

The Lady of the Gulf: A Romance of the City and the Seas

J. H. Ingraham

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The Lady of the Gulf: A Romance of the City and the Seas

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CHAPTER I. The Hero patronizes the Three Gilt Balls. The Scenes therein. A Saloon near the Park.

It was near the close of an unusually severe day in March, that a person muffled to the eyes in a handsome dark-colored cloak, and wearing a singularly shabby fur cap, might have been seen stealing along the walk, in Chatham street, opposite the Pawnbrokers' or Jews' Row. His step was slow and hesitating, while his eyes furtively glanced about, now up the street, now down, as if fearing that his movements would be observed. His height and figure were good, and his air genteel, but in his seedy cap, and in his shrunken, worn trowsers, and old boots, that appeared beneath his very elegant Spanish cloak, there was a discrepancy that might have arrested the eye of any observing passer by. But no one of the hurrying crowd noticed him. Each one was bent on his own business and aim. The mechanic, with his hands filled with tools, was hastening to his family; the sewing girl, in hood and shawl, to her humble home far up town where rents were cheap; the man of pleasure was pressing forward to the theatre for an early seat; the beggar, shuffling along to his hole in some wretched cellar. No one noticed him, for extremes, in the metropolis, are too often wedded to attract remark. But the young man did not seem to avoid observation upon his dress, but upon his movements. Three times, he passed and repassed a narrow door hung about with second-hand garments, over the lintel of which was suspended a sign representing three gilt balls, the well-known beacon for the wretched.

Suddenly, he stopped before the door, cast about a hurried glance, and concealing his face darted into the door, which, like a vortex, yawns ever, to swallow up the poor. He found himself in a strange looking apartment, long and narrow. On his right was a counter, against which were constructed half a dozen upright boxes, each the height of a man's head and wide enough to contain a single person. On the side towards him was a green curtain,

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made so as to let fall to conceal the occupant, but the side or front next to the counter was open, so that the person in the box could transact business with the pawnbroker unseen by any one but him. The young man passed along from box to box, and found all filled by persons who carefully kept the curtains down. At the extremity of the row of little closets was an open space, where he stood concealing his features, and began to take a survey of the scene till his own turn should come. There were two others waiting, a young woman closely veiled, and an old man, who did not care to have his poverty and necessities known; he held his hat in his hand and was wiping his forehead, for the place, filled as it was with clothes hanging all around, and with people, was stifled and hot.

From the place where the young man stood, he could command a view of the counter. Behind it stood three men, Jews, for their short stature, their dark Oriental eyes, eagle-beaked noses, full lips, and bushy black hair, could not belong to any other race.

One of them was a middle-aged man with a keen restless eye, a bald forehead, and more hair upon his chin and cheeks than upon his head. He was examining a small gold watch with an air of contempt, and the few words he uttered were those of scornful depreciation.

'I must have ten dollars, sir,' said, from within the box before him, a female voice, in earnest tones.

'It ish not wort dat moosh,' answered the Jew, harshly; 'I advance seven tollarsh no more.'

'I cant do with less than ten,' said the same low, imploring, yet sweet voice. 'Even nine would do me no good.'

'Den what you come here for? Take your watsh,' he answered, handing it back to her.

A white hand, that of a young woman, was extended to take it. It was extended slowly and reluctantly.

'Sir, will you give me ten, and take this ring also?'

'Let me shee de rink.'

She-handed it to him with hesitation, as if it were a sacred treasure that had never before gone from her hand. He examined it, and his gimlet eye sparkled.

'Yesh, I gif you ten dollarsh.'

'Will you be sure, sir, and keep it safely.'

'Yesh, yesh,' he answered, impatiently.

He then took the watch and ring, which were worth full fifty dollars, and placed them in a little paper bag which was numbered. He then asked her name, and wrote the same number and the name upon a ticket, and handed it to her with a ten dollar note.

'You will be so kind as to keep the watch wound up, sir. It has never stopped since since ' here some emotion overcame utterance.

'I haf oder ting to do, beside wind your watsh,' answered the man, coarsely. 'Leave de box to oder peoplesh.'

'I shall come for them in a few days, sir, if you would keep it wound up for a week, and then '

'Leave de box, Miss,' he cried, sternly.

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The lady drew back. The young man, who had witnessed this scene with a cheek glowing with sympathy and indignation, watched when she came out. He saw that her figure was graceful, though enveloped in a faded shawl. She wore a green veil doubled over her face, yet he felt sure she could not be twenty. She hurried out, and disappeared. He advanced and took her place in the box, dropping the curtain behind him. The pawnbroker was engaged already, in attending upon a person in the adjoining box; his other assistants, two young German Jews, with shrewd, vulgar physiognomies, being engaged also, each with a customer. The one next seemed to be an elderly man, from his voice, who was pawning a pair of silver spectacles, and trying to get two dollars upon them. The Jew offered but a dollar, for which the old man let them go. In the third box was an Irish woman, who was pledging a gown and shawl, for which she received half a dollar. In the box on the right of the young man, was a spruce looking youth, for as he bent forward, to whisper to the clerk, his face was for a moment visible. He had with him, a large bundle of sewing—silk and Italian cravats. He demanded twenty dollars, but got twelve. The negotiation was managed with such whispering, and significant looks between them, that he was set down by the young gentleman in the cloak, as a thieving apprentice, who had pilfered the goods and was there to raise money upon them for his dissipations. In the next box beyond, a pair of hands was visible holding out a silver cup. The hands were thin and white, evidently those of a lady of middle age. The cup bore an armorial device. It was probably the last relic of former opulence—all that remained upon which corroding poverty had not fed its greedy maw.

‘Well, now let me see *your* goods,’ demanded the old Jew, after having dismissed the old man with the spectacles. This was addressed to the young man in the handsome cloak and shabby cap.

He took from beneath his cloak, a bundle wrapped up in a newspaper, and laid it upon the counter before the lynx-eyed Israelite. Through the open folds of the cloak, it could be seen that the young man was in his shirt-sleeves. The pawnbroker tore off the paper, and exposed a handsome broadcloth coat and satin vest two fine linen shirts, and a silk scarf. With a professional eye the Jew held up each of the articles, and seemed to decide upon them at a glance. The coat underwent a little closer scrutiny perhaps than the other articles.

‘Well, what do you want for these?’ demanded the pawnbroker, not betraying any surprise, that a person of his genteel appearance, should pawn such things. Indeed, he would not have betrayed any surprise, had Napoleon come before him, in the little box, to pledge his imperial crown. Nothing moves a pawnbroker. Curiosity, wonder, have long ago ceased to have vitality in his bosom. He gets to be a mere machine, an automaton pawnbroker.

‘Eleven dollars,’ answered the pledger, who, by the light burning behind the counter, (for pawnbrokers’ shops are dark at noon—day) proved to be a very handsome, but pale young gentleman, with a fine, full, dark eye, expressive features, and an air of decided aristocracy. His age was not more than five or six and twenty. There was visible, in his aspect; a look of anxiety and gloom, if not of sternness, and he looked as if he had been of late indulging to excess in fashionable pleasures, wherein he had been the loser both in health and purse.

‘Eleven fiddles,’ answered the Jew, with a look of contempt, pushing the garments back to him.

‘Give me what you can, then.’

‘I will give fife tollarsh.’

‘Take them,’ answered the young man, with a reckless air that showed the desperation of his fortunes. The Jew rapidly folded up the clothes in a paper, stuck a number upon the parcel, and laid it upon a shelf behind him, with hundreds of other labelled packages, crowding the shelves to the very ceiling. He then gave him a ticket and a five dollar note. Upon the ticket he wrote the pledger’s name, without inquiry, as if he had seen him there before on similar errands. The name was simply Knox.

The young man took up the money and ticket, and was going out, when the Jew said,

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‘To save you de trouble ov coming again, I ‘ll gif you ten dollarsh vor de cloak you haf on.’

‘If I come again, it will be to pawn my cloak to buy a pistol, to blow my brains out,’ answered the young man in a voice of strong emotion.

‘You had petter take de ten dollarsh.’

‘No. I have this, and it is all I have left. Will you give me ten dollars for it should I bring it to you?’ he asked, turning back to the counter.

‘If you bring it before sabbath day.

‘That is, Saturday, *your* sabbath?’

‘Yesh.’

‘If I bring it, it will be before then,’ answered the pledger, leaving the box and going out.

‘Come, quick, transact your business,’ he heard the Jew scolding as he left, to the others who remained. ‘In ten minutes ‘t will pe sun down, when de law oblishe me to shut up my schop.’

It was already the verge of twilight, for the sky was filled with dark clouds, which cast a deep gloom over the city, even before the sun was quite below the horizon. The young man wrapped his form to the chin in his cloak, muffling thus, partly on account of the sharp cold, and partly to prevent being recognized. He took his way along towards Park Row, and passing the theatre, where a link-man was already lighting the large lamps in front, he entered a door a few paces beyond it. About the steps, as he passed in, lounged four or five tawdrily dressed young men, with long hair, and cigars between their lips. They had the hard, reckless look of professional gamblers.

As the pledger passed in by them they glanced at him, and one remarked to the other,

‘He ‘ll not hold out long. He is on his last legs. Did you see his shabby cap and boots?’

‘Yes,’ was the reply. ‘He ‘ll soon be glad to part with his cloak. Well, I have got all I want out of the poor fellow.’

‘I think we have all fleeced him pretty well,’ answered one of them, with a gold chain displayed across his red velvet vest, numerous rings on his fingers, studs and breastpin in his shirt, and a gold watch chain, loaded with seals and trinkets, dangled down his right side.

‘He goes in as if he had made a fresh raise of funds.’

‘Nothing worth going up stairs after him for, I ‘ll bet a V,’ was the response of the first speaker. ‘There is enough on ‘em up there to clean him out.’

The person who was the subject of these remarks, after entering the room below, which was an extensive showy restaurant, brilliantly lighted, and thronged with a set of flashy, genteel individuals, passed up stairs through a green door at the extremity of the saloon. He neither looked to the right nor the left, but hurried on, like a man who has but a single object and aim.

The stairs were thickly carpeted, and wound spirally to the third story, without any perceptible landing on the second floor. He emerged at the top into a room about ten feet square, lined with green baize, walls and ceiling,

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and having upon the floor a carpet of green bocking. It was called appropriately the green room. It was surrounded by racks, which held coats, canes, and umbrellas, and upon a table covered with a bright scarlet cloth, lay several bowie knives, dirks, and three pistols. By the table, sat a short, thick-set fellow, with a coarse countenance thickly studded with the scars of the small pox. He wore a dry-looking, reddish wig, much too small for his large, round skull, which sat close upon his shoulders in contempt of everything like a neck. In his hands he held a small parcel of playing cards which he incessantly shuffled for pastime. Upon the backs were written certain numbers in red ink. When the young man appeared, he said, politely,

'Leave your cloak and take a ticket, Mr. Hastings.'

'No, I will go in as I am.'

'You have no weapons?'

'No, sir.'

'Very well. Your fee, for I suppose you play.'

'There is a five. Give me the change.'

Four dollars were handed back to him. With it grasped tightly in the palm of his hand, he strode past the door-keeper, and entered a vast and splendid gaming saloon. Along the centre were ranged three billiard tables, at which players were engaged. In gilded alcoves, around the sides, were card-tables, and at each extremity, was a roulette and faro table. Persons were playing at all the games, and the sharp ticking of the billiard balls, the shuffling of cards, the ringing of silver, with the noise of voices in every key, met his ears.

CHAPTER II. The Roulette Table, and the Inn.

The young man in the cloak passed up the room to the roulette table, a broad, green surface, marked with numbers, and containing in the centre a horizontal wheel of polished brass. Behind the table sat a man about fifty, with wiry grey hair, and features upon which vice seemed to have been engraven with a pen of iron. Before him was the hollow wheel, which he from time to time revolved, and then snapped into it an ivory ball. Numbers environed the rim of the wheel, and the ball in its revolutions stopped at one or other of the figures. Upon the table, in squares, were placed corresponding numbers. The player placed his money upon the number on the square, and the ball upon stopping, after its revolution within the wheel, indicated the winning figure.

About this table stood three persons, betting upon the figures. In front of the keeper of the table were two piles, one of silver, the other of bank notes. In his hand he held a small ebony rake, with which he either drew in the stakes, or pushed the winnings to the players.

To this table the young man came. The keeper glanced at him and smiled coldly, as if he recognized him.

'All set!' he drawled out, snapping the ivory ball into the wheel and setting it revolving.

Every eye eagerly watched the little messenger as it danced round in the wheel. At length it stopped, and the keeper sung out, in the same sing-song key as before,

'Double O, red!'

Upon the answering number on the table, Hastings, as the young man had been called at the door, had laid a dollar

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as soon as he reached the board. Thirty-two times the amount of his stake was coolly thrust towards him by the banker, amid exclamations of surprise around him; for this point rarely turned up, and when it did, won as above stated the other numbers winning only double the stake.

The countenance of the young man brightened, and he staked the whole sum upon the black color. The ball revolved again, and he was a winner twice the amount staked. He now placed the whole of his winnings upon the OO, black. By a singular freak of fortune, he won the color, and two thousand and forty-eight dollars were counted out to him by the banker.

'I place one thousand dollars on the red color,' he said, staking an eagle as the representative of that sum upon the square.

'Single O, black!' cried the banker, with more vivacity than before, and with his rake drew towards him the stake of one thousand dollars.

'I place another thousand dollars on the red color,' repeated Hastings, in a calm voice.

'Black wins!' drawled out the banker.

With trembling fingers the loser counted out forty-eight dollars from the pile before him, and shoved the balance towards the bank. He had now but fifty-one dollars. With an air of desperate decision, he placed fifty dollars upon the black color. A dozen men's eyes eagerly watched the rapid revolution of the ball, but he looked only upon his stake.

'Red wins!' cried the banker, extending his slender rake, and drawing towards him the fifty dollars.

Every eye was turned upon the face of the loser. It was calm but pale, the eye fixed and steady, and the lips compressed. In his fingers he held a single silver dollar. He deliberated. Other players staked, and the cry of the banker, 'All set!' was just being uttered, when he placed his dollar quietly on the red.

'Black wins!' cried the banker, as he drew the dollar towards the pile of silver by his side.

'It is my last dollar, Jennings!' said the young man, folding his arms in his cloak, and gazing upon the table with a look of haggard despair.

'I'll lend you a five on your cloak, seeing you are an old customer,' said the banker, suspending the ivory ball on his fore finger before snapping it into the wheel. There were four or five small stakes upon the board, placed there by less desperate players than Hastings.

'No!' said Hastings, coloring, and folding his cloak more closely about him.

'Very well,' responded the banker, in a tone of indifference. 'All set!'

The game went on for about five minutes, during which time Hastings walked up and down before the table, in deep thought. At every pause of the wheel, he would stop and see what was lost and won. Seven times in succession he saw the red color win, and one young man, who sat down with a dollar, have hundreds before him. This seemed to decide him. He crossed the hall to the green room, closing the door after him.

'Fleury,' he said, in an under but eager tone, 'I am drained of every dollar. Will you loan me ten on my cloak?'

'Let me see it,' answered Fleury, coldly.

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‘It is worth forty. I can't take it off, as I am in my shirt–sleeves.’

‘Then how can you pawn it to me?’

‘You must let me have some thin coat worth a dollar or two, that will button to the throat, and ten dollars besides.’

‘Well, I dare say I can oblige you,’ answered Fleury, rising and opening a trunk. ‘Here is a grey Tweed blouse that ‘ll fit you. It belonged to a poor devil that left it with me for a dollar, and the next I heard of him was that he had drowned himself.’

‘I will take it; there is my cloak,’ answered Hastings, throwing the garment upon a chair, and exhibiting himself in only a pair of old trowsers and shirt. He put on the frock coat, and buttoned it closely to his throat. It was rather large for him; but it was in better keeping with his trowsers, boots, and cap, than his rich cloak. With ten dollars in hand, he now returned into the saloon, and took his way to the roulette table.

With this fresh capital, obtained at such a sacrifice, he began to play with caution. In twenty minutes' time, he had won and lost nine hundred dollars. He had but five dollars, in a single eagle, left. He seemed to deliberate whether to stake it, or go away and keep it for his necessities. The lucky winning of a large sum upon the black color, by one of the players, tempted him, perhaps with the hopes of being equally successful. He placed the eagle, the last money he had in the world, upon the red.

‘Black wins!’ sang the banker, raking the eagle towards the bank.

Hastings stood for a moment paralyzed. His last resource had vanished. Slowly, penniless, and a beggar, he turned away and crossed the hall. Despair and rage were impressed upon his wan visage. He passed through the green room.

‘Well, what luck, sir?’ asked Fleury.

‘All the fiends of hell seem to have conspired against me,’ answered the young man, clenching his fists convulsively.

‘Courage! Better luck next time!’

‘*Next time!*’ repeated the wretched young man. ‘For me, there is *no next time!*’

With this reply, he walked down the stairs with a slow, heavy step. He seemed like one stupefied. As he passed through the lower apartment, men turned and gazed upon him, and followed him with their eyes, his looks were so wild and full of despair.

‘Who is that?’ inquired a young man, with a very resolute, daring air, of one he was conversing with, as Hastings passed by.

‘It is Harry Hastings, the rich young fellow that has lost so much at play. He looks desperate now. His father left him fifty thousand dollars not a year ago, and I was told to–day, he had nearly run through with it.’

‘What a pity; he is a good–looking fellow,’ responded the seaman.

‘Yes, and they say has a generous heart. But he has gone to the devil now. I should n't wonder if he blows his brains out one of these days, for he is high–spirited and wont brook poverty.’

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‘Then he ‘ll blow his brains out pretty soon,’ observed Fleury, who that moment came down, having been relieved at his post; ‘he has just pawned his cloak with me and lost the stake. He has not another soumarkee. The coat he had on, as he went out, I gave him. He ‘ll have to take to the sea again.’

‘Has he been to sea?’ asked the sailor-looking individual, with sudden interest.

‘Yes. He was in the navy, a mid, till his father died, when he resigned to spend his money like a gentleman. Well, he ‘s had a short cruise of it ashore.’

‘Excuse me, gentlemen,’ said the seaman, ‘I just recollect an engagement.’

‘You ‘ll come into the theatre by and by, Captain,’ said one of the party.

‘Yes, towards the close. Good-by till then.’ With these words, he hastened from the saloon.

‘What man was that you called Captain?’ asked Fleury of the @here the seaman had left, who was a man about forty-five, with a red face and a nose discolored and bloated with brandy. He was now a well-known and rich shipping master, but fond of gaming. In the war, he had commanded a privateer, and thus laid the basis of the wealth which he now daily diminished at the gaming table.

‘He is one of the bravest fellows in the world,’ answered the ex privateersman. ‘His name is Jack Marshall. He was a boy with me, when I went a cruising. Since then he has been in the Greek service, and then in the Buenos Ayrean, and then in the Mexican, and got nothing, he says, but hard fighting. He is now but I can ‘t tell everything. It wont do. How is play going on up above?’

‘Finely.’

‘Then it is badly, for what is fine for you is not fine for me.’

‘That ‘s true. Shant you go up to night, Mr. Burrows?’

‘Well, I may by and by, after the theatre is out. I do n’t feel rich enough to-night to lose money, nor poor enough to care about winning; but I ‘ll drop in upon you, during the evening.’

Thus speaking, the shipping-master stumped about, for he was lame from a shot received in the hip in one of his sea-fights, and looked on here and there, among the groups of men talking in the refectory, and waiting for the hour of the theatre to come.

When Hastings passed out of the door, the young men who had stood there when he entered, had gone. No one noticed him. He paused an instant upon the walk, undecided what to do. Persons were constantly hurrying by. Carriages whirled along. Lights flashed from the windows across the streets, and all was life and activity. A sense of chillness caused him to move on. He took the way down Ann street, he hardly knew wherefore, but with an undefined desire to get out of the sight of men. This street was ill lighted, and but few passed through it at that hour. He continued on for several minutes, dwelling upon his situation. The crisis, towards which he had been tending with rapid descent for many weeks, had now arrived. He was reduced to the wretched suit of clothes he had upon his back. The pockets contained not even a penny. Had he stripped himself of them, they would not have sold or pawned for three dollars. But he could not spare one of the garments. They were all necessary to his decency and comfort, for the night air was cold and chilly, and penetrated to his bones.

He wandered on, now up this street, now down that, scarcely conscious of moving, and brooding over, in his mind, *suicide*. His course was in a direction that led him nearer and nearer the water. At the corner of a narrow

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lane, he came to a sailor's tavern. It was an ancient, half-sunken building, the door of which was a step lower than the walk. He looked in, and saw that but one or two persons were in the tap-room. A blazing coal fire gave a cheerful air to the interior, and a pretty young woman, with a cheerful face, behind the bar, seemed as if she would not object to his warming himself.

'At least,' said he, 'I can only make the attempt. In this humble place, I shall not meet those who have known me before. I will sit down and think what is to be done. The idea of self-murder is horrible. The world is wide, and hath a thousand other horizons than this.'

'That is bravely and truly spoken, my friend,' said a voice close to his ear, as he was standing with his hand upon the door of the tap-room.

A friendly hand was laid at the same time upon his shoulder. He turned round and beheld by his side a man a little shorter than himself, but stoutly formed, and in a seaman's round-about thickly studded with small bright buttons. The light from the window revealed a frank, open countenance, but sun and weather browned; a clear, blue eye, and light, fair hair, curling about his temples.

'Who are you?' asked the young man, with surprise.

'A friend to a ship-mate in distress.'

'Do you know me?'

'I never saw you till twenty minutes ago, as you were coming out of 's saloon. I made sail and overhauled you, and kept you in chase to see how you were likely to steer in the end, for you doubled and veered like an Indiaman beating up against the trades. But you were going in here. Let us go in together, and perhaps we may sail in company for awhile. Never give up the ship.'

CHAPTER III. The Heir and the Mexican Captain.

Hastings felt, at first, inclined to treat the intruding stranger with angry impatience; but seeing that, like himself, he was a son of the sea, and that his manner was friendly, he entered the inn with him; and on coming more fully into the light, he closely examined his face to see if he had ever met him before.

'We have never met before, Mr. Hastings,' said the seaman, 'but that makes very little difference, as we have met now. Come, let us sit down here in this box opposite the fire and have a chat.'

'Indeed, sir, you are familiar on a first acquaintance,' answered the ruined young heir, haughtily and moodily. 'I choose to be alone.'

'Nay, my dear fellow, you are, just now, the worst possible company for yourself.'

Hastings looked at him with the air of one disposed to resent his manner; but seeing that he was sincere and friendly, he thought it best to bear with him for awhile, and he also felt forcibly the truth of his words, that he was poor company for himself.

'I will sit with you,' he answered, for he was desirous of knowing who he was and how he came to address him.

'Come into this box, then,' said the seaman. 'Ah, my pretty Bessy Wynn,' he said to the handsome young girl behind the bar, who had just been placing two pewter mugs of foaming ale before two mates that sat in the

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adjoining box, 'come hither, dear, and bring with you a bottle of your best wine.'

'I'll bring it presently, sir,' said the smiling bar-maid, who, however, was a young widow of two years.

'Now, sir,' said Hastings, with the dark, gloomy air that his face had worn since he had left the gaming saloon, 'tell me, if you please, who you are.'

'I am a sailor,' answered Marshall.

'That I can see. But why have you addressed me? Have you sailed in the same ship?'

'Not that I recollect.'

'How do you know me?'

'I will tell you. I saw you pass out of the restaurant. I was talking with Burrows, the shipping-master, and your face struck me for its look of wild despair, which has not yet worn off, and I asked who you were. I was told that you had been in the navy, had inherited a fortune a year ago, thrown up your berth, and given yourself to a gay life, till you had run through your money and were reduced to your last penny.'

'They told you the truth. But does the world so soon know my fall!' he cried, bitterly. 'I have been a fool and a madman!'

'Courage! It is never too late to tack ship, so long as the soundings are free.'

'I have been a fool! I am goaded by my own conscience, and rendered wild with the deep sense of my degradation! The world has told you truly, sir, whoever you may be who has asked after me. I was left a fortune of fifty thousand dollars, not eighteen months ago; All that remains of it, is the shirt, pantaloons, cap, and boots, that I have on, for the coat was given me. I have been driven to ruin by a sort of blind fatality. It seemed to me, at first, that my thousands could never melt. I launched out into the wildest extravagances. But if I had not gambled, I might now have had a good part of my fortune. Gaming fascinated me. Losses maddened me, and inspired me with efforts to recover what I lost. But the evil only increased. Money went first, then my horses and equipage, then I found the way to the Pawnbroker's with my jewelry, and then with my wardrobe. To-night, I parted with the last article I could spare without making myself naked. I had been playing all the afternoon with various success, but finally lost all. I resolved still to try my fortune, and took my coat and vest and pawned them. My cloak followed. Within the last two hours, I have won and lost two thousand dollars. I am now a beggar, and tired of life. When you saw me leaving the hall, it was with the deliberate purpose of committing suicide. The man who owned the coat I wear, drowned himself in the Hudson. I shall drown myself to-night. It is therefore that I talk to you so freely.'

'Well, we will drink first. Wine is better than water, my dear fellow,' said Marshall, as the young widow brought the bottle of wine and two glasses. 'Thanks, sweet mistress, has any one been here for me since I went out?'

'The tall, black-looking fellow with the one eye, sir.'

'It is Van Dom. What did he want?'

'He said he would call again, when you were at breakfast.'

'Very well. Let me fill for you, Mr. Hastings. Your good health, sir, and our better acquaintance. This is fair wine, Mistress Wynn, very fair wine.'

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`You should know, Captain,' answered the widow, with a courtesy and a smile, `you, who have sailed all over the world, ought to know to be sure!'

`I never tasted better; did you, sir?'

`It is good wine,' answered Hastings, absently.

`I dare swear you do n't know whether it be wine or water. Cheer up, man! Drink it all, and let me fill again. I'll warrant me, you'll not think of the Hudson after your third glass.'

`How came you to follow me, Captain, if I may call you so?'

`Marshall's my name, Captain Jack Marshall. You may leave off the Captain and call me Jack, when we get a little better acquainted.'

`We seem to be in a fair way for it, sir,' answered Hastings with a faint smile.'

`Fair weather. Sky lifting. Why that smile is the sign of clear sky by and by. How did I come to follow you? Why you see I took a liking to your figure—head and gave chase, not as an enemy, but as a friend. But you led me a regular zigzag beat to windward, and at last brought up just at the port I would have towed you into.'

`Do you lodge here?' asked Hastings, looking round, for the first time, upon the smoky walls, and dark polished joists and beams of the ceiling; upon the small, pulpit-like bar on the back side of the room, and the little curtained alcoves containing tables, lining one wall.

`Yes, and you are welcome to be my guest.'

`No. I shall soon go.'

`Where?'

`Anywhere,' answered Hastings, after a moment's hesitation. `The more I realize my degrading position, the more irksome life becomes.'

Do n't talk in this style. You shall stop here to-night. In the morning you will wake and feel better about it.'

`Sleep! I cannot sleep, sir. If I could, waking to the full realization of all, would drive me crazy. If I could sleep forever, then I would sleep. I cannot dwell upon the idea of the waking moment. To-morrow I should feel worse than now.'

`Let me fill your glass. Mistress Bessy, another bottle of wine. Do n't despair. You have lost nothing but what can be got back again. You have health, hands, strength, courage, and are a seaman. I would not give a thought to the past. Begin to live from this moment. Let the past go to Davy Jones. The present is yours, and no man can say more. The future is no man's. To-morrow is as much yours as it is Astor's. You are young, and can yet live half a dozen lives before you are grey. Come, do not give up, so long as two planks hold together. You are only stranded. The next flood will float you off again.'

`But I have not a cent, sir. It is well enough for you to talk so, perhaps; but I am in a desperate situation.'

`No man's situation is desperate who has hands, heart, and health. What do you propose to do, if you live till to-morrow? Answer me fairly.'

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`Beg or rob; I have nothing to buy a loaf with.'

`I can do better for you than begging or robbing.'

`How?'

`I can put you in a way of making your fortune.'

`You mock me.'

`No. I have the power to serve you. It was to propose to you what I am about to do, that I followed you. But we are not alone. Will you come with me into the next room? Have you a fire in the sitting parlor, Mistress Wynn?'

`Yes, Captain. Walk in, gentlemen.'

`Come, Mr. Hastings. You are worth a score of drowned men yet. A man's life should not be weighed against gold no, not even fifty thousand worth of it. Gold may be got again; but life, never. Will you come with me?'

`Yes; I will hear what you have to propose,' answered Hastings, following his new found friend into a small room in the rear of the tap. The hostess placed a candle upon the table and left them together.

`Landlady,' said one of the mates seated in the box, `who was the shorter man of the two that went in there just now?'

`Captain Marshall, late of the Mexican navy.'

`That's where I've seen him,' answered the mate with emphasis, looking at his companion. `I knew I'd seen him somewhere. He commanded a Mexican gun-brig, and brought us to, off Vera Cruz, as we were running for Sisal, last year. He came aboard himself, and asked our Captain to loan him five thousand dollars. Of course he was refused. But he would n't take No for an answer, and took out the money, for we had twenty thousand in the run, and gave us an order, to be repaid, on a merchant in Havana.'

`And was it paid?' asked the other.

`Down upon the nail. If it had n't been, I'd have him now hauled up for piracy.'

`There was no harm done, if he paid it again. Probably he was run short just then.'

`He said his men were ready to mutiny, because government had n't paid 'em, and he should lose his vessel if he did n't take the money out of ours.'

`It was a bold act.'

`Yes, and he was the very man to do it. He was as civil, all the while, as you would wish to see anybody; but our Captain saw in his eye, that it would not be safe to attempt to resist. Indeed, he said that if we did n't let him quietly take the five thousand, his men would board us and plunder us of the whole.'

`Well, I do n't see, as long as it was paid, as he was much to blame. It was a case of distress at sea. I should like to have you speak to him when he comes out.'

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`No; he wont care to be reminded of it, and I might make him my enemy and get a knife into me by some of his fellows some dark night, in a by–street. I have seen enough of these Mexicans, to keep quiet.'

`But he is not a Mexican.'

`No; I should judge he was Yankee born. But shall we go aboard ship?'

`No; I'm going to the theatre to–night,' answered the other. `I shant go down aboard till morning.'

The two seamen then settled their score, and left the tap–room together.

The subject of their conversation, having seated himself by the table, in the inner room, with Hastings on the opposite side, thus began:

`Mr. Hastings, I am, as I told you, a seaman. You are, or have been, one also. You are now in a situation, from the loss of everything, to be fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils. Before you, you can see nothing, by your own confession, but beggary or crime. Go to any one of those of your friends who have basked in the sunshine of your prosperity, and not one of them will aid you. The world and you have to–night shaken hands. You are as fairly dead to it, as if, an hour ago, you had committed suicide, and your body were floating out towards Neversink Head. Now, I take you up just where the world and you are quits, and offer to make your fortune again.'

`How?' asked Hastings, with animation.

`I like to see your eye brighten, and your cheek get back a little of its color. This shows how good wine gladdens the sad heart of a man. I can talk with you now your blood is warmed, and you can listen better. I am about to confide to you a secret. Can I also confide in your honor?'

`Can you trust to the honor of a beggar?'

`Money is not honor, sir. In losing your money, I do not believe you have parted with your honor as a man. Your wish to fly to death, shows me that you feel deeply that your honor has been wounded. But it is not lost. I will trust you.'

`You may, Captain,' answered Hastings, firmly. `I also hereby pledge myself to enter into any scheme or plan you may propose, short of '

`Why do you hesitate?'

`Short of *piracy*, then,' he added, coloring and watching his countenance closely.

CHAPTER IV. The Story of the Adventurer.

The Mexican Captain laughed at the provision made by Hastings, and then said,

`I assure you I will not lead you into any such temptation. Do I look like a buccaneer?'

`Not much; but you seem to be a mysterious person.'

`There is no mystery about me whatever. I will lay myself open to you like a printed book. Hear my history.'

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'I will listen with pleasure.'

'I am a Boston boy, and at the age of fourteen, not liking Latin and books, I ran away and shipped as cabin-boy on board one of my father's ships, for he was a rich merchant and is now. The captain of course had never seen me, and as I shipped under an assumed name, he did not suspect whom he had carried off with him.'

'What name did you assume?'

'Jack Marshall.'

'Then this is not your real name, although you now call yourself by it.'

'No, I have always kept the name.'

'And your father's?'

'That is unimportant to my story,' answered the seaman, coloring slightly. 'My first voyage was to St. Petersburg, where, not liking my captain, I deserted; and as a fleet under Admiral Tate was just then fitting out against the Danes, I shipped on board.'

'Tate! That is an American name.'

'Yes. The old Admiral was a Portland boy, and at the age of sixteen ran away on board a ship, like myself. He brought up at St. Petersburg, and entered the Russian navy. He was brave and enterprising and a good seaman, and he passed through all the grades of rank, till, as I have said, he rose to be an Admiral. I shipped as a common sailor, but finding that I was a countryman, he gave me a midshipman's berth, and I was with him in several engagements. He was a brave man, and the best seaman in his fleet. After his affair with the Danes, he took it into his head to visit the United States, which he had been absent from more than thirty years. He had in Portland a niece, whom he desired much to see. So he chose out a fast sailing frigate and took me with him. After a passage of fortytwo days, we dropped anchor in Boston harbor. The Admiral then purchased a handsome equipage, and made a journey in fine style down to Portland, where he staid with his niece about six weeks, enjoying himself finely, but creating not a little excitement, from his splendid uniform, his Russian servants, and foreign mode of living, for he was more Russian than American.'

'After his return to Boston, we set sail for London. The Admiral had taken quite a fancy to me, and took me with him wherever he went to dine, and if he had lived I should have been rapidly promoted. But one day he went to dine with Sir Astley Cooper, and before dinner took a nap, as was his custom, on a sofa in the withdrawing room. Just before dinner was announced I went to him to wake him, when, to my grief and surprise, I found that he was dead.'

'Dead!' exclaimed Hastings.

'Yes. Upon examination, his death proved to have been caused by an affection of the heart. In him I lost my best friend. He was about sixty-five, and one of the noblest looking men I have seen, before or since. Upon his death, I resolved to quit the Russian service. I found an American vessel going to the Mediterranean and shipped in her, for I had a desire to see the world. The Greeks were then fighting for liberty, and I joined them, and at the age of eighteen was a lieutenant. I was soon after taken prisoner, in the Dardanelles, by a Turkish cruiser, and carried to Constantinople. By the aid of a beautiful Georgian slave, whom I fell in love with, I effected my escape. After various wanderings and adventures, I found myself in Circassia, where they were at war with Persia. I joined with the former, and, after sundry exploits, was made Colonel of Horse. I was rapidly rising to promotion, when I was taken prisoner, in the battle of Kefhel, and carried to Ispahan. The Persian Emperor offered me a command in his

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cavalry, and one of his hundred daughters to wife, if I would remain with him. But I rejected these offers, and after eight months' imprisonment, I made my escape, and, joining a caravan, reached Bagdad. Thence, I found my way, over land, and under several disguises, to Calcutta. I was now twenty-three years of age, and quite as much of a cavalry officer as I was a sailor. But I loved the sea, and seeing there a Portuguese man-of-war bound to Valparaiso, I shipped in her. At Valparaiso, I left her, as I found they were fighting for their liberties and something was to do, and offered myself to the General of the army. My services were accepted, and I remained twelve months, getting more knocks than pesos. Having helped them achieve their independence, and finding that there was no money in the treasury to pay me for my services, I resolved to try Buenos Ayres, where there was plenty of fighting and plenty of money. I crossed the Andes on mules, and scoured the pampas on wild horses. After a journey of twenty days, quite as tedious and dangerous as that from Ispahan to Calcutta, I reached Buenos Ayres. Lbaralleja was then battling with the Brazilians to recover Monte Video from them. I joined his forces and was with him when he bombarded the city; but tired of the prolonged siege, I resigned, after laying seven months before the walls, and getting into the city, found in port the American sloop of war Cyane, Captain Elliot. She was about to sail for Rio, and I shipped in her. At Rio I left her, and having about twenty thousand dollars with me, the fruits of my Buenos Ayrean campaign, I resolved to purchase a fast sailing slaver that I saw there, which took my eye, and cruise awhile on my own hook, for I had got quite sick of playing second fiddle all round the world. I knew that I could find in port plenty of seamen to man my vessel, for deserters are to be picked up everywhere. So I purchased the slaver, a beautiful craft as ever swam for ten thousand dollars. She was in perfect order, from keelson to truck. She tonned little less than two hundred, and carried six twelve pound carronades.

'I had no difficulty in shipping a crew. A number of rogues offered, who supposed I was bound for the coast of Africa, for a cargo of black cattle, but I gave such villains the go-by, and took aboard a pretty fair crew, as the world goes, consisting of Americans, English, Scotch, and Swedes, with a sprinkling of Danes. I had not a Portuguese nor a Spaniard among them. All told, we were just forty men.'

'And what was your destination and object?' asked Hastings, who was listening to this extraordinary man with deep interest. 'Could you have gone to the coast of Africa after all?'

The eyes of the seaman sparkled with angry light; but the emotion was temporary. He answered calmly,

'No, sir. I would as soon go to the coast of Connecticut and steal a cargo of white people, and take them to Algiers and sell them. The man that would do one would do the other. It's a tempting trade, however, for a man who would sell his soul to the devil. The poor blacks can be bought in Africa for about twenty dollars a head, all round, little and big. The expense of getting them to Rio, is about three dollars a piece more. There they sell at public auction for two hundred and three hundred dollars a piece on an average. An immense profit, you see. But white folks will bring quite as good a price in Algiers or Morocco, and, I dare say, can be got there quite as cheap. No, sir! I had no intention of engaging in the slave trade. You might as well ask me if I intended to go a pirating.'

'I beg your pardon,' answered Hastings, smiling at his earnestness.

'Granted! I will tell you where I was bound. I knew that the Mexicans were at war with France, and I resolved to give 'em a lift. I therefore steered for the West Indies, and stopping at Havana, got a cruising commission from the Mexican consul, and hoisting the Mexican flag, I captured in ten weeks, as many French merchantmen, besides fighting, and causing to surrender to me, a French brig of war that was escorting five merchantmen. For my services, the Mexicans gave me ten thousand dollars and paid all my men's wages. I was laying at anchor, down by the Sacrificios, ready for another cruise, when I parted my cable, in a gale of wind, and letting go a second anchor, lost that. I immediately made sail, my foretopmast-staysail being ready bent, and run my vessel right for the Mole. But the current was too strong to enable me to reach it, and so I resolved to beach her, as the only means of saving the lives of those on board. After narrowly escaping being driven on the Lavandera shoals, I run the brig upon the beach, hard and fast. We saved our lives, and that was all. Not a dollar of my silver did I ever see again.'

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`That was a misfortune indeed.'

`Yes, but, my dear friend, I did not turn about, and throw myself into the sea, to drown myself, because I had nothing left, not a maravedi to buy a breakfast. No, no! I made my way to the town, and wrote to the Government to give me another vessel. They had none to give, but they had money; so they gave me a draft on a banker here in New York, for forty thousand dollars. I reached here five weeks ago. I found on the stocks, building for the Greeks, just such a craft as I came for, and bought her and hurried her to completion. She was launched ten days ago, her sails are all bent, and her ballast and guns in. In a week, Burrows will have me a crew, and then I shall be ready for sea and to fight the Johnny Crapeaus. All I want is, a good first officer. I have been looking out for one for some days, and now I have found the man I want. The moment I saw you and was told your story, and that you were a sailor, I resolved to make you an offer to retrieve your fortunes by going with me. I now make you the offer of the berth of my first Luff.'

`Are you indeed in earnest, sir?'

`Yes. Why should n't I be? Will you take up with my offer, and try your fortune on the sea?'

`You have saved me, Captain Marshall!' cried Hastings, grasping his hand, his voice trembling with deep emotion. `But for you, I should have destroyed myself. You have inspired me with strength, courage, and hope.'

`It is settled then, that you are to go with me?'

`Yes. I have no other thought, or desire, than to comply with your wish.'

`You will not drown yourself now, eh?'

`Do not speak of my folly. I see now, that a man never should despair. Character and fortune, lost in one place, can be recovered in another. The world is wide, and a thousand ways are open to the bold and enterprising.'

`Yes. Suppose you had drowned yourself, and I had also, when I found myself on the beach at Vera Cruz, without a penny in the world, what good would it have done us? It is a great deal better to go to some other part of the world and live, than to jump plump into Tophet. Who knows if he is going to better the matter? In my opinion, a man who commits suicide, is a coward and a fool.'

`I agree with you.'

`There! I like that. It came out heartily. We are friends now, Lieutenant Hastings. Let us have a bottle of wine, to drink one another's good health and seal the compact. You do n't know how much I am relieved to have got an officer at last. It gave me more anxiety than fitting out my brig. Mistress Wynn!'

`Coming, Captain!'

`Be so kind, pretty widow, as to bring me another bottle of wine.'

`It will be the third, Captain.'

`I know it, sweet Bess. But I have talked a good deal, and that makes one amazing thirsty. What, the deuce! are you going to put me on short allowance?'

`No, Captain; but you remember, sir, when Mr. Burrows dined with you, that you you I mean to say, sir '

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‘You mean to say I drank a little too much.’

‘Yes, sir; and you said you were quite surprised, and desired me particularly, never to let you and your company have more than two bottles.’

‘So I did, Mistress widow fair. But I beg off this time. One more bottle, for the love of thy pretty face.’

‘Yes, sir, and only *this* one,’ answered the neat little widow, courtesying, and retiring for the wine.

‘When do you sail?’ asked Hastings.

‘Within eight days.’

‘What do you call the vessel?’

‘The Lady of the Gulf. Will you lodge here, with me?’

‘If you say so,’ answered Hastings, cheerfully.

‘By all means. To-morrow I will give you what money you will want, in advance, for your outfit.’

CHAPTER V. The Cruise.

On the night of the eighth day, after the scenes described in the last chapter, the moon shone brightly upon a clipper-built brigantine, as under full sail she was sailing out of New York harbor. Rapidly the outline of the city with its glimmering lights faded from view, and the broad ocean opened wider and wider.

The wind was west by north, and the brig ran nearly square before it, at the rate of seven knots. The bright moonlight was reflected from her pyramids of canvass, as from columns of piled snow. Every yard was in its place, every sail accurately set. All her appointments were characterized with man-of-war precision. In the height and rake of her masts, the length and beautiful symmetry of her hull, she presented a rare model for a true sailor's eye to gaze upon.

The vessel was the Lady of the Gulf. She was bound on a cruise in the Gulf of Mexico. She carried eight twelve pounders, an eighteen pounder on a carriage aft, and a thirty-six pounder upon a pivot amidships. She had a crew of thirty-six men, Marshall intending to complete her complement in Vera-Cruz by a third more men.

He now stood upon the quarter-deck near the helmsman, watching the sails, and observing the general sailing qualities of his craft.

‘She runs along like a bird, Hastings,’ he said to his first officer. ‘I verily believe she will pass any thing on the ocean. This is not more than a five knot breeze, and we are making seven of it full. She, walks the water like a thing of life. Byron should have been a sailor for that one line. He loved the sea, as he did every thing grand and beautiful. But, man, where are your thoughts?’

Hastings was standing near him, leaning over the trisail-boom, and gazing towards the receding city as if lost in thought. The moon shone so brightly that his face could be easily seen. It was pale and thoughtful. He started at the remark of his Captain, and said smiling,

‘I was thinking of leaving home!’

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‘Yes, it is very natural, I dare say. But my home is anywhere in the world. All places are alike to me now. I should think you would feel elated to tread a deck once more.’

‘I do, I assure you. I will throw off this dullness!’

And he succeeded. For some time he continued to converse with cheerfulness about the vessel, and with manifest interest in her. As soon as they passed the light, the watch was set, and the command of the deck given to Hastings, with the larboard watch. The captain, however remained on deck until midnight, too eager and anxious about his craft to sleep.

‘We shall make a fine offing by daylight,’ said Marshall to his lieutenant, who was walking the deck with folded arms and a thoughtful air.

‘Yes!’

‘Yes! you have n't got over your blues yet, I see! But, a few days at sea will make a new man of you! I am never worth anything after being ashore a month, till I have been three days on salt water. We shall be in the low latitudes in a week, and I dare say shall fall in with Monsieur, and give you something to do. To be sure, one can't but feel melancholy, after having such a handsome fortune left him, to run through it in a little better than a year. I dare say you are as mad as sad, to think it went to fill the purses of a miserable set of gambling rogues. There is one comfort; you have no one to suffer by it but yourself.’

‘The loss of my fortune,’ said Hastings, ‘has been the destruction of my fondest hopes.’

‘In love, hey?’

‘A few weeks after I came in possession of my money, I passed some time at Saratoga. There I became acquainted with the beautiful daughter of a Louisianian planter, and was soon deeply enamoured. As I was of an unexceptionable family, an officer, or recently such, in the navy, and possessed of wealth ’

‘And a fine person,’ interrupted the Captain with a smile, as he tapped the ashes from a cigar he was smoking.

‘As there was nothing to object to,’ continued Hastings, ‘she seemed willing to receive my attentions, and I really believe loved me!’

‘Did n't you ascertain this fact?’

‘No. Before I made up my mind to offer her my hand and heart, she departed with her father for the South!’

‘And you followed to lay you heart and fortune at her feet!’

‘Such was my intention; but in New York, on my way, I was tempted to play heavily, and lost a great deal of money. A band of harpies surrounded me, and lived upon me, flattering me, and making me feel that their presence and society were absolutely necessary for my happiness. Every day I resolved to break from them and go South, but they, aware of my purpose, and fearing to lose me, employed every artifice to detain me, that they might plunder me and live at my table. At length, I found myself stripped of half my fortune, and possessed of habits that would rapidly impoverish me, unless I checked my career. I felt now ashamed to present myself before Miss Livaudais, well aware that she must have heard of my dissipation, and knowing that I could offer her but a fragment of the fortune which I originally possessed.’

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‘You should have gone, nevertheless, confessed your fault, and thrown yourself upon her generosity and love. Women are angels to forgive the erring!’

‘I had not the courage to do this. The reflection that I was no longer worthy of her, made me reckless of consequences, and so I plunged headlong into all sorts of dissipation. My course was then rapid, as you may easily conceive. You witnessed the final crisis, the night on which, eight days ago, you saw me rushing from the saloon a desperate man!’

‘Thank God I did see you, Hastings,’ answered the captain warmly. ‘But I would not care now for what is passed. In six months you may make your fortune with me, and then you can see the fair maiden of your heart, and lay both at her feet, if you wish. Be sure, if she has once felt an interest in you, it will not easily perish. If a woman is flattered by the admiration of any man, how much more deeply must she be complimented by his love! If it is the loss of the lady which clouds your brow, cheer up, for I will assist you in getting her!’

‘You, Captain?’ cried Hastings with sudden animation mingled with surprise. ‘No, no! She regards me as a profligate roué. All the metropolis has rung with my vices. She must have heard all The rumor that I have fled degraded will soon reach her ears, and seal my fate in her estimation. I swear to you, Captain Marshall, that the loss of her esteem pains me more than the loss of all my fortune!’

‘I like that sentiment! It shows me you are the fine-spirited man I believed you to be from the first. Do not despair. We shall soon enrich ourselves by captures, for the trade between France, and the West Indies and New Orleans, is great, and we shall have no trouble in falling in with rich prizes. In six months you will be a rich man again. Besides the prizes of merchantmen, which we shall take and send into Vera Cruz for adjudication, it is a bargain between me and the Government, that any armed French ship that I capture belongs wholly to me and my men!’

‘If fortune restored to me, could replace me in the position I once held in her estimation, I should feel happy! But it cannot! She is rich, and can have no mercenary feeling. If she could be capable of such, I should never have seen in her that to make me love her! No, Captain, she would not wed me for riches were she penniless and I to pour the gold of India in her lap, were gold all I had to bestow upon her for her love!’

‘Well, well, my friend, we wont talk of her now. Wait and see how fortune turns, and then if you have bold heart and still love her, you will win her, or I dont know the metal you are made of!’

‘Sail ho!’ cried the lookout from the bows.

‘Where away?’ called out Marshall.

‘Dead ahead, and close aboard!’

‘I see her! a large packet ship bound in, Hastings!’

In a few minutes the two vessels passed each other within cable's length, the stranger being a large ship, close-hauled, and beating in on the starboard tack. Neither vessel hailed, and soon they were fading from each other's view as the distance widened between them.

Seven weeks after this departure of the Lady of the Gulf from the port of New York, two vessels might have been seen on the south side of Cuba, slowly approaching each other, though at the distance of several miles apart. The coast of Cuba was about a league to the north of them and their course lay parallel with it. It was a pleasant tropical afternoon, and a light breeze from the south and west just ruffled the blue surface of the sea. One of the vessels that approaching from the east, was a large ship and a heavy sailer; for though she had every sail drawing,

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she made but little progress. The wind blowing from the south, a point westerly, was upon her beam as she steered westward.

The other vessel was a small, armed brig, showing four ports to a side, having a rakish clipper look, and a very fast sailer. She was standing eastward in a line to meet the advancing ship, and had the wind two points abaft the beam, so that she carried fore topmast, and lower studding-sails on her starboard arm. No two vessels could be more unlike in appearance than these two, thus advancing from opposite directions towards a central point. One was light, graceful, swift, and bold looking, like a king-hawk on the wing after his prey. The other was heavily made, low masted, short in the hull, and very high out of the water; compared with the other, she might have been a clumsy vulture slowly flapping on his way with leaden and lazy pinions.

The ship on discerning the brig eight miles distant, hoisted the French flag at her peak, and bore up a little towards the land, but not materially to deviate from her previous course. The brig, however, showed no answering signal, but silently and swiftly kept steadily on her way.

The brig was the Lady of the Gulf, which had then been seven weeks at sea, and during that period made five captures, three of which, after the valuables and crews had been removed, were sunk, while the other two were sent into Vera Cruz. She had been the last ten days cruising in the Gulf, to fall in with a large French ship which was expected at New Orleans, from Havre, and which was known to be richly laden.

Marshall had gone down the Gulf as far as the Balise of the Mississippi, and then sailed back in the usual track, hoping to fall in with her. As he came up with the Tortugas, he spoke an English vessel, from which he learned that they had sailed some days in company with the very ship he was waiting for, and that her captain had told them he should take the south side of Cuba, as he feared he should fall in with some Mexican cruiser off the Havana.

Upon this fortunate intelligence, the Lady of the Gulf laid her course round Cape St. Antonio, and steered eastward. On the afternoon of the same day, she descried from aloft the ship already mentioned. To make sure that she was the prize he was in pursuit of, Marshall slung the spy-glass across his back and went to the foremast-head. There he was able to make her out to be a merchant vessel, and as he believed, French. This doubt, however, was speedily removed by seeing the ship display the tri-colored flag.

'That is our man, Hastings,' said Marshall, as he descended to the deck.

'Can you make her out clearly?'

'Yes. She is a large French trader, with the French bunting at her peak. Take the glass.'

'She must be, without question, the same we are looking for,' answered Hastings, after surveying her a few moments through the glass.

He was now much changed for the better. His air of gloom was gone, and he looked cheerful and at ease with himself. He wore the undress uniform of a Mexican lieutenant, which became him greatly. His eye had recovered its brilliancy, and his cheek its hue of health; altogether, he was quite unlike the person who, two months before, Marshall had seen rushing from the saloon with looks of wild despair.

The two vessels now drew nearer and nearer, until they were within four miles of each other, when the ship, as if taking the alarm suddenly, wore round and stood away under all sail in the direction in which she had come.

'She sees the cloven foot,' said Hastings laughing.

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'Yes, and now means to give us a chase of it. But, she 'll find it will do no good to run away. Before night we will be along side of her, if she does n't run herself under water. Quarter-master, set the Mexican flag! They shall not have any doubts about our character.'

CHAPTER VI. The Chase.

The flag of the Republic was hoisted to the peak, and also to the fore, on board the brig of war, and the decks were cleared for action, while every additional sail that could draw, was set to the wind.

The ship, which had nothing above her top-gallants, when she was approaching, now set her three royals, and studding-sails aloft, on her starboard side. She was using, plainly, every possible effort to escape from the brig.

Upon her decks were about twenty-five people, fourteen of them composing her crew; the others were the captain, his mates, three passengers and their servants. The seamen were stationed in various parts of the ship, ready to obey the orders of their officers, who appeared strougly excited by their danger, and were bringing into exercise all their skill, to escape the fate that menaced them. There were two nine pounders on board, at which the mate was busily drilling some of the men with the motions of loading and firing. The Captain, a small, active little Frenchman, with huge whiskers that encircled his chin and cheeks like a fur muffler, had his station upon the companion-way, spy-glass in hand, watching the enemy. Near him stood an old man of fifty-five, tall, and military in his air, but his person something wasted with illness. His grey locks crowned his temples with their snowy honors, and his dark eye yet beamed with fire. Its expression now, however, was more that of anxiety and love blended, as they rested upon the features of a lovely girl who hung upon his arm, or, rather, upon whose arm he himself leaned. As his eyes turned from the fast advancing vessel to her sweet countenance, he sighed, and from time to time, raised his eyes heavenward, as if seeking for her its protection. Then again his glance would flash with the bold courage of a father, and his hand would grasp more firmly the hilt of a sword that was girded by his side.

The maiden was about nineteen years of age, and dark-eyed, with raven hair, and a figure of blended grace and dignity. Love and mirth dwelt, when fear, as now, did not control, in the dimples of her delicate cheek, and slumbered upon the ruby pillows of her lips. Her form was slight, not too tall, and her hand was exquisitely shaped, and white as ivory. Her foot, which, in her troubled thoughts, slightly and nervously patted the deck, was minute, and faultless almost to a fault. She wore upon her head a small plaid hood, of red and green colors, and a rich scarlet cashmere shawl, folded about her symmetrical form, half concealing, half revealing, the exquisite shape of her waist.

Not far from her, stood an African slave, a short, fat negress, with a bright crimson handkerchief, tied like a hood, upon her head, and a yellow silk gown, very short, beneath which appeared a pair of enormous feet, cased in green shoes with high heels. About the neck of this Congo maiden was a string of large gold beads, and upon her ebony wrists, shone, with splendor of Guinea gold, a pair of broad bracelets. Her features were remarkable only for the great size of the lips, the whiteness of the teeth, that a leopard might have envied, and for the round pearly vastness of her eyes, which at the present moment were unusually expanded by fear. From the gold beads was suspended a small, silver cross, which she held in her hand, at intervals uttering to it some exclamation, and then devoutly and earnestly kissing it.

Of all present upon the deck, the young lady seemed the most composed and self-possessed. It is true, her cheek paled as she heard the Captain say, after taking a longer survey than usual, of the chase, 'Mon Dieu! She gains on us one fathom in every five! By sunset, unless we can shoot away her spars and check her when she comes near enough, she will be up with us.'

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At this remark, the old gentleman clasped his daughter tenderly to his heart, and the negress, falling upon her knees, began to utter outcries of terror.

'Hist, Linda,' said her young mistress, firmly. 'This is no time to give way to such fears. Go into the cabin, unless you can have more courage.'

'I fraid go down, Missis! Do n't send me down, Missis! I do n't cry for me, but for you. I tink ony for you, if de Mexicum catch us. What will become ob you!'

'I shall be safe, girl. The captain says it is a vessel of war; and if we are taken we shall be treated with honor as prisoners.'

'Would to God I could think so,' said her father. 'But I have little faith in the honor of these people. Their flag has already committed many excesses and outrages. I see my folly now, Captain Deland, in not waiting for the convoy. Three weeks delay would have been better than capture.'

'I did not expect to fall in with a Mexican this side of Cuba Marquis,' said the captain, 'it being out of the usual track. supposed they would be found only in the north channel, between Cuba and the coast of Florida. Peste! If I was only in a fast sailer, I would now have no fears, with this distance in advance.'

'How far are they off, sir?' asked the maiden, calmly.

'About four miles. If we could only keep along till dark, before they came up with us, we should be able to get out of their way in the night by doubling. But she seems to sail with the wind, and come down with it. If I had not discovered as soon as I did, that she was an armed vessel, and tacked about, we should have been now within her gun-shot. As soon as I saw with my glass, that she was armed, I knew she was Mexican, before she displayed her flag.'

'What a pity, sir, we had n't hoisted the American colors,' said the Marquis.

'I am not ashamed to take what destiny offers, under the colors of la belle France,' answered the captain, with a look of patriotic zeal. 'They would have boarded us, had we hoisted the Yankee bunting, and our speech and looks would have betrayed us, even if our canvass and spars had not beforehand. Every true sailor can tell what nation a vessel belongs to before he touches her deck. Ships have natural features as much as men.'

'What is your opinion about fighting her, captain?' asked the Marquis, after looking with the glass at the brig, and then, at her request, handing it to his daughter.

'That's my resolve, Marquis. The two guns I have will throw shot quite as well as the brig's, and I assure you, when they come within range they shall have it. If I can manage to hit their foremast, it will stop their headway.'

'This seems to me the only chance of our escaping unless '

'You hesitate! Unless what, Monsieur Marquis?'

'Unless you run the ship ashore,' answered the French noble, casting his eyes towards the green woodlands of Cuba, about three miles distant, here and there broken by a cultivated opening indicating the site of a coffee estate. In the distance, rose, blue and boldly, the central mountains of the Island.

'That's a sad alternative, Monsieur,' said the Captain, looking shoreward. 'The idea did not occur to me. It is a good one. We may run the ship ashore, and by sacrificing it, save ourselves from a prison.'

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‘That is what I have been thinking upon. The brig’s crew would hardly pursue us on land, and we could soon reach some coffee estate in the interior, where we should be in safety. They will be content with the plunder of the ship.’

‘And that they shall not have; for if I have to beach her, I will set her on fire. We can escape in our boats. But I trust we shall not have to be driven to this alternative, Monsieur Marquis. I have great confidence in being able to disable her with my guns, before she can come up with me.’

‘They will be likely to have artillery that will overshoot your own, Captain,’ said the Marquis; ‘in that case, they can fire into us from their own distance, while our shot will fall short.’

‘A brig of war is not likely to come up within gunshot of a mere merchant–ship, and stop there, to knock her to pieces. Believe me, she will stand on just as you see her until she comes up close under our stern, and then order us to beave–to, and if we do n’t she will give us a broadside. Now, I hope to be able, before she gets so near as that, to cripple her with one of my nine–pounders. She walks on after us, Marquis,’ added the French Captain, with heightened color, as he saw that he could make out details of her rigging that five minutes before were blended with the distance. ‘You seem to look very brave, Mademoiselle.’

‘I am not without anxiety; but I have confidence in your skill and courage, Monsieur Captain, and know that everything will be done for the ship’s safety and the lives of those on board.’

‘Be sure that harm shall come to you last of all, Mademoiselle,’ answered the Captain, with the gallantry of a brave Frenchman. ‘If we can’t escape by running, Marquis, I shall adopt your plan, of running for the shore.’

‘I think it would be best.’

‘We shall soon know what our fate will be. In the last half hour, she has gained a mile. In another half hour she will be within gunshot of us. I think I can make out with the glass, a long gun, on a pivot, forward. If so, it is, at the least, a thirty–two, and will send a shot two miles with effect. How does she run now?’ he demanded of the mate, who had just thrown the log.

‘Five and a half knots, Monsieur.’

‘That’s half a mile faster than we went a while since. But we have now done our best, to gain this much. Not another inch of canvass can be spared.’

‘And for our half mile more speed,’ said the Marquis, ‘she seems to have got a mile and a half! There is no alternative, Captain. If we let her come nearer she will fire into us, and disable us, so that we can’t reach the shore. My advice is, to square away before the wind and run for the land.’

The French Captain looked perplexed. He saw that the brig was walking down upon him at a slapping pace, and in less than an hour would be near enough to blow him out of water. Escape he saw was impossible. The only alternative left was, surrender and a prison, or to run her ashore and fly into the interior.

‘I will stand on a little longer, Marquis,’ he at length said. ‘I do n’t feel, that I can in honor destroy my ship, before the enemy has fired a single gun.’

‘Then you have your wish, and a salvo to your honor,’ cried the Marquis, as he saw a light flash on board the brig, and a cloud of smoke belch from her bows. At the same instant, he threw himself before his child to protect her with his own person. The next second, they were covered with spray, which the huge shot, as it struck the sea near the counter, dashed over the quarter–deck.

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‘One fathom this way,’ cried the Captain, ‘and we should have been reached. She is nearer to us than I thought for. That is a hint for me to heave—to.’

‘Then there is no time left. Our peril is imminent!’ cried the Marquis. ‘For my lovely child’s sake, Captain Deland, put up your helm and make for the shore.’

The Captain made no reply, but after watching the brig a moment, he gave an order to his mate to lower the colors.

‘What is that order for? Do you intend to surrender?’ demanded the noble, with surprise.

‘No, but to deceive them awhile, Monsieur. If I keep the colors flying, they will continue to fire, and do us mischief, and perhaps prevent the possibility of our getting to the land.’

‘Then you decide to beach the ship?’

‘Yes,’ he answered, sweeping with his glass along the shore ahead. ‘I wish to stand on till I get opposite a cove I discern, into which I mean to run the ship. About two miles inland, is a large *casa*, which will afford us shelter after we land in the boats. If I land opposite where we now are, there is a wilderness of forest, and no near shelter that I can discover.’

‘I see your course is judicious,’ answered the nobleman. ‘It is a pity to destroy, deliberately, so large a ship with its rich freight; but it is the only alternative. Either the ship must be wrecked, or it, with ourselves, will fall into the hands of the enemy.’

‘Do not put up the colors,’ said Captain Deland to his officer; ‘I mean to use them again. She shall burn with the French flag flying at the peak and both mast-heads. You had best, Monsieur Marquis, to collect together your valuables, and place them where they can be put into the boats. Monsieur Levasse,’ he added, to his mate, ‘go forward and give each of the men opportunity to go below and make up their bundles. You will then see that everything valuable is transferred from the cabins to the quarter-boats.’

While these preparations for deserting the ship were going forward in cabin and forecastle, she was pressing forward, under all sail, to get abreast of the inlet in the land, which the Captain had designated as the best spot at which to run her ashore, and facilitate their escape.

CHAPTER VII. The Proa.

The Captain of the brig and Hastings were, in the meanwhile, closely watching the flying ship, and with looks of surprise at not seeing her heave to after she had struck her flag.

‘What does this mean, Hastings?’ at length demanded Marshall, turning to his lieutenant, who had the spy-glass.

‘That I can’t tell, sir! She lowered her flag, it is true, after our thirty-two struck so near her; but she has not shown the least sign of heaving to!’

‘She has n’t stirred tack nor sheet. I don’t understand this. I shall have to give them another gun; though I do n’t care about damaging her hull, as I want to take possession of her in as sound a condition as possible!’

‘There she keeps away a little, sir; she may be coming round!’

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‘Yes, it looks like it! I thought she would not stand on long, after the specimen I had sent her of our quality. We shall be up with her now shortly. Get ready to lower the boat for boarding her!’

‘Aye, aye, sir,’ answered the second lieutenant, a harsh-featured young Englishman, with one eye, who had been a captain of the top in an English liner at the battle of Navarino.

‘She is *not* coming round, Captain!’ suddenly exclaimed Hastings. ‘She has squared her yards, and is standing dead for the island!’

‘It is true, by the head of Cromwell!’ exclaimed Marshall, after watching her an instant. ‘She finds she can’t escape, and means to run ashore. But I’ll show them a game worth two of that! Is the long gun charged again?’

‘All ready, sir!’ cried the mate.

‘Then I’ll lame the ship’s wing!’ he cried, going forward and leveling the piece. Hastings, with the glass, watched the effect of the shot. The French ship was about two miles and a half distant, broad-side to, and steering straight for the land with every sail set.

‘Keep away a point!’ called out Marshall to the helmsman.

‘Aye, a point it is, sir!’

‘Too much! Luff a little! So! Steady!’

With these words he caught up the lighted lint-stock, stepped back from the gigantic piece of ordnance, and applied the fire to the powder. At the instant of its discharge, and while the brig trembled from the shock, he leaped upon the gun and holding by a stay watched the shot.

An exclamation of disappointment escaped him. He saw nothing fall on board, no signs that the iron missile had done its work.

‘I will aim at her hull the next time!’ he cried. ‘She shall not escape by beaching, if there is any virtue in powder and iron balls.’

The gun was again levelled, and he was just about to fire, when he saw the fore-topmast of the ship fall over into the sea, carrying with it, the main royal-mast and royal yard.

‘That will make her ours!’ exclaimed Hastings: ‘You hit the mast fairly it seems, but the stays upheld it, till they could no longer sustain the weight of spars and sails. She will not reach the beach now before we can overtake her.’

‘I will sink her, before her captain shall have the satisfaction of running her ashore.’

‘Yet she stands steadily on before the wind, as if nothing had happened.’

‘Yes, she means to get ashore and cheat us of our prize money, if she can! But I will stop that manoeuvre before it is five minutes older. Keep away after her, at the helm there!’

‘Had n’t we better heave the lead, sir?’ said Marshall. ‘It looks shoal ahead!’

‘Yes, we can’t be too safe. But where she goes we can go. Hand me the match! I will see if I can’t stop her way!’

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A second gun was discharged, but without any visible effect. The ship drove on, and was already within a mile of the land. The soundings showed Marshall, that he could only advance with great caution, as shoals might be between him and the ship, and he was too busy to go below and examine the charts of the coast.

'I would square round and give her a broad-side, Hastings,' he said, watching the ship drive shoreward; 'but I should lose too much head way, and besides, do damage to her; for I look upon her as my own vessel already, and feel tender of her timbers!'

The ship the while, drew nearer and nearer the land. The boats were all filled with such articles as the passengers and crew wished to save, and ready to be lowered. A man in the chains was every minute reporting the depth as they advanced nigher and nigher the beach.

'It is just three fathoms, now, Monsieur Marquis,' said the Captain. In five feet less water, we shall strike. At the rate we are going, it will be in six minutes. You and your daughter get into the quarter boat, and be lowered in it, and the other boats will also be dropped into the water, and hauled along side for the men to get into them. We shall have half a mile to pull to the shore after the ship strikes.'

The passengers and their servants got into the boat with a crew of four men, and being lowered into the water, were towed astern of the ship by a line. Two other boats were also lowered and hauled under the gangways. The Captain made all the men get into them, and ordered the two boats to cast off, and pull for the shore. He now remained on board with only his two mates, one of whom held the rope by which the boat containing the Marquis La Fontleroy, and his daughter Josephine, was towed astern. In two minutes after the two boats left the ship, she struck, and with such force, as to snap the main-mast even with the deck. The three men were thrown down, but recovering his feet, the Captain seized a torch, which he had previously ignited at the caboose, and applied to the fore course, the mizzen shrouds, and the back stays. In an instant three serpents of fire were winding fiercely up the rigging, and fastening upon the sails, the ship was enveloped in flames. The Captain and two officers escaped only by jumping from the stern, and swimming to the boat which held the Marquis, where they were taken on board, when the boat pulled for the land.

'Sacrement!' cried Marshall, who swore oaths in every language of which he had a smattering; 'they have not only wrecked her, but fired her, and are escaping in their boats. We are cheated out of prize and prisoners.'

'We can land too, and pursue them!'

'I have half a mind. But, I have no business to capture people on a Spanish Island. I should get Mexico involved with the Don about it. Yet, I am half a mind to pursue.'

'I make out a lady in the boat, that last left the ship,' said Hastings, who had the spy glass at his eye.

'A lady! Then I wont do as I was about to do. I had just resolved to wear round, and blow the boats all out of water with broadsides. But I will stand on, and see if anything can be saved from the wreck. Bishallah! confound that fellow who commanded her. He is a brave fellow, and knows what he is about. She makes a brave bonfire. Fifty thousand dollars, Hastings, are going up to heaven in that cloud of smoke, that ought to have been in our pockets!'

The brig stood on for the burning ship without lessening sail, and had got within half a mile of her, when Hastings uttered an exclamation that drew the Captain's attention to him. The ship had been run into a sort of inlet surrounded by woods; but no creek had been visible penetrating the land. As the boats, however, drew near the shore, they opened the mouth of a narrow river a few yards broad, extending into the dark forest. Out of this suddenly shot a long proa filled with men, and attempted to cut off their landing. The proa darted upon them so suddenly and alarmingly, that the oarsmen in the first boat became paralyzed, and ceased rowing. In an instant

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they were come up with by the proa and taken prisoners. The other two boats turned back and pulled again seaward with all their might. The proa was full seventy feet long, was rowed by twenty men, and carried besides, a heavy lateen sail on a stump mast amidships. Four or five men halfrobed, and armed, stood up near her stern, one of whom, with vehement gestures and loud cries, that reached even the ears of Hastings, was urging the proa on after the flying boats.

It was the appearance and conduct of this piratical centipede, which had drawn the exclamation of surprise from Hastings. From the time of her first coming in sight, until she captured the leading boat, was three minutes. The men on board of the captured barge, had been tumbled into the proa, and the boat in charge of two of the robbers cast loose, to be pulled up the creek.

'This is a new turn in the game,' said Marshall. 'We have our humanity now called into action, to save the poor devils in the two boats. That proa is manned by the infernal Lagoon pirates, and if the French are taken by them, they will every soul be massacred! We must to their rescue.'

'They seem to dread their fate, and to fly to us, as the least evil of the two. I should like to bring a gun to bear upon the proa!'

'I'll let them have a broadside. Wait a bit! Helm hard up! Square the yards!' shouted Marshall with animation. 'To your guns men, to your guns!'

The broadside of the brig was brought to bear upon the boats and proa, and discharged so as to fire over the heads of the crew of the ship. The whole broadside was fired, and the proa stopped full in her course, and evidently in confusion. The boats pulled rapidly on towards the brig, as if they were flying to the protection of friends, and the brig approaching her at the same time more rapidly, they soon met.

'Come on board!' cried Marshall, through his trumpet. 'Come along side without delay, for I want to give those fellows a drubbing!'

The boats pulled on with good will, for the proa recovering from the shock of the broadside, was once more dashing through the water after them.

'Load quick, men! Load quick, villains!' cried Marshall, seeing the pirates coming down upon the brig like the wind. 'The hell-hounds mean to try to board us. Load and fire! Sink them!'

The Proa pulled on in a cloud of foam. Her captain stood upon the bows with a sword in one hand, which he waved about his head, and cheered his oarsmen on. The two boats, containing the crew of the French ship, were each moment gained upon, though within musket shot of the ship.

'By Allah!' exclaimed Marshall, 'the fellows have no more fear than devils. Fire away, and let them have it, or they will not only get the boats but ourselves too, for they out-number us.'

Hastings had already seen that the lady in the leading boat, was both beautiful and youthful, and he became deeply interested in her fate. He saw her clasp her hands, as if in the anguish of despair, as the wild shouts of the Captain of the proa reached her ears. Her beauty and danger inspired him with the resolution, to save her at the peril of his life from the horrible fate, that menaced her from the demoniacal crew of the proa; while Marshall was only inspired with a hearty desire to send to the bottom some fifty pirates.

The second broadside passed over them, as Hastings feared it would, they were so near, and immediately he sprung to the helm, and called to his men to arm for boarding.

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Marshall at once saw his object, and echoed the cry. Hastings turned the bows of the brig directly towards the proa, resolved to drive right over her, as the only way of saving the boats and preventing them from attempting to take the brig.

Before, however, the brig could reach the spot, the proa had rushed along between the two boats, and Hastings saw the maiden shrieking in the arms of the pirate, while a tall white-headed man was endeavoring to rescue her from his grasp.

'Marshall, do you see that!' cried Hastings.

'I do, and it makes my blood boil. But the same fate is ours. In a moment we will be over them.'

'And the pirates and their prisoners will all go to one fate. No! That maiden must be saved. She is as beautiful as an angel. I have sworn in my heart to save her. Instead of runing the proa under water, I mean to lay the brig along side of her, jump on board with all who will follow, drive the pirates into the sea, and rescue the prisoners.'

CHAPTER VIII. The Captives.

The proa was distant from the bows of the brig not more than sixty yards, when Hastings made known his plan to Marshall. The maiden was still struggling to release herself from the grasp of the pirate leader, while her father had been struck down.

In another moment more, the brig was laid along side of the proa, and Hastings quitting the helm, seized his cutlass, and called out to the crew, who were already armed, to follow him on board the pirate's craft. He leaped upon her deck near the bows, where the chief stood with the maiden grasped with one arm, while with the other, he was waving a sword, and encouraging his men to defend their vessel. At the same moment that Hastings leaped upon the deck, twenty of his men followed him with pistols and cutlasses. Marshall at the same time, boarded her upon the stern with a dozen men at his back. The pirates made a temporary resistance, but were soon driven overboard, or slain upon the deck. The French took heart at seeing their natural foes coming thus to their aid, and forming under their captain, attacked those who remained so bravely, that not one pirate was left upon the proa. The water was black with their heads as they swam towards the shore. But the sailors of the brig, busied themselves so diligently in making targets of their heads, that not ten of them got safely out of pistol shot.

The pirate chief had been from the first, the sole aim of Hastings' efforts. To reach him, he had to cut his way through the pirates, and when he came near him, the chief, with a savage laugh of derision, bade him rescue the lady, if he could, and then sprung from the proa into one of the boats, which at the same time, he shoved from it with his foot. In an instant, he was ten feet distant. Hastings knew not what to do. To reach him was impossible. To fire at him, would endanger the life of the maiden. He, however, took a pistol in his hand, and leveled it. She saw him hesitate, and alarmed as she was at her peril in the possession of the fierce outlaw, she retained her self-possession perfectly.

'Do not fear hitting me, Monsieur! Fire!' she cried fiercely.

Hastings cocked the pistol, and leveled it at the chief. He placed her person before him, and then with his foot moved an oar which had been left in the row-lock, and widened the distance between the boat and the proa. Hastings seeing him continue to work the oar with his naked foot, and rapidly recede, resolved no longer to hesitate.

'Fire, Monsieur! Fire!' She cried earnestly. 'Heaven will direct you aim. If I am killed, death is better than captivity!'

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Hastings brought his pistol to his eye, and covered the pirate's brain with his aim, for he was a head above the maiden, whom he placed rather as a shield to protect his heart. He drew the trigger, and a bright red spot on the pirate's brow, told his quick glance how truly he had sent the ball. The outlaw leaped into the air with a piercing shriek, and fell backwards into the sea a dead man, bearing with him in his revengeful grasp the maiden.

With a cry of horror, Hastings plunged into the water and disappeared after them. Far down in the deep bosom of the wave, he encountered the dead and the living. So firm was the iron grasp of the fiend about her waist, that he was forced to sever the muscles of the arm with his cutlass, ere he could release her. He then rose with her to the surface, just as Marshall had cleared the proa from the last buccaneer, and succeeded in placing her in the boat. But she was insensible. Taking the oars he pulled rapidly along side of the brig, and was aided by Marshall in getting her on board. He was bearing her to the cabin to apply restoratives, when a voice of mingled alarm and joy reached his ears from the deck of the proa.

'My child! My child! Thank God she is rescued. But does she live?'

It was the Marquis, who had only been stunned, when he fell under the pirate's blows, and aroused himself to see Hastings bearing his daughter across the deck.

'She is not dead!' he answered. 'Captain Marshall, help the old gentleman on board, that he may come and see his child!' he added, as he descended into the cabin.

The Marquis in a moment afterwards made his appearance, and rushing towards his daughter who lay upon a sofa, knelt by her, and embraced her with the wildest and most impassioned grief.

'Do not despair, sir,' said Hastings. 'She will soon come to herself by applying these remedies, and rubbing her hands and forehead. If I dared, I would bleed her.'

'I can bleed,' answered Marshall, 'and have a lancet.'

'To lose blood would revive her, Monsieur,' said the Marquis.

The beautiful arm was bared by the father, and Hastings bound it to fill the azure vein. As he examined its exquisite symmetry, he felt that it was sacrilege to mar its purity by a scar. But as his eyes fell upon the pale face that lay in the repose of marble before him, he felt that if life could be restored to the lovely features, glory to the eyes, and the smiles to the lips, any sacrifice ought to be made even of the arm itself.

The result of the application of the lancet was as was anticipated. The glow of life tinted the cheek, and the eyes that seemed sealed in death opened slowly, and gazed wonderingly around. They fell upon her father, and beamed with love and gratitude. Suddenly she seemed to recollect all. Her face suddenly resumed its paleness, and a shudder passed over her frame.

'Mon Dieu! she is dying again!' cried the Marquis. She opened her eyes and looked startled as she beheld strangers.

'Am I safe? Oh, my dear father! Am I free from that fearful being's power?'

'Yes, yes, ma fille! You are in no danger, now! Be composed. Although we are in the power of the enemies of our nation, we are in the hands of friends. But for them, we should have been the prisoners of the lawless buccaneers. This noble youth has rescued you. How, I know not; but I saw him bringing you on board the brig!'

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‘Yes, yes! It is he!’ she cried, meeting the eyes of Hastings. ‘Monsieur, to you I owe my preservation! I remember all. Your wet garments and my own recall all. You plunged in and saved me?’

‘Yes, and the reflection that I have been instrumental in doing so, will render me happy to the last hour of my life.’

‘And my heart will throb with gratitude, brave Monsieur, towards you, so long as it throbs with life,’ she said, taking his hand; for she had partly risen, and was sustained by her father's arm passed about her.

Marshall had in the meanwhile returned to the deck, and Hastings knowing that his presence was also needed there, left them to themselves, after saying that they must regard themselves as guests rather than prisoners. Upon reaching the deck, he found the proa standing shoreward wrapped in flames. She had been set on fire by Marshall's orders, after having called all his crew from her deck; and with her helm lashed down she was driving upon the beach. In her course, she drove over the swimming buccaneers, some of whom, in endeavoring to get on board of her, were burned and fell back into the water to perish. In ten minutes they saw her strike the beach and keel over, still in flames.

‘There are some of the devils who have reached the land trying to extinguish the flames!’ cried Marshall. ‘I'll pepper them with grape for a few minutes! Charge that after gun with slugs!’ he called to his men.

The gun was loaded, and fired upon the burning proa. Several of the pirates were seen to fall, while the rest fled to the woods which approached within a hundred yards of the water. The proa soon burned to the water's edge; but the French ship still blazed brightly where she had been driven ashore, about a third of a mile farther East. In a little while she burst asunder with a loud explosion, and her fragments were soon extinguished in the waves.

Marshall and his lieutenant had as much as they could attend to, the meanwhile, in attending to their own wounded, and disposing of the French crew, which they had so strangely got into their hands. These men were gathered forward, near the fore-rigging, eleven in all, the rest of their number having been slain. They seemed to be yet uncertain whether they were to fare any better from their present masters, then they would have done with the buccaneers; for now that they had time to reflect, they realized their situation as prisoners to the very brig they had wrecked their ship to escape.

The French Captain and his mate, after the buccaneers had been driven from the proa, in which they and their men had taken an active participation, had gone into the brig with its crew, when Marshall called them on board in order that he might set the pirate-craft on fire. Their men had gone forward, where they stood together awaiting their fate, while Captain Deland and his officer remained by the gang-way watching Captain Marshall get his brig under weigh again. At length the brig being fairly under her canvass again, and steering away from the land, her decks cleared and everything put in the order it was before the affair with the proa, Marshall approached the French Captain.

‘You are a brave fellow, Monsieur,’ he said in a hearty, cordial way, peculiar to him when pleased; ‘you and your people fought like lions. If you had fought so against me on your own deck, instead of running your ship ashore, I should hardly have got possession of her. It was an unkind cut that, Monsieur! you lost me the finest prize I could have wished to take, if, as I doubt not, the ship was the *Lorraine* from Havre.’

‘It was not the *Lorraine*, Monsieur.’

‘Not the *Lorraine*!’ exclaimed Hastings and Marshall in the same breath.

‘Non, Monsieur! My ship was the *Louis XIV*, from Bordeaux, Captain Deland, at your service!’

‘Can this be true!’ exclaimed the Captain with looks of disappointment.

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‘Here are my papers, Monsieur Capitan,’ answered the Frenchman, showing him a parchment which he drew from his pocket.

‘This is, indeed, a mistake, then,’ said Marshall. ‘I took you for the Loraine, a richly laden ship, her cargo all of silks from Havre.

‘The Loraine is a faster sailer, and larger ship than mine, and has doubtless taken convoy.’

‘Was your cargo valuable?’

‘Not so much so as the Loraine’s. It consisted mostly of wines. It was the casks which caused the explosion.’

‘Well, I am glad that I have not lost the Loraine and cargo after all, as I feared. It is not so bad as it might have been, Hastings. We shall get the Loraine yet. ‘How came you to run your ship ashore? Did you take me for a pirate?’

‘No, Monsieur! I saw your flag. We chose rather to destroy our ship, than enrich our enemies with it; and to escape to the forests, than to be carried prisoners to Vera Cruz. I had no means of effectual resistance, and knew that I should be captured if I did not take this course.’

‘Well, you acted like a brave and sensible fellow. I forgive you, so long as it was not the Loraine. But you fared worse than you expected with your buccaneers? How like a huge serpent that fellow glided out of the lagoon upon you. I never saw anything like it.

‘They were upon us before we were aware. All resistance was out of the question on the part of the first boat. But for you, Monsieur, we should all have been massacred by them. You have my gratitude, and that of all my men; and especially, Messieurs, will you have the gratitude of the Marquis La Fontleroy and his sweet daughter.’

‘Is this the celebrated General Fontleroy?’ asked Marshall with surprise.

‘Yes, Monsieur Capitan!’

‘Then my vessel is honored by his presence. He is a brave soldier, and a generous man. Were you bound to New Orleans?’

‘Yes. The Marquis has had a large estate left him there by his elder brother, the exiled Count Fontleroy, who died a few months ago; and as he was not rich himself, as few soldiers are, he was going out to take possession of it, and perhaps reside upon the estate altogether. But, alas, the unfortunate events of this day have defeated his hopes, and thrown over his fate and that of his daughter, a cloud of darkness and despair!’

CHAPTER IX. The Nautical Lover.

‘The Marquis La Fontleroy shall never have occasion to regret falling into my hands,’ said Marshall, with earnestness, nor, Monsieur Deland, shall you. It is not the fortune of war that has given you into my power, so much as the act of Providence. I cannot, therefore, look upon you in the light of prisoners of war, as I should have done under other circumstances. Men who have fled to my brig, from a foe more dreadful, shall be received as friends. I have not released you from the buccaneer to make you prisoners a second time, enemies as you are to the flag under which I sail. I will also let your men have the same privileges that I extend to you and General Fontleroy, presuming you will readily give me your honor as a Frenchman, that no attempt will be made by you, or your people, against the brig, while you are at liberty on board of her.’

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‘Monsieur, how shall I express my obligations to you!’ cried the astonished French Captain. ‘The pledge you require I give with pleasure.’

‘Then you are at liberty from this moment. Go forward and tell your men the same, and those who choose, may assist the brig’s company in their duties.’

‘They will all be glad to do so, noble Captain,’ responded Deland, with animation. ‘You are too good, too generous, Captain!’

‘I cannot do otherwise. I would as soon keep prisoners, ship-wrecked men, as yourselves. You have suffered enough by losing your ship. The pirates I think will long remember the visit of the Lady of the Gulf to this coast. I have pretty well broken them up. At least forty of the fellows were killed outright or drowned, besides the loss of their proa. Captain Deland, after you and your mate have made known to your crew my decision respecting them, you are welcome to the hospitalities of my cabin.’

The joy of the poor French crew, on being told by their Captain that they were not to be held as prisoners of war, was visible in their changing features. Gloom and doubts and heavy despondency, gave way to smiles and cheerfulness. They at once expressed their willingness to aid in the brig’s duty, and even said they would help fight the guns against everything but a ship of their own nation.

After Hastings had left the cabin, the daughter of the Marquis, no longer restrained by his presence, gave free expression to her joy at once more seeing her father in safety, by throwing herself upon his neck and covering his cheeks with kisses of overflowing gladness.

‘Never again did I expect to behold you, my dear child,’ said the Marquis, folding her to his heart. How much do I owe to our enemies for preserving you from the fate that threatened you! When I was struck down to the deck the second time, in trying to rescue you, I saw you, as my senses were leaving me, borne by him into the boat. Did the Captain slay him and rescue you?’

‘No, but his officer, the tall, handsome young man, with dark eyes,’ responded Josephine with warmth, her cheek glowing with gratitude as she spoke of him; ‘he saw me, and at the risk of my life, shot the pirate who held me in his grasp. He fell overboard, dragging me beneath the sea with him in his descent. Oh, horrible recollection! What terrific sensations passed through my soul in that fearful flight towards the shades of death! I could see around me distinctly, as I went down. I seemed falling through a sea of bluish light. Suddenly a dark object descended rapidly towards us. I lost all consciousness, and the next I recollect, I was here and you were bending over me. I was saved by the young officer, who plunged in after me. To him I owe my life and infinite gratitude.’

‘He who could show such courage and humanity must be an honorable man. I feel that though our lot is so unhappy as to have cast us into the power of our enemies, they will treat us with courtesy.’

At this moment, Hastings entered the cabin. At seeing him, the face of the maiden deepened with the glow of beauty, and her eyes brightened with the animation of a warm and grateful heart.

‘I trust that you have by this time recovered your composure, Mademoiselle,’ said Hastings, with admiration of her beautiful features.

‘Indeed, sir, I cannot feel apprehension with one who has so gallantly risked his life to save mine.’

‘Monsieur,’ said the General, grasping his hand, ‘how shall I find words to express to you my feelings. If you could see my heart, you would see your image impressed there imperishably.’

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'Your safety, and that of your lovely daughter, is sufficient reward, General Fontleroy,' answered Hastings.

'You are not a Mexican, sir? Your French, though very pure, has not the Spanish accent; and your appearance is that of one born in a more northern clime.'

Hastings did not reply for a moment, and then answered, with embarrassment.

'I am an officer in the Mexican service, sir; but it is true, I am not a Mexican by birth. I have come down into the cabin, sir, to say that you and your daughter are to be considered as guests, with the Captain of your ship also. The crew are likewise at liberty on board. If you and Captain Deland will decide together, what port you wish to be left at, it will afford us pleasure to land you at the place you select, if it is not far out of our cruising ground.'

'Sir, you are overwhelming us with favors we can never repay,' said General Fontleroy, with emotion. 'Where is Captain Deland?'

'He is now coming down with Captain Marshall.'

The French Captain, on entering the cabin and seeing his two passengers appearing so well, though the maiden with her wet locks looked like a sea-nymph, rushed towards them, and with tears of joy congratulated them on their safety. After a few moments given to mutual congratulations and expressions of thanks to their preservers, the Marquis mentioned to Captain Deland what Hastings had proposed to him.

After some debate, it was finally agreed that it would be convenient to all parties, including Captain Marshall, to put into New Orleans. For this port therefore the brig's head was laid, and when the sun rose the next morning, she was twenty leagues to the westward of Cuba, bowling along before a fine southeast wind that marked on the reel-line seven knots to the hour.

'There were two motives which governed the officers of the Lady of the Gulf in acquiescing in the desire of the Marquis and Captain Deland to put into New Orleans. Marshall thought that by running for the Balize, he would then be sure of falling in with the *Lorraine* as she entered the river, when he resolved to attempt her capture though in the United States' waters. He had been disappointed in not meeting her south of Cuba, and in losing also the *Louis XIV.*; and his crew were becoming openly dissatisfied at their failure in making captures. To run for New Orleans, therefore, send the Marquis and his daughter up to the city in some merchant vessel to be fallen in with at the mouth, and then lay by for the French ship, was his plan.

The next motive affected Hastings only. He wished to go to New Orleans that he might have an opportunity of seeing, once more, *Auguste Livaudais*. Thus the wishes of all parties were embraced in this movement.

On the evening of the fourth day after leaving the shores of Cuba, Hastings had been walking the deck, arm in arm, with *Mademoiselle Fontleroy*. It was a sweet night. The stars and moon shed their combined radiance upon the sparkling sea. The breeze was gentle and scarcely ruffled the surface of the gulf, while at the same time it sent the graceful vessel along with swift motion. He had walked with her half an hour in earnest conversation. Marshall, the while, stood near, leaning over the quarter-rail, and watching them with an earnest manner. At length, Hastings escorted her below, and returning to the deck, laid his hand upon Marshall's shoulder.

'Courage, my dear Jack,' said he.

'What, Harry, have I any hopes?'

'Yes. Do not despair.'

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‘Despair! If she thought but a tithe of *me* as she does of you! Here you are met half way and loved in spite of yourself, while I, who am ready to blow out my brains for her, can scarcely get a look. What did you say to her, and what did she say to you? I hope you managed the affair delicately, for I would n't have her suspect I could n't do my own courting.’

‘It is n't every man who fights well courts well,’ answered Hastings, laughing. ‘But I will tell you what I said. I began first, by giving her a brief history of my life and ’

‘Did you tell her of Auguste Livaudais?’ demanded the Captain, eagerly.

‘Yes.’

‘Then you have no hope. Once tell a woman, who is inclined to fall in love with you, that you love another, and she puts off on the other tack quick. In nine cases out of ten she will hate. Well, let me hear.’

‘I informed her of my attachment, and my hopes yet of being so happy as again to meet the maiden who had won my heart.’

‘I can tell when you made that known to her. It was when you were passing the binnacle and she stopped and seemed disturbed. I could not hear, but I saw.’

‘Yes, it was then. She received the intelligence with surprise and seeming pain. But I felt that when I saw her gratitude to me, as the preserver of her life, assuming the form of a strong passion, it became my duty as an honorable man to let her know, by artfully intruding it in conversation, that my affections were not free.’

‘You are a fine fellow, Hastings! and you have acted right. You owed this to me also, though, when you saw how much I was in love with her, and when you perceived that you stood in the way.’

‘Yes, and I did my best to remove the obstacle. I made out myself to her as quite a sad reprobate, who had not a grain of love for anybody but Auguste Livaudais, which is true, while I took the opportunity to bring you in and laud you to the skies.’

‘You did?’

‘Yes, I did! I spoke of all your estimable qualities, and you know you have a few, dear Jack.’

‘I wish she could think so.’

‘She does. I discoursed of you in such eloquent guise that I almost fell in love myself with the picture I drew, and yet it was a truthful one. I did my best to make her forget that there was such a person as myself in existence, and to see nobody else in the world but you.’

‘You have won my heart forever.’

‘No, no! I know you have none for me to win. Josephine Fontleroy has had it these three days. It is amusing how all at once you fell in love with her. You did not seem to notice her, or make a remark about her, the first twenty-four hours.’

‘Because I was confounded with her charms. I was afraid of her. I was afraid to speak a word. My heart was all in a flutter. Bless you, I fell dead in love with her while I was bleeding her.’

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`As you were bleeding her!'

`Yes. As my lancet pierced her beautiful arm, her beauty pierced my heart. I thought I should never get through. Well, what more did she say?'

`I have n't told you yet that she said anything.'

`Do n't say so. She did speak; did n't she?'

`Yes. She said that she admired you greatly, and thought you possessed noble qualities. She was grateful to you for your attentions to her father and herself, and a great many other kind things. I then told her that I saw with pleasure that you were deeply interested in her, nay, that you had in confidence told me how she had inspired you with the strongest passion. At this she sighed.'

`Sighed, did she!' repeated the Captain, sighing.

`Yes, sighed, and then immediately complained of the chilly air and desired to go below. And I went with her, as you saw.'

`The deuce she did! Then it is all up with me!'

CHAPTER X. The Lover.

The gallant Captain had indeed reason to despair of winning the heart of the lovely French maiden, from the reception she had given to the hints thrown out by Hastings, whom he had commissioned to feel the pulse of her heart. He was in love, but had not the courage to bring the matter to issue himself; and seeing that she had a strong regard for his lieutenant, and knowing that his affections were already engaged, he enlisted him, as has been seen, to advocate his cause with her.

Hastings had acted for his friend faithfully; for, although he was much pleased and almost fascinated with the beauty and mental graces of the lovely stranger, he had no heart for her. When, however, he saw that she was becoming interested in him, as maidens will be in those to whom they owe the preservation of life, he felt that it was his duty to avoid her society; and when he discovered that Marshall was in love with her, he endeavored, in every way, to give him his place by her side. At length, the Captain made him his full confidant, and asked his aid, in opening the avenues to her heart, in his behalf.

Josephine Fontleroy discovered at once the agency that her preserver was engaged in, and that instead of wooing for himself, he was wooing for his friend. This discovery, though nearly approached before, was not fully made until the conversation took place between them, and which has already been given. Her heart was truly and deeply interested in Hastings, for gratitude begets love in generous bosoms. The assurance, therefore, that he could not return her affection, that his heart and love were pledged to another, at first deeply moved her to sorrow. Unable to bear unmoved, the disappointment, she hastened below to escape betraying her feelings to Hastings.

`You have no reason to suppose it is all up with you, my dear Jack,' said Hastings, in reply to his words. 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' you know is the adage, and a very true one it is.'

`But what shall I do?'

`Do? Try to make yourself as agreeable to her as you can.'

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‘But I never can get to windward of her while you are in her eye.’

‘I will try and make myself as disagreeable to her as I can,’ answered Hastings, laughing.

‘Something might be done that way, to be sure. But then there is such little time to bring it about. We shall be off the Balize to-morrow morning, and then they will leave in the first vessel that goes up the river to the city, for I have promised them this.’

‘A great deal can be done in twelve hours, in love affairs,’ answered Hastings. ‘Believe me, Captain, I do not think you are indifferent to her.’

‘I wish she could have taken to me as she did to you. That is the only way to have a woman love you, to let her love of herself. It is like beating a craft against wind and tide, just for the sport of sailing down again with yards square. I would give my little finger to know whether she cared a straw for me.’

‘You can easily ascertain. She has gone down into the cabin. The General has not yet retired to his state-room, and I will invite him up to walk the deck with me. You can see the lady alone, and if you are true to yourself you will not longer sigh in vain.’

‘I will see her alone and tell her just the state of my heart. I can’t live this way.’

‘If she has pity on you, shall you propose marriage at once? Shall you give up the sea and turn sugar planter on the general’s estates?’

‘I never thought of that. She would n’t care to go to sea, I dare say. It would be more agreeable for her to be on shore.’

‘Of course it would.’

‘Well, I will do as she says. I will tell her so. I will tell her that it shall be the business of my life to render her happy.’

‘She can’t suspect you seek her hand for her fortune, Captain, for I told her you were worth full fifty thousand dollars.’

‘You might have said seventy, for I shall pocket twenty thousand more by the capture of the Loraine.’

‘I hope so.’

‘For your sake as well as mine. You have ten thousand as your part of the captures we have made, and I would like to have you quadruple it, especially if you hope to find favor with Miss Livaudais.’

‘I *do* hope to find favor with her. I hope that on repentance she will forgive me and but it is too great happiness to expect.’

‘Not a bit of it. If I stood as fair a chance of wedding the lovely Fontleroy, bless her beautiful eyes! as you do of making the lovely Auguste your bride, I should be the happiest dog in the world.’

‘I shall be able to do nothing without your assistance. You must pave the way.’

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`That I will do. I promised it, and I will make all square; never fear. Your good turn for me I'll offset in your favor. Leave me to making love I mean for *another* person. I am all aback when I try to negotiate for myself.'

`You promise me, Captain, that whether you capture the Loraine or not, you will run up the river as far as the plantation of Mr. Livaudais.'

`Yes. I will keep my promise too. You say it is not nine leagues below the city.'

`No more.'

`I will sail up then, though at some risk if I take the Loraine in American waters. It will be dangerous for me to be in the river. But then there are no Yankee ships of war at Orleans nor fortifications to prevent me. For that matter I could run up to the very city, fire a broadside upon it, and get safely back to sea again without interruption. So you may depend upon me giving you an opportunity of seeing your lady fair. Come, now go down and call up the Marquis. I begin to feel, though, as if I was about to be hanged. What a coward this love makes of a man. My blood feels as if it had turned into warm milk and water. Well, it must be done, or die. But vast, Harry,' he cried, as his lieutenant approached the companion-way, `say a good word to her in my favor before you come up a small pull, you know, on the weather brace.'

`Aye, aye!' answered Hastings, disappearing into the cabin.

`Bless us!' ejaculated the Captain, walking quickly, up and down the deck, with his hands behind his back; `bless my soul! what a difficulty a man gets himself into that falls in love with a pretty woman! Here I've been all over the world, seen blue-eyed English lasses, and black-eyed Spanish donas, flirted with pretty Jewesses in Syria, and glorious Circassians in Turkey. I have been exposed to all sorts of eye-batteries and never got a shot in my hull. I have come out of every action safe and sound, with spars and canvass all set. But here, when I have got to the mature age of thirty-seven no, I'm thirty-nine, which makes it worse here comes along this little French craft with her dark, killing glances, that do n't look at you, but steal at you out of their corners as it were, a sort of cross-firing that is confoundedly mischievous. In this way she has taken me to advantage, and I have struck my flag to her before I'm even hailed to surrender. But there is no use in striking. She do'nt think me worth the trouble of boarding, but sets all sail after this lucky fellow, Hastings. So all I've got to do, so long as she won't take me, is now to try and take her. Ah! here he comes with the old General. How my heart thumps! I'll have to keep it down with a preventer-brace.'

`All is clear, Jack,' said Hastings, in a whisper. `She looks divinely. You will find her reading by the table.'

`Did you tell her I was coming.'

`No. I feared she might weigh, and make for her state-room. Pluck up courage. I have sounded the Marquis and I have no doubt he would like the match if you would agree to live with him.'

`Agree! I'll agree to anything. I'll agree to to I'll agree to '

`She may not be there if you delay, Jack. Success!'

`Thank you, but I feel as if I was going to be hanged.'

With these words he descended into the cabin. The lovely French girl was seated by the table, leaning her cheek in her hand. A book, open, lay upon her lap. One finger was inserted listlessly between the leaves. She wore a look of sadness and seemed to be thoughtful, for her eyes slowly winked like one thinking intently.

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The Captain was in the cabin before she was aware of his presence. He saw her in this attitude and felt that she was sad on account of her disappointment with reference to his lieutenant. He thought that she never looked so lovely as in that attitude and with that pensive cast of countenance. He stood still to gaze upon her, both to admire, and from fear of destroying, by startling her, so fair a picture. He sighed at the thought that he should perhaps never possess so rich a treasure as the heart that gently heaved beneath her bosom.

She looked up as he sighed, and seeing him rise, and smiling with courtesy, but without that quickening of color or trembling of tone, which he had noticed in her when Hastings approached her, she said,

'You are quite a stranger in the cabin, Captain. I believe I have not seen you here since dinner.'

'I feared intruding upon your retirement, Miss Fontleroy.'

'No, you are always welcome you and your officers. I regret that we should have taken up your only cabin, and I by no means desire to make it exclusive. But we shall probably leave to-morrow, Lieutenant Hastings informs me. Be seated, Captain.'

'Yes, Madam,' answered Marshall, taking a chair and looking down like an abashed school-boy. 'Yes, I am sorry to say that you will leave the brig to-morrow.'

'Sorry, Monsieur!' she repeated, opening her large eyes with surprise and a smile; 'I should rather have expected to hear you say glad. But doubtless the word spoken, covers that which is repressed.'

'Indeed, Mademoiselle, I speak the feeling of my heart, when I say I regret your departure from the brig.'

This was spoken with such sincerity and warmth, that Miss Fontleroy gazed upon him with a glance of wonder.

'You are very kind, Monsieur,' she said, slightly coloring.

'I am happy to be thought so by one I so much esteem as yourself, Mademoiselle Fontleroy.' The Captain, while speaking these bold words, bravely looked her full in the face, though he colored to the eyes as he did so. But he had made up his mind to screw his courage up and make a bold stroke.

'Indeed, Monsieur, you are pleased to compliment me,' she replied, smiling and blushing.

'I feel too sincerely too deeply too *profoundly*, I may say to compliment you. What I have said, I have said from my heart. Yes, from my heart, Mademoiselle!'

'Here the Captain laid his hand upon his heart, in a very impressive manner. The maiden looked surprised and confused. She parted her pretty lips three several times to make some response, but she could not utter a word; but burst out with a peal of merry laughter that quite astounded the lover.

'Why, bless me, you are very merry, Mademoiselle! It is a very serious business with me, I assure you. To speak to the point, I am dead in love with you. From the first moment you came into the brig you won my heart. I am now ready to offer you my hand. I am a sailor, Mademoiselle, and do n't understand making love quite so well as I do fighting, so pardon my bluntness. I am completely on my beam-ends. You have done all this mischief and it is your part to repair it, by giving me your heart in exchange for mine. I love you with all my soul, and I'll make you the happiest wife in Christendom or out of it. I've tried to get to the windward of loving you, but I could n't do it; and so I have had to run down under your lee and surrender.'

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‘You honor me greatly,’ answered the beautiful woman, with an air half serious, half arch; ‘but are you courting me for yourself, Captain, or for your lieutenant?’

‘For my lieutenant! no, no! He can do his own courting too successfully. What the deuce did you ask me that for?’ he asked, laughing, yet looking confused and amazed.

‘Because he a little while ago was courting me in your behalf, and I did not know,’ she added, naively, but that you were reciprocating the favor.’

‘Bless me, what a baggage you are!’ cried the Captain, laughing. She laughed also very merrily. Confidence seemed at once established between them. He took courage, under cover of the good humored mirth, to seize her hand, press it to his lips, and boldly to reiterate his passion, solemnly assuring her that if she refused to listen, he should forthwith blow out his brains, or do something *worse*.

CHAPTER XI. The Declaration.

‘Well, what success, Captain?’ asked Hastings in about half an hour after the scene which closed the last chapter, approaching him as he came on deck with a light step.

‘Excellent, Harry! I am a happy man!’

‘I congratulate you, upon my soul. What said she? How did you manage it, to come off with such flying colors?’

‘You shall hear,’ answered Marshall. ‘Step aft here, where the General and Captain Deland will not overhear,’ he added, glancing at those two gentlemen, who were walking in the waist together, conversing.

‘At first,’ said Marshall, ‘I felt like a fool, and thought she would think me one outright; but I took courage and resolved to venture all, win or lose!’

‘That was your only way.’

‘Yes, as it proved. I began, by regretting her departure from the brig, and then assuring her how happy I was that she had ever honored the brig with her presence. She stared, and then I bluntly out with the truth, and told her how I loved her, how I had loved her from the first, and should love her to the last.’

‘What did she say to this?’

‘Well, what do you guess?’

‘That she was very grateful to you!’

‘No. She quietly asked me, if I was courting for myself, or for my lieutenant.’

‘For me?’

‘Yes, the baggage! And when I asked what she asked me that for, she replied with a roguish look, that as my lieutenant had a little while before been courting her for me, she thought it likely that I was now reciprocating matters.’

‘She has wit!’

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‘Yes, she is as witty as she is beautiful, the gipsy!’

‘What did you reply?’

‘Why this question, put in such a queer way, kind of broke the ice, as they say in Yankee land, and placed us on a footing at once. I laughed and so did she, and we were hand and glove at once. My awkwardness vanished like a fog before her smiling face, and my courage came back so stoutly that, what do you think I did?’

‘I have no idea!’

‘I caught her hand and kissed it!’

‘You made progress rapidly. I do n’t see but that you do your own love–making much better than I could have done it for you.’

‘It was all off hand, and a sort of forlorn hope affair, dash and go. I felt that unless I made soundings then, it was all up with me!’

‘How did she receive this little liberty of hand–kissing?’

‘She withdrew her hand and blushed, but did not look offended. So I took courage and asked her, if she would have pity upon me, and tell me whether there was any hope for me. She did n’t reply for some time, and seemed perplexed; and I thought I should have to come on deck and jump over–board, concluding she would say No, when she did speak.’

‘But she did n’t?’

‘Not exactly.’ She said, speaking in her musical way, ‘Monsieur Captain, I cannot but feel deeply grateful to you for your preference. I am agreeably flattered by your notice. You seem to be sincere and earnest. I assure you that I am not indifferent to your regard for me. I owe you much for protection and kindness since I have been in your vessel. I feel deeply your attentions to my father. I have admired the excellent traits of your character, developed by circumstances since I have been on board. I learn from your lieutenant, (here she sighed, Harry,) that you are an honorable man, and I will confess to you, that he informed me of your interest in me. You desire me to give you a positive reply, whether you can hope or not. To this I answer, that I cannot consent to become the wife of the enemy of France. If you will cease to serve Mexico and become the friend of France, you shall have a daughter of France for your bride.’

‘She answered as I supposed she would do! What did you say to this?’

‘I told her, that if I had the command of the whole Mexican fleet and army, nay, was Emperor of Mexico, I would resign all for her hand.’

‘Nothing could have been more gallant.’

‘She smiled, and extended to me her hand, and I touched my lips to it, without her snatching it away as she did before.’

‘That was encouraging!’

‘Encouraging? How cool you take things! It was Elysium, sir. It was the seal of our love, Harry. But there is a draw–back!’ he added, with a sad air.

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`What is that?'

`The Loraine! I must give her up?'

`Did she say so?'

`Yes, she mentioned that in particular, and with emphasis.'

`What did she say?'

`When I told her I would lay Mexico at her feet if it were mine, and all that, I never thought a word about the Loraine. It never entered my mind. So when I had done speaking, she said, smiling like a houri, I do n't wish you to resign, dear Captain '

`Did she say *dear* Captain?'

`*Dear Captain!*'

`That was advancing, Jack!

`It was. Said she, I do n't wish you, *dear* Captain, to resign what you do not possess. All I wish is, to know if you will resign your commission and command of your brig, if I will give you my hand.'

`Yes, I answered, I will most cheerfully, and deem it no sacrifice for such a treasure. Here I pressed her hand again very warmly indeed.

`I will give you thirty days,' said she, `after I leave the brig, for you to return your brig and commission to Mexico, and come back to New Orleans where I shall be.'

`This was coming to the point!'

`It was. But I did not hesitate. I promised that I would do it.'

`The Loraine will therefore go on to her port undisturbed and unimpeded by you, Monsieur Captain,' said she, with a peculiar look in the corner of her wicked eyes.

`Bless me, Harry, if this did n't thrown me all aback! It like to have carried away my spars, and foundered me!'

`The Loraine! I repeated, with my mouth half a yard open.'

`Yes, Monsieur,' she answered, as quietly as a summer's sea. `You promised me that you would become a friend to France, if you married a daughter of France. You must, therefore, from this hour, give up all hostile intentions against the Loraine.'

`And what did you say? This was a severe test of your love.'

`I was staggered, for my heart was set on capturing this ship. She saw my hesitation, and looked very grave. There I was, the Loraine on one side,' and the beautiful Josephine on the other. She suddenly threw all her charms into her eyes and smiles, and I threw myself at her feet, crying,

`You, beauteous Fontleroy, before all the French ships on the ocean!'

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`And you have then seriously pledged yourself to resign your commission, and let the Loraine pass freely to her port.'

`Yes. What could I do. If I had said no, and then captured the Loraine, I should still have loved her as before, and should then have loved in vain. I should have lost her forever.'

`And seriously, you have given up all intention of attacking this ship should you fall in with her!'

`Seriously I have!'

`Well, you have really been in love; and you have surely shown the sincerity of your devotion to her.'

`So she said. But I am content. I consider her worth a dozen French ships. If I possessed all the world, Harry, and had not her love, I should be poor.'

`Well, I must say you are a paragon of a lover. I hardly think my love in such a case would have withstood the trial. I think I should have told her, that if she did not love me without exacting any conditions, I could not believe that she loved me at all.'

`But consider, my dear Harry, that she did not love me at first. That all the interest I have got her to feel in me, grew out of your speaking a good word for me, showing her you were not in the market, and by my bold and sincere declaration of my passion. I confess that I have bought her love with the price she has named; but if I have it, I have it, and I care not at what sacrifice, so I do have it!'

`Well, Jack, if you are content I am. I am glad you are going to give up cruising, for I have been thinking that if I succeeded in finding Auguste's love for me undiminished by the report of my mad career, I will reside in Louisiana. If you marry the beautiful Josephine, you will, perhaps, be my neighbor.'

`That will be delightful! We will visit each other every day; dine, and smoke, and chat with each other; our wives will be great friends, and our '

`And our children '

`Yes, and our children will be cousins '

`Not exactly cousins '

`Well, they shall call each other so, and they shall marry together, and '

`Our grandchildren '

`We will dance upon our knees!'

`What a charming picture!'

`Delightful!'

`But, ah, Jack, we must get our wives first.'

`That is true. I hope nothing will prevent me from getting mine.'

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`You have nothing to fear, so long as you let the Loraine alone. But I have little hope. Yet I shall try boldly.'

`And I will aid you all I can, now I have got my bread buttered.'

`I suppose you will stand right up for the city then, without waiting for the Loraine?'

`Do n't mention the Loraine again!'

`When I do, I will mention Josephine in the same breath. I see you are a little sore.'

`Not a bit! Though, to tell you the truth, she was most too hard upon me. But she is right. I would n't like her half so well, if she would promise to marry a man who was laying in wait to capture a ship of her native country, degrade her flag, and slaughter her people. She is right. Every time I think about the Loraine, I will look at her handsome face and think how much richer a treasure I possess in her!'

`How are you to proceed now? What is your course?'

`The cruel and adorable Josephine gives me thirty days. I shall use them in this way. To-morrow we shall be in the Mississippi river. I shall proceed up to the city and wait on the Mexican Consul, and to him surrender the brig and my commission. If you choose, you can take her to Vera Cruz, and there receive the money due us for the prizes we have sent in. You can then return to New Orleans. It will occupy less than thirty days. In the meanwhile, I shall be enjoying the society of Josephine, and in seeing in your behalf the lovely Auguste Livaudais.'

`Will you see her?'

`I will. If you will take the brig to Vera Cruz, and surrender her to the authorities, by the time you return, I will have the way cleared for you.'

`I feel that I shall have the need of some intercessor, and one who will palliate and excuse to her my course of follies in New York, of which I feel heartily ashamed. If you will make use of the interval in conciliating her, I will take the brig to Vera Cruz. But *first*, I must try and see her in person before I call upon you. I shall avail myself of your services only in case she refuses to see me.'

`In that case, then, I will manage to see her and negotiate for you as warmly as you have done for me. I will leave you at the plantation, then, as I go up!'

`Yes, you may put me ashore there, and anchor in the river, and wait until you hear my success. If I fail, I proceed to the city with you, and then return in the brig down the river, and take her to Vera Cruz.'

`Very well. Our plan then is mutually understood,' responded Marshall, crossing the deck to speak to General Fontleroy.

CHAPTER XII. The Planter's Villa.

It was on one of those mellow, sunny afternoons peculiar to Louisiana, just before evening, when the cool breeze, following the river as the blood follows the veins, invites alike the planter and the slave to his piazza or his cabin threshold, to enjoy its refreshing influence.

A gentleman almost five and forty years of age, his brow shaded by a broad palmetto sombrero, was riding homeward along the river bank. He was mounted upon a gracefully-limbed horse, that ambled along at a pace

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that a lady would have loved. Behind him a few yards, followed a negro servant, also well mounted.

From time to time, the horseman would turn his head to watch the slow progress of a brig of war, that was moving up the river under a broad head of snowy canvass, every sail being set to catch the light wind that was just rising, and hardly filling the sails.

He seemed to regard her only with admiration rather than with curiosity; though it was not very common among the numerous vessels that daily passed up and down the majestic river, to number among them an armed vessel.

He arrived, at length, at an imposing gateway that opened upon an avenue of orange trees that led to a very imposing and elegant structure, in the style of an Italian Villa. As he entered the gate, which his slave opened and closed after him, he lingered an instant to gaze upon the brig which was half a mile below, and then cantered up the avenue. He passed from the avenue through a beautiful open garden with carriage-ways winding through it, and alighted in front of the mansion, where he was welcomed by a very noble looking maiden, with raven hair bound and braided like a coronet upon her brow, dark oriental eyes, and a superb figure. She had been watching his approach from the elevated piazza, which commanded a view of the river by glimpses through the trees.

'You have returned too late, dear father!' she cried.

'No, no, my daughter,' said the gentleman, with a smile of paternal pride and affection, as he gazed upon her charming face. 'It is not too late to ride for half an hour. I could not return from the padre's sooner. He insisted on my remaining to look over the plans of the new church he is to build in the parish; and then he must have a game at billiards with me, and then I had to go and look at his dog kennel and admire his litters.'

'I shall give the padre a rap when I see him, for taking up so much of your time. I have new music for you to listen to, which is better than the yelping of his puppies! Then I have '

'Do n't scold Dominie Sanchez, *Auguste*, for we have so few neighbors, and are so far removed from town, that I really do n't know what I should do, but for him. It is a great blessing,' added Mr. Livaudais, 'to have a merry priest in one's neighborhood.'

'Yes, I dare say the gentlemen think so; for they sent poor padre Bisente back to the bishop, because he would n't or could n't play at billiards.'

'Could n't, girl! He did n't know a cue from a mace, nor a "pocket" from a pouch. But get ready to ride. The sunset is pleasant, and the air fresh. A gallop on the river-road for a league and back, will be far enough. There is a gun-brig coming up the river close to the shore, which will be an interesting object to look at as we canter along.'

'I saw it, sir, from the piazza, and thought it was too beautiful for an ordinary merchant vessel.'

'So you have a sailor's eye, have you! But do n't delay. Every minute of this fine evening is precious. I have sent Pierre round for your bay.'

The brig of war was the Lady of the Gulf. She had come in sight of the villa, about a quarter of an hour before Mr. Livaudais had discovered her in riding homeward from the priest's house, which was situated a mile and a half below.

Upon discovering the villa, which was indicated to him by a pilot who was on board, Hastings took a spy-glass and went forward to have a clear view of it. He was soon joined by Marshall.

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`Well, she lives in a beautiful place, Harry! What a princely gentleman her father must be! What do you discover, eh! that your hand shakes so, and your face deepens in color?'

`I see her! I see her!'

`What? Auguste?'

`Yes. It is impossible to mistake her air and figure, even at this distance. She is upon the piazza!'

`Let me look. You will see her close at hand soon, so let me have the glass.'

`Not yet, not yet. I am not mistaken! It is she, and alive and well!'

`What good eyes a lover's are. Why, my dear man, it is a mile off!'

`But the spy-glass brings her nearer.'

`I wish it would bring her into your very arms. Let me look.'

`There! She has disappeared! No, she has returned, and seems watching the brig.'

`Bring your glass to bear on the two men on horseback riding along above them.'

`I see them! It is Mr. Livaudais himself, and a slave.'

`Are you sure?'

`Yes. I can't mistake him. He is a large man with an imposing Lafayette-like person, bold and military. He has disappeared through the gate to the villa.'

`Well, you are a lucky fellow, Harry, to see them so early, and to have the satisfaction of knowing that they are alive and well. Where shall I land you?'

`I hardly know what course to pursue,' said Hastings agitated. `Too abrupt a presentation before her would, perhaps, forever defeat my hopes. There is no doubt at all, but that they have heard of my mad career in New York; and they will look upon me as a disgraced person. What appeared to me plausible at a distance, now seems formidable enough, indeed, impossible. I have lost all courage.'

`I know what that is. I know just how you feel. I felt so before Josephine the other night, when I went to confess to her; bless her bright eyes, she is getting to love me very fast. I will tell you now how this thing shall be managed, for I have just been talking with the Marquis, and have learned from him that his brother's estate lays only eight miles above this. But as the trustee is in New Orleans, he wished first to go to the city and see him. Now I will lay your case, just as it is, before Josephine, and get her to lay it before her father, and propose that he be landed here, and throw himself upon the hospitality of M. Livaudais for to-night, and for horses tomorrow to ride up to his estate. Mr. Livaudais will be delighted to see him, there is no doubt, and to go with him to the plantation on the morrow, for these insulated planters consider a visiter a God-send to relieve the monotony of their lives.'

`Well, but what benefit will '

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‘You have n’t heard me out. I shall go ashore with them of course, and, as I shall want to appear well, I will take with me a servant. That servant shall be yourself.’

‘Me?’

‘Yes. A little burnt cork will transform you into a very respectable African valet.’

‘Do you mean that I shall disguise myself as a servant, and go to the villa with you?’ asked Hastings with surprise.

‘Yes. In that capacity you can see her and ’

‘No, no! I won’t degrade myself any farther in her eyes than I am! I can’t enter into any such deception, my dear Captain; I am willing you and the Marquis, and his daughter should go. You can see with your own eyes how things are, and report to me.’

‘Well, I will do it; only I think you had better go as my valet. You will then be on the spot to act as circumstances may turn up.’

‘I will first let you go and spy out the land.’

‘Well, I will do so, and report accordingly. I will come to anchor opposite that arched gate–way that leads into the villa grounds. But who are those riding out?’ he asked, as they reached the quarter–deck again.

Hastings stopped, and raised the glass quickly to his eye.

‘It is Auguste and her father!’ he exclaimed joyfully.

‘She rides bravely! What an elegant creature she is!’

‘Who is that so elegant, Monsieur Capitan?’ asked Josephine smiling archly.

‘You first, ma chere Josephine; and *second*, the lady on horseback cantering along the river road.’

‘She does ride beautifully! Monsieur the lieutenant seems to recognize her, by his emotion!’

‘Yes. It is Auguste Livaudais, the maiden of whom he has so eloquently discoursed in your hearing.’

‘Ah! then I shall regard her with more particular interest,’ she answered, smiling.

‘And so shall I; for if she had not already had possession of my lieutenant’s heart you would have had it, and I should not have been as I am, the happiest man on earth.’ Here the Captain raised her hand to his lips.

Hastings watched the riders with his glass, as they galloped along the pleasant banks of the river in the direction in which the brig was advancing. Soon they came opposite the vessel, and not being more than three hundred yards distance, could be seen plainly with the naked eye. Hastings with his glass, could have the happiness of bringing almost within touch, the beautiful features of Miss Livaudais. She was gazing upon the brig, all unconscious of such close scrutiny, and as little suspecting who was so closely observing her.

‘She is a very splendid creature, Harry,’ said the Captain, with admiration. ‘Your taste I admire with all my heart. It would be a pity if you should fail to secure such a prize. But you shall not lose her. You have helped me to mine, and I will help you to yours. I mean to come to an anchor here while they are looking on, and then pull

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ashore and introduce myself. Nothing like coming to the point at once.'

The orders were now given to let go the anchor, and take in sail. They were obeyed with alacrity; and in ten minutes, the beautiful brig which had so recently presented two moving pyramids of canvass to the eyes of Mr. Livaudais and his daughter, stood stationary in all the naked symmetry of her tapering spars, and delicate tracery of rigging. While they were looking on and admiring the exquisite outline of ropes and yards, and far raking masts, they beheld a light four-oared cutter leave her starboard gangway, and pull towards them.

'I am glad to see them drop anchor, and more pleased still to see them coming on shore,' said Mr. Livaudais, looking gratified. 'Officers of a man of war are always rare fellows and capital company. If I can, I will keep them over to-morrow, and give them a dinner-party and a fox hunt.'

'Do you know what nation the brig belongs to, father?' asked Miss Livaudais, 'restraining with the bit her spirited horse, which was pricking up his ears at the approaching boat.'

'No; but I think either French or Mexican. Those are the only ones likely to be about the Gulf just now. She is not Yankee, for the uniform of the officers in the boat is too brilliant for an American's.'

'There are two officers. The elderly one has opened his cloak and shows a plain uniform.'

'He is a military-looking man. But there is a lady on his right.'

'Yes, and young and beautiful!' cried Miss Livaudais. 'Now I shall have company, as well as you, father.'

'You ought to like young officer's company I should think, quite as well as that of your own sex. Most young ladies would. But since you saw that young Hastings, at the Springs, you never have looked civilly on any one else. But now that you know that he has proved unworthy of you, whatever you might have thought of him once, I hope you have been a good sensible girl and forgotten him.'

'I have, sir,' answered Auguste Livaudais, dropping her eyes to the ground, and looking very much distressed and embarrassed. Her reply was in firm tones, but a slight cadence of feeling tremulously vibrated in them, as if she had *not* forgotten, though believing so.

'That is right! Think no more about him. He is lost to your hopes forever. So be yourself again, and try and entertain these gentlemen, and also all others, grave and gay, who may hereafter be my guests. By and by, I hope you will make one worthy of you captive. The maiden in the boat is very beautiful, now that I see her nearer. They are close at hand. I will alight and receive them, for they evidently are come to visit me.'

CHAPTER XIII. The Guests.

'You are welcome, Messieurs,' said Mr. Livaudais, approaching the water-side as the brig's boat touched the shore, raising his hat as he spoke, out of deference to the lady.

'I believe I address Mr. Livaudais,' said Captain Marshall, stepping on shore and approaching him.

'Yes, sir. May I know to whom I have the honor of speaking?'

'Captain Marshall, of the Mexican war schooner Lady of the Gulf. I have rescued from pirates the Marquis La Fontleroy and his daughter, who were on the way to Louisiana, where the Marquis has an estate left him by his brother M. Pierre Fontleroy.'

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'I knew him well. His plantation is but a few miles above mine. Monsieur Marquis,' he added, approaching him, for Marshall in speaking had made a gesture with his hand towards him to indicate him, 'I am happy to see you, and congratulate you on your safe arrival. I knew your brother well. His loss has left a gap in our society, but I trust that you will remain among us and take his place. Mademoiselle, I have a daughter, whom you see there in the saddle, who will gladly welcome you. See, she is already alighted, and hastening hither.'

The Marquis and M. Livaudais then embraced, and so did Auguste and Josephine. M. Livaudais then proposed that the Marquis should become his guest till he recovered from the fatigues of his voyage, and then he would take him in his own carriage up to the estate which he had inherited. As this arrangement perfectly coincided with their wishes, and fell in with the plan of the Captain, it was thankfully accepted, and the whole party walked towards the villa, leaving a servant to bring the horses home.

On the way, the two maidens talked themselves into each other's confidence and friendship. Josephine related the incidents of her voyage, and Auguste listened with the deepest attention. She spoke so eloquently of the young officer, who had saved her at the risk of his own life, that Auguste smiled and said, playfully,

'And of course you gave him your heart. He could have desired no more than this from one so lovely as you are, and I know so good too.'

Josephine dropped her eyes an instant, and slightly colored. But she rallied and resolved to speak in behalf of her preserver, who, just before her leaving the brig, had told her all his fears.

'I would have given him my heart; but seeing the interest I was feeling in him, he took occasion to speak with me and unfold to me, by degrees, the sad truth that his heart was another's.'

'I sympathize with you. He was honorable to speak thus soon, before you became so much attached to him as to make you unhappy.'

'Yes; he was honorable. He is the very soul of honor and truth. He is brave, gentle, and generous above all men.'

'He is the first lieutenant of the brig, I think you said.'

'Yes.'

'And pray why did he not come on shore also? I have some curiosity to see this hero.'

'He has duties to keep him there, the Captain being with us.'

'What is his name?'

'It is not a Mexican name, but American, I believe,' answered Josephine, not desiring to make known who he was till she had made some interest in his behalf in her breast; for inasmuch as she could not have his love she generously resolved when he told her his story, to do all in her power to reconcile him with the maiden who had his heart.

'I told you that he loved another, Mademoiselle,' she added, without giving a more direct reply to her inquiry, 'but I did not tell you, what will excite your sympathy, that he fears the lady looks upon him as degraded, and he is despairing of ever attaining her hand.'

'Degraded!'

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‘Yes, Mademoiselle. This is the story. He was a young man of fortune, and he met this lady, who was very beautiful almost as beautiful as yourself, indeed. He had reason to believe that he had won a deep hold upon her affections. But circumstances separated them ere he declared his passion. He found that he could not live unless he declared his passion to her. He hastened to her home for this purpose, but unfortunately he was ensnared by some persons who wished to strip him of his money, by enticing him to play. He yielded to the temptation, and lost so much of his fortune that he became ashamed to approach her, lest she should not only think him influenced by a desire to mend his estate, and perhaps, hearing of his follies, reject his suit altogether with contempt. This reflection, acting upon a sensitive mind, and a mind conscious of guilt, (for he was fully alive to his folly in having gamed) drove him into a sort of reckless career. He plunged into every dissipation, and finally, one night left the halls of a gaming palace, stripped to his last dollar. You look pale, Mademoiselle!’

‘No it is nothing. Go on,’ she said, with nervous rapidity.

‘I have little more to say. He would have destroyed himself at once, being too proud to live, when he was fallen in with in the streets by the Captain of the brig whose influence saved him. He prevailed upon him to accompany him to sea. From that hour his character changed and his feelings were composed. He resolved to distinguish himself and win a name worthy of the maiden’s regard, for he still loved her with the most passionate adoration. Fortune threw us into his vessel, as I have told you; and how nobly he acted, I have told you. He still lives in the fond hope of being able, one day, to retrieve the past, and by and by, when he shall have redeemed his errors by an honorable career, he has told me that he means to lay his name and honors at her feet, or else leave his life there. I see that I have enlisted your sympathies, and that you feel for him as I do.’

‘Mademoiselle,’ said Auguste Livaudais, who had listened with the wildest eagerness to her narration, pressing her arm and looking earnestly in her face, ‘pray tell me the name of this person for for ’

Ah, young ladies,’ cried M. Livaudais, who, with the Marquis and Captain Marshall, were walking ahead, leaving the two maidens to talk together, ‘you loiterers! One would think you had been sworn friends all your lives. What prattlers you are! Why, Auguste, what is the matter?’ he added, as they came slowly up to the gate where he and the others had stopped to await them, ‘have you heard bad news?’

‘No, sir, I have been listening to a story, told me by Mademoiselle, that has enlisted my sympathies.’ She spoke with some agitation, and Josephine needed not more than a child’s penetration to see that she had identified the story with the history of Hastings, and that her heart was yet his, or could easily return to him. Whether she suspected that it was Hastings of whom she had been speaking, Josephine could not tell.

‘You must not tell such sad tales, Josephine,’ said the Marquis, smiling. ‘We must not carry sorrow to the house of our hospitable entertainer. Mademoiselle,’ he added, with courtesy, presenting his arm, ‘allow me to have the honor of escorting you. I will keep you away from my daughter, unless she can talk more merrily. In sooth, she ought to be gay, for by and by she means to be a bride.’

‘Father!’ said Josephine, blushing.

‘It is no secret, girl; or rather, it shan’t be. There, Mademoiselle, is the happy man, smiling like a Cupid,’ added the Marquis, pointing to Marshall, whose face looked as ruby as a rose, with conscious blushes.

M. Livaudais, now proffered his assistance to Josephine, while the Captain walked on and joined the Marquis and Auguste.

‘You have a charming villa and grounds here, Mademoiselle Livaudais,’ he said.

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‘Yes. I was just admiring them to her,’ answered the General, ‘and she tells me that my new estate is equally beautiful. Why can’t you remain till to-morrow on shore and ride up with us, and let the brig follow?’

‘I do n’t like to be ashore at night, Marquis. I will sail up, while you ride along the banks. What sad story was that my Josephine was telling you, Mademoiselle?’ asked Marshall, suspecting the truth.

‘It was of one of your officers,’ she answered, trying to speak with a smile. ‘What is the name of your first lieutenant, sir?’ she asked quickly.

‘Bless me, I always call him Harry,’ answered the Captain, who now divined her object, and saw clearly the cause of her emotion. ‘Lieutenant Harry, Miss! an odd name, but sailors have odd names very often. He is a noble fellow. I suppose Josephine has been telling you about his gallantry in saving her life. He is the best officer I ever saw. Brave as a lion, and handsome as Apollo, too. I wish you could see him board a vessel. We took a French brig of war, six weeks ago, wholly by his daring. Then he has a heart generous and noble. Do you know Josephine was half inclined to fall in love with him, heroine-like, for saving her life; but as soon as he saw it, he frankly told her he was hopelessly in love with another maiden, and knowing that I was in love with her, he took occasion to speak a good word for me. So, when I made bold to tell her how much I adored her, she did not turn a deaf ear, and we are to be married in a few weeks. But Harry has n’t lost anything by giving her up to me; for the lady he is in love with, and for whom he does nothing but sigh, is as beautiful as an angel.’

‘Then you have seen her?’ she asked, quickly.

‘Oh, did I say so? Harry has told me all about her. By the by, I wish you could see my lieutenant, I have no doubt you would fall in love with him yourself, that is if you are not already in love. Excuse the openness of speech of a sailor, Mademoiselle.’

‘Certainly, Monsieur Captain. But what good would it do me to fall in love with a young gentleman who loves another?’

‘That is very true. But, nevertheless, I want you to see him.’

‘I should like much to see him. You and Mademoiselle have said so much about him, that I have a good deal of curiosity to become acquainted with him.’

‘You shall have that opportunity whenever you say the word, Mademoiselle.’

At this crisis of their conversation, during which Miss Livaudais was a good deal embarrassed, for she could not but think of Hastings all the while, they came in front of the villa. M. Livaudais and Josephine came up with them, and the former welcomed them to his house and led the way up the steps of the piazza.

The sun had just gone down, and a soft twilight pervaded the atmosphere with its dreamy influence. The gentlemen sat down upon the piazza in comfortable arm-chairs, to enjoy the cool evening breeze after their walk, and converse about the estate of which the Marquis was to possess himself. The two maidens walked arm in arm, like long known friends, up the piazza, now talking together, and now lingering to admire the beauty of the evening. The brig was visible at her anchorage, about half a mile off, and was an interesting object amid the scenery. Hastings watched them from the brig’s deck, through his glass, until the deepening twilight hid them from his view. He then paced the deck impatiently, praying in his heart for success upon the two-fold mission of Josephine and Marshall.

‘Did Lieutenant Harry, (I believe that, is his name,) tell you Mademoiselle Josephine,’ asked Miss Livaudais, in a low tone, but earnestly, ‘who the maiden was he loved, but feared she loved him no longer?’

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‘He did, but I may not repeat the name.’

‘Your looks your words your mysterious manner, all lead me suspect that that but no, it cannot be!’

‘Suspect what?’

‘Nothing. It cannot be. But,’ she added, to herself, ‘he may have changed his name, for the letter which I received from New York, from my friend Louise Chantard, spoke of the probability of his having gone to sea. His name is Henry. He may have changed it to Harry and so called himself, or else he may have told his story to the Captain and this maiden, who are now endeavoring to sound my feelings. Oh, too happy, happy news! if this should prove to be Hastings, and redeemed too from his errors, and elevated by courage and humanity to be worthy again of my love! I dare not ask. I dare not closer press the question, lest, after all, I should be disappointed lest it should not be, but some one whose history resembles his. I must see him and judge for myself. I cannot endure this suspense’

CHAPTER XIV The Mediation.

The emotion of Mademoiselle Livaudais, and its cause, were clearly apparent to Josephine, who felt happy that she should be able to inform Hastings that she, whom he so idolized, still remembered him with tenderness.

‘You will remain with me to–night, Captain,’ said Mr. Livaudais, after a slave had handed them wines, coffee, and other refreshments, upon the piazza, the planter’s parlor.

‘No,’ replied Marshall, who had risen to go, ‘I must be on board my brig to–night. I nevertheless thank you for your hospitality.’

‘Well if you must go, I will drive you down to the water–side the evening is so pleasant.’

When they were seated in the carriage, and were passing out of the grounds by star–light, Mr. Livaudais said,

‘Pray, Captain Marshall, will you tell me the name of the brave officer whom the Marquis has lauded so high to me for saving his daughter, and whom you and she have both praised so warmly.’

‘I fear, sir, when you have heard his name, that you will cease to admire him.’

‘I cannot see why I should,’ answered Mr. Livaudais, with surprise. ‘I have a great desire to see him and know more of him; and to tell you the truth, I have become so much interested in him, that I am resolved, with your permission, to take him back to the house with me in the carriage.’

‘Nothing would give him more pleasure than to go, I assure you, sir. But there is a cloud hanging over my young friend.’

‘Indeed! But it cannot be serious, or you would not retain him as an officer.’

‘He is a native of New York, and the son of a wealthy and highly esteemed merchant, who left him, two years since, a large fortune. At the time, he was a midshipman in the navy. Upon hearing of his father’s decease and the fortune that was left him, he resigned his position in the navy, where he had been very popular for his many fine traits of character. After assuming the control of his fortune, he travelled, and, among other places, visited a celebrated watering place. There he fell in with a very charming Southern girl, an only daughter and an heiress. He loved her and devoted himself to her, feeling the sweet assurance that his love was reciprocated. Her father was attached to him, and love and fortune seemed to smile upon him. But before he could summon courage fairly

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to propose for her hand, she left and returned south. He then resolved to follow her and declare his passion, with a well based hope that he would not sue in vain. He reached New York, where he was detained by the arts of a set of those fashionable harpies that are always found in the train of a young man of fortune. They persuaded him to gamble, and robbed him of half his fortune. He awoke from the spell which had involved him, too late. Ashamed to pursue his original intention with the loss of character and estate, both of which he held when he last met her, he fell into despondency and despair, and driven on by a reckless sense of dishonor and lost happiness, he plunged headlong into dissipation, and in a few months was ruined. At that time I was in New York. I was standing in a restaurant, when I saw a young man rush past me with wild looks and an air of phrenzy. I followed him, for as he had just descended from a gambling room, it occurred to me that he was going to destroy himself. I was right in my conjecture. He was making his way to the harbor to throw himself in, when I overtook him, spoke to him kindly, and by degrees got his ear and his confidence. He told me his whole story, and throughout all, his chiefest misery was the reflection that he had lost the maiden without whose love life was wretchedness. He told me he had been an officer in the navy. I saw that he might yet be restored to society, and as I wanted a first lieutenant, I offered him the berth. He accepted, and has been with me ever since, and has proved to be the best officer I ever saw on the deck of a ship. He is a finished seaman, and as brave as Nelson. We have taken several prizes, and he has been enriched again by them; and we also captured, mainly through his skill and courage after they had boarded us, a large brig of war. These vessels I have sent into Vera Cruz, retaining, however, a fifth of all specie I found on board for my own use and that of my officers and crew, according to a special provision made by me with the Government. You already know, from the lips of the Marquis, his gallant conduct in saving his daughter's life.'

'All that you say only increases my interest in him. It is not an unusual thing for young men left with large fortunes, to fall into temptation and excesses, and finally be plunged into poverty. But it is unusual for them to rise again as you represent this young officer to have done. This circumstance shows a right heart and a right head at bottom, and he is deserving of the esteem and the confidence of the world for the exercise of such rare moral energies.'

'I am delighted to hear you give expression to such sentiments, sir,' answered the Captain, 'but you do not judge as you would do were you interested. Suppose that it was your daughter, Monsieur, whom my young officer had fallen in love with, and he should now, after such a fall and rise, come and acknowledge his errors and solicit her hand.'

'I would not turn him off. It should make no difference with me, provided she loved him.'

'But she does love him, I am confident.'

'Who loves him? Loves who?' exclaimed Mr. Livandais, with surprise.

'Your daughter, sir. She loves my lieutenant, the hero of your admiration.'

'Who then is your lieutenant?' demanded Mr. Livandais, the truth suddenly flashing upon his mind.

'Henry Knox Hastings, sir,' answered Marshall, quietly.

'What! The young gentleman whom I knew at Saratoga who why, impossible! I was told, or rather it was written to me, that he had fled to England.'

'No, sir, he is the first officer of that brig of war,' responded Marshall, pointing to the vessel, which they were very near, the light of which streamed brightly across the waters to the bank.

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The planter was silent for a few moments. He did not break the silence until the carriage stopped opposite the brig. Marshall feared that all hope for his friend was gone.

‘Captain Marshall,’ at length said Mr. Livaudais, as the Captain was about to leave the carriage, ‘I have been thinking upon what you have told me. I am willing to forget the past, and to receive Mr. Hastings as if nothing had happened, provided my daughter has sufficient regard for him still, to render such a course agreeable to her.’

‘Sir, you have filled me with joy. My dear Harry will go into raptures at this happy result of my negotiation. I will be sure for her, that your daughter still loves him. Women do not easily forget a lover.’

‘Well, I am not sure she has forgotten him; on the contrary, it is my belief she will not need any urging. I knew Mr. Hastings very well at Saratoga, and was pleased with his attentions to Auguste; for I saw that he was a young man possessed of admirable qualities, and likely to render her happy if she should marry him. His family I knew to be unexceptionable, having met his father on several occasions. But just before I left Saratoga, some rumors reached me that he was very fond of play. This alarmed me, for I knew that the father who gave his daughter to a gamester, gave her to ruin, and woe, and infamy. I took steps to satisfy myself as to the truth of the rumor. I found to my regret, that he did play and that he lost much money at it. Although he had not actually proposed for my daughter's hand, it was an understood affair, and I resolved at once to quit Saratoga. I did so, abruptly. The next I heard of Mr. Hastings was, that he was running an extravagant career of dissipation in the city, and that he was wholly indifferent to reputation and public opinion.’

‘This proceeded from despair and remorse, sir.’

‘Repentance and reform, and humble acknowledgment to me and my daughter, would have been a wiser and better course.’

‘But he felt that having lost half his fortune, he could not conscientiously present himself to you for an alliance with your daughter.’

‘I think I can understand his feelings, Captain, but I regret he should have entertained such; for fortune on his side, when Auguste has so much, would have been no object. By and by news came to us that he was lost, that he had ruined himself, and fled to Europe. I confess to you that this news brought out fully and convincingly to myself the painful fact that Auguste had all along deeply loved him. I thought it would have killed her, at first. But in a few days she called her pride to her aid and rallied, especially when I told her that he was evidently unworthy of her, or he could never have degraded himself in her eyes; for the opinion of a woman who is beloved, is to the lover a breastplate of proof against vice and all manner of temptation. Since then I have all I could to make her forget him, and I have very nearly succeeded.’

‘She still loves him. Josephine has been sounding her, and she assures me that her love is still all his; that in relation to his conduct grief and pity, not resentment, have place in her emotions.’

‘I cannot then resist her wishes, if they should prove favorable to his reception. In the meanwhile, *I* will freely receive Mr. Hastings as a friend. He has sufficiently atoned for his past follies, and there is little fear of his ever repeating them. The respect for him and esteem which your narrative inspired me with, before I knew that the person you spoke of was he, shall not now be lessened with this knowledge. Are you going on board now?’

‘Yes. My boat is putting off. I shall be a bearer of good news.’

‘I will go on board with you.’

‘Better still!’

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The boat soon reached the shore, and the Captain and Mr. Livaudais entered it and were rowed to the brig's gangway.

‘There he stands with the lantern in his hand,’ said Marshall, as they came near, in a whisper.

‘I recognize his features. It is he,’ answered Mr. Livaudais, in the same under tone.

‘What good news, my dear Marshall? Ah, you have one with you!’ asked and exclaimed Hastings in the same breath. As he let the rays of the light fall upon the form and features of the stranger, he started back with confusion and surprise at seeing that it was Mr. Livaudais.

‘Harry, do not be alarmed,’ said Marshall, in a gay cheery tone, as they got on deck. Mr. Livaudais, allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. Hastings. Mr. Hastings, Mr. Livaudais.’

‘I am happy to meet you again, sir,’ said the Louisianian, in a cordial, frank tone, giving his hand to Harry. ‘Come, sir, I want you to go ashore with me.’

‘I hardly know how to meet you again, sir,’ began Harry.

‘Not a word. I know all, bad and good. Your friend, the Captain, has been an eloquent advocate.’

‘Am I indeed then received by you, Mr. Livaudais, as formerly?’ asked Harry, with trembling joy.

‘Yes, with *me*. But I promise only for myself. You will have to ask Auguste, in person, for her sentiments upon the matter.’

It would be difficult to describe Harry's joy. He could hardly realize that such happiness was his. He went into the cabin to make a hurried toilette, and as he did so, Marshall explained how everything had been managed ashore by himself and Josephine to bring about this agreeable crisis in his affairs.

CHAPTER XV. The Meeting.

‘I know not how to express my grateful sense of your kindness, Mr. Livaudais,’ said Harry Hastings, as the carriage which conveyed him to the villa entered the avenue of orange trees.

‘You need not feel so deeply, my young friend,’ answered the father of Auguste. ‘You have shown yourself a changed man, and I have no doubt will henceforth act as a wise one.’

‘I trust I shall, sir.’

‘I will vouch for him, Monsieur,’ cried Marshall, who had returned with Mr. Livandais, leaving his brig in charge of his English lieutenant, and determined, as he said, to see the meeting between the lovers, at all risks. ‘But how are you to break the matter to Mademoiselle Auguste?’

‘I fear there that I may after all be defeated,’ said Harry. ‘Yet it is much to have the father's forgiveness and countenance.’

‘I will answer for Mademoiselle Auguste,’ replied Marshall, with earnestness.

‘My plan is this, gentlemen,’ said Mr. Livaudais. ‘Auguste is not aware of the presence of Mr. Hastings. I shall

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take him at once to my library and let you keep him there till I report proceedings. Should she receive you favorably, Mr. Hastings, I will let you know at once.'

'This is a rare plan!' cried the Captain. 'I will, however, if you please, be with you in your interview with Auguste,' he added, to Mr. Livaudais.

'Yes, with pleasure. Mr. Hastings will probably not be afraid to remain alone in the library.'

At length the carriage drove to the door, and the three gentlemen alighted, passed into the hall, and entered an apartment on the left.

'Here now, Mr. Hastings, you will remain until you hear from me,' said Mr. Livaudais, taking his hand and pressing it. 'Be assured that I shall be happy to return and say to you that Auguste will see you.'

'I scarcely dare hope so much.'

'Courage, Harry,' said Marshall. 'You kept my spirits up, and I will try and do the same for you.'

When Mr. Livaudais entered the drawing-room he found the Marquis engaged in writing a letter to be sent to his trustee in the city, notifying him of his arrival, and Josephine occupied in looking over a volume of Audubon's gorgeous birds, and stealthily watching at the same time, with anxious, earnest curiosity, the countenance of Auguste, who stood by the window which commanded a view of the river now faintly seen in the gloom of the night, and only indicated by the reflection of the stars upon its surface. A little below the villa, was visible the beacon-like light of the brig's battle lanterns hung in the main rigging.

'The eyes of the maiden were watching the light. Her cheek was pale and her appearance agitated. The secret had been revealed to her. She had learned from Josephine the *name* of the lieutenant, and been told that that of the maiden he so loved was Auguste Livaudais. When she heard this, she exclaimed with a deep glow upon her cheek, and in an excited, emphatic tone,

'I did half guess the truth!'

Without more words, she walked rapidly up and down the room in a state of mind painful to contemplate. Now, she would stop full and look as if she was about to speak to Josephine. Then she would rush on again and clasp her hands upon her heart as if to press down its wild throbbings. At length she stood by the window and gazed off upon the water at the brig's light. She gazed long and earnestly, and so intensely lost in her thoughts, that she did not notice the carriage when it drove up to the portico.

All the while Josephine closely observed her, and marked the struggle going on in her bosom. She saw that it was a contest between resentment and love. She saw that it was a struggle in a proud but loving heart whether to receive again one who had outraged her feelings, had cast himself down from her level, and been therefor silently banished from her memories and hopes, but not from her heart. Oh, no! not from her heart! The painful conflict that was going on in it proved that her affections still clung to him.

'Do you solemnly assure me, Mademoiselle,' she suddenly said, turning round upon Josephine, 'that Henry Hastings is on board that brig!'

'I do, sweet Auguste.'

'And you have told me that he has not forgotten me.'

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‘He lives only upon the memory of you. Your love is his sun.’

‘You did tell me that all his errors were from his great love for me, his despair lest I should not look kindly upon him.’

‘Yes, I told you all this, which I received from his own lips.’

‘You know not, maiden, none but heaven above knows, how hard I have tried to tear his image from the throne of my heart, since I began to learn he was unworthy of me. But, though I brought pride to my aid, I could not wholly destroy my idolatry. Yet, yesterday I thought I had well nigh forgotten him; but to-day, with the knowledge that he is so near me, that he has reformed, and won your esteem and that of his commander, and that he has been so humane and brave, I feel rising in my soul all my former love for him.’

‘This is a sweet and noble confession. It will make him so happy. I wish he were here to hear it as I do.’

‘And do you think his happiness depends on my love?’ she asked, sadly and earnestly.

‘Do I? Oh, were you to refuse to see him, he would not live another hour. All his earthly happiness depends on the manner in which you receive the information of his presence.’

‘Then tell him oh, that you could tell him this night!’ she cried, earnestly, ‘tell him that I am still unchanged, that the past is nothing to me, so that the present restores him unchanged in his love.’

She had just uttered these words, and once more turned to gaze intently from the window upon the brig's light, when her father and Captain Marshall entered.

‘Well, Auguste, what do you see from the window so interesting?’ asked her father, approaching her.

‘Nothing, sir; I was merely looking.’

‘So I see,’ responded her father, dryly. ‘But one would think you knew who was her lieutenant, and were trying to make him out with love's eyes.’

‘Her lieutenant, sir!’ repeated Auguste, coloring to the brows and looking alarmed. ‘Do you know *who* he is, sir?’

‘Why do n't we all know he is a hero, dear? I thought you had heard his story and how gallantly he saved Josephine, and what a brave man he is in battle.’

‘Oh, yes, sir, I did hear,’ answered the maiden, taking a long breath very much relieved; for she trembled lest he had discovered what she wished, yet feared, he should know.

‘Do you know, child, I have taken a great fancy to see this young officer,’ said her father, enjoying her confusion.

‘Indeed, sir!’

‘Yes. It is n't every day that we have a hero light down upon us. I think I shall send for him to come and breakfast with us. Have you any objection, Captain Marshall?’

‘Not in the least. I have no doubt he would be very happy indeed to come. No doubt he would like to see the fair Auguste, for I told him how lovely she was, when I went on board.’

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‘Perhaps, Gusty dear,’ said her father, he might fall in love with you and you with him. I dare say he will make you forget this truant spendthrift, Hastings.’

‘My dear father, I do not wish to see any one. If this officer comes on shore, I shall not see him.’

‘Not see him!’

‘No, sir. That is, I do n’t wish you to invite him on shore; for ’

‘For what?’ Why, how embarrassed and distressed you look. Why should n’t he come?’

‘Because, sir, to tell you the truth, my dear father, I know who he is, and I know that when you see him and recognize him you will be enraged.’

‘Who then is he, my child? How do you know him?’

‘Through Mademoiselle Josephine. This officer, whom you so much admire, is none other than Henry Hastings.’

‘Indeed! Is that so, Captain?’ asked Mr. Livaudais, turning with assumed gravity to Marshall, who was smiling at the perplexity of the maiden, who, between her love for her lover, and her fear of her father’s hostility towards him, was standing up before them painfully embarrassed.

‘It is, sir.’

‘I thought his name was Lieutenant Harry.’

‘Lieutenant Harry Hastings, sir.’

‘Oh, a trifling omission. So, my child, you knew this?’

‘Yes, sir. I have just learned that it was he?’

‘No wonder, then, you did not wish me to invite him to the villa. It shows me that you do n’t care a fig for him, and did n’t wish me to be imposed upon. I am glad you have so well got over your foolish passion.’

‘Father, I ’

‘Not a word, dear! I understand. I know you do n’t love him, and are indignant that he should presume to come so near you as he has.’

‘Indeed Mr. Livaudais,’ said Marshall, with well assumed warmth, ‘I do not like to hear my favorite officer calumniated. I see that he has been guilty of some errors, and he has confessed them to me and is deeply penitent. I do not see but that it would be just to give him an opportunity to make his defence before you, and especially before Miss Livaudais, who seems to be the most unrelenting.’

‘I unrelenting!’ she exclaimed, with deep emotion. ‘Oh, no! You have both mistaken me. My dear father, it was not, (be angry if you will, sir!) because I disliked Mr. Hastings, that I did not wish to see him at the villa. I trembled to have him come on shore, for you to recognize in him the person you have commanded me so often to forget. Forget? Oh, no, sir! I have never forgotten him. I have forgiven him all his faults. He is as dear, nay dearer to me than ever. I know that he has loved me through all that it was love for me, in the shape of despair, that drove him to the excesses you have condemned. My dear father, if you love me and would make me happy, go

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and invite him hither receive him as a friend, and give your hand to him from mine.'

'Ah! this is presenting the affair in a new light, my dear Captain. I see that there is no destroying true love in a woman's bosom.'

'Oh, you will forgive him, sir!' pleaded the beautiful Josephine, pressing his hands.

'I also will intercede for him.' cried the Marquis, advancing.

'Then I forgive him, Auguste.

'My *dear* father!' cried the grateful, joyful girl, throwing her arms about his neck.

The Captain, at a glance from Mr. Livaudais, had, a few seconds before, left the room. He now returned leading in Hastings.

Mr. Livaudais advanced, and taking his hand led him towards the happy Auguste.

'Your hand, my daughter. Thus I join them, as your hearts have long been joined. May you be happy.'

Harry would have pressed his lips to her hand, but her father cried,

'Her lips, Hastings! Her lips, boy!'

The happiness of that moment was shared in by all present. The Captain kissed both ladies, and hugged Harry, the Marquis, and Mr. Livaudais, and joy and cheerfulness reigned without a cloud throughout the happy circle.

In a month Harry led the faithful and lovely Auguste before the altar in the cathedral of New Orleans, while the Captain led the beautiful Josephine, for the ceremony of marriage, to be performed according to the imposing rites of the Roman Church.

Both of them quietly settled down as planters upon the estates of their wives, being just far enough apart to make the ride pleasant from one villa to the other. The visions of the Captain, already mentioned, touching paternal bliss, were in due time realized; and the old Marquis and M. Livaudais, no longer ago than the very last Christmas, well nigh came to an open rupture touching the weight, avoirdupois, of the youngest grandchildren appertaining to each.

The Lady of the Gulf, was despatched back to Vera Cruz, under the command of the English lieutenant; but as she never reached that port, it was surmised by Marshall, that the lieutenant had gone cruising in her upon his own account; and a vessel, answering her description, had recently made several captures in the West Indies, on the coast of Brazil, but was finally fallen in with and destroyed by an American sloop of war, that sailed out of Rio expressly in pursuit of her.

THE END.