down by a full can of grog, to slake the thirst respectively of the several worthies who were about to sit in judgment.

Having progressed thus far, our worthy child of whim, to whose con-

ception alone the court-martial, awarded to McWhat at the intercession of the old steersman, owed its entire solemnity, animated by a determination to give it yet greater claim on the estimation of the trembling wretch upon whom it was about to sit in judgment, got a couple of new swabs, which, aided by the little ingenuity he had acquired in the dressing-room, he converted into the semblance of a Judge Advocate's wig, gracing his own block therewith; and cooping up a seat on an eighteen-gallon rum cask, he wrapped himself up in an old morning gown, and was hailed judge of the court amid the laughter of the drunken contrabandists, who, like many other people in the world, could always relish a joke—with this proviso, that it should be ready made unto their hands, and executed at another person's expense.

While these preliminary arrangements were being hurried on in the waist, Boltrope and Binnacle stood abaft the mainmast, the latter looking on the bustle and activity of the people forward, as they made the preparations above described, with an agitation he could by no means control. Deeply angered with his companion for having made the absurd proposal to grant the Scotsman a fair trial before proceeding to take his life, he regarded the bustling activity of the men with a moody and discontented look; this proposition had, in fact, by distracting his own attention from his infuriate companions, enabled the latter to master the person of McWhat, and thus carry their murderous designs into execution, which he knew would occasion much displeasure to their leader, being as already stated, in direct and open contravention of his express commands. Binnacle, therefore, continued looking at the men in the waist, and reverting his glance to the steersman for some moments in silence, at length, unable to control himself, he burst out:—

"A queer mess of lobsouse you've cooked up for us all; when the captain comes to hear on't, Master Boltrope," said he, "they'll be sorry for what they are doing to-morrow morning."

Boltrope turned his quid, but said nothing.

"Had you drawn on my side, instead of making such a mischievous proposal, Delaware Dick and two or three others, who are not quite so far gone as the rest, would have been with us in a few minutes, and enabled us to have brought the drunken fools to reason," continued Binnacle; "as things go at present, I don't think the rogues will stop short of taking his life."

"Belay there, Master Binnacle," returned his companion; "I don't know as they won't be better serving our purpose by takin' of his life, than the captain would by preserving it; so that after all's said and done, I shall be found on the right side at last; better to spifficate a dozen sick fellers as him than give one a chance of living to split on us, after what has happened!"

"Why, Master Boltrope," said Binnacle, "I'm not going to dispute that matter with you at all, nor, seeing as we cut down braver and better men, do I care one straw for the life of the cowardly rascal who would have betrayed us all to save himself. But I do reverence the Captain, and had rather be hanged, if I had twenty necks, than do

anything agin his orders. I know he's got the doldrums over the late affair, and talks about warnings, and signs. Therefore, I'd rather give up my own opinion than have any say against his'n; for, it might be, he'd resign, and then what becomes of us? Why, we drop to pieces for want of a bold hand to hold, and a clear judgment to direct us. What should we have done without him in our late engagement? I'm as brave as he is—but, though I care little for my life, and feel a wild and glesome spirit of madness swelling up my lungs, when shots are flying about me, I cannot do as he does."

"Come, come, Master Binnacle," observed Boltrope, "things mayn't displease the Cap'n so much, after all; and if this fellow's put out of the way, we get more safety by the action."

"Nevertheless, I don't like it."

"Nor I, for the matter of that," pursued Boltrope; "and I care not who hears me say it, I don't feel over comfortable when I think of the cutter as we've run down, and the men as we've conquered. But, as I said afore, things may turn out better in the end, if we wind up the case by making clear decks of it at once: and, after what we have done, Master Binnacle, one life can't make so much difference in squaring accounts up aloft, if the Capt'n's that way inclined."

"I tell you," said Binnacle, half vexed with his companion for siding with the crew, against the express orders of their leader—"I tell you the Captain won't be best pleased to murder"—

"Nor the crew to save him," interrupted the old steersman.

"That may be; but"—

"But what?" demanded Boltrope with energy. "Are all our lives to be put to hazard, rather than one man should be sent to Davy? Remember, Master Binnacle, there are sixteen of us aboard, and a whisper of that rascally Scotsman, about whom you are making such a fuss, would line the coast of Kent with our gibbeted bodies, for—and let them say the worst they can of the action—boldly takin' o' the law in our own hands, in defence of our own property. I tell you, Master Binnacle, it may be all very well for the Capt'n to preach humanity, but what humanity would they show the like of us? None, I reckon. So let's a-head, and see how the fun goes on."

"You can do as you please, Master Boltrope," observed Binnacle, in high dudgeon; "I shall not a-head to see anything of the kind, for I know worse'll come of it than you seem to think."

"Just as you please, for the matter of that, Master Binnacle," said the steersman; "but Delaware Dick's a rolling this way, with as much rum in him as a dock-delivered puncheon—and that's ticketed 'full to the bung'—and I guess he's coming to bring you for'ard, with a suppeeny, whether you will or no; for he's a grinning like a Cheshire cat, as the saying is—I wonder if them kind o' cats catches any mice, seeing as they talk of their eating cheese."

As may be already surmised, the conversation betwixt Binnacle, and the steersman was put an end to by the negro's approach, who, as Boltrope described him, came reeling, or rather rolling, up to them in a state of inebriation that defied all consequences—in other words, re-

freshed so illustriously, as to fancy himself the most capable hand on board the schooner, at talking; though, truth to say, the liquor, and his negro dialect, combined, rendered him barely capable of being understood.

"Ha! ya! ha! Ow, Massa Binnacle!" said Delaware Dick, on approaching the two worthies, "ow, Massa Binnacle!"

Binnacle turned away.

"A gat a peeny por yoo."

"Suppeeny, I s'pose you mean," observed Boltrope.

"Bot's dat t' yoo bot I mean?" said the negro, flourishing his fist in all the irascibility of drunkenness; "bot's dat t' yoo bot I mean? Didn't 'dress mysalp t' yoo, no how, Massa Boltrope. An' ip a did, I sed a 'peeny, didn't I? Tink I lib all dis so long, an' not larn 'peak Englis! Ain't comin' to be teacht, a reckon"

"I didn't mean to offend you, Master Dick," said the steersman.

"Dat um hoss ob anoder color, as my granny use' t' say," said Dick, opening his broad black hand and tendering it in amity to Boltrope, who took it; "s'pose yoo don't warn' to defend me, a' don't warn' to defend yoo, an' dere's an end o' the matt'r. I 'peak to yoo Massa Binnacle, to come for'd."

"And suppose I don't choose to go?"

"Den I fe'ch yoo. Ha, ha! ha! See yoo dat, eh?"

"Well! let me know what they want with me," asked Binnacle.

"Dey say dey mos' hab a ground bobbin," replied Dick, with his usually loud laugh.

"Round Robin, you mean," followed Boltrope, correcting the negro again; which correction, however, roused the ire of the man of color, who, suddenly turning round on him, exclaimed—

"Am I t' be int'rup' in dis bay? Oo are yoo dat you set up 'cool-massa! I can take a message, I reck'n, bedout yoo 'sistance, Massa Boltrope, I carn tell 'ee."

"You say you can take a message," said Binnacle, addressing the negro with a stern regard.

"I sho'd tink so!" returned the black.

"Then away for'ard," said Binnacle, "away for'ard! and say that Bill Binnacle 'ill take no part in the present proceedings of the crew. Carry that message to them as sent ye, d'ye hear? and tell them they'd better drop what they're about. I would not be in some of their shoes when Captain hears on't."

"Den you won' come!" said the negro

"No!"

Laying his immense fist on the collar of Binnacle's jacket, the negro, who was a powerful fellow, notwithstanding his inebriation, seized him, and sang, in a running guttural cadence—

"Den I mos' log yoo along bid me, says the sarcy Aretusa!"

Binnacle, however, who had no mind to be handled in that fashion, endeavoured to shake him off, when the black, in consequence of his intoxication, finding impossible to move his antagonist, called out—

"Land yon 'sistance, Massa Boltrope; it um order ob my Lor' Promp'cue, de chu'ge."

"Go forward without resistance," said the person last addressed; "you may as well humour as hold out against the will of drunken men. 'Tis the liquor, not them, you should blame."

"I take you, Boltrope, to witness," observed Binnacle, "that I declare myself agin the mumming in which I am compelled to act. Depend on't worse 'ill come on't than you think for."

And Binnacle accompanied by Boltrope, walked forward to the waist, where the drunken array sat in boisterous session to try the trembling McWhat.

Though incapable of perfect motion, his arms being still pinioned, his lower limbs disencumbered of their sea-shroud or covering of shot-ted canvas, in which they had been swathed during the late engagement, he was enabled to stretch himself and breathe the air in partial freedom, while he stood before the self-constituted tribunal about to hold a session on his life. McWhat contemplated their proceedings with mingled feelings of resentment, terror, and despair.

Under any other circumstances, the appearance of this court of mad-men and drunkards would have excited no other feeling than scornful contempt; but, possessed of uncontrolled power over the fate of their prisoner, and unchecked in its exercise by the presence of any master spirit, the array was sufficient to awe the most dauntless. The natural repugnance felt by all men unto death, though it may be overcome by an ambition of glory when attended by a public display where honour may be reaped or advantage gained, is, nevertheless, as rife in the breast of heroes as in the minor spirits of creation. There was nothing here to rob it of its terrors—not a solitary circumstance of mitigation—nothing to soften the dying moment—no friendly hand to smooth the pillow—no religious comforter to point out a bright futurity—no hope of after life. Even the charity which lends a light unto faith on other occasions, was necessarily lost here in the ebullitions of a resentment against men who were thus seeking his life in defiance of all laws, divine or human.

Nevertheless, this resentment, like all other feelings of a violent nature, wore itself out, and his anger subsided into a fear that made the unfortunate Scotsman view the proceedings before him with a sinking of the spirit which deprived his cheek and lips of their wonted colour. His heart, completely under the dominion of terror, refused to propel the circulation to the surface, and left his skin of a mingled yellowish and blueish cast, imparting to the prisoner more of the livid appearance of a corpse than of a christian and breathing man. He, indeed, truly felt the bitterness of death, foretasting the obstruction which renders the sensible, warm motion of the flesh back to its kindred clay; while the thought that his unimprisoned spirit should be so soon and so suddenly hurried before the tribunal of a wise and perfect judge, was far too horrible to contemplate."

"The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment,
Could lay on nature, had been a paradise,
To what he feared of death"—

The agony and affliction of spirit he endured, are indescribable, even by those who have suffered under similar circumstances; nor is it in the power of human language to depict truly the horrors of his situation. Wavering betwixt time and eternity, he felt his hold on the one gradually relaxing, whilst he dare not look into the yawning void presented by the other. It seemed unto him, as it indeed is, a more than immeasurable space—an idea whose vastness can only be circumscribed within the narrow compass of the human mind, by filling it with the perfections of the immensity of glory that informs all the visible expanse, and, yet, creative beyond the bound of human vision, aided by the nicest human art, has, possibly, placed systems on systems billions of millions of miles beyond the ken of things of mortal growth.

In this deep feeling of misery, McWhat could find no solace. His mind was obscured by the conflict of his feelings. The vastness of eternity was intolerable. There was no hope to circumscribe it by personifying a being of mercy, of mildness, of beneficence, of love. In that moment, therefore, of uncertainty and horror, when the sweet visitations of religion were denied, there was no consolation, nor was there any thing in the surrounding circumstances to arouse his energies by calling to his aid the bad principle of human pride that rather chooses death than repentance, and hardens itself alike against the fear of future reprobacy and sense of present malediction.

The whole world seemed fading on his vision, and the vanity which had invested it with brightness and beauty in other days, turned from the contemplation of the boundless sea and sky, neither an unworthy type of eternity to view his miserable self, a mere grain of sand in the estimation of the universe, and filled him with a trembling and quaking horror, when he thought of futurity, and deemed what dreadful sufferings might exist in a world beyond the grave. Alas! what idea could he form of infinitude, having no longer a living portion in the material world! he saw nothing in the future but hopelessness and despair.

While McWhat continued a prey to inward horrors, his persecutors, arrayed in the very mockery of judicial forms practised in the more regular communities of mankind, whose conventional properties sanction and render them palatable, gave unbounded licence to their glee, as if moved by an uncontrollable spleen which whetted the edge of its resentment on a semblance of joy, and borrowed an unholy mirth from the contemplation of the murder they were about to perpetrate.

Madness and guilt were in that hour of horror—a mirthful madness, which seemed to gloat on prospective blood, with an unearthly appetite—a fitful insanity of horrid joy, as the promise of revenge revelled in the blood and rose and fell with serpentine undulations in the veins of those lawless and cruel men. Rude, gibing, caustic remarks passed from mouth to mouth, amongst them, on the bearing of their victim, whom they honored with occasional regards, and whose blanched cheeks and trembling limbs only furnished them with a theme for coarse jesting, and bitter and contemptuous and taunting scorn.

Mercy there was none—hope there was none—despair had usurped

the place of fear in the Scotsman's breast, and forbade him to indulge the fond and flattering dream of safety or escape. He looked on his savage persecutors, and the horrid truth could no longer be concealed; death in all its terrors was before him—his breath became painfully restricted—his eyes swam—his heart struck heavily against his ribs—a tingling sensation, like the puncturing of pins and needles, shot through his frame, and he was only prevented falling to the deck in a state of insensibility, by the clay cold and clammy perspiration which overtasked nature sent at length to his relief.

CHAPTER V.

"No walls can hide us from the eye of heaven,
For shame must end what wickedness began."

Our last chapter left the unfortunate McWhat abiding the arbitrament of the self-elected tribunal of smugglers, palsied and enchained in his faculties, and deprived of the ordinary powers of motion, of perception, and will. His abjectness of spirit seemed to have robbed him of the common functions of life. Every limb had become paralysed under a painful sense of certain and approaching destruction. His strength seemed altogether to have departed from him, and he stood waiting their question without being able to summon up the nerve necessary to make a reply, or attempt a palliation or defence of his conduct.

The rabble of drunkards by this time assembled round the grating, which, covered with black canvas, served them in lieu of a table, had collected together various substitutes for chairs that were most conveniently at hand, such as buckets turned upside down, coal basket, coils of rope, brandy kegs, &c. These miscellaneous articles formed appropriate seats for the fiery spirits who, flushed by drunkenness, and excited by their recent achievement, were about to add another victim to the day's slaughter.

They acted, however, up to the madness of the hour, and commenced proceedings; and of a verity their conduct was of a character that might serve to rebuke the practices of some higher courts, deputed in more regular communities to dispense justice, and who, like them, indeed, often affirm right unto might, and send the weaker spitor empty-handed away.

Promptene, the Thespian smuggler, introduced to the reader's notice in the last chapter, with his head decorated in long ringlets of rope-yarn, sat as the counterfeit judge in this supreme court of folly. He was stimulated by the liquor he had been swallowing, until his brain presented that strange compound of cruelty and caprice, extravagance and good humor, not unfrequent amongst men accustomed to the personification or embodiment of the various passions and emotions of human nature, and who, in moments of excitement, become partially affected by the feelings they have been in the habit of imitating. Each feeling in turn asserted its supremacy in his mind, or, mingled in chaotic confusion, disposed him to the most absurd extravagance. Rising from

the rum cask that elevated him a trifle above the other members of the court, he now proceeded to address his compeers, interlarding his sea lingo with quotations from the green-room, and accompanying the whole with an occasional hiccup.

"Belay jawing!" said he, "belay jawing! and, if you please,

To leave the keen encounter of your tongues,
And fall to something of more serious method:"

or, as Polonius says—

———"Since brevity's the soul of wit,
And tediousness its limbs and outward flourishes
I will be brief."

By the bye, some or one of you ought properly to hold a brief of charges," interlarded he, the word brief having suggested another propriety or point of form, "if you mean to conduct the court-martial in an ordinary manner." He then continued: "The tyrant custom, most grave senators—I mean smugglers—has rendered it necessary I should open this court with a speech; wherefore I say again, with the noble patrician Brutus, 'Here me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear; or, as I said before, belay jawing; for a judge should be an oracle, and

"I am Sir Oracle,
So when I ope my mouth, let no dog bark!"

for if, interrupting the proceedings of our solemn court of justice, you refuse to hear both sides, then do I seriously say with Touchstone, you are in a 'parlous state,' which, being translated into English, signifieth, 'You are damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.'

"Never fear, we are all on the right side," exclaimed several.

"Then you shall find 'a Daniel come to judgment,'" observed Promptcue, with a serio-comic air. "But stop, I must quench my familiar smile in an austere regard of control. Let the prisoner be put into dock."

"Ow, Massa Promptcue, him here raddy," said Delaware Dick.

And McWhat stood at the end of the table, scarcely cognizant of the proceedings at which he was assisting, although he mechanically obeyed Promptcue, and presented himself to the court.

The mock judge then continued:

"Is your name Shylock?"

The Scotsman stared in amazement.

"Beg pardon," said the drunken Promptcue; "I meant to say Alexander McWhat."

"It is," answered the prisoner, faintly.

"That's right, he has now impleaded," said the judge, taking a pull at the grog can. "Now, prosecutor, go on with the charge. What, no answer?"

"Upon my power I must dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario—"

I mean Boltrope comes to render me assistance," hiccuped the judge.

"I'll nothin' to do with your proceedings," grumbled the latter-mentioned personage.

"And you, Master Binnacle?" interposed the judge.

"I tell you plainly 'tis against our leader's will, and I'll no hand in his death or mischief, if mischief you mean. I know much danger to us all will grow out of this idle adventure," replied Binnacle.

"You don't mean what you say?" quoth the Judge.

"I do."

Why then does our captain hold him prisoner?" questioned Promptcue, with a drunken stare. "You can't object to answer that."

"For plotting to betray us into the hands of government," replied Binnacle.

"Enough!" cried the judge. "This is evidence on the substantive charge."

"A charge! a charge!" cried the whole court tumultuously.

"Prisoner, thou hast heard the charge against you," said the judge gravely, but with a most provoking cock of the eye; "and now doubting thee, 'I will put thee to thy purgation,' as Touchstone says. Bouse up your jib-stays."

"I pray ye to put an end to this mockery," said McWhat, roused into a momentary indignation. "Ye ken ye hae nae recht till tre't me like a daft loon; hooe'er ye may hae poo'er to deal wi' me."

"Thou hast heard the charge, friend," observed Promptcue, taking a swill, which lent new fire to the mischievous twinkling of his eye. "Thou hast heard our charge, and had best answer it temperately. 'So will your modesty be a flambeau to your merit,' as Arthur has it; for, as Lear says,

———'Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it with rags, a pigmy straw doth pierce it.'

Therefore, look well unto thy bearing, prisoner, being thyself not only neither more nor less than a rag as aforesaid, but, placed amongst the jolly roving fellows about you, a rag without a bush to hang yourself upon—not that we wish to put you to any inconvenience in the disposition of your person, or compel you, as Gratiano says, to

'Beg that thou may'st have leave to hang thyself.'

To thy defence, therefore. Speak, I charge you, for, *accorde linto*, as the immortal bard hath it, thou art granted space."

If this rigmarole address of the inebriated judge, as well as the drunken plaudits with which his companions received it, were sufficient to strike terror into the mind of McWhat, he was nevertheless roused to a momentary equality with the threatening aspect of his fate, when he heard Boltrope and Binnacle decline taking part in the proceedings. He even cherished a hope they would not consent to his death, should the drunken fury of their companions lead them to condemn

him unto that punishment, and that they would at the last moment adopt some means to save him. So that, notwithstanding he could hear the active preparations on all sides for his execution, his mind still dared to present him with a chance of life in the demurrer of the two smugglers to the proceedings of their shipmates. It was a desperate chance—a forlorn hope, at best; yet he indulged it—indulged it even when the smugglers carried the spare spar past him rigged out with the block and tackle to be used to launch him into eternity—indulged it even when he saw the cord spliced to the tackle and rove into a noose to perfect their final judgment.

Yes, trembling on the verge of eternity, the poor wretch dared to hope he should be respited from the fate that threatened him; and though his limbs trembled, and his heart inwardly quailed under the surrounding horrors; and though his knees knocked together, and his pulsations came heavily and slowly, as if his blood had become too thick for circulation—he still dared to hope. Alas! when does the anticipating cheat quit the bosom of mankind! Hope soars in her many-colored robe, rising in the midst of difficulty and danger. She leads the warrior to the contest, the lover to his enjoyment, the wretch to deeper misery than happier natures would dare to look upon, mocking alike the pleasures of life and scoffing at the pains of death. She is where she is not. For, though it may appear paradoxical, the cherub hope may be found lurking behind the gloomy figure of despair, if man would courageously look beyond his own fears. She animates the living and consoles the dying; and, curing present pain by promising future pleasure, incites me onward through the pilgrimage of life, by creating a future, where the heavy-laden are unburthened and the weary may look for rest.

Roused to the fool's paradise, therefore, by the refusal of Binnacle and Boltrope to have any participation in the affair, McWhat answered the ludicrous nonsense strung together by the half-mad Thespian, Promptue, in the first place, by protesting against any right on the part of his drunken inquisitors to question him; and in the second, by loudly demanding the presence and sanction of the commander of the schooner, before they proceeded further in their avowed intention of taking his life.

Unprepared, from the weakness previously exhibited by the Scotsman, for so downright a denial of the authority of their court, in the teeth of the "open sea," which so conveniently offered him a bed among the oyster natives below whenever the banded contrabandists should solicit Neptune for his accommodation, Promptue stared at the prisoner with a stare of deep and drunken astonishment, which lent any but an intellectual expression unto his countenance. Yes, he stared as if he could not bring himself to believe that so much fool-hardiness could find a shelter in the cool brain of a Scotsman; or, indeed, in the brain of Adam's descendants, gifted with the modicum of common sense which falls unto the share of ordinary mortals.

Recovering by slow degrees, Promptue, who, by this time, was pretty far gone in liquor, being in a state of fox-drunkenness, wherein

the intellect peeps out at the eyes without daring to pass the barrier of indiscretion by trusting itself tongueward, drew a long breath, at the same time uttering an audible interjection, which he intended should convey his inward surprise unto his brethren of the court, and prepare them for the overwhelming torrent of indignation which would certainly follow, as soon as he could collect words enough for such a purpose, or breath to utter them.

At length the negro came to the rescue, by exclaiming—

"Oo, Massa. Promptue; bot shall 'um done to de man bot defies our court? tell me dat."

"Defies our court, did ye say? He shall find the court can protect itself then," exclaimed Promptue, with a hiccup, while his companions vociferately took him up by crying—

"He shall! he shall!"

"He shall! he shall! to be sure he shall; and he will, and he must," flourished the judge. "If it be necessary, I'd hang up a dozen such scurvy knaves, without tarrying consent of the captain. Yes, as Antonio says, he shall find—"

"He may as well go stand upon the beach,
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
He may as well use question with the wolf,
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
He may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;
He may as well do anything most hard,
As seek to soften that (than which, what's harder?)—"

our stubborn resolution. If he won't plead, boys, let's hang him for contumacy. What say you to this?"

"Agreed! agreed!" shouted the rest.

"He hath defied our power, and shall be treated as a Philistine," cried Promptue. "Hangman, look to your victim. 'Fye upon him,' as Shakspeare says, 'he will discredit your mystery.'"

Nor did the judge speak without occasion, for as the hangman stretched forth his hand to grasp the shoulder of McWhat, the whole of the latter shook with a sudden tremor, and he cast himself at the feet of Boltrope and Binnacle, looking up to them with a pitiful and imploring eye, and showing as if, had his arms been unconfined, he would even have embraced their knees, in his humiliation, to propitiate their mercy. The baseness of his fear disgusted the only men on deck who felt for his situation, and they turned themselves away, loathing the miserable clinging to existence he manifested in the presence of actual danger.

"Who'd try to save a coward like him, Master Binnacle!" said Boltrope, in a tone of contempt. "It's no credit to be knocked on the head for a crawling, miserable wretch like that. Had he an ounce of pluck in his beggarly carcase, it might afford provocation to an act of mercy. Mercy to him! If the captain's self were here, he could not do it."

"I wish he was here, Master Boltrope," replied the person last addressed; "I wish he was here, if it were only to take the 'sponsibility off some of their shoulders."

"It will be all right, I tell you, let the crew do their worst to him," said the former speaker.

"I hope so," observed Binnacle; "I hope so."

And both seamen turned on their heel disgusted by the cowardly bearing of the half-prostrate, half-crawling wretch who endeavored to excite their sympathies in his behalf; while the Scotsman continued in a voice occasionally broken by his struggling against the athletic ruffians who were dragging him towards the spot where loosely floated in the air the tackle and rope, his destined passports to eternity.

"I implore ye, jontlemen; I crave ye to hae mercy on a puir confined body that canna raise an arm to protae' himsal' agen an atrocity like this. Hae marcy as ye may hope for marcy at your ain need-time. Think there may come a time when yoursals 'ill lack the marcy ye deny until me. Halp, for the marcy o' the gude Gad! Listen until me. Ye maun a' abide his judgment. Think then o' that moment. Halp! Oh, murder!" continued the distracted Scotsman, as he felt himself dragged by main strength past the foremast, to suffer the death to which they had already doomed him.

The piercing cry, or rather yell of agony, uttered by McWhat in this extremity of suffering, thrilled to the very hearts of his murderers, and occasioned a momentary pause in the desperate deed for which they were preparing. It even aroused Watch from the heavy stupor into which he had been plunged by the loss of blood, as well as the fatigue he had undergone during the last twenty-four hours. Starting from his mattress on the cabin floor, on which Binnacle and Bladen had laid him, he raised himself upon his elbow and stared around him, unable to define the meaning of a sound so unusual on board the schooner.

Another outcry shook the vault of heaven, and Watch, unable longer to endure suspense, with a single bound started to his feet, and ran up the companion-ladder. Astonished to find himself a prisoner within his own cabin, he at first deemed the schooner had been picked up by a revenue cruiser, and that he and his men were at the mercy of their conquerors. This idea was too maddening to be endured. The thought of the disgraceful death that awaited him; should such a misfortune as he had surmised have really befallen, was too bitter to contemplate. His brain began to swell under the horrible anticipation of the threatening disgrace. His heart rose unto his throat with a choking sensation, that suspended the power of speech, as he thundered at the companion slide for egress.

"Hark!" said Binnacle, who first caught the sound, "hark!—'tis the Captain! You will repent your present conduct, depend on't; but you will not be warned."

"It is certainly the Captain," followed Boltrope; "let somebody go aft and unfasten the companion hatch."

"I shall certainly do nothing of the sort," hiccuped Promptene; "nor any body else, while I'm judge. It would be a thousand shames to spoil our sport at the present interesting crisis."

"You will have to answer for it"

"I know that as well as you do," said the drunken Promptene; "so let every tub stand on its own bottom. I sat upon one, just now, that stood on its head."

McWhat cast an imploring look towards Binnacle.

Watch again shook the companion slide.

"You may shake long enough before you shake us out of our sport," hiccuped Promptene; "so bear a-hand, my lads, and up with him at once. It's a pity he ain't a little the worse for liquor; for Shakspeare says, 'He that is drunk over night, and hanged early in the morning, is sure to sleep soundly all day.'"

It would be impossible to describe the mingled emotions which agitated the bosom of McWhat, during the short interval occupied by the conversation we have just detailed. The relief afforded by the words of Binnacle had lent a beam of hope to his eye, which flashed out with the effect of lightning. It was succeeded, however, by a revulsion of feeling, equally sudden, when he heard the ribald jest of the drunken Promptene, and the loud laugh which followed that worthy's observation.

But when, pursuant to the proposition of their companion, the hands of several of the crew were laid upon him at once, he uttered a yell of terror, so unearthly and appalling, as suspended their purpose, and froze them with horror.

A moment's pause, and they had recovered themselves; and, notwithstanding the prayers, and entreaties, and appalling cries he alternately uttered—notwithstanding the convulsive struggles with which he resisted their efforts, they succeeded in dragging him backward beneath the beam which was to launch him to eternity, and adjusting the noose.

When he felt the cord round his neck, the Scotsman made a last desperate effort, and succeeded in freeing his arms. Waving them about in a momentary state of excitement approaching to insanity, he seized the throats of two of the contrabandists with a convulsive grip of agony, and, though blackening in the face by the desperation with which he clung unto existence, the cord by which he was to be strangled having slipped aside, and therefore not performing its office properly, he held them so firmly as even to raise them from the deck, while his chest heaved and expanded under the combined effect of effort and excitement, and a low hoarse gurgling sound proceeded from his throat, while he successfully resisted every effort to sway him upward by the tackle-lift to which they had fastened him, until slashing his knuckles with a cutlass, his hold on the two smugglers was so far loosened as to render further resistance unavailing, although he still struggled against the fate to which his enemies had doomed him.

Desperately did this unfortunate wretch endeavor to preserve existence; the instinct of life seemed, in him, to predominate so far above

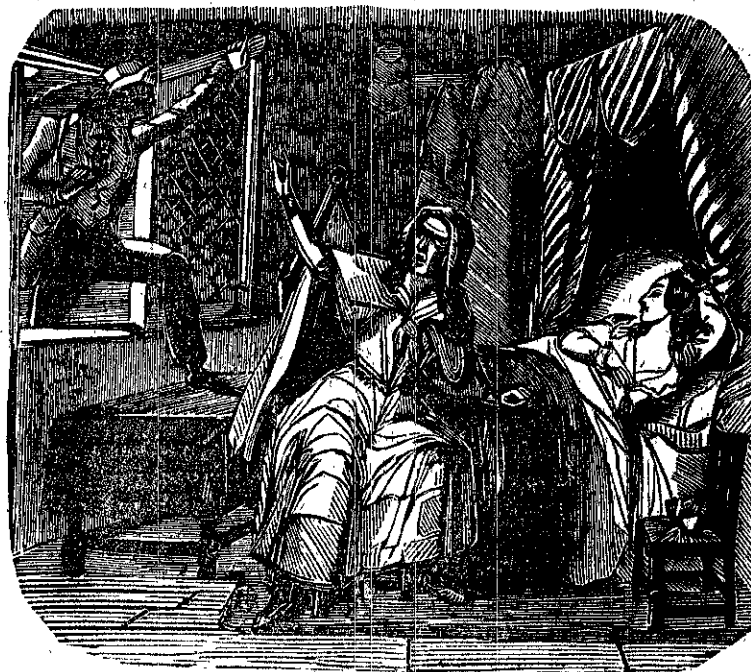
every other feeling as to deprive him even of the lesser and more ignoble energies of our common nature. Nor could he summon the passive courage to his aid by which the ordinary run of men are able to meet what seems inevitable, with resignate spirit. His imbecile effort to retain his life in the teeth of despair itself, and so to prolong the tortures he endured, forbade any sympathy from the rude and lawless characters around him; and his death, which, bravely borne, might have impressed them with decent awe, now excited ineffable loathing and contempt.

His grasp being loosened, a single effort of the men who held on the tackle was sufficient to raise him from the deck. His chest now swelled to bursting, and his whole frame seemed convulsed with the most horrible agony. Life, however, was as yet intact, and he made a last desperate effort to retain it. Ere he swung over the vessel's side, he sprang upward with the instinct of a cat, and caught at the rope above his head; he retracted his knees, then thrusting out his limbs in a rereward position, his back bent like a piece of whalebone, as with the last energy of despair he endeavored to take the weight of his body off the line by which it was suspended. He now tried to cry, but, from the swollen state of his tongue, although he made the most horrible effort, failed to produce a sound, till his arms becoming too feeble to support him in so unnatural a position, he dropped to the full extent of the cord; blood gushed out of his ears and nostrils; his eyes protruded from their sockets; his face, blackening under the effect of gradual strangulation, presented the most horrible distortions; his tongue projected from his mouth, and, nearly bitten through in the last agonies of expiring nature, dripped with red and ropy slime; a convulsive shuddering throughout his frame proclaimed his last effort, and he then swung passive and listless in the breeze.

The crew of the schooner engaged in this desperate and daring outrage gazed on the struggling and despairing man until their flesh crept and their blood was chilled and frozen within their veins, and a mist floated before their eyes, and their brain seemed whirled round, and they experienced a sensation of dizziness, while their limbs, rooted to the spot under the united emotions of terror and disgust, were rendered for some time incapable of their office. So that, notwithstanding their leader still continued to thunder for egress from the cabin to which they had confined him, their faculties were so absorbed by the terrible struggles of their victim, that they neither heard nor heeded him.

Even Boltrope and Binnacle, although they had taken no part in the proceedings, the latter particularly having opposed the fury of the drunken crew, were so scared by the horrible scene they had just witnessed, as to lose all perception of any other object, and they stood gazing upon the now inert and lifeless body of the Scotsman, without having power to withdraw their eyes, and quailing under the horrible quiet which had succeeded to the convulsive efforts of his despair.

The faculties of all on board the schooner were too deeply absorbed by the awful silence which followed the decease of the Scotsman, to



THE GIPSY BESIDE SUSAN'S BED.

attend unto the clamours of their captain for release, until Bladen, roused by the apprehended displeasure of Watch from the trance into which he, as well as the whole crew, had apparently fallen, exclaimed—

“Hark! hark! is not that the voice of the captain?”

And the voice of Watch might now be heard in the pause which had succeeded the tumultuous bustle so recently attendant on the execution of McWhat.

Then commenced a new phase in the depiction of human life, wherein was evinced the bearing of men of ordinary or standard mind under sudden or unlooked-for emergency. The character of every man on board the schooner was changed in a twinkling, and many who had been foremost and most active in the recent affair now began to question within themselves the propriety of having proceeded so far as taking the life of a prisoner without seeking their leader's concurrence in the act; and each, as will be found the practice of mankind in all

similar cases, wished to ease himself of the individual responsibility he had incurred, by shifting his share of the blame upon the shoulders of his neighbors, discovering, when a little too late, that they would not have proceeded to such a desperate length if somebody else had not incited them.

Multiloquent were the actors in the recent tragedy in their defence of themselves, and as all spoke at the same time it would be impossible to convey their exact meaning unto the reader; but, as usual, all parties were unsparing in reproach, though as each, while he accused his neighbour, excused himself, it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion than that they were either all guilty or all innocent. The revulsion of feeling, however, that followed the announcement of Watch's approach, may serve as proof of the ascendancy which a mind, naturally powerful and inquisitive, attains over its inferiors in the scale of intellect, in any circumstances, even notwithstanding the influence of reckless habits and lawless and uncertain pursuits.

As Boltrope and Binnacle were the only two contrabandists standing perfectly exempt from any charge of participation in the outrage indicted on the Scotsman, every other eye turned upon them, that they might use their influence with Watch to extricate the crew from their present dilemma. But these two worthies kept themselves aloof, though from very different motives. The old steersman was seriously thankful that the murder had been perpetrated, from a conviction that it had removed a dangerous witness; yet he uttered no word which might convey such an opinion to the public ear, and so kept himself free from any share of the blame like to be cast by their leader on their violent proceedings; and though he in fact was the proposer of the court-martial which had occasioned the mischief, he was prepared to shrink out of that responsibility, by alleging, what was indeed partly the fact, that he had done so for the purpose of saving Binnacle's life.

The latter-mentioned personage, independent of his natural disgust at cool and deliberate bloodshed, felt the matter deeply, from an anticipation of the umbrage which Watch would take at the little ceremony with which his companions had regarded his own expressed opinion in the matter; for though, as far as concerned a community of goods, the principles of the contrabandists were essentially republican, the authority he exercised was in the highest degree dictatorial; and it was necessary it should be so, to control the free spirits over whom he reigned, and who in turn paid an involuntary tribute to his ascendant genius, by submitting to an authority they tacitly acknowledged beneficial.

Binnacle saw the impossibility of supplying Watch's place, should he retire from their community. He felt, that though the task of re-electing a captain might be easy, the task of electing the captain would be difficult; that the qualities necessary to hold the turbulent people about him in subjection would not be readily found amongst them, and that without this control their community must soon fall to pieces by the segregation of its several members confounding every principle of order or direction.

It is not wonderful then, that believing in the utter helplessness of this band of smugglers, if left to themselves, he should inwardly, as well as openly, condemn their folly in exercising the temper of a man who, however willing to hazard his life with or for them, was proud to excess, and consequently rarely forgave the lightest infringement of his orders. Binnacle well knew that Watch's temper was neither of flint nor of flax, extinguished as soon as kindled—but rather of gold, which being slowly heated is a long time in regaining its pristine coolness. The view which the contrabandist leader might, therefore, take of their present outrage, formed a matter of serious deliberation with the rough-spun mariner, and he flatly refused to take any part of the onus on himself, leaving the real perpetrators of the outrage to release their leader, and explain their recent conduct as they might.

With slow and undecided and hesitative steps the schooner's crew now sensible how far they had exceeded their duty in their late proceedings, retreated to the companion hatchway to release Watch, hardly daring to meet his eye, after having contravened his orders to the extent of murder.

CHAPTER VI.

"I will to-morrow, that betimes I will,
Until the Weird Sisters."

In this most interesting conjuncture of their affairs, bidding the bold smuggler and his companions a temporary farewell, we will return unto the Three Jolly Anchorsmiths, the better to explain the feelings and intentions of certain parties, now registered customers of the venerable Jeremiah Pardo, although not recorded in chalk.

It is not necessary to state that one of the persons here alluded to is the redoubted sheriff of the county, whose growing passion for Mistress Susan now nightly drew him thither, and whose courage, though he had spoken "boldly and cheerfully" on recovering from the effect of old Moll's second visitation, as may be readily supposed, had arisen from the proximity of the doctor and Mistress Margaret, and the other plain and palpable beings like himself—creatures who ate and drank, and talked and walked, in short, performed all the offices of nature without exhibiting any positive departure from the ordinary train or tramp of society.

Not that we would have the reader suppose that the little sheriff felt himself on a level with the rest of mankind. By no means. He was too self-convinced to be capable of an idea so debasing. Indeed, he felt that nature had informed his little body with a heart above the ordinary magnitude—with what Shakspeare, whom we sometimes quote, calls a "heart of hearts." Nor was the heart of the little sheriff slow to acknowledge the flattering compliment by swelling to a commensuration with the ennobling idea.

We would merely have it understood, that his fear died away in pro-

portion as he felt himself removed from the world of spirits, and that he conversed with Cullsimple and Margaret until he had recovered his mental equipoise, and had well-nigh forgotten the recent, and by him thought, supernatural visitation. But a courage which depends on the stimulous derivable from the presence of others, is, like that of Bob Acres, a little apt to ooze away when most required, and Muddlepuzzle Williams, on quitting the inn and the company, and turning his steady-going cob into the dark lane, notwithstanding the presence of Hogsflesh, felt himself alone.

Yet not alone neither, for a thousand spirits seemed to dance before and behind, and above and beneath him, and the jolting of his horse sent his heart at least four inches nearer unto his mouth every time he rose and fell in his saddle; and his imagination played the thousand and one pranks which in the dark imagination is wont to play in the mind of the superstitious. So that, notwithstanding the usual effect of that most dry of all studies, the law, in hardening the human heart against the flood of fine feeling a belief in supernatural communication lets in upon it, his mind began to be influenced by the now almost universally exploded doctrine, that departed spirits are at times permitted to reappear unto mortals, either by way of forewarnment or admonition.

It cannot, therefore, be a matter of astonishment, that under the clouds of night, and after the second apparition of the gypsy-woman, Muddlepuzzle Williams should have felt in a fever of excitement; or that, under the influence of a newly-awakened superstition, he should have fancied what less eminently gifted mortals would have felt in similar circumstances, or that indistinct objects should seem to flit by him, or that his heart should tremble within him, or his blood creep lazily and with obstructed circulation through his veins; or that he should have gathered his knees unto the shoulders of his horse, and huddled up his body, without daring to look around him; or seized the pommel with both hands, while his fell of hair stood up like quills upon the fretful porcupine, in his mental exertation.

The very trees, as they stretched their huge arms and bowed unto the breeze, took a new and terrific form, and made him cower. Legions of strange spectres came peering close to his face with an expression that made him shudder. Men and women, supporting themselves on limbs which, like the bodies of serpents, bent and undulated beneath their pressure at every movement, seemed walking by his side. Human faces came close to his, grinning widely, but without teeth, and showing nothing but a black chasm to back their boneless gums, filled him with horror. Toads seemed to croak in his path—vipers, as he passed, to hiss at him from the hedges. The most hideous-looking monsters appeared to grin a greeting to him as he rode along. In fine, all the fantastic creations that bend before the throne of superstition seemed invested with form and life, and called into being for the mere purpose of adding to his torment.

In the midst of these mental horrors and awful visitations, while thus surrounded by the foreshadowings of a future world, conscience asserted her empire in the mind of the little sheriff. His foul intention

against Susan Wylie rose uppermost in his vision, and awakened a momentary emotion of repentance. He recoiled inwardly from the resolution he, had formed; but, as is generally the case among saints and sinners, with respect to intentions which in their nature are positively evil, the little sheriff soon discovered reason to bless and approve it, with texts that set his conscience perfectly at ease. He found ample justification for the atrocity he had resolved on committing. His matrimonial bed was barren. Vanity forbade him to believe the cause of effect defective rested with himself. This seemed sufficient to warrant his pursuit of a new passion and led him to jump to the startling conclusion that seduction was not a crime.

He concluded, therefore, that the horrible spectres which everywhere beset his path were not sent to forewarn or admonish him from a pursuit so lawless as that embodied in his intention against Susan Wylie; for, reasoned the little dignitary, recurring mentally to the lessons acquired during his pursuit of the cold realities of life, men are punished for those misdeeds they *would* do by the reflected consequences of their own imbecility, rather than the interference of supernatural agents. And if, admitting the earliest superstitions, I acknowledge the existence of agents beyond the grave, I cannot think a man's better angel would assume forms horrible enough to frighten the devil himself.

Hogsflesh, who, in this extremity, rode at the distance deference dictates betwixt a sheriff and his follower, would have been tolerated by his master even had he approached a little nearer, or ventured to speak before that august personage, breaking through the bonds of taciturnity, should proclaim unto him the choicest of all human privileges—liberty of speech. But Hogsflesh, duly impressed with a sense of the vast difference betwixt himself and his master, continued to ride on without attempting to open his mouth.

The heart of the county dignitary beat heavily; nor was he in anywise unwilling to put an end unto the horrors by which his path was beset. Whereupon, on passing a bend in the road, at which the hedge-row, taking a semi-circular sweep, terminated at the gate or lodge of a neighboring franklin, and gave a deeper and more sombre appearance to the shadows of night, and where the elm and lime trees which ornamented either side of the short horse-path, sighing in the breeze, lent a mournful voice unto the surrounding solitude, the little sheriff found it impossible to brave it any longer. He trembled violently, and called out—

"Obadiah!"

"I am here, sir," responded that individual.

"Obadiah, didn't you hear anything?"

"Nothing particular, sir."

"Nor see anything?"

"The night is too dark to see much," replied Hogsflesh.

"I have seen many things in this night's ride," said the little sheriff, in a quailing tone. "Monsters whose resemblance bear no kin unto the forms of earth—creatures whose horrid figures proclaimed them to belong unto another and worse world—phantoms and sprites have been dancing around me ever since we quitted the hostel."

"I ain't seen nothin' on 'em," observed Obadiah.

"Nothing!" exclaimed the sheriff.

"Nothin' in the world, sir," replied his imperturbable follower.

"That's very strange," quoth the sheriff.

"Very," responded his man, "setting the case as if you've *actilly* seen these things and I ain't; but I'll take my Solomon 'davit, and I knows the natur' of an oath, as it's equally true."

"What's that?" cried the sheriff, starting suddenly in his saddle, and turning to the trusty Hogsflesh, in evident alarm. "What's that, Obadiah?"

"I don't see nothin' but a poplar tree," returned Hogsflesh.

"Nor hear anything?"

"Nothin' but the wind among the trees."

"Is that all?" asked the sheriff.

"All as I can see or hear," replied Obadiah.

"Am I then the victim of imagination?" cried the little sheriff, vexed with himself, not only for having given way to his fears, but exposed them unto his attendant.

"I fancy something o' that sort," observed Hogsflesh.

"Then the figure that I saw at the inn?"

"Wasn't no figure at all."

"No figure at all!" exclaimed the sheriff.

"No, to be sure not," returned Hogsflesh, unable to keep Bridget's secret any longer; "or if it wor, it wor real wholesome flesh and blood, such as doesn't come a visitin' out o' churchyards and such like loathsome places."

"What do you mean?" demanded the sheriff.

"I mean what I say," returned the sheriff's man.

"I say I saw an apparition."

"And I say what you saw was flesh and blood."

"Then the figure of the old gypsy-woman—"

"Was an old gypsy woman, and no mistake."

"I can hardly believe you," cried the sheriff.

"Then you had better ask Mistress Bridget," returned his man.

And Hogsflesh, having committed himself so far, proceeded to unburthen his bosom of the secret which Mistress Bridget, in the exuberance of her affection, had communicated unto him; taking especial care, however, not to mention the many jests indulged in by the Irish maiden and himself on the little sheriff's manifest want of valor, and the awkward appearance that dignitary cut when he fainted in the arms of Bridget, on the fall of his pitchfork, with other particulars he deemed unnecessary to mention.

Ridden of his supernatural fears by the communication of the trusty Obadiah, the mind of the little sheriff soon resumed its wonted activity, and mischievously busied itself in plotting and planning schemes for the future. No longer afraid of agents from another world, he began to think how his wealth might procure him agents in this; and he well knew that in England, where everything is brought into the market and sold to the best bidder, that wealth had too often succeeded in corrupting honesty.

Hogsflesh dared not move in the affair he had at heart—he was too near home for that; for should he betray him unto his lady, he dreaded the consequences. The sheriff, like married men similarly circumstanced, thought he should never hear the last of his delinquency, nor was he without fear of the many ridiculous things which might be said on the occasion; or if, not content with domestic ridicule, his lady should take his aberration in a serious light, and expose him to the animadversion of the awful consistory which sits continually guardant over the matrimonial rights of both sexes, he trembled at the consequences. He felt himself in a dilemma, and that a confidence in Hogsflesh, by placing him at the mercy of that individual's honesty or discretion, would only be a means of increasing his difficulties.

Our worthy little man of the county, like other persons of equal wit and fashion, when they resolve on the perpetration of an offence against the morals of society, only paused until he should be able effectually to carry out his resolve. Let not the reader think that he was deterred by the horror of committing the contemplated crime—that he was checked by the beauty of virtue, or withheld by the deformity of vice. His mind was too well founded for that, and the fear of detection and consequences of failure were the only matters which passed under his consideration. Wherefore, testing the eternal "fitness of things" by the doctrine of philosopher Square, and building his immutable "rule of right" on the inevitable necessity established by nature for the aggregation of atoms of similar qualities and tendencies, and such like reasoning, advanced by passion to throw a veil over its ordinate cravings, the little sheriff valiantly resolved to do everything but betray himself.

Hence he decided against trusting Hogsflesh more than he could help. He could not altogether shut out the danger he incurred by continuing to make that individual the companion of his evening visits unto the Three Jolly Anchorsmiths. Some suspicion he deemed might arise in the mind of Obadiah as to the real cause of those visits, and the little sheriff well knew that suspicion once awakened in the human mind is ever afterwards sleepless. Neither could he directly forbid the attendance of his zealous follower, after having once permitted it. To proceed alone unto the hostel was equally to court detection, or raise a doubt as to the motive that carried him thither.

There was no company there to attract a man of his station in the country. The inn was almost solitary. It was, beside, an infraction of the habits of years to devote his evening hours to any objects save his study and the society of his amiable lady, and to break through the fetters of habit without an apparent cause seemed to amplify suspicion. He knew how he judged the conduct of others under like circumstances, and dreaded lest his own judgment, which he deemed infallible, should recoil against himself.

The assurance that the figure he had seen at the Anchorsmiths was nothing more than flesh and blood, had quieted his supernatural fears, while the presence of Moll Parley at the hostel announced the gypsy gang in the neighborhood, and promised to furnish him the means of

carrying out his intention by their agency, though as yet he had to learn where to pitch upon their encampment. This piece of information he resolved on obtaining from Hogsflesh; and as his commission as a magistrate of the county would warrant such an enquiry, he thought he might venture upon interrogating his follower on the subject, without incurring suspicion as to the real motive that actuated him.

Having resolved on this course of proceeding, he began his interrogatories, although at first distantly, and without making the most remote allusion to the real intention of his enquiry, thereby proving how admirably he was qualified for a diplomat, should fortune ever favor his merits by an appointment to such an office.

"Obadiah?" said the little dignitary.

The sheriff's man responded by uttering the monosyllable, "sir," with an emphasis which alike implied interrogation and admiration, and his master continued:—

"The gypsies, I am told, are mere marauders."

"You need not doubt that," observed Obadiah.

"Then," quoth the sheriff, with a look replete with the incorruptibility of the bench, though it was too dark for Obadiah to see it, "it is my duty, as a magistrate, to put them down, if possible."

"Without a doubt sir," answered his man.

"I wonder if their encampment lies within my district?" enquired the little sheriff, making his way unto the important fact to be elicited by a side wind. "I should like to ascertain."

"I can easily find out," said Obadiah.

"I wish you would, then," observed the county official, exulting in the success which had thus far attended his effort to mask his real intention, and keep his man in the dark.

"It shall be set about the first thing to-morrow, sir," said Obadiah, no wise unwilling to make himself useful. "For my part, I wonder they ha'n't been put down afore, for they are nothen but thieves; and for smuggling—they supply, to my certain knowledge, all the farmers in the neighborhood with brandy, and tea, and tobacco."

"They do!" exclaimed the sheriff, with an emphasis he did not feel.

"I'll take my affidavit on it, whenever you like to swear me to it," returned Obadiah. "And I should ha' told your worship of it afore, but what's every body's business is nobody's business."

"I wish you had," observed the county dignitary; "men like myself require to be surrounded by people of intelligence, for it is impossible to see every thing with one's own eyes."

"I was afraid of intruding on your worship."

"You should have known me better on a point of duty," observed the little sheriff in an insinuating tone.

"You have reproved us for being over hasty in our duty," observed Hogsflesh at a venture. "Your honor has before now reproved both Oliver and myself for interfering beyond our office."

"That must have been under very peculiar circumstances, observed the little sheriff; "very peculiar circumstances, indeed. And I do

not deny that there are cases wherein the interference of the minor agents of the law are highly improper."

"Your worship wishes me to interfere in this?"

"Decidedly."

"Then," observed Obadiah confidentially, "you may rely on knowing where the encampment is situate the first thing in the morning. I am certain it is no very great distance."

The county official and his man shortly afterwards arriving at the end of their journey, separated for the night; the former, betaking himself to his bed in a state of perturbation too excitve to permit even of momentary slumber, still less of refreshing or invigorating sleep, lay tossing and tumbling from side to side, and revolving in his mind the various advantages to which he might turn the gypsy gang in the furtherance of his base design against Mistress Susan, and felicitating himself at the same time on the dissimulation by which he had succeeded in closing the eyes of Obadiah Hogsflesh, and thus securing his service without risk or discovery.

The morning dawned, bringing unto the little sheriff that kind of head-ache which usually results from over-watching and mental anxiety, and he rubbed his eyes as if to rub the sleep out of them, but with little effect. Fatigue had laid her dead hand on his shining orbs, and their lustre was eclipsed; and his cheeks exhibited the pallor that equally results from pleasurable or painful vigils, and which might have been increased in the present instance by the mixed sensations which had tormented him during the night. Be this, as it may, with nerves depressed below the excitement of love, law, or physic, he descended to his study to await the coming of his trusty messenger.

Hogsflesh on the other hand, filled to the brim with the prospect of meeting the object of his affection so many hours before their usual time of interview, slept calmly and tranquilly during the night—a clear proof, if any proof were wanting, of the wide difference betwixt virtuous and illicit love. He dreamt of the fair maid of Erin. He thought Bridget stood before him. He told his tale of love. She smiled upon his passion. The three hundred pounds she had saved was in her hand. He pressed that hand within his own. Her eyes beaming a yielding unto desire that made him happy. It is enough to buy a ring, said she. He awoke to extacy.

Judge his disappointment, when, instead of seeing Bridget at his side, he saw the washhand basin and ewer, and that refrigerent antidote to passion, an abundance of cold water. The truth flashed upon him with the celerity of lightning. He had been cheated into a momentary happiness, and by a dream.

Nevertheless, it was a dream too flattering unto his wishes to be disregarded, the more particularly as it was through the Irish maiden's instrumentality he hoped to discover the haunt of the gypsies he was commissioned by his master to find out; for Hogsflesh had shrewdly judged, that if Moll Purley was at the hostel, the gang could not be very far off.

Starting out of bed, therefore, he hurried on his clothes, though not

without due and proper attention to the folding of his cravat, and the arrangement of his plaited frill, and the buttoning and unbuttoning of his waistcoat several times, to affix the exact medium for the display of his cambric. He even smoothed down his hair with an extra quantity of pomatum, that its jetty gloss might attract the eyes of Bridget, ere he addressed himself to the journey he had before him.

These arrangements of the toilet completed, Hogsflesh, filled with the joyous reception that awaited his arrival at the hostel, commenced his march from Muddlepuddle Hall, determined on acquiring the information he was sent for by his master, or returning as he went; and also determined to bring his affair with the Irish maiden to a crisis, lest the story of her property should take wind, and some rival, with a better favored patronymic, should rise to cross him in the golden time he looked for.

The interim at the Three Jolly Anchorsmiths was hardly passed in a state of greater tranquility, although the disquiet of the inmates arose from a very different cause.

The outcry of the old gypsy-woman on the attempt made by Frontibelle to enter Susan's apartment by the window, not only aroused Mistress Margaret and her maid Bridget, but even reached the ears of the venerable Jeremiah himself, who, springing out of bed, snatched up the lamp which burnt in his chamber, and all the inmates of the hostel were thus brought together on the landing-place, looking a thousand terrors, if it were possible to look so many in a single glance, and out of three pair of eyes.

Added to this picture of the three, came the long gaunt figure of the old hammerman, without shoes or stockings, his nethermost garment open at the knees, and held around him in the left hand, while his shirt sleeves were tucked up above the elbow, as if, day and night, he was prepared for his labors in the smithy. His long face was half buried in a red night-cap, which stood bolt upright in the form of a sugar-loaf, and looked like the emblem of liberty on the head of a gorgon. Ephraim Clink, in this condition, tripped down the stairs, expressing hurry and intelligence in his features, and exclaiming at every step he took—

"Never fear! I'll have him! Yes! Ha! You'll see!"

"What's the matter?" questioned Jeremiah Pardo, confronting the hammerman. He might as well have appealed unto a stock-fish, for Ephraim only grinned and nodded, and putting his master on one side, began to descend the second flight of stairs without further notice of Jeremiah, and continuing to call out as he descended—

"I'll have him! I know where he is!"

"Have who? What do you mean?" bawled out old Pardo at the very top of his voice, but without producing any more effect on the tympanum of the ancient Ephraim, than if he were already dead.

"A thief! a thief!" cried Ephraim, without turning. "I'll have him."

On this announcement, Mistress Margaret set up a scream, and Mistress Bridget a hoot so shrill and piercing, that it might have been

taken for the last trumpet, if, while it awakened the deadened sense of Ephraim Clink, it had not almost deadened the living one of his master. So that the intelligence which mantled for a moment in the countenance of the deaf hammerman seemed to be abstracted from that of Jeremiah, who looked as blank as an investment in the South American bonds. A strange example of cause and effect! on which any mind of a philosophical turn building a theory, might assert that the quantity of positive knowledge, like the properties of earth and water, is unvariable, and that the portion exhibited in this, is necessarily abstracted from that; thus proving "there is nothing new under the sun," in defiance of the daily-produced novelties we see amongst us, and arriving at the highest point of philosophy by setting down the sum total of mortal knowledge at nothing.

Nor was the ancient landlord of the hostel the only person whose senses were affected by the yelling we have feebly attempted to describe; for even Mistress Susan, awakened from her medicine-wrought slumber by sounds so unusual, though not as yet clearly in her senses, took up the key-note by the sheer habit of imitation, and screamed as loudly as the rest, without knowing why or wherefore; while the cat curled up her back, and straightening her tail, swore as trooper never swore before her; and the poor spaniel bitch yelped its terrors in, and the fierce house-dog barked with deep and sonorous barkings out of the house, as, disturbed in his fitful slumberings, he rushed unto the front of his kennel, to give a needless alarm unto those whose alarm had just awakened him.

We need hardly inform our readers, that the fairy-like and fawn-footed Frontibelle had placed herself far beyond successful pursuit, long ere the deaf hammerman had reached and unbarred the outer-door of the hostel, though in that labor he was assisted by his master, whose fears for the safety of his property were awakened by the last intimation of his faithful adherent. The time lost in the fumbling of their fear, had given ample space for the retreat of a heavy dragoon, though encumbered by sword, carbine, cuirass, helmet, jack-boots, and spurs, which it must be confessed, are awful drawbacks in clearing a plantation. When, therefore, the old hammerman ran across the cold and dewy grass into the rear of the inn, and his old master paddled after him, shivering at every step, and devoutly cursing the cause of the disturbance, it is not wonderful they should have discovered nothing; or, if nonentity is too tough a riddle for philosophy to find out, merely a few imprints, which, in the language of our police courts, might pass for proof impressions of a very tiny foot, but furnished no marked or striking evidence to identify the owner.

While Jeremiah Pardo and his man Clink were thus busied in the rear of the hostel, Mistress Margaret and Bridget Mullaghney made their way to the apartment of Susan, to enquire the occasion of the alarm there.

They found the old gypsy as much surprised as themselves at the universal confusion which had so suddenly broken out in the hostel. The tears of the Irish maiden and her maiden mistress however, were still

further excited, by old Moll informing them of the recent attempt to effect an entrance to Susan's apartment by the window, which relation tallying in substance with old Clink's confused intimation of the presence of a thief at their sequestered residence, renewed the terror of Mistress Margaret for the safety of her brother and his man, which the return of those worthies into the hostel having quieted, the two females again left Mistress Purley to the care of her charge, and retired to their chamber, where they remained, without further interruption, until morning.

Whatever thoughts and anxieties disturbed the heart of Mistress Margaret on account of her niece, Mistress Bridget, during the short sleep which locked up her senses to all external objects, gave way to those sunny prospects which are wont to hallow the dreams of the unmarried; so that, when compelled to open her eyes at the customary hour of commencing the business of the day, she did it unwillingly, as if she were loth to disturb the elysium of her slumbers.

In this tumultuous state of feeling the Irish vestal paid her morning visit to the apartment of her young mistress. Notwithstanding the recent disturbance, she found Susan much better. The fever during the night had reached its crisis, and had then, like fever or excitement of all kinds, subsided into a comparative calm, and been followed by a weakness which left her young mistress scarcely able to utter a sound but at the same time tormented by the pangs of a hunger proportionate to the protracted abstinence imposed by her present disorder—to speak more familiarly, in a state of vulgar appetite, which would be thankful for food of any kind, and grateful to any one who would administer unto his cravings.

Overjoyed to find Susan Wylie so far recovered, Mistress Bridget descended to the ale-room to prepare breakfast for the family; and as she busied herself in her various avocations, her recollection was filled with the form of the man whose life-service she was ambitious of commanding, when, in the midst of her preparation, Hogsflesh arrived at the inn door.

Bridget, overcome by surprise at seeing her lover so many hours before the usual time of his arrival, started back, exclaiming, "The Lord save us! can there be any truth in thrames? Who'd have thought of seein' you so early on this blessed mornin', av all days in the year!"

CHAPTER VII.

"These betray nice wenches, that would be betrayed without these."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE reception accorded unto Hogsflesh by the Irish maiden, was of that kind and endearing nature, with which, as every one who has been a favored lover must be fully acquainted, we will abstain from attempting to describe, leaving it rather to the imagination. Be it said, however, that Bridget's affection found a medium of communication rather in the eyes than tongue; and that after her first ebullition

of surprise at seeing her lover at the hostel so early in the morning had passed away, her feelings settled down, as female's feelings should, while she

Gazed on the swain
That caused her pain,
And sighed and looked, look'd and sighed.

as if there were more pleasure in the agonies of love, than in any other agonies of which the flesh is capable.

It is true she was nothing loth to the kiss which her lover imprinted on her lip, with a heartiness and goodwill that shewed he intended it should be indelible—and though she coyly whispered—

"Arrah, now, Misther Obadhiah! don't be afther blarneying so—and its quite onproper to have your arm here, it is; and if missus should see us, its no knowin' fhot she might think av sich goin's an."

She bridled as he pressed her waist, and looked straight forward as a hungry donkey looks at a bare cabbage stump, or as if what could not be eaten, might yet furnish matter for rumination; and a slight hectic increased the natural ruddiness of her cheek, and her grey eye lost half its lustre in the liquid that partly quenched its fire; proving, by all these symptoms, that a maiden of forty-two may feel the passion of love, and play off all those fantasies which, in a girl of sixteen, are set down by the prudent to the score of silliness, and excused accordingly.

"And fhot brings you out so early in the mornin'?" asked Mistress Bridget, when her surprise and pleasure had in some measure subsided, "since it isn't to me alone that you come."

"Indeed, Mistress Bridget, but it is," answered the sheriff's man, telling a bouncing lie on the occasion, for which every reader who has been in love will no doubt find a very proper excuse.

"Musha dthen!" exclaimed Mistress Bridget, with a look made up of that mixture of surprise, and pleasure, and self-delusion, which makes us all so happy in this world.

"Yes, I did indeed, Missus Bridget," said Hogsflesh with a grin intended to express the delight he felt in the Irish maiden's company; "I did, indeed!"

"To think o' that now!" exclaimed Bridget, taking another breakfast-cup out of the cupboard, and dusting it. "Sure you can't have breakfasted so early in the mornin'."

"Indeed, Missus Bridget, I could not think of breakfast, and you by," said Obadhiah, with an expression of countenance which, made up between a grin and a languish, caused him to look like a satyr.

"Well I declare!" cried the propitiated Irish maiden. "Upon my consheins, I niver had words av thim kind spoke to me afore."

"Acause nobody loves as I do," pursued Obadhiah.

"Do you take tay or coffee, Misther Obadhiah?" asked the maiden.

"Whichever is most agreeable."

"Faith, you can have aither."

"Tea, then, Missus Bridget, if you please."

"I like a cup of tay myself," said Mistress Bridget.

And the Irish maiden began to bustle about with as much pride as if she held the freehold of the whole county of Kent in reversion, after a life of ninety-seven. So highly pleased was she with her prospect of not only being made a woman for life, but an honest woman into the bargain, and the first woman in the county to boot; for it follows as a matter of induction, that if the sheriff be the prime official of the district, then his officer depute must, of necessity, be the first man in it, and *ergo*, that officer's wife the first woman.

Hitherto Hogsflesh had not spoken of the real object of his visit, preferring his passion in the first instance as a propitiatory offering unto the maiden's vanity, and thus furthering his own interests while endeavoring to further the interests of his master. He now began to think of the best mode of broaching the subject of the gypsies, so as to obtain a knowledge of their locality, without making that appear the primary cause of his early visit to the hostelry; for, having assigned that already to the promptings of affection, he was unwilling to mortify the maiden's feelings whose hand he was so desirous of obtaining, by ascribing his visit to any other cause.

While her lover was thus meditating on his mission, Bridget was giving way unto a thousand anticipations; and her untrained fancy sported wildly over the future, and she thought of—we know not what. But whatever it might have been, there is little doubt it made her happy for the time, from the expression of unalloyed pleasure that animated her countenance: and she tossed up her head when she bid Clink to breakfast, in a manner which can be likened unto nothing else than an undertaker's coach-horse, when dressed, and so unusual as made the old hammerman stare and wonder what could possess the bosom of the maiden, or occasion the apparent tumult that seemed to revel in her veins.

"You'll not object to a little brandy in your tay?" observed Mistress Bridget, sitting by the side of her lover, and preparing to do the honors of the table. "You've had a long walk—and it's wholesome, it is, I can tell you, these raw mornin's, to take a throp av spirit to qualify the cowl'd air in the stomach."

Obadiah answered not, while Ephraim Clink stared at the brandy with a most expressive stare; nor was his gaze withdrawn until Mistress Bridget had transferred a portion to his proper cup.

"You needn't be shamefaced acause he's here," said Mistress Bridget to her lover, in a tone of encouragement, and at the same time pointing unto Ephraim—"he's so deaf, that there's no danger av his hearing you, though you should bawl ever so loud."

"That's very convenient, Missus Bridget, very convenient, indeed," said Hogsflesh. "But I'm told there are some gypsies in the neighborhood, and I want to find them."

"Arrah, now! fhot d'yer want with the likes o' them!" asked Mistress Bridget, with a sly glance at her lover. "Sare you can't want to have your fortune told?"

"That's the very thing, Missus Bridget," observed Hogsflesh catch-

ing up the idea, and turning it to his own advantage with the adroitness of a Talleyrand, "that's the very thing."

"Arrah now! fhot do you want to enquire about?"

"What?"

"Yes."

"I don't like to tell you," replied her lover with a sheepish air.

"Arrah! fhy not?"

"Because its so ridiculous."

"Na hochleish, honey! sure all things is ridic'lous in love," said Mistress Bridget, with a slight tinge, and a side glance at her lover, which made her look the living illustration of her own words.

"Well, then, I want to enquire," said Hogsflesh, and his eye caught Mistress Bridget's eagerly curious glance, and unable to proceed further he made a full stop.

"Musha, fhot?" exclaimed the Irish maiden, excited to the highest degree.

"I want to enquire —"

"Well."

"Whether I'm beloved by I know who?" said Obadiah.

"Arrah fhot call have ye ti be makin' sich an omadawn av yersilf?" said Mistress Bridget, with a glance expressive of her inward gratification. "Couldn't I who know tell your fortune much betther in a matther av that sort than all the gypsies in England?"

"I think she could," said Obadiah, and paused.

"Sure I know that much," said Mistress Bridget.

Both lovers now looked as foolish as it was possible to look under the circumstances. Obadiah, because he had been disappointed in killing two birds with one stone, by flattering Mistress Bridget's partiality, while he made it subservient to the acquisition of the intelligence he wished to obtain for his master; and Bridget, because her lover could not muster up sufficient courage to pop the question. Determined, however, he should not lack the opportunity, Bridget, after a moment's reflection, observed—

"Sure I had my fortune read wonst by the planters."

"By what?" exclaimed her lover.

"By 'strology. Sure I'm tould that's the bist way they can do it," returned Mistress Bridget.

"And what did they say?"

"Sure they tould me the first letther av my husband's name 'ud be—but I forget the letther," said Mistress Bridget, who, being perfectly innocent of any knowledge of her alphabet, could not readily hit on the initial of her lover.

"Mine begins with an H," observed Obadiah.

"The very letther av all others in the world," observed Mistress Bridget.

"La, now, how singular."

"Curse the man, fhy don't he say summat!" said Mistress Bridget, provoked by her lover's taciturnity at such a period of excitement and expectation.

And Bridget, in the petulance of the moment, snatched up the tea-pot to pour out the second cup of tea; but, in the confusion of mind incidental to the vexation occasioned by the dullness of her lover, she poured the scalding liquid on the shins of the deaf hammerman, who being sensible in every point save that of hearing, started up and began dancing and capering about like a madman, uttering a yell of pain that startled the Irish maiden, who, laying the tea-pot out of her hand, utterly unconscious of having disturbed her fellow servant's customary taciturnity, looked at him with an air of unconsciousness, while she exclaimed—

"Arrah, honey, shot's the matther!"

But the sympathetic modulation of Mistress Bridget's voice produced small effect on her fellow servant, who, raging with pain, went dancing about the room and bellowing—

"My leg! my leg! my leg!"

"The divel take your leg, for its a small matther to make sich a fuss about," cried Mistress Bridget, alluding to the spindle shanks of the ancient hammerman.

The pain having in some degree subsided, Ephraim resumed his seat, rubbing his shins up and down with tears in his eyes, while Bridget, now brought to understand how she had hurt the old man, looked in his face with the most ridiculous expression of sympathy, while she prepared a soap plaster to cool the inflammation.

It was while she was thus engaged that Obadiah found means to obtain from her the information of which he was so desirous for his master, and which having obtained he became, notwithstanding his affection for the Irishwoman, in an equal hurry to convey to Muddle-puzzle Hall, in order to manifest the zeal he felt in the cause of public justice, in all and every case where the edge of the sword of that blind divinity was to be directed against any person other than himself.

Breakfast having been finished, Obadiah, much to Mistress Bridget's dissatisfaction, rose for the purpose, as he said, of seeking the gypsies in Copsewood dell, and promising a speedy return to the hostel, saluted Bridget, mounted his horse, and turned his head into the road; while the Irish maiden, completely dumbfounded at his want of comprehension, and wondering what could have prevented his catching her meaning when she had spoken out so plainly, exclaimed, as she looked on his receding figure—

"The Lord save the man! 'Couldn't I have tould him as well as the gypsies, if that fas all he fhanted to know; but its timid he is, I suppose; by my faith thin he needn't be so if he know'd but all."

While Hogsflesh was thus busied at the Jolly Anchorsmiths, Muddle-puzzle Williams paced up and down his study in the greatest perturbation, revolving and re-revolving plans for the furtherance of his object, should Hogsflesh return unsuccessful from the errand on which he had dispatched him. As is the case in all vicious pursuits, he felt a greater desire to achieve his object than had that object been virtuous. Nor could he control his impatience at the protracted stay made



BINNACLE JACK DEFTYING THE MUTINEERS.

by his messenger. Twenty times at least did he take out his watch, and every time accuse the absent Obadiah of idleness and neglect of duty; a thing which, when he was engaged in any matter arising out of his official capacity, he never thought of doing, though his follower should make ten times the delay—a perversity of disposition not unfrequently found amongst such as, suffering passion to prevail over prudence, render reason subservient to inclination.

In this state of vexation he was summoned to join his lady at breakfast, and her presence did not at all contribute to allay his perturbation, insomuch that she could not avoid noticing his chagrin, although she merely received an ill-natured remark on attempting a word of condolence and sympathy.

Leaving his breakfast scarcely tasted, he left his lady much perplexed in her mind to guess what he could be studying to produce so sinister an effect upon the temper, and again sought the study to await the arrival of Obadiah Hogsflesh, renewing all his former petulancies unto the arrival of that person with the news he coveted.

"Well, Obadiah," said the sheriff, as Hogsflesh entered the study, "you are here at last, and I have been kept within these two hours. What can have detained you so long?"

"So long, sir!" exclaimed Hogsflesh, with an air of astonishment.

"You can't have thought me long, sir."

"Can't have thought what, Obadiah?"

"Me long sir."

"No matter what I think. Have you got me the requisite intelligence?"

"Sir, I went——"

"Well, I know you went!" said the sheriff, interrupting his follower impatiently; "and I know you have come back again. I want to know what you have done in the interim?"

"In the what, sir?"

"The interim, sir," replied the irascible man of the county.

"You know not the difficulties I have met with in my search," replied Hogsflesh, willing to enhance the value of the service he had performed with so little trouble. "You do not know the difficulties I have had to overcome, or I am sure you would not chide me."

"Never mind the difficulties," cried the sheriff, "I want the result. Nothing,—nothing in the world can be achieved without difficulty of some kind. Have you discovered the gypsy haunt?"

"I have," returned Obadiah.

"And where is it situate?" enquired the sheriff.

"In Copsewood Dell, sir," replied his man.

"Thank you. You may go now," said the sheriff, in the tone of one who, having obtained all he requires, has no further occasion for the service of another.

"Shall I send Mr. Oliver in to take instructions?" asked Obadiah, lingering at the door of the study.

"For what?" demanded the sheriff.

"To take your honor's instructions with regard to the vagrants in Copsewood Dell," replied Hogsflesh, who was inflexible on a point of duty. "Your honor said last night——"

"How often am I to tell you not to interfere beyond your proper office?" asked the little sheriff, with extreme irascibility. "It is indecent to be thus forward in urging your duty on the privacy of your betters. You should wait until duly authorized. You and Hobbs are too fond of meddling with matters that don't concern you!"

"But you said last night it was your duty, as a magistrate, to put such characters down," interposed Obadiah; "and that it was impossible for persons in your honor's station to know every thing without intelligent——"

"Well, granting it to be my duty to put them down," observed the sheriff, interrupting him "the proper period is for my consideration, and I shall doubtless decide on that without the suggestion of either of you!"

"No doubt, sir," said Obadiah, submissively.

"Then let me hear no more upon that subject, but order my horse

immediately," cried the little sheriff; "I will ride across the country, and meditate on the best mode of furthering my views."

"I will, sir," said Obadiah.

"And immediately! Do you hear?"

"Shall I attend you, sir?"

"No!" was the peremptory reply of the county officer; while, as Obadiah quitted the room, profoundly ignorant of the real state of his master's feelings, Muddlepuddle Williams threw himself into his magisterial chair, in the highest degree satisfied with his success in masking his intentions, and deeming himself no less than equal to a Machiaval in politics, or a Talleyrand in diplomacy.

Thus unceremoniously dismissed, Hogsflesh left the presence of his master in some doubt whether he could be in his right mind, and wondering where all the condescensions of which he had been so prodigal on the previous evening could have gone to, or how he could reconcile his present testiness of temper with his former bearing.

Be this as it may, Obadiah was too old a servant not to know obedience was a duty; wherefore he, with true German docility, paid the prime man of the county just as much deference as he himself exacted from the next grade in authority beneath him: so that, catching the key-note from the objurgatory lesson of his master, he screwed up his rage to concert pitch, descending in a crash, rather than modulating in a cadence, on the ear of the man of the stable; or, to speak less metaphorically, visiting the scolding he had just received, in the rigidity of discipline and austerity of temper, he manifested towards the poor devil of an ostler.

A very few minutes had elapsed, however, and Obadiah Hogsflesh was again in the presence of the sheriff, with the gratifying intelligence that the cob was readily saddled and in waiting.

Satisfied with having completely closed the eyes of his man-servant regarding his real design in seeking out the gypsies, the sheriff mustered up sufficient temper to receive Hogsflesh with a propitiatory smile, which had the effect of setting that individual entirely at his ease; a fact which will hardly be disputed by such as know the effect produced on the generality of mankind, by so simple a matter as a smile from one of their superiors.

"I shall ride alone, Obadiah," said the sheriff, in a tone that spoke his inward rejoicement.

"Very well, sir," was the reply.

"And as you have already had so much trouble in making this important discovery, you may, if you please, devote the remainder of the day unto your own pleasure."

"Thank you, sir," said Obadiah.

And in this matter, Hogsflesh thanked the sheriff from his very heart; for he thought of his parting words unto Mistress Bridget, and rejoiced he could now keep promise with the Irish maiden.

While Obadiah again made his way unto the hostelry, to spend the remainder of the day there, and, if possible, consummate his destiny by popping the awful question unto Mistress Bridget Mullaghney, the lit-

tions permitted in the ancient and Catholic times, when churchmen and laity vied with each other in misrule, and mingled for one day at least in a general license and folly, might be traced a few years since in various parts of Kent; nay, in some, where the march of intellect hath not yet reached, probably exists to this day.

"I am lucky in having met you," observed the little sheriff in a reassured tone. "I was making my way to your encampment when you made your appearance in such monstrous disguise."

"Do yer warnt yer fortune told?" questioned Barney Nous. "We have gals below as can do it for yer by web or wid, so you dubs up accordin'."

"No," returned the sheriff, with a smile which spoke his inward scorn of such a superstition.

"No, marster!" echoed Barney, with a broad emphasis of surprise. "Then I hopes marster, you are not a goin' to tell ourn; for its awful work to have you gemmen of the law among the likes of us."

"You should follow an honest calling then," observed the sheriff.

"Why we picks up a livin' some how," said Barney Nous. "Your honor never sees one of us chargeable on the parish, and that's some credit; but what does your honor warnt with us?"

"You know Susan Wylie at the Anchorsmiths?"

"Aye, aye, sir," cried several in tones of recognition.

"Then mark! I wish to have her seized and carried off."

"The devil you do," said Barney.

"I will give fifty guineas now and fifty more when the abduction is completed," said the sheriff.

"Follow me then," said Barney; "there are others to be consulted before we undertake this."

And as Barney Nous led the little sheriff to Frontibelle, who ruled in her grandmother's absence, he began to ponder what that moral dig-nitary meant by getting an honest livelihood.

CHAPTER VIII.

"'Twas not without some reason, for the wind
Increased at night until it blew a gale."

WHILE the prime official of the county of Kent,

— "With Tarquin's ravishing strides,
Moves like a ghost towards his design,"

we respectfully invite the reader to take water with us in quest of the contrabandist schooner and her crew, whom, after the murder of McWhat, we left quailing under the anticipated anger of their leader.

Those who have dealt with the medley of characters of which this miserable world is composed, will well understand the ease with which

the general run of men, the mere rank and file of society, transit from one extreme of feeling to another. Possessing no fixedness of principle. Suffering all the higher emotions of their nature to be absorbed in mere animal enjoyment, how prone soever they may be to enact any mischief that may be devised for them, they are ever ready to impute the blame of their actions to the persuasions of others, on the most remote appearance of danger and detection.

Slowly making their way to the companion, the smugglers now unfastened the sliding panel, to afford free egress unto their leader, whose surprise at seeing himself a prisoner to his own crew may easily be imagined. Overcome by astonishment, he looked at them with an enquiring eye, as if he sought some explanation of the recent circumstances. They were silent from a dread of his displeasure. A dead pause therefore ensued, which continued for some moments uninterrupted. Watch, however, put an end to it, by demanding in a stern and authoritative tone, the meaning of the late disturbance on board the schooner.

Promptene, who stood near him, and who possessed a quiet and quaint drollery almost irresistible, now thrust his head forward with a grotesque grimace and comic twinkle of the eye, which proved his quondam profession had lost a votary of no ordinary qualification when he turned his attention to the smuggling line.

"Pardon, gentle captain," said he; "the fault, if any, lies in my wig."

"What does this mean? What folly are you committing now, Promptene?" demanded Watch, who, not having as yet ascended the companion stairs, was necessarily precluded from seeing that part of the schooner where hung the mute evidence of the tragedy they had been enacting.

"Will no one answer?"

"You are and do not know," said Promptene, still keeping up his quotations from the reflected habits of former years, though he betrayed, in his endeavor to speak, the effect of the potatoes, pottle deep, with which he had, not to speak profanely, been lauding the gods in drink offerings for the last two hours. While silent, however, he had experienced no difficulty in bringing himself up with the rest, and looking as impenetrably sober as the dullest blockhead would desire.

"Then I say with thee, thrice worthy thane of Cawdor,

'Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud'st the deed.'"

"Deed! what deed?" cried Watch, in a tone of surprise, unable to comprehend the jargon of his companion.

"What deed!" re-echoed Promptene, with the peculiar stare which expresses a drunkard's self-satisfaction, and the scorn in which he holds the rest of mankind. "A deed without a name."

He dropped his jaw in a semi-biccup when he came to the dissyllable as if the word were too difficult for utterance, and brought himself up

at the end of the sentence by a steady settlement on his heels, which set his head nodding most provokingly for the space of half a minute.

Watch, who, even in his best moods, was not a man either to trifle or be trifled with, turned from the drunken Promptue with a glance of fierceness, though in very truth he could hardly help quenching it in the disposition to laughter, provoked by the odd appearance and strange grimace of the *ci-devant* Thespian, who, unable to keep a correct balance, swayed backward and forward at the head of the hatchway, threatening every moment to precipitate himself down the companion ladder, on or about the mid-mast.

"Which of you can give me an account," said the latter at length, recovering his gravity, "of the cause of all this disturbance aboard? Binnacle, you are an old seaman, almost born on shipboard, you, therefore, should have known how to keep order on deck while I was unavoidably below. You will explain, perhaps?"

"All as I can say's as this," grumbled the individual singled out by Watch for explanation, "it warn't none o' my fau't, so don't blame me for it. I only know I did all in my power to purwent it; but they would have all their own way in spite o' me."

"All their own way! Speak! Speak, man! What do you mean?" exclaimed Watch, as much in the dark from these explanations as explanations usually leave all matters of mystery.

Binnacle, however, from the desire to avoid saying anything to inculpate his shipmates, observable even amongst men better disciplined into a knowledge of their duties and obligations, was silent.

Whereupon Delaware Dick took up the question for elucidation.

"On, Massa Botch," said the black.

"Well, Delaware," observed the smuggler captain, "perhaps you will explain."

"Hap a may," returned the negro, "try't all 'vents, massa. 'Pose now, massa, 'ou hab a jigger in 'ou poot—'ou know bot a jigger is a dar' say dat."

"What has a jigger to do with it?"

"Ou'll see by an' by, ip 'ou on'y lat me come to dat my own bay. Dar' say dat," said the negro, proceeding, as is the wont with colored people, to illustrate the matter by familiar example. "A 'pose 'ou know bot a jigger is? an' 'ou had 'um in 'ou poot: bell 'ou earn' balk, 'ou earn' run, 'ou earn' do nothin' else, till 'ou fuss get rid ob de darnation jigger. Dat dar' quite freely. Ha, ya, ha!"

"Well?"

"Bell, den," continued Dick, with a grin, "'pose a little ting like a jigger caus' so mortch tr'ubble, how b'ud 'ou like to go op ti de mars' ed bid a cotsban' ti'd to 'ou lag? Answer dat, eh, eh, eh!"

"What does this mean?"

"Ow, massal we jis hang de 'cotsman t' save 'ou de tr'ubble!"

Provoked to wrath on hearing this announcement, the smuggler-chief threw a glance upon his companions that made the stoutest among them tremble. He felt that, in venturing on a proceeding so extreme, without deigning even to acquaint him with their intention, or seeking

his concurrence, they had struck a deadly blow at the discipline on which he had hitherto depended for safety. Without a strict maintenance of the authority he had established over the desperate men with whom he associated, he knew it would be impossible to work out their safety or his own. It was to this control over the movements of his people, he owed many a hair-breadth escape from the myrmidons of government, when a more extended counsel might have defeated his purpose. For, in this respect, our hardy contrabandist defied the generally received axiom, that in a multitude of counsellors consists wisdom, presuming to think that in all matters of a dangerous or duplex operation, the moment of promulgation should be the moment of action.

He felt that a movement so independent and unexpected as the execution of a prisoner, could not be passed over lightly or without comment; though comment, without the power necessary to punish, appeared ridiculous in practice. Under these circumstances, he considered but one course remained open to him—to surrender the command with which they had invested him, and leave the smugglers, with whom he had so long moved in concert, to their own guidance and direction. In other words, he felt what has been experienced by many despots of far loftier pretensions in the world's government—that all controlling power must totter whenever the wills which should be subordinate assume an independent action.

But though Watch felt that, after the late evidence of self-will his resignation of the command with which they had invested him, had become a matter of necessity, he did not ungenerously choose the present moment to announce such an intention to the companions of his lawless daring. He resolved also, that the act which determined his authority amongst them, an authority they appeared no longer to respect, should be accompanied with all the concomitants of solemnity.

Yet, while he formed this resolution, he was unwilling to give them just cause of complaint. To abandon his comrades in the midst of their difficulties, before he provided for their safety, was a course too unworthy for adoption. He, therefore, resolved, in the first place, to provide for the safety of the crew, and having achieved this point, no longer to continue a connection of so much hazard and danger; but retiring while he yet possessed means of an easy competency, from the uncertain trade he had pursued from boyhood, endeavour to realize happiness in the endearments of love; and, at a distance, from the world, whose ordinances he had so long defied, live and die unenvied and forgotten. Alas! what a dream!—freedom of will amid controlling circumstances! With all his knowledge of the world, he had yet to experience the awful truth that men blindly reticulate the web of their fate, and are taken within meshes of their own workmanship.

Wherefore, though his countenance underwent a change expressive of his inward mortification at finding his commands so openly violated and set at naught, in the matter of the Scotsman, he uttered not a word. But, moving a-head, pointed at the body, which swung backwards and forwards in the wind, the block and tackle creaking in its

oscillating motion, in a manner that seemed to mete and measure time even to its end—in death. The men understood the voiceless mandate of their leader, and mechanically hastened to haul in the body and lay it on the deck, preparatory to committing it to the deep.

Kneeling by the side of the stiffened body of McWhat, Watch now felt the heart, the temples, and the wrists; but, though warmth yet lingered on the surface, the circulation had become entirely extinct. The Scotsman was numbered with the dead. A chilly, shivering sensation shook the frame of the contrabandist—his heart smote him. Not that he felt, or could feel, sorry for the death of an individual whose life, had it been suffered to continue, must have been the source of terror to himself and his companions; but his better spirit revolted from cold-murder, nor could the strongest necessity plead in favor of such a barbarity, after the excitement of battle had ceased to animate him. Added to this peculiarity of temperament, his pride, as we have seen, rebelled against the unauthorised act of his subordinates. It is perfectly natural that he should have gazed upon the harsh and distorted features of his late treacherous enemy, and that a feeling of pity should have stolen over his mind while the crew enveloped the limbs of the deceased in his sea-shroud.

This silent survey of the body had something sufficiently solemn in it to make his heart shrink back from the contemplation with an inward horror he could not immediately control: and compunction for the crime, and defiance of the consequences resulting, or to result therefrom, seemed struggling in a strange and fearful contest within the breast of the smuggler chief. A mixture of the good and evil passions that sooth or vex mankind mantled on his countenance, and spoke it dangerous to cross him in the moody temper which had seized him; while a behavior so uncommon and opposite to what they had looked for from him, on his becoming acquainted with the act they had committed, kept the faculties of the crew suspended by mingled sensations of surprise and fear.

While thus engaged, Watch seemed to be laboring under an inward and superstitious excitement, that engrossed his faculties, and suspended his powers of thought and motion; nor dared the best beloved among the crew, in that moment of horrible pause, presume to interrupt the reverie into which he had fallen. Slowly and mechanically he raised himself from the deck, as his companions raised the body on the grating upon which they had lain it, to place it on the bounding vessel's quarter. His eyes followed the corpse, as if some preternatural fascination had rivited his attention to the horrible object they looked on; nor could he summon the power to withdraw his gaze until, sliding it over the schooner's quarter, it fell, with a heavy splash, into its cold deep grave, and the waters closed over and shut it for ever from his sight.

He then, in the same slow and solemn manner which had characterized his movements since he had become acquainted with Mc What's execution, retired aft and descended to his cabin to meditate in silence

on what had occurred; leaving the crew to form what judgment they might on a deportment so unusual with him. Nor was Binnacle, who had been attentively watching every change in their leader's features, slow to draw unfavorable auguries from a bearing so contrary to all their expectations.

"Well! who'd ha' thought it!" said Boltrope, throwing up both hands in an ejaculation of surprise, at the odd manner assumed by their leader, as he quitted the deck. "A cat may look at a king, I trust!"

"I'd thank you not to say nothin' about cats under our present circumstances, Master Boltrope," observed the other seamen, with a grave and mysterious gesticulation. "I hate the mention of them creturs when there's any thing mis-chea-vious a brewin', as I take to be the case jist now, seein' as the bare mention of them is sure to bring it on faster and faster. If ever I dreams of the creturs, some'at is sure to happen; so jist be silent while cap'n's in his present temper. Now a dog's altogether the other way, and means a friend, as is obvious to any one's calculations; for, put a dog an' cat together, they agree for all the world like a sailor and marine! and it all arises from a cat's wantin' of a sociable feelin', which fully proves that cats not bein' of the feelin' specie', ar'nt over lucky to be talked about when things is goin' cross with us, and that's all I know of the matter."

And Binnacle finished his speech, looking as important as many others who have said twice as much in senates and elsewhere, and to as little purpose, on subjects of infinitely greater moment!

Notwithstanding the look of dogmatism with which Binnacle had concluded, Boltrope did not appear altogether convinced by the argument of his companion; for though as superstitious as sailors commonly are, and that is to be superstitious enough, heaven knows, the idea of a cat's being unlucky was entirely new unto his mind. He had his own weak points, indeed in such matters—and he would not have whistled in a gale, or danced or played at cards, on shipboard, though you should offer him fifty guineas for such an act of presumption. In like manner, if he dreamt of his wife, he would feel himself perfectly justified in taking in sail; for he had the experience of a long nautical life to prove that such a matter was the sure forerunner of a squall. Nevertheless, not having heard of a similar opinion to that uttered by Binnacle before, he could not bring himself to see how the mere mention of a cat or dog could in any wise affect the safety of their present position, wherefore he exclaimed—

"Avast, there, Marster Binny! I don't see exactly how you brings that argyment to bear!"

"Why, look ye," observed Binnacle, "I know its of no use to try to convince a man agin his will; but I never yet he-ard of a murder done, whether at sea or ashore, which worn't punished some hows or other. Not as I consider deaths done in the nat'ral way of self-defence, as murder; seein' as there's a unavoidable compulsion in the likes o' them. I aint none o' your methodey-pralm-singing sort; but I parit my catechism, and I say, as we've done wrong in the matter o' that

lousy Scotsman, and I know as the capt'n thinks so his self, and I'd back the capt'n's opinion agin the whole world; for though he has'n't said nothin' in the way of blowing up, I know he thinks the more; and he has reason to think, Marster Boltrope, for that gatherin' up aloft don't mean nothin'."

Binnacle concluded this elucidating harrangue by directing the attention of his companion unto one of those phenomena by which the superstitions of seamen are daily nurtured and encouraged, and to which he silently appealed, to prove he had not spoken without cause. The clouds had gathered themselves immediately over the fatal vessel in the form of a cone, and pressed downward on the atmosphere with a force that suspended the wind, and produced a sudden calm. Not a breath stirred above or around them. A burning heat struck all on board the schooner, to the very marrow in their bones. The sea, or such part of it as was immediately beneath the weight that pressed it from above, was powerless to move. The sails lay flat upon the mast. It seemed as if the angel of destruction hovered in that cloud, to avenge the cry of blood that had been sent upward from the schooner's deck.

"Do you see that, Boltrope?" asked Binnacle, in a voice half choked by the over-heated atmosphere, yet still pointing to the cloud to which he had first directed his attention.

Boltrope looked, but spoke not.

All hands on board were breathless under the sudden effect of a phenomenon so unusual. They gazed upon each other, and then upon the cloud, in silent horror, as if they knew not what to say or do. While thus gazing the centre of the vaporous mass above them appeared descending to the ocean, and without exhibiting a single break in the cloud, the cone became inverted. In this state it hovered for a moment; a whizzing noise ensued, as if the wind, forced upward in the first instance by the mass of electric matter, had now found vent through some fissure in the descending cloud. There was but one flash—only one—but God! how vivid! A roar, as if a whole park of artillery had been simultaneously discharged succeeded, and relieved the atmosphere of the accumulation of fluid that burthened it. The fore-topmast of the schooner was carried away. An intense light seemed whirling fiercely round and round the mainmast till it reached the deck, melting every particle of metal in its way, and destroying every thing it touched, leaving the blackened and burnt wreck of the mainmast standing alone, without sail, or spar, or cordage.

Overcome by a crash so sudden, so unlooked for, so awful, the men, with one general movement, fell upon their knees, glaring wildly on the heavens, with eyes half blinded by the fierce intensity of the light, and stretching out their arms as if in the silent horror of the time they would propitiate the only Power that could at will destroy or save them.

The wind now burst forth with violence, as if actuated by scorn of the momentary restraint it had been put under, it determined to show its strength, and revel in its mightiness and power; yet, though the

waters began to boil up in a fierce turmoil, they failed to rouse the smugglers from the stupor which had seized upon and suspended their faculties. The storm spirit, passing into the ascendancy, roared and revelled in the nether air, and in a few minutes presented a scene appalling beyond the powers of description.

Watch, roused into action by the sudden concussion which had, indeed, shaken the schooner from stem to stern, rushed from the cabin to the deck, only to see the remnant of the mainmast cleared of its spars and cordage—the men on their knees stretching out their arms in silent horror—the whole deck, in short, a complete ruin—while the vessel, hurried before the wind like a wild horse, kept plunging by the head in a manner that bid fairly to ship water enough to swamp her altogether in a few minutes.

"What's the matter, my men," cried the intrepid leader, though some degree of horror might, perhaps, have infused itself in his tone "Come, rouse up! Bear a hand, lads, and take in the canvas for'ard. This is sad work! Up, lads, up! Bear a hand for'ard, there! Delaware! you down? We musn't lose her this time, any how."

"Ow, massa!" said the individual last addressed, now partially recovered from the panic which had affected him, in common with the rest, "dey cou'dnt done it better in d' West Indies!"

"Done it!—done what?" exclaimed Watch.

"Ow, massa! dat las' flash ob lightnin'," observed the negro, with a faint shudder.

"Don't think of that now," cried Watch, in a tone of encouragement; "we have something else to do. Come, bear a hand, Delaware. We must take in all our canvas but a trysail, and batten down our fore hatch way. The water pours in over our bows at every plunge, and the vessel's unmanageable at present. We want a sail aft here, to steady the craft. We might stand a chance of doing then; but that's impossible, while it blows great guns in this way."

It now blew a perfect hurricane, and the uproar of the elements became tremendous. Yet, notwithstanding the hurtling in the air, the smuggler crew flitted backwards and forwards on the darkened deck, in silent obedience to their commander's orders, like so many evil spirits working amid discordances we may imagine to exist in hell.

The impossibility of hoisting either canvas or spar abaft, to steady her motion under so heavy a wind, rendered the schooner still more unmanageable, and she rolled from side to side like a mere log, with a terrific sea breaking over every minute; while, drenched to the skin by the rain, which fell in torrents, the smuggler and his bold crew held on as well as they might, expecting momentarily to founder with their craft.

The sea and sky were now enveloped in one wide mantle of the most pitchy darkness, except where the lightnings, fierce and forked, darted their blue flame athwart the dense clouds in a zig-zag career, that rendered the scene more dreadful and appalling, illuminating the surface of the sea, until it seemed absolutely on fire in parts, where lashed into foam it roared and flew before the hurrying wind, which lifted up the

heads of the waves, and gave them a new and more tremendous grandeur.

The timbers of the poor schooner quivered at every plunge of her bows, and creaked and vibrated, trembling to her very keel at every stroke she received from the tempest-troubled ocean. Now upborne upon the crest of some aspiring wave, she was lifted amid hissing, and swirling and spattering foam, as if destined to certain destruction the following moment, amid the depths in which she was about to be precipitated. Now hurled downward with a velocity that deprived the crew of breath, into a valley of waters, in which the waves, boiling, and roaring, and struggling, seemed hurrying onward with maddening impetuosity to bury the fated vessel in their wrath. The scene was awful—the silence death-like. The crew looked at each other, but spoke not. Each read his companion's thoughts in that silent and melancholy look. There was no hope of safety or escape—death was indeed before them—their earthly hours were numbered.

Accumulated horrors now surrounded them; wave upon wave advanced upon and broke over the devoted vessel, that rocked and rolled completely powerless amid the boiling tempest. Lifted on the summit of the highest wave, you could now see nothing but another rising in still more dreadful magnificence, and advancing to the charge. The condition of the crew can hardly be imagined. Awe-struck and spiritless, worn out with fatigue, and rendered stiff and uncomfortable from the continued rain and cold, which struck to their very hearts as they huddled themselves together, in the vain hope of attracting the heat of each others' bodies; whispering occasionally in tremulous whispers, while, exposed to the fierce contention of the elements, they surveyed with various emotions the awful scene before them.

All this time the schooner, entirely unmanageable, was hurried onward by the screaming wind in a direct course for the shores of Holland. Nor was it practicable to wear her off, though Watch himself stood at the tiller, and did all that seamanship could do to inspire confidence, and if possible save the vessel. The bold smuggler looked on the wild commotion of the elements with a bearing which might be imagined of the prince of the powers of light, when he saw his bright host discomfited in their vain contest for the mastery of heaven, and in the midst of threatening destruction showed neither quailing nor dismay.

Notwithstanding they had succeeded in battening down the fore-hatchway, the quantity of water she had already shipped, by the forward rigging carrying her nose completely under the waves, and running her in that condition for a considerable space at a time, had completely swamped the cabins and hold; and, as she rolled from side to side, you might hear the water washing below, while all the articles which were at all floatable swam hither or thither under the accidental direction of the water contained in her, in the hearing of the broken-hearted and dispirited crew, and rendered their present situation yet more wretched.

In this most miserable plight they earnestly desired death would re-

lieve them from their hapless condition, so cold, so wet, so wretched had they become. They looked on the wild turmoil of the surrounding waters, which rose like a wall on either side of their poor devoted bark, to pour all their fury on their already drenched bodies, with a languid expression, as if they had lost all sense of approaching danger in indifference.

Their leader proved his real value to the smugglers by his calm and courageous bearing amid these perils and difficulties. In this moment of trial, when the hearts of the dispirited men quailed under the impression that all their efforts were useless, and only prolonged a struggle which must inevitably terminate in death, Watch maintained his self-possession; and to this alone might be attributed the preservation of the vessel and her crew. So far as she would obey her helm, he firmly held her to the waves; and though, from her dipping continually a-head, he entertained well-grounded fears that she would settle down that way, the schooner still kept on the surface, to the surprise of all on board. In the midst of surrounding discouragement, a gleam of joy lit up the features of the crew when Dick shouted—

"Lan', lan', massa!—lan'!"

Poor souls! the magic of that sound made them forget that land, in their present situation, brought them their greatest danger, and that the wild, and roaring, and turbulent waters were infinitely safer than a violent surge-beaten shore, with breakers amongst the flat rocks, and a heavy wind blowing them to destruction. Miserable dupes of hope! The mention of land came thronged with other associations—thoughts of home, of pleasures, of parents, wives, children, and all the fire-side endearments that soften the hearts of men, and bring a thousand joys, even to the rudest and most uncultivated of our species.

"I see it—would we were a hundred miles away from it!" said Watch, gloomily, as he surveyed the low, flat, black-looking coast of Holland, towards which the schooner was drifting before the wind.

Every exertion within the power of man now seemed hopeless to the preservation of the contraband schooner and her devoted crew, hurried on by a wind that blew directly on shore. To wear her off was impossible. Each passing moment came fraught with despair to these wretched men. One desperate chance alone remained, and their intrepid leader, determined to struggle against fate until destruction should become inevitable, resolved on trying it.

While the crew looked despairingly on the fierce-contending waters that lashed the shore, and in which they and their gallant bark seemed destined to find a grave together, Watch kept the schooner's head directly in for a small narrow estuary, or rather creek, at the entrance of which the breakers boiled and roared in maddened fury. The eye of the crew seemed starting from their sockets as they approached this point of danger, and gazed upon the waters that lashed the sides and eddied beneath the bows of their gallant bark. "Now God have mercy on our souls!" prayed their courageous steersman, prepared for the worst; and at that instant a wave propelled the schooner with giant force through the surrounding breakers, and the next found her safe within the creek, and anchored in smooth water.

CHAPTER IX.

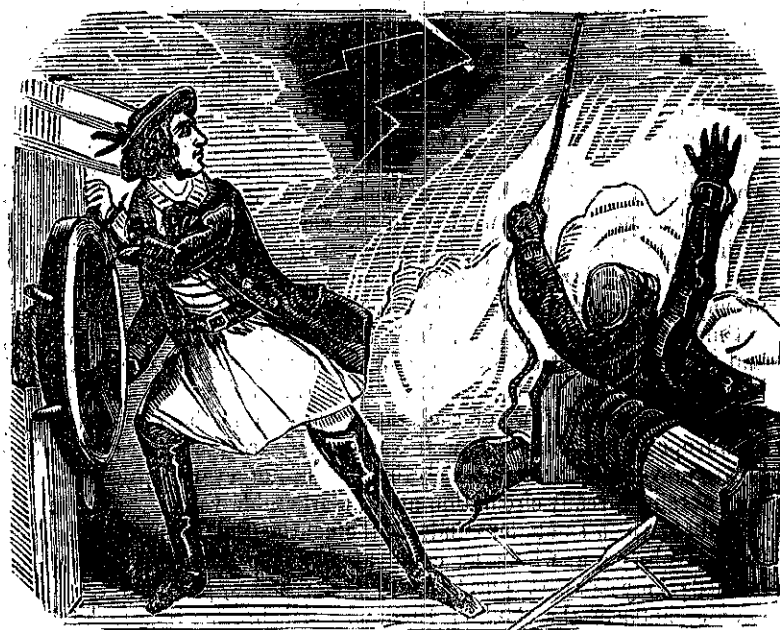
"Tis a grand sight
To watch the progress of the rolling sea."

THE feelings of the contrabandists, on being thus snatched from the very jaws of destruction, may be left to the imagination of the reader. As all on board, even the bold helmsman himself, had abandoned all hope of saving the schooner, when, propelled by the gale which howled behind her, as if burthened by the voice of fiends rejoicing at her destruction, she entered breakers that washed over her decks, drenching the heart-stricken men and benumbing their limbs, the revulsion of feeling, attending their providential and unlooked-for escape, was proportionate to the peril through which they had passed. The men seemed to have run mad; and, in the extacy of their excitement, danced, sang, and embraced each other, pouring forth incoherent congratulations on their recent escape, and using the most extravagant testimonials of joy, beyond, infinitely beyond the sober control of reason.

Watch himself offered up a heartfelt thanksgiving, when, surveying his dismantled craft, now safely riding in a creek that served as a breakwater, he reflected on the imminent danger through which they had been conducted by the hand of providence; for he was not slow to acknowledge that all human aid had been powerless to have saved the schooner. He then set the now invigorated crew to clear the vessel of the water she had shipped, and, descending to his cabin, again stretched himself on the boards to take the repose necessary to recruit his exhausted frame, but which he found impossible, from the pain he suffered and the anxiety he felt.

The day at length broke through the pitchy haze—if the dull grey light which dawned upon a flat, inhospitable shore, and barely served to render darkness visible, could be designated day. Sad as it was, and miserable as the prospect it developed, the appearance of a few straggling fishing huts, about half-a-mile distant, spoke of hope and comfort to men who, on the previous night, saw no other resource than to make their minds up to sup with Pluto. They found, also, they were at the mouth of the Texel; though as the wind continued to blow hard ashore, it would be impossible to work the schooner out—which, in fact, it would be the height of folly to attempt. They, therefore, set themselves about rigging a jury-mast aft, and preparing to sail on the first opportunity.

When the storm had subsided, Watch carried his vessel, all crippled as she was, into Rotterdam, for the purpose of refitting. He now applied himself to the measures rendered necessary to secure the safety of the crew of the schooner. The singular appearance of his craft, when the loss of the government cutter sent in chase of him should be



WILL WATCH AT THE WHEEL.

reported, would, he was convinced, occasion no inconsiderable risk of detection. To obviate this difficulty, the confidence of others was rendered necessary, and the hazard of treachery and betrayal by his agents must, to a certain extent, be incurred.

The contrabandists, so lately rescued from a death that seemed inevitable, gave themselves up to the grosser enjoyments which seamen in general indulge in ashore, and revelled, night and day, with the jung frows and schnaps, as if there were no other pleasures in the world—and, probably, they were in the right—leaving their leader uninterrupted in his measures to defeat any inquiry that might be instituted with respect to the loss of the government vessel he had so unceremoniously sent down.

As we have already premised, the singular appearance of the schooner would be most likely to attract attention; and should government have received information enabling them to identify himself and companions—a circumstance not over and above consolatory to his feelings, as such a fact would lead to their execution for piracy.

Watch, however, had lived too long in the world not to know there are always means at hand, in mercantile towns, to cover any extent of crime with a becoming concealment. Amongst other extensive dealings, he had long transacted business with a person of the Jewish persuasion, whose enlarged mind and easy conscience afforded ample proof of the old proverb, "honesty among thieves;" wherefore, in this individual, of a scorned and persecuted race, he had the most unbounded confidence; nor had he, as yet, had occasion to repent it, though their transactions required the utmost secrecy. Though an unlimited reward would have attended a breach of faith by the despised Jew, Abednego Nebat had proved trustworthy to the smuggler; contenting himself with a fair share of the profits of the transactions, and despising the idea of a gain, however enormous, only obtainable by violating the principles which he had prescribed for their mutual abidance.

Singular as it may appear, there are such characters in the World, and men who assist each other in violating or evading every kind of law, are yet true to themselves. It is this which renders detection and punishment of Jews of such rare occurrence in the criminal courts of Europe; even while it is well known they are the centre of a combine movement through which the produce of every species of robbery obtains a ready circulation and a marketable value.

Nebat was a smuggler—indeed, the continental agent of the Wellington's Hole gang, whom he could at any time betray, if he were so minded; he was also a purchaser of stolen notes, provided they were genuine notes of the Bank of England. His brother Shadrack resided at Hamburgh, and both were connected with gaming establishments in various capitals of Europe, through which tables the notes so purchased found their way into circulation amongst respectable firms, and so confounded all means of tracing them to the hand of the spoiler.

Thousands of pounds would have waited on Abednego's betrayal of the parties he transacted business with; but he scorned a treachery which, though it might add a little to his fortune, could not confer character in the world. He therefore continued honest in the midst of his nefarious transactions, and was accounted a good fellow amongst all the first-rate plunderers of the day.

To this character did Watch determine to apply in the extremity of his affairs, well knowing that if there existed a possibility of eluding the consequences that might follow on the heels of the present advantage, the head of Abednego was the place to fish for it; in which opinion he was fully authorised by the experience of years. No one of the many nefarious characters with whom the Jew had done business, having as yet had occasion to impeach his veracity or discretion. "Silence is the sowl of pis'ness, mine tear," he would continually say, "and if you'll be on'y foolish enough to howld yer tongue, depend on it I shall be wise enough to howld mine tongue."

Daily engaged in mysterious transactions of a like nature, he nevertheless contrived to elude the police, with all their vigilance; nor had they ever succeeded in tracing plundered property home to him, or discovering the secret repertory in which he contrived to conceal it. That was religiously kept a secret from his most intimate friends.

His mode of living was equally mysterious and secluded: he held no communication with his neighbors, or if a word might pass between them it was generally delivered in such wise as had obtained for him the character of a misanthrope. This kept them at a distance, and a man engaged in affairs like Abednego Nebat's could not be very desirous of company. His misanthropy, however, was assumed, and to the distressed amongst his own people he was ever known to be liberal, even to excess. For the christian race of men he could hardly be supposed to feel. Like generally produces its own resemblance; and the persecuting spirit under which his people stand rebuked in christian communities, had engendered a spirit in his breast, if not absolutely of hatred, at least of apathy towards their sufferings, very nearly the same in its effect. The Jew could not forget the wide difference which christian communities had marked between the races; and as most men are to a certain degree actuated by a pride of spirit which warms them unto their own particular class, Abednego felt but small sympathy towards those who degraded him and his brethren; his heart, indeed, stung by mortification, naturally turned from those who had degraded his brethren, and kept them homeless and denationalised—a rich, but landless people, having no stamp or mark of currency in the communities among which they were sheltered.

But though the Israelite kept no company, he inhabited one of the best houses in the city, living in it nearly alone, having but one domestic to people so vast a wilderness. Nebat also had taken equal care to isolate every kind of arrangement that might lead to evidence of the dark dealings to which he had devoted himself. Before this house did Watch present himself in the evening, and being well known to the domestic, was freely admitted, and left to grope his way to the solitary chamber at the house-top, in which Abednego delighted to immure himself, when dialting on profits already accrued, or planning future operations.

The last rays of the setting sun fell upon the venerable countenance of the Jew Nebat, who sat at his window in a fit of musing, while the mighty organ of life and light descended below the western horizon to his bed in the wild and distant waters of the Atlantic; and as ray after ray disappeared, until they were entirely lost in the broad streaks of burnished gold and crimson which marked the quarter of the sun's descent; the eye of the Jew became intelligence, as if he sympathised in the quiet of that moment, and held communion with beings of another world. His lips moved, as if in highly-wrought admiration, yet he spoke not; he was too deeply engrossed to hear Watch when entering the room, nor could the latter for a while summon resolution to break in upon a reverie apparently so replete with pleasurable sensations.

"Father!" said the smuggler, at length breaking silence.

The Jew, startled by the interruption, turned round in some confusion, but, perceiving who it was, recovered his presence of mind, and pointing to a chair, exclaimed—

"Mine son, ish't you! Vat prings you here! D'ye vant anoder

cargo, or do ye seek Abednego Nebat that he may help vash de plood off your hands. If you dabble in plood it vill shtain, mine shild—if you dabble in plood it vill shtain, mine shild!"

"What do you mean, father?" cried Watch, in alarm.

"Nay, nay, mine shild, nobody knows av it excep' mineself," cried Abednego. "An' you, mine son, ish on'y antishipate a leetle pit py my bein' told a leetle afore."

"Whence obtained you your information?"

"Dat cannot be of any consequence."

"To me it is of the utmost."

"Den it must go unsatisfied, mine shild, for de present."

"Will you not tell me?"

"I never make a point of telling any ting, mine tear, not even ven dere's any ting to be cot py it, and ton't see exac'y vy I should go out of mine vay dis time."

"Is the news publicly known? Will you answer me that?"

"I 'ave no objection to a confidence as limited as dat."

"Then, father—"

"It ish known on'y to me. Vill dat satsify you?"

"It must perforce."

"But vat prings you here, mine child?"

"I come to consult with you on the best means of securing the safety of myself and my companions, and I know not in whom I may better confide than in an old friend."

Nebat smiled.

"You som'time meetsh dem kind o' cattle mid new fashes, Mister Vatch," said he.

"It is not the first confidence I have reposed in you, Nebat, nor the first time I have placed my life within your keeping, and you have considered the trust as sacred."

"You have found de vay, Mister Vatch, to teal mit de ould Jew. If oder peoples would show a leetle more confidence, dey would not find our tribe sho hard upon dem as dey say ve are."

"You then know what has happened?"

"I know you fought mit a coverment cutter."

"And destroyed her."

"An' tishtroyed her!"

"All hands on board perished, I believe."

"Dat vash lucky; nor 'ave I heard of any pody's eshcapi'n', mine shild, as yet. It vash a powld teed, Mister Vatch; it vas a powld teed in tefence of our property."

"I almost regret having ventured it."

"Vy, yes, it toes pring apout some queer conshequences mit it, an' if its found out—I teclare my throat aches mid de bare tought of sich a ting mine shild."

"We are all born to die, Master Abednego."

"True; put ve needn't pe in too creat a hurry apout it."

"I have never known solicitude to prolong a life," observed Watch, "and we all know how apt it is to embitter one. Why should we go through life as if we were eternally afraid of losing it!"

"You are quite a philosopher, Mister Vatch," observed the Jew,

"My profession makes me one," said the smuggler.

"Dat's true," observed Nebat; "nothing acquaints a man mid the true value of life like a perpetual hazard; put ve must proceed to pis'-ness at vonce: vot do you expec' me to do in de matter?"

"To transfer the schooner to other hands," said Watch; "to transfer her to other hands, by sale, as quick as need be, and ship myself and crew for legitimate owners, and in a legal trade."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled the Jew, while his bright eyes twinkled with inward satisfaction at the prospect of outwitting a government, which might indeed be said to form the chief source of delight with this extraordinary character.

"Why do you laugh, Abednego?" questioned the smuggler, hardly brooking so untimely a mirth, and setting it rather down to the score of ridicule than approbation.

"To tink of your fine plan, Mister Vatch," answered the Jew. "Cou'dn't 'ave tone it petter mineself, an' dat's sayin' a creat teal in praise of it, Mister Vatch—a creat teal in praise of it."

"Have you any better to offer?"

"No, mine tear; it's de very von I would 'ave offer' mineself."

"You agree with me, then?"

"Decidedly."

"I'm glad of that."

"But you'll vant a cargo. Vat tink you av a cargo av tutch bheeses, eh, Mynheer Vatch?" said the old Jew. "You mus' carry sum'at to cover your legitimate character."

"Butter will be better, Nebat," returned Watch.

"How's that?"

"We can break bulk, and drop some of the firkins at Welling's Hole, and nobody be any the wiser. Ay, Abednego, enough to put a profit on our freight for the English market."

"Mein cot!" cried Nebat, "you've a cood 'ed for trade, Mynheer Vatch. I shall often tink o' dem firkins, an' laugh at vot may pass for legitimate tradin.' But now, mine shild," continued the old Jew, "ve mus' have a care for your safety. In de first plaish, var is te black schooner. You shou'd have christen'd her te Tivel, and not te Vitch."

"She lays in Schelder's Dock."

"Mind den, she pelangs to me," said the Jew; "nor do I tink, Mynheer Vatch, it vill be altogether safe for you an' te crew to remain here. You mos' go to Hamburgh, an' wait at mein proder's till I send 'um roun' to you, mit an assortment of articles all nicely packed in firkins, for te butter market. Ha! ha! ha!"

"But why send us to Hamburgh?"

"Merely to keep appearances."

"How?"

"Embarking from thence, you will not seem to 'ave any connexion with the vessel at Rotterdam. Never fear, I vill take my measure with precaution, Mynheer Vatch," observed Abednego.

"You will be the saving of us all, Nebat."

"Yes, I 'ave save a creat many in mine time," laughed the Jew—

"a creat many rokes. I vou'dn't take all de trouble apout dis for an honest man, Mynheer Vatch."

"You will not dare to betray?"

"Tare to vhat?" cried Nebat; while a sudden gleam from his eyes lighted up his countenance with indignation. "Tare to vhat! You had better not tare me to any thing!"

"Pardon me, my old friend," said Watch, taking his hand. "Pardon my suspicion. I should have known you better; but the hard usage of the world makes us suspect even the innocent."

"Den learn de experience o' a long life, mynheer," said the Jew. "Suspicion rarely keeps men honesht—never makes dem so; but I forkive you, mynheer. Do' its rader hart, after so many yearsh an' opportunities I have had, to make a fortune by petrayin' mine friends, to be suspect of sich a matter as dat."

The two parties shortly after separated, Watch to summon his companions, and get under weigh for Hamburg, and Abednego Nebat to forward the vessel with papers to his brother, consigning her to the ownership of one Jorgan Janson, with whom the Jews did business in the shipping way, and whose name was ever ready to lend a currency to any transaction which the latter might have on hand, where unlimited confidence was required, and no questions to be asked on either side.

The due progress of our narrative now requires we should return unto Welling's Hole, confined within the gloomy recesses of which we left Ned Topman and our respected friend Mister Timothy Clark, not exactly cater causers; in other words, in a mood very much inclined to the quarrelsome, the loyalty of the individual having got something the better not only of his judgment, but triumphing gloriously over the habitual feeling of respect in which he had been accustomed to hold the master's mate.

Until the moment they were stowed away together within the smuggler's cave, the simple but good-hearted Timothy had not the most remote suspicion of the private practices of Ned Topman.

The eclairsissement which took place when Welling had left them together in the cave, rendered the fact of Topman's being connected with the smugglers plain and palpable unto his senses, and led him to conclude that he was not only guilty of treacherous dealing, but probably the veritable murderer of their messmate Hardbrace.

This latter reflection did not therefore contribute to the ease or satisfaction felt by Timothy Clark, in the presence of a man whom, he could not now help considering, had unfairly disposed of his brother preventive. Nor did the occasional looks of gloom which overspread the countenance of Topman tend to remove this idea. Still the bearing of the master's mate, as manifested individually towards himself, combatted this impression, and made him unwilling to believe the worst. What galled him most deeply was, that his *ci devant* companion in the cage and cart—indeed, it would have galled any thorough seaman to the quick—should have calculated on his becoming a traitor to the true blue he had carried unstained from the age of nine years,

when he served as powder-monkey on board the old Thunderer, until the thatch upon his crown had become of that mingled hue which betokens the approach of age.

This was a wound too deep for the honest formast-man, a stain upon his character he could not brook, a never-to-be-forgotten stain, that impeached his honor as a British sailor by which honor he was bound to be shot at for something less than a shilling a day, or remain in a floating prison as long as His Majesty's underlings in command might please to insist. Timothy had strong notions of his duty as a sailor, nor did Topman raise himself in his estimation by running directy counter to them, by the premature disclosure he had made of the uses to which the cave was devoted. The cave was to Timothy a prison, unless he joined the smuggler's crew, and sacrificed his dearly cherished sense of duty, for so trifling a matter as a mouthful of fresh air.

Now, as these reflections all rushed into Timothy's brain at once, that discriminating organ became so perplexed by the crowd of associations, as to be incapable of producing any other explanation than Timothy's ebullition at the close of the last chapter, in which we had occasioned to mention that worthy character, and which would have formed a tolerable sample of plain English, if a sense of propriety had not stepped in, and, in due time checked his utterance; for Timothy had little or no thought of staying the impetuosity of his feelings, when they were once thoroughly aroused; and, to do him justice, he felt himself more deeply disturbed by the plain and unvarnished proposal of his companion, than by any other matter that had come under his observation before; for Clark had too much honesty in his nature to render him apt to receive the impressions of roguery at the first blush.

Yet though Timothy vindicated his loyalty and devotion to a service in which he had obtained scarcely any reward, save and except hard fare and harder knocks, he was something of a sensualist, and was as fond of good eating and drinking, as he would describe himself, as here and there one; and when after a copious libation of grog, he got up in the morning to a breakfast of cold mutton and hot tea, with an unsparing supply of brandy in it, his virtue, it must be confessed, was something staggered.

In short, he began to think it very hard that honest fellows like himself, who never flinched from their duty, but battled the watch in all weathers, never got served in that fashion aboard; and he pondered over and over again at every mouthful he took of the mutton, thinking, no doubt, that short eating was far preferable to short allowance. The soft tack too, instead of the coarse ship-bread, often full of weevils, made him begin to think, if honesty had any claim to class itself among the virtues, it was in general a thriftless and ragged one, that might be praised by such as filled a better situation in the world, but never met with any other than empty encouragement; a species of reward which, unto a man of Timothy's capacity of stomach, afforded all cause of rejoicement.

And he began to look upon his companion with more favorable impressions than he had indulged in on the previous night. Neither did smuggling, which left so many of the comforts and luxuries of life at his command, appear so very reprehensible; for, however, rightly Tim's mind might have decided in favor of the direct line of duty, he felt those impressions made thereon, gradually disappearing under the potent effects of the luxury he was then enjoying. The stomach, therefore, that enemy to all true nobility of sentiment in the highest as well as among the lowest grades of society—if Timothy should chance to change his opinions in the matter of duty—the stomach alone was reprehensible. A grave matter, indeed, and in some respects worthy the deliberation of statesmen and legislators.

But whether or not grave enough to attract the attention of the principal movers of the social scheme, it was not grave enough to make Timothy feel heartily ashamed of the splenetic temper he had displayed towards his companion on the previous night, for, added to his other reflections, the gallows, from which he believed himself to have been rescued the night before, stood up in awful array before his imagination, and formed a powerful contrast to the comforts he then enjoyed.

"I say, Ned," said Timothy, breaking the silence which had continued between them from that period of their preceding night's quarrel, until the middle of breakfast, "I say, Ned!"

"Well, Timothy."

"Do smugglers allus git treatment like this here?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I'm blest!" said Timothy, and relapsed into his former silence, while his stomach still continued to sap his resolution, and endanger the virtue which had previously animated him.

Topman, on the other hand, an old stager, who knew mankind, left Timothy to form his own resolution on the subject, convinced, from the tone in which he had made the above enquiry, and the air of profound astonishment with which he had concluded his speech, that he was in a fair way to renounce his honesty, and duty, and other like unreasonable notions, and come into a resolution which would merge all such fanatical considerations in sensual enjoyment.

Wherefore, he left Timothy to the uninterrupted bias of his own mind, merely watching him as he opened and shut his huge mouth licking his lips with additional relish at every mouthful; while his little eyes fairly glistened under the sensation of the enjoyment he experienced; which, indeed, was not diminished until the mutton-bone had been stripped, when the fore-mast-man thought it incumbent on him to say something which might serve in lieu of grace after meat, and which he did as follows:—

"I've bin a thinking, Ned——"

"About what, my hearty?" cried the master's mate.

"That it isn't over grateful in me to be unthankful for all these good things, as you are the cause of my enj'yn'; and I don't think as I ought to ha' gone so far as I did last night."

"Don't you?"

"No, not wi'out axing pardon."

"That's easily granted," said Topman, heartily shaking the simple-witted Timothy by the hand, while the latter looked as pleased as if he had got leave of absence and a month's pay in his pocket.

"Well," said Timothy, "blame me if that ain't good of you; and now I comes to consider what you said about hangin', I don't see no joke in goin' back to the Wasp, to go up to the foreyard agin my will."

"You are right, Timothy," observed the master's mate.

"Right as a ring-bolt, for the matter o' that," proceeded Timothy; "I don't do things without deliberation. I can tell you, Master Topman; and afore as I gi's my final vardic' agin smugglin', I warnt to know what smugglin' is, wherefore, I warnt you to answer as this here—did your companions thieve all this here wot I have bin a eatin' an' a drinkin' on?"

"Thieve it! What do you mean?"

"Why I means wot I ses," said Clark, sticking to the question; "accase as if so be as its the pro-duce of thievin', I tell you plainly, I won't have nothin' whatsumever to do with it."

"If that's all," observed Topman, with a grim smile, "all that you have eaten and drunk in this cave has been fairly bought, and as fairly paid for."

"Then there ain't no dishonesty in smugglin' arter all," said Timothy Clark, with inward excitement.

"None in the world," returned his companion.

"Then I say, as a good breakfast is better nor a bad un' observed Timoty, and relapsed into his former state of pondering, as if he had yet some doubt that required to be satisfied ere he gave in the final result of his deliberation.

A fortnight had passed over in this confinement, every day during which the good things that passed the gullet of Timothy Clark formed fresh assaults upon his loyalty and zeal for the service. Alas! that the rations he swallowed, and the liquor he imbibed, should have power enough to stain the hitherto incorruptible current of his heart, and turn his loyalty and devotion from the hard fare which awaited him on shipboard, unto the luxuries which seemed part and parcel of a smuggler's life. Timothy, wavering all the time betwixt inclination and a sense of duty, at length gave way, and he took pledge of pot luck with the master's mate for the rest of his days. Matters were in this state when Welling received an intimation from Watch to make ready for a landing, and our friend Timothy was notified to prepare for a first appearance in his new character.

CHAPTER X.

"What shall he have who hits the deer?"

THE gypsy Frontibelle—on the road to whose presence we left the redoubtable little sheriff of the county of Kent, surrounded by a motley group of merry-hearted vagabonds, who seemed to live as if it had been originally decreed by the great informer of creation, that man should enjoy himself without pain or care or sorrow—the gypsy Frontibelle, while her companions prepared for their annual foolery, laying aside her accustomed mirth, watched by her wounded brother, her mind ever and anon wandering from the object of her tendance to that of her affection, and returning again much in the same manner, we suspect, as the mind of her betters have often done under similar circumstances. Alas! where the heart is deeply interested, the mind learns to divest itself of the trammels of duty, and revel uncontrolled in the fond anticipations and eager promptings of passion. Nor must our readers blame nature that the young gypsy felt, as other feel when they have acknowledged themselves in love; nor wonder that hope, despair, resentment, and regret, successively occupied her warm and enthusiastic imagination as her rival or her lover in turn triumph in her recollection.

The spot she occupied was in itself favorable for meditation, and the light whispering of the wind, as it swept along in the deepened wood, soothed her by its murmurs, and hushed her spirit into the repose necessary to intensity of thought. The fragile grass took a diversity of coloring as, bending beneath the passing breeze, and, recovering itself again, it became deepened into transient shadow by the motion which agitated it. The sun poured down his glory into the heart of the dell, throwing a shield of burnished gold over the face of the water, save where towards the margin the trees, and skies, and every surrounding object became imaged as in a mirror. Such a spot at such an hour, together with an occupation at once so monotonous and melancholy, might surely move a heart that inwardly and deeply felt a sense of loneliness, to muse upon its hidden grief, or, losing sight of all opposing barriers, dilate on its cherished desires.

Though one of the abandoned race of outcasts and vagrants who possess no moral code nor social restriction, Frontibelle had never forgotten, never could forget, the object of her first and earlier ambition. Nature had taught her, as indeed she teaches most of her sex, the necessity of a single preference, and her heart acknowledged no other; nor was the affection she felt for our hero corrupted by the desire of animal enjoyment. Gypsy as she was, her passion was more pure, more confiding, more noble, and less selfish than can be conceived by

the mere sensualist. It was, in fact, the first affection of a young girl—so hard to win, and so difficult to break. She had, in truth, devoted herself to one. The image of that one filled her heart, nor could the possession of the whole world beside have compensated her for his loss, nor filled up the void left in her feelings when Watch deserted her. Life had become to her a thing without value, and she looked through the waste of existence as if she had no object—no intention. With one of her sanguine and passionate temperament love was existence, and the warm blood that circled in her veins boiled fiercely as ever for the handsome smuggler, who had taught her heart to form its first preference. Watch was all the world to Frontibelle, and as she pressed her burning and throbbing temples, sick with anxious care, and thought, and watching, filled with one idea, she would have ventured soul and body for him.

Bernard, over whom she tended with all the care, and tenderness, and devotion of a sister, began to show signs of amendment, which promised fairly of returning health; and her mind, relieved from the dread of her grandmother's resentment against Watch, cherished presages that rendered her moments happy. The success of Mistress Purley in obtaining a footing at the hostel, and thus commanding at will the person of her rival, promised a revenge on her who had estranged the heart of the smuggler from his oft-repeated oaths of constancy and affection—oaths in which she had trusted in all the fond confidence of woman's love.

While Watch flattered the gypsy girl by the attentions which won her whole soul, her life was cloudless, and her days passed in pure and unsophisticated happiness; those days, the brightness of which breaks in upon existence in the period of youth and hope, to promise joys which are seldom realized, and never forgotten. In those sunny days, life seemed to have no dark side for the enthusiastic gypsy. As she sped down the stream of existence, nature presented all things lovely as enjoyment could desire, and her heart danced amid the fruits and flowers that seemed to spring around her; she was far too happy to dream of the thorns that lurked beneath them. Hurried impetuously onward, hope eagerly grasped at a distant happiness, and pictured it in all the tintings of reality. The colors possessed the vivid warmth of heaven—alas! that it should have been merely the fading flattery of a dream. The man to whom she had devoted herself abandoned her, destroyed the illusion which had rendered her happy, and involved her future life in misery and despair. She had now nothing but blighted hopes to mark the minutes of her weary pilgrimage.

The active co-operation of her stern old grandam promised Frontibelle a certain and no distant gratification in the possession of the smuggler himself—at all events, soothed her by the prospect of revenge upon her rival—that revenge so desirable unto fierce natures—and what more fierce the tempers of her dark-skinned race? Revenge by them as eagerly coveted as affection—revenge that glows with greater intensity from the energy that calls it forth. Frontibelle felt this, and chided the hours that passed too slowly for her sanguine wishes.

It was this eager desire that led the young gypsy to the disguise which, with her attempt to effect an entrance to the chamber of Susan Wylie, had occasioned the disturbance at the Anchorsmiths, and which even now almost forbade her to think of pause, until midnight should acquaint her with her grandam's plans for the future. She was nervous, irritated; and perhaps the excitement she felt on her brother's account, added to the restlessness of mind under which she labored.

Such were the feelings of Frontibelle when the whole tribe of gypsies ushered the little sheriff into her presence, and, to do him justice, he seemed to be as much struck with the beauty of the little gypsy as he had previously been with that of Susan of the hostel; nor, as she raised herself from the green knoll on which she previously reclined, could he prevent his classical mind homaging her beauty, by tacitly acknowledging her as the most perfect model for a Cleopatra he had ever seen.

"What would you with me, Mike?" said Frontibelle, addressing the Mavis, who was indeed the foremost of the throng, and who preceded the sheriff to announce the splendid proffer of the latter for the assistance of the gypsy gang. "What would you with me? You might have judged your mumming so near my brother would not be overwelcome."

"Nay," returned Mike, "we have brought here a fair bidder for our services, by whom we shall net a hundred guineas, and at the same time be doing you a service in a love matter you wot of."

"For what would he give us his gold?" said the young gypsy.

"Nothing less than the seizure of Mistress Susan," whispered Mike, while the features of Frontibelle were lit up by a flash of pleasure and recognition, as the little sheriff bustled forward to back the proffer of Mike.

"What is it you require, stranger?" asked Frontibelle.

"The assistance of your gang to carry off Susan Wylie," returned the little sheriff; "for which I will pay fifty guineas now, and fifty more when the abduction is completed."

"What you demand is dangerous, and needs consideration," said the young gypsy. "I know the punishment that awaits us if discovered, and the snares you sometimes lay to entrap us. Should this be one?"

"I swear to you it is not," said the sheriff.

"What motive can you have for so vile a deed?" asked Frontibelle.

"You know my motive well enough," said the little sheriff.

"I!"

"Yes," re-asserted the sheriff. "There is, there can be but one motive to prompt such an action."

"And that is?"

"Love."

Frontibelle sent a flood of ridicule through her beautiful eyes, and laughed aloud.

"At your age!" said she.

And in spite of himself, the sheriff felt the blood mount to his face as he encountered the eloquent glance of the young gypsy, and he

looked as foolish as it is possible for an elderly gentleman to look upon any similar occasion, and he played with the end of his riding whip, hardly daring to raise his eyes from the ground.

"Will you assist me?" said he at length.

"Provided you pay us well, and promise never to betray us."

"I swear it."

"It can be of little consequence to us whether you over-rate your powers over the affection of a young woman like Susan Wylie; so you pay us, you may command our service."

"Half of the money is in this rouleau," said the little sheriff, handing it to Frontibelle, who, weighing it for a moment in her hand, thrust it into her bosom. "And the reward shall be doubled the moment I am assured the maiden is in your hands. Remember, fifty guineas more the moment I am certified that Susan is in your hands."

"Then, as the bargain's struck, master," said the Mavis, "you may depend on our taking her as soon as she is capable of moving, with many thanks for your honor's bounty. We don't catch a sheriff every day."

"You will not fail me?" said the prime man of the county.

"Fail you! I should think not," returned the Mavis.

And the worthy sheriff separated from his confederates.

Grave and serious were the deliberations of the sheriff on his return by the pathway so lately the scene of his panic, which he, now put into good spirits by the ready acquiescence of the gypsies, was rather inclined to laugh at than condemn. His sickly mind turned on Mistress Susan, with the warmest hopes that he should yet possess himself of her person, while the Mavis and his brother gypsies were chuckling and laughing in their sleeves to think Muddlepuzzle Williams should so liberally pay them for doing that which they had already determined on long ere he had thought of appropriating Watch's mistress to his own use and behoof.

While the sheriff was thus plotting with the gypsies in Copsewood dell, matters at the hostelry had taken a turn yet more favorable to his wishes, and the object of his desire was fast recovering, only feeling that languor which fever always leaves behind it, and which prevented her for the present from quitting her room. With returning health came all those pleasing anticipations by which the young and the sanguine so happily beguile their hours, and frame a future of sunshine, without a cloud to overshadow it. The path of life seemed to her lit up by a thousand joys nor dreamt she that a single ill could cross it. Watch would soon be with her, as she fondly imagined, never to part again; for on their separating at Copsewood she had half won from him a promise, that on their marriage he would give up the desperate trade he had been so long engaged in, and endeavor to realize his hopes of happiness in the more regular and less dangerous paths of life.

It was a clear, lovely October morning, and the lingering warmth of autumn yet tempered the chill of approaching winter, and rendered the air pure and bracing to the patient at the hostelry, who, propped

up in her bed, languidly surveyed the orchard trees from her open casement, now clothed in that beautiful variety of tint which renders the landscape at this season of the year so pleasing to the beholder. The old gypsy sat nodding in her chair, almost overcome by fatigue, when Mistress Bridget, rid of her lover by his return to Muddlepuzzle Hall, entered with the breakfast.

Thanks to the urbane attention of Mr. Sheriff Williams, the Irish maiden had not long to count the moments in melancholy solicitude; for even while she thought of her lover's slackness in popping the question most interesting to her feelings, and had almost resolved to ask him his intentions the very next time he should make his appearance, and so to make a hog or dog of it at once, without wasting any more time in shilly-shallying she thought absurd in people who had spirit enough to make their minds up, Obadiah Hogsflesh rode under the inn door, equally determined in his own mind to bring the matter to an issue.

Turning his horse into the stable, Hogsflesh crossed the inn yard and reached the door of the Three Jolly Anchorsmiths, where stood Mistress Bridget, wondering why her lover had paid so much attention to his horse before he had spoken to her, and more than half inclined to be angry with him for having proferred his attentions to the quadrupedal animal in the first instance.

"Fhy don't you say sumthin'," said Mistress Bridget.

"Well, Missus Bridget," said Hogsflesh, summoning up courage to pop the final question, "will you be married to me?"

"Faith thin, if the gypsies towld you as much, it's a matter o' fate, and I can't help it, you know," said Mistress Bridget slyly.

And having arrived at a mutual explanation, preliminaries were soon arranged, and a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, as speedily ratified; Bridget insisting that the ceremony should take place when Captain Watch should marry Susan, so that one trouble and expense would serve the purpose of both weddings.

Leaving Hogsflesh to congratulate himself on his success, we will retrace our steps to the sick room at the Anchorsmiths, in which watched the old gypsy, counting over the minutes until midnight should bring Frontibelle again unto the hostel, and enable the old woman to communicate with her tribe, and give final directions for the furtherance of her grand design of spiriting away Susan Wylie, and marrying her to her grandson Bernard, while she secured Watch as a husband for Frontibelle.

The old gypsy, firm to her purpose, looked on the silence of night as the best cover to mature the villany she contemplated.

The distant booming of the church clock had sounded the hour of midnight, when a light foot was heard amid the rustling leaves which strewed the orchard of the hostelry, and in a few minutes the young gypsy, Frontibelle, true to her appointment with Mistress Purley, disguised as before, stood beneath the window of the unsuspecting Susan.

"How is Bernard, girl?"

"He is fast recovering."

"And Susan Wylie?" said Frontibelle.

"Susan may be ours in three days at furthest."

"The squire at the hall yonder has been down to bribe the gang to seize her," said Frontibelle. "He little thinks how liberally he is paying us for doing that we would have done had we never seen the color of his money."

"Remember, girl, thy brother."

"I have not forgotten him," said Frontibelle; "nor would I for a thousand guineas have proffered our aid to Squire Williams, but to obtain his sanction in the act, and so make him answerable in part for what otherwise must be done by ourselves, and risked alone."

"Good!" said the elder gypsy.

"But how propose you, mother, to render your charge into our hands?" asked Frontibelle, after a pause.

"In three nights from the present time," said the old gypsy, in a deep and distinct whisper; "in three nights from the present time be where you are with Nous, the Mavis, and half-a-dozen of the stoutest chaps amongst them. I will, in the mean time, sleep Susan with a drug of power, and while she is thus insensible, convey her to your hands. How like you this proposal?"

"'Tis excellent!" said Frontibelle, her eyes expanding with the prospect of having her rival so soon within her power.

"You must away now."

"Farewell, mother."

Hitherto Frontibelle had leaned against the off-side of a tree, which concealed her from the view of any person who might be watching. She now emerged in the moonlight, and the next moment the crack of a blunderbuss was heard, and the whizzing sound of the charge.

"Heavens! what's that?" said the young gypsy, clapping her hand to the side of her face, as if wounded, when, reeling towards the tree, she leaned against its trunk, as if to find support.

The shot was from the blunderbus of the old hammerman, but age had impaired the keenness of his eye, as well as of his ears, so that he merely scared the young gypsy, whom he was sure he had killed, and accordingly rushed from the spot to arouse the house by his cries that he had killed a thief. Meanwhile Frontibelle was assisted into Susan's chamber by her grandmother, where she remains concealed until the alarm subsided. Here, while Susan still slept profoundly, they contrived the manner of the abduction of the insensible maiden.

The evening fixed upon by Moll Purly for the abduction of Susan at length arrived, and the poor girl was buried in a slumber almost profound as the "last long sleep, that knows no waking," from the effect of a powerful drug given her by the aged gypsy.

The night was dark and murky, just such a one as suited the black deed about to be committed.

The sheriff and his gypsy confederates had stealthily approached the back of the house which contained their prey; the window of the unconscious maiden's chamber was already opened, and Frontibelle

and her grandmother had just lifted the fair burden in their swarthy arms, when her safety was effected by an unexpected accident. Hog-flesh who had been given leave of absence by his master, the sheriff, on purpose to keep him out of the way, availed himself of the fact to visit the fair Bridget, nor did he go alone, but was accompanied by some half dozen sturdy rustics. These he had invited to participate in a treat he intended giving in honor of his acceptance by the buxom Hibernian.

It was while their valor was inflamed by sundry potent potations that Bridget became aware of the attempt of the gypsies to carry off her young mistress, and at her suggestion they sallied out and attacking the marauders unexpectedly, and put them to flight.

Moll Purley and Frontibelle dropped the insensible girl upon her bed, when they heard the outcry; the latter murmuring through her thin lips: "Surely it is written in the stars, that Susan Wylie must become the Straggler's Bride."

How far the swarthy beldame was correct in her unwilling prediction will appear in the last of this series, entitled "Binnacle Jack, or, the Cavern of Death."

THE END.