

Jack Tier, Volume 2

James Fenimore Cooper

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JACK TIER; OR, THE FLORIDA REEF. BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE PILOT," "RED ROVER," "TWO ADMIRALS," "WING-AND-WING," "MILES WALLINGFORD," ETC.

Ay, now I am in Arden; the more fool

I; when I was at home I was in a better place; but

Travellers must be content.

As You Like It IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

The night has been unruly: where we lay,

Our chimneys were blown down: and, as they say,

Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death;

And prophesying, with accents terrible,

Of dire combustion, and confused events,

New hatched to the woful time.

Macbeth

It is seldom that man is required to make an exertion as desperate and appalling, in all its circumstances, as that on which Harry Mulford was now bent. The night was starlight, it was true, and it was possible to see objects near by

with tolerable distinctness; still, it was midnight, and the gloom of that hour rested on the face of the sea, lending its solemn mystery and obscurity to the other trying features of the undertaking. Then there was the uncertainty whether it was the boat at all, of which he was in pursuit; and, if the boat, it might drift away from him as fast as he could follow it. Nevertheless, the perfect conviction that, without some early succour, the party on the wreck, including Rose Budd, must inevitably perish, stimulated him to proceed, and a passing feeling of doubt, touching the prudence of his course, that came over the young mate, when he was a few yards from the wreck, vanished under a vivid renewal of this last conviction. On he swam, therefore, riveting his eye on the "thoughtful star" that guided his course, and keeping his mind as tranquil as possible, in order that the exertions of his body might be the easier.

Mulford was an excellent swimmer. The want of food was a serious obstacle to his making one of his best efforts, but, as yet, he was not very sensible of any great loss of strength. Understanding fully the necessity of swimming easily, if he would swim long, he did not throw out all his energy at first, but made the movements of his limbs as regular, continued, and skilful as possible. No strength was thrown away, and his progress was in proportion to the prudence of this manner of proceeding. For some twenty minutes he held on his course, in this way, when he began to experience a little of that weariness which is apt to accompany an unremitting use of the same set of muscles, in a monotonous and undeviating mode. Accustomed to all the resources of his art, he turned on his back, for the double purpose of relieving his arms for a minute, and of getting a glimpse of the wreck, if possible, in order to ascertain the distance he had overcome. Swim long in this new manner, however, he could not with prudence, as the star was necessary in order to keep the direct line of his course. It may be well to explain to some of our readers, that, though the surface of the ocean may be like glass, as sometimes really happens, it is never absolutely free from the long, undulating motion that is known by the name of a "ground swell." This swell, on the present occasion, was not very heavy, but it was sufficient to place our young mate, at moments, between two dark mounds of water, that limited his view in either direction to some eighty or a hundred yards; then it raised him on the summit of a rounded wave, that enabled him to see, far as his eye could reach under that obscure light. Profiting by this advantage, Mulford now looked behind him, in quest of the wreck, but uselessly. It might have been in the trough, while he was thus on the summit of the waves, or it might be that it floated so low as to be totally lost to the view of one whose head was scarcely above the surface of the water. For a single instant, the young man felt a chill at his heart, as he fancied that the wreck had already sunk; but it passed away when he recalled the slow progress by which the air escaped, and he saw the certainty that the catastrophe, however inevitable, could not yet have really arrived. He waited for another swell to lift him on its summit, when, by "treading water," he raised his head and shoulders fairly above the surface of the sea, and strained his eyes in another vain effort to catch a glimpse of the wreck. He could not see it. In point of fact, the mate had swum much further than he had supposed, and was already so distant as to render any such attempt hopeless. He was fully a third of a mile distant from the point of his departure.

Disappointed, and in a slight degree disheartened, Mulford turned, and swam in the direction of the sinking star. He now looked anxiously for the boat. It was time that it came more plainly into view, and a new source of anxiety beset him, as he could discover no signs of its vicinity. Certain that he was on the course, after making a due allowance for the direction of the wind, the stout-hearted young man swam on. He next determined not to annoy himself by fruitless searches, or vain regrets, but to swim steadily for a certain time, a period long enough to carry him a material distance, ere he again looked for the object of his search.

For twenty minutes longer did that courageous and active youth struggle with the waste of waters, amid the obscurity and solitude of midnight. He now believed himself near a mile from the wreck, and the star which had so long served him for a beacon was getting near to the horizon. He took a new observation of another of the heavenly bodies nigh it, to serve him in its stead when it should disappear altogether, and then he raised himself in the water, and looked about again for the boat. The search was in vain. No boat was very near him, of a certainty, and the dreadful apprehension began to possess his mind, of perishing uselessly in that waste of gloomy waters. While thus gazing about him, turning his eyes in every quarter, hoping intently to catch some glimpse of the much-desired object in the gloom, he saw two dark, pointed objects, that resembled small stakes, in the water

within twenty feet of him. Mulford knew them at a glance, and a cold shudder passed through his frame, as he recognised them. They were, out of all question, the fins of an enormous shark; an animal that could not measure less than eighteen or twenty feet in length.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that when our young mate discovered the proximity of this dangerous animal, situated as he was, he gave himself up for lost. He possessed his knife, however, and had heard of the manner in which even sharks were overcome, and that too in their own element, by the skilful and resolute. At first, he was resolved to make one desperate effort for life, before he submitted to a fate as horrible as that which now menaced him; but the movements of his dangerous neighbour induced him to wait. It did not approach any nearer, but continued swimming back and fro, on the surface of the water, according to the known habits of the fish, as if watching his own movements. There being no time to be wasted, our young mate turned on his face, and began again to swim in the direction of the setting star, though nearly chilled by despair. For ten minutes longer did he struggle on, beginning to feel exhaustion, however, and always accompanied by those two dark, sharp and gliding fins. There was no difficulty in knowing the position of the animal, and Mulford's eyes were oftener on those fins than on the beacon before him. Strange as it may appear, he actually became accustomed to the vicinity of this formidable creature, and soon felt his presence a sort of relief against the dreadful solitude of his situation. He had been told by seamen of instances, and had once witnessed a case himself, in which a shark had attended a swimming man for a long distance, either forbearing to do him harm, from repletion, or influenced by that awe which nature has instilled into all of the inferior, for the highest animal of the creation. He began to think that he was thus favoured, and really regarded the shark as a friendly neighbour, rather than as a voracious foe. In this manner did the two proceed, nearly another third of a mile, the fins sometimes in sight ahead, gliding hither and thither, and sometimes out of view behind the swimmer, leaving him in dreadful doubts as to the movements of the fish, when Mulford suddenly felt something hard hit his foot. Believing it to be the shark, dipping for his prey, a slight exclamation escaped him. At the next instant both feet hit the unknown substance again, and he stood erect, the water no higher than his waist! Quick, and comprehending everything connected with the sea, the young man at once understood that he was on a part of the reef where the water was so shallow as to admit of his wading.

Mulford felt that he had been providentially rescued from death. His strength had been about to fail him, when he was thus led, unknown to himself, to a spot where his life might yet be possibly prolonged for a few more hours, or days. He had leisure to look about him, and to reflect on what was next to be done. Almost unwittingly, he turned in quest of his terrible companion, in whose voracious mouth he had actually believed himself about to be immolated, a few seconds before. There the two horn-like fins still were, gliding about above the water, and indicating the smallest movement of their formidable owner. The mate observed that they went a short distance ahead of him, describing nearly a semi-circle, and then returned, doing the same thing in his rear, repeating the movements incessantly, keeping always on his right. This convinced him that shoaler water existed on his left hand, and he waded in that direction, until he reached a small spot of naked rock.

For a time, at least, he was safe! The fragment of coral on which the mate now stood, was irregular in shape, but might have contained a hundred feet square in superficial measurement, and was so little raised above the level of the water as not to be visible, even by daylight, at the distance of a hundred yards. Mulford found it was perfectly dry, however, an important discovery to him, as by a close calculation he had made of the tides, since quitting the Dry Tortugas, he knew it must be near high water. Could he have even this small portion of bare rock secure, it made him, for the moment, rich as the most extensive landholder living. A considerable quantity of sea-weed had lodged on the rock, and, as most of this was also quite dry, it convinced the young sailor that the place was usually bare. But, though most of this sea-weed was dry, there were portions of the more recent accessions there that still lay in, or quite near to the water, which formed exceptions. In handling these weeds, in order to ascertain the facts, Mulford caught a small shell-fish, and finding it fresh and easy to open, he swallowed it with the eagerness of a famishing man. Never had food proved half so grateful to him as that single swallow of a very palatable testaceous animal. By feeling further, he found several others of the same family, and made quite as large a meal, as, under the circumstances, was probably good for him. Then, grateful for his escape, but overcome

by fatigue, he hastily arranged a bed of sea-weed, drew a portion of the plant over his body, to keep him warm, and fell into a deep sleep that lasted for hours.

Mulford did not regain his consciousness until the rays of the rising sun fell upon his eye-lids, and the genial warmth of the great luminary shed its benign influence over his frame. At first his mind was confused, and it required a few seconds to bring a perfect recollection of the past, and a true understanding of his real situation. They came, however, and the young man moved to the highest part of his little domain, and cast an anxious, hurried look around in quest of the wreck. A knowledge of the course in which he had swum, aided by the position of the sun, told him on what part of the naked waste to look for the object he sought. God had not yet forsaken them! There was the wreck; or, it might be more exact to say, there were those whom the remaining buoyancy of the wreck still upheld from sinking into the depths of the gulf. In point of fact, but a very little of the bottom of the vessel actually remained above water, some two or three yards square at most, and that little was what seamen term nearly awash. Two or three hours must bury that small portion of the still naked wood beneath the surface of the sea, though sufficient buoyancy might possibly remain for the entire day still to keep the living from death.

There the wreck was, however, yet floating; and, though not visible to Mulford, with a small portion of it above water. He saw the four persons only; and what was more, they saw him. This was evident by Jack Tier's waving his hat like a man cheering. When Mulford returned this signal, the shawl of Rose was tossed into the air, in a way to leave no doubt that he was seen and known. The explanation of this early recognition and discovery of the young mate was very simple. Tier was not asleep when Harry left the wreck, though, seeing the importance of the step the other was taking, he had feigned to be so. When Rose awoke, missed her lover, and was told what had happened, her heart was kept from sinking by his encouraging tale and hopes. An hour of agony had succeeded, nevertheless, when light returned and no Mulford was to be seen. The despair that burst upon the heart of our heroine was followed by the joy of discovering him on the rock.

It is scarcely necessary to say how much the parties were relieved on ascertaining their respective positions. Faint as were the hopes of each of eventual delivery, the two or three minutes that succeeded seemed to be minutes of perfect happiness. After this rush of unlooked-for joy, Mulford continued his intelligent examination of surrounding objects.

The wreck was fully half a mile from the rock of the mate, but much nearer to the reef than it had been the previous night. "Could it but ground on the rocks," thought the young man, "it would be a most blessed event." The thing was possible, though the first half hour of his observations told him that its drift was in the direction of the open passage so often named, rather than toward the nearest rocks. Still, that drift brought Rose each minute nearer and nearer to himself again. In looking round, however, the young man saw the boat. It was a quarter of a mile distant, with open water between them, apparently grounded on a rock, for it was more within the reef than he was himself. He must have passed it in the dark, and the boat had been left to obey the wind and currents, and to drift to the spot where it then lay.

Mulford shouted aloud when he saw the boat, and at once determined to swim in quest of it, as soon as he had collected a little refreshment from among the sea-weed. On taking a look at his rock by daylight, he saw that its size was quadrupled to the eye by the falling of the tide, and that water was lying in several of the cavities of its uneven surface. At first he supposed this to be sea-water, left by the flood; but, reflecting a moment, he remembered the rain, and hoped it might be possible that one little cavity, containing two or three gallons of the fluid, would turn out to be fresh. Kneeling beside it, he applied his lips in feverish haste, and drank the sweetest draught that had ever passed his lips. Slaking his thirst, which had begun again to be painfully severe, he arose with a heart overflowing with gratitude could he only get Rose to that narrow and barren rock, it would seem to be an earthly paradise. Mulford next made his scanty, but, all things considered, sufficient meal, drank moderately afterward, and then turned his attention and energies toward the boat, which, though now aground and fast, might soon float on the rising tide, and drift once more beyond his reach. It was his first intention to swim directly for

his object; but, just when about to enter the water, he saw with horror the fins of at least a dozen sharks, which were prowling about in the deeper water of the reef, and almost encircling his hold. To throw himself in the midst of such enemies would be madness, and he stopped to reflect, and again to look about him. For the first time that morning, he took a survey of the entire horizon, to see if anything were in sight; for, hitherto, his thoughts had been too much occupied with Rose and her companions, to remember anything else. To the northward and westward he distinctly saw the upper sails of a large ship, that was standing on a wind to the northward and eastward. As there was no port to which a vessel of that character would be likely to be bound in the quarter of the Gulf to which such a course would lead, Mulford at once inferred it was the sloop-of-war, which, after having examined the islets, at the Dry Tortugas, and finding them deserted, was beating up, either to go into Key West, or to pass to the southward of the reef again, by the passage through which she had come as lately as the previous day. This was highly encouraging; and could he only get to the boat, and remove the party from the wreck before it sunk, there was now every prospect of a final escape.

To the southward, also, the mate fancied he saw a sail. It was probably a much smaller vessel than the ship in the north-west, and at a greater distance. It might, however, be the lofty sails of some large craft; standing along the reef, going westward, bound to New Orleans, or to that new and important port, Point Isabel: or it might be some wrecker, or other craft, edging away into the passage. As it was, it appeared only as a speck in the horizon; and was too far off to offer much prospect of succour.

Thus acquainted with the state of things around him, Mulford gave his attention seriously to his duties. He was chiefly afraid that the returning tide might lift the boat from the rock on which it had grounded, and that it would float beyond his reach. Then there was the frightful and ever-increasing peril of the wreck, and the dreadful fate that so inevitably menaced those that it held, were not relief prompt. This thought goaded him nearly to desperation, and he felt at moments almost ready to plunge into the midst of the sharks, and fight his way to his object.

But reflection showed him a less hazardous way of making an effort to reach the boat. The sharks' fins described a semicircle only, as had been the case of his single attendant during the night, and he thought that the shallowness of the water prevented their going further than they did, in a south-easterly direction, which was that of the boat. He well knew that a shark required sufficient water to sink beneath its prey, ere it made its swoop, and that it uniformly turned on its back, and struck upward whenever it gave one of its voracious bites. This was owing to the greater length of its upper than of its lower jaw, and Mulford had heard it was a physical necessity of its formation. Right or wrong, he determined to act on this theory, and began at once to wade along the part of the reef that his enemies seemed unwilling to approach.

Had our young mate a weapon of any sort larger than his knife, he would have felt greater confidence in his success. As it was, however, he drew that knife, and was prepared to sell his life dearly should a foe assail him. No sooner was his step heard in the water, than the whole group of sharks were set in violent motion, glancing past, and frequently quite near him, as if aware their intended prey was about to escape. Had the water deepened much, Harry would have returned at once, for a conflict with such numbers would have been hopeless; but it did not; on the contrary, it shoaled again, after a very short distance, at which it had been waist-deep; and Mulford found himself wading over a long, broad surface of rock, and that directly toward the boat, through water that seldom rose above his knees, and which, occasionally, scarce covered his feet. There was no absolutely naked rock near him, but there seemed to be acres of that which might be almost said to be awash. Amid the greedy throng that endeavoured to accompany him, the mate even fancied he recognised the enormous fins of his old companion, who sailed to and fro in the crowd in a stately manner, as if merely a curious looker-on of his own movements. It was the smaller, and probably the younger sharks, that betrayed the greatest hardihood and voracity. One or two of these made fierce swoops toward Harry, as if bent on having him at every hazard; but they invariably glided off when they found their customary mode of attack resisted by the shallowness of the water.

Our young mate got ahead but slowly, being obliged to pay a cautious attention to the movements of his escort. Sometimes he was compelled to wade up to his arms in order to cross narrow places, that he might get on portions of the rock that were nearly bare; and once he was actually compelled to swim eight or ten yards. Nevertheless, he did get on, and after an hour of this sort of work, he found himself within a hundred yards of the boat, which lay grounded near a low piece of naked rock, but separated from it by a channel of deep water, into which all the sharks rushed in a body, as if expressly to cut off his escape. Mulford now paused to take breath, and to consider what ought to be done. On the spot where he stood he was quite safe, though ankle-deep in the sea, the shallow water extending to a considerable distance on all sides of him, with the single exception of the channel in his front. He stood on the very verge of that channel, and could see in the pellucid element before him, that it was deep enough to float a vessel of some size.

To venture into the midst of twenty sharks required desperation, and Harry was not yet reduced to that. He had been so busy in making his way to the point where he stood as to have no leisure to look for the wreck; but he now turned his eyes in quest of that all-interesting object. He saw the shawl fluttering in the breeze, and that was all he could see. Tier had contrived to keep it flying as a signal where he was to be found, but the hull of the schooner had sunk so low in the water that they who were seated on its keel were not visible even at the short distance which now separated them from Mulford. Encouraged by this signal, and animated by the revived hope of still saving his companions, Harry turned toward the channel, half inclined to face every danger rather than to wait any longer. At that moment the fins were all gliding along the channel from him, and in the same direction. Some object drew the sharks away in a body, and the young mate let himself easily into the water, and swam as noiselessly as he could toward the boat.

It was a fearful trial, but Mulford felt that everything depended on his success. Stimulated by his motive, and strengthened by the food and water taken an hour before, never had he shown so much skill and power in the water. In an incredibly short period he was half-way across the channel, still swimming strong and unharmed. A few strokes more sent him so near the boat that hope took full possession of his soul, and he shouted in exultation. That indiscreet but natural cry, uttered so near the surface of the sea, turned every shark upon him, as the pack springs at the fox in view. Mulford was conscious of the folly of his cry the instant it escaped him, and involuntarily he turned his head to note the effect on his enemies. Every fin was gliding toward him a dark array of swift and furious foes. Ten thousand bayonets, levelled in their line, could not have been one-half as terrible, and the efforts of the young man became nearly frantic. But strong as he was, and ready in the element, what is the movement of a man in the water compared to that of a vigorous and voracious fish? Mulford could see those fins coming on like a tempest, and he had just given up all hope, and was feeling his flesh creep with terror, when his foot hit the rock. Giving himself an onward plunge, he threw his body upward toward the boat, and into so much shoaler water, at least a dozen feet by that single effort. Recovering his legs as soon as possible, he turned to look behind him. The water seemed alive with fins, each pair gliding back and forth, as the bull-dog bounds in front of the ox's muzzle. Just then a light-coloured object glanced past the young man, so near as almost to touch him. It was a shark that had actually turned on its back to seize its prey, and was only prevented from succeeding by being driven from the line of its course by hitting the slimy rock, over which it was compelled to make its plunge. The momentum with which it came on, added to the inclination of the rock, forced the head and half of the body of this terrible assailant into the air, giving the intended victim an opportunity of seeing from what a fate he had escaped. Mulford avoided this fish without much trouble, however, and the next instant he threw himself into the boat, on the bottom of which he lay panting with the violence of his exertions, and unable to move under the reaction which now came over his system.

The mate lay in the bottom of the boat, exhausted and unable to rise, for several minutes; during that space he devoutly returned thanks to God for his escape, and bethought him of the course he was next to pursue, in order to effect the rescue of his companions. The boat was larger than common. It was also well equipped a mast and sail lying along with the oars, on its thwarts. The rock placed Harry to windward of the wreck, and by the time he felt sufficiently revived to rise and look about him, his plan of proceeding was fully arranged in his own mind. Among other things that he saw, as he still lay in the bottom of the boat, was a breaker which he knew contained

fresh water, and a bread-bag. These were provisions that it was customary for the men to make, when employed on boat duty; and the articles had been left where he now saw them, in the hurry of the movements, as the brig quitted the islets.

Harry rose the instant he felt his strength returning. Striking the breaker with his foot, and feeling the basket with a hand, he ascertained that the one held its water, and the other its bread. This was immense relief, for by this time the sufferings of the party on the wreck must be returning with redoubled force. The mate then stepped the mast, and fitted the sprit to the sail, knowing that the latter would be seen fluttering in the wind by those on the wreck, and carry joy to their hearts. After this considerate act, he began to examine into the position of the boat. It was still aground, having been left by the tide; but the water had already risen several inches, and by placing himself on a gunwale, so as to bring the boat on its bilge, and pushing with an oar, he soon got it into deep water. It only remained to haul aft the sheet, and right the helm, to be standing through the channel, at a rate that promised aspeedy deliverance to his friends, and, most of all, to Rose.

Mulford glanced past the rocks and shoals, attended by the whole company of the sharks. They moved before, behind, and on each side of him, as if unwilling to abandon their prey, even after he had got beyond the limits of their power to do him harm. It was not an easy thing to manage the boat in that narrow and crooked channel, with no other guide for the courses than the eye, and it required so much of the mate's vigilance to keep clear of the sharp angles of the rocks, that he could not once cast his eyes aside, to look for the fluttering shawl, which now composed the standing signal of the wreck. At length the boat shot through the last passage of the reef, and issued into open water. Mulford knew that he must come out half a mile at least to leeward of his object, and, without even raising his head, he flattened in the sheet, put his helm down, and luffed close to the wind. Then, and then only, did he venture to look around him.

Our mate felt his heart leap toward his mouth, as he observed the present state of the wreck. It was dead to windward of him, in the first place, and it seemed to be entirely submerged. He saw the shawl fluttering as before; for Tier had fastened one corner to a button-hole of his own jacket, and another to the dress of Bidy, leaving the part which might be called the fly, to rise at moments almost perpendicularly in the air, in a way to render it visible at some distance. He saw also the heads and the bodies of those on the schooner's bottom, but to him they appeared to be standing in, or on, the water. The distance may have contributed a little to this appearance, but no doubt remained that so much air had escaped from the hold of the vessel, as to permit it to sink altogether beneath the surface of the sea. It was time, indeed, to proceed to the relief of the sufferers.

Notwithstanding the boat sailed particularly fast, and worked beautifully, it could not equal the impatience of Mulford to get on. Passing away to the north-east a sufficient distance, as he thought, to weather on the wreck, the young man tacked at last, and had the happiness to see that every foot he proceeded was now in a direct line toward Rose. It was only while tacking he perceived that all the fins had disappeared. He felt little doubt that they had deserted him, in order to push for the wreck, which offered so much larger, and so much more attainable prey. This increased his feverish desire to get on, the boat seeming to drag, in his eyes, at the very moment it was leaving a wake full of eddies and little whirlpools. The wind was steady, but it seemed to Mulford that the boat was set to leeward of her course by a current, though this could hardly have been the case, as the wreck, the sole mark of his progress, would have had at least as great a drift as the boat. At length Mulford to him it appeared to be an age; in truth it was after a run of about twenty minutes came near the goal he so earnestly sought, and got an accurate view of the state of the wreck, and of those on it. The hull of the schooner had, in truth, sunk entirely beneath the surface of the sea; and the party it sustained stood already knee-deep in the water. This was sufficiently appalling; but the presence of the sharks, who were crowding around the spot, rendered the whole scene frightful. To the young mate it seemed as if he must still be too late to save Rose from a fate more terrible than drowning, for his boat fell so far to leeward as to compel him to tack once more. As he swept past the wreck, he called out to encourage his friends, begging them to be of good heart for five minutes longer, when he should be able to reach them. Rose held out her arms entreatingly, and the screams of Mrs. Budd and Bidy, which were extorted by the closer and closer approach of the sharks, proclaimed the imminency of the danger they ran, and

the importance of not losing a moment of time.

Mulford took his distance with a seaman's eye, and the boat went about like a top. The latter fell off, and the sail filled on the other tack. Then the young mariner saw, with a joy no description can pourtray, that he looked to windward of the fluttering shawl, toward which his little craft was already flying. He afterward believed that shawl alone prevented the voracious party of fish from assailing those on the wreck, for, though there might not yet be sufficient depth of water to allow of their customary mode of attack, creatures of their voracity did not always wait for such conveniences. But the boat was soon in the midst of the fins, scattering them in all directions; and Mulford let go his sheet, put his helm down, and sprang forward to catch the extended arms of Rose.

It might have been accident, or it might have been the result of skill and interest in our heroine, but certain it is, that the bows of the boat came on the wreck precisely at the place where Rose stood, and her hand was the first object that the young man touched.

"Take my aunt first," cried Rose, resisting Mulford's efforts to lift her into the boat; "she is dreadfully alarmed, and can stand with difficulty."

Although two of Rose's activity and lightness might have been drawn into the boat, while the process was going on in behalf of the widow, Mulford lost no time in discussion, but did as he was desired. First directing Tier to hold on to the painter, he applied his strength to the arms of Mrs. Budd, and, assisted by Rose and Bidy, got her safely into the boat, over its bows. Rose now waited not for assistance, but followed her aunt with a haste that proved fear lent her strength in despite her long fast. Bidy came next, though clumsily, and not without trouble, and Jack Tier followed the instant he was permitted so to do. Of course, the boat, no longer held by its painter, drifted away from the spot, and the hull of the schooner, relieved from the weight of four human beings, rose so near the surface again as to bring a small line of its keel out of water. No better evidence could have been given of the trifling power which sustained it, and of the timely nature of the succour brought by Mulford. Had the boat remained near the schooner, it would have been found half an hour later that the hull had sunk slowly out of sight, finding its way, doubtless, inch by inch, toward the bottom of the Gulf.

By this time the sun was well up, and the warmth of the hour, season, and latitude, was shed on the sufferers. There was an old sail in the boat, and in this the party dried their limbs and feet, which were getting to be numb by their long immersion. Then the mate produced the bag and opened it, in quest of bread. A small portion was given to each, and, on looking farther, the mate discovered that a piece of boiled ship's beef had been secreted in this receptacle. Of this also he gave each a moderate slice, taking a larger portion for himself, as requiring less precaution. The suffering of the party from hunger was far less than that they endured from thirst. Neither had been endured long enough seriously to enfeeble them or render a full meal very dangerous, but the thirst had been much the hardest to be borne. Of this fact Bidy soon gave audible evidence.

"The mate is good," she said, "and the bread tastes swate and refreshing, but wather is a blessed thing. Can you no give us one dhrap of the wather that falls from heaven, Mr. Mulford; for this wather of the saa is of no use but to drown Christians in?"

In an instant the mate had opened a breaker, and filled the tin pot which is almost always to be found in a boat. Bidy said no more, but her eyes pleaded so eloquently, that Rose begged the faithful creature might have the first drink. One eager swallow went down, and then a cry of disappointment succeeded. The water was salt, and had been put in the breaker for ballast. The other breaker was tried with the same success.

"It is terrible to be without one drop of water," murmured Rose, "and this food makes it more necessary than ever."

"Patience, patience, dearest Rose patience for ten minutes, and you shall all drink," answered the mate, filling the sail and keeping the boat away while speaking. "There is water, God be praised, on the rock to which I first swam, and we will secure it before another day's sun help to make it evaporate."

This announcement quieted the longings of those who endured a thirst which disappointment rendered doubly hard to bear; and away the boat glided toward the rock. As he now flew over the distance, lessened more than one-half by the drift of the wreck, Mulford recalled the scene through which he had so painfully passed the previous night. As often happens, he shuddered at the recollection of things which, at the moment, a desperate resolution had enabled him to encounter with firmness. Still, he thought nothing less than the ardent desire to save Rose could have carried him through the trial with the success which attended his struggles. The dear being at his side asked a few explanations of what had passed; and she bowed her head and wept, equally with pain and delight, as imagination pictured to her the situation of her betrothed, amid that waste of water, with his fearful companions, and all in the hours of deep night.

But that was over now. There was the rock the blessed rock on which Mulford had so accidentally struck, close before them and presently they were all on it. The mate took the pot and ran to the little reservoir, returning with a sweet draught for each of the party.

"A blessed, blessed thing, is wather!" exclaimed Biddy, this time finding the relief she sought, "and a thousand blessings on you, Mr. Mulford, who have niver done us anything but good."

Rose looked a still higher eulogy on the young man, and even Mrs. Budd had something commendatory and grateful to say. Jack Tier was silent, but he had all his eyes about him, as he now proved.

"We've all on us been so much taken up with our own affairs," remarked the steward's assistant, "that we've taken but little notice of the neighbourhood. If that is n't the brig, Mr. Mulford, running through this very passage, with stun'sails set aloft, I do n't know the Molly Swash when I see her!"

"The brig!" exclaimed the mate, recollecting the vessels he had seen at the break-of-day, for the first time in hours. "Can it be possible that the craft I made out to the southward, is the brig?"

"Look, and judge for yourself, sir. There she comes, like a race-horse, and if she holds her present course, she must pass somewhere within a mile or so of us, if we stay where we are."

Mulford did look, as did all with him. There was the Swash, sure enough, coming down before the wind, and under a cloud of canvas. She might be still a league, or a league and a half distant, but, at the rate at which she was travelling, that distance would soon be past. She was running through the passage, no doubt with a view to proceed to the Dry Tortugas, to look after the schooner, Spike having the hope that he had dodged his pursuers on the coast of Cuba. The mate now looked for the ship, in the north-western board, believing, as he did, that she was the sloop-of-war. That vessel had gone about, and was standing to the southward, on a taut bowline. She was still a long way off, three or four leagues at least, but the change she had made in her position, since last seen, proved that she was a great sailer. Then she was more than hull down, whereas, now, she was near enough to let the outline of a long, straight fabric be discovered beneath her canvas.

"It is hardly possible that Spike should not see the vessel here in the northern board," Mulford observed to Tier, who had been examining the ship with him. "The look-out is usually good on board the Swash, and, just now, should certainly be as good as common. Spike is no dawdler with serious business before him."

"He's a willain!" muttered Jack Tier.

The mate regarded his companion with some surprise. Jack was a very insignificant-looking personage in common, and one would scarcely pause to give him a second look, unless it might be to laugh at his rotundity and little waddling legs. But, now, the mate fancied he was swelling with feelings that actually imparted somewhat more than usual stature and dignity to his appearance. His face was full of indignation, and there was something about the eye, that to Mulford was inexplicable. As Rose, however, had related to him the scene that took place on the islet, at the moment when Spike was departing, the mate supposed that Jack still felt a portion of the resentment that such a collision would be apt to create. From the expression of Jack's countenance at that instant, it struck him Spike might not be exactly safe, should accident put it in the power of the former to do him an injury.

It was now necessary to decide on the course that ought to be pursued. The bag contained sufficient food to last the party several days, and a gallon of water still remained in the cavity of the rock. This last was collected and put in one of the breakers, which was emptied of the salt water in order to receive it. As water, however, was the great necessity in that latitude, Mulford did not deem it prudent to set sail with so small a supply, and he accordingly commenced a search, on some of the adjacent rocks, Jack Tier accompanying him. They succeeded in doubling their stock of water, and collected several shell-fish, that the females found exceedingly grateful and refreshing. On the score of hunger and thirst, indeed, no one was now suffering. By judiciously sipping a little water at a time, and retaining it in the mouth before swallowing, the latter painful feeling had been gotten rid of; and as for food, there was even more than was actually needed, and that of a very good quality. It is probable that standing in the water for hours, as Rose, and her aunt, and Bidley had been obliged to do, had contributed to lessen the pain endured from thirst, though they had all suffered a good deal from that cause, especially while the sun shone.

Mulford and Tier were half an hour in obtaining the water. By the end of that period the brigantine was so near as to render her hull distinctly visible. It was high time to decide on their future course. The sail had been brailled when the boat reached the rock, and the boat itself lay on the side of the latter opposite to the brig, and where no part of it could be seen to those on board the Swash, with the exception of the mast. Under the circumstances, therefore, Mulford thought it wisest to remain where they were, and let the vessel pass, before they attempted to proceed toward Key West, their intended place of refuge. In order to do this, however, it was necessary to cause the whole party to lie down, in such a way as to be hid by the inequalities in the rock, as it was now very evident the brig would pass within half a mile of them. Hitherto, it was not probable that they had been seen, and by using due caution, the chances of Spike's overlooking them altogether amounted nearly to certainty.

The necessary arrangements were soon made, the boat's masts unstepped, the party placed behind their covers, and the females comfortably bestowed in the spare sail, where they might get a little undisturbed sleep after the dreadful night, or morning, they had passed. Even Jack Tier lay down to catch his nap, as the most useful manner of bestowing himself for a couple of hours; the time Mulford had mentioned as the period of their stay where they were.

As for the mate, vigilance was his portion, and he took his position, hid like all the rest, where he could watch the movements of his old craft. In about twenty minutes, the brig was quite near; so near that Mulford not only saw the people on board her, who showed themselves in the rigging, but fancied he could recognise their persons. As yet, nothing had occurred in the way of change, but, just as the Swash got abreast of the rock, she began to take in her studding-sails, and that hurriedly, as is apt to occur on board a vessel in sudden emergencies. Our young man was a little alarmed at first, believing that they might have been discovered, but he was soon induced to think that the crew of the brigantine had just then begun to suspect the character of the ship to the northward. That vessel had been drawing near all this time, and was now only some three leagues distant. Owing to the manner in which she headed, or bows on, it was not a very easy matter to tell the character of this stranger, though the symmetry and squareness of his yards rendered it nearly certain he was a cruiser. Though Spike could not expect to meet his old acquaintance here, after the chase he had so lately led her, down on the opposite coast, he might and would have his misgivings, and Mulford thought it was his intention to haul up close round the northern angle of the

reef, and maintain his advantage of the wind, over the stranger. If this were actually done, it might expose the boat to view, for the brig would pass within a quarter of a mile of it, and on the side of the rock on which it lay. It was too late, however, to attempt a change, since the appearance of human beings in such a place would be certain to draw the brig's glasses on them, and the glasses must at once let Spike know who they were. It remained, therefore, only to await the result as patiently as possible.

A very few minutes removed all doubt. The brig hauled as close round the reef as she dared to venture, and in a very short time the boat lay exposed to view to all on board her. The vessel was now so near that Mulford plainly saw the boatswain get upon the coach-house, or little hurricane-house deck, where Spike stood examining the ship with his glass, and point out the boat, where it lay at the side of the rock. In an instant, the glass was levelled at the spot, and the movements on board the brig immediately betrayed to Mulford that the boat was recognised. Sail was shortened on board the Swash, and men were seen preparing to lower her stern boat, while everything indicated that the vessel was about to be hove-to. There was no time now to be lost, but the young man immediately gave the alarm.

No sooner did the party arise and show themselves, than the crew of the Swash gave three cheers. By the aid of the glass, Spike doubtless recognised their persons, and the fact was announced to the men, by way of stimulating their exertions. This gave an additional spur to the movements of those on the rock, who hastened into their own boat, and made sail as soon as possible.

It was far easier to do all that has been described, than to determine on the future course. Capture was certain if the fugitives ventured into the open water, and their only hope was to remain on the reef. If channels for the passage of the boat could be found, escape was highly probable, as the schooner's boat could sail much faster than the brig's boat could row, fast as Mulford knew the last to be. But the experience of the morning had told the mate that the rock rose too near the surface, in many places, for the boat, small as it was, to pass over it; and he must trust a great deal to chance. Away he went, however, standing along a narrow channel, through which the wind just permitted him to lay, with the sail occasionally shaking.

By this time the Swash had her boat in the water, manned with four powerful oars, Spike steering it in his own person. Our young mate placed Tier in the bows, to point out the deepest water, and kept his sail a rap full, in order to get ahead as fast as possible. Ahead he did get, but it was on a course that soon brought him out in the open water of the main passage through the reef, leaving Spike materially astern. The latter now rose in his boat, and made a signal with his hat, which the boatswain perfectly understood. The latter caused the brig to ware short round on her heel, and boarded his foretack in chase, hauling up into the passage as soon as he could again round the reef. Mulford soon saw that it would never do for him to venture far from the rocks, the brig going two feet to his one, though not looking quite as high as he did in the boat. But the Swash had her guns, and it was probable they would be used rather than he should escape. Whendistant two hundred yards from the reef, therefore, he tacked. The new course brought the fugitives nearly at right angles to that steered by Spike, who stood directly on, as if conscious that, sooner or later, such a rencounter must occur. It would seem that the tide was setting through the passage, for when the boat of Mulford again reached the reef, it was considerably to windward of the channel out of which she had issued, and opposite to another which offered very opportunely for her entrance. Into this new channel, then, the mate somewhat blindly ran, feeling the necessity of getting out of gun-shot of the brig at every hazard. She at least could not follow him among the rocks, let Spike, in his boat, proceed as he might.

According to appearances, Spike was not likely to be very successful. He was obliged to diverge from his course, in order to go into the main passage at the very point where Mulford had just before done the same thing, and pull along the reef to windward, in order to get into the new channel, into which the boat he was pursuing had just entered. This brought him not only astern again, but a long bit astern, inasmuch as he was compelled to make the circuit described. On he went, however, as eager in the chase as the hound with his game in view.

Mulford's boat seemed to fly, and glided ahead at least three feet to that of Spike's two. The direction of the channel it was in, brought it pretty close to the wind, but the water was quite smooth, and our mate managed to keep the sail full, and his little craft at the same time quite near the weatherly side of the rocks. In the course of ten minutes the fugitives were fully a mile from the brig, which was unable to follow them, but kept standing off and on, in the main passage, waiting the result. At one time Mulford thought the channel would bring him out into open water again, on the northern side of the reef, and more than a mile to the eastward of the point where the ship-channel in which the Swash was plying commenced; but an accidental circumstance prevented his standing in far enough to ascertain the fact. That circumstance was as follows:

In running a mile and a half over the reef, in the manner described, Mulford had left the boat of Spike quite half a mile astern. He was now out of gun-shot from the brig, or at least beyond the range of her grape, the only missile he feared, and so far to windward that he kept his eye on every opening to the southward, which he fancied might allow of his making a stretch deeper into the mazes of the reef, among which he believed it easiest for him to escape, and to weary the oarsmen of his pursuers. Two or three of these openings offered as he glided along, but it struck him that they all looked so high that the boat would not lay through them an opinion in which he was right. At length he came abreast of one that seemed straight and clear of obstacles as far as he could see, and through which he might run with a flowing sheet. Down went his helm, and about went his boat, running away to the southward as fast as ever.

Had Spike followed, doubled the same shoal, and kept away again in the same channel as had been done by the boat he chased, all his hopes of success must have vanished at once. This he did not attempt, therefore; but, sheering into one of the openings which the mate had rejected, he cut off quite half a mile in his distance. This was easy enough for him to accomplish, as a row-boat would pull even easier, near to the wind, than with the wind broad on its bow. In consequence of this short cut, therefore, Spike was actually crossing out into Mulford's new channel, just as the latter had handsomely cleared the mouth of the opening through which he effected his purpose.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the two boats must have been for a few minutes quite near to each other; so near, indeed, did the fugitives now pass to their pursuers, that it would have been easy for them to have conversed, had they been so disposed. Not a word was spoken, however, but Mulford went by, leaving Spike about a hundred yards astern. This was a trying moment to the latter, and the devil tempted him to seek his revenge. He had not come unarmed on his enterprise, but three or four loaded muskets lay in the stern-sheets of his yawl. He looked at his men, and saw that they could not hold out much longer to pull as they had been pulling. Then he looked at Mulford's boat, and saw it gliding away from him at a rate that would shortly place it another half mile in advance. He seized a musket, and raised it to his shoulder, nay, was in the act of taking aim at his mate, when Rose, who watched his movements, threw herself before Harry, and if she did not actually save his life, at least prevented Spike's attempt on it for that occasion. In the course of the next ten minutes the fugitives had again so far gained on their pursuers, that the latter began to see that their efforts were useless. Spike muttered a few bitter curses, and told his men to lay on their oars.

"It's well for the runaway," he added, "that the gal put herself between us, else would his grog have been stopped for ever. I've long suspected this; but had I been sure of it, the Gulf Stream would have had the keeping of his body, the first dark night we were in it together. Lay on your oars, men, lay on your oars; I'm afeared the villian will get through our fingers, a'ter all."

The men obeyed, and then, for the first time, did they turn their heads, to look at those they had been so vehemently pursuing. The other boat was quite half a mile from them, and it had again tacked. This last occurrence induced Spike to pull slowly ahead, in quest of another short passage to cut the fugitives off; but no such opening offered.

"There he goes about again, by George!" exclaimed Spike. "Give way, lads give way; an easy stroke, for if he is embayed, he can't escape us!"

Sure enough, poor Mulford was embayed, and could see no outlet by which to pass ahead. He tacked his boat two or three times, and he wore round as often; but on every side shoals, or rocks that actually rose above the surface of the water, impeded his course. The fact was not to be concealed; after all his efforts, and so many promises of success, not only was his further progress ahead cut off, but equally so was retreat. The passage was not wide enough to admit the hope of getting by his pursuers, and the young man came to the conclusion that his better course was to submit with dignity to his fate. For himself he had no hope he knew Spike's character too well for that; but he did not apprehend any great immediate danger to his companions. Spike had a coarse, brutal admiration for Rose! but her expected fortune, which was believed to be of more amount than was actually the case, was a sort of pledge that he would not willingly put himself in a situation that would prevent the possibility of enjoying it. Strange, hurried, and somewhat confused thoughts passed through Harry Mulford's mind, as he brailed his sail, and waited for his captors to approach and take possession of his boat and himself. This was done quietly, and with very few words on the part of Spike.

Mulford would have liked the appearance of things better had his old commander cursed him, and betrayed other signs of the fury that was boiling in his very soul. On the contrary, never had Stephen Spike seemed more calm, or under better self-command. He smiled, and saluted Mrs. Budd, just as if nothing unpleasant had occurred, and alluded to the sharpness of the chase with facetiousness and seeming good-humour. The females were deceived by this manner, and hoped, after all, that the worst that would happen would be a return to their old position on board the Swash. This was being so much better off than their horrible situation on the wreck, that the change was not frightful to them.

"What has become of the schooner, Mr. Mulford?" asked Spike, as the boats began to pass down the channel to return to the brig two of the Swash's men taking their seats in that which had been captured, along with their commander, while the other two got a tow from the use of the sail. "I see you have the boat here that we used alongside of her, and suppose you know something of the craft itself."

"She capsized with us in a squall," answered the mate, "and we only left the wreck this morning."

"Capsized! hum that was a hard fate, to be sure, and denotes bad seamanship. Now I've sailed all sorts of craft these forty years, or five-and-thirty at least, and never capsized anything in my life. Stand by there for'ard to hold on by that rock."

A solitary cap of the coral rose above the water two or three feet, close to the channel, and was the rock to which Spike alluded. It was only some fifty feet in diameter, and of an oval form, rising quite above the ordinary tides, as was apparent by its appearance. It is scarcely necessary to say it had no other fresh water than that which occasionally fell on its surface, which surface being quite smooth, retained very little of the rain it received. The boat was soon alongside of this rock, where it was held broadside-to by the two seamen.

"Mr. Mulford, do me the favour to step up here," said Spike, leading the way on to the rock himself. "I have a word to say to you before we get on board the old Molly once more."

Mulford silently complied, fully expecting that Spike intended to blow his brains out, and willing the bloody deed should be done in a way to be as little shocking to Rose as circumstances would allow. But Spike manifested no such intention. A more refined cruelty was uppermost in his mind; and his revenge was calculated, and took care to fortify itself with some of the quibbles and artifices of the law. He might not be exactly right in his legal reservations, but he did not the less rely on their virtue.

"Hark'e, Mr. Mulford," said Spike, sharply, as soon as both were on the rock, "you have run from my brig, thereby showing your distaste for her; and I've no disposition to keep a man who wishes to quit me. Here you are, sir, on terrum firm, as the scholars call it; and here you have my full permission to remain. I wish you a good morning, sir; and will not fail to report, when we get in, that you left the brig of your own pleasure."

"You will not have the cruelty to abandon me on this naked rock, Captain Spike, and that without a morsel of food, or a drop of water."

"Wather is a blessed thing!" exclaimed Bidy. "Do not think of lavin' the gentleman widout wather."

"You left me, sir, without food or water, and you can fit out your own rock yes, d e, sir, you left me under fire, and that is a thing no true-hearted man would have thought of. Stand by to make sail, boys; and if he offer to enter the boat, pitch him out with the boat-hooks."

Spike was getting angry, and he entered the boat again, without perceiving that Rose had left it. Light of foot, and resolute of spirit, the beautiful girl, handsomer than ever perhaps, by her excited feelings and dishevelled hair, had sprung on the rock, as Spike stepped into the boat forward, and when the latter turned round, after loosening the sail, he found he was drifting away from the very being who was the object of all his efforts. Mulford, believing that Rose was to be abandoned as well as himself, received the noble girl in his arms, though ready to implore Spike, on his knees, to return and at least to take her off. But Spike wanted no solicitation on that point. He returned of his own accord, and had just reached the rock again when a report of a gun drew all eyes toward the brig.

The Swash had again run out of the passage, and was beating up, close to the reef as she dared to go, with a signal flying. All the seamen at once understood the cause of this hint. The strange sail was getting too near, and everybody could see that it was the sloop-of-war. Spike looked at Rose, a moment, in doubt. But Mulford raised his beloved in his arms, and carried her to the side of the rock, stepping on board the boat.

Spike watched the movements of the young man with jealous vigilance, and no sooner was Rose placed on her seat, than he motioned significantly to the mate to quit the boat.

"I cannot and will not voluntarily, Captain Spike," answered Harry, calmly. "It would be committing a sort of suicide."

A sign brought two of the men to the captain's assistance. While the latter held Rose in her place, the sailors shoved Harry on the rock again. Had Mulford been disposed to resist, these two men could not very easily have ejected him from the boat, if they could have done it at all; but he knew there were others in reserve, and feared that blood might be shed, in the irritated state of Spike, in the presence of Rose. While, therefore, he would not be accessory to his own destruction, he would not engage in what he knew would prove not only a most harassing, but a bootless resistance. The consequence was that the boats proceeded, leaving him alone on the rock.

It was perhaps fortunate for Rose that she fainted. Her condition occupied her aunt and Bidy, and Spike was enabled to reach his brig without any further interruption. Rose was taken on board still nearly insensible, while her two female companions were so much confused and distressed, that neither could have given a reasonably clear account of what had just occurred. Not so with Jack Tier, however. That singular being noted all that passed, seated in the eyes of the boat, away from the confusion that prevailed in its stern-sheets, and apparently undisturbed by it.

As the party was sailing back toward the brig, the light-house boat towing the Swash's yawl, Jack took as good an observation of the channels of that part of the reef as his low position would allow. He tried to form in his mind a sort of chart of the spot, for, from the instant Mulford was thus deserted, the little fellow had formed a stern

resolution to attempt his rescue. How that was to be done, however, was more than he yet knew; and when they reached the brig's side, Tier may be said to have been filled with good intentions, rather than with any very available knowledge to enable him to put them in execution.

As respects the two vessels, the arrival of Spike on board his own was not a moment too soon. The Poughkeepsie, for the stranger to the northward was now ascertained to be that sloop-of-war, was within long gun-shot by this time, and near enough to make certain, by means of her glasses, of the character of the craft with which she was closing. Luckily for the brig she lay in the channel so often mentioned, and through which both she and her present pursuer had so lately come, on their way to the northward. This brought her to windward, as the wind then stood, with a clear passage before her. Not a moment was lost. No sooner were the females sent below, than sail was made on the brig, and she began to beat through the passage, making long legs and short ones. She was chased, as a matter of course, and that hard, the difference in sailing between the two crafts not being sufficiently great to render the brigantine's escape by any means certain, while absolutely within the range of those terrible missiles that were used by the man-of-war's men.

But Spike soon determined not to leave a point so delicate as that of his own and his vessel's security to be decided by a mere superiority in the way of heels. The Florida Reef, with all its dangers, windings, and rocks, was as well known to him as the entrances to the port of New York. In addition to its larger channels, of which there are three or four, through which ships of size can pass, it had many others that would admit only vessels of a lighter draught of water. The brig was not flying light, it is true, but she was merely in good ballast trim, and passages would be available to her, into which the Poughkeepsie would not dare to venture. One of these lesser channels was favourably placed to further the escape of Spike, and he shoved the brig into it after the struggle had lasted less than an hour. This passage offered a shorter cut to the south side of the reef than the main channel, and the sloop-of-war, doubtless perceiving the uselessness of pursuit, under such circumstances, wore round on her heel, and came down through the main channel again, just entering the open water, near the spot where the schooner had sunk, as the sun was setting.

CHAPTER II.

Shallow.

Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

Evans.

Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

Shallow.

I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

Evans.

Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts.

Shakspeare.

As for Spike, he had no intention of going to the southward of the Florida Reef again until his business called him there. The lost bag of doubloons was still gleaming before his imagination, and no sooner did the Poughkeepsie bear up, than he shortened sail, standing back and forth in his narrow and crooked channel, rather losing ground

than gaining, though he took great pains not to let his artifice be seen. When the Poughkeepsie was so far to the northward as to render it safe, he took in everything but one or two of his lowest sails, and followed easily in the same direction. As the sloop-of-war carried her light and loftier sails, she remained visible to the people of the Swash long after the Swash had ceased to be visible to her. Profiting by this circumstance, Spike entered the main channel again some time before it was dark, and selected a safe anchorage there that was well known to him; a spot where sufficient sand had collected on the coral to make good holding ground, and where a vessel would be nearly embayed, though always to windward of her channel going out, by the formation of the reef. Here he anchored, in order to wait until morning ere he ventured further north. During the whole of that dreadful day, Rose had remained in her cabin, disconsolate, nearly unable, as she was absolutely unwilling to converse. Now it was that she felt the total insufficiency of a mind feeble as that of her aunt's to administer consolation to misery like her own. Nevertheless, the affectionate solicitude of Mrs. Budd, as well as that of the faithful creature, Bidly, brought some relief, and reason and resignation began slowly to resume their influence. Yet was the horrible picture of Harry, dying by inches, deserted in the midst of the waters on his solitary rock, ever present to her thoughts, until, once or twice, her feelings verged on madness. Prayer brought its customary relief, however; and we do not think that we much exaggerate the fact, when we say that Rose passed fully one-half of that terrible afternoon on her knees.

As for Jack Tier, he was received on board the brig much as if nothing had happened. Spike passed and repassed him fifty times, without even an angry look, or a word of abuse; and the deputy-steward dropped quietly into the duties of his office, without meeting with either reproach or hindrance. The only allusion, indeed, that was made to his recent adventures, took place in a conversation that was held on the subject in the galley, the interlocutors being Jack himself, Josh, the steward, and Simon, the cook.

"Where you been scullin' to, 'bout on dat reef, Jack, wid dem' ere women, I won'er now?" demanded Josh, after tasting the cabin soup, in order to ascertain how near it was to being done. "It'ink it no great fun to dodge 'bout among dem rock in a boat, for anudder hurricane might come when a body least expeck him."

"Oh," said Jack, cavalierly, "two hurricanes no more come in one month, than two shot in the same hole. We'vebeen turtlin', that's all. I wish we had in your coppers, cook, some of the critturs that we fell in with in our cruise."

"Wish'e had, master steward, wid all my heart," answered the fat, glistening potentate of the galley. "But, hark'ee, Jack; what became of our young mate, can 'e tell? Some say he get kill at'e Dry Tortugas, and some say he war' scullin' round in dat boat you hab, wid'e young woman, eh?"

"Ah, boys," answered Jack, mournfully, "sure enough, what has become of him?"

"You know, why can't you tell? What good to hab secret among friend."

"Are ye his friends, lads? Do you really feel as if you could give a poor soul in its agony a helpin' hand?"

"Why not?" said Josh, in a reproachful way. "Misser Mulford'e bess mate dis brig ebber get; and I don't see why Cap'in Spike-want to be rid of him."

"Because he's a willian!" returned Jack between his grated teeth. "D'ye know what that means in English, master Josh; and can you and cook here, both of whom have sailed with the man years in and years out, say whether my words be true or not?"

"Dat as a body understand 'em. Accordin' to some rule, Stephen Spike not a werry honest man; but accordin' to 'nudder some, he as good as any body else."

"Yes, dat just be upshot of de matter," put in Simon, approvingly. "De whole case lie in dat meanin'."

"D'ye call it right to leave a human being to starve, or to suffer for water, on a naked rock, in the midst of the ocean?"

"Who do dat?"

"The willian who is captain of this brig; and all because he thinks young eyes and bloomin' cheeks prefer young eyes and bloomin' cheeks to his own grizzly beard and old look-outs."

"Dat bad; dat werry bad," said Josh, shaking his head, a way of denoting dissatisfaction, in which Simon joined him; for no crime appeared sufficiently grave in the eyes of these two sleek and well-fed officials to justify such a punishment. "Dat mons'ous bad, and cap'in ought to know better dan do dat. I nebber starves a mouse, if I catcheshim in de bread-locker. Now, dat a sort of reason'ble punishment, too; but I nebber does it. If mouse eat my bread, it do seem right to tell mouse dat he hab enough, and dat he must not eat any more for a week, or a mont', but it too cruel for me, and I nebber does it; no, I t'rows de little debil overboard, and lets him drown like a gentle'em."

"Y-e-s," drawled out Simon, in a philanthropical tone of voice, "dat'e best way. What good it do to torment a fellow critter? If Misser Mulford run, why put him down run, and let him go, I say, on'y mulk his wages; but what good it do anybody to starve him? Now dis is my opinion, gentle'em, and dat is, dat starwation be wuss dan choleric. Choleric kill, I knows, and so does starwation kill; but of de two, gib me de choleric fuss; if I gets well of dat, den try starwation if you can."

"I'm glad to hear you talk in this manner, my hearties," put in Jack; "and I hope I may find you accommodatin' in a plan I've got to help the maty out of this difficulty. As a friend of Stephen Spike's I would do it; for it must be a terrible thing to die with such a murder on one's soul. Here's the boat that we pick'd up at the light-house, yonder, in tow of the brig at this minute; and there's everything in her comfortable for a good long run, as I know from having sailed in her; and what I mean is this: as we left Mr. Mulford, I took the bearings and distance of the rock he was on, d'ye understand, and think I could find my way back to it. You see the brig is travelin' slowly north ag'in, and afore long we shall be in the neighbourhood of that very rock. We, cook and stewards, will be called on to keep an anchor-watch, if the brig fetches up, as I heard the captain tell the Spanish gentleman he thought she would; and then we can take the boat that's in the water and go and have a hunt for the maty."

The two blacks looked at Tier earnestly; then they turned their heads to look at each other. The idea struck each as bold and novel, but each saw serious difficulties in it. At length Josh, as became his superior station, took on himself the office of expressing the objections that occurred to his mind.

"Dat nebber do!" exclaimed the steward. "We be'squite willin' to sarve'e mate, who's a good gentle'em, and as nice a young man as ever sung out, 'hard a-lee,' but we must t'ink little bit of number one; or, for dat matter, of number two, as Simon would be implerated as well as myself. If Cap'in Spike once knew we've lent a hand in sich a job, he'd never overlook it. I knows him, well; and that is sayin' as much as need be said of any man's character. You nebber catch me runnin' myself into his jaws; would rather fight a shark widout any knife. No, no I knows him well. Den comes anudder werry unanswerable objecsh'un, and dat is, dat'e brig owe bot' Simon and I money. Fifty dollars, each on us, if she owe one cent. Now, do you t'ink in cander, Jack, dat two colour' gentle'em, like us, can t'row away our fortins like two sons of a York merchant dat has inherited a hundred t'ousand dollar tudder day?"

"There is no occasion for running at all, or for losing your wages."

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"How you get'e mate off, den? Can he walk away on de water? If so, let him go widout us. A werry good gentle'em is Misser Mulford, but not good enough to mulk Simon and me out of fifty dollar each."

"You will not hear my project, Josh, and so will never know what I would be at."

"Well, come, tell him jest as you surposes him. Now listen, Simon, so dat not a word be loss."

"My plan is to take the boat, if we anchor, as anchor I know we shall, and go and find the rock and bring Mr. Mulford off; then we can come back to the brig, and get on board ourselves, and let the mate sail away in the boat by himself. On this plan nobody will run, and no wages be mulcted."

"But dat take time and an anchor—watch last but two hour, surposin' even dat'ey puts all t'ree of us in de same watch."

"Spike usually does that, you know. 'Let the cook and the stewards keep the midnight watch,' he commonly says, 'and that will give the foremost hands a better snooze.'"

"Yes, he do say dat, Josh," put in Simon, "most ebbery time we comes—to."

"I know he does, and surposes he will say it to—night, if he comes—to to—night. But a two hour watch may not be long enough to do all you wants; and den, jest t'ink for a moment, should 'e cap'in come on deck and hail'e forecastle, and find us all gone, I wouldn't be in your skin, Jack, for dis brig, in sich a kerlamity. I knows Cap'in Spike well; t'ree time I endebber to run myself, and each time he bring me up wid a round turn; so, now—a—days, I nebber t'inks of sich a projeck any longer."

"But I do not intend to leave the forecastle without some one on it to answer a hail. No, all I want is a companion; for I do not like to go out on the reef at midnight, all alone. If one of you will go with me, the other can stay and answer the captain's hail, should he really come on deck in our watch a thing very little likely to happen. When once his head is on his pillow, a'ter a hard day's work, it's not very apt to be lifted ag'in without a call, or a squall. If you do know Stephen Spike well, Josh, I know him better."

"Well, Jack, dis here is a new idee, d'ye see, and a body must take time to consider on it. If Simon and I do ship for dis v'y'ge, 't will be for lub of Mr. Mulford, and not for his money or your'n".

This was all the encouragement of his project Jack Tier could obtain, on that occasion, from either his brother steward, or from the cook. These blacks were well enough disposed to rescue an innocent and unoffending man from the atrocious death to which Spike had condemned his mate, but neither lost sight of his own security and interest. They promised Tier not to betray him, however; and he had the fullest confidence in their pledges. They who live together in common, usually understand the feeling that prevails, on any given point, in their own set; and Jack felt pretty certain that Harry was a greater favourite in and about the camboose than the captain. On that feeling he relied, and he was fain to wait the course of events, ere he came to any absolute conclusion as to his own course.

The interview in the galley took place about half an hour before the brig anchored for the night. Tier, who often assisted on such occasions, went aloft to help secure the royal, one of the gaskets of which had got loose, and from the yard he had an excellent opportunity to take a look at the reef, the situation of the vessel, and the probable bearings of the rock on which poor Mulford had been devoted to a miserable death. This opportunity was much increased by Spike's hailing him, while on the yard, and ordering him to take a good look at the sloop-of-war, and at the same time to ascertain if any boats were "prowlin' about, in order to make a set upon us in the night." On receiving this welcome order, Jack answered with a cheerful "Ay, ay, sir," and standing up on the yard, he placed an arm around the mast, and remained for a long time making his observations. The command

to look-out for boats would have been a sufficient excuse had he continued on the yard as long as it was light.

Jack had no difficulty in finding the Poughkeepsie, which was already through the passage, and no longer visible from the deck. She appeared to be standing to the northward and westward, under easy canvas, like a craft that was in no hurry. This fact was communicated to Spike in the usual way. The latter seemed pleased, and he answered in a hearty manner, just as if no difficulty had ever occurred between him and the steward's assistant.

"Very well, Jack! bravo, Jack! now take a good look for boats; you'll have light enough for that this half hour," cried the captain. "If any are out, you'll find them pulling down the channel, or maybe they'll try to shorten the cut, by attempting to pull athwart the reef. Take a good and steady look for them, my man."

"Ay, ay, sir; I'll do all I can with naked eyes," answered Jack, "but I could do better, sir, if they would only send me up a glass by these here signal-halyards. With a glass, a fellow might speak with some sartainty."

Spike seemed struck with the truth of this suggestion; and he soon sent a glass aloft by the signal-halyards. Thus provided, Jack descended as low as the cross-trees, where he took his seat, and began a survey at his leisure. While thus employed, the brig was secured for the night, her decks were cleared, and the people were ordered to get their suppers, previously to setting an anchor-watch, and turning-in for the night. No one heeded the movements of Tier, for Spike had gone into his own state-room, with the exception of Josh and Simon. Those two worthies were still in the galley, conversing on the subject of Jack's recent communications; and ever and anon one of them would stick his head out of the door and look aloft, withdrawing it, and shaking it significantly, as soon as his observations were ended.

As for Tier, he was seated quite at his ease; and having slung his glass to one of the shrouds, in a way to admit of its being turned as on a pivot, he had every opportunity for observing accurately, and at his leisure. The first thing Jack did, was to examine the channel very closely, in order to make sure that no boats were in it, after which he turned the glass with great eagerness toward the reef, in the almost hopeless office of ascertaining something concerning Mulford. In point of fact, the brig had anchored quite three leagues from the solitary rock of the deserted mate, and, favoured as he was by his elevation, Jack could hardly expect to discern so small and low an object as that rock at so great a distance. Nevertheless, the glass was much better than common. It had been a present to Spike from one who was careful in his selections of such objects, and who had accidentally been under a serious obligation to the captain. Knowing the importance of a good look, as regards the boats, Spike had brought this particular instrument, of which, in common, he was very chary, from his own state-room, and sent it aloft, in order that Jack might have every available opportunity of ascertaining his facts. It was this glass, then, which was the means of the important discoveries the little fellow, who was thus perched on the fore-topmast cross-trees of the Swash, did actually succeed in making.

Jack actually started, when he first ascertained how distinctly and near the glass he was using brought distant objects. The gulls that sailed across its disk, though a league off, appeared as if near enough to be touched by the hand, and even their feathers gave out not only their hues, but their forms. Thus, too, was it with the surface of the ocean, of which the little waves that agitated the water of the reef, might be seen tossing up and down, at more than twice the range of the Poughkeepsie's heaviest gun. Naked rocks, low and subdued as they were in colour, too, were to be noted, scattered up and down in the panorama. At length Tier fancied his glass covered a field that he recognized. It was distant, but might be seen from his present elevation. A second look satisfied him he was right; and he next clearly traced the last channel in which they had endeavoured to escape from Spike, or that in which the boat had been taken. Following it along, by slowly moving the glass, he actually hit the rock on which Mulford had been deserted. It was peculiar in shape, size, and elevation above the water, and connected with the circumstance of the channel, which was easily enough seen by the colour of the water, and more easily from his height than if he had been in it, he could not be mistaken. The little fellow's heart beat quick as he made the glass move slowly over its surface, anxiously searching for the form of the mate. It was not to be seen. A second, and a more careful sweep of the glass, made it certain that the rock was deserted.

Although a little reflection might have satisfied any one Mulford was not to be sought in that particular spot, so long after he had been left there, Jack Tier felt grievously disappointed when he was first made certain of the accuracy of his observations. A minute later he began to reason on the matter, and he felt more encouraged. The rock on which the mate had been abandoned was smooth, and could not hold any fresh water that might have been left by the late showers. Jack also remembered that it had neither sea-weed nor shell-fish. In short, the utmost malice of Spike could not have selected, for the immolation of his victim, a more suitable place. Now Tier had heard Harry's explanation to Rose, touching the manner in which he had waded and swum about the reef that very morning, and it at once occurred to him that the young man had too much energy and spirit to remain helpless and inactive to perish on a naked rock, when there might be a possibility of at least prolonging existence, if not of saving it. This induced the steward to turn the glass slowly over the water, and along all the ranges of visible rock that he could find in that vicinity. For a long time the search was useless, the distance rendering such an examination not only difficult but painful. At length Jack, about to give up the matter in despair, took one sweep with the glass nearer to the brig, as much to obtain a general idea of the boat-channels of the reef, as in any hope of finding Mulford, when an object moving in the water came within the field of the glass. He saw it but for an instant, as the glass swept slowly past, but it struck him it was something that had life, and was in motion. Carefully going over the same ground again, after a long search, he again found what he so anxiously sought. A good look satisfied him that he was right. It was certainly a man wading along the shallow water of the reef, immersed to his waist and it must be Mulford.

So excited was Jack Tier by this discovery that he trembled like a leaf. A minute or two elapsed before he could again use the glass; and when he did, a long and anxious search was necessary before so small an object could be once more found. Find it he did, however, and then he got its range by the vessel, in a way to make sure of it. Yes, it was a man, and it was Mulford.

Circumstances conspired to aid Jack in the investigation that succeeded. The sun was near setting, but a stream of golden light gleamed over the waters, particularly illuminating the portion which came within the field of the glass. It appeared then that Harry, in his efforts to escape from the rock, and to get nearer to the edge of the main channel, where his chances of being seen and rescued would be ten-fold what they were on his rock, had moved south, by following the naked reef and the shallow places, and was actually more than a league nearer to the brig than he would have been had he remained stationary. There had been hours in which to make this change, and the young man had probably improved them to the utmost.

Jack watched the form that was wading slowly along with an interest he had never before felt in the movements of any human being. Whether Mulford saw the brig or not, it was difficult to say. She was quite two leagues from him, and, now that her sails were furled, she offered but little for the eye to rest on at that distance. At first, Jack thought the young man was actually endeavouring to get nearer to her, though it must have been a forlorn hope that should again place him in the hands of Spike. It was, however, a more probable conjecture that the young man was endeavouring to reach the margin of the passage, where a good deal of rock was above water, and near to which he had already managed to reach. At one time Jack saw that the mate was obliged to swim, and he actually lost sight of him for a time. His form, however, reappeared, and then it slowly emerged from the water, and stood erect on a bare rock of some extent. Jack breathed freer at this; for Mulford was now on the very margin of the channel, and might be easily reached by the boat, should he prevail on Josh, or Simon, to attempt the rescue.

At first, Jack Tier fancied that Mulford had knelt to return thanks on his arrival at a place of comparative safety; but a second look satisfied him that Harry was drinking from one of the little pools of fresh water left by the late shower. When he rose from drinking, the young man walked about the place, occasionally stooping, signs that he was picking up shell-fish for his supper. Suddenly, Mulford darted forward, and passed beyond the field of the glass. When Jack found him again, he was in the act of turning a small turtle, using his knife on the animal immediately after. Had Jack been in danger of starvation himself, and found a source of food as ample and as grateful as this, he could scarcely have been more delighted. The light now began to wane perceptibly, still

Harry's movements could be discerned. The turtle was killed and dressed, sufficiently at least for the mate's purposes, and the latter was seen collecting sea-weed, and bits of plank, boards, and sticks of wood, of which more or less, in drifting past, had lodged upon the rocks. "Is it possible," thought Jack, "that he is so werry partic'lar he can't eat his turtle raw! Will he, indeed, venture to light a fire, or has he the means?" Mulford was so particular, however, he did venture to light a fire, and he had the means. This may be said to be the age of matches not in a connubial, though in an inflammatory sense and the mate had a small stock in a tight box that he habitually carried on his person. Tier saw him at work over a little pile he had made for a long time, the beams of day departing now so fast as to make him fearful he should soon lose his object in the increasing obscurity of twilight. Suddenly a light gleamed, and the pile sent forth a clear flame. Mulford went to andfro, collecting materials to feed his fire, and was soon busied in cooking his turtle. All this Tier saw and understood, the light of the flames coming in proper time to supply the vacuum left by the departure of that of day.

In a minute Tier had no difficulty in seeing the fire that Mulford had lighted on his low and insulated domains with the naked eye. It gleamed brightly in that solitary place; and the steward was much afraid it would be seen by some one on deck, get to be reported to Spike, and lead to Harry's destruction after all. The mate appeared to be insensible to his danger, however, occasionally casting piles of dry sea-weed on his fire, in a way to cause the flames to flash up, as if kindled anew by gunpowder. It now occurred to Tier that the young man had a double object in lighting this fire, which would answer not only the purposes of his cookery, but as a signal of distress to anything passing near. The sloop-of-war, though more distant than the brig, was in his neighbourhood; and she might possibly yet send relief. Such was the state of things when Jack was startled by a sudden hail from below. It was Spike's voice, and came up to him short and quick.

"Fore-topmast cross-trees, there! What are ye about all this time, Master Jack Tier, in them fore-topmast cross-trees, I say?" demanded Spike.

"Keeping a look-out for boats from the sloop-of-war, as you bade me, sir," answered Jack, coolly.

"D'ye see any, my man? Is the water clear ahead of us, or not?"

"It's getting to be so dark, sir, I can see no longer. While there was day-light, no boat was to be seen."

"Come down, man come down; I've business for you below. The sloop is far enough to the nor'ard, and we shall neither see nor hear from her to-night. Come down, I say, Jack come down."

Jack obeyed, and securing the glass, he began to descend the rigging. He was soon as low as the top, when he paused a moment to take another look. The fire was still visible, shining like a torch on the surface of the water, casting its beams abroad like "a good deed in a naughty world." Jack was sorry to see it, though he once more took its bearing from the brig, in order that he might knowwhere to find the spot, in the event of a search for it. When on the stretcher of the fore-rigging, Jack stopped and again looked for his beacon. It had disappeared, having sunk below the circular formation of the earth. By ascending two or three ratlins, it came into view, and by going down as low as the stretcher again, it disappeared. Trusting that no one, at that hour, would have occasion to go aloft, Jack now descended to the deck, and went aft with the spy-glass.

Spike and the Señor Montefalderon were under the coach-house, no one else appearing on any part of the quarter-deck. The people were eating their suppers, and Josh and Simon were busy in the galley. As for the females, they chose to remain in their own cabin, where Spike was well pleased to leave them.

"Come this way, Jack," said the captain, in his best-humoured tone of voice, "I've a word to say to you. Put the glass in at my state-room window, and come hither."

Tier did as ordered.

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"So you can make out no boats to the nor'ard, ha, Jack! nothing to be seen thereaway?"

"Nothing in the way of a boat, sir."

"Ay, ay, I dare say there's plenty of water, and some rock. The Florida Reef has no scarcity of either, to them that knows where to look for one, and to steer clear of the other. Hark'e, Jack; so you got the schooner under way from the Dry Tortugas, and undertook to beat her up to Key West, when she fancied herself a turtle, and over she went with you is that it, my man?"

"The schooner turned turtle with us, sure enough, sir; and we all came near drowning on her bottom."

"No sharks in that latitude and longitude, eh Jack?"

"Plenty on 'em, sir; and I thought they would have got us all, at one time. More than twenty set of fins were in sight at once, for several hours."

"You could hardly have supplied the gentlemen with a leg, or an arm, each. But where was the boat all this time you had the light-house boat in tow, I suppose?"

"She had been in tow, sir; but Madam Budd talked so much dictionary to the painter, that it got adrift."

"Yet I found you all in it."

"Very true, sir. Mr. Mulford swam quite a mile to reach the rocks, and found the boat aground on one on 'em. As soon as he got the boat, he made sail, and came and took us off. We had reason to thank God he could do so."

Spike looked dark and thoughtful. He muttered the words "swam," and "rocks," but was too cautious to allow any expressions to escape him, that might betray to the Mexican officer that which was uppermost in his mind. He was silent, however, for quite a minute, and Jack saw that he had awakened a dangerous source of distrust in the captain's breast.

"Well, Jack," resumed Spike, after the pause, "can you tell us anything of the doubloons? I nat'rally expected to find them in the boat, but there were none to be seen. You scarcely pumped the schooner out, without overhauling her lockers, and falling in with them doubloons."

"We found them, sure enough, and had them ashore with us, in the tent, down to the moment when we sailed."

"When you took them off to the schooner, eh? My life for it, the gold was not forgotten."

"It was not, sure enough, sir; but we took it off with us to the schooner, and it went down in her when she finally sunk."

Another pause, during which Señor Montefalderon and Captain Spike looked significantly at each other.

"Do you think, Jack, you could find the spot where the schooner went down?"

"I could come pretty near it, sir, though not on the very spot itself. Water leaves no mark over the grave of a sunken ship."

"If you can take us within a reasonable distance, we might find it by sweeping for it. Them doubloons are worth some trouble; and their recovery would be better than a long v'y'ge to us, any day."

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"They would, indeed, Don Esteban," observed the Mexican; "and my poor country is not in a condition to bear heavy losses. If Señor Jack Tier can find the wreck, and we regain the money, ten of those doubloons shall be his reward, though I take them from my own share, much diminished as it will be."

"You hear, Jack here is a chance to make your fortune! You say you sailed with me in old times and old times were good times with this brig, though times has changed; but if you sailed with me, in old times, you must remember that whatever the Swash touched she turned to gold."

"I hope you do n't doubt, Captain Spike, my having sailed in the brig, not only in old times, but in her best times."

Jack seemed hurt as he put this question, and Spike appeared in doubt. The latter gazed at the little, rotund, queer-looking figure before him, as if endeavouring to recognise him; and when he had done, he passed his hand over his brow, like one who endeavoured to recall past objects by excluding those that are present.

"You will then show us the spot where my unfortunate schooner did sink, Señor Jack Tier?" put in the Mexican.

"With all my heart, señor, if it is to be found. I think I could take you within a cable's length of the place, though hunger, and thirst, and sharks, and the fear of drowning, will keep a fellow from having a very bright look-out for such a matter."

"In what water do you suppose the craft to lie, Jack?" demanded the captain.

"You know as much of that as I do myself, sir. She went down about a cable's length from the reef, toward which she was a settin' at the time; and had she kept afloat an hour longer, she might have grounded on the rocks."

"She 's better where she is, if we can only find her by sweeping. On the rocks we could do nothing with her but break her up, and ten to one the doubloons would be lost. By the way, Jack, do you happen to know where that scoundrel of a mate of mine stowed the money?"

"When we left the island, I carried it down to the boat myself and a good lift I had of it. As sure as you are there, señor, I was obliged to take it on a shoulder. When it came out of the boat, Mr. Mulford carried it below; and I heard him tell Miss Rose, a'terwards that he had thrown it into a bread-locker."

"Where we shall find it, Don Wan, notwithstanding all this veering and hauling. The old brig has luck when doubloons are in question, and ever has had since I've commanded her. Jack, we shall have to call on the cook and stewards for an anchor-watch to-night. The people are a good deal fagged with boxing about this reef so much, and I shall want 'em all as fresh to-morrow as they can be got. You idlers had better take the middle watches, which will give the fore-castle chaps longer naps."

"Ay, ay, sir; we'll manage that for 'em. Josh and Simon can go on at twelve, and I will take the watch at two, which will give the men all the rest they want, as I can hold out for four hours full. I'm as good for an anchor-watch as any man in the brig, Captain Spike."

"That you are, Jack, and better than some on 'em. Take you all round, and round it is, you 're a rum 'un, my lad the queerest little jigger that ever lay out on a royal-yard."

Jack might have been a little offended at Spike's compliments, but he was certainly not sorry to find him so good-natured, after all that had passed. He now left the captain, and his Mexican companion, seemingly in close conference together, while he went below himself, and dropped as naturally into the routine of his duty, as if he had never left the brig. In the cabin he found the females, of course. Rose scarce raising her face from the shawl which lay on the bed of her own berth. Jack busied himself in a locker near this berth, until an opportunity

occurred to touch Rose, unseen by her aunt or Biddy. The poor heart-stricken girl raised her face, from which all the colour had departed, and looked almost vacantly at Jack, as if to ask an explanation. Hope is truly, by a most benevolent provision of Providence, one of the very last blessings to abandon us. It is probable that we are thus gifted, in order to encourage us to rely on the great atonement to the last moment, since, without this natural endowment to cling to hope, despair might well be the fate of millions, who, there is reason to think, reap the benefit of that act of divine mercy. It would hardly do to say that anything like hope was blended with the look Rose now cast on Jack, but it was anxious and inquiring.

The steward bent his head to the locker, bringing his face quite near to that of Rose, and whispered "There is hope, Miss Rose but do not betray me."

These were blessed words for our heroine to hear, and they produced an immediate and great revolution in her feelings. Commanding herself, however, she looked her questions, instead of trusting even to a whisper. Jack did not say any more, just then; but, shortly after, he called Rose, whose eyes were now never off him, into the main cabin, which was empty. It was so much pleasanter to sleep in an airy state-room on deck, that Señor Montefalderon, indeed, had given up the use of this cabin, in a great measure, seldom appearing in it, except at meals, having taken possession of the deserted apartment of Mulford. Josh was in the galley, where he spent most of his time, and Rose and Jack had no one to disturb their conference.

"He is safe, Miss Rose God be praised!" whispered Jack. "Safe for the present, at least; with food, and water, and fire to keep him warm at night."

It was impossible for Rose not to understand to whom there was allusion, though her head became dizzy under the painful confusion that prevailed in it. She pressed her temples with both hands, and asked a thousand questions with her eyes. Jack considerably handed her a glass of water before he proceeded. As soon as he found her a little more composed, he related the facts connected with his discovery of Mulford, precisely as they had occurred.

"He is now on a large rock a little island, indeed where he is safe from the ocean unless it comes on to blow a hurricane," concluded Jack, "has fresh water and fresh turtle in the bargain. A man might live a month on one such turtle as I saw Mr. Mulford cutting up this evening."

"Is there no way of rescuing him from the situation you have mentioned, Jack? In a year or two I shall be my own mistress, and have money to do as I please with; put me only in the way of taking Mr. Mulford from that rock, and I will share all I am worth on earth with you, dear Jack."

"Ay, so it is with the whole sex," muttered Tier; "let them only once give up their affections to a man, and he becomes dearer to them than pearls and rubies! But you know me, Miss Rose, and know why and how well I would serve you. My story and my feelin's are as much your secret, as your story and your feelin's is mine. We shall pull together, if we do n't pull so very strong. Now, hearken to me, Miss Rose, and I will let you into the secret of my plan to help Mr. Mulford make a launch."

Jack then communicated to his companion his whole project for the night. Spike had, of his own accord, given to him and his two associates, Simon and Josh, the care of the brig between midnight and morning. If he could prevail on either of these men to accompany him, it was his intention to take the light-house boat, which was riding by its painter astern of the brig, and proceed as fast as they could to the spot whither Mulford had found his way. By his calculations, if the wind stood as it then was, little more than an hour would be necessary to reach the rock, and about as much more to return. Should the breeze lull, of which there was no great danger, since the easterly trades were again blowing, Jack thought he and Josh might go over the distance with the oars in about double the time. Should both Josh and Simon refuse to accompany him, he thought he should attempt the rescue of the mate alone, did the wind stand, trusting to Mulford's assistance, should he need it, in getting back to the brig.

"You surely would not come back here with Harry, did you once get him safe from off that rock!" exclaimed Rose.

"Why, you know how it is with me, Miss Rose," answered Jack. "My business is here, on board the Swash, and I must attend to it. Nothing shall tempt me to give up the brig so long as she floats, and sartain folk float in her, unless it might be some such matter as that which happened on the bit of an island at the Dry Tortugas. Ah! he's a willian! But if I do come back, it will be only to get into my own proper berth ag'in, and not to bring Mr. Mulford into the lion's jaws. He will only have to put me back on board the Molly here, when he can make the best of his own way to Key West. Half an hour would place him out of harm's way; especially as I happen to know the course Spike means to steer in the morning."

"I will go with you, Jack," said Rose, mildly, but with great firmness.

"You, Miss Rose! But why should I show surprise! It's like all the sex, when they have given away their affections. Yes, woman will be woman, put her on a naked rock, or put her in silks and satins in her parlour at home. How different is it with men! They dote for a little while, and turn to a new face. It must be said, men's willians!"

"Not Mulford, Jack no, not Harry Mulford! A truer or a nobler heart never beat in a human breast; and you and I will drown together, rather than he should not be taken from that rock."

"It shall be as you say," answered Jack, a little thoughtfully. "Perhaps it would be best that you should quit the brig altogether. Spike is getting desperate, and you will be safer with the young mate than with so great an old willian. Yes, you shall go with me, Miss Rose; and if Josh and Simon both refuse, we will go alone."

"With you, Jack, but not with Mr. Mulford. I cannot desert my aunt, nor can I quit the Swash alone in company with her mate. As for Spike, I despise him too much to fear him. He must soon go into port somewhere, and at the first place where he touches we shall quit him. He dare not detain us nay, he cannot and I do not fear him. We will save Harry, but I shall remain with my aunt."

"We'll see, Miss Rose, we'll see," said Tier, smiling. "Perhaps a handsome young man, like Mr. Mulford, will have better luck in persuading you than an old fellow like me. If he should fail, 't will be his own fault."

So thought Jack Tier, judging of women as he had found them, but so did not think Rose Budd. The conversation ended here, however, each keeping in view its purport, and the serious business that was before them.

The duty of the vessel went on as usual. The night promised to be clouded, but not very dark, as there was a moon. When Spike ordered the anchor-watches, he had great care to spare his crew as much as possible, for the next day was likely to be one of great toil to them. He intended to get the schooner up again, if possible; and though he might not actually pump her out so as to cause her to float, enough water was to be removed to enable him to get at the doubloons. The situation of the bread-locker was known, and as soon as the cabin was sufficiently freed from water to enable one to move about in it, Spikedid not doubt his being able to get at the gold. With his resources and ingenuity, the matter in his own mind was reduced to one of toil and time. Eight-and-forty hours, and some hard labour, he doubted not would effect all he cared for.

In setting the anchor-watches for the night, therefore, Stephen Spike bethought him as much of the morrow as of the present moment. Don Juan offered to remain on deck until midnight, and as he was as capable of giving an alarm as any one else, the offer was accepted. Josh and Simon were to succeed the Mexican, and to hold the lookout for two hours, when Jack was to relieve them, and to continue on deck until light returned, when he was to give the captain a call. This arrangement made, Tier turned in at once, desiring the cook to call him half an hour before the proper period of his watch commenced. That half hour Jack intended to employ in exercising his

eloquence in endeavouring to persuade either Josh or Simon to be of his party. By eight o'clock the vessel lay in a profound quiet, Señor Montefalderon pacing the quarter-deck alone, while the deep breathing of Spike was to be heard issuing through the open window of his state-room; a window which it may be well to say to the uninitiated, opened in-board, or toward the deck, and not outboard, or toward the sea.

For four solitary hours did the Mexican pace the deck of the stranger, resting himself for a few minutes at a time only, when wearied with walking. Does the reader fancy that a man so situated had not plenty of occupation for his thoughts? Don Juan Montefalderon was a soldier and a gallant cavalier; and love of country had alone induced him to engage in his present duties. Not that patriotism which looks to political preferment through a popularity purchased by the vulgar acclamation which attends success in arms, even when undeserved, or that patriotism which induces men of fallen characters to endeavour to retrieve former offences by the shortest and most reckless mode, or that patriotism which shouts "our country right or wrong," regardless alike of God and his eternal laws, that are never to be forgotten with impunity; but the patriotism which would defend his home and fire-side, his altars and thegraves of his fathers, from the ruthless steps of the invader. We shall not pretend to say how far this gentleman entered into the merits of the quarrel between the two republics, which no arts of European jealousy can ever conceal from the judgment of truth, for, with him, matters had gone beyond the point when men feel the necessity of reasoning, and when, perhaps, if such a condition of the mind is ever to be defended, he found his perfect justification in feeling. He had travelled, and knew life by observation, and not through traditions and books. He had never believed, therefore, that his countrymen could march to Washington, or even to the Sabine; but he had hoped for better things than had since occurred. The warlike qualities of the Americans of the North, as he was accustomed to call those who term themselves, par excellence, Americans, a name they are fated to retain, and to raise high on the scale of national power and national pre-eminence, unless they fall by their own hands, had taken him by surprise, as they have taken all but those who knew the country well, and who understood its people. Little had he imagined that the small, widely-spread body of regulars, that figured in the blue books, almanacs and army-registers of America, as some six or seven thousand men, scattered along frontiers of a thousand leagues in extent, could, at the beck of the government, swell into legions of invaders, men able to carry war to the capitals of his own states, thousands of miles from their doors, and formidable alike for their energy, their bravery, their readiness in the use of arms, and their numbers. He saw what is perhaps justly called the boasting of the American character, vindicated by their exploits; and marches, conquests and victories that, if sober truth were alone to cover the pages of history, would far outdo in real labour and danger the boasted passage of the Alps under Napoleon, and the exploits that succeeded it.

Don Juan Montefalderon was a grave and thoughtful man, of pure Iberian blood. He might have had about him a little of the exaltation of the Spanish character; the overflowings of a generous chivalry at the bottom; and, under its influence, he may have set too high an estimate on Mexico and her sons, but he was not one to shut his eyes to the truth. He saw plainly that the northern neighbours of his country were a race formidable and enterprising, and that of all the calumnies that had been heaped upon them by rivalries and European superciliousness, that of their not being military by temperament was, perhaps, the most absurd of all. On the contrary, he had himself, though anticipating evil, been astounded by the suddenness and magnitude of their conquests, which in a few short months after the breaking out of hostilities, had overrun regions larger in extent than many ancient empires. All this had been done, too, not by disorderly and barbarous hordes, seeking in other lands the abundance that was wanting at home; but with system and regularity, by men who had turned the ploughshare into the sword for the occasion, quitting abundance to encounter fatigue, famine, and danger. In a word, the Señor Montefalderon saw all the evils that environed his own land, and foresaw others, of a still graver character that menaced the future. On matters such as these did he brood in his walk, and bitter did he find the minutes of that sad and lonely watch. Although a Mexican, he could feel; although an avowed foe of this good republic of ours, he had his principles, his affections, and his sense of right. Whatever may be the merits of the quarrel, and we are not disposed to deny that our provocation has been great, a sense of right should teach every man that what may be patriotic in an American, would not be exactly the same thing in a Mexican, and that we ought to respect in others sentiments that are so much vaunted among ourselves. Midnight at length arrived, and, calling the cook and steward, the unhappy gentleman was relieved, and went to his berth to dream, in sorrow, over the same pictures of national

misfortunes, on which, while waking, he had brooded in such deep melancholy.

The watch of Josh and Simon was tranquil, meeting with no interruption until it was time to summon Jack. One thing these men had done, however, that was of some moment to Tier, under a pledge given by Josh, and which had been taken in return for a dollar in hand. They had managed to haul the light-house boat alongside, from its position astern, and this so noiselessly as not to give the alarm to any one. There it lay, when Jack appeared, ready at the main-rigging, to receive him at any moment he might choose to enter it.

A few minutes after Jack appeared on deck, Rose and Bidly came stealthily out of the cabin, the latter carrying a basket filled with bread and broken meat, and not wanting in sundry little delicacies, such as woman's hands prepare, and, in this instance, woman's tenderness had provided. The whole party met at the galley, a place so far removed from the state-rooms aft as to be out of ear-shot. Here Jack renewed his endeavours to persuade either Josh or Simon to go in the boat, but without success. The negroes had talked the matter over in their watch, and had come to the conclusion the enterprise was too hazardous.

"I tell you, Jack, you does n't know Cap'in Spike as well as I does," Josh said, in continuance of the discourse. "No, you does n't know him at all as well as I does. If he finds out that anybody has quit dis brig dis werry night, woful will come! It no good to try to run; I run t'ree time, an' Simon here run twice. What good it all do? We got cotched, and here we is, just as fast as ever. I knows Cap'in Spike, and does n't want to fall in athwart his hawse any more."

"Y-e-s, dat my judgment too," put in the cook. "We wishes you well, Jack, and we wishes Miss Rose well, and Mr. Mulford well, but we can't, no how, run ath'art hawse, as Josh says. Dat is my judgment, too."

"Well, if your minds are made up to this, my darkies, I s'pose there'll be no changing them," said Jack. "At all ewents you'll lend us a hand, by answering any hail that may come from aft, in my watch, and in keepin' our secret. There's another thing you can do for us, which may be of service. Should Captain Spike miss the boat, and lay any trap to catch us, you can just light this here bit of lantern and hang it over the brig's bows, where he'll not be likely to see it, that we may know matters are going wrong, and give the craft a wide berth."

"Sartain," said Josh, who entered heartily into the affair, so far as good wishes for its success were concerned, at the very moment when he had a most salutary care of his own back. "Sartain; we do all dat, and no t'ank asked. It no great matter to answer a hail, or to light a lantern and sling him over de bows; and if Captain Spike want to know who did it, let him find out."

Here both negroes laughed heartily, manifesting so little care to suppress their mirth, that Rose trembled lest their noise should awaken Spike. Accustomed sounds, however, seldom produce this effect on the ears of the sleeper, and the heavy breathing from the state-room, succeeded the merriment of the blacks, as soon as the latter ceased. Jack now announced his readiness to depart. Some little care and management were necessary to get into the boat noiselessly, more especially with Bidly. It was done however, with the assistance of the blacks, who cast off the painter, when Jack gave the boat a shove to clear the brig, and suffered it to drift astern for a considerable distance before he ventured to cast loose the sail.

"I know Spike well," said Jack, in answer to a remonstrance from the impatient Rose concerning his delay: "A single flap of that canvas would wake him up, with the brig anchored, while he would sleep through a salute of heavy guns if it came in regular course. Quick ears has old Stephen, and it's best to humour them. In a minute more we'll set our canvas and be off."

All was done as Jack desired, and the boat got away from the brig unheard and undetected. It was blowing a good breeze, and Jack Tier had no sooner got the sail on the boat, than away it started at a speed that would have soon distanced Spike in his yawl, and with his best oarsmen. The main point was to keep the course, though the

direction of the wind was a great assistant. By keeping the wind abeam, Jack thought he should be going toward the rock of Mulford. In one hour, or even in less time, he expected to reach it, and he was guided by time, in his calculations, as much as by any other criterion. Previously to quitting the brig, he had gone up a few ratlins of the fore-rigging to take the bearings of the fire on Mulford's rock, but the light was no longer visible. As no star was to be seen, the course was a little vague, but Jack was navigator enough to understand that by keeping on the weather side of the channel he was in the right road, and that his great danger of missing his object was in overrunning it.

So much of the reef was above water, that it was not difficult to steer a boat along its margin. The darkness, to be sure, rendered it a little uncertain how near they were running to the rocks, but, on the whole, Jack assured Rose he had no great difficulty in getting along.

"These trades are almost as good as compasses," he said, "and the rocks are better, if we can keep close aboard them without going on to them. I do not know the exact distance of the spot we seek from the brig, but I judged it to be about two leagues, as I looked at it from aloft. Now, this boat will travel them two leagues in an hour, with this breeze and in smooth water."

"I wish you had seen the fire again before we left the brig," said Rose, too anxious for the result not to feel uneasiness on some account or other.

"The mate is asleep, and the fire has burned down; that's the explanation. Besides, fuel is not too plenty on a place like that Mr. Mulford inhabits just now. As we get near the spot, I shall look out for embers, which may serve as a light-house, or beacon, to guide us into port."

"Mr. Mulford will be charmed to see us, now that we take him wather!" exclaimed Bidy. "Wather is a blessed thing, and it's hard will be the heart that does not fale gratitude for a plenty of swate wather."

"The maty has plenty of food and water where he is," said Jack. "I'll answer for both them sarcumstances. I saw him turn a turtle as plain as if I had been at his elbow, and I saw him drinking at a hole in the rock, as heartily as a boy ever pulled at a gimblet-hole in a molasses hogs-head."

"But the distance was so great, Jack, I should hardly think you could have distinguished objects so small."

"I went by the motions altogether. I saw the man, and I saw the movements, and I knowed what the last meant. It's true I couldn't swear to the turtle, though I saw something on the rock that I knowed, by the way in which it was handled, must be a turtle. Then I saw the mate kneel, and put his head low, and then I knowed he was drinking."

"Perhaps he prayed," said Rose, solemnly.

"Not he. Sailors isn't so apt to pray, Miss Rose; not as apt as they ought to be. Women for prayers, and men for work. Mr. Mulford is no worse than many others, but I doubt if he be much given to that."

To this Rose made no answer, but Bidy took the matter up, and, as the boat went briskly ahead, she pursued the subject.

"Then more is the shame for him," said the Irish woman, "and Miss Rose, and missus, and even I prayin' for him, all as if he was our own brudder. It's seldom I ask anything for a heretic, but I could not forget a fine young man like Mr. Mulford, and Miss Rose so partial to him, and he in so bad a way. He ought to be ashamed to make his brags that he is too proud to pray."

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"Harry has made no such wicked boast," put in Rose, mildly; "nor do we know that he has not prayed for us, as well as for himself. It may all be a mistake of Jack's, you know."

"Yes," added Jack, coolly, "it may be a mistake, a'ter all, for I was lookin' at the maty six miles off, and through a spy-glass. No one can be sure of anything at such a distance. So overlook the matter, my good Bidy, and carry Mr. Mulford the nice things you've mustered in that basket, all the same as if he was pope."

"This is a subject we had better drop," Rose quietly observed.

"Anything to oblige you, Miss Rose, though religion is a matter it would do me no harm to talk about once and awhile. It's many a long year since I've had time and opportunity to bring my thoughts to dwell on holy things. Ever since I left my mother's side, I've been a wanderer in my mind, as much as in my body."

"Poor Jack! I understand and feel for your sufferings; but a better time will come, when you may return to the habits of your youth, and to the observances of your church."

"I do n't know that, Miss Rose; I do n't know that," answered Tier, placing the elbow of his short arm on the seemingly shorter leg, and bending his head so low as to lean his face on the palm of the hand, an attitude in which he appeared to be suffering keenly through his recollections. "Childhood and innocence never come back to us in this world. What the grave may do, we shall all learn in time."

"Innocence can return to all with repentance, Jack; and the heart that prompts you to do acts as generous as this you are now engaged in, must contain some good seed yet."

"If Jack will go to a praste and just confess, when he can find a father, it will do his sowl good," said Bidy, who was touched by the mental suffering of the strange little being at her side.

But the necessity of managing the boat soon compelled its coxswain to raise his head, and to attend to his duty. The wind sometimes came in puffs, and at such moments Jack saw that the large sail of the light-house boat required watching, a circumstance that induced him to shake off his melancholy, and give his mind more exclusively to the business before him. As for Rose, she sympathised deeply with Jack Tier, for she knew his history, his origin, the story of his youth, and the well-grounded causes of his contrition and regrets. From her, Jack had concealed nothing, the gentle commiseration of one like Rose being a balm to wounds that had bled for long and bitter years. The great poet of our language, and the greatest that ever lived, perhaps, short of the inspired writers of the Old Testament, and old Homer and Dante, has well reminded us that the "little beetle," in yielding its breath, can "feel a pang as great as when a giant dies." Thus is it, too, in morals. Abasement, and misery, and poverty, and sin, may, and all do, contribute to lower the tone of our moral existence; but the principle that has been planted by nature, can be eradicated by nature only. It exists as long as we exist; and if dormant for a time, under the pressure of circumstances, it merely lies, in the moral system, like the acorn, or the chestnut, in the ground, waiting its time and season to sprout, and bud, and blossom. Should that time never arrive, it is not because the seed is not there, but because it is neglected. Thus was it with the singular being of whose feelings we have just spoken. The germ of goodness had been implanted early in him, and was nursed with tenderness and care, until, self-willed, and governed by passion; he had thrown off the connections of youth and childhood, to connect himself with Spike a connection that had left him what he was. Before closing our legend, we shall have occasion to explain it.

"We have run our hour; Miss Rose," resumed Jack, breaking a continued silence, during which the boat had passed through a long line of water; "we have run our hour, and ought to be near the rock we are in search of. But the morning is so dark that I fear we shall have difficulty in finding it. It will never do to run past it, and we must haul closer into the reef, and shorten sail, that we may be sartain to make no such mistake."

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Rose begged her companion to omit no precaution, as it would be dreadful to fail in their search, after incurring so much risk in their own persons.

"Harry may be sleeping on the sea-weed of which you spoke," she added, "and the danger of passing him will be much increased in such a case. What a gloomy and frightful spot is this, in which to abandon a human being! I fear, Jack, that we have come faster than we have supposed, and may already have passed the rock."

"I hope not, Miss Rose it seemed to me a good two leagues to the place where I saw him, and the boat is fast that will run two leagues in an hour."

"We do not know the time, Jack, and are obliged to guess at that as well as at the distance. How very dark it is!"

Dark, in one sense, it was not, though Rose's apprehensions, doubtless, induced her to magnify every evil. The clouds certainly lessened the light of the moon; but there was still enough of the last to enable one to see surrounding objects; and most especially to render distinct the character of the solitude that reigned over the place.

The proximity of the reef, which formed a weather shore to the boat, prevented anything like a swell on the water, notwithstanding the steadiness and strength of the breeze, which had now blown for near twenty-four hours. The same wind, in open water, would have raised sea enough to cause a ship to pitch, or roll; whereas, the light-house boat, placed where she was, scarce rose and fell under the undulations of the channel through which she was glancing.

"This is a good boat, and a fast boat too," observed Jack Tier, after he had luffed up several minutes, in order to make sure of his proximity to the reef; "and it might carry us all safe enough to Key West, or certainly back to the Dry Tortugas, was we inclined to try our hands at either."

"I cannot quit my aunt," said Rose, quickly, "so we will not even think of any such thing."

"No, 't would never do to abandon the missus," said Bidy, "and she on the wrack wid us, and falin' the want of wather as much as ourselves."

"We three have sartainly gone through much in company," returned Jack, "and it ought to make us friends for life."

"I trust it will, Jack; I hope, when we return to New York, to see you among us, anchored, as you would call it, for the rest of your days under my aunt's roof, or under my own, should I ever have one."

"No, Miss Rose, my business is with the Swash and her captain. I shall stick by both, now I've found 'em again, until they once more desert me. A man's duty is his duty, and a woman's duty is her duty."

"You same to like the brig and her captain, Jack Tier," observed Bidy, "and there's no use in gainsaying such a likin'. What will come to pass, must come to pass. Captain Spike is a mighty great sailor, anyway."

"He's a willian!" muttered Jack.

"There!" cried Rose, almost breathless, "there is a rock above the water, surely. Do not fly by it so swiftly, Jack, but let us stop and examine it."

"There is a rock, sure enough, and a large piece it is," answered Tier. "We will go alongside of it, and see what it is made of. Bidy shall be boat-keeper, while you and I, Miss Rose, explore."

Jack had thrown the boat into the wind, and was shooting close alongside of the reef, even while speaking. The party found no difficulty in landing; the margin of the rock admitting the boat to lie close alongside of it, and its surface being even and dry. Jack had brailed the sail, and he brought the painter ashore, and fastened it securely to a fragment of stone, that made a very sufficient anchor. In addition to this precaution, a lazy painter was put into Bidley's hands, and she was directed not to let go of it while her companions were absent. These arrangements concluded, Rose and Jack commenced a hurried examination of the spot.

A few minutes sufficed to give our adventurers a tolerably accurate notion of the general features of the place on which they had landed. It was a considerable portion of the reef that was usually above water, and which had even some fragments of soil, or sand, on which was a stunted growth of bushes. Of these last, however, there were very few, nor were there many spots of the sand. Drift-wood and sea-weed were lodged in considerable quantities about its margin, and, in places, piles of both had been tossed upon the rock itself, by the billows of former gales of wind. Nor was it long before Jack discovered a turtle that had been up to a hillock of sand, probably to deposit its eggs. There was enough of the sportsman in Jack, notwithstanding the business he was on, to turn this animal; though with what object, he might have been puzzled himself to say. This exploit effected, Jack followed Rose as fast as his short legs would permit, our heroine pressing forward eagerly, though almost without hope, in order to ascertain if Mulford were there.

"I am afraid this is not the rock," said Rose, nearly breathless with her own haste, when Jack had overtaken her. "I see nothing of him, and we have passed over most of the place."

"Very true, Miss Rose," answered her companion, who was in a good humour on account of his capture of the turtle; "but there are other rocks besides this. Ha! what was that, yonder," pointing with a finger, "here, more toward the brig. As I'm a sinner, there was a flashing, as of fire."

"If a fire, it must be that made by Harry. Let us go to the spot at once."

Jack led the way, and, sure enough, he soon reached a place where the embers of what had been a considerable body of fire, were smouldering on the rock. The wind had probably caused some brand to kindle momentarily, which was the object that had caught Tier's eye. No doubt any longer remained of their having found the very place where the mate had cooked his supper, and lighted his beacon, though he himself was not near it. Around these embers were all the signs of Mulford's having made the meal, of which Jack had seen the preparations. A portion of the turtle, much the greater part of it, indeed, lay in its shell; and piles of wood and sea-weed, both dry, had been placed at hand, ready for use. A ship's topgallant-yard, with most of its rope attached, lay with a charred end near the fire, of where the fire had been, the wood having burned until the flames went out for want of contact with other fuel. There were many pieces of boards of pitch-pine in the adjacent heap, and two or three beautiful planks of the same wood, entire. In short, from the character and quantity of the materials of this nature that had thus been heaped together, Jack gave it as his opinion that some vessel, freighted with lumber, had been wrecked to windward, and that the adjacent rocks had been receiving the tribute of her cargo. Wrecks are of very, very frequent occurrence on the Florida Reef; and there are always moments when such gleanings are to be made in some part of it or other.

"I see no better way to give a call to the mate, Miss Rose, than to throw some of this dry weed, and some of this lumber on the fire," said Jack, after he had rummaged about the place sufficiently to become master of its condition. "There is plenty of ammunition, and here goes for a broadside."

Jack had no great difficulty in effecting his object. In a few minutes he succeeded in obtaining a flame, and then he fed it with such fragments of the brands and boards as were best adapted to his purpose. The flames extended gradually, and by the time Tier had dragged the topgallant-yard over the pile, and placed several planks, on their edges, alongside of it, the whole was ready to burst into a blaze. The light was shed athwart the rock for a long distance, and the whole place, which was lately so gloomy and obscure, now became gay, under the bright

radiance of a blazing fire.

"There is a beacon-light that might almost be seen on board!" said Jack, exulting in his success. If the mate is anywhere in this latitude, he will soon turn up."

"I see nothing of him," answered Rose, in a melancholy voice. "Surely, surely, Jack, he cannot have left the rock just as we have come to rescue him!"

Rose and her companion had turned their faces from the fire to look in an opposite direction in quest of him they sought. Unseen by them, a human form advanced swiftly toward the fire, from a point on its other side. It advanced nearer, then hesitated, afterward rushed forward with a tread that caused the two to turn, and at the next moment, Rose was clasped to the heart of Mulford.

CHAPTER III.

I might have pass'd that lovely cheek,

Nor, perchance, my heart have left me;

But the sensitive blush that came trembling there,

Of my heart it for ever bereft me.

Who could blame had I loved that face,

Ere my eyes could twice explore her;

Yet it is for the fairy intelligence there,

And her warm, warm heart I adore her.

Wolfe.

The stories of the respective parties who had thus so strangely met on that barren and isolated rock, were soon told. Harry confirmed all of Jack's statements as to his own proceedings, and Rose had little more to say than to add how much her own affections had led her to risk in his behalf. In a word, ten minutes made each fully acquainted with the other's movements. Then Tier considerately retired to the boat, under the pretence of minding it, and seeing everything ready for a departure, but as much to allow the lovers the ten or fifteen minutes of uninterrupted discourse that they now enjoyed, as for any other reason.

It was a strange scene that now offered on the rock. By this time the fire was burning not only brightly, but fiercely, shedding its bright light far and near. Under its most brilliant rays stood Harry and Rose, both smiling and happy, delighted in their meeting, and, for the moment, forgetful of all but their present felicity. Never, indeed, had Rose appeared more lovely than under these circumstances. Her face was radiant with those feelings which had so recently changed from despair to delight a condition that is ever most propitious to beauty; and charms that always appeared feminine and soft, now seemed elevated to a bright benignancy that might best be likened to our fancied images of angels. The mild, beaming, serene and intelligent blue eyes, the cheeks flushed with happiness, the smiles that came so easily, and were so replete with tenderness, and the rich hair, deranged by the breeze, and moistened by the air of the sea, each and all, perhaps, borrowed some additional lustre from the peculiar light under which they were exhibited. As for Harry, happiness had thrown all the disadvantages of

exposure, want of dress, and a face that had not felt the razor for six—and—thirty hours, into the back—ground. When he left the wreck, he had cast aside his cap and his light summer jacket, in order that they might not encumber him in swimming, but both had been recovered when he returned with the boat to take off his friends. In his ordinary sea attire, then, he now stood, holding Rose's two hands in front of the fire, every garment clean and white as the waters of the ocean could make them, but all betraying some of the signs of his recent trials. His fine countenance was full of the love he bore for the intrepid and devoted girl who had risked so much in his behalf; and a painter might have wished to preserve the expression of ardent, manly admiration which glowed in his face, answering to the gentle sympathy and womanly tenderness it met in that of Rose.

The back—ground of this picture was the wide, even surface of the coral reef, with its exterior setting of the dark and gloomy sea. On the side of the channel, however, appeared the boat, already winded, with Bidy still on the rock, looking kindly at the lovers by the fire, while Jack was holding the painter, beginning to manifest a little impatience at the delay.

"They'll stay there an hour, holding each other's hands, and looking into each other's faces," half grumbled the little, rotund, assistant—steward, anxious to be on his way back to the brig, "unless a body gives 'em a call. Captain Spike will be in no very good humour to receive you and me on board ag'in, if he should find out what sort of a trip we've been making hereaway."

"Let 'em alone let 'em alone, Jacky," answered the good—natured and kind—hearted Irish woman. "It's happy they bees, jist now, and it does my eyes good to look at 'em."

"Ay, they're happy enough, now; I only hope it may last."

"Last! what should help its lasting? Miss Rose is so good, and so handsome and she's a fortin', too; and the mate so nice a young man. Think of the likes of them, Jack, wantin' the blessed gift of wather, and all within one day and two nights. Sure it's Providence that takes care of, and not we ourselves! Kings on their thrones is n't as happy as them at this moment."

"Men's willians!" growled Jack; "and more fools women for trustin' 'em."

"Not sich a nice young man as our mate, Jacky; no, not he. Now the mate of the ship I came from Liverpool in, this time ten years agone, he was a villain. He grudged us our potaties, and our own bread; and he grudged us every dhrap of swate wather that went into our mouths. Call him a villain, if you will, Jack; but niver call the likes of Mr. Mulford by so hard a name."

"I wish him well, and nothing else; and for that very reason must put a stop to his looking so fondly into that young woman's face. Time wont stand still, Bidy, to suit the wishes of lovers; and Stephen Spike is a man not to be trifled with. Halloo, there, maty! It's high time to think of getting under way."

At this summons both Harry and Rose started, becoming aware of the precious moments they were losing. Carrying a large portion of the turtle, the former moved toward the craft, in which all were seated in less than three minutes, with the sail loose, and the boat in motion. For a few moments the mate was so much occupied with Rose, that he did not advert to the course; but one of his experience could not long be misled on such a point, and he turned suddenly to Tier, who was steering, to remonstrate.

"How's this, Jack!" cried Mulford; "you've got the boat's head the wrong way."

"Not I, sir. She's heading for the brig as straight as she can go. This wind favours us on both legs; and it's lucky it does, for't will be hard on upon daylight afore we are alongside of her. You'll want half an hour of dark, at the very least, to get a good start of the Swash, in case she makes sail a'ter you."

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"Straight for the brig! what have we to do with the brig? Our course is for Key West, unless it might be better to run down before the wind to the Dry Tortugas again, and look for the sloop—of—war. Duty, and perhaps my own safety, tells me to let Captain Mull know what Spike is about with the Swash; and I shall not hesitate a moment about doing it, after all that has passed. Give me the helm, Jack, and let us ware short round on our heel."

"Never, master maty never. I must go back to the brig. Miss Rose, there, knows that my business is with Stephen Spike, and with him only."

"And I must return to my aunt, Harry," put in Rose, herself. "It would never do for me to desert my aunt, you know."

"And I have been taken from that rock, to be given up to the tender mercies of Spike again?"

This was said rather in surprise, than in a complaining way; and it at once induced Rose to tell the young man the whole of their project.

"Never, Harry, never," she said firmly. "It is our intention to return to the brig ourselves, and let you escape in the boat afterwards. Jack Tier is of opinion this can be done without much risk, if we use proper caution and do not lose too much time. On no account would I consent to place you in the hands of Spike again death would be preferable to that, Harry!"

"And on no account can or will I consent to place you again in the hands of Spike, Rose," answered the young man. "Now that we know his intentions, such an act would be almost impious."

"Remember my aunt, dear Harry. What would be her situation in the morning, when she found herself deserted by her niece and Biddy by me, whom she has nursed and watched from childhood, and whom she loves so well."

"I shall not deny your obligations to your aunt, Rose, and your duty to her under ordinary circumstances. But these are not ordinary circumstances; and it would be courting the direst misfortunes, nay, almost braving Providence, to place yourself in the hands of that scoundrel again, now that you are clear of them."

"Spike's a willian!" muttered Jack.

"And my desartin' the missus would be a sin that no praste would overlook aisily," put in Biddy. "When Miss Rose told me of this v'y'ge that she meant to make in the boat wid Jack Tier, I asked to come along, that I might take care of her, and see that there was plenty of wather; but ill—luck befall me if I would have t'ought of sich a thing, and the missus desarted."

"We can then run alongside of the brig, and put Biddy and Jack on board of her," said Mulford, reflecting a moment on what had just been said, "when you and I can make the best of our way to Key West, where the means of sending government vessels out after the Swash will soon offer. In this way we can not only get our friends out of the lion's jaws, but keep out of them ourselves."

"Reflect a moment, Harry," said Rose, in a low voice, but not without tenderness in its tones; "it would not do for me to go off alone with you in this boat."

"Not when you have confessed your willingness to go over the wide world with me, Rose with me, and with me only?"

"Not even then, Harry. I know you will think better of this, when your generous nature has time to reason with your heart, on my account."

"I can only answer in your own words, Rose never. If you return to the Swash, I shall go on board with you, and throw defiance into the very teeth of Spike. I know the men do not dislike me, and, perhaps, assisted by Señor Montefalderon, and a few friends among the people, I can muster a force that will prevent my being thrown into the sea."

Rose burst into tears, and then succeeded many minutes, during which Mulford was endeavouring, with manly tenderness, to soothe her. As soon as our heroine recovered her self-command, she began to discuss the matter at issue between them more coolly. For half an hour everything was urged by each that feeling, affection, delicacy, or distrust of Spike could well urge, and Mulford was slowly getting the best of the argument, as well he might, the truth being mostly of his side. Rose was bewildered, really feeling a strong reluctance to quit her aunt, even with so justifiable a motive, but principally shrinking from the appearance of going off alone in a boat, and almost in the open sea, with Mulford. Had she loved Harry less, her scruples might not have been so active, but the consciousness of the strength of her attachment, as well as her fixed intention to become his wife the moment it was in her power to give him her hand with the decencies of her sex, contributed strangely to prevent her yielding to the young man's reasoning. On the subject of the aunt, the mate made out so good a case, that it was apparent to all in the boat Rose would have to abandon that ground of refusal. Spike had no object to gain by ill-treating Mrs. Budd; and the probability certainly was that he would get rid of her as soon as he could, and in the most easy manner. This was so apparent to all, that Harry had little difficulty in getting Rose to assent to its probability. But there remained the reluctance to go off alone with the mate in a boat. This part of the subject was more difficult to manage than the other; and Mulford betrayed as much by the awkwardness with which he managed it. At length the discussion was brought to a close by Jack Tier suddenly saying,

"Yonder is the brig; and we are heading for her as straight as if she was the pole, and the keel of this boat was a compass. I see how it is, Miss Rose, and a'ter all, I must give in. I suppose some other opportunity will offer for me to get on board of the brig ag'in, and I'll trust to that. If you won't go off with the mate alone, I suppose you'll not refuse to go off in my company."

"Will you accompany us, Jack? This is more than I had hoped for! Yes, Harry, if Jack Tier will be of the party, I will trust my aunt to Bidy, and go with you to Key West, in order to escape from Spike."

This was said so rapidly, and so unexpectedly, as to take Mulford completely by surprise. Scarce believing what he heard, the young man was disposed, at first, to feel hurt, though a moment's reflection showed him that he ought to rejoice in the result let the cause be what it might.

"More than I had hoped for!" he could not refrain from repeating a little bitterly; "is Jack Tier, then, of so much importance, that his company is thought preferable to mine!"

"Hush, Harry!" said Rose, laying her hand on Mulford's arm, by way of strengthening her appeal. "Do not say that. You are ignorant of circumstances; at another time you shall know them, but not now. Let it be enough for the present, that I promise to accompany you if Jack will be of our party."

"Ay, ay, Miss Rose, I will be of the party, seeing there is no other way of getting the lamb out of the jaws of the wolf. A'ter all, it may be the wisest thing I can do, though back to the Swash I must and will come, powder or no powder, treason or no treason, at the first opportunity. Yes, my business is with the Molly, and to the Molly I shall return. It's lucky, Miss Rose, since you have made up your mind to ship for this new cruise, that I bethought me of telling Bidy to make up a bundle of duds for you. This carpet-bag has a change or two in it, and all owing to my forethought. Your woman said 'Miss Rose will come back wid us, Jack, and what's the use of rumplin' the clothes for a few hours' sail in the boat;' but I knew womankind better, and foreseed that if master mate fell in alongside of you ag'in, you would not be apt to part company very soon."

"I thank you, Jack, for the provision made for my comfort; though some money would have added to it materially. My purse has a little gold in it, but a very little, and I fear you are not much better off, Harry. It will be awkward to find ourselves in Key West penniless."

"We shall not be quite that. I left the brig absolutely without a cent, but foreseeing that necessity might make them of use, I borrowed half a dozen of the doubloons from the bag of Señor Montefalderon, and, fortunately, they are still in my pocket. All I am worth in the world is in a bag of half-eagles, rather more than a hundred altogether, which I left in my chest, in my own state-room aboard the brig."

"You'll find that in the carpet-bag too, master mate," said Jack, coolly.

"Find what, man not my money, surely?"

"Ay, every piece of it. Spike broke into your chest this a'ternoon, and made me hold the tools while he was doing it. He found the bag, and overhauled it a hundred and seven half, eleven quarter, and one full-grown eagle, was the count. When he had done the job, he put all back ag'in, a'ter giving me the full-grown eagle for my share of the plunder, and told me to say nothing of what I had seen. I did say nothing, but I did a good bit of work, for, while he was at supper. I confiserated that bag, as they call it and you will find it there among Miss Rose's clothes, with the full-grown gentleman back in his nest ag'in."

"This is being not only honest, Tier," cried Mulford, heartily, "but thoughtful. One-half that money shall be yours for this act."

"I thank'e, sir; but I'll not touch a cent of it. It came hard, I know, Mr. Mulford; for my own hands have smarted too much with tar, not to know that the seaman 'earns his money like the horse.' "

"Still it would not be 'spending it like an ass,' Jack, to give you a portion of mine. But there will be other opportunities to talk of this. It is a sign of returning to the concerns of life, Rose, that money begins to be of interest to us. How little did we think of the doubloons, or half-eagles, a few hours since, when on the wreck!"

"It was wather that we t'ought of then," put in Bidy. "Goold is good in a market, or in a town, or to send back to Ireland, to help a body's aged fader or mudder in comfort wid; but wather is the blessed thing on a wrack!"

"The brig is coming quite plainly into view, and you had better give me the helm, Jack. It is time to bethink us of the manner of approaching her, and how we are to proceed when alongside."

This was so obviously true, that everybody felt disposed to forget all other matters, in order to conduct the proceedings of the next twenty minutes, with the necessary prudence and caution. When Mulford first took the helm, the brig was just coming clearly into view, though still looking a little misty and distant. She might then have been half a league distant, and would not have been visible at all by that light, but for the circumstance that she had no back-ground to swallow up her outlines. Drawn against clouds, above which the rays of the moon were shed, her tracery was to be discerned, however, and, minute by minute, it was getting to be more and more distinct, until it was now so plainly to be seen as to admonish the mate of the necessity of preparation in the manner mentioned.

Tier now communicated to the mate his own proposed manner of proceeding. The brig tended to the trades, the tides having very little influence on her, in the bight of the reef where she lay. As the wind stood at about east south-east, the brig's stern pointed to about west north-west, while the boat was coming down the passage from a direction nearly north from her, having, as a matter of course, the wind just free enough to lay her course. Jack's plan was to pass the brig to windward, and having got well on her bow, to brail the sail, and drift down upon her, expecting to fall in alongside, abreast of the fore-chains, into which he had intended to help Bidy, and to ascend

himself, when he supposed that Mulford would again make sail, and carry off his mistress. To this scheme the mate objected that it was awkward, and a little lubberly. He substituted one in its place that differed in seamanship, and which was altogether better. Instead of passing to windward, Mulford suggested the expediency of approaching to leeward, and of coming alongside under the open bow-port, letting the sheet fly and brailing the sail, when the boat should be near enough to carry her to the point of destination without further assistance from her canvass.

Jack Tier took his officer's improvement on his own plan in perfect good part, readily and cheerfully expressing his willingness to aid the execution of it all that lay in his power. As the boat sailed unusually well, there was barely time to explain to each individual his or her part in the approaching critical movements, ere the crisis itself drew near; then each of the party became silent and anxious, and events were regarded rather than words.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Mulford sailed a boat well. He held the sheet in his hand, as the little craft came up under the lee-quarter of the brig, while Jack stood by the brail. The eyes of the mate glanced over the hull of the vessel to ascertain, if possible, who might be stirring; but not a sign of life could he detect on board her. This very silence made Mulford more distrustful and anxious, for he feared a trap was set for him. He expected to see the head of one of the blacks at least peering over the bulwarks, but nothing like a man was visible. It was too late to pause, however, and the sheet was slowly eased off, Jack hauling on the brail at the same time; the object being to prevent the sail's flapping, and the sound reaching the ears of Spike. As Mulford used great caution, and had previously schooled Jack on the subject, this important point was successfully achieved. Then the mate put his helm down, and the boat shot up under the brig's lee-bow. Jack was ready to lay hold of one of the bow-sprit shrouds, and presently the boat was breasted up under the desired port, and secured in that position. Mulford quitted the stern-sheets, and cast a look in upon deck. Nothing was to be seen, though he heard the heavy breathing of the blacks, both of whom were sound asleep on a sail that they had spread on the fore-castle.

The mate whispered for Bidy to come to the port. This the Irishwoman did at once, having kissed Rose, and taken her leave of her previously. Tier also came to the port, through which he passed, getting on deck with a view to assist Bidy, who was awkward, almost as a matter of course, to pass through the same opening. He had just succeeded, when the whole party was startled, some of them almost petrified, indeed, by a hail from the quarter-deck in the well-known, deep tones of Spike.

"For'ard, there?" hailed the captain. Receiving no answer, he immediately repeated, in a shorter, quicker call, "Fore-castle, there?"

"Sir," answered Jack Tier, who by this time had come to his senses.

"Who has the look-out on that fore-castle?"

"I have it, sir I, Jack Tier. You know, sir, I was to have it from two 'till daylight."

"Ay, ay, I remember now. How does the brig ride to her anchor?"

"As steady as a church, sir. She's had no more sheer the whole watch than if she was moored head and stern."

"Does the wind stand as it did?"

"No change, sir. As dead a trade wind as ever blowed."

"What hard breathing is that I hear for'ard?"

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"'T is the two niggers, sir. They've turned in on deck, and are napping it off at the rate of six knots. There's no keepin' way with a nigger in snorin'."

"I thought I heard loud whispering, too, but I suppose it was a sort of half-dream. I'm often in that way now-a-days. Jack!"

"Sir."

"Go to the scuttle-butt and get me a pot of fresh water my coppers are hot with hard thinking."

Jack did as ordered, and soon stood beneath the coach-house deck with Spike, who had come out of his state-room, heated and uneasy at he knew not what. The captain drank a full pint of water at a single draught.

"That's refreshing," he said, returning Jack the tin-pot, "and I feel the cooler for it. How much does it want of daylight, Jack?"

"Two hours, I think, sir. The order was passed to me to have all hands called as soon as it was broad day."

"Ay, that is right. We must get our anchor and be off as soon as there is light to do it in. Doubloons may melt as well as flour, and are best cared for soon when cared for at all."

"I shall see and give the call as soon as it is day. I hope, Captain Spike, I can take the liberty of an old shipmate, however, and say one thing to you, which is this look out for the Poughkeepsie, which is very likely to be on your heels when you least expect her."

"That's your way of thinking, is it, Jack. Well, I thank you, old one, for the hint, but have little fear of that craft. We've had our legs together, and I think the brig has the longest."

As the captain said this, he gaped like a hound, and went into his state-room. Jack lingered on the quarter-deck, waiting to hear him fairly in his berth, when he made a sign to Biddy, who had got as far aft as the galley, where she was secreted, to pass down into the cabin, as silently as possible. In a minute or two more, he moved forward, singing in a low, cracked voice, as was often his practice, and slowly made his way to the forecabin. Mulford was just beginning to think the fellow had changed his mind, and meant to stick by the brig, when the little, rotund figure of the assistant-steward was seen passing through the port, and to drop noiselessly on a thwart. Jack then moved to the bow, and cast off the painter, the head of the boat slowly falling off under the pressure of the breeze on that part of her mast and sail which rose above the hull of the Swash. Almost at the same moment, the mate let go the stern-fast, and the boat was free.

It required some care to set the sail without the canvas flapping. It was done, however, before the boat fairly took the breeze, when all was safe. In half a minute the wind struck the sail, and away the little craft started, passing swiftly ahead of the brig. Soon as far enough off, Mulford put up his helm and wore short round, bringing the boat's head to the northward, or in its proper direction; after which they flew along before the wind, which seemed to be increasing in force, with a velocity that really appeared to defy pursuit. All this time the brig lay in its silence and solitude, no one stirring on board her, and all, in fact, Biddy alone excepted, profoundly ignorant of what had just been passing alongside of her. Ten minutes of running off with a flowing sheet, caused the Swash to look indistinct and hazy again; in ten minutes more she was swallowed up, hull, spars, and all, in the gloom of night.

Mulford and Rose now felt something like that security, without the sense of which happiness itself is but an uneasy feeling, rendering the anticipations of evil the more painful by the magnitude of the stake. There they sat, now, in the stern-sheets by themselves, Jack Tier having placed himself near the bows of the boat, to look out for

Jack Tier, Volume 2

rocks, as well as to trim the craft. It was not long before Rose was leaning on Harry's shoulder, and ere an hour was past, she had fallen into a sweet sleep in that attitude, the young man having carefully covered her person with a capacious shawl, the same that had been used on the wreck. As for Jack, he maintained his post in silence, sitting with his arms crossed, and the hands thrust into the breast of his jacket, sailor fashion, a picture of nautical vigilance. It was some time after Rose had fallen asleep, that this singular being spoke for the first time.

"Keep her away a bit, maty," he said, "keep her away, half a point or so. She's been travelin' like a racer since we left the brig; and yonder's the first streak of day."

"By the time we have been running," observed Mulford, "I should think we must be getting near the northern side of the reef."

"All of that, sir, depend on it. Here's a rock close aboard on us, to which we're comin' fast just off here, on our weather-bow, that looks to me like the place where you landed a'ter that swim, and where we had stowed ourselves when Stephen Spike made us out, and gave chase."

"It is surprising to me, Jack, that you should have any fancy to stick by a man of Spike's character. He is a precious rascal, as we all can see, now, and you are rather an honest sort of fellow."

"Do you love the young woman there, that's lying in your arms, as it might be, and whom you say you wish to marry."

"The question is a queer one, but it is easily answered. More than my life, Jack."

"Well, how happens it that you succeed, when the world has so many other young men who might please her as well as yourself."

"It may be that no other loves her as well, and she has had the sagacity to discover it."

"Quite likely. So it is with me and Stephen Spike. I fancy a man whom other folk despise and condemn. Why I stand by him is my own secret; but stand by him I do and will."

"This is all very strange, after your conduct on the island, and your conduct to-night. I shall not disturb your secret, however, Jack, but leave you to enjoy it by yourself. Is this the rock of which you spoke, that we are now passing?"

"The same; and there's the spot in which we was stowed when they made us out from the brig; and hereaway, a cable's length, more or less, the wreck of that Mexican craft must lie."

"What is that rising above the water, thereaway, Jack; more on our weather-beam?"

"I see what you mean, sir; it looks like a spar. By George! there's two on 'em; and they do seem to be the schooner's masts."

Sure enough! a second look satisfied Mulford that two mast-heads were out of water, and that within a hundred yards of the place the boat was running past. Standing on a short distance, or far enough to give himself room, the mate put his helm down, and tacked the boat. The flapping of the sail, and the little movement of shifting over the sheet, awoke Rose, who was immediately apprized of the discovery. As soon as round, the boat went glancing up to the spars, and presently was riding by one, Jack Tier having caught hold of a topmast-shroud, when Mulford let fly his sheet again, and luffed short up to the spot. By this time the increasing light was sufficiently strong to render objects distinct, when near by, and no doubt remained any longer in the mind of Mulford about the two

mast-heads being those of the unfortunate Mexican schooner.

"Well, of all I have ever seen I've never see'd the like of this afore!" exclaimed Jack. "When we left this here craft, sir, you'll remember, she had almost turned turtle, laying over so far as to bring her upper coamings under water; now she stands right side up, as erect as if docked! My navigation can't get along with this, Mr. Mulford, and it does seem like witchcraft."

"It is certainly a very singular incident, Jack, and I have been trying to come at its causes."

"Have you succeeded, Harry?" asked Rose, by this time wide awake, and wondering like the others.

"It must have happened in this wise. The wreck was abandoned by us some little distance out here, to windward. The schooner's masts, of course, pointed to leeward, and when she drifted in here, they have first touched on a shelving rock, and as they have been shoved up, little by little, they have acted as levers to right the hull, until the cargo has shifted back into its proper berth, which has suddenly set the vessel up again."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Jack, "all that might have happened had she been above water, or any part of her abovewater; but you'll remember, maty, that soon after we left her she went down."

"Not entirely. The wreck settled in the water no faster after we had left it, than it had done before. It continued to sink, inch by inch, as the air escaped, and no faster after it had gone entirely out of sight than before; not as fast, indeed, as the water became denser the lower it got. The great argument against my theory, is the fact, that after the hull got beneath the surface, the wind could not act on it. This is true in one sense, however, and not in another. The waves, or the pressure of the water produced by the wind, might act on the hull for some time after we ceased to see it. But the currents have set the craft in here, and the hull floating always, very little force would cant the craft. If the rock were shelving and slippery, I see no great difficulty in the way; and the barrels may have been so lodged, that a trifle would set them rolling back again, each one helping to produce a change that would move another. As for the ballast, that, I am certain, could not shift, for it was stowed with great care. As the vessel righted, the air still in her moved, and as soon as the water permitted, it escaped by the hatches, when the craft went down, as a matter of course. This air may have aided in bringing the hull upright by its movements in the water."

This was the only explanation to which the ingenuity of Mulford could help him, under the circumstances, and it may have been the right one, or not. There lay the schooner, however, in some five or six fathoms of water, with her two topmasts, and lower mast-heads out of the element, as upright as if docked! It may all have occurred as the mate fancied, or the unusual incident may have been owing to some of the many mysterious causes which baffle inquiry, when the agents are necessarily hidden from examination.

"Spike intends to come and look for this wreck, you tell me, Jack; in the hope of getting at the doubloons it contains?" said Mulford; when the boat had lain a minute or two longer, riding by the mast-head.

"Ay, ay, sir; that's his notion, sir, and he'll be in a great stew, as soon as he turns out, which must be about this time, and finds me missing; for I was to pilot him to the spot."

"He'll want no pilot now. It will be scarcely possible to pass anywhere near this and not see these spars. But this discovery almost induces me to change my own plans. What say you, Rose? We have now reached the northern side of the reef, when it is time to haul close by the wind, if we wish to beat up to Key West. There is a moral certainty, however, that the sloop-of-war is somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Dry Tortugas, which are much the most easily reached, being to leeward. We might run down to the light-house by mid-day, while it is doubtful if we could reach the town until to-morrow morning. I should like exceedingly to have five minutes conversation with the commander of the Poughkeepsie."

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"Ay, to let him know where he will be likely to fall in with the Molly Swash and her traitor master, Stephen Spike," cried Jack Tier. "Never mind, maty; let 'em come on; both the Molly and her master have got long legs and clean heels. Stephen Spike will show 'em how to thread the channels of a reef."

"It is amazing to me, Jack, that you should stand by your old captain in feeling, while you are helping to thwart him, all you can, in his warmest wishes."

"He's a willian!" muttered Jack "a reg'lar willian is Stephen Spike!"

"If a villain, why do you so evidently wish to keep him out of the hands of the law? Let him be captured and punished, as his crimes require."

"Men's willians, all round," still muttered Jack. "Hark'e, Mr. Mulford, I've sailed in the brig longer than you, and know'd her in her comeliest and best days when she was young, and blooming, and lovely to the eye, as the young creature at your side and it would go to my heart to have anything happen to her. Then, I've know'd Stephen a long time, too, and old shipmates get a feelin' for each other, sooner or later. I tell you now, honestly, Mr. Mulford, Captain Adam Mull shall never make a prisoner of Stephen Spike, if I can prevent it."

The mate laughed at this sally, but Rose appeared anxious to change the conversation, and she managed to open a discussion on the subject of the course it might be best to steer. Mulford had several excellent reasons to urge for wishing to run down to the islets, all of which, with a single exception, he laid before his betrothed. The concealed reason was one of the strongest of them all, as usually happens when there is a reason to conceal, but of that he took care to say nothing. The result was an acquiescence on the part of Rose, whose consent was yielded more to the influence of one particular consideration than to all the rest united. That one was this: Harry had pointed out to her the importance to himself of his appearing early to denounce the character and movements of the brig, lest, through his former situation in her, his own conduct might be seriously called in question.

As soon as the matter was determined, Jack was told to let go his hold, the sheet was drawn aft, and away sped the boat. No sooner did Mulford cause the little craft to keep away than it almost flew, as if conscious it were bound to its proper home, skimming swiftly over the waves, like a bird returning eagerly to its nest. An hour later the party breakfasted. While at this meal, Jack Tier pointed out to the mate a white speck, in the south-eastern board, which he took to be the brig coming through the passage, on her way to the wreck.

"No matter," returned the mate. "Though we can see her, she cannot see us. There is that much advantage in our being small, Rose, if it do prevent our taking exercise by walking the deck."

Soon after, Mulford made a very distant sail in the north-western board, which he hoped might turn out to be the Poughkeepsie. It was but another speck, but its position was somewhat like that in which he had expected to meet the sloop-of-war. The two vessels were so far apart that one could not be seen from the other, and there was little hope that the Poughkeepsie would detect Spike at his toil on the wreck; but the mate fully expected that the ship would go into the anchorage, among the islets, in order to ascertain what had become of the schooner. If she did not go in herself, she would be almost certain to send in a boat.

The party from the brigantine had run down before the wind more than two hours before the light-house began to show itself, just rising out of the waves. This gave them the advantage of a beacon, Mulford having steered hitherto altogether by the sun, the direction of the wind, and the treading of the reef. Now he had his port in sight, it being his intention to take possession of the dwelling of the light-house keeper, and to remain in it, until a favourable opportunity occurred to remove Rose to Key West. The young man had also another important project in view, which it will be in season to mention as it reaches the moment of its fulfillment.

The rate of sailing of the light-house boat, running before a brisk trade wind, could not be much less than nine miles in the hour. About eleven o'clock, therefore, the lively craft shot through one of the narrow channels of the islets, and entered the haven. In a few minutes all three of the adventurers were on the little wharf where the light-house people were in the habit of landing. Rose proceeded to the house, while Harry and Jack remained to secure the boat. For the latter purpose a sort of slip, or little dock, had been made, and when the boat was hauled into it, it lay so snug that not only was the craft secure from injury, but it was actually hid from the view of all but those who stood directly above it.

"This is a snug berth for the boat, Jack," observed the mate, when he had hauled it into the place mentioned, "and by unstepping the mast, a passer-by would not suspect such a craft of lying in it. Who knows what occasion there may be for concealment, and I'll e'en do that thing."

To a casual listener, Harry, in unstepping the mast, might have seemed influenced merely by a motiveless impulse; but, in truth, a latent suspicion of Jack's intentions instigated him, and as he laid the mast, sprit and sail on the thwarts, he determined, in his own mind, to remove them all to some other place, as soon as an opportunity for doing so unobserved should occur. He and Jack now followed Rose to the house.

The islets were found deserted and tenantless. Not a human being had entered the house since Rose left it, the evening she had remained so long ashore, in company with her aunt and the Señor Montefalderon. This our heroine knew from the circumstance of finding a slight fastening of the outer door in the precise situation in which she had left it with her own hands. At first a feeling of oppression and awe prevailed with both Harry and Rose, when they recollected the fate of those who had so lately been tenants of the place; but this gradually wore off, and each soon got to be more at home. As for Jack, he very coolly rummaged the lockers, as he called the drawers and closets of the place, and made his preparations for cooking a very delicious repast, in which callipash and callipee were to be material ingredients. The necessary condiments were easily enough found in that place, turtle being a common dish there, and it was not long before steams that might have quickened the appetite of an alderman filled the kitchen. Rose rummaged, too, and found a clean tablecloth, plates, glasses, bowls, spoons, and knives; in a word, all that was necessary to spread a plain but plentiful board. While all this was doing, Harry took some fishing-tackle, and proceeded to a favourable spot among the rocks. In twenty minutes he returned with a fine mess of that most delicious little fish that goes by the very unpoetical name of "hog-fish," from the circumstance of its giving a grunt not unlike that of a living porker, when rudely drawn from its proper element. Nothing was now wanting to not only a comfortable, but to what was really a most epicurian meal, and Jack just begged the lovers to have patience for an hour or so, when he promised them dishes that even New York could not furnish.

Harry and Rose first retired to pay a little attention to their dress, and then they joined each other in a walk. The mate had found some razors, and was clean shaved. He had also sequestered a shirt, and made some other little additions to his attire, that contributed to give him the appearance of being, that which he really was, a very gentleman-like looking young sailor. Rose had felt no necessity for taking liberties with the effects of others, though a good deal of female attire was found in the dwelling. As was afterward ascertained, a family ordinarily dwelt there, but most of it had gone to Key West, on a visit, at the moment when the man and boy left in charge had fallen into the hands of the Mexicans, losing their lives in the manner mentioned.

While walking together, Harry opened his mind to Rose, on the subject which lay nearest to his heart, and which had been at the bottom of this second visit to the islets of the Dry Tortugas. During the different visits of Wallace to the brig, the boat's crew of the Poughkeepsie had held more or less discourse with the people of the Swash. This usually happens on such occasions, and although Spike had endeavoured to prevent it, when his brig lay in this bay, he had not been entirely successful. Such discourse is commonly jocular, and sometimes witty; every speech, coming from which side it may, ordinarily commencing with "shipmate," though the interlocutors never saw each other before that interview. In one of the visits an allusion was made to cargo, when "the pretty gal aft," was mentioned as being a part of the cargo of the Swash. In answer to this remark, the wit of the Poughkeepsie

had told the brig's man, "you had better send her on board us, for we carry a chaplain, a regular-built one, that will be a bishop some day or other, perhaps, and we can get her spliced to one of our young officers." This remark had induced the sailor of the Molly to ask if a sloop-of-war really carried such a piece of marine luxury as a chaplain, and the explanation given went to say that the clergyman in question did not properly belong to the Poughkeepsie, but was to be put on board a frigate, as soon as they fell in with one that he named. Now, all this Mulford overheard, and he remembered it at a moment when it might be of use. Situated as he and Rose were, he felt the wisdom and propriety of their being united, and his present object was to persuade his companion to be of the same way of thinking. He doubted not that the sloop-of-war would come in, ere long, perhaps that very day, and he believed it would be an easy matter to induce her chaplain to perform the ceremony. America is a country in which every facility exists, with the fewest possible impediments, to getting married; and, we regret to be compelled to add, to getting unmarried also. There are no banns, no licenses, no consent of parents even, usually necessary, and persons who are of the age of discretion, which, as respects females and matrimony, is a very tender age indeed, may be married, if they see fit, almost without form or ceremony. There existed, therefore, no legal impediment to the course Mulford desired to take; and his principal, if not his only difficulty, would be with Rose. Over her scruples he hoped to prevail, and not without reason, as the case he could and did present, was certainly one of a character that entitled him to be heard with great attention.

In the first place, Mrs. Budd had approved of the connection, and it was understood between them, that the young people were to be united at the first port in which a clergyman of their own persuasion could be found, and previously to reaching home. This had been the aunt's own project, for, weak and silly as she was, the relict had a woman's sense of the proprieties. It had occurred to her that it would be more respectable to make the long journey which lay before them, escorted by a nephew and husband, than escorted by even an accepted lover. It is true that she had never anticipated a marriage in a light-house, and under the circumstances in which Rose was now placed, though it might be more reputable that her niece should quit the islets as the wife of Harry than as his betrothed. Then Mulford still apprehended Spike. In that remote part of the world, almost beyond the confines of society, it was not easy to foretell what claims he might set up, in the event of his meeting them there. Armed with the authority of a husband, Mulford could resist him, in any such case, with far better prospects of success than if he should appear only in the character of a suitor.

Rose listened to these arguments, ardently and somewhat eloquently put, as a girl of her years and habits would be apt to listen to a favoured lover. She was much too sincere to deny her own attachment, which the events of the last few days had increased almost to intenseness, so apt is our tenderness to augment in behalf of those for whom we feel solicitude; and her judgment told her that the more sober part of Harry's reasoning was entitled to consideration. As his wife, her situation would certainly be much less equivocal and awkward, than while she bore a different name, and was admitted to be a single woman, and it might yet be weeks before the duty she owed her aunt would allow her to proceed to the north. But, after all, Harry prevailed more through the influence of his hold on Rose's affections, as would have been the case with almost every other woman, than through any force of reasoning. He truly loved, and that made him eloquent when he spoke of love; sympathy in all he uttered being his great ally. When summoned to the house, by the call of Jack, who announced that the turtle-soup was ready, they returned with the understanding that the chaplain of the Poughkeepsie should unite them, did the vessel come in, and would the functionary mentioned consent to perform the ceremony.

"It would be awkward nay, it would be distressing, Harry, to have him refuse," said the blushing Rose, as they walked slowly back to the house, more desirous to prolong their conversation than to partake of the bountiful provision of Jack Tier. The latter could not but be acceptable, nevertheless, to a young man like Mulford, who was in robust health, and who had fared so badly for the last eight-and-forty hours. When he sat down to the table, therefore, which was covered by a snow-white cloth, with smoking and most savoury viands on it, it will not be surprising if we say it was with a pleasure that was derived from one of the great necessities of our nature.

Sancho calls for benediction "on the man who invented sleep." It would have been more just to have asked this boon in behalf of him who invented eating and turtle-soup. The wearied fall into sleep, as it might be unwittingly;

sometimes against their will, and often against their interests; while many a man is hungry without possessing the means of appeasing his appetite. Still more daily feel hunger without possessing turtle-soup. Certain persons impute this delicious compound to the genius of some London alderman, but we rather think unjustly. Aldermanic genius is easily excited and rendered active, no doubt, by strong appeals on such a theme, but our own experience inclines us to believe that the tropics usually send their inventions to the less fruitful regions of the earth along with their products. We have little doubt, could the fact be now ascertained, that it would be found turtle-soup was originally invented by just some such worthy as Jack Tier, who in filling his coppers to tickle the captain's appetite, had used all the condiments within his reach; ventured on a sort of Regent's punch; and, as the consequence, had brought forth the dish so often eulogized, and so well beloved. It is a little extraordinary that in Paris, the seat of gastronomy, one rarely, if ever, hears of or sees this dish; while in London it is to be met in almost as great abundance as in one of our larger commercial towns. But so it is, and we cannot say we much envy a cuisine its patés, and soufflets, and its à la this and à la thats, but which was never redolent with the odours of turtle-soup.

"Upon my word, Jack, you have made out famously with your dinner, or supper, whichever you may please to call it," cried Mulford gaily, as he took his seat at table, after having furnished Rose with a chair. "Nothing appears to be wanting; but here is good pilot bread, potatoes even, and other little niceties, in addition to the turtle and the fish. These good people of the light seem to have lived comfortably, at any rate."

"Why should they not, maty?" answered Jack, beginning to help to soup. "Living on one of these islets is like living afloat. Everything is laid in, as for an outward bound craft; then the reef must always furnish fish and turtle. I've overhauled the lockers pretty thoroughly, and find a plenty of stores to last us a month. Tea, sugar, coffee, bread, pickles, potatoes, onions, and all other knick-knacks."

"The poor people who own these stores will be heavy-hearted enough when they come to learn the reason why we have been put in undisturbed possession of their property," said Rose. "We must contrive some means of repaying them for such articles as we may use, Harry."

"That's easily enough done, Miss Rose. Drop one of the half-eagles in a tea-pot, or a mug, and they'll be certain to fall in with it when they come back. Nothin' is easier than to pay a body's debts, when a body has the will and the means. Now, the worst enemy of Stephen Spike must own that his brig never quits port with unsettled bills. Stephen has his faults, like other mortals; but he has his good p'int, too."

"Still praising Spike, my good Jack," cried the mate, a little provoked at this pertinacity in the deputy-steward, in sticking to his ship and his shipmate. "I should have thought that you had sailed with him long enough to have found him out, and to wish never to put your foot in his cabin again."

"Why, no, maty, a craft is a craft, and a body gets to like even the faults of one in which a body has gone through gales, and squalls, with a whole skin. I like the Swash, and, for sartain things I like her captain."

"Meaning by that, it is your intention to get on board of the one, and to sail with the other, again, as soon as you can."

"I do, Mr. Mulford, and make no bones in telling on't. You know that I came here without wishing it."

"Well, Jack, no one will attempt to control your movements, but you shall be left your own master. I feel it to be a duty, however, as one who may know more of the law than yourself, as well as more of Stephen Spike, to tell you that he is engaged in a treasonable commerce with the enemy, and that he, and all who voluntarily remain with him, knowing this fact, may be made to swing for it."

"Then I'll swing for it," returned Jack, sullenly.

"There is a little obstinacy in this, my good fellow, and you must be reasoned out of it. I am under infinite obligations to you, Jack, and shall ever be ready to own them. Without you to sail the boat, I might have been left to perish on that rock, for God only knows whether any vessel would have seen me in passing. Most of those who go through that passage keep the western side of the reef aboard, they tell me, on account of there being better water on that side of the channel, and the chance of a man's being seen on a rock, by ships a league or two off, would be small indeed. Yes, Jack, I owe my life to you, and am proud to own it."

"You owe it to Miss Rose, maty, who put me up to the enterprise, and who shared it with me."

"To her I owe more than life," answered Harry, looking at his beloved as she delighted in being regarded by him, "but even she, with all her wishes to serve me, would have been helpless without your skill in managing a boat. I owe also to your good-nature the happiness of having Rose with me at this moment; for without you she would not have come."

"I'll not deny it, maty take another ladle-full of the soup, Miss Rosy: a quart of it would n't hurt an infant I'll not deny it, Mr. Mulford I know by the way you've got rid of the first bowl-full that you are ready for another, and there it is I'll not deny it, and all I can say is that you are heartily welcome to my sarvices."

"I thank you, Jack; but all this only makes me more desirous of being of use to you, now, when it's in my power. I wish you to stick by me, and not to return to the Swash. As soon as I get to New York I shall build or buy a ship, and the berth of steward in her shall always be open to you."

"Thank'e, maty; thank'e, with all my heart. It's something to know that a port is open to leeward, and, though I cannot now accept your offer, the day may come when I shall be glad to do so."

"If you like living ashore better, our house will always be ready to receive you. I should be glad to leave as handy a little fellow as yourself behind me whenever I went to sea. There are a hundred things in which you might be useful, and fully earn your biscuit, so as to have no qualms about eating the bread of idleness."

"Thank'e, thank'e, maty," cried Jack, dashing a tear out of his eye with the back of his hand, "thank'e, sir, from the bottom of my heart. The time may come, but not now. My papers is signed for this v'y'ge. Stephen Spike has a halter round his neck, as you say yourself, and it's necessary for me to be there to look to't. We all have our callin's and duties, and this is mine. I stick by the Molly and her captain until both are out of this scrape, or both are condemned. I know nothin' of treason; but if the law wants another victim, I must take my chance."

Mulford was surprised at this steadiness of Jack's, in what he thought a very bad cause, and he was quite as much surprised that Rose did not join him, in his endeavours to persuade the steward not to be so foolhardy, as to endeavour to go back to the brig. Rose did not, however; sitting silently eating her dinner the whole time, though she occasionally cast glances of interest at both the speaker the while. In this state of things the mate abandoned the attempt, for the moment, intending to return to the subject, after having had a private conference with his betrothed.

Notwithstanding the little drawback just related, that was a happy as well as a delicious repast. The mate did full justice to the soup, and afterward to the fish with the unpoetical name; and Rose ate more than she had done in the last three days. The habits of discipline prevented Jack from taking his seat at table, though pressed by both Rose and Harry to do so, but he helped himself to the contents of a bowl and did full justice to his own art, on one side. The little fellow was delighted with the praises that were bestowed on his dishes; and for the moment, the sea, its dangers, its tornadoes, wrecks and races, were all forgotten in the security and pleasures of so savoury a repast.

"Folk ashore do n't know how sailors sometimes live," said Jack, holding a large spoon filled with the soup ready to plunge into a tolerably capacious mouth.

"Or how they sometimes starve," answered Rose. "Remember our own situation, less than forty-eight hours since!"

"All very true, Miss Rose; yet, you see, turtle-soup brings us up, a'ter all. Would you like a glass of wine, maty?"

"Very much indeed, Jack, after so luscious a soup; but wishing for it will not bring it here."

"That remains to be seen, sir. I call this a bottle of something that looks wery much like a wine."

"Claret, as I live! Why, where should light-house keepers get the taste for claret?"

"I've thought of that myself, Mr. Mulford, and have supposed that some of Uncle Sam's officers have brought the liquor to this part of the world. I understand a party on 'em was here surveyin' all last winter. It seems they come in the cool weather, and get their sights and measure their distances, and go home in the warm weather, and work out their traverses in the shade, as it might be."

"This seems likely, Jack; but, come whence it may it is welcome, and we will taste it."

Mulford then drew the cork of this mild and grateful liquor, and helped his companions and himself. In this age of moral tours de force, one scarcely dare say anything favourable of a liquid that even bears the name of wine, or extol the shape of a bottle. It is truly the era of exaggeration. Nothing is treated in the old-fashioned, natural, common sense way. Virtue is no longer virtue, unless it get upon stilts; and, as for sin's being confined to "transgression against the law of God," audacious would be the wretch who should presume to limit the sway of the societies by any dogma so narrow! A man may be as abstemious as an anchorite and get no credit for it, unless "he sigu the pledge;" or, signing the pledge, he may get fuddled in corners, and be cited as a miracle of sobriety. The test of morals is no longer in the abuse of the gifts of Providence, but in their use; prayers are deserting the closet for the corners of streets, and charity (not the giving of alms) has got to be so earnest in the demonstration of its nature, as to be pretty certain to "begin at home," and to end where it begins. Even the art of mendacity has been aroused by the great progress which is making by all around it, and many manifest the strength of their ambition by telling ten lies where their fathers would have been satisfied with telling only one. This art has made an extraordinary progress within the last quarter of a century, aspiring to an ascendancy that was formerly conceded only to truth, until he who gains his daily bread by it has some such contempt for the sneaking wretch who does business on the small scale, as the slayer of his thousands in the field is known to entertain for him who kills only a single man in the course of a long life.

At the risk of damaging the reputations of our hero and heroine, we shall frankly aver the fact that both Harry and Rose partook of the vin de Bordeaux, a very respectable bottle of Medoc, by the way, which had been forgotten by Uncle Sam's people, in the course of the preceding winter, agreeably to Jack Tier's conjecture. One glass sufficed for Rose, and, contrary as it may be to all modern theory, she was somewhat the better for it; while the mate and Jack Tier quite half emptied the bottle, being none the worse. There they sat, enjoying the security and abundance which had succeeded to their late danger, happy in that security, happy in themselves, and happy in the prospects of a bright future. It was just as practicable for them to remain at the Dry Tortugas, as it was for the family which ordinarily dwelt at the light. The place was amply supplied with everything that would be necessary for their wants, for months to come, and Harry caused his betrothed to blush, as he whispered to her, should the chaplain arrive, he should delight in passing the honey-moon where they then were.

"I could tend the light," he added, smiling, "which would be not only an occupation, but a useful occupation; you could read all those books from beginning to end, and Jack could keep us supplied with fish. By the way, master

steward, are you in the humour for motion, so soon after your hearty meal?"

"Anything to be useful," answered Jack, cheerfully.

"Then do me the favour to go up into the lantern of the light-house, and take a look for the sloop-of-war. If she's in sight at all, you'll find her off here to the northward; and while you are aloft you may as well make a sweep of the whole horizon. There hangs the light-house keeper's glass, which may help your eyes, by stepping into the gallery outside of the lantern."

Jack willingly complied, taking the glass and proceeding forthwith to the other building. Mulford had two objects in view in giving this commission to the steward. He really wished to ascertain what was the chance of seeing the Poughkeepsie, in the neighbourhood of the islets, and felt just that indisposition to move himself, that is apt to come over one who has recently made a very bountiful meal, while he also desired to have another private conversation with Rose.

A good portion of the time that Jack was gone, and he stayed quite an hour in the lantern, our lovers conversed as lovers are much inclined to converse; that is to say, of themselves, their feelings, and their prospects. Mulford told Rose of his hopes and fears, while he visited at the house of her aunt, previously to sailing, and the manner in which his suspicions had been first awakened in reference to the intentions of Spike intentions, so far as they were connected with an admiration of his old commander's niece, and possibly in connection also with the little fortune she was known to possess, but not in reference to the bold project to which he had, in fact, resorted. No distrust of the scheme finally put in practice had ever crossed the mind of the young mate, until he received the unexpected order, mentioned in our opening chapter, to prepare the brig for the reception of Mrs. Budd and her party. Harry confessed his jealousy of one youth whom he dreaded far more even than he had ever dreaded Spike, and whose apparent favour with Rose, and actual favour with her aunt, had given him many a sleepless night.

They next conversed of the future, which to them seemed full of flowers. Various were the projects started, discussed, and dismissed, between them, the last almost as soon as proposed. On one thing they were of a mind, as soon as proposed. Harry was to have a ship as quick as one could be purchased by Rose's means, and the promised bride laughingly consented to make one voyage to Europe along with her husband.

"I wonder, dear Rose, my poverty has never presented any difficulties in the way of our union," said Harry, sensibly touched with the free way his betrothed disposed of her own money in his behalf; "but neither you nor Mrs. Budd has ever seemed to think of the difference there is between us in this respect."

"What is the trifle I possess, Harry, set in the balance against your worth? My aunt, as you say, has thought I might even be the gainer by the exchange."

"I am sure I feel a thousand times indebted to Mrs. Budd "

"Aunt Budd. You must learn to say, 'my Aunt Budd,' Mr. Henry Mulford, if you mean to live in peace with her unworthy niece."

"Aunt Budd, then," returned Harry, laughing, for the laugh came easily that evening; "Aunt Budd, if you wish it, Rose. I can have no objection to call any relative of yours, uncle or aunt."

"I think we are intimate enough, now, to ask you a question or two, Harry, touching my aunt," continued Rose, looking stealthily over her shoulder, as if apprehensive of being overheard. "You know how fond she is of speaking of the sea, and of indulging in nautical phrases?"

"Any one must have observed that, Rose," answered the young man, gazing up at the wall, in order not to be compelled to look the beautiful creature before him in the eyes "Mrs. Budd has very strong tastes that way."

"Now tell me, Harry that is, answer me frankly I mean she is not always right, is she?"

"Why, no; not absolutely so that is, not absolutely always so few persons are always right, you know."

Rose remained silent and embarrassed for a moment; after which she pursued the discourse.

"But aunty does not know as much of the sea and of ships as she thinks she does?"

"Perhaps not. We all overrate our own acquirements. I dare say that even I am not as good a seaman as I fancy myself to be."

"Even Spike admits that you are what he calls 'a prime seaman.' But it is not easy for a woman to get a correct knowledge of the use of all the strange, and sometimes uncouth, terms that you sailors use."

"Certainly not, and for that reason I would rather you should never attempt it, Rose. We rough sons of the ocean would prefer to hear our wives make divers pretty blunders, rather than to be swaggering about like so many 'old salts.' "

"Mr. Mulford! Does Aunt Budd swagger like an old salt?"

"Dearest Rose, I was not thinking of your aunt, but of you. Of you, as you are, feminine, spirited, lovely alike in form and character, and of you a graduate of the ocean, and full of its language and ideas."

It was probable Rose was not displeased at this allusion to herself, for a smile struggled around her pretty mouth, and she did not look at all angry. After another short pause, she resumed the discourse.

"My aunt did not very clearly comprehend those explanations of yours about the time of day, and the longitude," she said, "nor am I quite certain that I did myself."

"You understood them far better than Mrs. Budd, Rose. Women are so little accustomed to think on such subjects at all, that it is not surprising they sometimes get confused. I do wish, however, that your aunt could be persuaded to be more cautious in the presence of strangers, on the subject of terms she does not understand."

"I feared it might be so, Harry," answered Rose, in a low voice, as if unwilling even he should know the full extent of her thoughts on this subject; "but my aunt's heart is most excellent, though she may make mistakes occasionally, I owe her a great deal, if not absolutely my education, certainly my health and comfort through childhood, and more prudent, womanly advice than you may suppose, perhaps, since I have left school. How she became the dupe of Spike, indeed, is to me unaccountable; for in all that relates to health, she is, in general, both acute and skilful."

"Spike is a man of more art than he appears to be to superficial observers. On my first acquaintance with him, I mistook him for a frank, fearless but well-meaning sailor, who loved hazardous voyages and desperate speculation a sort of innocent gambler; but I have learned to know better. His means are pretty much reduced to his brig, and she is getting old, and can do but little more service. His projects are plain enough, now. By getting you into his power, he hoped to compel a marriage, in which case both your fortune and your aunt's would contribute to repair his."

Jack Tier, Volume 2

"He might have killed me, but I never would have married him," rejoined Rose, firmly. "Is not that Jack coming down the steps of the light-house?"

"It is. I find that fellow's attachment to Spike very extraordinary, Rose. Can you, in any manner, account for it?"

Rose at first seemed disposed to reply. Her lips parted, as if about to speak, and closed again, as glancing her eyes toward the open door, she seemed to expect the appearance of the steward's little, rotund form on its threshold, which held her tongue-tied. A brief interval elapsed, however, ere Jack actually arrived, and Rose, perceiving that Harry was curiously expecting her answer, said hurriedly "It may be hatred, not attachment."

The next instant Jack Tier entered the room. He had been gone rather more than an hour, not returning until just as the sun was about to set in a flame of fire.

"Well, Jack, what news from the Poughkeepsie?" demanded the mate. "You have been gone long enough to make sure of your errand. Is it certain that we are not to see the man-of-war's-men to-night?"

"Whatever you see, my advice to you is to keep close, and to be on your guard," answered Jack, evasively.

"I have little fear of any of Uncle Sam's craft. A plain story, and an honest heart, will make all clear to a well-disposed listener. We have not been accomplices in Spike's treasons, and cannot be made to answer for them."

"Take my advice, maty, and be in no hurry to hail every vessel you see. Uncle Sam's fellows may not always be at hand to help you. Do you not know that this island will be tabooed to seamen for some time to come?"

"Why so, Jack? The islet has done no harm, though others may have performed wicked deeds near it."

"Two of the drowned men lie within a hundred yards of this spot, and sailors never go near new-made graves, if they can find any other place to resort to."

"You deal in enigmas, Jack; and did I not know that you are very temperate, I might suspect that the time you have been gone has been passed in the company of a bottle of brandy."

"That will explain my meanin'," said Jack, laconically, pointing as he spoke seemingly at some object that was to be seen without.

The door of the house was wide open, for the admission of air. It faced the haven of the islets, and just as the mate's eyes were turned to it, the end of a flying-jib-boom, with the sail down, and fluttering beneath it, was coming into the view. "The Poughkeepsie!" exclaimed Mulford, in delight, seeing all his hopes realized, while Rose blushed to the eyes. A pause succeeded, during which Mulford drew aside, keeping his betrothed in the back-ground, and as much out of sight as possible. The vessel was shooting swiftly into view, and presently all there could see it was the Swash.

CHAPTER IV.

But no he surely is not dreaming.

Another minute makes it clear,

A scream, a rush, a burning tear,

From Inez' cheek, dispel the fear

That bliss like his is only seeming.

Washington Alston.

A moment of appalled surprise succeeded the instant when Harry and Rose first ascertained the real character of the vessel that had entered the haven of the Dry Tortugas. Then the first turned toward Jack Tier, and sternly demanded an explanation of his apparent faithlessness.

"Rascal," he cried, "has this treachery been intended? Did you not see the brig and know her?"

"Hush, Harry dear Harry," exclaimed Rose, entreatingly. "My life for it, Jack has not been faithless."

"Why, then, has he not let us know that the brig was coming? For more than an hour has he been aloft, on the look-out, and here are we taken quite by surprise. Rely on it, Rose, he has seen the approach of the brig, and might have sooner put us on our guard."

"Ay, ay, lay it on, maty," said Jack, coolly, neither angry nor mortified, so far as appearances went, at these expressions of dissatisfaction; "my back is used to it. If I did n't know what it is to get hard raps on the knuckles, I should be but a young steward. But, as for this business, a little reflection will tell you I am not to blame."

"Give us your own explanations, for without them I shall trust you no longer."

"Well, sir, what good would it have done, had I told you the brig was standing for this place? There she came down, like a race-horse, and escape for you was impossible. As the wind is now blowin', the Molly would go two feet to the boat's one, and a chase would have been madness."

"I do n't know that, sirrah" answered the mate. "The boat might have got into the smaller passages of the reef, where the brig could not enter, or she might have dodged about among these islets, until it was night, and then escaped in the darkness."

"I thought of all that, Mr. Mulford, but it came too late. When I first went aloft, I came out on the north-west side of the lantern, and took my seat, to look out for the sloop-of-war, as you bade me, sir. Well, there I was sweepin' the horizon with the glass for the better part of an hour, sometimes fancyin' I saw her, and then givin' it up; for to this moment I am not sartain there is n't a sail off here to the westward, turning up toward the light on a bowline; but if there be, she's too far off to know anything partic'lar about her. Well, sir, there I sat, looking for the Poughkeepsie, for the better part of an hour, when I thought I would go round on t' other side of the lantern and take a look to windward. My heart was in my mouth, I can tell you, Miss Rose, when I saw the brig; and I felt both glad and sorry. Glad on my own account, and sorry on your'n. There she was, however, and no help for it, within two miles of this very spot, and coming down as if she despised touching the water at all. Now, what could I do? There was n't time, Mr. Mulford, to get the boat out, and the mast stepped, afore we should have been within reach of canister, and Stephen Spike would not have spared that, in order to get you again within his power."

"Depend on it, Harry, this is all true," said Rose, earnestly. "I know Jack well, and can answer for his fidelity. He wishes to, and if he can he will return to the brig, whither he thinks his duty calls him, but he will never willingly betray us least of all, me. Do I speak as I ought, Jack?"

"Gospel truth, Miss Rose, and Mr. Mulford will get over this squall, as soon as he comes to think of matters as he ought. There 's my hand, maty, to show I bear no malice."

"I take it, Jack, for I must believe you honest, after all you have done for us. Excuse my warmth, which, if a little unreasonable, was somewhat natural under the circumstances. I suppose our case is now hopeless, and that we shall all be soon on board the brig again; for Spike will hardly think of abandoning me again on an island provisioned and fitted as is this!"

"It's not so certain, sir, that you fall into his hands at all," put in Jack. "The men of the brig will never come here of their own accord, depend on that, for sailors don't like graves. Spike has come in here after the schooner's chain, that he dropped into the water when he made sail from the sloop-of-war, at the time he was here afore, and is not expectin' to find us here. No no he thinks we are beatin' up toward Key West this very minute, if, indeed, he has missed us at all. 'T is possible he believes the boat has got adrift by accident, and has no thought of our bein' out of the brig."

"That is impossible, Jack. Do you suppose he is ignorant that Rose is missing?"

"Certain of it, maty, if Mrs. Budd has read the letter well that Miss Rose left for her, and Biddy has obeyed orders. If they've followed instructions, Miss Rose is thought to be in her state-room, mournin' for a young man who was abandoned on a naked rock, and Jack Tier, havin' eat somethin' that has disagreed with him, is in his berth. Recollect, Spike will not be apt to look into Miss Rose's state-room or my berth, to see if all this is true. The cook and Josh are both in my secret, and know I mean to come back, and when the fit is over I have only to return to duty, like any other hand. It is my calculation that Spike believes both Miss Rose and myself on board the Molly at this very moment."

"And the boat what can he suppose has become of the boat?"

"Certainly, the boat makes the only chance ag'in us. But the boat was ridin' by its painter astarn, and accidents sometimes happen to such craft. Then we two are the very last he will suspect of havin' made off in the boat by ourselves. There'll be Mrs. Budd and Biddy as a sort of pledge that Miss Rose is aboard, and as for Jack Tier, he is too insignificant to occupy the captain's thoughts just now. He will probably muster the people for'ard, when he finds the boat is gone, but I do not think he'll trouble the cabins or state-rooms."

Mulford admitted that this was possible, though it scarcely seemed probable to him. There was no help, however, for the actual state of things, and they all now turned their attention to the brig, and to the movements of those on board her. Jack Tier had swung—to the outer-door of the house, as soon as the Swash came in view through it, and fortunately none of the windows on that side of the building had been opened at all. The air entered to windward, which was on the rear of the dwelling, so that it was possible to be comfortable and yet leave the front, in view from the vessel, with its deserted air. As for the brig, she had already anchored and got both her boats into the water. The yawl was hauled alongside, in readiness for any service that might be required of it, while the launch had been manned at once, and was already weighing the anchor, and securing the chain to which Tier had alluded. All this served very much to lessen the uneasiness of Mulford and Rose, as it went far to prove that Spike had not come to the Dry Tortugas in quest of them, as, at first, both had very naturally supposed. It might, indeed, turn out that his sole object was to obtain this anchor and chain, with a view to use them in raising the ill-fated vessel that had now twice gone to the bottom.

"I wish an explanation with you, Jack, on one other point," said the mate, after all three had been for sometime observing the movements on board and around the Swash. "Do you actually intend to get on board the brig?"

"If it's to be done, maty. My v'y'ge is up with you and Miss Rose. I may be said to have shipped for Key West and a market, and the market's found at this port."

"You will hardly leave us yet, Jack," said Rose, with a manner and emphasis that did not fail to strike her betrothed lover, though he could in no way account for either. That Rose should not wish to be left alone with him

in that solitary place was natural enough; or, might rather be referred to education and the peculiar notions of her sex; but he could not understand why so much importance should be attached to the presence of a being of Jack Tier's mould and character. It was true, that there was little choice, under present circumstances, but it occurred to Mulford that Rose had manifested the same strange predilection when there might have been something nearer to aselection. The moment, however, was not one for much reflection on the subject.

"You will hardly leave us yet, Jack?" said Rose, in the manner related.

"it's now or never, Miss Rose. If the brig once gets away from this anchorage without me, I may never lay eyes on her ag'in. Her time is nearly up, for wood and iron wont hold together always, any more than flesh and blood. Consider how many years I've been busy in huntin' her up, and how hard 't will be to lose that which has given me so many weary days and sleepless nights to find."

Rose said no more. If not convinced, she was evidently silenced, while Harry was left to wonder and surmise, as best he might. Both quitted the subject, to watch the people of the brig. By this time the anchor had been lifted, and the chain was heaving in on board the vessel, by means of a line that had been got around its bight. The work went on rapidly, and Mulford observed to Rose that he did not think it was the intention of Spike to remain long at the Tortugas, inasmuch as his brig was riding by a very short range of cable. This opinion was confirmed, half an hour later, when it was seen that the launch was hooked on and hoisted in again, as soon as the chain and anchor of the schooner were secured.

Jack Tier watched every movement with palpable uneasiness. His apprehensions that Spike would obtain all he wanted, and be off before he could rejoin him, increased at each instant, and he did not scruple to announce an intention to take the boat and go alongside of the Swash at every hazard, rather than be left.

"You do not reflect on what you say, Jack," answered Harry; "unless, indeed, it be your intention to betray us. How could you appear in the boat, at this place, without letting it be known that we must be hard by?"

"That don't follow at all, maty," answered Jack. "Suppose I go alongside the brig and own to the captain that I took the boat last night, with the hope of findin' you, and that failin' to succeed, I bore up for this port, to look for provisions and water. Miss Rose he thinks on board at this moment, and in my judgment he would take me at my word, give me a good cursing, and think no more about it."

"It would never do, Jack," interposed Rose, instantly. "It would cause the destruction of Harry, as Spike would not believe you had not found him, without an examination of this house."

"What are they about with the yawl, Mr. Mulford?" asked Jack, whose eye was never off the vessel for a single moment. "It's gettin' to be so dark that one can hardly see the boat, but it seems as if they're about to man the yawl."

"They are, and there goes a lantern into it. And that is Spike himself coming down the brig's side this instant."

"They can only bring a lantern to search this house," exclaimed Rose. "Oh! Harry, you are lost!"

"I rather think the lantern is for the light-house," answered Mulford, whose coolness, at what was certainly a most trying moment, did not desert him. "Spike may wish to keep the light burning, for once before, you will remember, he had it kindled after the keeper was removed. As for his sailing, he would not be apt to sail until the moon rises; and in beating back to the wreck the light may serve to let him know the bearings and position of the reef."

"There they come," whispered Rose, half breathless with alarm. "The boat has left the brig, and is coming directly hither!"

All this was true enough. The yawl had shoved off, and with two men to row it, was pulling for the wharf in front of the house, and among the timbers of which lay the boat, pretty well concealed beneath a sort of bridge. Mulford would not retreat, though he looked to the fastenings of the door as a means of increasing his chances of defence. In the stern—sheets of the boat sat two men, though it was not easy to ascertain who they were by the fading light. One was known to be Spike, however, and the other, it was conjectured, must be Don Juan Montefalderon, from the circumstance of his being in the place of honour. Three minutes solved this question, the boat reaching the wharf by that time. It was instantly secured, and all four of the men left it. Spike was now plainly to be discerned by means of the lantern which he carried in his own hands, He gave some orders, in his customary authoritative way, and in a high key, after which he led the way from the wharf, walking side by side with the Señor Montefalderon. These two last came up within a yard of the door of the house, where they paused, enabling those within not only to see their persons and the working of their countenances, but to hear all that was said; this last the more especially, since Spike never thought it necessary to keep his powerful voice within moderate limits.

"It's hardly worth while, Don Wan, for you to go into the light—house," said Spike. "T is but a greasy, dirty place at the best, and one's clothes are never the better for dealin' with ile. Here, Bill, take the lantern, and get a filled can, that we may go up and trim and fill the lamp, and make a blaze. Bear a hand, lads, and I'll be a'ter ye afore you reach the lantern. Be careful with the flame about the ile, for seamen ought never to wish to see a light—house destroyed."

"What do you expect to gain by lighting the lamps above, Don Esteban?" demanded the Mexican, when the sailors had disappeared in the light—house, taking their own lantern with them.

"It's wisest to keep things reg'lar about this spot, Don Wan, which will prevent unnecessary suspicions. But, as the brig stretches in toward the reef to—night, on our way back, the light will be a great assistance. I am short of officers, you know, and want all the help of this sort I can get."

"To be sincere with you, Don Esteban, I greatly regret you are so short of officers, and do not yet despair of inducing you to go and take off the mate, whom I hear you have left on a barren rock. He was a fine young fellow, Señor Spike, and the deed was not one that you will wish to remember a few years hence."

"The fellow run, and I took him at his word, Don Wan. I'm not obliged to receive back a deserter unless it suits me."

"We are all obliged to see we do not cause a fellow creature the loss of life. This will prove the death of the charming young woman who is so much attached to him, unless you relent and are merciful!"

"Women have tender looks but tough hearts," answered Spike, carelessly, though Mulford felt certain, by the tone of his voice, that great bitterness of feeling lay smothered beneath the affected indifference of his manner; "few die of love."

"The young lady has not been on deck all day; and the Irish woman tells me that she does nothing but drink water the certain proof of a high fever."

"Ay, ay, she keeps her room if you will, Don Wan, but she is not about to make a dupe of me by any such tricks. I must go and look to the lamps, however, and you will find the graves you seek in the rear of this house, about thirty yards behind it, you'll remember. That's a very pretty cross you've made, señor, and the skipper of the schooner's soul will be all the better for settin' it up at the head of his grave."

"It will serve to let those who come after us know that a Christian sleeps beneath the sand, Don Esteban," answered the Mexican, mildly. "I have no other expectation from this sacred symbol."

The two now separated, Spike going into the light-house, little in a hurry, while Don Juan Montefalderon walked round the building to its rear in quest of the grave. Mulford waited a moment for Spike to get a short distance up the stairs of the high tower he had to ascend, when placing the arm of Rose within his own, he opened the door in the rear of the house, and walked boldly toward the Mexican. Don Juan was actually forcing the pointed end of his little cross into the sand, at the head of his countryman's grave, when Mulford and his trembling companion reached the spot. Although night had shut in, it was not so dark that persons could not be recognised at small distances. The Señor Montefalderon was startled at an apparition so sudden and unexpected, when Mulford saluted him by name; but recognising first the voice of Harry, and then the persons of himself and his companion, surprise, rather than alarm, became the emotion that was uppermost. Notwithstanding the strength of the first of these feelings, he instantly saluted the young couple with the polished ease that marked his manner, which had much of the courtesy of a Castilian in it, tempered a little, perhaps, by the greater flexibility of a Southern American.

"I see you," exclaimed Don Juan, "and must believe my eyes. Without their evidence, however, I could scarce believe it can be you two, one of whom I thought on board the brig, and the other suffering a most miserable death on a naked rock."

"I am aware of your kind feelings in our behalf, Don Juan," said Mulford, "and it is the reason I now confide in you. I was taken off that rock by means of the boat, which you doubtless have missed; and this is the gentle being who has been the means of saving my life. To her and Jack Tier, who is yonder, under the shadows of the house, I owe my not being the victim of Spike's cruelty."

"I now comprehend the whole matter, Don Henriquez. Jack Tier has managed the boat for the señorita; and those whom we were told were too ill to be seen on deck, have been really out of the brig!"

"Such are the facts, señor, and from you there is no wish to conceal them. We are then to understand that the absence of Rose and Jack from the brig is not known to Spike."

"I believe not, señor. He has alluded to both, once or twice to-day, as being ill below; but would you not do well to retire within the shade of the dwelling, lest a glance from the lantern might let those in it know that I am not alone."

"There is little danger, Don Juan, as they who stand near a light cannot well see those who are in the darkness. Beside, they are high in the air, while we are on the ground, which will greatly add to the obscurity down here. We can retire, nevertheless, as I have a few questions to ask, which may as well be put in perfect security, as put where there is any risk."

The three now drew near the house, Rose actually stepping within its door, though Harry remained on its exterior, in order to watch the proceedings of those in the light-house. Here the Señor Montefalderon entered into a more detailed explanation of what had occurred on board the brig, since the appearance of day, that very morning. According to his account of the matter, Spike had immediately called upon the people to explain the loss of the boat. Tier was not interrogated on this occasion, it being understood he had gone below and turned in, after having the look-out for fully half the night. As no one could, or would, give an account of the manner in which the boat was missing, Josh was ordered to go below and question Jack on the subject. Whether it was from consciousness of his connection with the escape of Jack, and apprehensions of the consequences, or from innate good-nature, and a desire to befriend the lovers, this black now admitted that Jack confessed to him that the boat had got away from him while endeavouring to shift the turns of its painter from a cleet where they ought not to be, to their proper place. This occurred early in Jack's watch, according to Josh's story, and had not been reported, as the boat

did not properly belong to the brig, and was an incumbrance rather than an advantage. The mate admired the negro's cunning, as Don Juan related this part of his story, which put him in a situation to throw all the blame on Jack's mendacity in the event of a discovery, while it had the effect to allow the fugitives more time for their escape. The result was, that Spike bestowed a few hearty curses, as usual, on the clumsiness of Jack Tier, and seemed to forget all about the matter. It is probable he connected Jack's abstaining from showing himself on deck, and his alleged indisposition, with his supposed delinquency in this matter of the boat. From that moment the captain appeared to give himself no further concern on the subject, the boat having been, in truth, an incumbrance rather than a benefit, as stated.

"As for Rose, her keeping her room, under the circumstances, was so very natural, that the Señor Montefalderon had been completely deceived, as, from his tranquillity on this point, there was no question was the case with Spike also. Biddy appeared on deck, though the widow did not, and the Irish woman shook her head anxiously when questioned about her young mistress, giving the spectators reason to suppose that the latter was in a very bad way.

As respects the brig and her movements, Spike had got under way as soon as there was light enough to find his course, and had run through the passage. It is probable that the boat was seen; for something that was taken for a small sail had just been made out for a single instant, and then became lost again. This little sail was made, if made at all, in the direction of the Dry Tortugas, but so completely was all suspicion at rest in the minds of those on the quarter-deck of the Swash, that neither Spike nor the Mexican had the least idea what it was. When the circumstance was reported to the former, he answered that it was probably some small wrecker, of which many were hovering about the reef, and added, laughingly, though in a way to prove how little he thought seriously on the subject at all, "who knows but the light-house boat has fallen into their hands, and that they've made sail on her; if they have, my word for it, that she goes, hull, spars, rigging, canvas, and cargo, all in a lump, for salvage."

As the brig came out of the passage, in broad day, the heads of the schooner's masts were seen, as a matter of course. This induced Spike to heave-to, lower a boat, and to go in person to examine the condition of the wreck. It will be seen that Jack's presence could now be all the better dispensed with. The examination, with the soundings, and other calculations connected with raising the vessel, occupied hours. When they were completed, Spike returned on board, run up his boat, and squared away for the Dry Tortugas. Señor Montefalderon confirmed the justice of Jack Tier's surmises, as to the object of this unexpected visit. The brig had come solely for the chain and anchor mentioned, and having secured them, it was Spike's intention to get under way and beat up to the wreck again as soon as the moon rose. As for the sloop-of-war, he believed she had given him up; for by this time she must know that she had no chance with the brig, so long as the latter kept near the reef, and that she ran the constant hazard of shipwreck, while playing so near the dangers herself.

Before the Señor Montefalderon exhausted all he had to communicate, he was interrupted by Jack Tier with a singular proposition. Jack's great desire was to get on board the Swash; and he now begged the Mexican to let Mulford take the yawl and scull him off to the brig, and return to the islet before Spike and his companions should descend from the lantern of the light-house. The little fellow insisted there was sufficient time for such a purpose, as the three in the lantern had not yet succeeded in filling the lamps with the oil necessary to their burning for a night—a duty that usually occupied the regular keeper for an hour. Five or six minutes would suffice for him; and if he were seen going up the brig's side, it would be easy for him to maintain that he had come ashore in the boat. No one took such precise note of what was going on; as to be able to contradict him; and as to Spike and the men with him, they would probably never hear anything about it.

Don Juan Montefalderon was struck with the boldness of Jack Tier's plan, but refused his assent to it. He deemed it too hazardous, but substituted a project of his own. The moon would not rise until near eleven, and it wanted several hours before the time of sailing. When they returned to the brig, he would procure his cloak, and scull himself ashore, being perfectly used to managing a boat in this way, under the pretence of wishing to pass an hour longer near the grave of his countryman. At the expiration of that hour he would take Jack off, concealed beneath

his cloak an exploit of no great difficulty in the darkness, especially as no one would be on deck but a hand or two keeping the anchor-watch. With this arrangement, therefore, Jack Tier was obliged to be content.

Some fifteen or twenty minutes more passed; during which the Mexican again alluded to his country, and his regrets at her deplorable situation. The battles of the 8th and 9th of May; two combats that ought to, and which will reflect high honour on the little army that won them, as well as on that hardly worked, and in some respects hardly used, service to which they belong, had been just fought. Don Juan mentioned these events without reserve; and frankly admitted that success had fallen to the portion of much the weaker party. He ascribed the victory to the great superiority of the American officers of inferior rank; it being well known that in the service of the "Republic of the North," as he termed America, men who had been regularly educated at the military academy, and who had reached the period of middle life, were serving in the stations of captains, and sometimes in that of lieutenants; men who, in many cases, were fitted to command regiments and brigades, having been kept in these lower stations by the tardiness with which promotion comes in an army like that of this country.

Don Juan Montefalderon was not sufficiently conversant with the subject, perhaps, else he might have added, that when occasions do offer to bestow on these gentlemen the preferment they have so hardly and patiently earned, they are too often neglected, in order to extend the circle of vulgar political patronage. He did not know that when a new regiment of dragoons was raised, one permanent in its character, and intended to be identified with the army in all future time, that, instead of giving its commissions to those who had fairly earned them by long privations and faithful service, they were given, with one or two exceptions, to strangers.

No government trifles more with its army and navy than our own. So niggardly are the master-spirits at Washington of the honours justly earned by military men, that we have fleets still commanded by captains, and armies by officers whose regular duty it would be to command brigades. The world is edified with the sight of forces sufficient, in numbers, and every other military requisite, to make one of Napoleon's corps de armée, led by one whose commission would place him properly at the head of a brigade, and nobly led, too. Here, when so favourable an occasion offers to add a regiment or two to the old permanent line of the army, and thus infuse new life into its hope deferred, the opportunity is overlooked, and the rank and file are to be obtained by cramming, instead of by a generous regard to the interests of the gallant gentlemen who have done so much for the honour of the American name, and, unhappily, so little for themselves. The extra-patriots of the nation, and they form a legion large enough to trample the "Halls of the Montezumas" under their feet, tell us that the reward of those other patriots beneath the shadows of the Sierra Madre, is to be in the love and approbation of their fellow citizens, at the very moment when they are giving the palpable proof of the value of this esteem, and of the inconstancy of popular applause, by pointing their fingers, on account of an inadvertent expression in a letter, at the gallant soldier who taught, in our own times, the troops of this country to stand up to the best appointed regiments of England, and to carry off victory from the pride of Europe, in fair field-fights. Alas! alas! it is true of nations as well as of men, in their simplest and earliest forms of association, that there are "secrets in all families;" and it will no more do to dwell on our own, than it would edify us to expose those of poor Mexico.

The discourse between the Señor Montefalderon and Mulford was interesting, as it ever has been when the former spoke of his unfortunate country. On the subject of the battles of May he was candid, and admitted his deep mortification and regrets. He had expected more from the force collected on the Rio Grande, though, understanding the northern character better than most of his countrymen, he had not been as much taken by surprise as the great bulk of his own nation.

"Nevertheless, Don Henrique," he concluded, for the voice of Spike was just then heard as he was descending the stairs of the light-house, "nevertheless, Don Henrique, there is one thing that your people, brave, energetic, and powerful as I acknowledge them to be, would do well to remember, and it is this no nation of the numbers of ours can be, or ever was conquered, unless by the force of political combinations. In a certain state of society a government may be overturned, or a capital taken, and carry a whole country along with it, but our condition is one not likely to bring about such a result. We are of a race different from the Anglo-Saxon, and it will not be

easy either to assimilate us to your own, or wholly to subdue us. In those parts of the country, where the population is small, in time, no doubt, the Spanish race might be absorbed, and your sway established; but ages of war would be necessary entirely to obliterate our usages, our language, and our religion from the peopled portions of Mexico."

It might be well for some among us to reflect on these matters. The opinions of Don Juan, in our judgment, being entitled to the consideration of all prudent and considerate men.

As Spike descended to the door of the light-house, Harry, Rose, and Jack Tier retired within that of the dwelling. Presently the voice of the captain was heard hailing the Mexican, and together they walked to the wharf, the former boasting to the latter of his success in making a brilliant light. Brilliant it was, indeed; so brilliant as to give Mulford many misgivings on the subject of the boat. The light from the lantern fell upon the wharf, and he could see the boat from the window where he stood, with Spike standing nearly over it, waiting for the men to get his own yawl ready. It is true, the captain's back was toward the dangerous object, and the planks of the bridge were partly between him and it; but there was a serious danger that was solely averted by the circumstance that Spike was so earnestly dilating on some subject to Don Juan, as to look only at that gentleman's face. A minute later they were all in the yawl, which pulled rapidly toward the brig.

Don Juan Montefalderon was not long absent. Ten minutes sufficed for the boat to reach the Swash, for him to obtain his cloak, and to return to the islet alone, no one in the vessel feeling a desire to interfere with his imaginary prayers. As for the people, it was not probable that one in the brig could have been induced to accompany him to the graves at that hour; though everybody but Josh had turned-in, as he informed Mulford, to catch short naps previously to the hour of getting the brig under way. As for the steward, he had been placed on the look-out as the greatest idler on board. All this was exceedingly favourable to Jack Tier's project, since Josh was already in the secret of his absence, and would not be likely to betray his return. After a brief consultation, it was agreed to wait half an hour or an hour, in order to let the sleepers lose all consciousness, when Don Juan proposed returning to the vessel with his new companion.

The thirty or forty minutes that succeeded were passed in general conversation. On this occasion the Señor Montefalderon spoke more freely than he had yet done of recent events. He let it be plainly seen how much he despised Spike, and how irksome to him was the intercourse he was obliged to maintain, and to which he only submitted through a sense of duty. The money known to be in the schooner, was of a larger amount than had been supposed; and every dollar was so important to Mexico, at that moment, that he did not like to abandon it, else, did he declare, that he would quit the brig at once, and share in the fortunes of Harry and Rose. He courteously expressed his best wishes for the happiness of the young couple, and delicately intimated that, under the circumstances, he supposed that they would be united as soon as they could reach a place where the marriage rite could be celebrated. This was said in the most judicious way possible; so delicately as not to wound any one's feelings, and in a way to cause it to resemble the announcement of an expectation, rather than the piece of paternal advice for which it was really intended. Harry was delighted with this suggestion of his Mexican friend the most loyal American may still have a sincere friend of Mexican birth and Mexican feelings, too since it favoured not only his secret wishes, but his secret expectations also.

At the appointed moment, Don Juan Montefalderon and Jack Tier took their leave of the two they left behind them. Rose manifested what to Harry seemed a strange reluctance to part with the little steward; but Tier was bent on profiting by this excellent opportunity to get back to the brig. They went, accordingly, and the anxious listeners, who watched the slightest movement of the yawl, from the shore, had reason to believe that Jack was smuggled in without detection. They heard the familiar sound of the oar falling in the boat, and Mulford said that Josh's voice might be distinguished, answering to a call from Don Juan. No noise or clamour was heard, such as Spike would certainly have made, had he detected the deception that had been practised on himself.

Harry and Rose were now alone. The former suggested that the latter should take possession of one of the little bed-rooms that are usually to be found in American dwellings of the dimensions and humble character of the lighthouse abode, while he kept watch until the brig should sail. Until Spike was fairly off, he would not trust himself to sleep; but there was no sufficient reason why Rose should not endeavour to repair the evil of a broken night's rest, like that which had been passed in the boat. With this understanding, then, our heroine took possession of her little apartment, where she threw herself on the bed in her clothes, while Mulford walked out into the air, as the most effective means of helping to keep his eyes open.

It was now some time past ten, and before eleven the moon would rise. The mate consequently knew that his watch could not be long before Spike would quit the neighbourhood a circumstance pregnant with immense relief to him, at least. So long as that unscrupulous, and now nearly desperate, man remained anywhere near Rose, he felt that she could not be safe; and as he paced the sands, on the off, or outer side of the islet, in order to be beyond the influence of the light in the lantern, his eye was scarcely a moment taken away from the Swash, so impatiently and anxiously did he wait for the signs of some movement on board her.

The moon rose, and Mulford heard the well-known raps on the booby-hatch, which precedes the call of "all hands," on board a merchant-man. "All hands up anchor, ahoy!" succeeded, and in less than five minutes the bustle on board the brig announced the fact, that her people were "getting the anchor." By this time it had got to be so light that the mate deemed it prudent to return to the house, in order that he might conceal his person within its shadows. Awake Rose he would not, though he knew she would witness the departure of the Swash with a satisfaction little short of his own. He thought he would wait, that when he did speak to her at all, it might be to announce their entire safety. As regarded the aunt, Rose was much relieved on her account, by the knowledge that Jack Tier would not fail to let Mrs. Budd know everything connected with her own situation and prospects. The desertion of Jack, after coming so far with her, had pained our heroine in a way we cannot at present explain; but go he would, probably feeling assured there was no longer any necessity for his continuance with the lovers, in order to prevail on Rose to escape from Spike.

The Swash was not long in getting her ground-tackle, and the brig was soon seen with her topsail aback, waiting to cat the anchor. This done, the yards swung round, and the topsail filled. It was blowing just a good breeze for such a craft to carry whole sail on a bow-line with, and away the light and active craft started, like the racer that is galloping for daily exercise. Of course there were several passages by which a vessel might quit the group of islets, some being larger, and some smaller, but all having sufficient water for a brigantine of the Molly's draught. Determined not to lose an inch of distance unnecessarily, Spike luffed close up to the wind, making an effort to pass out to windward of the light. In order to do this, however, it became necessary for him to make two short tacks within the haven, which brought him far enough to the southward and eastward to effect his purpose. While this was doing, the mate, who perfectly understood the object of the manœuvres, passed to the side of the light-house that was opposite to that on which the dwelling was placed, with a view to get a better sight of the vessel as she stood out to sea. In order to do this, however, it was necessary for the young man to pass through a broad bit of moonlight but he trusted for his not being seen, to the active manner in which all hands were employed on board the vessel. It would seem that, in this respect, Mulford trusted without his host, for as the vessel drew near, he perceived that six or eight figures were on the guns of the Swash, or in her rigging, gesticulating eagerly, and seemingly pointing to the very spot where he stood. When the brig got fairly abeam of the light, she would not be a hundred yards distant from it, and fearful to complete the exposure of his person, which he had so inadvertently and unexpectedly commenced, our mate drew up close to the wall of the light-house, against which he sustained himself in a position as immovable as possible. This movement had been seen by a single seaman on board the Swash, and the man happened to be one of those who had landed with Spike only two hours before. His name was Barlow.

"Captain Spike, sir," called out Barlow, who was coiling up rigging on the fore-castle, and was consequently obliged to call out so loud as to be heard by all on board, "yonder is a man at the foot of the light-house."

By this time, the moon coming out bright through an opening in the clouds, Mulford had become conscious of the risk he ran, and was drawn up, as immovable as the pile itself, against the stones of the light-house. Such an announcement brought everybody to leeward, and everyhead over the bulwarks. Spike himself sprang into the lee main-chains, where his view was unobstructed, and where Mulford saw and recognised him, even better than he was seen and recognised in his own person. All this time the brig was moving ahead.

"A man, Barlow!" exclaimed Spike, in the way one a little bewildered by an announcement expresses his surprise. "A man! that can never be. There is no one at the light-house, you know."

"There he stands, sir, with his back to the tower, and his face this way. His dark figure against the whitewashed stones is plain enough to be seen. Living, or dead, sir, that is the mate!"

"Living it cannot be," answered Spike, though he gulped at the words the next moment.

A general exclamation now showed that everybody recognised the mate, whose figure, stature, dress, and even features, were by this time all tolerably distinct. The fixed attitude, however, the immovable statue-like rigidity of the form, and all the other known circumstances of Harry's case, united to produce a common and simultaneous impression among the superstitious mariners, that what they saw was but the ghostly shadow of one lately departed to the world of spirits. Even Spike was not free from this illusion, and his knees shook beneath him, there where he stood, in the channels of a vessel that he had handled like a top in so many gales and tempests. With him, however, the illusion was neither absolute nor lasting. A second thought told him it could scarcely be so, and then he found his voice. By this time the brig was nearly abreast of where Harry stood.

"You Josh!" called out Spike, in a voice of thunder, loud enough to startle even Mrs. Budd and Biddy in their berths.

"Lor' help us all!" answered the negro, "what will come next t'ing aboard dis wessel! Here I be, sir."

"Pass the fowling-piece out of my state-room. Both barrels are loaded with ball; I'll try him, though the bullets are only lead."

A common exclamation of dissatisfaction escaped the men, while Josh was obeying the order. "It's no use." "You never can hurt one of them things," "Something will befall the brig on account of this," and "It's the mate's spirit, and sperits can't be harmed by lead or iron," were the sort of remarks made by the seamen, during the short interval between the issuing the order for the fowling-piece and its execution.

"There 't is, Cap'in Spike," said Josh, passing the piece up through the rigging, "but 't will no more shoot that thing, than one of our carronades would blow up Gibraltar."

By this time Spike was very determined, his lips being compressed and his teeth set, as he took the gun and cocked it. Then he hailed. As all that passed occurred, as it might be, at once, the brig even at that moment was little more than abreast of the immovable mate, and about eighty yards from him.

"Light-house, there!" cried Spike "Living or dead, answer or I fire."

No answer came, and no motion appeared in the dark figure that was now very plainly visible, under a bright moon, drawn in high relief against the glittering white of the tower. Spike dropped the muzzle to its aim, and fired.

So intense was the attention of all in the Swash, that a wink of Harry's could almost have been seen, had he betrayed even that slight sign of human infirmity at the flash and the report. The ball was flattened against a stone

of the building, within a foot of the mate's body; but he did not stir. All depended now on his perfect immovability, as he well knew; and he so far commanded himself, as to remain rigid as if of stone himself.

"There! one can see how it is no life in that being," said one. "I know'd how it would end," added another. "Nothing but silver, and that cast on purpose, will ever lay it," continued a third. But Spike disregarded all. This time he was resolved that his aim should be better, and he was inveterately deliberate in getting it. Just as he pulled the trigger, however, Don Juan Montefalderon touched his elbow, the piece was fired, and there stood the immovable figure as before, fixed against the tower. Spike was turning angrily to chide his Mexican friend for deranging his aim, when the report of an answering musket came back like an echo. Every eye was turned toward the figure, but it moved not. Then the humming sound of an advancing ball was heard, and a bullet passed, whistling hoarsely, through the rigging, and fell some distance to windward. Every head disappeared below the bulwarks. Even Spike was so far astonished as to spring in upon deck, and, for a single instant, not a man was to be seen above the monkey-rail of the brig. Then Spike recovered himself and jumped upon a gun. His first look was toward the light-house, now on the vessel's lee-quarter; but the spot where had so lately been seen the form of Mulford, showed nothing but the glittering brightness of the whitewashed stones!

The reader will not be surprised to learn that all these events produced a strange and deep impression on board the Molly Swash. The few who might have thrown a little light on the matter were discreetly silent, while all that portion of the crew which was in the dark, firmly believed that the spirit of the murdered mate was visiting them, in order to avenge the wrongs inflicted on it in the flesh. The superstition of sailors is as deep as it is general. All those of the Molly, too, were salts of the old school, seadogs of a past generation, properly speaking, and mariners who had got their notions in the early part of the century, when the spirit of progress was less active than it is at present.

Spike himself might have had other misgivings, and believed that he had seen the living form of his intended victim, but for the extraordinary and ghost-like echo of his last discharge. There was nothing visible, or intelligible, from which that fire could have come, and he was perfectly bewildered by the whole occurrence. An intention to round-to, as soon as through the passage, down boat and land, which had been promptly conceived when he found that his first aim had failed, was as suddenly abandoned, and he gave the command to board fore-tack;" immediately after, his call was to "pack on the brig," and not without a little tremour in his voice, as soon as he perceived that the figure had vanished. The crew was not slow to obey these orders, and in ten minutes, the Swash was a mile from the light, standing to the northward and eastward, under a press of canvas, and with a freshening breeze.

To return to the islets. Harry, from the first, had seen that everything depended on his remaining motionless. As the people of the brig were partly in shadow, he could not, and did not, fully understand how completely he was himself exposed, in consequence of the brightness of all around him, and he had at first hoped to be mistaken for some accidental resemblance to a man. His nerves were well tried by the use of the fowling-piece, but they proved equal to the necessities of the occasion. But, when an answering report came from the rear, or from the opposite side of the islet, he darted round the tower, as much taken by surprise, and overcome by wonder, as any one else who heard it. It was this rapid movement which caused his flight to be unnoticed, all the men of the brig dodging below their own bulwarks at that precise instant.

As the light-house was now between the mate and the brig, he had no longer any motive for trying to conceal himself. His first thought was of Rose, and, strange as it may seem, for some little time he fancied that she had found a musket in the dwelling, and discharged it, in order to aid his escape. The events had passed so swiftly, that there was no time for the cool consideration of anything, and it is not surprising that some extravagances mingled with the first surmises of all these.

On reaching the door of the house, therefore, Harry was by no means surprised at seeing Rose standing in it, gazing at the swiftly receding brigantine. He even looked for the musket, expecting to see it lying at her feet, or

leaning against the wall of the building. Rose, however, was entirely unarmed, and as dependent on him for support, as when he had parted from her, an hour or two before.

"Where did you find that musket, Rose, and what have you done with it?" inquired Harry, as soon as he had looked in every place he thought likely to hold such an implement.

"Musket, Harry! I have had no musket, though the report of fire-arms, near by, awoke me from a sweet sleep."

"Is this possible! I had imprudently trusted myself on the other side of the light-house, while the moon was behind clouds, and when they broke suddenly away, its light betrayed me to those on board the brig. Spike fired at metwice, without injuring me; when, to my astonishment, an answering report was heard from the islet. What is more, the piece was charged with a ball-cartridge, for I heard the whistling of the bullet as it passed on its way to the brig."

"And you supposed I had fired that musket?"

"Whom else could I suppose had done it? You are not a very likely person to do such a thing, I will own, my love; but there are none but us two here."

"It must be Jack Tier," exclaimed Rose suddenly.

"That is impossible, since he has left us."

"One never knows. Jack understood how anxious I was to retain him with us, and he is so capricious and full of schemes, that he may have contrived to get out of the brig, as artfully as he got on board her."

"If Jack Tier be actually on this islet, I shall set him down as little else than a conjuror."

"Hist!" interrupted Rose, "what noise is that in the direction of the wharf? It sounds like an oar falling in a boat."

Mulford heard that well-known sound, as well as his companion, and, followed by Rose, he passed swiftly through the house, coming out at the front, next the wharf. The moon was still shining bright, and the mystery of the echoing report, and answering shot, was immediately explained. A large boat, one that pulled ten oars, at least, was just coming up to the end of the wharf, and the manner in which its oars were unshipped and tossed, announced to the mate that the crew were man-of-war's men. He walked hastily forward to meet them.

Three officers first left the boat together. The gold bands of their caps showed that they belonged to the quarter-deck, a fact that the light of the moon made apparent at once, though it was not strong enough to render features distinct. As Mulford continued to advance, however, the three officers saluted him.

"I see you have got the light under way once more," observed the leader of the party. "Last night it was as dark as Erebus in your lantern."

"The light-house keeper and his assistant have both been drowned," answered Mulford. "The lamps have been lit to-night by the people of the brig which has just gone out."

"Pray, sir, what brig may that be?"

"The Molly Swash, of New York; a craft that I lately belonged to myself, but which I have left on account of her evil doings."

"The Molly Swash, Stephen Spike master and owner, bound to Key West and a market, with a cargo of eight hundred barrels of flour, and that of a quality so lively and pungent that it explodes like gunpowder! I beg your pardon, Mr. Mate, for not recognising you sooner. Have you forgotten the Poughkeepsie, Captain Mull, and her farreaching Paixhans?"

"I ought to ask your pardon, Mr. Wallace, for not recognising you sooner, too. But one does not distinguish well by moonlight. I am delighted to see you, sir, and now hope that, with my assistance, a stop can be put to the career of the brig."

"What, Mr. Mate, do you turn against your craft?" said Wallace, under the impulsive feeling which induces all loyal men to have a distaste for treachery of every sort, "the seaman should love the very planks of his vessel."

"I fully understand you, Mr. Wallace, and will own that, for a long time, I was tied to rascality by the opinions to which you allude. But, when you come to hear my explanation, I do not fear your judgment in the least."

Mulford now led the way into the house, whither Rose had already retreated, and where she had lighted candles, and made other womanly arrangements for receiving her guests. At Harry's suggestion, some of the soup was placed over coals, to warm up for the party, and our heroine made her preparations to comfort them also with a cup of tea. While she was thus employed, Mulford gave the whole history of his connection with the brig, his indisposition to quit the latter, the full exposure of Spike's treason, his own desertion, if desertion it could be called, the loss of the schooner, and his abandonment on the rock, and the manner in which he had been finally relieved. It was scarcely possible to relate all these matters, and altogether avoid allusions to the schemes of Spike in connection with Rose, and the relation in which our young man himself stood toward her. Although Mulford touched on these points with great delicacy, it was as a seaman talking to seamen, and he could not entirely throw aside the frankness of the profession. Ashore, men live in the privacy of their own domestic circles, and their secrets, and secret thoughts, are "family secrets," of which it has passed into a proverb to say, that there are always some, even in the best of these communities. On shipboard, or in the camp, it is very different. The close contact in which men are brought with each other, the necessity that exists for opening the heart and expanding the charities, gets in time to influence the whole character, and a certain degree of frankness and simplicity, takes the place of the reserve and acting that might have been quickened in the same individual, under a different system of schooling. But Mulford was frank by nature, as well as by his sea-education, and his companions on this occasion were pretty well possessed of all his wishes and plans, in reference to Rose, even to his hope of falling in with the chaplain of the Poughkeepsie, by the time his story was all told. The fact that Rose was occupied in another room, most of the time, had made these explanations all the easier, and spared her many a blush. As for the man-of-war's men, they listened to the tale, with manly interest and a generous sympathy.

"I am glad to hear your explanation, Mr. Mate," said Wallace, cordially, as soon as Harry had done, "and there's my hand, in proof that I approve of your course. I own to a radical dislike of a turncoat, or a traitor to his craft, Brother Hollins" looking at the elder of his two companions, one of whom was the midshipman who had originally accompanied him on board the Swash "and am glad to find that our friend Mulford here is neither. A true-hearted sailor can be excused for deserting even his own ship, under such circumstances."

"I am glad to hear even this little concession from you, Wallace," answered Hollins, good-naturedly, and speaking with a mild expression of benevolence, on a very calm and thoughtful countenance. "Your mess is as heterodox as any I ever sailed with, on the subject of our duties, in this respect."

"I hold it to be a sailor's duty to stick by his ship, reverend and dear sir."

This mode of address, which was used by the "ship's gentleman" in the cant of the ward-room, as a pleasantry of an old shipmate, for the two had long sailed together in other vessels, at once announced to Harry that he saw the very chaplain for whose presence he had been so anxiously wishing. The "reverend and dear sir" smiled at the

sally of his friend, a sort of thing to which he was very well accustomed, but he answered with a gravity and point that, it is to be presumed, he thought befitting his holy office.

It may be well to remark here, that the Rev. Mr. Hollins was not one of the "lunch'd chaplains," that used to do discredit to the navy of this country, or a layman dubbed with such a title, and rated that he might get the pay and become a boon companion of the captain, at the table and in his frolics ashore. Those days are gone by, and ministers of the gospel are now really employed to care for the souls of the poor sailors, who so long have been treated by others, and have treated themselves, indeed, as if they were beings without souls, altogether. In these particulars, the world has certainly advanced, though the wise and the good, in looking around them, may feel more cause for astonishment in contemplating what it once was, than to rejoice in what it actually is. But intellect has certainly improved in the aggregate, if not in its especial dispensations, and men will not now submit to abuses that, within the recollections of a generation, they even cherished. In reference to the more intellectual appointments of a ship of war, the commander excepted, for we contend he who directs all, ought to possess the most capacity, but, in reference to what are ordinarily believed to be the more intellectual appointments of a vessel of war, the surgeon and the chaplain, we well recollect opinions that were expressed to us, many years since, by two officers of the highest rank known to the service. "When I first entered the navy," said one of these old Benbows, "if I had occasion for the amputation of a leg, and the question lay between the carpenter and the doctor, d e, but I would have tried the carpenter first, for I felt pretty certain he would have been the most likely to get through with the job." "In oldtimes," said the other, "when a chaplain joined a ship, the question immediately arose, whether the mess were to convert the chaplain, or the chaplain, the mess; and the mess generally got the best of it." There was very little exaggeration in either of these opinions. But, happily, all this is changed vastly for the better, and a navy-surgeon is necessarily a man of education and experience; in very many instances, men of high talents are to be found among them; while chaplains can do something better than play at backgammon, eat terrapins, when in what may be called terrapin-ports, and drink brandy and water, or pure Bob Smith.

"It is a great mistake, Wallace, to fancy that the highest duty a man owes, is either to his ship or to his country," observed the Rey. Mr. Hollins, quietly. "The highest duty of each and all of us, is to God; and whatever conflicts with that duty, must be avoided as a transgression of his laws, and consequently as sin."

"You surprise me, reverend and dear sir! I do not remember ever to have heard you broach such opinions before, which might be interpreted to mean that a fellow might be disloyal to his flag."

"Because the opinion might be liable to misinterpretation. Still, I do not go as far as many of my friends on this subject. If Decatur ever really said, 'Our country, right or wrong,' he said what might be just enough, and creditable enough, in certain cases, and taken with the fair limitations that he probably intended should accompany the sentiment; but, if he meant it as an absolute and controlling principle, it was not possible to be more in error. In this last sense, such a rule of conduct might, and in old times often would, have justified idolatry; nay, it is a species of idolatry in itself, since it is putting country before God. Sailors may not always be able to make the just distinctions in these cases, but the quarter-deck should be so, irreverend and dear sir."

Wallace laughed, and then he turned the discourse to the subject more properly before them.

"I understand you to say, Mr. Mulford," he remarked, "that, in your opinion, the Swash has gone to try to raise the unfortunate Mexican schooner, a second time, from the depths of the ocean?"

"From the rock on which she lies. Under the circumstances, I hardly think he would have come hither for the chain and cable, unless with some such object. We know, moreover, that such was his intention when we left the brig."

"And you can take us to the very spot where that wreck lies?"

"Without any difficulty. Her masts are partly out of water, and we hung on to them, in our boat, no later than last night, or this morning rather."

"So far, well. Your conduct in all this affair will be duly appreciated, and Captain Mull will not fail to represent it in a right point of view to the government."

"Where is the ship, sir? I looked for her most anxiously, without success, last evening; nor had Jack Tier, the little fellow I have named to you, any better luck; though I sent him aloft, as high as the lantern in the light-house, for that purpose."

"The ship is off here to the northward and westward, some six leagues or so. At sunset she may have been a little further. We have supposed that the Swash would be coming back hither, and had laid a trap for her, which came very near taking her alive."

"What is the trap you mean, sir though taking Stephen Spike alive, is sooner said than done."

"Our plan has been to catch him with our boats. With the greater draft of water of the Poughkeepsie, and the heels of your brig, sir, a regular chase about these reefs, as we knew from experience, would be almost hopeless. It was, therefore, necessary to use head-work, and some man-of-war traverses, in order to lay hold of him. Yesterday afternoon we hoisted out three cutters, manned them, and made sail in them all, under our luggs, working up against the trades. Each boat took its own course, one going off, the west end of the reef, one going more to the eastward, while I came this way, to look in at the Dry Tortugas. Spike will be lucky if he do not fall in with our third cutter, which is under the fourth lieutenant, should he standon far on the same tack as that on which he left this place. Let him try his fortune, however. As for our boat, as soon as I saw the lamps burning in the lantern, I made the best of my way hither, and got sight of the brig, just as she loosened her sails. Then I took in my own luggs, and came on with the oars. Had we continued under our canvas, with this breeze, I almost think we might have overhauled the rascal."

"It would have been impossible, sir. The moment he got a sight of your sails, he would have been off in a contrary direction, and that brig really seems to fly, whenever there is a pressing occasion for her to move. You did the wisest thing you could have done, and barely missed him, as it was. He has not seen you at all, as it is, and will be all the less on his guard, against the next visit from the ship."

"Not seen me! Why, sir, the fellow fired at us twice with a musket; why he did not use a carronade, is more than I can tell."

"Excuse me, Mr. Wallace; those two shots were intended for me, though I now fully comprehend why you answered them."

"Answered them! yes, indeed; who would not answer such a salute, and gun for gun, if he had a chance. I certainly thought he was firing at us, and having a musket between my legs, I let fly in return, and even the chaplain here will allow that was returning 'good for evil.' But explain your meaning."

Mulford now went into the details of the incidents connected with his coming into the moon-light, at the foot of the light-house. That he was not mistaken as to the party for whom the shots were intended, was plain enough to him, from the words that passed aloud among the people of the Swash, as well as from the circumstance that both balls struck the stones of the tower quite near him. This statement explained everything to Wallace, who now fully comprehended the cause and motive of each incident.

It was now near eleven, and Rose had prepared the table for supper. The gentlemen of the Poughkeepsie manifested great interest in the movements of the Hebe-like little attendant who was caring for their wants. When

the cloth was to be laid, the midshipman offered his assistance, but his superior directed him to send a hand or two up from the wharf, where the crew of the cutter were lounging or sleeping after their cruise. These men had been thought of, too; and a vessel filled with smoking soup was taken to them, by one of their own number.

The supper was as cheerful as it was excellent. The dry humour of Wallace, the mild intelligence of the chaplain, the good sense of Harry, and the spirited information of Rose, contributed, each in its particular way, to make the meal memorable in more senses than one. The laugh came easily at that table, and it was twelve o'clock, before the party thought of breaking up.

The dispositions for the night were soon made. Rose returned to her little room, where she could now sleep in comfort, and without apprehension. The gentlemen made the disposition of their persons, that circumstances allowed; each finding something on which to repose, that was preferable to a plank. As for the men, they were accustomed to hard fare, and enjoyed their present good-luck, to the top of their bent. It was quite late, before they had done "spinning their yarns," and "cracking their jokes," around the pot of turtle-soup, and the can of grog that succeeded it. By half-past twelve, however, everybody was asleep.

Mulford was the first person afoot the following morning. He left the house just as the sun rose, and perceiving that the "coast was clear" of sharks, he threw off his light attire, and plunged into the sea. Refreshed with this indulgence, he was returning toward the building, when he met the chaplain coming in quest of him. This gentleman, a man of real piety, and of great discretion, had been singularly struck, on the preceding night, with the narrative of our young mate; and he had not failed to note the allusions, slight as they were, and delicately put as they had been, to himself. He saw, at once, the propriety of marrying a couple so situated, and now sought Harry, with a view to bring about so desirable an event, by intimating his entire willingness to officiate. It is scarcely necessary to say that very few words were wanting, to persuade the young man to fall into his views; and as to Rose, he had handed her a short note on the same subject, which he was of opinion, would be likely to bring her to the same way of thinking.

An hour later, all the officers, Harry and Rose, were assembled in what might be termed the light-house parlour. The Rev. Mr. Hollins had neither band, gown, nor surplice; but he had what was far better, feeling and piety. Without a prayer-book he never moved; and he read the marriage ceremony with a solemnity that was communicated to all present. The ring was that which had been used at the marriage of Rose's parents, and which she wore habitually, though not on the left hand. In a word, Harry and Rose were as firmly and legally united, on that solitary and almost unknown islet, as could have been the case, had they stood up before the altar of mother Trinity itself, with a bishop to officiate, and a legion of attendants. After the compliments which succeeded the ceremony, the whole party sat down to breakfast.

If the supper had been agreeable, the morning meal was not less so. Rose was timid and blushing, as became a bride, though she could not but feel how much more respectable her position became under the protection of Harry as his wife, than it had been while she was only his betrothed. The most delicate deportment, on the part of her companions, soon relieved her embarrassment however, and the breakfast passed off without cause for an unhappy moment.

"The ship's standing in toward the light, sir," reported the cockswain of the cutter, as the party was still lingering around the table, as if unwilling to bring so pleasant a meal to a close. "Since the mist has broke away, we see her, sir, even to her ports and dead-eyes."

"In that case, Sam, she can't be very far off," answered Wallace. "Ay, there goes a gun from her, at this moment, as much as to say, 'what has become of all of my boats?' Run down and let off a musket; perhaps she will make out to hear that, as we must be rather to windward, if anything."

The signal was given and understood. A quarter of an hour later, the Poughkeepsie began to shorten sail. Then Wallace stationed himself in the cutter, in the centre of one of the passages, signalling the ship to come on. Ten minutes later still, the noble craft came into the haven, passing the still burning light, with her topsails just lifting, and making a graceful sweep under very reduced sail, she came to the wind, very near the spot where the Swash had lain only ten hours before, and dropped an anchor.

CHAPTER V.

The gull has found her place on shore;

The sun gone down again to rest;

And all is still but ocean's roar;

There stands the man unblest'd.

But see, he moves he turns, as asking where

His mates? Why looks he with that piteous stare?

Dana.

Superstition would seem to be a consequence of a state of being, in which so much is shadowed forth, while so little is accurately known. Our far-reaching thoughts range over the vast fields of created things, without penetrating to the secret cause of the existence of even a blade of grass. We can analyze all substances that are brought into our crucibles, tell their combinations and tendencies, give a scientific history of their formation, so far as it is connected with secondary facts, their properties, and their uses; but in each and all, there is a latent natural cause, that baffles all our inquiries, and tells us that we are merely men. This is just as true in morals, as in physics no man living being equal to attaining the very faith that is necessary to his salvation, without the special aid of the spirit of the godhead; and even with that mighty support, trusting implicitly for all that is connected with a future that we are taught to believe is eternal, to "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen." In a word, this earthly probation of ours, was intended for finite beings, in the sense of our present existence, leaving far more to be conjectured, than is understood.

Ignorance and superstition ever bear a close, and even a mathematical relation to each other. The degrees of the one, are regulated by the degrees of the other. He who knows the least believes the most; while he who has seen the most, without the intelligence to comprehend that which he has seen, feels, perhaps, the strongest inclination to refer those things which to him are mysteries, to the supernatural and marvellous. Sailors have been, from time immemorial, more disposed than men of their class on the land, to indulge in this weakness, which is probably heightened by the circumstance of their living constantly and vividly in the presence of powers that menace equally their lives and their means, without being in any manner subject to their control.

Spike, for a seaman of his degree of education, was not particularly addicted to the weakness to which we have just alluded. Nevertheless, he was not altogether free from it; and recent circumstances contributed to dispose him so much the more to admit a feeling which, like sin itself, is ever the most apt to insinuate itself at moments of extraordinary moral imbecility, and through the openings left by previous transgression. As his brig stood off from the light, the captain paced the deck, greatly disturbed by what had just passed, and unable to account for it. The boat of the Poughkeepsie was entirely concealed by the islet, and there existing no obvious motive for wishing to return, in order to come at the truth, not a thought to that effect, for one moment, crossed the mind of the smuggler. So far from this, indeed, were his wishes, that the Molly did not seem to him to go half as fast as

usual, in his keen desire to get further and further from a spot where such strange incidents had occurred.

As for the men forward, no argument was wanting to make them believe that something supernatural had just passed before their eyes. It was known to them all, that Mulford had been left on a naked rock, some thirty miles from that spot; and it was not easy to understand how he could now be at the Dry Tortugas, planted, as it might be, on purpose to show himself to the brig, against the tower, in the bright moonlight, "like a pictur' hung up for his old shipmates to look at."

Sombre were the tales that were related that night among them, many of which related to the sufferings of men abandoned on desert islands; and all of which bordered, more or less, on the supernatural. The crew connected the disappearance of the boat with Mulford's apparition, though the logical inference would have been, that the body which required planks to transport it, could scarcely be classed with anything of the world of spirits. The links in arguments, however, are seldom respected by the illiterate and vulgar, who jump to their conclusions, in cases of the marvellous, much as politicians find an expression of the common mind in the prepared opinions of the few who speak for them, totally disregarding the dissenting silence of the million. While the men were first comparing their opinions on that which, to them, seemed to be so extraordinary, the Señor Montefalderon joined the captain in his walk, and dropped into a discourse touching the events which had attended their departure from the haven of the Dry Tortugas. In this conversation, Don Juan most admirably preserved his countenance, as well as his self-command, effectually preventing the suspicion of any knowledge on his part, that was not common to them both.

"You did leave the port with the salutes observed," the Mexican commenced, with the slightest accent of a foreigner, or just enough to show that he was not speaking in his mother tongue; "salutes paid and returned."

"Do you call that saluting, Don Wan? To me, that infernal shot sounded more like an echo, than anything else."

"And to what do you ascribe it, Don Esteban?"

"I wish I could answer that question. Sometimes I begin to wish I had not left my mate on that naked rock."

"There is still time to repair the last wrong; we shall go within a few miles of the place where the Señor Enrique was left; and I can take the yawl, with two men, and go in search of him, while you are at work on the wreck."

"Do you believe it possible that he can be still there?" demanded Spike, looking suddenly and intently at his companion, while his mind was strangely agitated between hatred and dread. "If he is there, who and what was he that we all saw so plainly at the foot of the light-house?"

"How should he have left the rock? He was without food or water; and no man, in all his vigour, could swim this distance. I see no means of his getting here."

"Unless some wrecker, or turtler, fell in with him, and took him off. Ay, ay, Don Wan; I left him that much of a chance, at least. No man can say I murdered my mate."

"I am not aware, Don Esteban, that any one has said so hard a thing of you. Still, we have seen neither wrecker nor turtler since we have been here; and that lessens the excellent chance you left Don Enrique."

"There is no occasion, señor, to be so particular," growled Spike, a little sullenly, in reply. "The chance, I say, was a good one, when you consider how many of them devils of wreckers hang about these reefs. Let this brig only get fast on a rock, and they would turn up, like sharks, all around us, each with his maw open for salvage. But this is neither here nor there; what puzzles me, was what we saw at the light, half an hour since, and the musket that was fired back at us! I know that the figure at the foot of the tower did not fire, for my eye was on him from first

to last; and he had no arms. You were on the island a good bit, and must have known if the light-house keeper was there or not, Don Wan?"

"The light-house keeper was there, Don Esteban but he was in his grave."

"Ay, ay, one, I know, was drowned, and buried with the rest of them; there might, however, have been more than one. You saw none of the people that had gone to Key West, in or about the house, Don Wan?"

"None. If any persons have left the Tortugas to go to Key West, within a few days, not one of them has yet returned."

"So I supposed. No, it can be none of them. Then I saw his face as plainly as ever I saw it by moon-light, from aft, for'ard. What is your opinion about seeing the dead walk on the 'arth, Don Wan?"

"That I have never seen any such thing myself, Don Esteban, and consequently know nothing about it."

"So I supposed; I find it hard to believe it, I do. It may be a warning to keep us from-coming any more to the Dry Tortugas; and I must say I have little heart for returning to this place, after all that has fell out here. We can go to the wreck, fish up the doubloons, and be off for Yucatan. Once in one of your ports, I make no question that the merits of the Molly will make themselves understood, and that we shall soon agree on a price."

"What use could we put the brig to, Don Esteban, if we had her all ready for sea?"

"That is a strange question to ask in time of war! Give me such a craft as the Molly, with sixty or eighty men on board her, in a war like this, and her 'arnin's should not fall short of half a million within a twelvemonth."

"Could we engage you to take charge of her, Don Esteban?"

"That would be ticklish work, Don Wan. But we can see. No one knows what he will do until he is tried. In for a penny, in for a pound. A fellow never knows! Ha! ha! ha! Don Wan, we live in a strange world yes, in a strange world."

"We live in strange times, Don Esteban, as the situation of my poor country proves. But let us talk this matter over a little more in confidence."

And they did thus discuss the subject. It was a singular spectacle to see an honourable man, one full of zeal of the purest nature in behalf of his own country, sounding a traitor as to the terms on which he might be induced to do all the harm he could, to those who claimed his allegiance. Such sights, however, are often seen; our own especial objects too frequently blinding us to the obligations that we owe morality, so far as not to be instrumental in effecting even what we conceive to be good, by questionable agencies. But the Señor Montefalderon kept in view, principally, his desire to be useful to Mexico, blended a little too strongly, perhaps, with the wishes of a man who was born near the sun, to avenge his wrongs, real or fancied.

While this dialogue was going on between Spike and his passenger, as they paced the quarter-deck, one quite as characteristic occurred in the galley, within twenty feet of them Simon, the cook, and Josh, the steward, being theinterlocutors. As they talked secrets, they conferred together with closed doors, though few were ever disposed to encounter the smoke, grease, and fumes of their narrow domains, unless called thither by hunger.

"What you t'ink of dis matter Josh?" demanded Simon, whose skull having the well-known density of his race, did not let internal ideas out, or external ideas in as readily as most men's. "Our young mate was at de light-house beyond all controwersy; and how can he be den on dat rock over yonder, too?"

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"Dat is imposserbul," answered Josh; "derefore I says it is n't true. I surposes you know dat what is imposserbul is n't true, Simon. Nobody can't be out yonder and down here at de same time. Dat is imposserble, Simon. But what I wants to intermate to you, will explain all dis difficulty; and it do show de raal super'ority of a coloured man over de white poperlation. Now, you mark my words, cook, and be full of admiration! Jack Tier came back along wid de Mexican gentle'em, in my anchor-watch, dis very night! You see, in de first place, ebbery t'ing come to pass in nigger's watch."

Here the two dark-skinned worthies haw-haw'd to their heart's content; laughing very much as a magistrate or a minister of the gospel might be fancied to laugh, the first time he saw a clown at a circus. The merriment of a negro will have its course, in spite of ghosts, or of anything else; and neither the cook nor the steward dreamed of puting in another syllable, until their laugh was fairly and duly ended. Then the cook made his remarks.

"How Jack Tier comin' back explain der differculity, Josh?" asked Simon.

"Did n't Jack go away wid Miss Rose and de mate, in de boat dat got adrift, you know, in Jack's watch on deck?"

Here the negroes laughed again, their imaginations happening to picture to each, at the same instant, the mystification about the boat; Biddy having told Josh in confidence, the manner in which the party had returned to the brig, while he and Simon were asleep; which fact the steward had already communicated to the cook. To these two beings, of an order in nature different from all aroundthem, and of a simplicity and of habits that scarce placed them on a level with the intelligence of the humblest white man, all these circumstances had a sort of mysterious connection, out of which peeped much the most conspicuously to their faculties, the absurdity of the captain's imagining that a boat had got adrift, which had, in truth, been taken away by human hands. Accordingly, they laughed it out; and when they had done laughing, they returned again to the matter before them with renewed interest in the subject.

"Well, how all dat explain dis differculity?" repeated Simon.

"In dis wery manner, cook," returned the steward, with a little dignity in his manner. "Ebbery t'ing depend on understandin', I s'pose you know. If Mr. Mulford got taken off dat rock by Miss Rose and Jack Tier, wid de boat, and den dey comes here altogedder; and den Jack Tier, he get on board and tell Biddy all dis matter, and den Biddy tell Josh, and den Josh tell de cook what for you surprise, you black debbil, one bit?"

"Dat all!" exclaimed Simon.

"Dat just all dat ebbery bit of it, do n't I say."

Here Simon burst into such a fit of loud laughter, that it induced Spike himself to shove aside the galley-door, and thrust his own frowning visage into the dark hole within, to inquire the cause.

"What's the meaning of this uproar?" demanded the captain, all the more excited because he felt that things had reached a pass that would not permit him to laugh himself. "Do you fancy yourself on the Hook, or at the Five Points?"

The Hook and the Five Points are two pieces of tabooed territory within the limits of the good town of Manhattan, that are getting to be renowned for their rascality and orgies. They probably want nothing but the proclamation of a governor in vindication of their principles, annexed to a pardon of some of their unfortunate children, to render both classical. If we continue to make much further progress in political logic, and in the same direction as that in which we have already proceeded so far, neither will probably long be in want of this illustration. Votes canbe given by the virtuous citizens of both these purlieus, as well as by the virtuous citizens of the anti-rent districts, and votes contain the essence of all such principles, as well as of their glorification.

"Do you fancy yourselves on the Hook, or at the Five Points?" demanded Spike, angrily.

"Lor', no sir!" answered Simon, laughing at each pause with all his heart. "Only laughs a little at ghost dat all, sir."

"Laugh at ghost! Is that a subject to laugh at? Have a care, you black rascal, or he will visit you in your galley here, when you will least want to see him."

"No care much for him, sir," returned Simon, laughing away as hard as ever. "Sich a ghost ought n't to skear little baby."

"Such a ghost? And what do you know of this ghost more than any other?"

"Well, I seed him, Cap'in Spike; and what a body sees, he is acquainted wid."

"You saw an image that looked as much like Mr. Mulford, my late mate, as one timber-head in this brig is like another."

"Yes, sir, he like enough must say dat so wery like, could n't see any difference."

As Simon concluded this remark, he burst out into another fit of laughter, in which Josh joined him, heart and soul, as it might be. The uninitiated reader is not to imagine the laughter of those blacks to be very noisy, or to be raised on a sharp, high key. They could make the welkin ring, in sudden bursts of merriment, on occasion; but, at a time like this, they rather caused their diversion to be developed by sounds that came from the depths of their chests. A gleam of suspicion that these blacks were acquainted with some fact that it might be well for him to know, shot across the mind of Spike; but he was turned from further inquiry by a remark of Don Juan, who intimated that the mirth of such persons never had much meaning to it, expressing at the same time a desire to pursue the more important subject in which they were engaged. Admonishing the blacks to be more guarded in their manifestations of merriment, the captain closed the door on them, and resumed his walk up and down the quarter-deck. As soon as left to themselves, the blacks broke out afresh, though in a way so guarded, as to confine their mirth to the galley.

"Cap'in Spike t'ink dat a ghost!" exclaimed Simon, with contempt.

"Guess if he see raal ghost, he find 'e difference," answered Josh. "One look at raal sperit wort' two at dis object."

Simon's eyes now opened like two saucers, and they gleamed, by the light of the lamp they had, like dark balls of condensed curiosity, blended with awe, on his companion.

"You ebber see him, Josh?" he asked, glancing over each shoulder hurriedly, as it might be, to make sure that he could not see "him," too.

"How you t'ink I get so far down the wale of life, Simon, and nebber see sich a t'ing? I seed t'ree of the crew of the 'Maria Sheffington,' that was drowned by deir boat's capsizin', when we lay at Gibraltar, jest as plain as I see you now. Then "

But it is unnecessary to repeat Josh's experiences in this way, with which he continued to entertain and terrify Simon for the next half-hour. This is just the difference between ignorance and knowledge. While Spike himself, and every man in his brig who belonged forward, had strong misgivings as to the earthly character of the figure they had seen at the foot of the light-house, these negroes laughed at their delusion, because they happened to be in the secret of Mulford's escape from the rock, and of that of his actual presence at the Tortugas. When, however,

the same superstitious feeling was brought to bear on circumstances that lay without the sphere of their exact information, they became just as dependent and helpless as all around them; more so, indeed, inasmuch as their previous habits and opinions disposed them to a more profound credulity.

It was midnight before any of the crew of the Swash sought their rest that night. The captain had to remind them that a day of extraordinary toil was before them, ere he could get one even to quit the deck; and when they did go below, it was to continue to discuss the subject of what they had seen at the Dry Tortugas. It appeared to be the prevalent opinion among the people, that the late event foreboded evil to the Swash, and long as most of these men had served in the brig, and much as they had become attached to her, had she gone into port that night, nearly every man forward would have run before morning. But fatigue and wonder, at length, produced their effect, and the vessel was silent as was usual at that hour. Spike himself lay down in his clothes, as he had done ever since Mulford had left him; and the brig continued to toss the spray from her bows, as she bore gallantly up against the trades, working her way to windward. The light was found to be of great service, as it indicated the position of the reef, though it gradually sunk in the western horizon, until near morning it fell entirely below it.

At this hour Spike appeared on deck again, where, for the first time since their interview on the morning of Harry's and Rose's escape, he laid his eyes on Jack Tier. The little dumpling-looking fellow was standing in the waist, with his arms folded sailor-fashion, as composedly as if nothing had occurred to render his meeting with the captain any way of a doubtful character. Spike approached near the person of the steward, whom he surveyed from head to foot, with a sort of contemptuous superiority, ere he spoke.

"So, Master Tier," at length the captain commenced, "you have deigned to turn out at last, have you? I hope the day's duty you've forgotten, will help to pay for the light-house boat, that I understand you've lost for me, also."

"What signifies a great clumsy boat that the brig could n't hoist in nor tow," answered Jack, coolly, turning short round at the same time, but not condescending to "uncoil" his arms as he did so, a mark of indifference that would probably have helped to mystify the captain, had he even actually suspected that anything was wrong beyond the supposed accident to the boat in question. "If you had had the boat astarn, Captain Spike, an order would have been given to cut it adrift the first time the brig made sail on the wind."

"Nobody knows, Jack; that boat would have been very useful to us while at work about the wreck. You never even turned out this morning to let me know where that craft lay, as you promised to do, but left us to find it out by our wits."

"There was no occasion for my tellin' you anything about it, sir, when the mast-heads was to be seen above water. As soon as I heard that them 'ere mast-heads was out of water, I turned over and went to sleep upon it. A man can't be on the doctor's list and on duty at the same time."

Spike looked hard at the little steward, but he made no further allusion to his being off duty, or to his failing to stand pilot to the brig as she came through the passage in quest of the schooner's remains. The fact was, that he had discovered the mast-heads himself, just as he was on the point of ordering Jack to be called, having allowed him to remain in his berth to the last moment after his watch, according to a species of implied faith that is seldom disregarded among seamen. Once busied on the wreck, Jack was forgotten, having little to do in common with any one on board, but that which the captain termed the "women's mess."

"Come aft, Jack," resumed Spike, after a considerable pause, during the whole of which he had stood regarding the little steward as if studying his person, and through that his character. "Come aft to the trunk; I wish to catechise you a bit."

"Catechise!" repeated Tier, in an under tone, as he followed the captain to the place mentioned. "It's a long time since I've done anything at that!"

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"Ay, come hither," resumed Spike, seating himself at his ease on the trunk, while Jack stood near by, his arms still folded, and his rotund little form as immovable, under the plunges that the lively brig made into the head-seas that she was obliged to meet, as if a timber-head in the vessel itself. "You keep your sea-legs well, Jack, short as they are."

"No wonder for that, Captain Spike; for the last twenty years I've scarce passed a twelvemonth ashore; and what I did before that, no one can better tell than yourself, since we was ten good years shipmates."

"So you say, Jack, though I do not remember you as well as you seem to remember me. Do you not make the time too long?"

"Not a day, sir. Ten good and happy years did we sail together, Captain Spike; and all that time in this very "

"Hush h-u-s-h, man, hush! There is no need of telling the Molly's age to everybody. I may wish to sell her some day, and then her great experience will be no recommendation. You should recollect that the Molly is a female, and the ladies do not like to hear of their ages after five-and-twenty."

Jack made no answer, but he dropped his arms to their natural position, seeming to wait the captain's communication, first referring to his tobacco-box and taking a fresh quid.

"If you was with me in the brig, Jack, at the time you mention," continued Spike, after another long and thoughtful pause, "you must remember many little things that I do n't wish to have known; especially while Mrs. Budd and her handsome niece is aboard here."

"I understand you, Captain Spike. The ladies shall l'arn no more from me than they know already."

"Thank 'e for that Jack thank 'e with all my heart Shipmates of our standing ought to be fast friends; and so you'll find me, if you'll only sail under the true colours, my man."

At that moment Jack longed to let the captain know how strenuously he had insisted that very night on rejoining his vessel; and this at a time, too, when the brig was falling into disrepute. But this he could not do, without betraying the secret of the lovers so he chose to say nothing.

"There is no use in blabbing all a man knows, and the galley is a sad place for talking. Galley news is poor news, I suppose you know, Jack."

"I've hear'n say as much on board o' man-of-war. It's a great place for the officers to meet and talk, and smoke, in Uncle Sam's crafts; and what a body hears in such places, is pretty much newspaper stuff, I do suppose."

"Ay, ay, that's it; not to be thought of half-an-hour after it has been spoken. Here's a doubloon for you, Jack; and all for the sake of old times. Now, tell me, my litle fellow, how do the ladies come on? Does n't Miss Rose get over her mourning on account of the mate? Ar' n't we to have the pleasure of seein' her on deck soon?"

"I can't answer for the minds and fancies of young women, Captain Spike. They are difficult to understand; and I would rather not meddle with what I can't understand."

"Poh, poh, man; you must get over that. You might be of great use to me, Jack, in a very delicate affair for you know how it is with women; they must be handled as a man would handle this brig among breakers; Rose, in partic'lar, is as skittish as a colt."

"Stephen Spike," said Jack, solemnly, but on so low a key that it entirely changed his usually harsh and cracked voice to one that sounded soft, if not absolutely pleasant, "do you never think of hereafter? Your days are almost run; a very few years, in your calling it may be a very few weeks, or a few hours, and time will be done with you, and eternity will commence. Do you never think of a hereafter?"

Spike started to his feet, gazing at Jack intently; then he wiped the perspiration from his face, and began to pace the deck rapidly, muttering to himself "this has been a most accursed night! First the mate, and now this! Blast me, but I thought it was a voice from the grave! Graves! can't they keep those that belong to them, or have rocks and waves no graves?"

What more passed through the mind of the captain must remain a secret, for he kept it to himself; nor did he take any further notice of his companion. Jack, finding that he was unobserved, passed quietly below, and took the place in his berth, which he had only temporarily abandoned.

Just as the day dawned, the Swash reached the vicinity of the wreck again. Sail was shortened, and the brig stood in until near enough for the purpose of her commander, when she was hove-to, so near the mast-heads that, by lowering the yawl, a line was sent out to the fore-mast, and the brig was hauled close alongside. The direction of the reef at that point formed a lee; and the vessel lay in water sufficiently smooth for her object.

This was done soon after the sun had risen, and Spike now ordered all hands called, and began his operations in earnest. By sounding carefully around the schooner when last here, he had ascertained her situation to his entire satisfaction. She had settled on a shelf of the reef, in such a position that her bows lay in a sort of cradle, while her stern was several feet nearer to the surface than the opposite extremity. This last fact was apparent, indeed, by the masts themselves, the lower mast aft being several feet out of water, while the fore-mast was entirely buried, leaving nothing but the fore-topmast exposed. On these great premises Spike had laid the foundation of the practical problem he intended to solve.

No expectation existed of ever getting the schooner afloat again. All that Spike and the Señor Montefalderon now aimed at, was to obtain the doubloons, which the former thought could be got at in the following manner. He knew that it would be much easier handling the wreck, so far as its gravity was concerned, while the hull continued submerged. He also knew that one end could be raised with a comparatively trifling effort, so long as the other rested on the rock. Under these circumstances, therefore, he proposed merely to get slings around the after body of the schooner, as near her stern-post, indeed, as would be safe, and to raise that extremity of the vessel to the surface, leaving most of the weight of the craft to rest on the bows. The difference between the power necessary to effect this much, and that which would be required to raise the whole wreck, would be like the difference in power necessary to turn over a log with one end resting on the ground, and turning the same log by lifting it bodily in the arms, and turning it in the air. With the stern once above water, it would be easy to come at the bag of doubloons, which Jack Tier had placed in a locker above the transoms.

The first thing was to secure the brig properly, in order that she might bear the necessary strain. This was done very much as has been described already, in the account of the manner in which she was secured and supported in order to raise the schooner at the Dry Tortugas. An anchor was laid abreast and to windward, and purchases were brought to the masts, as before. Then the bight of the chain brought from the Tortugas, was brought under the schooner's keel, and counter-purchases, leading from both the fore-mast and main-mast of the brig, were brought to it, and set taut. Spike now carefully examined all his fastenings, looking to his cables as well as his mechanical power aloft, heaving in upon this, and veering out upon that, in order to bring the Molly square to her work; after which he ordered the people to knock-off for their dinners. By that time, it was high noon.

While Stephen Spike was thus employed on the wreck, matters and things were not neglected at the Tortugas. The Poughkeepsie had no sooner anchored, than Wallace went on board and made his report. Capt. Mull then sent for Mulford, with whom he had a long personal conference. This officer was getting grey, and consequently he had

acquired experience. It was evident to Harry, at first, that he was regarded as one who had been willingly engaged in an unlawful pursuit, but who had abandoned it to push dearer interests in another quarter. It was some time before the commander of the sloop-of-war could divest himself of this opinion, though it gradually gave way before the frankness of the mate's manner, and the manliness, simplicity, and justice of his sentiments. Perhaps Rose had some influence also in bringing about this favourable change.

Wallace did not fail to let it be known that turtle-soup was to be had ashore; and many was the guest our heroine had to supply with that agreeable compound, in the course of the morning. Jack Tier had manifested so much skill in the preparation of the dish, that its reputation soon extended to the cabin, and the captain was induced to land, in order to ascertain how far rumour was or was not a liar, on this interesting occasion. So ample was the custom, indeed, that Wallace had the consideration to send one of the ward-room servants to the light-house, in order to relieve Rose from a duty that was getting to be a little irksome. She was "seeing company" as a bride, in a novel and rather unpleasant manner; and it was in consequence of a suggestion of the "ship's gentleman," that the remains of the turtle were transferred to the vessel, and were put into the coppers, *secundum artem*, by the regular cooks.

It was after tickling his palate with a bowl of the soup, and enjoying a half-hour's conversation with Rose, that Capt. Mull summoned Harry to a final consultation on the subject of their future proceedings. By this time the commander of the Poughkeepsie was in a better humour with his new acquaintance, more disposed to believe him, and infinitely more inclined to listen to his suggestions and advice, than he had been in their previous interviews. Wallace was present in his character of "ship's gentleman," or, as having nothing to do, while his senior, the first lieutenant, was working like a horse on board the vessel, in the execution of his round of daily duties.

At this consultation, the parties came into a right understanding of each other's views and characters. Capt. Mull was slow to yield his confidence, but when he did bestow it, he bestowed it sailor-fashion, or with all his heart. Satisfied at last that he had to do with a young man of honour, and one who was true to the flag, he consulted freely with our mate, asked his advice, and was greatly influenced in the formation of his final decision by the opinions that Harry modestly advanced, maintaining them, however, with solid arguments, and reasons that every seaman could comprehend.

Mulford knew the plans of Spike by means of his own communications with the Señor Montefalderon. Once acquainted with the projects of his old commander, it was easy for him to calculate the time it would require to put them in execution, with the means that were to be found on board the Swash. "It will take the brig until near morning," he said, "to beat up to the place where the wreck lies. Spike will wait for light to commence operations, and several hours will be necessary to moor the brig, and get out the anchors with which he will think it necessary to stay his masts. Then he will hook on, and he may partly raise the hull before night return. More than this he can never do; and it would not surprise me were he merely to get everything ready for heaving on his purchases to-morrow, and suspend further proceedings until the next day, in preference to having so heavy a strain on his spars all night. He has not the force, however, to carry on such duty to a very late hour; and you may count with perfect security, Captain Mull, on his being found alongside of the wreck at sunrise the next day after to-morrow, in all probability with his anchors down, and fast to the wreck. By timing your own arrival well, nothing will be easier than to get him fairly under your guns, and once under your guns, the brig must give up. When you chased her out of this very port, a few days since, you would have brought her up could you have kept her within range of those terrible shells ten minutes longer."

"You would then advise my not sailing from this place immediately," said Mull.

"It will be quite time enough to get under way late in the afternoon, and then under short canvas. Ten hours will be ample time for this ship to beat up to that passage in, and it will be imprudent to arrive too soon; nor do I suppose you will wish to be playing round the reef in the dark."

To the justice of all this Capt. Mull assented; and the plan of proceedings was deliberately and intelligently formed. As it was necessary for Mulford to go in the ship, in order to act as pilot, no one else on board knowing exactly where to find the wreck, the commander of the Poughkeepsie had the civility to offer the young couple the hospitalities of his own cabin, with one of his state-rooms. This offer Harry gratefully accepted, it being understood that the ship would land them at Key West, as soon as the contemplated duty was executed. Rose felt so much anxiety about her aunt, that any other arrangement would scarcely have pacified her fears.

In consequence of these arrangements, the Poughkeepsie lay quietly at her anchors until near sunset. In the interval her boats were out in all directions, parties of the officers visiting the islet where the powder had exploded, and the islet where the tent, erected for the use of the females, was still standing. As for the light-house island, an order of Capt. Mull's prevented it from being crowded in a manner unpleasant to Rose, as might otherwise have been the case. The few officers who did land there, however, appeared much struck with the ingenuous simplicity and beauty of the bride, and a manly interest in her welfare was created among them all, principally by means of the representations of the second lieutenant and the chaplain. About five o'clock she went off to the ship, accompanied by Harry, and was hoisted on board in the manner usually practised by vessels of war which have no accommodation-ladder rigged. Rose was immediately installed in her state-room, where she found every convenience necessary to a comfortable though small apartment.

It was quite late in the afternoon, when the boatswain and his mate piped "all hands up anchor,!" Harry hastened into the state-room for his charming bride, anxious to show her the movements of a vessel of war on such an occasion. Much as she had seen of the ocean, and of a vessel, within the last few weeks, Rose now found that she had yet a great deal to learn, and that a ship of war had many points to distinguish her from a vessel engaged in commerce.

The Poughkeepsie was only a sloop-of-war, or a corvette, in construction, number of her guns, and rate; but she was a ship of the dimensions of an old-fashioned frigate, measuring about one thousand tons. The frigates of which we read half a century since, were seldom ever as large as this, though they were differently built in having a regular gun-deck, or one armed deck that was entirely covered, with another above it; and on the quarter-deck and fore-castle of the last of which were also batteries of lighter guns. To the contrary of all this, the Poughkeepsie had but one armed deck, and on that only twenty guns. These pieces, however, were of unusually heavy calibre, throwing thirty-two pound shot, with the exception of the Paixhans, or Columbiads, which throw shot of even twice that weight. The vessel had a crew of two hundred souls, all told; and she had the spars, anchors, and other equipments of a light frigate.

In another great particular did the Poughkeepsie differ from the corvette-built vessels that were so much in favour at the beginning of the century; a species of craft obtained from the French, who have taught the world so much in connection with naval science, and who, after building some of the best vessels that ever floated, have failed in knowing how to handle them, though not always in that. The Poughkeepsie, while she had no spar, or upper deck, properly speaking, had a poop and a topgallant-fore-castle. Within the last were the cabins and other accommodations of the captain; an arrangement that was necessary for a craft of her construction, that carried so many officers, and so large a crew. Without it, sufficient space would not be had for the uses of the last. One gun of a side was in the main cabin, there being a very neat and amply spacious after-cabin between the state-rooms, as is ordinarily the case in all vessels from the size of frigates up to that of three-deckers. It may be well to explain here, while on this subject of construction, that in naval parlance, a ship is called a single-decked vessel; a two-decker, or a three-decker, not from the number of decks she actually possesses, but from the number of gun-decks that she has, or of those that are fully armed. Thus a frigate has four decks, the spar, gun, berth, and orlop (or haul-up) decks; but she is called a "single-decked ship," from the circumstance that only one of these four decks has a complete range of batteries. The two-decker has two of these fully armed decks, and the three-deckers three; though, in fact, the two-decker has five, and the three-decker six decks. Asking pardon for this little digression, which we trust will be found useful to a portion of our readers, we return to the narrative.

Harry conducted Rose to the poop of the Poughkeepsie, where she might enjoy the best view of the operation of getting so large a craft under way, man-of-war fashion. The details were mysteries, of course, and Rose knew no more of the process by which the chain was brought to the capstan, by the intervention of what is called a messenger, than if she had not been present. She saw two hundred men distributed about the vessel, some at the capstan, some on the forecastle, some in the tops, and others in the waist, and she heard the order to "heave round." Then the shrill fife commenced the lively air of "the girl I left behind me," rather more from a habit in the fifer, than from any great regrets for the girls left at the Dry Tortugas, as was betrayed to Mulford by the smiles of the officers, and the glances they cast at Rose. As for the latter, she knew nothing of the air, and was quite unconscious of the sort of parody that the gentlemen of the quarter-deck fancied it conveyed on her own situation.

Rose was principally struck with the quiet that prevailed in the ship, Captain Mull being a silent man himself, and insisting on having a quiet vessel. The first lieutenant was not a noisy officer, and from these two, everybody else on board received their cues. A simple "all ready, sir," uttered by the first to the captain, in a common tone of voice, answered by a "very well, sir, get your anchor," in the same tone, set everything in motion. "Stamp and go," soon followed, and taking the whole scene together, Rose felt a strange excitement come over her. There were the shrill, animating music of the fife; the stamping time of the men at the bars; the perceptible motion of the ship, as she drew ahead to her anchor, and now and then the call between Wallace, who stood between the knight-heads, as commander-in-chief on the forecastle, (the second lieutenant's station when the captain does not take the trumpet, as very rarely happens,) and the "executive officer" aft, was "carrying on duty," all conspiring to produce this effect. At length, and it was but a minute or two from the time when the "stamp and go" commenced, Wallace called out "a short stay-peak, sir." "Heave and pull," followed, and the men left their bars.

The process of making sail succeeded. There was no "letting fall" a fore-topsail here, as on board a merchantman, but all the canvas dropped from the yards, into festoons, at the same instant. Then the three topsails were sheeted home and hoisted, all at once, and all in a single minute of time; the yards were counter-braced, and the capstan-bars were again manned. In two more minutes it was "heave and she's up and down." Then "heave and in sight," and "heave and pull again." The cat-fall was ready, and it was "hook on," when the fife seemed to turn its attention to another subject as the men catted the anchor. Literally, all this was done in less time than we have taken to write it down in, and in very little more time than the reader has wasted in perusing what we have here written.

The Poughkeepsie was now "free of bottom," as it is called, with her anchor catted and fished, and her position maintained in the basin where she lay, by the counter-bracing of her yards, and the counteracting force of the wind on her sails. It only remained to "fill away," by bracing her head-yards sharp up, when the vast mass overcame its inertia, and began to move through the water. As this was done, the jib and spanker were set. The two most beautiful things with which we are acquainted, are a graceful and high-bred woman entering or quitting a drawing-room, more particularly the last, and a man-of-war leaving her anchorage in a moderate breeze, and when not hurried for time. On the present occasion, Captain Mull was in no haste, and the ship passed out to windward of the light, as the Swash had done the previous night, under her three topsails, spanker and jib, with the light sails loose and flowing, and the courses hanging in the brails.

A great deal is said concerning the defective construction of the light cruisers of the navy, of late years, and complaints are made that they will not sail, as American cruisers ought to sail, and were wont to sail in old times. That there has been some ground for these complaints, we believe; though the evil has been greatly exaggerated, and some explanation may be given, we think, even in the cases in which the strictures are not altogether without justification. The trim of a light, sharp vessel is easily deranged; and officers, in their desire to command as much as possible, often get their vessels of this class too deep. They are, generally, for the sort of cruiser, over-sparred, over-manned, and over-provisioned; consequently, too deep. We recollect a case in which one of these delicate craft, a half-rigged brig, was much abused for "having lost her sailing." She did, indeed, lose her fore-yard, and, after that, she sailed like a witch, until she got a new one! If the facts were inquired into, in the spirit which ought

to govern such inquiries, it would be found that even most of the much-abused "ten sloops" proved to be better vessels than common. The St. Louis, the Vincennes, the Concord, the Fairfield, the Boston, and the Falmouth, are instances of what we mean. In behalf of the Warren, and the Lexington, we believe no discreet man was ever heard to utter one syllable, except as wholesome crafts. But the Poughkeepsie was a very different sort of vessel from any of the "ten sloops." She was every way a good ship, and, as Jack expressed it, was "a good goer." The most severe nautical critic could scarcely have found a fault in her, as she passed out between the islets, on the evening of the day mentioned, in the sort of undress we have described. The whole scene, indeed, was impressive, and of singular maritime characteristics.

The little islets scattered about, low, sandy, and untenanted, were the only land in sight all else was the boundless waste of waters. The solitary light rose like an aquatic monument, as if purposely to give its character to the view. Captain Mull had caused its lamps to be trimmed and lighted for the very reason that had induced Spike to do the same thing, and the dim star they presented was just struggling into existence, as it might be, as the brilliance left by the setting sun was gradually diminished, and finally disappeared. As for the ship, the hull appeared dark, glossy, and graceful, as is usual with a vessel of war. Her sails were in soft contrast to the colour of the hull, and they offered the variety and divergence from straight lines which are thought necessary to perfect beauty. Those that were set, presented the symmetry in their trim, the flatness in their hoist, and the breadth that distinguish a man-of-war; while those that were loose, floated in the air in every wave and cloud-like swell, that we so often see in light canvas that is released from the yards in a fresh breeze. The ship had an undress look from this circumstance, but it was such an undress as denotes the man or woman of the world. This undress appearance was increased by the piping down of the hammocks, which left the nettings loose, and with a negligent but still knowing look about them.

When half a mile from the islets, the main-yard was braced aback, and the maintopsail was laid to the mast. As soon as the ship had lost her way, two or three boats that had been towing astern, each with its boat-sitter, or keeper, in it, were hauled up alongside, or to the quarters, were "hooked on," and "run up" to the whistling of the call. All was done at once, and all was done in a couple of minutes. As soon as effected, the maintopsail was again filled, and away the ship glided.

Captain Mull was not in the habit of holding many consultations with his officers. If there be wisdom in a "multitude of counsellors," he was of opinion it was not on board a man-of-war. Napoleon is reported to have said that one bad general was better than two good ones; meaning that one head to an army, though of inferior quality, is better than a hydra of Solomons, or Cæsars. Captain Mull was much of the same way of thinking, seldom troubling his subordinates with anything but orders. He interfered very little with "working Willy," though he saw effectually that he did his duty. "The ship's gentleman" might enjoy his joke as much as he pleased, so long as he chose his time and place with discretion, but in the captain's presence joking was not tolerated, unless it were after dinner, at his own table, and in his own cabin. Even there it was not precisely such joking as took place daily, not to say hourly, in the midshipmen's messes.

In making up his mind as to the mode of proceeding on the present occasion, therefore, Captain Mull, while he had heard all that Mulford had to tell him, and had even encouraged Wallace to give his opinions, made up his decision for himself. After learning all that Harry had to communicate, he made his own calculations as to time and distance, and quietly determined to carry whole sail on the ship for the next four hours. This he did as the wisest course of making sure of getting to windward while he could, and knowing that the vessel could be brought under short canvas at any moment when it might be deemed necessary. The light was a beacon to let him know his distance with almost mathematical precision. It could be seen so many miles at sea, each mile being estimated by so many feet of elevation, and having taken that elevation, he was sure of his distance from the glittering object, so long as it could be seen from his own poop. It was also of use by letting him know the range of the reef, though Captain Mull, unlike Spike, had determined to make one leg off to the northward and eastward until he had brought the light nearly to the horizon, and then to make another to the southward and eastward, believing that the last stretch would bring him to the reef, almost as far to windward as he desired to be. In furtherance of

this plan, the sheets of the different sails were drawn home, as soon as the boats were in, and the Poughkeepsie, bending a little to the breeze, gallantly dashed the waves aside, as she went through and over them, at a rate of not less than ten good knots in the hour. As soon as all these arrangements were made, the watch went below, and from that time throughout the night, the ship offered nothing but the quiet manner in which ordinary duty is carried on in a well-regulated vessel of war at sea, between the hours of sun and sun. Leaving the good craft to pursue her way with speed and certainty, we must now return to the Swash.

Captain Spike had found the mooring of his brig a much more difficult task, on this occasion, than on that of his former attempt to raise the schooner. Then he had to lift the wreck bodily, and he knew that laying the Swash a few feet further ahead or astern, could be of no great moment, inasmuch as the moment the schooner was off the bottom, she would swing in perpendicularly to the purchases. But now one end of the schooner, her bows, was to remain fast, and it became of importance to be certain that the purchases were so placed as to bring the least strain on the masts while they acted most directly on the after body of the vessel to be lifted. This point gave Spike more trouble than he had anticipated. Fully one half of the remainder of the day, even after he had begun to heave upon his purchases, was spent in rectifying mistakes in connection with this matter, and in getting up additional securities to his masts.

In one respect Spike had, from the first, made a good disposition. The masts of the brig raked materially, and by bringing the head of the Swash in the direction of the schooner, he converted this fact, which might otherwise have been of great disadvantage, into a circumstance that was favourable. In consequence of the brig's having been thus moored, the strain, which necessarily led forward, came nearly in a line with the masts, and the latter were much better able to support it. Notwithstanding this advantage, however, it was found expedient to get up preventer-stays, and to give the spars all the additional support could be conveniently bestowed. Hours were passed in making these preliminary, or it might be better to say, secondary arrangements.

It was past five in the afternoon when the people of the Swash began to heave on their purchases as finally disposed. After much creaking, and the settling of straps and lashings into their places, it was found that everything stood, and the work went on. In ten minutes Spike found he had the weight of the schooner, so far as he should be obliged to sustain it at all, until the stern rose above the surface; and he felt reasonably secure of the doubloons. Further than this he did not intend to make any experiment on her, the Señor Montefalderon having abandoned all idea of recovering the vessel itself, now so much of the cargo was lost. The powder was mostly consumed, and that which remained in the hull must, by this time, be injured by dampness, if not ruined. So reasoned Don Juan at least.

As the utmost care was necessary, the capstan and windlass were made to do their several duties with great caution. As inch by inch was gained, the extra supports of the masts were examined, and it was found that a much heavier strain now came on the masts than when the schooner was raised before. This was altogether owing to the direction in which it came, and to the fact that the anchor planted off abeam was not of as much use as on the former occasion, in consequence of its not lying so much in a straight line with the direction of the purchases. Spike began to have misgivings on account of his masts, and this so much the more because the wind appeared to haul a little further to the northward, and the weather to look unsettled. Should a swell roll into the bight of the reef where the brig lay, by raising the hull a little too rudely, there would be the imminent danger of at least springing, if not of absolutely carrying away both the principal spars. It was therefore necessary to resort to extraordinary precautions, in order to obviate this danger.

The captain was indebted to his boatswain, who was now in fact acting as his mate, for the suggestion of the plan next adopted. Two of the largest spare spars of the brig were got out, with their heads securely lashed to the links of the chain by which the wreck was suspended, one on each side of the schooner. Pig-iron and shot were lashed to the heels of these spars, which carried them to the bottom. As the spars were of a greater length than was necessary to reach the rock, they necessarily lay at an inclination, which was lessened every inch the after body of the wreck was raised, thus forming props to the hull of the schooner.

Spike was delighted with the success of this scheme, of which he was assured by a single experiment in heaving. After getting the spars well planted at their heels, he even ordered the men to slacken the purchases a little, and found that he could actually relieve the brig from the strain, by causing the wreck to be supported altogether by these shores. This was a vast relief from the cares of the approaching night, and indeed alone prevented the necessity of the work's going on without interruption, or rest, until the end was obtained.

The people of the Swash were just assured of the comfortable fact related, as the Poughkeepsie was passing out from among the islets of the Dry Tortugas. They imagined themselves happy in having thus made a sufficient provision against the most formidable of all the dangers that beset them, at the very moment when the best laid plan for their destruction was on the point of being executed. In this respect, they resembled millions of others of their fellows, who hang suspended over the vast abyss of eternity, totally unconscious of the irretrievable character of the fall that is so soon to occur. Spike, as has been just stated, was highly pleased with his own expedient, and he pointed it out with exultation to the Señor Montefalderon, as soon as it was completed.

"A nicer fit was never made by a Lunnun leg-maker, Don Wan," the captain cried, after going over the explanations connected with the shores "there she stands, at an angle of fifty, with two as good limbs under her as a body could wish. I could now cast off everything, and leave the wreck in what they call 'statu quo,' which, I suppose, means on its pins, like a statue. The tafferel is not six inches below the surface of the water, and half an hour of heaving will bring the stern in sight."

"Your work seems ingeniously contrived to get up one extremity of the vessel, Don Esteban," returned the Mexican; but are you quite certain that the doubloons are in her?"

This question was put because the functionary of a government in which money was very apt to stick in passing from hand to hand was naturally suspicious, and he found it difficult to believe that Mulford, Jack Tier, and even Biddy, under all the circumstances, had not paid special attention to their own interests.

"The bag was placed in one of the transom-lockers before the schooner capsized," returned the captain, "as Jack Tier informs me; if so, it remains there still. Even the sharks will not touch gold, Don Wan."

"Would it not be well to call Jack, and hear his account of the matter once more, now we appear to be so near the Eldorado of our wishes?"

Spike assented, and Jack was summoned to the quarter-deck. The little fellow had scarce showed himself throughout the day, and he now made his appearance with a slow step, and reluctantly.

"You've made no mistake about them 'ere doubloons, I take it, Master Tier?" said Spike, in a very nautical sort of style of addressing an inferior. "You know them to be in one of the transom-lockers?"

Jack mounted on the breech of one of the guns, and looked over the bulwarks at the dispositions that had been made about the wreck. The tafferel of the schooner actually came in sight, when a little swell passed over it, leaving it for an instant in the trough. The steward thus caught a glimpse again of the craft on board which he had seen so much hazard, and he shook his head and seemed to be thinking of anything but the question which had just been put to him.

"Well, about that gold?" asked Spike, impatiently.

"The sight of that craft has brought other thoughts than gold into my mind, Captain Spike," answered Jack, gravely, "and it would be well for all us mariners, if we thought less of gold and more of the dangers we run. For hours and hours did I stand over eternity, on the bottom of that schooner, Don Wan, holdin' my life, as it might be, at the mercy of a few bubbles of air."

"What has all that to do with the gold? Have you deceived me about that locker, little rascal?"

"No, sir, I've not deceived you no, Captain Spike, no. The bag is in the upper transom-locker, on the starboard side. There I put it with my own hands, and a good lift it was; and there you'll find it, if you'll cut through the quarter-deck at the spot I can p'int out to you."

This information seemed to give a renewed energy to all the native cupidity of the captain, who called the men from their suppers, and ordered them to commence heaving anew. The word was passed to the crew that "it was now for doubloons," and they went to the bars and handspikes, notwithstanding the sun had set, cheerfully and cheering.

All Spike's expedients admirably answered the intended purposes. The stern of the schooner rose gradually, and at each lift the heels of the shores dropped in more perpendicularly, carried by the weights attached to them, and the spars stood as firm props to secure all that was gained. In a quarter of an hour, most of that part of the stern which was within five or six feet of the tafferel, rose above the water, coming fairly in view.

Spike now shouted to the men to "pall!" then he directed the falls to be very gradually eased off, in order to ascertain if the shores would still do their duty. The experiment was successful, and presently the wreck stood in its upright position, sustained entirely by the two spars. As the last were now nearly perpendicular, they were capable of bearing a very heavy weight, and Spike was so anxious to relieve his own brig from the strain she had been enduring, that he ordered the lashings of the blocks to be loosened, trusting to his shores to do their duty. Against this confidence the boatswain ventured a remonstrance, but the gold was too near to allow the captain to listen or reply. The carpenter was ordered over on the wreck with his tools, while Spike, the Señor Montefalderon, and two men to row the boat and keep it steady, went in the yawl to watch the progress of the work. Jack Tier was ordered to stand in the chains, and to point out, as nearly as possible, the place where the carpenter was to cut.

When all was ready, Spike gave the word, and the chips began to fly. By the use of the saw and the axe, a hole large enough to admit two or three men at a time, was soon made in the deck, and the sounding for the much-coveted locker commenced. By this time, it was quite dark; and a lantern was passed down from the brig, in order to enable those who searched for the locker to see. Spike had breasted the yawl close up to the hole, where it was held by the men, while the captain himself passed the lantern and his own head into the opening to reconnoitre.

"Ay, it's all right!" cried the voice of the captain from within his cell-like cavity. "I can just see the lid of the locker that Jack means, and we shall soon have what we are a'ter. Carpenter, you may as well slip off your clothes at once, and go inside; I will point out to you the place where to find the locker. You're certain, Jack, it was the starboard locker?"

"Ay, ay, sir, the starboard locker, and no other."

The carpenter had soon got into the hole, as naked as when he was born. It was a gloomy-looking place for a man to descend into at that hour, the light from the lantern being no great matter, and half the time it was shaded by the manner in which Spike was compelled to hold it.

"Take care and get a good footing, carpenter," said the captain, in a kinder tone than common, "before you let go with your hands; but I suppose you can swim, as a matter of course?"

"No, sir, not a stroke I never could make out in the water at all."

"Have the more 'care, then. Had I known as much, I would have sent another hand down; but mind your footing. More to the left, man more to the left. That is the lid of the locker your hand is on it; why do you not open it?"

"It is swelled by the water, sir, and will need a chisel, or some tool of that sort. Just call out to one of the men, sir, if you please, to pass me a chisel from my tool-chest. A good stout one will be best."

This order was given, and, during the delay it caused, Spike encouraged the carpenter to be cool, and above all to mind his footing. His own eagerness to get at the gold was so great that he kept his head in at the hole, completely cutting off the man within from all communication with the outer world.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Spike, a little sternly. "You shiver, and yet the water cannot be cold in this latitude. No, my hand makes it just the right warmth to be pleasant."

"It's not the water, Captain Spike I wish they would come with the chisel. Did you hear nothing, sir? I'm certain I did!"

"Hear! what is there here to be heard, unless there may be some fish inside, thrashing about to get out of the vessel's hold?"

"I am sure I heard something like a groan, Captain Spike. I wish you would let me come out, sir, and I'll go for the chisel myself; them men will never find it."

"Stay where you are, coward! are you afraid of dead men standing against walls? Stay where you are. Ah! here is the chisel now let us see what you can do with it."

"I am certain I heard another groan, Captain Spike. I cannot work, sir. I'm of no use here do let me come out, sir, and send a hand down that can swim."

Spike uttered a terrible malediction on the miserable carpenter, one we do not care to repeat; then he cast the light of the lantern full in the man's face. The quivering flesh, the pallid face, and the whole countenance wrought up almost to a frenzy of terror, astonished, as well as alarmed him.

"What ails you, man?" said the captain in a voice of thunder. "Clap in the chisel, or I'll hurl you off into the water. There is nothing here, dead or alive, to harm ye!"

"The groan, sir I hear it again! Do let me come out, Captain Spike."

Spike himself, this time, heard what even he took for a groan. It came from the depths of the vessel, apparently, and was sufficiently distinct and audible. Astonished, yet appalled, he thrust his shoulders into the aperture, as if to dare the demon that tormented him, and was met by the carpenter endeavouring to escape. In the struggle that ensued, the lantern was dropped into the water, leaving the half-frenzied combatants contending in the dark. The groan was renewed, when the truth flashed on the minds of both.

"The shores! the shores!" exclaimed the carpenter from within. "The shores!" repeated Spike, throwing himself back into the boat, and shouting to his men to "see all clear of the wreck!" The grating of one of the shores on the coral beneath was now heard plainer than ever, and the lower extremity slipped outward, not astern, as had been apprehended, letting the wreck slowly settle to the bottom again. One piercing shriek arose from the narrow cavity within; then the gurgling of water into the aperture was heard, when naught of sound could be distinguished but the sullen and steady wash of the waves of the gulf over the rocks of the reef.

The impression made by this accident was most profound. A fatality appeared to attend the brig; and most of the men connected the sad occurrence of this night with the strange appearance of the previous evening. Even the Señor Montefalderon was disposed to abandon the doubloons, and he urged Spike to make the best of his way for Yucatan, to seek a friendly harbour. The captain wavered, but avarice was too strong a passion in him to be easily

diverted from its object, and he refused to give up his purpose.

As the wreck was entirely free from the brig when it went down for the third time, no injury was sustained by the last on this occasion. By renewing the lashings, everything would be ready to begin the work anew and this, Spike was resolved to attempt in the morning. The men were too much fatigued, and it was too dark to think of pushing matters any further that night; and it was very questionable whether they could have been got to work. Orders were consequently given for all hands to turn in, the captain, relieved by Don Juan and Jack Tier, having arranged to keep the watches of the night.

"This is a sad accident, Don Esteban," observed the Mexican, as he and Spike paced the quarter-deck together, just before the last turned in; "a sad accident! My miserable schooner seems to be deserted by its patron saint. Then your poor carpenter!"

"Yes, he was a good fellow enough with a saw, or anadze," answered Spike, yawning. "But we get used to such things at sea. It's neither more nor less than a carpenter expended. Good night, Señor Don Wan; in the morning we'll be at that gold ag'in."

CHAPTER VI.

She's in a scene of nature's war,

The winds and waters are at strife;

And both with her contending for

The brittle thread of human life.

Miss Gould.

Spike was sleeping hard in his berth, quite early on the following morning, before the return of light, indeed, when he suddenly started up, rubbed his eyes, and sprang upon deck like a man alarmed. He had heard, or fancied he had heard, a cry. A voice once well known and listened to, seemed to call him in the very portals of his ear. At first he had listened to its words in wonder, entranced like the bird by the snake, the tones recalling scenes and persons that had once possessed a strong control over his rude feelings. Presently the voice became harsher in its utterance, and it said.

"Stephen Spike, awake! The hour is getting late, and you have enemies nearer to you than you imagine. Awake, Stephen, awake!"

When the captain was on his feet, and had plunged his head into a basin of water that stood ready for him in the state-room, he could not have told, for his life, whether he had been dreaming or waking, whether what he had heard was the result of a feverish imagination, or of the laws of nature. The call haunted him all that morning, or until events of importance so pressed upon him as to draw his undivided attention to them alone.

It was not yet day. The men were still in heavy sleep, lying about the decks, for they avoided the small and crowded fore-castle in that warm climate, and the night was apparently at its deepest hour. Spike walked forward to look for the man charged with the anchor-watch. It proved to be Jack Tier, who was standing near the galley, his arms folded as usual, apparently watching the few signs of approaching day that were beginning to be apparent in the western sky. The captain was in none of the best humours with the steward's assistant; but Jack had unaccountably got an ascendancy over his commander, which it was certainly very unusual for any

subordinate in the Swash to obtain. Spike had deferred more to Mulford than to any mate he had ever before employed; but this was the deference due to superior information, manners, and origin. It was common-place, if not vulgar; whereas, the ascendancy obtained by little Jack Tier was, even to its subject, entirely inexplicable. He was unwilling to admit it to himself in the most secret manner, though he had begun to feel it on all occasions which brought them in contact, and to submit to it as a thing not to be averted.

"Jack Tier," demanded the captain, now that he found himself once more alone with the other, desirous of obtaining his opinion on a point that harassed him, though he knew not why; "Jack Tier, answer me one thing. Do you believe that we saw the form of a dead or of a living man at the foot of the light-house?"

"The dead are never seen leaning against walls in that manner, Stephen Spike," answered Jack, coolly, not even taking the trouble to uncoil his arms. "What you saw was a living man; and you would do well to be on your guard against him. Harry Mulford is not your friend and there is reason for it."

"Harry Mulford, and living! How can that be, Jack? You know the port in which he chose to run."

"I know the rock on which you chose to abandon him, Captain Spike."

"If so, how could he be living and at the Dry Tortugas. The thing is impossible!"

"The thing is so. You saw Harry Mulford, living and well, and ready to hunt you to the gallows. Beware of him, then; and beware of his handsome wife!"

"Wife! the fellow has no wife he has always professed to be a single man!"

"The man is married and I bid you beware of his handsome wife. She, too, will be a witness ag'in you."

"This will be news, then, for Rose Budd. I shall delight in telling it to her, at least."

"T will be no news to Rose Budd. She was present at the wedding, and will not be taken by surprise. Rose loves Harry too well to let him marry, and she not present at the wedding."

"Jack, you talk strangely! What is the meaning of all this? I am captain of this craft, and will not be trifled with tell me at once your meaning, fellow."

"My meaning is simple enough, and easily told. Rose Budd is the wife of Harry Mulford."

"You're dreaming, fellow, or are wishing to trifle with me!"

"It may be a dream, but it is one that will turn out to be true. If they have found the Poughkeepsie sloop-of-war, as I make no doubt they have by this time, Mulford and Rose are man and wife."

"Fool! you know not what you say! Rose is at this moment in her berth, sick at heart on account of the young gentleman who preferred to live on the Florida Reef rather than to sail in the Molly!"

"Rose is not in her berth, sick or well; neither is she on board this brig at all. She went off in the light-house boat to deliver her lover from the naked rock and well did she succeed in so doing. God was of her side, Stephen Spike; and a body seldom fails with such a friend to support one."

Spike was astounded at these words, and not less so at the cool and confident manner with which they were pronounced. Jack spoke in a certain dogmatical, oracular manner, it is true, one that might have lessened his

authority with a person over whom he had less influence; but this in no degree diminished its effect on Spike. On the contrary, it even disposed the captain to yield an implicit faith to what he heard, and all so much the more because the facts he was told appeared of themselves to be nearly impossible. It was half a minute before he had sufficiently recovered from his surprise to continue the discourse.

"The light-house boat!" Spike then slowly repeated. "Why, fellow, you told me the light-house boat went adrift from your own hands!"

"So it did," answered Jack, coolly, "since I cast off the painter and what is more, went in it."

"You! This is impossible. You are telling me a fabricated lie. If you had gone away in that boat, how could you now be here? No, no it is a miserable lie, and Rose is below!"

"Go and look into her state-room, and satisfy yourself with your own eyes."

Spike did as was suggested. He went below, took a lamp that was always suspended, lighted in the main cabin, and, without ceremony, proceeded to Rose's state-room, where he soon found that the bird had really flown. A direful execration followed this discovery, one so loud as to awaken Mrs. Budd and Biddy. Determined not to do things by halves, he broke open the door of the widow's state-room, and ascertained that the person he sought was not there. A fierce explosion of oaths and denunciations followed, which produced an answer in the customary screams. In the midst of this violent scene, however, questions were put, and answers obtained, that not only served to let the captain know that Jack had told him nothing but truth, but to put an end to everything like amicable relations between himself and the relict of his old commander. Until this explosion, appearances had been observed between them; but, from that moment, there must necessarily be an end of all professions of even civility. Spike was never particularly refined in his intercourse with females, but he now threw aside even its pretension. His rage was so great that he totally forgot his manhood, and lavished on both Mrs. Budd and Biddy epithets that were altogether inexcusable, and many of which it will not do to repeat. Weak and silly as was the widow, she was not without spirit; and on this occasion she was indisposed to submit to all this unmerited abuse in silence. Biddy, as usual, took her cue from her mistress, and between the two, their part of the wordy conflict was kept up with a very respectable degree of animation.

"I know you I know you, now!" screamed the widow, at the top of her voice; "and you can no longer deceive me, unworthy son of Neptune as you are! You are unfit to be a lubber, and would be log-booked for an or'nary by every gentleman on board ship. You, a full-jiggered seaman! No, you are not even half-jiggered, sir; and I tell you so to your face."

"Yes, and it is n't half that might be tould the likes of yees!" put in Biddy, as her mistress stopped to breathe. "And it's Miss Rose you'd have for a wife, when Biddy Noon would be too good for ye! We knows ye, and all about ye, and can give yer history as complate from the day ye was born down to the prisent moment; and not find a good word to say in yer favour in all that time and a precious time it is, too, for a gentleman that would marry pretthy, young Miss Rose! Och! I scorn to look at ye, yer so ugly!"

"And trying to persuade me you were a friend of my poor, dear Mr. Budd, whose shoe you are unworthy to touch, and who had the heart and soul for the noble profession you disgrace," cut in the widow, the moment Biddy gave her a chance, by pausing to make a wry face as she pronounced the word "ugly." "I now believe you capasided them poor Mexicans, in order to get their money; and the moment we cast anchor in a road-side, I'll go ashore, and complain of you for murder, I will."

"Do, missus, dear, and I'll be your bail, will I, and swear to all that happened, and more too. Och! yer a wretch, to wish to be the husband of Miss Rose, and she so young and pretthy, and you so ould and ugly!"

"Come away come away, Stephen Spike, and do not stand wrangling with women, when you and your brig, and all that belongs to you, are in danger," called out Jack Tier from the companion-way. "Day is come; and what is much worse for you, your most dangerous enemy is coming with it."

Spike was almost livid with rage, and ready to burst out in awful maledictions; but at this summons he sprang to the ladder, and was on deck in a moment. At first, he felt a strong disposition to wreak his vengeance on Tier, but, fortunately for the latter, as the captain's foot touched the quarter-deck, his eye fell on the Poughkeepsie, then within half a league of the Swash, standing in toward the reef, though fully half a mile to leeward. This spectre drove all other subjects from his mind, leaving the captain of the Swash in the only character in which he could be said to be respectable, or that of a seaman. Almost instinctively he called all hands, then he gave one brief minute to a survey of his situation.

It was, indeed, time for the Swash to be moving. There she lay, with three anchors down, including that of the schooner, all she had, in fact, with the exception of her best bower, and one kedge, with the purchases aloft, in readiness for hooking on to the wreck, and all the extra securities up that had been given to the masts. As for the sloop-of-war, she was under the very same canvas as that with which she had come out from the Dry Tortugas, or her three top-sails, spanker, and jib; but most of her other sails were loose, even to her royals and flying-jibs; though closely gathered into their spars by means of the running gear. In a word, every sailor would know, at a glance, that the ship was merely waiting for the proper moment to spread her wings, when she would be flying through the water at the top of her speed. The weather looked dirty, and the wind was gradually increasing, threatening to blow heavily as the day advanced.

"Unshackle, unshackle!" shouted Spike to the boatswain, who was the first man that appeared on deck. "The bloody sloop-of-war is upon us, and there is not a moment to lose. We must get the brig clear of the ground in the shortest way we can, and abandon everything. Unshackle, and cast off for'ard and aft, men."

A few minutes of almost desperate exertion succeeded. No men work like sailors, when the last are in a hurry, their efforts being directed to counteracting squalls, and avoiding emergencies of the most pressing character. Thus was it now with the crew of the Swash. The clanking of chains lasted but a minute, when the parts attached to the anchors were thrust through the hawse-holes, or were dropped into the water from other parts of the brig. This at once released the vessel, though a great deal remained to be done to clear her for working, and to put her in the best trim.

"Away with this out-hauler!" again shouted Spike, casting loose the main-brails as he did so; "loose the jibs!"

All went on at once, and the Swash moved away from the grave of the poor carpenter with the ease and facility of motion that marked all her evolutions. Then the topsail was let fall, and presently all the upper square-sails were sheeted home, and hoisted, and the fore-tack was hauled aboard. The Molly was soon alive, and jumping into the seas that met her with more power than was common, as she drew out from under the shelter of the reef into rough water. From the time when Spike gave his first order, to that when all his canvas was spread, was just seven minutes.

The Poughkeepsie, with her vastly superior crew, was not idle the while. Although the watch below was not disturbed, she tacked beautifully, and stood off the reef, in a line parallel to the course of the brig, and distant from her about half a mile. Then sail was made, her tacks having been boarded in stays. Spike knew the play of his craft was short legs, for she was so nimble in her movements that he believed she could go about in half the time that would be required for a vessel of the Poughkeepsie's length. "Ready about," was his cry, therefore, when less than a mile distant from the reef "ready about, and let her go round." Round the Molly did go, like a top, being full on the other tack in just fifty-six seconds. The movement of the corvette was more stately, and somewhat more deliberate. Still, she stayed beautifully, and both Spike and the boatswain shook their heads, as they saw her coming into the wind with her sails all lifting and the sheets flowing.

"That fellow will fore-reach a cable's length before he gets about!" exclaimed Spike. "He will prove too much for us at this sport! Keep her away, my man keep the brig away for the passage. We must run through the reef, instead of trusting ourselves to our heels in open water."

The brig was kept away accordingly, and sheets were eased off, and braces just touched, to meet the new line of sailing. As the wind stood, it was possible to lay through the passage on an easy bowline, though the breeze, which was getting to be fresher than Spike wished it to be, promised to haul more to the southward of east, as the day advanced. Nevertheless, this was the Swash's best point of sailing, and all on board of her had strong hopes of her being too much for her pursuer, could she maintain it. Until this feeling began to diffuse itself in the brig, not a countenance was to be seen on her decks that did not betray intense anxiety; but now something like grim smiles passed among the crew, as their craft seemed rather to fly than force her way through the water, toward the entrance of the passage so often adverted to in this narrative.

On the other hand, the Poughkeepsie was admirably sailed and handled. Everybody was now on deck, and the first lieutenant had taken the trumpet. Captain Mull was a man of method, and a thorough man-of-war's man. Whatever he did was done according to rule, and with great system. Just as the Swash was about to enter the passage, the drum of the Poughkeepsie beat to quarters. No sooner were the men mustered, in the leeward, or the starboard batteries, than orders were sent to cast loose the guns, and to get them ready for service. Owing to the more leeward position of his vessel, and to the fact that she always head-reached so much in stays, Captain Mull knew that she would not lose much by luffing into the wind, or by making half-boards, while he might gain everything by one well-directed shot.

The strife commenced by the sloop-of-war, firing her weather bow-gun, single-shotted, at the Swash. No damage was done, though the fore-yard of the brig had a very narrow escape. This experiment was repeated three times, without even a rope-yarn being carried away, though the gun was pointed by Wallace himself, and well pointed, too. But it is possible for a shot to come very near its object and still to do no injury. Such was the fact on this occasion, though the "ship's gentleman" was a good deal mortified by the result. Men look so much at success as the test of merit, that few pause to inquire into the reasons of failures, though it frequently happens that adventures prosper by means of their very blunders. Captain Mull now determined on a half-board, for his ship was more to leeward than he desired. Directions were given to the officers in the batteries to be deliberate, and the helm was put down. As the ship shot into the wind, each gun was fired, as it could be brought to bear, until the last of them all was discharged. Then the course of the vessel was changed, the helm being righted before the ship had lost her way, and the sloop-of-war fell off again to her course.

All this was done in such a short period of time as scarcely to cause the Poughkeepsie to lose anything, while it did the Swash the most serious injury. The guns had been directed at the brig's spars and sails, Captain Mull desiring no more than to capture his chase, and the destruction they produced aloft was such as to induce Spike and his men, at first, to imagine that the whole hamper above their heads was about to come clattering down on deck. One shot carried away all the weather fore-topmast rigging of the brig, and would no doubt have brought about the loss of the mast, if another, that almost instantly succeeded it, had not cut the spar itself in two, bringing down, as a matter of course, everything above it. Nearly half of the main-mast was gouged out of that spar, and the gaff was taken fairly out of its jaws. The fore-yard was cut in the slings, and various important ropes were carried away in different parts of the vessel.

Flight, under such circumstances, was impossible, unless some extraordinary external assistance was to be obtained. This Spike saw at once, and he had recourse to the only expedient that remained; which might possibly yet save him. The guns were still belching forth their smoke and flames, when he shouted out the order to put the helm hard up. The width of the passage in which the vessels were was not so great but that he might hope to pass across it, and to enter a channel among the rocks, which was favourably placed for such a purpose, ere the sloop-of-war could overtake him. Whither that channel led, what water it possessed, or whether it were not a shallow cul de sac, were all facts of which Spike was ignorant. The circumstances, however, would not admit of

an alternative.

Happily for the execution of Spike's present design, nothing from aloft had fallen into the water, to impede the brig's way. Forward, in particular, she seemed all wreck; her fore-yard having come down altogether, so as to enriedthe forecastle, while her top-mast, with its dependent spars and gear, was suspended but a short distance above. Still, nothing had gone over the side, so as actually to touch the water, and the craft obeyed her helm as usual. Away she went, then, for the lateral opening in the reef just mentioned, driven ahead by the pressure of a strong breeze on her sails, which still offered large surfaces to the wind, at a rapid rate. Instead of keeping away to follow, the Poughkeepsie maintained her luff, and just as the Swash entered the unknown passage, into which she was blindly plunging, the sloop-of-war was about a quarter of a mile to windward, and standing directly across her stern. Nothing would have been easier, now, than for Captain Mull to destroy his chase; but humanity prevented his firing. He knew that her career must be short, and he fully expected to see her anchor; when it would be easy for him to take possession with his boats. With this expectation, indeed, he shortened sail, furling top-gallant-sails, and hauling up his courage. By this time, the wind had so much freshened, as to induce him to think of putting in a reef, and the step now taken had a double object in view.

To the surprise of all on board the man-of-war, the brig continued on, until she was fully a mile distant, finding her way deeper and deeper among the mazes of the reef without meeting with any impediment! This fact induced Captain Mull to order his Paixhans to throw their shells beyond her, by way of a hint to anchor. While the guns were getting ready, Spike stood on boldly, knowing it was neck or nothing, and beginning to feel a faint revival of hope, as he found himself getting further and further from his pursuers, and the rocks not fetching him up. Even the men, who had begun to murmur at what seemed to them to be risking too much, partook, in a slight degree, of the same feeling, and began to execute the order they had received to try to get the launch into the water, with some appearance of an intention to succeed. Previously, the work could scarcely be said to go on at all; but two or three of the older seamen now bestirred themselves, and suggestions were made and attended to, that promised results. But it was no easy thing to get the launch out of a half-rigged brig, that had lost her fore-yard, and which carried nothing square abaft. A derrick was used in common, to lift the stern of the boat, but a derrick would now be useless aft, without an assistant forward. While these things were in discussion, under the superintendence of the boatswain, and Spike was standing between the knight-heads, conning the craft, the sloop-of-war let fly the first of her hollow shot. Down came the hurtling mass upon the Swash, keeping every head elevated and all eyes looking for the dark object, as it went booming through the air above their heads. The shot passed fully a mile to leeward, where it exploded. This great range had been given to the first shot, with a view to admonish the captain how long he must continue under the guns of the ship, and as advice to come to. The second gun followed immediately. Its shot was seem to ricochet, directly in a line with the brig, making leaps of about half a mile in length. It struck the water about fifty yards astern of the vessel, bounded directly over her decks, passing through the main-sail and some of the fallen hamper forward, and exploded about a hundred yards ahead. As usually happens with such projectiles, most of the fragments were either scattered laterally, or went on, impelled by the original momentum.

The effect of this last gun on the crew of the Swash was instantaneous and deep. The faint gleamings of hope vanished at once, and a lively consciousness of the desperate nature of their condition succeeded in every mind. The launch was forgotten, and, after conferring together for a moment, the men went in a body, with the boatswain at their head, to the forecastle, and offered a remonstrance to their commander, on the subject of holding out any longer, under circumstances so very hazardous, and which menaced their lives in so many different ways. Spike listened to them with eyes that fairly glared with fury. He ordered them back to their duty in a voice of thunder, tapping the breast of his jacket, where he was known to carry revolvers, with a significance that could convey but one meaning.

It is wonderful the ascendancy that men sometimes obtain over their fellows, by means of character, the habits of command, and obedience, and intimidation. Spike was a stern disciplinarian, relying on that and ample pay for the unlimited control he often found it necessary to exercise over his crew. On the present occasion, his people were

profoundly alarmed, but habitual deference and submission to their leader counteracted the feeling, and held them in suspense. They were fully aware of the nature of the position they occupied in a legal sense, and were deeply reluctant to increase the appearances of crime; but most of them had been extricated from so many grave difficulties in former instances, by the coolness, nerve and readiness of the captain, that a latent ray of hope was perhaps dimly shining in the rude breast of every old sea-dog among them. As a consequence of these several causes, they abandoned their remonstrance, for the moment at least, and made a show of returning to their duty; though it was in a sullen and moody manner.

It was easier, however, to make a show of hoisting out the launch, than to effect the object. This was soon made apparent on trial, and Spike himself gave the matter up. He ordered the yawl to be lowered, got alongside, and to be prepared for the reception of the crew, by putting into it a small provision of food and water. All this time the brig was rushing madly to leeward, among rocks and breakers, without any other guide than that which the visible dangers afforded. Spike knew no more where he was going than the meanest man in his vessel. His sole aim was to get away from his pursuers, and to save his neck from the rope. He magnified the danger of punishment that he really ran, for he best knew the extent and nature of his crimes, of which the few that have been laid before the reader, while they might have been amongst the most prominent, as viewed through the statutes and international law, were far from the gravest he had committed in the eyes of morals.

About this time the Señor Montefalderon went forward to confer with Spike. The calmness of this gentleman's demeanour, the simplicity and coolness of his movements, denoted a conscience that saw no particular ground for alarm. He wished to escape captivity, that he might continue to serve his country, but no other apprehension troubled him.

"Do you intend to trust yourself in the yawl, Don Esteban?" demanded the Mexican quietly. "If so, is she not too small to contain so many as we shall make altogether?"

Spike's answer was given in a low voice; and it evidently came from a very husky throat.

"Speak lower, Don Wan," he said. "The boat would be greatly overloaded with all hands in it, especially among the breakers, and blowing as it does; but we may leave some of the party behind."

"The brig must go on the rocks, sooner or later, Don Esteban; when she does, she will go to pieces in an hour.

"I expect to hear her strike every minute, señor; the moment she does, we must be off. I have had my eye on that ship for some time, expecting to see her lower her cutters and gigs to board us. You will not be out of the way, Don Wan; but there is no need of being talkative on the subject of our escape."

Spike now turned his back on the Mexican, looking anxiously ahead, with the desire to get as far into the reef as possible with his brig, which he conned with great skill and coolness. The Señor Montefalderon left him. With the chivalry and consideration of a man and a gentleman, he went in quest of Mrs. Budd and Biddy. A hint sufficed for them, and gathering together a few necessaries they were in the yawl in the next three minutes. This movement was unseen by Spike, or he might have prevented it. His eyes were now riveted on the channel ahead. It had been fully his original intention to make off in the boat, the instant the brig struck, abandoning not only Don Juan, with Mrs. Budd and Biddy to their fates, but most of the crew. A private order had been given to the boatswain, and three of the ablest-bodied among the seamen, each and all of whom kept the secret with religious fidelity, as it was believed their own personal safety might be connected with the success of this plan.

Nothing is so contagious as alarm. It requires not only great natural steadiness of nerve, but much acquired firmness to remain unmoved when sudden terror has seized on the minds of those around us. Habitual respect had prevented the crew from interfering with the movements of the Mexican, who not only descended into the boat with his female companions uninterrupted, but also took with him the little bag of doubloons which fell to his

share from the first raising of the schooner. Josh and Jack Tier assisted in getting Mrs. Budd and Bidy over the side, and both took their own places in the yawl, as soon as this pious duty was discharged. This served as a hint to others near at hand; and man after man left his work to steal into the yawl, until every living being had disappeared from the deck of the Swash, Spike himself excepted. The man at the wheel had been the last to desert his post, nor would he have done so then, but for a signal from the boatswain, with whom he was a favourite.

It is certain there was a secret desire among the people of the Swash, who were now crowded into a boat not large enough to contain more than half their number with safety, to push off from the brig's side, and abandon her commander and owner to his fate. All had passed so soon, however, and events succeeded each other with so much rapidity, that little time was given for consultation. Habit kept them in their places, though the appearances around them were strong motives for taking care of themselves.

Notwithstanding the time necessary to relate the foregoing events, a quarter of an hour had not elapsed, from the moment when the Swash entered this unknown channel among the rocks, ere she struck. No sooner was her helm deserted than she broached—to, and Spike was in the act of denouncing the steerage, ignorant of its cause, when the brig was thrown, broadside—to, on a sharp, angular bed of rocks. It was fortunate for the boat, and all in it, that it was brought to leeward by the broaching—to of the vessel, and that the water was still sufficiently deep around them to prevent the waves from breaking. Breakers there were, however, in thousands, on every side; and the seamen understood that their situation was almost desperately perilous, without shipwreck coming to increase the danger.

The storm itself was scarcely more noisy and boisterous than was Spike, when he ascertained the manner in which his people had behaved. At first, he believed it was their plan to abandon him to his fate; but, on rushing to the lee—gangway, Don Juan Montefalderon assured him that no such intention existed, and that he would not allow the boat to be cast off until the captain was received on board. This brief respite gave Spike a moment to care for his portion of the doubloons; and he rushed to his state—room to secure them, together with his quadrant.

The grinding of the brig's bottom on the coral, announced a speedy breaking up of the craft, while her commander was thus employed. So violent were some of the shocks with which she came down on the hard bed in which she was now cradled, that Spike expected to see her burst asunder, while he was yet on her decks. The cracking of timbers told him that all was over with the Swash, nor had he got back as far as the gangway with his prize, before he saw plainly that the vessel had broken her back, as it is termed, and that her plank—sheer was opening in a way that threatened to permit a separation of the craft into two sections, one forward and the other aft.

Notwithstanding all these portentous proofs that the minutes of the Molly were numbered, and the danger that existed of his being abandoned by his crew, Spike paused a moment, ere he went over the vessel's side, to take a hasty survey of the reef. His object was to get a general idea of the position of the breakers, with a view to avoid them. As much of the interest of that which is to succeed is connected with these particular dangers, it may be well to explain their character, along with a few other points of a similar bearing.

The brig had gone ashore fully two miles within the passage she had entered, and which, indeed, terminated at the very spot where she had struck. The Poughkeepsie was standing off and on, in the main channel, with her boats in the water, evidently preparing to carry the brig in that mode. As for the breakers, they whitened the surface of the ocean in all directions around the wreck, far as the eye could reach, but in two. The passage in which the Poughkeepsie was standing to and fro was clear of them, of course; and about a mile and a half to the northward, Spike saw that he should be in open water, or altogether on the northern side of the reef, could he only get there. The gravest dangers would exist in the passage, which led among breakers on all sides, and very possibly among rocks so near the surface as absolutely to obstruct the way. In one sense, however, the breakers were useful. By avoiding them as much as possible, and by keeping in the unbroken water, the boat would be running in the channels of the reef, and consequently would be the safer. The result of the survey, short as it was, and it did not last a minute, was to give Spike something like a plan; and when he went over the side, and got into the boat, it was with a determination to work his way out of the reef to its northern edge, as soon as possible, and then to skirt

it as near as he could, in his flight toward the Dry Tortugas.

CHAPTER VII.

The screams of rage, the groan, the strife,

The blow, the grasp, the horrid cry,

The panting, throttled prayer for life,

The dying's heaving sigh,

The murderer's curse, the dead man's fixed, still glare,

And fear's and death's cold sweat they all are there.

Matthew Lee.

It was high time that Captain Spike should arrive when his foot touched the bottom of the yawl. The men were getting impatient and anxious to the last degree, and the power of Señor Montefalderon to control them was lessening each instant. They heard the rending of timber, and the grinding on the coral, even more distinctly than the captain himself, and feared that the brig would break up while they lay alongside of her, and crush them amid the ruins. Then the spray of the seas that broke over the weather side of the brig, fell like rain upon them; and everybody in the boat was already as wet as if exposed to a violent shower. It was well, therefore, for Spike that he descended into the boat as he did, for another minute's delay might have brought about his own destruction.

Spike felt a chill at his heart when he looked about him and saw the condition of the yawl. So crowded were the stern-sheets into which he had descended, that it was with difficulty he found room to place his feet; it being his intention to steer, Jack was ordered to get into the eyes of the boat, in order to give him a seat. The thwarts were crowded, and three or four of the people had placed themselves in the very bottom of the little craft, in order to be as much as possible out of the way, as well as in readiness to bail out water. So seriously, indeed, were all the seamen impressed with the gravity of this last duty, that nearly every man had taken with him some vessel fit for such a purpose. Rowing was entirely out of the question, there being no space for the movement of the arms. The yawl was too low in the water, moreover, for such an operation in so heavy a sea. In all, eighteen persons were squeezed into a little craft that would have been sufficiently loaded, for moderate weather at sea, with its four oarsmen and as many sitters in the stern-sheets, with, perhaps, one in the eyes to bring her more on an even keel. In other words, she had twice the weight in her, in living freight, that it would have been thought prudent to receive in so small a craft, in an ordinary time, in or out of a port. In addition to the human beings enumerated, there was a good deal of baggage, nearly every individual having had the forethought to provide a few clothes for a change. The food and water did not amount to much, no more having been provided than enough for the purposes of the captain, together with the four men with whom it had been his intention to abandon the brig. The effect of all this cargo was to bring the yawl quite low in the water; and every sea-faring man in her had the greatest apprehensions about her being able to float at all when she got out from under the lee of the Swash, or into the troubled water. Try it she must, however, and Spike, in a reluctant and hesitating manner, gave the final order to "Shove off!"

The yawl carried a lugg, as is usually the case with boats at sea, and the first blast of the breeze upon it satisfied Spike that his present enterprise was one of the most dangerous of any in which he had ever been engaged. The puffs of wind were quite as much as the boat would bear; but this he did not mind, as he was running off before it, and there was little danger of the yawl capsizing with such a weight in her. It was also an advantage to have swift

way on, to prevent the combing waves from shooting into the boat, though the wind itself scarce outstrips the send of the sea in a stiff blow. As the yawl cleared the brig and began to feel the united power of the wind and waves, the following short dialogue occurred between the boatswain and Spike.

"I dare not keep my eyes off the breakers ahead," the captain commenced, "and must trust to you, Strand, to report what is going on among the man-of-war's men. What is the ship about?"

"Reefing her top-sails just now, sir. All three are on the caps, and the vessel is laying-to, in a manner."

"And her boats?"

"I see none, sir ay, ay, there they come from alongside of her in a little fleet! There are four of them, sir, and all are coming down before the wind, wing and wing, carrying their luggs reefed."

"Ours ought to be reefed by rights, too, but we dare not stop to do it; and these infernal combing seas seem ready to glance aboard us with all the way we can gather. Stand by to bail, men; we must pass through a strip of white water there is no help for it. God send that we go clear of the rocks!"

All this was fearfully true. The adventurers were not yet more than a cable's length from the brig, and they found themselves so completely environed with the breakers as to be compelled to go through them. No man in his senses would ever have come into such a place at all, except in the most unavoidable circumstances; and it was with a species of despair that the seamen of the yawl now saw their little craft go plunging into the foam.

But Spike neglected no precaution that experience or skill could suggest. He had chosen his spot with coolness and judgment. As the boat rose on the seas he looked eagerly ahead, and by giving it a timely sheer, he hit a sort of channel, where there was sufficient water to carry them clear of the rock, and where the breakers were less dangerous than in the shoaler places. The passage lasted about a minute; and so serious was it, that scarce an individual breathed until it was effected. No human skill could prevent the water from combing in over the gunwales; and when the danger was passed, the yawl was a third filled with water. There was no time or place to pause, but on the little craft was dragged almost gunwale to, the breeze coming against the lugg in puffs that threatened to take the mast out of her. All hands were bailing; and even Bidy used her hands to aid in throwing out the water.

"This is no time to hesitate, men," said Spike, sternly. "Everything must go overboard but the food and water. Away with them at once, and with a will."

It was a proof how completely all hands were alarmed by this, the first experiment in the breakers, that not a man stayed his hand a single moment, but each threw into the sea, without an instant of hesitation, every article he had brought with him and had hoped to save. Bidy parted with the carpet-bag, and Señor Montefalderon, feeling the importance of example, committed to the deep a small writing-desk that he had placed on his knees. The doubloons alone remained, safe in a little locker where Spike had deposited them along with his own.

"What news astern, boatswain?" demanded the captain, as soon as this imminent danger was passed, absolutely afraid to turn his eyes off the dangers ahead for a single instant. "How come on the man-of-war's men?"

"They are running down in a body toward the wreck, though one of their boats does seem to be sheering out of the line, as if getting into our wake. It is hard to say, sir, for they are still a good bit to windward of the wreck."

"And the Molly, Strand?"

"Why, sir, the Molly seems to be breaking up fast; as well as I can see, she has broke in two just abaft the fore-chains, and cannot hold together in any shape at all many minutes longer."

This information drew a deep groan from Spike, and the eye of every seaman in the boat was turned in melancholy on the object they were so fast leaving behind them. The yawl could not be said to be sailing very rapidly, considering the power of the wind, which was a little gale, for she was much too deep for that, but she left the wreck so fast as already to render objects on board her indistinct. Everybodysaw that, like an overburthened steed, she had more to get along with than she could well bear; and, dependent as seamen usually are on the judgment and orders of their superiors, even in the direst emergencies, the least experienced man in her saw that their chances of final escape from drowning were of the most doubtful nature. The men looked at each other in a way to express their feelings; and the moment seemed favourable to Spike to confer with his confidential sea-dogs in private; but more white water was also ahead, and it was necessary to pass through it, since no opening was visible by which to avoid it. He deferred his purpose, consequently, until this danger was escaped.

On this occasion Spike saw but little opportunity to select a place to get through the breakers, though the spot, as a whole, was not of the most dangerous kind. The reader will understand that the preservation of the boat at all, in white water, was owing to the circumstance that the rocks all around it lay so near the surface of the sea as to prevent the possibility of agitating the element very seriously, and to the fact that she was near the lee side of the reef. Had the breakers been of the magnitude of those which are seen where the deep rolling billows of the ocean first meet the weather side of shoals or rocks, a craft of that size, and so loaded, could not possibly have passed the first line of white water without filling. As it was, however, the breakers she had to contend with were sufficiently formidable, and they brought with them the certainty that the boat was in imminent danger of striking the bottom at any moment. Places like those in which Mulford had waded on the reef, while it was calm, would now have proved fatal to the strongest frame, since human powers were insufficient long to withstand the force of such waves as did glance over even these shallows.

"Look out!" cried Spike, as the boat again plunged in among the white water. "Keep bailing, men keep bailing."

The men did bail, and the danger was over almost as soon as encountered. Something like a cheer burst out of the chest of Spike, when he saw deeper water around him, and fancied he could now trace a channel that would carry him quite beyond the extent of the reef. It was arrested, only half uttered, however, by a communication from the boatswain, who sat on a midship thwart, his arms folded, and his eye on the brig and the boats.

"There goes the Molly's masts, sir! Both have gone together; and as good sticks was they, before them bomb-shells passed through our rigging, as was ever stepped in a keelson."

The cheer was changed to something like a groan, while a murmur of regret passed through the boat.

"What news from the man-of-war's men, boatswain? Do they still stand down on a mere wreck?"

"No, sir; they seem to give it up, and are getting out their oars to pull back to their ship. A pretty time they'll have of it, too. The cutter that gets to windward half a mile in an hour, ag'in such a sea, and such a breeze, must be well pulled and better steered. One chap, however, sir, seems to hold on."

Spike now ventured to look behind him, commanding an experienced hand to take the helm. In order to do this he was obliged to change places with the man he had selected to come aft, which brought him on a thwart alongside of the boatswain and one or two other of his confidants. Here a whispered conference took place, which lasted several minutes, Spike appearing to be giving instructions to the men.

By this time the yawl was more than a mile from the wreck, all the man-of-war boats but one had lowered their sails, and were pulling slowly and with great labour back toward the ship, the cutter that kept on, evidently laying

her course after the yawl, instead of standing on toward the wreck. The brig was breaking up fast, with every probability that nothing would be left of her in a few more minutes. As for the yawl, while clear of the white water, it got along without receiving many seas aboard, though the men in its bottom were kept bailing without intermission. It appeared to Spike that so long as they remained on the reef, and could keep clear of breakers a most difficult thing, however they should fare better than if in deeper water, where the swell of the sea, and the combing of the waves, menaced so small and so deep—loaded a craft with serious danger. As it was, two or three men could barely keep the boat clear, working incessantly, and much of the time with a foot or two of water in her.

Josh and Simon had taken their seats, side by side, with that sort of dependence and submission that causes the American black to abstain from mingling with the whites more than might appear seemly. They were squeezed on to one end of the thwart by a couple of robust old sea—dogs, who were two of the very men with whom Spike had been in consultation. Beneath that very thwart was stowed another confidant, to whom communications had also been made. These men had sailed long in the Swash, and having been picked up in various ports, from time to time, as the brig had wanted hands, they were of nearly as many different nations as they were persons. Spike had obtained a great ascendancy over them by habit and authority, and his suggestions were now received as a sort of law. As soon as the conference was ended, the captain returned to the helm.

A minute more passed, during which the captain was anxiously surveying the reef ahead, and the state of things astern. Ahead was more white water the last before they should get clear of the reef; and astern it was now settled that the cutter that held on through the dangers of the place, was in chase of the yawl. That Mulford was in her Spike made no doubt; and the thought embittered even his present calamities. But the moment had arrived for something decided. The white water ahead was much more formidable than any they had passed; and the boldest seamen there gazed at it with dread. Spike made a sign to the boatswain, and commenced the execution of his dire project.

"I say, you Josh," called out the captain, in the authoritative tones that are so familiar to all on board a ship, "pull in that fender that is dragging alongside."

Josh leaned over the gunwale, and reported that there was no fender out. A malediction followed, also so familiar to those acquainted with ships, and the black was told to look again. This time, as had been expected, the negro leaned with his head and body far over the side of the yawl, to look for that which had no existence, when two of them beneath the thwart shoved his legs after them. Josh screamed, as he found himself going into the water, with a sort of confused consciousness of the truth; and Spike called out to Simon to "catch hold of his brother—nigger." The cook bent forward to obey, when a similar assault on his legs from beneath the thwart, sent him headlong after Josh. One of the younger seamen, who was not in the secret, sprang up to rescue Simon, who grasped his extended hand, when the too generous fellow was pitched headlong from the boat.

All this occurred in less than ten seconds of time, and so unexpectedly and naturally, that not a soul beyond those who were in the secret, had the least suspicion it was anything but an accident. Some water was shipped, of necessity, but the boat was soon bailed free. As for the victims of this vile conspiracy, they disappeared amid the troubled waters of the reef, struggling with each other. Each and all met the common fate so much the sooner, from the manner in which they impeded their own efforts.

The yawl was now relieved from about five hundred pounds of the weight it had carried Simon weighing two hundred alone, and the youngish seaman being large and full. So intense does human selfishness get to be, in moments of great emergency, that it is to be feared most of those who remained, secretly rejoiced that they were so far benefited by the loss of their fellows. The Señor Montefalderon was seated on the aftermost thwart, with his legs in the stern—sheets, and consequently with his back toward the negroes, and he fully believed that what had happened was purely accidental.

"Let us lower our sail, Don Esteban," he cried, eagerly, "and save the poor fellows."

Something very like a sneer gleamed on the dark countenance of the captain, but it suddenly changed to a look of assent.

"Good!" he said, hastily "spring forward, Don Wan, and lower the sail stand by the oars, men!"

Without pausing to reflect, the generous-hearted Mexican stepped on a thwart, and began to walk rapidly forward, steadying himself by placing his hands on the heads of the men. He was suffered to get as far as the second thwart past most of the conspirators, when his legs were seized from behind. The truth now flashed on him, and grasping two of the men in his front, who knew nothing of Spike's dire scheme, he endeavoured to save himself by holding to their jackets. Thus assailed, those men seized others with like intent, and an awful struggle filled all that part of the craft. At this dread instant the boat glanced into the white water, shipping so much of the element as nearly to swamp her, and taking so wild a sheer as nearly to broach-to. This last circumstance probably saved her, fearful as was the danger for the moment. Everybody in the middle of the yawl was rendered desperate by the amount and nature of the danger incurred, and the men from the bottom rose in their might, underneath the combatants, when a common plunge was made by all who stood erect, one dragging overboard another, each a good deal hastened by the assault from beneath, until no less than five were gone. Spike got his helm up, the boat fell off, and away from the spot it flew, clearing the breakers, and reaching the northern wall-like margin of the reef at the next instant. There was now a moment when those who remained could breathe, and dared to look behind them.

The great plunge had been made in water so shoal, that the boat had barely escaped being dashed to pieces on the coral. Had it not been so suddenly relieved from the pressure of near a thousand pounds in weight, it is probable that this calamity would have befallen it, the water received on board contributing so much to weight it down. The struggle between these victims ceased, however, the moment they went over. Finding bottom for their feet, they released each other, in a desperate hope of prolonging life by wading. Two or three held out their arms, and shouted to Spike to return and pick them up. This dreadful scene lasted but a single instant, for the waves dashed one after another from his feet, continually forcing them all, as they occasionally regained their footing, toward the margin of the reef, and finally washing them off it into deep water. No human power could enable a man to swim back to the rocks, once to leeward of them, in the face of such seas, and so heavy a blow; and the miserable wretches disappeared in succession, as their strength became exhausted, in the depths of the Gulf.

Not a word had been uttered while this terrific scene was in the course of occurrence; not a word was uttered for some time afterward. Gleams of grim satisfaction had been seen on the countenances of the boatswain and his associates, when the success of their nefarious project was first assured; but they soon disappeared in looks of horror, as they witnessed the struggles of the drowning men. Nevertheless, human selfishness was strong within them all, and none there was so ignorant as not to perceive how much better were the chances of the yawl now than it had been on quitting the wreck. The weight of a large ox had been taken from it, counting that of all the eight men drowned; and as for the water shipped, it was soon bailed back again into the sea. Not only, therefore, was the yawl in a better condition to resist the waves, but it sailed materially faster than it had done before. Ten persons still remained in it, however, which brought it down in the water below its proper load-line; and the speed of a craft so small was necessarily a good deal lessened by the least deviation from its best sailing, or rowing trim. But Spike's projects were not yet completed.

All this time the man-of-war's cutter had been rushing as madly through the breakers, in chase, as the yawl had done in the attempt to escape. Mulford was, in fact, on board it; and his now fast friend, Wallace, was in command. The latter wished to seize a traitor, the former to save the aunt of his weeping bride. Both believed that they might follow wherever Spike dared to lead. This reasoning was more bold than judicious notwithstanding, since the cutter was much larger, and drew twice as much water as the yawl. On it came, nevertheless, faring much better in the white water than the little craft it pursued, but necessarily running a much more considerable

risk of hitting the coral, over which it was glancing almost as swiftly as the waves themselves; still it had thus far escaped and little did any in it think of the danger. This cutter pulled ten oars; was an excellent sea boat; had four armed marines in it, in addition to its crew, but carried all through the breakers, receiving scarcely a drop of water on board, on account of the height of its wash-boards, and the general qualities of the craft. It may be well to add here, that the Poughkeepsie had shaken out her reefs, and was betraying the impatience of Captain Mull to make sail in chase, by firing signal-guns to his boats to bear a hand and return. These signals the three boats under their oars were endeavouring to obey, but Wallace had got so far to leeward as now to render the course he was pursuing the wisest.

Mrs. Budd and Biddy had seen the struggle in which the Señor Montefalderon had been lost, in a sort of stupid horror. Both had screamed, as was their wont, though neither probably suspected the truth. But the fell designs of Spike extended to them, as well as to those whom he had already destroyed. Now the boat was in deep water, running along the margin of the reef, the waves were much increased in magnitude, and the comb of the sea was far more menacing to the boat. This would not have been the case had the rocks formed a lee; but they did not, running too near the direction of the trades to prevent the billows that got up a mile or so in the offing, from sending their swell quite home to the reef. It was this swell, indeed, which caused the line of white water along the northern margin of the coral, washing on the rocks by a sort of lateral effort, and breaking, as a matter of course. In many places, no boat could have lived to pass through it.

Another consideration influenced Spike to persevere. The cutter had been overhauling him, hand over hand, but since the yawl was relieved of the weight of no less than eight men, the difference in the rate of sailing was manifestly diminished. The man-of-war's boat drew nearer, but by no means as fast as it had previously done. A point was now reached in the trim of the yawl, when a very few hundreds in weight might make the most important change in her favour; and this change the captain was determined to produce. By this time the cutter was in deep water, as well as himself, safe through all the dangers of the reef, and she was less than a quarter of a mile astern. On the whole, she was gaining, though so slowly as to require the most experienced eye to ascertain the fact.

"Madame Budd," said Spike, in a hypocritical tone, "we are in great danger, and I shall have to ask you to change your seat. The boat is too much by the stern, now we've got into deep water, and your weight amidships would be a great relief to us. Just give your hand to the boatswain, and he will help you to step from thwart to thwart, until you reach the right place, when Biddy shall follow."

Now Mrs. Budd had witnessed the tremendous struggle in which so many had gone overboard, but so dull was she of apprehension, and so little disposed to suspect anything one-half so monstrous as the truth, that she did not hesitate to comply. She was profoundly awed by the horrors of the scene through which she was passing, the raging billows of the Gulf, as seen from so small a craft, producing a deep impression on her; still a lingering of her most inveterate affectation was to be found in her air and language, which presented a strange medley of besetting weakness, and strong, natural, womanly affection.

"Certainly, Captain Spike," she answered, rising. "A craft should never go astern, and I am quite willing to ballast the boat. We have seen such terrible accidents today, that all should lend their aid in endeavouring to get under way, and in averting all possible hamper. Only take me to my poor, dear Rosy, Captain Spike, and everything shall be forgotten that has passed between us. This is not a moment to bear malice; and I freely pardon you all and everything. The fate of our unfortunate friend, Mr. Montefalderon, should teach us charity, and cause us to prepare for untimely ends."

All the time the good widow was making this speech, which she uttered in a solemn and oracular sort of manner, she was moving slowly toward the seat the men had prepared for her, in the middle of the boat, assisted with the greatest care and attention by the boatswain and another of Spike's confidants. When on the second thwart from aft, and about to take her seat, the boatswain cast a look behind him, and Spike put the helm down. The boat

luffed and lurched, of course, and Mrs. Budd would probably have gone overboard to leeward, by so sudden and violent a change, had not the impetus thus received been aided by the arms of the men who held her two hands. The plunge she made into the water was deep, for she was a woman of great weight for her stature. Still, she was not immediately gotten rid of. Even at that dread instant, it is probable that the miserable woman did not suspect the truth, for she grasped the hand of the boatswain with the tenacity of a vice, and, thus dragged on the surface of the boiling surges, she screamed aloud for Spike to save her. Of all who had yet been sacrificed to the captain's selfish wish to save himself, this was the first instance in which any had been heard to utter a sound, after falling into the sea. The appeal shocked even the rude beings around her, and Biddy chiming in with a powerful appeal to "save the missus!" added to the piteous nature of the scene.

"Cast off her hand," said Spike reproachfully, "she'll swamp the boat by her struggles get rid of her at once! Cut her fingers off, if she wont let go!"

The instant these brutal orders were given, and that in a fierce, impatient tone, the voice of Biddy was heard no more. The truth forced itself on her dull imagination, and she sat a witness of the terrible scene, in mute despair. The struggle did not last long. The boatswain drew his knife across the wrist of the hand that grasped his own, one shriek was heard, and the boat plunged into the trough of a sea, leaving the form of poor Mrs. Budd struggling with the wave on its summit, and amid the foam of its crest. This was the last that was ever seen of the unfortunate relict.

"The boat has gained a good deal by that last discharge of cargo," said Spike to the boatswain, a minute after they had gotten rid of the struggling woman "she is much more lively, and is getting nearer to her load—line. If we can bring her to that, I shall have no fear of the man—of—war's men; for this yawl is one of the fastest boats that ever floated."

"A very little now, sir, would bring us to our true trim."

"Ay, we must get rid of more cargo. Come, good woman," turning to Biddy, with whom he did not think it worth his while to use much circumlocution, "your turn is next. It's the maid's duty to follow her mistress."

"I know'd it must come," said Biddy, meekly. "If there was no mercy for the missus, little could I look for. But ye'll not take the life of a Christian woman widout giving her so much as one minute to say her prayers?"

"Ay, pray away," answered Spike, his throat becoming dry and husky, for, strange to say, the submissive quiet of the Irish woman, so different from the struggle he had anticipated with her, rendered him more reluctant to proceed than he had hitherto been in all of that terrible day. As Biddy kneeled in the bottom of the stern—sheets, Spike looked behind him, for the double purpose of escaping the painful spectacle at his feet, and that of ascertaining how his pursuers came on. The last still gained, though very slowly, and doubts began to come over the captain's mind whether he could escape such enemies at all. He was too deeply committed, however, to recede, and it was most desirable to get rid of poor Biddy, if it were for no other motive than to shut her mouth. Spike even fancied that some idea of what had passed was entertained by those in the cutter. There was evidently a stir in that boat, and two forms that he had no difficulty, now, in recognizing as those of Wallace and Mulford, were standing on the grating in the eyes of the cutter, or forward of the foresail. The former appeared to have a musket in his hand, and the other a glass. The last circumstance admonished him that all that was now done would be done before dangerous witnesses. It was too late to draw back, however, and the captain turned to look for the Irish woman.

Biddy arose from her knees, just as Spike withdrew his eyes from his pursuers. The boatswain and another confidant were in readiness to cast the poor creature into the sea, the moment their leader gave the signal. The intended victim saw and understood the arrangement, and she spoke earnestly and piteously to her murderers.

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"It's not wanting will be violence!" said Bidy, in a quiet tone, but with a saddened countenance. "I know it's my turn, and I will save yer sowls from a part of the burden of this great sin. God, and His Divine Son, and the Blessed Mother of Jesus have mercy on me if it be wrong; but I would far radder jump into the saa widout having the rude hands of man on me, than have the dreadfulsight of the missus done over ag'in. It's a fearful thing is wather, and sometimes we have too little of it, and sometimes more than we want "

"Bear a hand, bear a hand, good woman," interrupted the boatswain, impatiently. "We must clear the boat of you, and the sooner it is done the better it will be for all of us."

"Don't grudge a poor morthal half a minute of life, at the last moment," answered Bidy. "It's not long that I'll throuble ye, and so no more need be said."

The poor creature then got on the quarter of the boat, without any one's touching her; there she placed herself with her legs outboard, while she sat on the gunwale. She gave one moment to the thought of arranging her clothes with womanly decency, and then she paused to gaze with a fixed eye, and pallid cheek, on the foaming wake that marked the rapid course of the boat. The troughs of the sea seemed less terrible to her than their combing crests, and she waited for the boat to descend into the next.

"God forgive ye all, this deed, as I do!" said Bidy, earnestly, and bending her person forward, she fell, as it might be "without hands," into the gulf of eternity. Though all strained their eyes, none of the men, Jack Tier excepted, ever saw more of Bidy Noon. Nor did Jack see much. He got a frightful glimpse of an arm, however, on the summit of a wave, but the motion of the boat was too swift, and the water of the ocean too troubled, to admit of aught else.

A long pause succeeded this event. Bidy's quiet submission to her fate had produced more impression on her murderers than the desperate, but unavailing, struggles of those who had preceded her. Thus it is ever with men. When opposed, the demon within blinds them to consequences as well as to their duties; but, unresisted, the silent influence of the image of God makes itself felt, and a better spirit begins to prevail. There was not one in that boat who did not, for a brief space, wish that poor Bidy had been spared. With most, that feeling, the last of human kindness they ever knew, lingered until the occurrence of the dread catastrophe which, so shortly after, closed the scene of this state of being on their eyes.

"Jack Tier," called out Spike, some five minutes after Bidy was drowned, but not until another observation had made it plainly apparent to him that the man-of-war's men still continued to draw nearer, being now not more than fair musket-shot astern.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Jack, coming quietly out of his hole, from forward of the mast, and moving aft as if indifferent to the danger, by stepping lightly from thwart to thwart, until he reached the stern-sheets.

"It is your turn, little Jack," said Spike, as if in a sort of sorrowful submission to a necessity that knew no law, "we cannot spare you the room."

"I have expected this, and am ready. Let me have my own way, and I will cause you no trouble. Poor Bidy has taught me how to die. Before I go, however, Stephen Spike, I must leave you this letter. It is written by myself, and addressed to you. When I am gone, read it, and think well of what it contains. And now, may a merciful God pardon the sins of both, through love for His Divine Son. I forgive you, Stephen; and should you live to escape from those who are now bent on hunting you to the death, let this day cause you no grief on my account. Give me but a moment of time, and I will cause you no trouble."

Jack now stood upon the seat of the stern-sheets, balancing himself with one foot on the stern of the boat. He waited until the yawl had risen to the summit of a wave, when he looked eagerly for the man-of-war's cutter. At

that moment she was lost to view in the trough of the sea. Instead of springing overboard, as all expected, he asked another instant of delay. The yawl sank into the trough itself, and rose on the succeeding billow. Then he saw the cutter, and Wallace and Mulford standing in its bows. He waved his hat to them, and sprang high into the air, with the intent to make himself seen; when he came down the boat had shot her length away from the place, leaving him to buffet with the waves. Jack now managed admirably, swimming lightly and easily, but keeping his eyes on the crests of the waves, with a view to meet the cutter. Spike now saw this well-planned project to avoid death, and regretted his own remissness in not making sure of Jack. Everybody in the yawl was eagerly looking after the form of Tier.

"There he is on the comb of that sea, rolling over like a keg!" cried the boatswain.

"He 's through it," answered Spike, "and swimming with great strength and coolness."

Several of the men started up involuntarily and simultaneously to look, hitting their shoulders and bodies together. Distrust was at its most painful height; and bull-dogs do not spring at the ox's muzzle more fiercely than those six men throttled each other. Oaths, curses, and appeals for help, succeeded; each man endeavouring, in his frenzied efforts, to throw all the others overboard, as the only means of saving himself. Plunge succeeded plunge; and when that combat of demons ended, no one remained of them all but the boatswain. Spike had taken no share in the struggle, looking on in grim satisfaction, as the Father of Lies may be supposed to regard all human strife, hoping good to himself, let the result be what it might to others. Of the five men who thus went overboard, not one escaped. They drowned each other by continuing their maddened conflict in an element unsuited to their natures.

Not so with Jack Tier. His leap had been seen, and a dozen eyes in the cutter watched for his person, as that boat came foaming down before the wind. A shout of "There he is!" from Mulford succeeded; and the little fellow was caught by the hair, secured, and then hauled into the boat by the second lieutenant of the Poughkeepsie and our young mate.

Others in the cutter had noted the incident of the hellish fight. The fact was communicated to Wallace, and Mulford said, "That yawl will outsail this loaded cutter, with only two men in it."

"Then it is time to try what virtue there is in lead," answered Wallace. "Marines, come forward, and give the rascal a volley."

The volley was fired; one ball passed through the head of the boatswain, killing him dead on the spot. Another went through the body of Spike. The captain fell in the stern-sheets, and the boat instantly broached-to.

The water that came on board apprised Spike fully of the state in which he was now placed, and by a desperate effort, he clutched the tiller, and got the yawl again before the wind. This could not last, however. Little by little, his hold relaxed, until his hand relinquished its grasp altogether, and the wounded man sank into the bottom of the stern-sheets, unable to raise even his head. Again the boat broached-to. Every sea now sent its water aboard, and the yawl would soon have filled, had not the cutter come glancing down past it, and rounding-to under its lee, secured the prize.

CHAPTER VIII.

Man hath a weary pilgrimage,

As through the world he wends;

On every stage, from youth to age,
Still discontent attends;
With heaviness he casts his eye,
Upon the road before,
And still remembers with a sigh
The days that are no more.

Southey.

It has now become necessary to advance the time three entire days, and to change the scene to Key West. As this latter place may not be known to the world at large, it may be well to explain that it is a small seaport, situate on one of the largest of the many low islands that dot the Florida Reef, that has risen into notice, or indeed into existence as a town, since the acquisition of the Floridas by the American Republic. For many years it was the resort of few besides wreckers, and those who live by the business dependent on the rescuing and repairing of stranded vessels, not forgetting the salvages. When it is remembered that the greater portion of the vessels that enter the Gulf of Mexico stand close along this reef, before the trades, for a distance varying from one to two hundred miles, and that nearly everything which quits it, is obliged to beat down its rocky coast in the Gulf Stream for the same distance, one is not to be surprised that the wrecks, which so constantly occur, can supply the wants of a considerable population. To live at Key West is the next thing to being at sea. The place has sea air, no other water than such as is preserved in cisterns, and no soil, or so little as to render even a head of lettuce a rarity. Turtle is abundant, and the business of "turtling" forms an occupation additional to that of wrecking. As might be expected, in such circumstances, a potato is a far more precious thing than a turtle's egg, and a sack of the tubers would probably be deemed a sufficient remuneration for enough of the materials of callipash and callipee to feed all the aldermen extant.

Of late years, the government of the United States has turned its attention to the capabilities of the Florida Reef, as an advanced naval station; a sort of Downs, or St. Helen's Roads, for the West Indian seas. As yet little has been done beyond making the preliminary surveys, but the day is not probably very distant when fleets will lie at anchor among the islets described in our earlier chapters, or garnish the fine waters of Key West. For a long time it was thought that even frigates would have a difficulty in entering and quitting the port of the latter, but it is said that recent explorations have discovered channels capable of admitting anything that floats. Still Key West is a town yet in its chrysalis state, possessing the promise rather than the fruition of the prosperous days which are in reserve. It may be well to add, that it lies a very little north of the 24th degree of latitude, and in a longitude quite five degrees west from Washington. Until the recent conquests in Mexico it was the most southern possession of the American government, on the eastern side of the continent; Cape St. Lucas, at the extremity of Lower California, however, being two degrees farther south.

It will give the foreign reader a more accurate notion of the character of Key West, if we mention a fact of quite recent occurrence. A very few weeks after the closing scenes of this tale, the town in question was, in a great measure, washed away! A hurricane brought in the sea upon all these islands and reefs, water running in swift currents over places that within the memory of man were never before submerged. The lower part of Key West was converted into a raging sea, and everything in that quarter of the place disappeared. The foundation being of rock, however, when the ocean retired the island came into view again, and industry and enterprise set to work to repair the injuries.

The government has established a small hospital for seamen at Key West. Into one of the rooms of the building thus appropriated our narrative must now conduct the reader. It contained but a single patient, and that was Spike. He was on his narrow bed, which was to be but the precursor of a still narrower tenement, the grave. In the room with the dying man were two females, in one of whom our readers will at once recognize the person of Rose Budd, dressed in deep mourning for her aunt. At first sight, it is probable that a casual spectator would mistake the second female for one of the ordinary nurses of the place. Her attire was well enough, though worn awkwardly, and as if its owner were not exactly at ease in it. She had the air of one in her best attire, who was unaccustomed to be dressed above the most common mode. What added to the singularity of her appearance, was the fact, that while she wore no cap, her hair had been cut into short, gray bristles, instead of being long, and turned up, as is usual with females. To give a sort of climax to this uncouth appearance, this strange-looking creature chewed tobacco.

The woman in question, equivocal as might be her exterior, was employed in one of the commonest avocations of her sex that of sewing. She held in her hand a coarse garment, one of Spike's, in fact, which she seemed to be intently busy in mending; although the work was of a quality that invited the use of the palm and sail-needle, rather than that of the thimble and the smaller implement known to seamstresses, the woman appeared awkward in her business, as if her coarse-looking and dark hands refused to lend themselves to an occupation so feminine. Nevertheless, there were touches of a purely womanly character about this extraordinary person, and touches that particularly attracted the attention, and awakened the sympathy of the gentle Rose, her companion. Tears occasionally struggled out from beneath her eyelids, crossed her dark, sun-burnt cheek, and fell on the coarse canvas garment that lay in her lap. It was after one of these sudden and strong exhibitions of feeling that Rose approached her, laid her own little, fair hand, in a friendly way, though unheeded, on the other's shoulder, and spoke to her in her kindest and softest tones.

"I do really think he is reviving, Jack," said Rose, "and that you may yet hope to have an intelligent conversation with him."

"They all agree he must die," answered Jack Tier for it was he, appearing in the garb of his proper sex, after a disguise that had now lasted fully twenty years "and he will never know who I am, and that I forgive him. He must think of me in another world, though he is n't able to do it in this; but it would be a great relief to his soul to know that I forgive him."

"To be sure, a man must like to take a kind leave of his own wife before he closes his eyes for ever; and I dare say it would be a great relief to you to tell him that you have forgotten his desertion of you, and all the hardships it has brought upon you in searching for him, and in earning your own livelihood as a common sailor."

"I shall not tell him I've forgotten it, Miss Rose; that would be untrue and there shall be no more deception between us; but I shall tell him that I forgive him, as I hope God will one day forgive me all my sins."

"It is, certainly, not a light offence to desert a wife in a foreign land, and then to seek to deceive another woman," quietly observed Rose.

"He's a willian!" muttered the wife "but but "

"You forgive him, Jack yes, I'm sure you do. You are too good a Christian to refuse to forgive him."

"I'm a woman a'ter all, Miss Rose; and that, I believe, is the truth of it. I suppose I ought to do as you say, for the reason you mention; but I'm his wife and once he loved me, though that has long been over. When I firstknew Stephen, I'd the sort of feelin's you speak of, and was a very different creatur' from what you see me to-day. Change comes over us all with years and sufferin'."

Rose did not answer, but she stood looking intently at the speaker more than a minute. Change had, indeed, come over her, if she had ever possessed the power to please the fancy of any living man. Her features had always seemed diminutive and mean for her assumed sex, as her voice was small and cracked; but, making every allowance for the probabilities, Rose found it difficult to imagine that Jack Tier had ever possessed, even under the high advantages of youth and innocence, the attractions so common to her sex. Her skin had acquired the tanning of the sea; the expression of her face had become hard and worldly; and her habits contributed to render those natural consequences of exposure and toil even more than usually marked and decided. By saying "habits," however, we do not mean that Jack had ever drunk to excess, as happens with so many seamen, for this would have been doing her injustice, but she smoked and chewed practices that intoxicate in another form, and lead nearly as many to the grave as excess in drinking. Thus all the accessories about this singular being, partook of the character of her recent life and duties. Her walk was between a waddle and a seaman's roll, her hands were discoloured with tar, and had got to be full of knuckles, and even her feet had degenerated into that flat, broad-toed form that, perhaps, sooner distinguishes caste, in connection with outward appearances, than any one other physical peculiarity. Yet this being had once been young had once been even fair; and had once possessed that feminine air and lightness of form, that as often belongs to the youthful American of her sex, perhaps, as to the girl of any other nation on earth. Rose continued to gaze at her companion for some time, when she walked musingly to a window that looked out upon the port.

"I am not certain whether it would do him good or not to see this sight," she said, addressing the wife kindly, doubtful of the effect of her words even on the latter. "But here are the sloop-of-war, and several other vessels."

"Ay, she is there; but never will his foot be put on board the Swash ag'in. When he bought that brig I was still young, and agreeable to him; and he gave her my maiden name, which was Mary, or Molly Swash. But that is all changed; I wonder he did not change the name with his change of feelin's."

"Then you did really sail in the brig in former times, and knew the seaman whose name you assumed?"

"Many years. Tier, with whose name I made free, on account of his size, and some resemblance to me in form, died under my care; and his protection fell into my hands, which first put the notion into my head of hailing as his representative. Yes, I knew Tier in the brig, and we were left ashore at the same time; I, intentionally, I make no question; he, because Stephen Spike was in a hurry, and did not choose to wait for a man. The poor fellow caught the yellow fever the very next day, and did not live eight-and-forty hours. So the world goes; them that wish to live, die; and them that wants to die, live!"

"You have had a hard time for one of your sex, poor Jack quite twenty years a sailor, did you not tell me?"

"Every day of it, Miss Rose and bitter years have they been; for the whole of that time have I been in chase of my husband, keeping my own secret, and slaving like a horse for a livelihood."

"You could not have been old when he left that is when you parted."

"Call it by its true name, and say at once, when he deserted me. I was under thirty by two or three years, and was still like my own sex to look at. All that is changed since; but I was comely then."

"Why did Captain Spike abandon you, Jack; you have never told me that."

"Because he fancied another. And ever since that time he has been fancying others, instead of remembering me. Had he got you, Miss Rose, I think he would have been content for the rest of his days."

"Be certain, Jack, I should never have consented to marry Captain Spike."

"You're well out of his hands," answered Jack, sighing heavily, which was the most feminine thing she had done during the whole conversation, "well out of his hands and God be praised it is so. He should have died, before I would let him carry you off the island husband or no husband."

"It might have exceeded your power to prevent it under other circumstances, Jack."

Rose now continued looking out of the window in silence. Her thoughts reverted to her aunt and Biddy, and tears rolled down her cheeks as she remembered the love of one, and the fidelity of the other. Their horrible fate had given her a shock that, at first, menaced her with a severe fit of illness; but her strong, good sense, and excellent constitution, both sustained by her piety and Harry's manly tenderness, had brought her through the danger, and left her, as the reader now sees her, struggling with her own griefs, in order to be of use to the still more unhappy woman who had so singularly become her friend and companion.

The reader will readily have anticipated that Jack Tier had early made the females on board the Swash her confidants. Rose had known the outlines of her history from the first few days they were at sea together, which is the explanation of the visible intimacy that had caused Mulford so much surprise. Jack's motive in making his revelations might possibly have been tinctured with jealousy, but a desire to save one as young and innocent as Rose was at its bottom. Few persons but a wife would have supposed our heroine could have been in any danger from a lover like Spike; but Jack saw him with the eyes of her own youth, and of past recollections, rather than with those of truth. A movement of the wounded man first drew Rose from the window. Drying her eyes hastily, she turned toward him, fancying she might prove the better nurse of the two, notwithstanding Jack's greater interest in the patient.

"What place is this and why am I here?" demanded Spike, with more strength of voice than could have been expected, after all that had passed. "This is not a cabin not the Swash it looks like a hospital."

"It is a hospital, Captain Spike," said Rose, gently drawing near the bed; "you have been hurt, and have been brought to Key West, and placed in the hospital. I hope you feel better, and that you suffer no pain."

"My head is n't right I do n't know everything seems turned round with me perhaps it will all come out as it should. I begin to remember where is my brig?"

"She is lost on the rocks. The seas have broken her into fragments."

"That's melancholy news, at any rate. Ah! Miss Rose! God bless you I've had terrible dreams. Well, it's pleasant to be among friends what creature is that where does she come from?"

"That is Jack Tier," answered Rose, steadily. "She turns out to be a woman, and has put on her proper dress, in order to attend on you during your illness. Jack has never left your bedside since we have been here."

A long silence succeeded this revelation. Jack's eyes twinkled, and she hitched her body half aside, as if to conceal her features, where emotions that were unusual were at work with the muscles. Rose thought it might be well to leave the man and wife alone and she managed to get out of the room unobserved.

Spike continued to gaze at the strange-looking female, who was now his sole companion. Gradually his recollection returned, and with it the full consciousness of his situation. He might not have been fully aware of the absolute certainty of his approaching death, but he must have known that his wound was of a very grave character, and that the result might early prove fatal. Still that strange and unknown figure haunted him; a figure that was so different from any he had ever seen before, and which, in spite of its present dress, seemed to belong quite as much to one sex as to the other. As for Jack, we call Molly, or Mary Swash by her masculine appellation, not only because it is more familiar, but because the other name seems really out of place, as applied to such a

person as for Jack, then, she sat with her face half averted, thumbing the canvas, and endeavouring to ply the needle, but perfectly mute. She was conscious that Spike's eyes were on her; and a lingering feeling of her sex told her how much time, exposure, and circumstances, had changed her person and she would gladly have hidden the defects in her appearance.

Mary Swash was the daughter as well as the wife of a ship-master. In her youth, as has been said before, she had even been pretty, and down to the day when her husband deserted her, she would have been thought a female of a comely appearance rather than the reverse. Her hair in particular, though slightly coarse, perhaps, had been rich and abundant; and the change from the long, dark, shining, flowing locks which she still possessed in her thirtieth year, to the short, grey bristles that now stood exposed without a cap, or covering of any sort, was one very likely to destroy all identity of appearance. Then Jack had passed from what might be called youth to the verge of old age, in the interval that she had been separated from her husband. Her shape had changed entirely; her complexion was utterly gone; and her features, always unmeaning, though feminine, and suitable to her sex, had become hard and slightly coarse. Still there was something of her former self about Jack that bewildered Spike; and his eyes continued fastened on her for quite a quarter of an hour in profound silence.

"Give me some water," said the wounded man, "I wish some water to drink."

Jack arose, filled a tumbler and brought it to the side of the bed. Spike took the glass and drank, but the whole time his eyes were riveted on the strange nurse. When his thirst was appeased, he asked

"Who are you? How came you here?"

"I am your nurse. It is common to place nurses at the bedsides of the sick."

"Are you man or woman?"

"That is a question I hardly know how to answer. Sometimes I think myself each; sometimes neither."

"Did I ever see you before?"

"Often, and quite lately. I sailed with you in your last voyage."

"You! That cannot be. If so, what is your name?"

"Jack Tier."

A long pause succeeded this announcement, which induced Spike to muse as intently as his condition would allow, though the truth did not yet flash on his understanding. At length the bewildered man again spoke.

"Are you Jack Tier?" he said slowly, like one who doubted. "Yes I now see the resemblance, and it was that which puzzled me. Are they so rigid in this hospital that you have been obliged to put on woman's clothes in order to lend me a helping hand?"

"I am dressed as you see, and for good reasons."

"But Jack Tier run, like that rascal Mulford ay, I remember now; you were in the boat when I overhauled you all on the reef."

"Very true; I was in the boat. But I never run, Stephen Spike. It was you who abandoned me, on the islet in the Gulf, and that makes the second time in your life that you left me ashore, when it was your duty to carry me to

sea."

"The first time I was in a hurry, and could not wait for you; this last time you took sides with the women. But for your interference, I should have got Rose, and married her, and all would now have been well with me."

This was an awkward announcement for a man to make to his legal wife. But after all Jack had endured, and all Jack had seen during the late voyage, she was not to be overcome by this avowal. Her self-command extended so far as to prevent any open manifestation of emotion, however much her feelings were excited.

"I took sides with the women, because I am a woman myself," she answered, speaking at length with decision, as if determined to bring matters to a head at once. "It is natural for us all to take sides with our kind."

"You a woman, Jack! That is very remarkable. Since when have you hailed for a woman? You have shipped with me twice, and each time as a man though I've never thought you able to do seaman's duty."

"Nevertheless, I am what you see; a woman born and educated; one that never had on man's dress until I knew you. You supposed me to be a man, when I came off to you in the skiff to the eastward of Riker's Island, but I was then what you now see."

"I begin to understand matters," rejoined the invalid, musingly. "Ay, ay, it opens on me; and I now see how it was you made such fair weather with Madam Budd and pretty, pretty Rose. Rose is pretty, Jack; you must admit that, though you be a woman."

"Rose is pretty I do admit it; and what is better, Rose is good." It required a heavy draft on Jack's justice and magnanimity, however, to make this concession.

"And you told Rose and Madam Budd about your sex; and that was the reason they took to you so on the v'y'ge?"

"I told them who I was, and why I went abroad as a man. They know my whole story."

"Did Rose approve of your sailing under false colours, Jack?"

"You must ask that of Rose herself. My story made her my friend; but she never said anything for or against my disguise."

"It was no great disguise a'ter all, Jack. Now you're fitted out in your own clothes, you've a sort of half-rigged look; one would be as likely to set you down for a man under jury-canvas, as for a woman."

Jack made no answer to this, but she sighed very heavily. As for Spike himself, he was silent for some little time, not only from exhaustion, but because he suffered pain from his wound. The needle was diligently but awkwardly plied in this pause.

Spike's ideas were still a little confused; but a silence and rest of a quarter of an hour cleared them materially. At the end of that time he again asked for water. When he had drunk, and Jack was once more seated, with his side-face toward him, at work with the needle, the captain gazed long and intently at this strange woman. It happened that the profile of Jack preserved more of the resemblance to her former self, than the full face; and it was this resemblance that now attracted Spike's attention, though not the smallest suspicion of the truth yet gleamed upon him. He saw something that was familiar, though he could not even tell what that something was, much less to what or whom it bore any resemblance. At length he spoke.

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"I was told that Jack Tier was dead," he said; "that he took the fever, and was in his grave within eight-and-fortyhours after we sailed. That was what they told me of him."

"And what did they tell you of your own wife, Stephen Spike. She that you left ashore at the time Jack was left?"

"They said she did not die for three years later. I heard of her death at New Orleans, three years later."

"And how could you leave her ashore she, your true and lawful wife?"

"It was a bad thing," answered Spike, who, like all other mortals, regarded his own past career, now that he stood on the edge of the grave, very differently from what he had regarded it in the hour of his health and strength.

"Yes, it was a very bad thing; and I wish it was undone. But it is too late now. She died of the fever, too that's some comfort; had she died of a broken heart, I could not have forgiven myself. Molly was not without her faults great faults, I considered them; but, on the whole, Molly was a good creatur'."

"You liked her, then, Stephen Spike?"

"I can truly say that when I married Molly, and old Captain Swash put his daughter's hand into mine, that the woman was n't living who was better in my judgment, or handsomer in my eyes."

"Ay, ay when you married her; but how was it afterwards? when you was tired of her, and saw another that was fairer in your eyes?"

"I deserted her; and God has punished me for the sin! Do you know, Jack, that luck has never been with me since that day. Often and often have I bethought me of it; and sartin as you sit there, no great luck has ever been with me, or my craft, since I went off, leaving my wife ashore. What was made in one v'y'ge, was lost in the next. Up and down, up and down the whole time, for so many, many long years, that grey hairs set in, and old age was beginning to get close aboard and I as poor as ever. It has been rub and go with me ever since; and I have had as much as I could do to keep the brig in motion, as the only means that was left to make the two ends meet."

"And did not all this make you think of your poor wife she whom you had so wronged?"

"I thought of little else, until I heard of her death at New Orleans and then I gave it up as useless. Could I have fallen in with Molly at any time a'ter the first six months of my desertion, she and I would have come together again, and everything would have been forgotten. I knowed her very nature, which was all forgiveness to me at the bottom, though seemingly so spiteful and hard."

"Yet you wanted to have this Rose Budd, who is only too young, and handsome, and good for you."

"I was tired of being a widower, Jack; and Rose is wonderful pretty. She has money, too, and might make the evening of my days comfortable. The brig was old, as you must know, and has long been off of all the Insurance Offices' books; and she could n't hold together much longer. But for this sloop-of-war, I should have put her off on the Mexicans; and they would have lost her to our people in a month."

"And was it an honest thing to sell an old and worn-out craft to any one, Stephen Spike?"

Spike had a conscience that had become hard as iron by means of trade. He who traffics much, most especially if his dealings be on so small a scale as to render constant investigations of the minor qualities of things necessary, must be a very fortunate man, if he preserve his conscience in any better condition. When Jack made this allusion, therefore, the dying man for death was much nearer to Spike than even he supposed, though he no longer hoped for his own recovery when Jack made this allusion, then, the dying man was a good deal at a loss to comprehend

it. He saw no particular harm in making the best bargain he could; nor was it easy for him to understand why he might not dispose of anything he possessed for the highest price that was to be had. Still he answered in an apologetic sort of way.

"The brig was old, I acknowledge," he said, "but she was strong, and might have run a long time. I only spoke of her capture as a thing likely to take place soon, if the Mexicans got her; so that her qualities were of no great account, unless it might be her speed and that you know was excellent, Jack."

"And you regret that brig, Stephen Spike, lying as you do on your death-bed, more than anything else."

"Not as much as I do pretty Rose Budd, Jack; Rosy is so delightful to look at!"

The muscles of Jack's face twitched a little, and she looked deeply mortified; for, to own the truth, she hoped that the conversation had so far turned her delinquent husband's thoughts to the past, as to have revived in him some of his former interest in herself. It is true, he still believed her dead; but this was a circumstance Jack overlooked so hard is it to hear the praises of a rival, and be just. She felt the necessity of being more explicit, and determined at once to come to the point.

"Stephen Spike," she said, steadily, drawing near to the bed-side, "you should be told the truth, when you are heard thus extolling the good looks of Rose Budd, with less than eight-and-forty hours of life remaining. Mary Swash did not die, as you have supposed, three years a'ter you deserted her, but is living at this moment. Had you read the letter I gave you in the boat, just before you made me jump into the sea, that would have told you where she is to be found."

Spike stared at the speaker intently; and when her cracked voice ceased, his look was that of a man who was terrified as well as bewildered. This did not arise still from any gleamings of the real state of the case, but from the soreness with which his conscience pricked him, when he heard that his much-wronged wife was alive. He fancied, with a vivid and rapid glance at the probabilities, all that a woman abandoned would be likely to endure in the course of so many long and suffering years.

"Are you sure of what you say, Jack? You would n't take advantage of my situation to tell me an untruth?"

"As certain of it as of my own existence. I have seen her quite lately talked with her of you in short, she is now at Key West, knows your state, and has a wife's feelin's to come to your bed-side."

Notwithstanding all this, and the many gleamings he had had of the facts during their late intercourse on board the brig, Spike did not guess at the truth. He appeared astounded, and his terror seemed to increase.

"I have another thing to tell you," continued Jack, pausing but a moment to collect her own thoughts. "Jack Tier the real Jack Tier he who sailed with you of old, and whom you left ashore at the same time you deserted your wife, did die of the fever, as you was told, in eight-and-forty hours a'ter the brig went to sea."

"Then who, in the name of Heaven, are you? How came you to hail by another's name as well as by another sex?"

"What could a woman do, whose husband had deserted her in a strange land?"

"That is remarkable! So you've been married? I should not have thought that possible; and your husband deserted you, too. Well, such things do happen."

Jack now felt a severe pang. She could not but see that her ungainly we had almost said her unearthly appearance prevented the captain from even yet suspecting the truth; and the meaning of his language was not

easily to be mistaken. That any one should have married her, seemed to her husband as improbable as it was probable he would run away from her as soon as it was in his power after the ceremony.

"Stephen Spike," resumed Jack, solemnly, "I am Mary Swash I am your wife!"

Spike started in his bed; then he buried his face in the coverlet and he actually groaned. In bitterness of spirit the woman turned away and wept. Her feelings had been blunted by misfortune and the collisions of a selfish world; but enough of former self remained to make this the hardest of all the blows she had ever received. Her husband, dying as he was, as he must and did know himself to be, shrunk from one of her appearance, unsexed as she had become by habits, and changed by years and suffering.

CHAPTER IX.

The trusting heart's repose, the paradise

Of home, with all its loves, doth fate allow

The crown of glory unto woman's brow.

Mrs. Hemans.

It has again become necessary to advance the time; and we shall take the occasion thus offered to make a few explanations touching certain events which have been passed over without notice.

The reason why Captain Mull did not chase the yawl of the brig in the Poughkeepsie herself, was the necessity of waiting for his own boats that were endeavouring to regain the sloop-of-war. It would not have done to abandon them, inasmuch as the men were so much exhausted by the pull to windward, that when they reached the vessel all were relieved from duty for the rest of the day. As soon, however, as the other boats were hoisted in, or run up, the ship filled away, stood out of the passage and ran down to join the cutter of Wallace, which was endeavouring to keep its position, as much as possible, by making short tacks under close-reefed luggs.

Spike had been received on board the sloop-of-war, sent into her sick bay, and put under the care of the surgeon and his assistants. From the first, these gentlemen pronounced the hurt mortal. The wounded man was insensible most of the time, until the ship had beat up and gone into Key West, where he was transferred to the regular hospital, as has already been mentioned.

The wreckers went out the moment the news of the calamity of the Swash reached their ears. Some went in quest of the doubloons of the schooner, and others to pick up anything valuable that might be discovered in the neighbourhood of the stranded brig. It may be mentioned here, that not much was ever obtained from the brigantine, with the exception of a few spars, the sails, and a little rigging; but, in the end, the schooner was raised, by means of the chain Spike had placed around her, the cabin was ransacked, and the doubloons were recovered. As there was no one to claim the money, it was quietly divided among the conscientious citizens present at its re-visiting "the glimpses of the moon," making gold plenty.

The doubloons in the yawl would have been lost but for the sagacity of Mulford. He too well knew the character of Spike to believe he would quit the brig without taking the doubloons with him. Acquainted with the boat, he examined the little locker in the stern-sheets, and found the two bags, one of which was probably the lawful property of Captain Spike, while the other, in truth, belonged to the Mexican government. The last contained the most gold, but the first amounted to a sum that our young mate knew to be very considerable. Rose had made him acquainted with the sex of Jack Tier since their own marriage; and he at once saw that the claims of this uncouth

wife, who was so soon to be a widow, to the gold in question, might prove to be as good in law, as they unquestionably were in morals. On representing the facts of the case to Captain Mull and the legal functionaries at Key West, it was determined to relinquish this money to the heirs of Spike, as, indeed, they must have done under process, there being no other claimant. These doubloons, however, did not amount to the full price of the flour and powder that composed the cargo of the Swash. The cargo had been purchased with Mexican funds; and all that Spike or his heirs could claim, was the high freight for which he had undertaken the delicate office of transporting those forbidden articles, contraband of war, to the Dry Tortugas.

Mulford by this time was high in the confidence and esteem of all on board the Poughkeepsie. He had frankly explained his whole connexion with Spike, not even attempting to conceal the reluctance he had felt to betray the brig after he had fully ascertained the fact of his commander's treason. The manly gentlemen with whom he was now brought in contact entered into his feelings, and admitted that it was an office no one could desire, to turn against the craft in which he sailed. It is true, they could not and would not be traitors, but Mulford had stopped far short of this; and the distinction between such a character and that of an informer was wide enough to satisfy all their scruples.

Then Rose had the greatest success with the gentlemen of the Poughkeepsie. Her youth, beauty, and modesty, told largely in her favour; and the simple, womanly affection she unconsciously betrayed in behalf of Harry, touched the heart of every observer. When the intelligence of her aunt's fate reached her, the sorrow she manifested was so profound and natural, that every one sympathized with her grief. Nor would she be satisfied unless Mulford would consent to go in search of the bodies. The latter knew the hopelessness of such an excursion, but he could not refuse to comply. He was absent on that melancholy duty, therefore, at the moment of the scene related in our last chapter, and did not return until after that which we are now about to lay before the reader. Mrs. Budd, Bidy, and all of those who perished after the yawl got clear of the reef, were drowned in deep water, and no more was ever seen of any of them; or, if wreckers did pass them, they did not stop to bury the dead. It was different, however, with those, who were first sacrificed to Spike's selfishness. They were drowned on the reef, and Harry did actually recover the bodies of the Señor Montefalderon, and of Josh, the steward. They had washed upon a rock that is bare at low water. He took them both to the Dry Tortugas, and had them interred along with the other dead at that place. Don Juan was placed side by side with his unfortunate countryman, the master of his equally unfortunate schooner.

While Harry was absent and thus employed, Rose wept much and prayed more. She would have felt herself almost alone in the world, but for the youth to whom she had so recently, less than a week before, plighted her faith in wedlock. That new tie, it is true, was of sufficient importance to counteract many of the ordinary feelings of her situation; and she now turned to it as the one which absorbed most of the future duties of her life. Still she missed the kindness, the solicitude, even the weaknesses of her aunt; and the terrible manner in which Mrs. Budd had perished, made her shudder with horror whenever she thought of it. Poor Bidy, too, came in for her share of the regrets. This faithful creature, who had been in the relict's service ever since Rose's infancy, had become endeared to her, in spite of her uncouth manners and confused ideas, by the warmth of her heart, and the singular truth of her feelings. Bidy, of all her family, had come to America, leaving behind her not only brothers and sisters, but parents living. Each year did she remit to the last a moiety of her earnings, and many a half-dollar that had come from Rose's pretty little hand, had been converted into gold, and forwarded on the same pious errand to the green island of her nativity. Ireland, unhappy country! at this moment what are not the dire necessities of thy poor! Here, from the midst of abundance, in a land that God has blessed in its productions far beyond the limits of human wants, a land in which famine was never known, do we at this moment hear thy groans, and listen to tales of suffering that to us seem almost incredible. In the midst of these chilling narratives, our eyes fall on an appeal to the English nation, that appears in what it is the fashion of some to term the first journal of Europe (!) in behalf of thy suffering people. A worthy appeal to the charity of England seldom fails; but it seems to us that one sentiment of this might have been altered, if not spared. The English are asked to be "forgetful of the past," and to come forward to the relief of their suffering fellow-subjects. We should have written "mindful of the past," in its stead. We say this in charity, as well as in truth. We come of English blood, and if we claim to share in all the

ancient renown of that warlike and enlightened people, we are equally bound to share in the reproaches that original misgovernment has inflicted on thee. In this latter sense, then, thou hast a right to our sympathies, and they are not withheld.

As has been already said, we now advance the time eight—and—forty hours, and again transfer the scene to that room in the hospital which was occupied by Spike. The approaches of death, during the interval just named, had been slow but certain. The surgeons had announced that the wounded man could not possibly survive the coming night; and he himself had been made sensible that his end was near. It is scarcely necessary to add that Stephen Spike, conscious of his vigour and strength, in command of his brig, and bent on the pursuits of worldly gains, or of personal gratification, was a very different person from him who now lay stretched on his pallet in the hospital of Key West, a dying man. By the side of his bed still sat his strange nurse, less peculiar in appearance, however, than when last seen by the reader.

Rose Budd had been ministering to the ungainly externals of Jack Tier. She now wore a cap, thus concealing the short, grey bristles of hair, and lending to her countenance a little of that softness which is a requisite of female character. Some attention had also been paid to the rest of her attire; and Jack was, altogether, less repulsive in her exterior than when, unaided, she had attempted to resume the proper garb of her sex. Use and association, too, had contributed a little to revive her woman's nature, if we may so express it, and she had begun, in particular, to feel the sort of interest in her patient which we all come in time to entertain toward any object of our especial care. We do not mean that Jack had absolutely ever ceased to love her husband; strange as it may seem, such had not literally been the case; on the contrary, her interest in him and in his welfare had never ceased, even while she saw his vices and detested his crimes; but all we wish to say here is, that she was getting, in addition to the long—enduring feelings of a wife, some of the interest of a nurse.

During the whole time which had elapsed between Jack's revealing her true character, and the moment of which we are now writing, Spike had not once spoken to his wife. Often had she caught his eyes intently riveted on her, when he would turn them away, as she feared, in distaste; and once or twice he groaned deeply, more like a man who suffered mental than bodily pain. Still the patient did not speak once in all the time mentioned. We should be representing poor Jack as possessing more philosophy, or less feeling, than the truth would warrant, were we to say that she was not hurt at this conduct in her husband. On the contrary, she felt it deeply; and more than once it had so far subdued her pride, as to cause her bitterly to weep. This shedding of tears, however, was of service to Jack in one sense, for it had the effect of renewing old impressions, and in a certain way, of reviving the nature of her sex within her a nature which had been sadly weakened by her past life.

But the hour had at length come when this long and painful silence was to be broken. Jack and Rose were alone with the patient, when the last again spoke to his wife.

"Molly poor Molly!" said the dying man, his voice continuing full and deep to the last, "what a sad time you must have had of it after I did you that wrong!"

"It is hard upon a woman, Stephen, to turn her out, helpless, on a cold and selfish world," answered Jack, simply, much too honest to affect a reserve she did not feel.

"It was hard, indeed; may God forgive me for it, as I hope ye do, Molly."

No answer was made to this appeal; and the invalid looked anxiously at his wife. The last sat at her work, which had now got to be less awkward to her, with her eyes bent on her needle, her countenance rigid, and, so far as the eye could discern, her feelings unmoved.

"Your husband speaks to you, Jack Tier," said Rose, pointedly.

"May yours never have occasion to speak to you, Rose Budd, in the same way," was the solemn answer. "I do not flatter myself that I ever was as comely as you, or that yonder poor dying wretch was a Harry Mulford in his youth; but we were young and happy, and respected once, and loved each other, yet you see what it's all come to!"

Rose was silenced, though she had too much tenderness in behalf of her own youthful and manly bridegroom to dread a fate similar to that which had overtaken poor Jack. Spike now seemed disposed to say something, and she went to the side of his bed, followed by her companion, who kept a little in the back-ground, as if unwilling to let the emotion she really felt be seen, and, perhaps, conscious that her ungainly appearance did not aid her in recovering the lost affections of her husband.

"I have been a very wicked man, I fear," said Spike, earnestly.

"There are none without sin," answered Rose. "Place your reliance on the mediation of the Son of God, and sins even far deeper than yours may be pardoned."

The captain stared at the beautiful speaker, but self-indulgence, the incessant pursuit of worldly and selfish objects for forty years, and the habits of a life into which the thought of God and the dread hereafter never entered, had encased his spiritual being in a sort of brazen armour, through which no ordinary blow of conscience could penetrate. Still he had fearful glimpses of recent events, and his soul, hanging as it was over the abyss of eternity, was troubled.

"What has become of your aunt?" half whispered Spike "my old captain's widow. She ought to be here; and Don Wan Montezuma where is he?"

Rose turned aside to conceal her tears but no one answered the questions of the dying man. Then a gleaming of childhood shot into the recollection of Spike, and, clasping his hands, he tried to pray. But, like others who have lived without any communication with their Creator through long lives of apathy to his existence and laws, thinking only of the present time, and daily, hourly sacrificing principles and duty to the narrow interests of the moment, he now found how hard it is to renew communications with a being who has been so long neglected. The fault lay in himself, however, for a gracious ear was open, even over the death-bed of Stephen Spike, could that rude spirit only bring itself to ask for mercy in earnestness and truth. As his companions saw his struggles, they left him for a few minutes to his own thoughts.

"Molly," Spike at length uttered, in a faint tone, the voice of one conscious of being very near his end, "I hope you will forgive me, Molly. I know you must have a hard, hard time of it."

"It is hard for a woman to unsex herself, Stephen; to throw off her very natur', as it might be, and to turn man."

"It has changed you sadly even your speech is altered. Once your voice was soft and womanish more like that of Rose Budd's than it is now."

"I speak as them speak among whom I've been forced to live. The fore-castle and steward's pantry, Stephen Spike, are poor schools to send women to l'arn language in."

"Try and forget it all, poor Molly! Say to me, so that I can hear you, 'I forget and forgive, Stephen.' I am afraid God will not pardon my sins, which begin to seem dreadful to me, if my own wife refuse to forget and forgive, on my dying bed."

Jack was much mollified by this appeal. Her interest in her offending husband had never been entirely extinguished. She had remembered him, and often with woman's kindness, in all her wanderings and sufferings, as the preceding parts of our narrative must show; and though resentment had been mingled with the grief and

mortification she felt at finding how much he still submitted to Rose's superior charms, in a breast as really generous and humane as that of Jack Tier's, such a feeling was not likely to endure in the midst of a scene like that she was now called to witness. The muscles of her countenance twitched, the hard-looking, tanned face began to lose its sternness, and every way she appeared like one profoundly disturbed.

"Turn to Him whose goodness and mercy may serve you, Stephen," she said, in a milder and more feminine tone than she had used now for years, making her more like herself than either her husband or Rose had seen her since the commencement of the late voyage; "my sayin' that I forget and forgive cannot help a man on his deathbed."

"It will settle my mind, Molly, and leave me freer to turn my thoughts to God."

Jack was much affected, more by the countenance and manner of the sufferer, perhaps, than by his words. She drew nearer to the side of her husband's pallet, knelt, took his hands, and said solemnly,

"Stephen Spike, from the bottom of my heart, I do forgive you; and I shall pray to God that he will pardon your sins as freely and more mercifully than I now pardon all, and try to forget all that you have done to me."

Spike clasped his hands, and again he tried to pray; but the habits of a whole life are not to be thrown off at will; and he who endeavours to regain, in his extremity, the moments that have been lost, will find, in bitter reality, that he has been heaping mountains on his own soul, by the mere practice of sin, which were never laid there by the original fall of his race. Jack, however, had disburthened her spirit of a load that had long oppressed it, and, burying her face in the rug, she wept.

"I wish, Molly," said the dying man, several minutes later, "I wish I had never seen the brig. Until I got that craft, no thought of wronging human being ever crossed my mind."

"It was the Father of Lies that tempts all to do evil, Stephen, and not the brig which caused the sins."

"I wish I could live a year longer only one year; that is not much to ask for a man who is not yet sixty."

"It is hopeless, poor Stephen. The surgeons say you cannot live one day."

Spike groaned for the past, blended fearfully with the future, gleamed on his conscience with a brightness that appalled him. And what is that future, which is to make us happy or miserable through an endless vista of time? Is it not composed of an existence, in which conscience, released from the delusions and weaknesses of the body, sees all in its true colours, appreciates all, and punishes all? Such an existence would make every man the keeper of the record of his own transgressions, even to the most minute exactness. It would of itself mete out perfect justice, since the sin would be seen amid its accompanying facts, every aggravating or extenuating circumstance. Each man would be strictly punished according to his talents. As no one is without sin, it makes the necessity of an atonement indispensable, and, in its most rigid interpretation, it exhibits the truth of the scheme of salvation in the clearest colours. The soul, or conscience, that can admit the necessary degree of faith in that atonement, and in admitting, feels its efficacy, throws the burthen of its own transgressions away, and remains for ever in the condition of its original existence, pure, and consequently happy.

We do not presume to lay down a creed on this mighty and mysterious matter, in which all have so deep an interest, and concerning which so very small a portion of the human race think much, or think with any clearness when it does become the subject of their passing thoughts at all. We too well know our own ignorance to venture on dogmas which it has probably been intended that the mind of man should not yet grapple with and comprehend. To return to our subject.

Stephen Spike was now made to feel the incubus-load, which perseverance in sin heaps on the breast of the reckless offender. What was the most grievous of all, his power to shake off this dead weight was diminished in precisely the same proportion as the burthen was increased, the moral force of every man lessening in a very just ratio to the magnitude of his delinquencies. Bitterly did this deep offender struggle with his conscience, and little did his half-unsexed wife know how to console or aid him. Jack had been superficially instructed in the dogmas of her faith, in childhood and youth, as most persons are instructed in what are termed Christian communities had been made to learn the Catechism, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed and had been left to set up for herself on this small capital, in the great concern of human existence, on her marriage and entrance on the active business of life. When the manner in which she had passed the last twenty years is remembered, no one can be surprised to learn that Jack was of little assistance to her husband in his extremity. Rose made an effort to administer hope and consolation, but the terrible nature of the struggle she witnessed, induced her to send for the chaplain of the Poughkeepsie. This divine prayed with the dying man; but even he, in the last moments of the sufferer, was little more than a passive but shocked witness of remorse, suspended over the abyss of eternity in hopeless dread. We shall not enter into the details of the revolting scene, but simply add that curses, blasphemy, tremulous cries for mercy, agonized entreaties to be advised, and sullen defiance, were all strangely and fearfully blended. In the midst of one of these revolting paroxysms, Spike breathed his last. A few hours later, his body was interred in the sands of the shore. It may be well to say in this place, that the hurricane of 1846, which is known to have occurred only a few months later, swept off the frail covering, and that the body was washed away to leave its bones among the wrecks and relics of the Florida Reef.

Mulford did not return from his fruitless expedition in quest of the remains of Mrs. Budd, until after the death and interment of Spike. As nothing remained to be done at Key West, he and Rose accompanied by Jack Tier, took passage for Charleston in the first convenient vessel that offered. Two days before they sailed, the Poughkeepsie went out to cruise in the Gulf, agreeably to her general orders. The evening previously Captain Mull, Wallace, and the chaplain, passed with the bridegroom and bride, when the matter of the doubloons found in the boat was discussed. It was agreed that Jack Tier should have them; and into her hands the bag was now placed. On this occasion, to oblige the officers, Jack went into a narrative of all she had seen and suffered, from the moment when abandoned by her late husband down to that when she found him again. It was a strange account, and one filled with surprising adventures. In most of the vessels in which she had served, Jack had acted in the steward's department, though she had frequently done duty as a fore-mast hand. In strength and skill she admitted that she had often failed; but in courage, never. Having been given reason to think her husband was reduced to serving in a vessel of war, she had shipped on board a frigate bound to the Mediterranean, and had actually made a whole cruise as a ward-room boy on that station. While thus employed, she had met with two of the gentlemen present; Captain Mull and Mr. Wallace. The former was then first-lieutenant of the frigate, and the latter a passed-midshipman; and in these capacities both had been well known to her. As the name she then bore was the same as that under which she now "hailed," these officers were soon made to recollect her, though Jack was no longer the light, trim-built lad he had then appeared to be. Neither of the gentlemen named had made the whole cruise in the ship, but each had been promoted and transferred to another craft, after being Jack's shipmate rather more than a year. This information greatly facilitated the affair of the doubloons.

From Charleston the travellers came north by rail-road. Harry made several stops by the way, in order to divert the thoughts of his beautiful young bride from dwelling too much on the fate of her aunt. He knew that home would revive all these recollections painfully, and wished to put off the hour of their return, until time had a little weakened Rose's regrets. For this reason, he passed a whole week in Washington, though it was a season of the year that the place is not in much request. Still, Washington is scarce a town, at any season. It is much the fashion to deride the American capital, and to treat it as a place of very humble performance with very sounding pretensions. Certainly, Washington has very few of the peculiarities of a great European capital, but few as these are, they are more than belong to any other place in this country. We now allude to the distinctive characteristics of a capital, and not to a mere concentration of houses and shops within a given space. In this last respect, Washington is much behind fifty other American towns, even while it is the only place in the whole republic which possesses specimens of architecture, on a scale approaching that of the higher classes of the edifices of the

old world. It is totally deficient in churches, and theatres, and markets; or those it does possess are, in an architectural sense, not at all above the level of village or country—town pretensions, but one or two of its national edifices do approach the magnificence and grandeur of the old world. The new Treasury Buildings are unquestionably, on the score of size, embellishments and finish, the American edifice that comes nearest to first class architecture on the other side of the Atlantic. The Capitol comes next, though it can scarce be ranked, relatively, as high. As for the White House, it is every way sufficient for its purposes and the institutions; and now that its grounds are finished, and the shrubbery and trees begin to tell, one sees about it something that is not unworthy of its high uses and origin. Those grounds, which so long lay a reproach to the national taste and liberality, are now fast becoming beautiful, are already exceedingly pretty, and give to a structure that is destined to become historical, having already associated with it the names of Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, and Quincy Adams, together with the *ci polloi* of the later Presidents, an entourage that is suitable to its past recollections and its present purposes. They are not quite on a level with the parks of London, it is true; or even with the Tuileries, or Luxembourg, or the Boboli, or the Villa Reale, or fifty more grounds and gardens, of a similar nature, that might be mentioned; but, seen in the spring and early summer, they adorn the building they surround, and lend to the whole neighbourhood a character of high civilization, that no other place in America can show, in precisely the same form, or to the same extent.

This much have we said on the subject of the White House and its precincts, because we took occasion, in a former work, to berate the narrow-minded parsimony which left the grounds of the White House in a condition that was discreditable to the republic. How far our philippic may have hastened the improvements which have been made, is more than we shall pretend to say; but having made the former strictures, we are happy to have an occasion to say (though nearly twenty years have intervened between the expressions of the two opinions) that they are no longer merited.

And here we will add another word, and that on a subject that is not sufficiently pressed on the attention of a people, who, by position, are unavoidably provincial. We invite those whose gorges rise at any stricture on anything American, and who fancy it is enough to belong to the great republic to be great in itself, to place themselves in front of the State Department, as it now stands, and to examine its dimensions, material and form with critical eyes, then to look along the adjacent Treasury Buildings, to fancy them completed, by a junction with new edifices of a similar construction to contain the department of state; next to fancy similar works completed for the two opposite departments; after which, to compare the past and present with the future as thus finished, and remember how recent has been the partial improvement which even now exists. If this examination and comparison do not show, directly to the sense of sight, how much there was and is to criticise, as put in contrast with other countries, we shall give up the individuals in question, as too deeply dyed in the provincial wool ever to be whitened. The present Trinity church, New York, certainly not more than a third class European church, if as much, compared with its village-like predecessor, may supply a practical homily of the same degree of usefulness. There may be those among us, however, who fancy it patriotism to maintain that the old Treasury Buildings were quite equal to the new, and of these intense Americans we cry their mercy!

Rose felt keenly on reaching her late aunt's very neat dwelling in Fourteenth Street, New York. But the manly tenderness of Mulford was a great support to her, and a little time brought her to think of that weak-minded, but well-meaning and affectionate relative, with gentle regret, rather than with grief. Among the connexions of her young husband, she found several females of a class in life certainly equal to her own, and somewhat superior to the latter in education and habits. As for Harry, he very gladly passed the season with his beautiful bride, though a fine ship was laid down for him, by means of Rose's fortune, now much increased by her aunt's death, and he was absent in Europe when his son was born; an event that occurred only two months since.

The Swash, and the shipment of gunpowder, were thought of no more in the good town of Manhattan. This great emporium we beg pardon, this great commercial emporium has a trick of forgetting, condensing all interests into those of the present moment. It is much addicted to believing that which never had an existence, and of overlooking that which is occurring directly under its nose. So marked is this tendency to forgetfulness, we should

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not be surprised to hear some of the Manhattanese pretend that our legend is nothing but a fiction, and deny the existence of the Molly, Captain Spike, and even of Biddy Noon. But we know them too well to mind what they say, and shall go on and finish our narrative in our own way, just as if there were no such raven-throated commentators at all.

Jack Tier, still known by that name, lives in the family of Captain Mulford. She is fast losing the tan on her face and hands, and every day is improving in appearance. She now habitually wears her proper attire, and is dropping gradually into the feelings and habits of her sex. She never can become what she once was, any more than the blackamoor can become white, or the leopard change his spots; but she is no longer revolting. She has left off chewing and smoking, having found a refuge in snuff. Her hair is permitted to grow, and is already turned up with a comb, though constantly concealed beneath a cap. The heart of Jack, alone, seems unaltered. The strange, tiger-like affection that she bore for Spike, during twenty years of abandonment, has disappeared in regrets for his end. It is succeeded by a most sincere attachment for Rose, in which the little boy, since his appearance on the scene, is becoming a large participator. This child Jack is beginning to love intensely; and the doubloons, well invested, placing her above the feeling of dependence, she is likely to end her life, once so errant and disturbed, in tranquillity and a home-like happiness.

THE END.