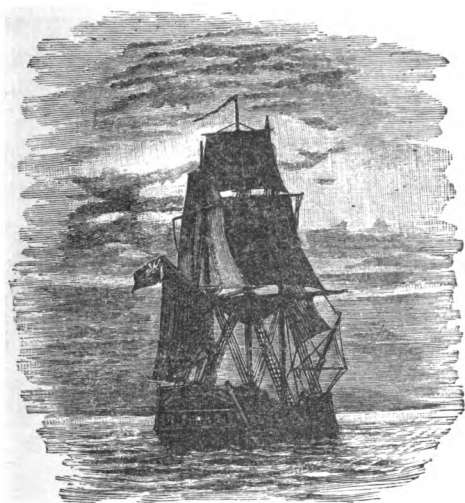
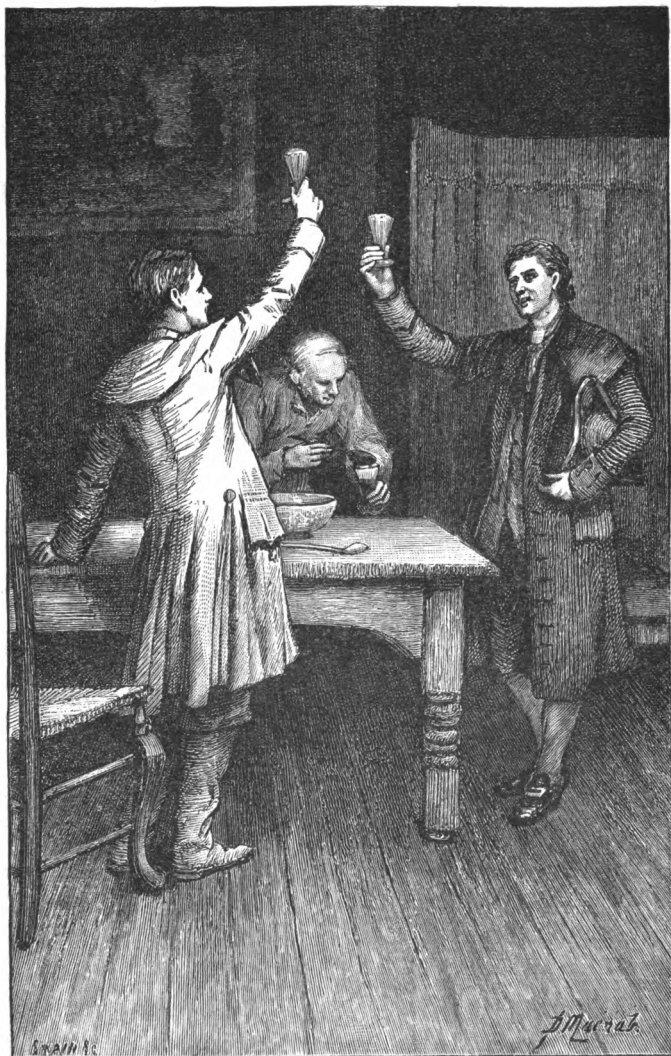


THE CRUISE
OF
THE "BLACK PRINCE"
PRIVATEER

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"GOOD FORTUNE TO THE 'BLACK PRINCE.'"

THE CRUISE OF
THE "BLACK PRINCE."


CHAPTER I.

ONE evening I was sitting in the comfortable parlour of the Woolpack Inn, in Dale Street, Liverpool, with mine host, John Pye, discussing a bowl of punch brewed from right Jamaica and limes, which I had made a present to him on my return from the West Indies, and smoking a pipe of Carolina tobacco, when my old schoolfellow Tom Merrick came in, shaking the wet off his shaggy dreadnought coat, and said, "I heard you were here, Bob, and have come to make an offer to you on behalf of my father and his partner, old Floyd. They were arguing between themselves to whom to offer the command of their ship the *Black Prince*, and I said, 'There's my old schoolfellow Hawkins is now without a ship,' and I thought that they could do no better than get you. At first they said that, as you were at school with me, you must

be quite a boy, forgetting, as old people often do, that as they grow old those they have remembered as children become men of middle age—though, for that matter, I hope at thirty-eight neither of us are yet commencing to go downhill—and it took a good deal of my persuasion, and telling how old Grog Vernon had spoken so highly of your services at the taking of Porto Bello, and of the seamanship you showed in bringing that crazy old *Elizabeth* home from Charleston, before they consented to let me come to you ; and now I have been hunting for you for the last three hours, but have run you to earth at last. Now, I make you the offer, will you accept the command of the *Black Prince* ?”

“Take command of the *Black Prince* ! why, I should think I would. She’s the finest ship that sails out of Liverpool. I shall never forget seeing her work up past Tom Shot’s Point in old Calabar, and how Price—or Ap Rhys, as he loved to be called—handled her. But what has become of Price ? They can never have had any disagreement with him.”

“Oh no ; there has been no disagreement, but Captain Ap Rhys, as we must all call him now, has been left by a relation of his a snug farm in Wales, and he has borne up for the farm, and, from what I hear, he not only succeeds to the farm, but also to the pulpit of a small chapel which his cousin was minister of.”



"I hope Ap Rhys will prove as good a farmer and preacher as he was a sailor; and I think it likely, for he always was what we sailors call of a serious turn of mind. I am infinitely obliged to his relation for leaving him the farm, and giving me the chance of commanding the *Black Prince*."

"Well, Bob, you'll take her? I thought you would, and I'll come as super-cargo. And, I've something more to tell you. We have heard that war with France is to be declared, and my father and Mr. Floyd have determined to apply for a letter of marque."

"What! am I to command her as a privateer? That's next best to being captain of a man-of-war."

"Yes, my lad; but she is not only to go privateering—she is to make the round voyage to Africa and the West Indies, and trust to her heels and her guns to escape capture."

"She can certainly sail, and we'll pick up a right good crew. There were three or four good men in that old *Elizabeth*, and if they have not been picked up by the crimps, I dare say we may be able to get them—and they all have served in men-of-war. There's Black Jack Jago, and his great chum that the men called Bloodred Bill—Cundy's his name; John Beer, Tom Batten, and Harry Moxon—all Falmouth men, and good sailors. And then there's many a tidy man to be found on the banks of the Mersey."

"There you go off at scort. You just come down to the office on the quayside to-morrow morning, and you will get your instructions."

"All right. But where is the ship now? I only got back from my uncle's farm this afternoon, where I have been since I left the *Elizabeth*, and know nothing of the news of the town."

"Well, she's up on the beach at Runcorn, to have her bottom resheathed where necessary, and breamed; and just before Captain Ap Rhys left her she had got a new gang of lower rigging over the mastheads, and the mate is busy setting it up. I think the old dad did a good thing when he built her. Last voyage Ap Rhys carried six hundred and fifty-seven slaves from Calabar to Jamaica, and never lost one on the whole voyage. All Liverpool said a ship of five hundred tons was far too big for the African or any other trade."

"Is she five hundred tons? I did not think her so big. She is frigate built, and, with her poop, she has as much room as some of our two-deckers—rather a different class of ship from the old *Elizabeth*."

"I believe you, my boy, and, as you say, she can sail well. She'll show a clean pair of heels to any John Crapands who may be too big for her. Now I must be off. I'll tell my father you'll be down at the office by eight o'clock in the

morning. Another glass of punch, to drink the health of the master of the *Black Prince*."

"All right, Tom. Here, host, fill Mr. Merrick's and my glasses—bumpers,—and join us in wishing good fortune to the *Black Prince* and her new skipper."

John Pye was ready enough to comply, and the toast was drunk with enthusiasm, and after exchanging good nights, Tom left me and rode away.

As soon as he had gone, I asked Pye if he knew of the whereabouts of Jack Jago and his old ship-mates.

"Jack Jago? D'ye mean the man they call Black Jack, who was a prisoner with the Moors?"

"Yes, the same."

"Well, I can't rightly say. I heard he was seen a few days ago, but he's lying low, for fear of the press-gang; but the tender dropped down to the bar this afternoon, and he'd be safe now. I think I know most of the cribs where they stow themselves, but he's too wide awake to trust to the crimps, and it may take some time to find him. Anyway I'll send a lad round to look for him, and he'll be here if he's to be found by seven in the morning?"

"All right. Will you do it at once?"

"I'll send at once. Good night. Do you want anything more before you go to bed?"

"No, thank you."

John Pye left the room, and I was left alone to consider my prospects, and what a great piece of good luck had befallen me in my old school-fellow getting me the command of the *Black Prince*, for except the crazy old *Elizabeth*, I had never yet commanded a ship, and I now found myself master of one of the finest ships sailing out of Liverpool, or, for that matter, out of any English port.

I had hitherto been rather knocked about in the world. My father had been at one time a sea lieutenant, but when he married my mother he quitted the navy, with the intention of settling down as a farmer near her brother's farm in Cumberland; but when on my birth my mother died, he again took to the sea, and got command of a merchant vessel sailing out of Liverpool. Till I was seven years old I lived with my uncle, a Cumberland statesman, and then my father—who now owned the ship he sailed, having invested all his money in her purchase—took me to sea with him for four years, when, at the advice of his friends, he sent me to the school at Liverpool where Tom Merrick was being educated, and there I made his acquaintance, which ripened into a warm friendship and continued long after our school-days.

At the age of fifteen my school-days were brought to an abrupt close by the death of my father, who was killed whilst defending, though unsuccessfully, his ship from capture by an enemy's frigate; and,

as all he had was invested in the ship and her freight, I was left a penniless orphan. My uncle, who had a large family, would willingly have taken me to his home and given me my chance with my cousins, but one of my father's old friends offered to take me to sea with him, and putting my gentility on one side, I had dipped my hands in the tar bucket and slush pot, and, by zeal and good conduct, worked my way aft to the quarter-deck. In 1739 I was present at the taking of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon, or Old Grog, as the sailors called him, where I was fortunate enough to attract his attention by carrying messages under fire, and afterwards at the disastrous operations against Cartagena, where scurvy and disease decimated our forces, the ship I was on board of having been chartered as a transport. At this time I made the acquaintance of Roderick Random, who was a doctor's mate in one of the men-of-war, as one night a boat I was in had the good fortune to save him from drowning when his own had been capsized.

At the age of twenty-two I became my old friend and patron's, Captain How's, mate; and served with him in that capacity till he died some years after, being employed chiefly in the West Indian and African trade. On his death he was succeeded by a stranger, who brought a relation of his own as mate, and I for a time, being thrown out of

employment, had to ship before the mast, and as an able seaman made a voyage to the East Indies, where the English and French East India Companies were constantly fighting with each other, though the two countries were not at war. But indeed in those days there was no peace beyond the line.

In a brush which we had with a French cruiser, I had the good fortune to attract the attention of our captain, and finding out my history, he gave me the berth of the third mate, who had been killed in the action, and endeavoured to get me confirmed in that post, on the return of the ship to England; but owing to the place being required by one of the India Board for a young gentleman, in whom he was interested, his application was refused.

I was thus again thrown on my own resources, and had some idea of shipping on board a king's ship, when I ran up against my friend Tom Merrick, who for some time had been employed in a merchants' house in London, and who was surprised to see the desolate condition in which I was. He at once sent me down to Liverpool, where his interest got me a berth as mate on board a Guineaman, and I had been employed in that trade till the time this story commences. On my last voyage, the ship in which I was had been totally wrecked in a hurricane, and only myself

and two other men had escaped on some wreckage, and when, after three days of terrible suffering, we were picked up, my companions were in such a dreadful condition that they both died a short time after, and I was for a long time dangerously ill and was taken to the seaman's hospital at Port Royal.

When I recovered I went to the correspondents of my owners, and by them was ordered to take a passage home in one of their ships which was to call at Charleston on the way home. At Charleston we found the *Elizabeth*, which had put in there from stress of weather, and had lost her master and several of her crew from yellow fever. She was in such a bad condition that it was hard to find any one who would consent to cross the Western Ocean in her. As I thought it was an opportunity of getting command of a ship, I volunteered to take her home if a crew could be found. The merchant to whom she was consigned was only too glad to accept my offer, and was so pleased with my willingness to run the risk of the voyage, that he pressed me to stay at his house whilst the *Elizabeth* underwent the repairs which were absolutely necessary before she could put to sea.

I found Mr. Penmore, who was the scion of an old English family, and his wife and daughters most charming people ; one of the daughters indeed was so charming, that I could not withstand her

winning ways, and soon lost my heart to her. Muriel Penmore returned my affections, and gave me leave to prefer my suit to her father. Mr. Penmore, who, though he had left the old country, still retained all the pride of his family, was furious at what he was pleased to term my presumption, and ordered me out of the house, calling me an impertinent and low-bred tarpaulin, and forbidding me to say farewell to Muriel. I had to take up my quarters in a lodging-house in the town, to wait for the *Elizabeth* to be ready for sea, as there was no other place where I could find shelter. Mr. Penmore hurried on the preparations, and would, verily, I believe, have turned me out the command, if he could have made sure that I would not remain in Charleston, and he had been able to find any one else to take command of the ship.

I tried all manner of means to communicate with Muriel, but could not manage it, and all the letters I addressed to her and her father were returned to me unopened. I tried to see Mr. Penmore several times, but without avail, and had even to transact business connected with the ship with his chief clerk instead of with him personally.

At last the *Elizabeth* was reported ready for sea, and I went on board and got all in order for sailing. As, notwithstanding the repairs which had been made, she was very leaky, a gang of twenty slaves

was put on board for the purpose of relieving the sailors of a portion of the labour at the pumps. In the boat that brought these I saw a boy whom I had constantly noticed at Mr. Penmore's, and he managed, unseen by the overseer who came to deliver the slaves to me, and obtain my receipt for them, to give me a note from my beloved Muriel, in which she assured me of her undying affection for me, and by whom I was able to send a reply, couched in the most ardent language I could muster, and in return for a lock of her hair which she sent me to send one of my own and a ring I had purchased in the town and had longed for an opportunity of giving her.

The next morning we sailed from Charleston, and after a most tedious and dangerous voyage, in which only the seamanship of the crew and the unremitting labours of the negroes at the pumps prevented her from being lost, the *Elizabeth* arrived at Liverpool, but in such an unseaworthy condition that all idea of repairing her was abandoned, and the hopes I had of having the command of her when she again went to sea were dashed to the ground.

I, as was my custom whenever I came to Liverpool, made my way into Cumberland to visit my uncle and cousins, and had only this very afternoon returned to look for employment, and had intended to go next morning to call on Tom Merrick to see if he could help me in my search.

I was delighted with the opening before me and now trusted that a few successful voyages might enable me to return to Charleston, and again sue for the hand of my Muriel, and, if her father proved obdurate, to induce her to leave her home and throw in her lot with mine.

As I was thinking over my prospects, mine host returned into the room, and said, "Your honour will have Black Jack here to-morrow morning. One of my lads is the sharpest boy in all Liverpool, and he says he knows where Jago and the rest are hiding, but that he must be well paid to go there and have some token from you to prove that it is not a dodge of the press-gang their being sent for. The boy, who is called Rat, will go at once and tell the men your wishes if you will."

"All right, Pye. Here is my hanger—they know that ; and I'll even go to bed now, but let me know at once when the men come in the morning."

CHAPTER II.

MY night's rest was broken by dreams of successful actions and captures of prizes loaded with doubloons, and my returning to Charleston to claim the hand of Muriel as a rich man. From these dreams I was awoke by a knock at my door, followed by the entry of one of the servants of the inn, who told me it was half-past six o'clock and that two sailors were down below asking for me.

I got up at once and dressed, and, going down, found that Black Jack Jago and his inseparable friend Cundy, commonly called Bloodred Bill, were there waiting for me. Two men more different in their outward appearance could scarcely be imagined. Jago was over six feet high, and thin and gaunt, and, as his nickname implied, as dark as a Spaniard. His hair was commencing to get grizzled, and one side of his face was disfigured by a scar from a wound which he had received in effecting his escape from captivity at Algiers, where he had been a slave for five years. Of his experiences there he could never be got to speak, but

his frame bore many marks of the cruelty and ill-usage to which he had been subjected, and on his wrists and ankles were the scars of the irons by which he had been fettered. Though the pirates might have injured his body, they had been powerless to affect his spirit, and he was reckoned by those who knew him as one of the best and bravest of British seamen. His companion was a short, stout man, of not more than five feet three, and seemed, from the massiveness of his build, like a giant cut short. His face was tanned red by the wind and spray of many a storm, and his hair was also bright red, thus justifying his nickname ; but a bright blue eye—for he had only one—and a smile which played round his lips were quite contrary to the idea of ferocity, which the name would seem to imply. He was a townsman of Jago's, and had formed one of the crew of the ship which picked him up, the only survivor of six who had managed to steal a boat at Algiers and make their escape. Jago was lying insensible in the bottom of the boat among the corpses of his companions, and it could never be found out for how many days he had existed without food or water, and his recovery every one said was due to the care lavished on him by his friend. After this Cundy in the West Indies had fallen overboard in a port infested by sharks, and, having been injured in falling, was unable to swim, and would soon have either been drowned or

fallen a prey to these ravenous monsters, if Jago, heedless of the danger he incurred, had not sprung overboard to his assistance and brought him safely on board.

Ever since the two men had been inseparable friends, and had always shipped together and tried to be in the same watch and mess, and wherever one was to be seen it was quite certain that the other was close at hand.

They were sitting down in a sanded room, furnished with wooden benches, and when I entered both got up, and, smoothing down their forelocks, said, "Morning, and service to your honour."

"Good morning, my lads," I said. "I want to know if you will sail with me? I am promised the command of the *Black Prince*, belonging to Messrs. Merrick and Floyd."

"Sail with your honour!—ay, that we will!" said Cundy—"won't we, Bo?" to Jago. "We knows your honour for a good seaman, and a skilful one, and one that knows and cares for a man."

"All right, my good fellows; but you don't know where we are going, or what we're going to do."

"That's all one to us; it don't matter a piece of tobacco whether it's the East Indies, South Seas, or the Spanish main. A good skipper and a good ship's all we ask for, and here's both. Eh, Bo?" and Cundy, as was his unfailing custom, appealed

to Jago, who signified his assent by a nod and a grunt.

"Well, we are going down the coast of Africa and across to the West Indies, and I believe we're to have a letter of marque. Now, what d'ye say?"

"Say! why, we'll sail with your honour for a voyage like that twenty times over."

"Good, my men. Now, the ship is on the beach at Runcorn, being breamed and refitted. Will you go round and see what men you can get together? Do you know of any?"

"Yes, your honour; Jan Beer and Sam Moxon is down where we've been stowed away while the press-gang was about, and there's some seven or eight more likely lads there, too. A privateer in the Spanish main—that would bring men out of the stones of Liverpool."

"Well, mind, I won't have any sweepings out of the gutter, nor longshore loafers; every man you bring must be a seaman."

"Sartain, your honour. A good crew makes light work, and we want no lazy, lubberly swabs aboard, to put their fists in a mess kid, and never pull a pound in boarding a tack."

"All right. Now tell the host to give you something to eat, and not to forget the drink. I must go down to the quayside to see the owners."

I now went up to my room to make my toilet, and, assisted by my black servant Toby, I put on

my best wig and a blue coat guarded with silver lace, and, with a silver-mounted hanger round my waist, which had belonged to my father, a three-cornered hat cocked rather on one side, I considered myself as smart a looking skipper as could be seen on the Liverpool flags.

Just as I was putting the finishing touches to my dress, I heard the sound of a horse in the street, and in another moment Tom Merrick bounded into my room.

"Here, heave out, you lazybones ; I've ridden in from Mr. Floyd's house, and here you are not dressed yet."

"One moment.—Here, Toby, just give me a handkerchief.—Now I'm ready, but I have been up for a long time, and have got two of the men I wanted for the crew of the *Black Prince* downstairs, and they say they can find me some more."

"All right ; come along. You are a regular macaroni, but you look a sailor, too. My father and Mr. Floyd are full of the letter of marque ; but it will be necessary for us to go to London to get it. There may be some difficulty, as war is not declared yet, but I think that Sir John Dormer, who is a friend of father's, and high in favour at court for services he rendered the Government during the Jacobite rising, may be able to help us."

Tom Merrick and I were soon at his father's

house, the lower rooms of which were used as their offices, and here we found both Mr. Merrick and Mr. Floyd waiting for us.

When I came in Mr. Merrick said, "Good morning, Captain Hawkins. I suppose my son has told you that we want a master for the *Black Prince*, our old friend Captain Price having decided to give up going to sea? Master Tom has recommended you, and after making careful inquiries of the owners of the *Elizabeth*, we have decided on offering you the command of the *Black Prince*. We remember your father well, and he was always an honourable man, as well as a smart seaman. If you will only follow in his footsteps I am sure we shall never have reason to regret having intrusted you with the command of one of our ships."

"I am sure, sir," I replied, "that I will do my utmost to merit your approbation. I cannot now say much, except that my humble duty and thanks are yours and Mr. Floyd's for the honour you have done me in the bestowal of this mark of your confidence."

"That's well," chimed in Mr. Floyd; "but you must not think that it's this young shipjack here who has to be thanked for our choosing you, but your own merits and seamanship. I went yesterday to Malcolmson Brothers, who own the *Elizabeth*, and they told me how you frapped the crazy old craft together on the passage home and brought her into

the Mersey, when many another man would have failed."

"Yes, sir, I had a tough piece of work to bring her home; but I am well repaid for any difficulty by being intrusted with such a vessel as the *Black Prince*. I am happy to say I can get some of the best men who were in the *Elizabeth* to sail with me again."

"That's very well," said Mr. Merrick; "but now I must talk to you on business matters. We have news from our correspondents in London that there will be war with France in a very short time, and we think that, sooner than undergo the delays entailed by sailing with a convoy, we will arm the *Black Prince*, and let her trust to herself for protection, and, in some measure to repay the cost of this, to ask for a letter of marque against the Mounseers."

"I should like nothing better. You know my father was in the navy, and I have seen some fighting. But is not the *Black Prince* armed already?"

"Certainly. She has guns on boards, because at Sierra Leone and elsewhere on the African coast there are many pirates; but we think of arming her so as to be a match for any ship of her tonnage."

"If you do, sir, I hope that I may be able to give a good account of any Frenchman we may meet. I've seen her sail, and I know she has the heels of most ships."

"All right, Captain Hawkins. We will now go and take oars from near the slave market, and go up with the flood tide to where she is on the beach at Runcorn."

We went down to the steps leading to the river, and then got into a wherry belonging to Mr. Merrick, and with a flood tide soon got up to where the *Black Prince* was on the beach, with the shipwrights busy about her bottom, and after a good deal of scrambling and climbing, managed to get up on her deck.

If what I had seen of the *Black Prince* before from the outside had pleased me, I had double reason to feel satisfied with her when I got on the poop and could really judge of her size and roominess. The poop had on each side ports for three guns, and places on the gunwale for mounting swivels, but all these had been landed whilst the ship was being refitted, as had also the guns on the main deck and forecastle. The waist was covered with a flying deck, chinsed down, which could be removed when necessary, to give air to the slaves in the 'tween decks and hold.

The mate, who I found was busy setting up the new lower rigging with a gang of longshore men, did not seem to view me with any friendly eye, and I was very glad to hear him tell Mr. Merrick that he wished to bear up for the shore. I could see that the work was not being done in the way I should

like, and determined that I should have Jago and Cundy, and such men as they could bring at once, to turn to the next morning, and that Mr. Jones, as the mate was called, should be permitted to leave directly, and that a likely young fellow named Harry Trenal, who had been third mate in the *Elizabeth*, should have the berth of second mate in the *Black Prince*, and, until I found a trustworthy and good seaman for the post of first mate, have charge of the work. All the upper masts and the yards, sails, and running rigging, were on shore, as were all the other fittings and stores, the ship only having two anchors and their cables on board, and enough ballast to shift on.

We were thus able to see every part of the ship most thoroughly, and I was glad to see that the precaution, too often neglected in the Guinea trade, of having the poop and forecastle strongly barricaded, had not been omitted. After having examined the ship in detail, and made notes as to what alterations were advisable to fit her as a privateer, and given some directions to the shipwrights and Mr. Jones, we left again, and returned to Mr. Merrick's office.

As soon as we arrived there, we sent messengers to find Mr. Trenal, and for Jago and Cundy to come at once, and then began to discuss what steps should be taken to procure a letter of marque.

Mr. Merrick said that there were great obstacles,

as war had not been declared, but that there could be no doubt that it would soon be, as the present state of affairs could not long continue, and that he trusted very much to the influence at court of one of his London correspondents, Sir John Dormer, who had been Lord Mayor, and, besides having largely assisted the court in monetary matters, had been of great use to them during the Jacobite rising of 1745, through the intelligence he was able to supply from having extensive connections in the north of England and Scotland. Though he had aided in maintaining the Hanoverian dynasty, and had received the honour of knighthood for his services, he was a true Englishman, and had used all his power and influence to save the followers of the young Chevalier from the anger of the king, and had furnished many a needy Jacobite with money and a passage to the Continent. He was also on good terms with Mr. Pitt, and if any one could be expected to succeed in the obtaining of any favour, Sir John Dormer was the man.

It was soon decided that Tom Merrick and myself should go to London with letters for Sir John as soon as I had put the work in order on board the *Black Prince*, and whilst there also engage a surgeon, and learn as far as might be possible what the Government intended to do in case war might be declared.

We had scarcely finished this discussion when

the messenger we had sent for Mr. Trenal returned, and said that he would be with us in half an hour, and immediately afterwards we heard the sound of a drum and fifes and fiddles, and going out to see what the noise meant, found Jago and Cundy, with their old shipmates Beer and Moxon and about twenty more likely fellows, had come to ship on board the *Black Prince*, Captain Robert Hawkins.

Cundy as usual was spokesman, and ended his remarks by an appeal to Jago, and from him I learned that all these men were ready to sail with me to any part of the world, and that they all were good men and true and real seamen, and that they knew of many more whom they would be able to easily find, now that the press-gang tender had left the river.

I asked Mr. Merrick if we could enter these men at once, and set them to work at fitting out the *Black Prince*, as I knew from experience that men would much sooner trust to rigging and gear they had fitted themselves than to anything done by others, who were only interested in getting the work over as soon as possible.

A book was prepared and I entered Jago as gunner, and his chum Cundy as boatswain, while Sam Moxon was given the rating of sailmaker, which my experience of him on board the *Elizabeth* had proved him to be well fitted for; the rest were all shipped as "AB's," being well able

to reef, hand, and steer, use the lead and sew a seam.

When their marks had been appended to the agreement, I told them that we had a good ship, and I hoped we should have a happy and prosperous voyage, and return with all our pockets full of dollars. In the mean time I gave them a couple of doubloons, to drink to the success of the *Black Prince* and her owners and master, and told them to be on board the next morning to turn to work.

Giving three hearty huzzas, they trooped off, headed by their music, to amuse themselves in the way Jack ashore delights in.

As they were going Mr. Trenal arrived, and I soon made arrangements with him to take over charge from Mr. Jones on the following morning, discharge the men who were employed in rigging the ship, and get on with the work with the hands I had just shipped; and, in order to give them a pull when necessary, Mr. Merrick said he would send a dozen blacks from the slave market, where there were just at that moment a great number on sale, some of whom had been employed in assisting to bring ships home from the West Indies which had lost part of their crew from yellow fever. I especially asked him to try to obtain those I had had on board the *Elisabeth*, some of whom were fairly good seamen, and, as I hoped that we might perchance visit Charleston, I had an idea that their

assistance might enable me to visit my darling Muriel.

These various businesses had filled up the whole of our day, and I was glad to accept the invitation of Mr. Merrick to sup with him and his family when they were over, as it would be far more pleasant than the company of mine host John Pye, good fellow though he might be, in the parlour of the Woolpack.

I had before this made the acquaintance of Tom's mother and two sisters, and so did not come in as a stranger, and passed a most pleasant evening, and when, at nine o'clock, the time for retiring came, I had no idea the evening was so far spent.

CHAPTER III.

TOM MERRICK accompanied me to the Woolpack for a pipe and glass of punch, and to talk over our approaching journey to London. As we desired to be independent of wind and tide, we decided to go on horseback instead of by sea, and Tom said he could provide me with a stout hackney, and that good useful beasts could easily be bought for Toby and his servant Standen, and that when we were ready we could join with some friends of his, who were about to visit London on business, for protection against highwaymen and other dangers of the road.

On Toby being told he was to visit London, which he had never yet seen, although he had heard many stories about its wonders, he expressed the liveliest delight ; but this was somewhat mitigated by his being told that he would have to ride the whole way, as he had never yet been on the back of a horse.

In two days more our preparations were made, and I had also the pleasure of seeing the *Black*

Prince afloat and moored in the stream opposite Mr. Merrick's office, and the work going on apace under the directions of Mr. Trenal.

On the morning of the third day Tom and I left Mr. Merrick's house, mounted on two stout, surefooted hackneys. Standen and Toby, each with a valise strapped behind them, and armed with a blunderbuss and pair of pistols, followed us; whilst Tom and myself, besides our pistols, each carried a trusty broadsword. Our horseman's cloaks were rolled tightly up, and strapped on our saddles, and in inner pockets both Tom and myself carried our letters of recommendation and credit, which were made out in duplicate. Bidding farewell to my employers and Tom's family, we rode off to Edge Hill where we had agreed to meet the gentlemen who were to accompany us on our journey to London, and when we joined them we found our party consisted in all of fourteen well-armed men, which we thought would be sufficient to repel the attacks of any highwaymen we might meet, or of any bands of broken soldiers, of whom at that time many infested the roads and levied contributions on those whom they were able to frighten, or force into compliance with their demands.

Our journey passed without any incident worthy of note till after leaving Harrow-on-the-Hill, where we baited our horses and dined, the day before arriving in London. We had pushed on pretty

fast, and Tom and I, being better mounted than the rest, were somewhat in front, when, soon after dusk, a bullet whizzed past my head, and four men, jumping their horses over the hedge, commanded us to "stand and deliver."

I drew a pistol from my holster, and, pointing at the man nearest me, pulled the trigger, but it did not go off; so I drew my sword and made at our assailants. They fired several pistol-shots at us, one of which killed Tom's horse, and deprived me for a time of his assistance, and it was only by dint of making my horse twist and turn that I foiled the attempts that were made to drag me from my saddle, and was also able to deal one of the highwaymen a blow on the head with my sword, which tumbled him off his steed.

Tom, who had cleared himself from his horse, caught that of the robber, and our companions coming up, his three comrades made off. I told Toby to dismount and see after the wounded man, who was lying on the road groaning and half stunned. He administered a dram, which, when the wounded man had swallowed, he lifted up his head, and opening his eyes, exclaimed, as he saw Toby's black face close by his, "O Lord, the devil has got me at last, and is pouring hell fire down my throat," and jumping to his feet, dashed through the hedge.

Some of us were for pursuing him, but the rest

advised letting him go, as we should have trouble in conveying him to town, and afterwards might be detained for a long time to witness against him at his trial, and their advice prevailed. We removed the saddle, bridle, and other trappings from Tom's horse, and put them on top of his valise behind Standen, whilst Tom himself mounted the highwayman's steed, and could not help acknowledging that, though he was sorry for the death of his trusty hackney, he had made an exchange for the better, as the new horse was a handsome and well-bred animal.

Leaving the dead horse on the road, we proceeded on our way, determining to be on our guard until our arrival at our destination. On looking to our firearms, we found the priming had been removed from them all, so that evidently the highwaymen had been in league with the stablemen of the inn where we had halted at Harrow.

When we got into London, Tom and I bade farewell to our fellow-travellers, and made our way to a tavern in Holborn, where, after seeing our horses looked to, we were glad enough to have our suppers and get to bed.

In the morning we were awoke by a great noise outside the house, and going to the window, I saw a crowd assembled, and throwing open the window heard them shouting about highwaymen, and at the same moment the door of our room was burst

open, and some men, coming into the room, said we were their prisoners. Tom, who had not got out of his bed, asked what was the matter, when the ostler of the inn, who had come in with these men, who by their scarlet waistcoats we knew to be Bow Street runners, said—

"Yes, that's him in bed ; he's the one that rode the big chestnut, with white stockings and blaze on his face. That's Captain Starlight."

"Captain Starlight ! What do you fellows mean ?" said Tom.

"Come, captain," said the leader, "it's no use ; you're nabbed, and must come along with us."

"What do you mean ?" interposed I. "That's my friend, Mr. Merrick of Liverpool, a shipowner, and I'm master of one of his ships."

"Well, I never heard of high-tobymen having to do with sea. Here you're rather far from your port, as you'll soon find ; but I never thought the captain would have been foolhardy enough to put that chestnut horse of his up in Holborn."

"We can prove who we are. Here are our papers."

"The papers will be seen, but you must both come along. Now quick with your togs, and come along."

Tom and I, seeing resistance was useless, put on our clothes, and said we would be ready to come at once, but that we hoped we might be permitted to write to Sir John Dormer.

"Ay, you may write if you'll pay for it ; but this paper—— Ah, high-toby men writing to an alderman ! Come, Captain Starlight, you'll want your guineas in Newgate. I'm good-natured, and you'd better keep your rhino. I've nabbed many of your sort, but never such a highflyer as you."

"Fellow, I'm no highwayman. If the horse I rode yesterday belonged to one, I can easily explain how it came into my possession."

"Yes, you may explain ; but I know you're worth a hundred guineas, and fifty for any of your gang ; and I've nabbed three. Now, that's two hundred and fifty, and I can afford to be generous. Write, and I won't charge more than five guineas."

Opening our valises, we soon dressed, and Tom wrote a short note to Sir John asking him to come and free us from the unpleasant predicament in which we were placed.

When the letter was written, the officer asked if we would walk, or if, as we were at the top of the tree, we would prefer to have chairs. Ten guineas was the modest demand for us and our servants to have chairs to be carried before the justices, and then the officers produced handcuffs, and said, "Now, gentlemen, we must put the darbies on."

This was too much for our temper, and we struck out, flooring several of the runners, but were overpowered by numbers, and the handcuffs placed

on our wrists, poor Toby not at all understanding what was going on, and asseverating that he was a free man and not a slave.

The head runner said he admired our courage, and that he should come to see us when we had to dance upon nothing at the Tyburn tree.

Outside the tavern we were each placed in a sedan-chair with an officer, and carried off to the watch-house, accompanied by a shouting and halloaing mob, all anxious to catch a glimpse of the famous Captain Starlight, who, I gathered from my companion, though he laughed at what he termed my pretended ignorance, was a notorious highway-man who, with a gang of followers, had for a long time rendered the northern road unsafe.

At the watch-house we were taken into a large room, where were prisoners of all descriptions, demireps, cutpurses, tramps, bloods who had assaulted the watch, apprentices who had been aping the habits of the bloods, and in fact all the sweepings of the London streets, waiting for the arrival of the magistrates.

Here we were released from our handcuffs, but could easily see that, as Captain Starlight and his friends, our arrival created considerable sensation. Several of the prisoners thought they couldn't do better than show their appreciation of the high estimation in which they held us by pressing us to drink with them ; porter and strong waters being

readily obtainable at somewhat exorbitant prices by those who had money to pay for them.

Our refusal to accept these invitations was not well taken by our fellow-prisoners, and we doubtless would have been roughly handled if some sailor expressions which I let fall had not brought to our assistance half a dozen sailors who had been locked up for being engaged in some pothouse brawl, and who swore that they would not see us unfairly dealt with. Their brawny fists soon dispersed the more violent of our assailants, and we were left to wait either for the arrival of the justices or else for a messenger from Sir John Dormer with what equanimity we could muster.

Fortunately for us, the worthy knight was in his house in Great St. Helen's when Tom's letter to him arrived, and not content with sending to procure our liberation, he came down at once himself to see into the matter. We had, indeed, been scarcely locked up half an hour before the man who had been the principal in our arrest came in with cringing manner, and said, "Pray pardon me, your honours. Sir John Dormer is without, and awaits you ; and I beg you will accept the fifteen guineas you gave me and not mention anything of the matter."

"Not so," said Tom. "You made us pay them, and we will have them back by authority or not at all."

We were immediately shown into a room where there was a bright fire burning, and which was sufficiently, if somewhat shabbily, furnished, and here we found Sir John.

"How are you, Master Merrick? I am afraid these knaves have given you but a sorry welcome to our fair town of London. Come, this, I suppose, is your friend Mr. Hawkins, and these your servants. Tell me how you got into this scrape, for I know you of old to be a steady, sober, and well-conducted gentleman."

"Well, sir, I can scarcely say. Yestereven as we were riding from Harrow-on-the-Hill we were attacked by highwaymen, and my poor steed was killed. Captain Hawkins here dismounted one of the robbers, who afterwards escaped, being mightily frightened by the black visage of Toby there, and I was fain to mount the horse he left behind, or I should have had to tramp it to London."

"Well, my lad, that's soon settled. The worshipful justices are just now arriving, and I will soon have you freed, and anything these redbreasts have done to annoy you shall be inquired into at once. 'Twas a mad trick though not to give notice of your having the highwayman's horse."

"Sure, sir, you know what delay such a case causes; and as soon as our business in London is completed we want to get away north again; and in that we shall ask for your kind assistance and favour."

"Time enough when I have got you and your friend out of this inferno."

I here interposed, and asked the worthy knight if he could not also use his interest with their worships on behalf of the sailors who had protected us whilst in the room into which we had first been taken, as otherwise their run ashore would soon be put an end to, and they would find themselves sent on board the tender off the Tower, commonly known as the "London waggon" for passage to the Nore.

Sir John said, "That's right, captain, never forget a friend in need. I have no doubt their crime is a trivial one, that may be easily overlooked. I will now to the justices, and you two wait here till I come back."

Sir John soon came back with orders for our release and that of the seamen who had assisted us, and asked Tom Merrick and myself to come with him into the justices' withdrawing-room; and there we gave an account of what had occurred, and had the pleasure of seeing the officers who had arrested us severely handled and forced to return the fifteen guineas they had screwed out of us.

Sir John now bid us come to dine with him at two of the clock, when he said he would be glad to hear why we had come to town, and Tom and I calling a couple of chairs, returned to our tavern, followed by Toby and Standen and the seamen whom Sir John had got released.

CHAPTER IV.

WE at once ordered our morning meal, and then went to our chamber to arrange our dress for the day, and I put on my blue frock which I had regarded with so much pride at Liverpool, when Tom said, "Why, Bob my boy, you must get another dress than that, for I intend to make you visit the coffee-houses and see some of the wits and men of letters, and you will have to ruffle it with the best of them."

"But, my dear Tom, I can't pay for more now. The money I got from the owners of the *Elizabeth* has only served to replace all I had lost when I was wrecked in the West Indies, and I have only a few guineas left."

"Nonsense. I'm your paymaster. There's your advance for the *Black Prince*; and besides, you are in London on business for my father and Mr. Floyd, and I must have the captain of the *Black Prince* able to hold his own when he appears before the Lords of the Admiralty to apply for the letter of marque. I will send for a tailor to bring some

clothes, and as I must have a fit-out myself, we can choose at the same time."

When we had finished our breakfast the tailor who had been sent for arrived, accompanied by two porters carrying great packages, which he unfolded before us, and displayed coats and other garments of every cut, material, and colour.

He was most voluble in his vaunting of his wares, and would have forced me into a pea-green satin coat with silver lace before I could look round, if Tom, who knew him of old, had not interfered.

"Not so fast, Master Kersey. We are not bloods or mohocks, and we want none of that frippery, but something that a plain gentleman may wear."

"Certainly, your honour. Now here's a scarlet coat would suit the gentleman admirably, especially if he would wear one of the new pattern wigs, just imported from France—the last fashion in wigs."

"No, we want no Frenchified wigs. Let me see what you have, I'd have thee smack somewhat of salt water, Bob."

"Is the gentleman a sea officer. Nay, then I have the very thing. Here is a dark blue coat with white facings; it is the very fellow of one I made for the captain of his Majesty's ship *Raisable* a month ago."

"Well, Bob," said Merrick, "I do not see how you can do better than that. Now let me see for

myself. Here, this plum-coloured velvet will do if it will fit me."

"It will fit your honour like a glove. Now, would you not choose some others? Permit me, the nights are somewhat cold, and this roquelaure is warm, and permits you to use your sword arm freely; I fashioned it with that intent. No gentleman now knows when he may not have to draw; the mohocks make the streets intolerable of a night."

So the little tailor chattered on, and Tom selected for us both, till I had to cry, "Hold! enough." When the tailor was dismissed, he was succeeded by barber and bootmaker, and lastly by a swordmaker, and Tom insisted on my receiving, as a present from him, a handsome and serviceable cut-and-thrust sword.

When we had, as Tom said, fitted out, it was time to go to Sir John Dormer's for dinner, and we passed by the noble pile of St. Paul's and along the busy street of Chepe, and were just passing the Mansion House, when we saw Sir John leaving it and entering his chair; so we told our carriers to follow him, and arrived at great St. Helen's just behind him.

The worthy knight, when he saw us getting out of our chairs, welcomed us warmly, and said he had just received news at the Mansion House that war against France was to be declared on the morrow.

"That is what we came to town about, sir," said

Tom. "My father has a ship which he has just intrusted to Captain Hawkins here, and for which he desire to get a letter of marque, and we have come to beg your assistance in the same."

"The war is popular, and I suppose there will be no difficulty. Who are to be your sureties?"

"Why, sir, my father thought he might trespass on your worship's friendship, and ask you to become one, and I have powers from my father and his partner Mr. Floyd to enter into security on their behalf; but I have all the papers here for your perusal, and you can give your answer when you have read them, and if necessary they will lodge a sum of money to indemnify you from any loss."

"Well, Master Merrick, I will not give an answer now. But my wife and daughters must be waiting for us; so even come with me and renew your acquaintance with them, and introduce your friend."

The wife of Sir John and his two handsome daughters we found waiting for us in an apartment furnished solidly and handsomely, but bearing many tokens of the softening presence of educated women; and after Tom and I had made our bows, we proceeded to the dining-room, where Sir John exercised a most lavish hospitality, and where, as Tom whispered to me, some of the principal men in the state were by no means unknown.

After dinner was finished the ladies left us, and Sir John entered upon the business which had

brought us to town, and when he had read the papers we had brought with us, promised to accede to our request, and said that he would make an appointment for us to appear before the Lords of the Admiralty on the next day but one, and said he would in the mean time employ a scrivener to draw up all the necessary forms, so that our business might be got through with all possible despatch.

When this conversation was finished, he said that no doubt Tom would want to visit some of the resorts of fashion, and show me something of London life if I was as yet ignorant of it, but that we were both to remember that during our stay in London his house was always open to us.

On our returning to our hostelry we found that the seamen of whom we had obtained the release in the morning were there, and said that they heard I was going to command a privateer, and that they were ready to ship on board her.

After some discussion, we decided on accepting their offer, and made arrangements for them to go to Liverpool by waggon, which, as they were fearful of the press-gang catching them up now war was about to be declared, they were ready enough to do ; and at the same time we thought it best to send Standen off to Liverpool with letters announcing our arrival in London and the declaration of war, and as he would have to travel hard and fast, we mounted him on the highwayman's steed which had

caused us so much trouble, and which we thought it was best to send away from London as soon as possible, lest some more trouble might arise about him.

As soon as this was done, Tom took me with him to see the coffee-houses, and at one he pointed out to me the famous Dr. Johnson, a huge short-sighted man, who seemed master of his company, and to brook very little contradiction from those by whom he was surrounded. In another Tom met some of his London friends, who professed themselves vastly pleased to see him, and proffered to show him and myself some of the high life of London, and invited us to sup with them at a tavern, near the theatre in Drury Lane, where there was much wine and witty conversation. It was nearly midnight when we parted, and we had to hire link boys to guide us to Holborn. As we were passing through a narrow and dark street, we heard a great noise, clashing of swords, and cries of "Help," "Cowards," "Fairplay;" and hastening towards the sounds, we found a gentleman standing over a wounded man, and defending himself against the attacks of half a dozen ruffians.

We instantly made in to his assistance, and after a few moments his cowardly assailants took to their heels and fled. The gentleman at once knelt down and began to feel the body of the man lying on the ground, lamenting most bitterly that he should be wounded.

I and Tom aided him in the examination of the prostrate man, and found that he had been run through the shoulder, and also had received a blow on the head from a club or cudgel, with which one of the cowardly assailants had struck him from behind whilst he had been defending himself from the attacks of the others in front. Luckily his hat and wig had deadened the force of the blow, and he soon began to show signs of returning consciousness, and professed himself ready to walk home ; but on getting on his feet he found he could scarcely support himself, and as we found that he lived in a distant part of the town, we proposed to him and his companion to accompany us to our inn, which was close at hand.

"Faith, gentlemen," said the other, "we are much indebted to you ; for I have no doubt that, but for your welcome aid, the rascals would soon have got the better of me, and we should both have been robbed and stripped, even if we had not been killed, for the watch, as is ever the case, were absent. See, here they come now, when the fray is over."

Sure enough we saw lanterns and men approaching, and four watchmen came to us and wanted to know what we were doing there, and said we must accompany them to the watchhouse for brawling in the streets.

"Surely, Bob," said Tom to me, "we are fated to get into trouble. This morning we were arrested as

highwaymen, and now we are going to be taken up as midnight brawlers."

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said the unwounded one of our two new acquaintances, "I will soon settle with these fellows. Here, sirrah, you ought to look after those rascals who attacked us; but if you will find a chair to put my friend in, I'll give you a guinea. If you don't, I'll make this night a bad one for you."

"Pardon, your honour," said one of the watchmen; "we understand matters now. There are some chairmen who live in a court close by, and we will call them at once, if you will give us the guinea."

"No, no; I'm too old a salt for that. Bring the chair, and then I'll give you the guinea, as sure as my name is George Dormer."

"What! is your name Dormer?" said Tom. "Are you any relation of Sir John?"

"Certainly; I have the honour to be his nephew, and a lieutenant in his Majesty's fleet. Do you know my uncle?"

"Yes; we came to town on purpose to transact some business with him, and only to-day dined with him at his house in Great St. Helen's."

"What, are you the captain of the privateer that is going to fit out at Liverpool?"

"No; but my friend here, Captain Hawkins, is, and I am the son of one of the owners."

"Well, our acquaintance has only began sooner

than it would otherwise have done, for I purposed paying you a visit to-morrow to make some proposals to you. But here comes the chair. Come, Will," to his friend, "get into this chair, and we will go with these gentlemen to their inn."

The wounded man, whose name we found was "Will Griffiths," was placed in the chair, and we soon arrived at the inn, where we at once dispatched a messenger to fetch a surgeon, who, on his arrival, said that Mr. Griffiths's injuries were not dangerous, though he would have to lie by for a few days.

George Dormer said he would watch by him for the night, and that in the morning he would broach to us the business about which he had intended to come and see us. So after a bowl of punch, in which the surgeon, though he forbade it to his patient, joined us, we, with mutual good nights, sought our sleeping chambers.

In the morning Toby called me and Tom, and said, "Sailor officer wish for speak massa."

"All right, Toby; tell him we shall be down in a moment;" and dressing ourselves, we went down to a sitting-room, where we found George Dormer waiting for us.

As we entered the room he rose from a chair on which he was sitting, and coming towards us, said, "Good morning, gentlemen. I must thank you both most warmly, on behalf of my friend and myself, for your most welcome assistance last night, for

without your aid those rascals must soon have got the better of me ; and even as it is I have had a narrower escape than I thought. See here, look at my coat ; one of their swords passed through under my right arm."

We both professed ourselves only too glad to have been of any use to a gentleman of his merit, and a relation of the worshipful Sir John Dormer, and inquired how his friend did.

"Well enough ; he is sleeping like a child now. Poor Will ! he was going to show me some London life, and we fell in among pirates, who would have treated us worse than the buccaneers on the Spanish main use their prisoners. But now, gentlemen, I want to know if your ship could call at the Canaries on her way to the Guinea coast ?"

"Well," I replied, "it is not usual ; but no doubt, if the owners consented, it could be easily done. What say you, Tom ?"

"It depends, of course, on my father and Mr. Floyd ; but I have no doubt it could be arranged with them."

"If so," said the lieutenant, "I beg to offer myself as mate, if the post is still vacant."

"It is vacant ; but surely you, a king's officer, would not serve on board a privateer ?"

"It may seem strange to you, gentlemen, but I have a pressing need to visit the Grand Canary.

and I see no other way of accomplishing my desire."

I said that I should be proud and happy to avail myself of his services, but reminded him that we were rougher in our manners than in the king's ships, and that he might have to put up with worse fare and accommodation than he was accustomed to.

"I don't mind that ; but I think under Commo-dore Anson I learnt what hard living meant—and visit Las Palmas I must."

Tom said that the whole question would turn upon the cost and delay the visit would entail.

"Well, then, I think you will agree, for my uncle, when I proposed my plan to him that night, after he had told me of your visit to London and its object, fully approved of my plans when I explained them to him. Will you now come with me to his house? I can leave Will here safely ; perhaps you would allow your servant to watch by his bedside?"

This we readily agreed to, and accompanied him at once to Great St. Helen's. On our way we saw the heralds and trumpeters in front of the Exchange make public declaration of war against France, amidst the huzzas and clamour of an excited multitude, who were all indignant at the treachery, as they called it, of the French nation.

CHAPTER V.

ON arriving at Sir John's residence we found the worthy knight in his counting-house, and when he saw us, he said, "Why, Master George, you are here betimes; I did not expect you for another hour. He must have come to you, gentlemen, at a very early hour this morning?"

"Why, uncle, we met last night; and if it had not been for the assistance of Captain Hawkins and Mr. Merrick, you would not have seen your graceless nephew George here this morning, for a band of ruffians set on me and Will Griffiths last night, and poor Will was wounded, and I had to hold my own single-handed against six cut-throat vagabonds until your friends struck in to assist me."

"The condition of the streets is disgraceful. But where is poor Will? He is not as accustomed to hard knocks as you seafaring men."

"He's lying at the Golden Lion in Holborn, where these gentlemen are lodging, and has been skilfully coopered up by a surgeon we called in,

and doubtless will be as sound as a roach in a few days. But now, uncle, I have spoken to Captain Hawkins and Mr. Merrick about their ship calling at the Canaries and my sailing in her, there seems to be no objection except money. You know my reasons, and that I can afford to pay for the cost. Will you assure them of this?"

"Certainly, George, I am willing to do this; but there is more than cost. If you are to succeed, you must run a considerable risk, and you must in fairness tell them about that. Shall I say what you want, if you are too shamefaced to do so yourself?"

"Yes, uncle, you can do so."

"Now, gentlemen, this scapegrace of a nephew of mine has been charmed by the black eyes and raven tresses of a Spanish lady, and he has never been able to win the consent of her family to her wedding an Englishman and a heretic; and now he has heard that his lady-love has been taken to Las Palmas by her uncle, who has been appointed by his Catholic Majesty governor of the Canaries. And it is to Las Palmas you will have to go if you carry out his plans. The lady is nothing loth to come away with George if he can arrange it; but she has to be smuggled out of the island, and he wants to attempt to do it with your aid. I have no son, since my poor lad is dead, killed on the bridge at Dettingen; and I look upon George as my heir, and anything that will make

him happy I am willing to do; though why he could not wed a bonny English lass, I know not. There is danger and risk, as you must see; but I will leave it to you, Captain Hawkins, and you, Mr. Merrick, whether you will entertain his proposal."

I replied that what I could do should be done, but that I thought the decision would have to rest with Tom's father and Mr. Floyd, and that until I had heard further the plans of the lieutenant, I could not judge of their feasibility.

"Certainly, Captain Hawkins. I will leave it to George to tell his own story, now that I have launched him fairly. And now I have news for you both. I sent a letter to the first Lord of the Admiralty yesterday, and he has promised to receive us to-morrow at noon, so I will call for you in my coach at your inn to-morrow at eleven of the clock, and carry you both down to the Navy office. Now, George, I'm busy, as I have to supply the Government with many things on account of this war with France; so you take care of your two friends. Remember, dinner is at two o'clock, gentlemen, if you are inclined to honour my poor house; and till then I must wish you God speed."

On our leaving Sir John, George Dormer proposed that we should take a boat at the Tower and, landing at Westminster, go for a stroll in the Mall, where we should see all the world of fashion and perchance even have a glimpse of the king and

queen, as he said that he thought his friend would be best left alone ; and then asked us to excuse him for a moment whilst he paid his respects to his aunt and cousins, unless we chose to accompany him.

Fearful of intruding, we said we would wait for him, and in a few minutes he came and told us that, instead of dining, he had promised that we should sup with his aunt, when we should meet some of his uncle's and aunt's friends, and he proposed that after a stroll in the Mall we should dine on board the *Folly*. To this Tom at once acceded, and we made our way down to the river, and calling a wherry, we pulled up to the stairs at Westminster, where we landed and made our way to the Mall, which was crowded with fashionable people of both sexes, many of the ladies being attended by black pages, one of whom, according to George Dormer, was as necessary a part of the equipment of a lady of fashion as a full-bottomed wig and a clouded cane of that of a macaroni.

Here we soon found a seat on some benches under the trees, and were immediately assailed by the drawers from neighbouring taverns, who pressed us to order some wine ; and so, to be free from their importunity, we ordered a flagon of Bourdeaux, and whilst we were sipping it, George Dormer pointed out to us the different notabilities. After a time he exclaimed—

"Here is one of the most extraordinary men in London coming this way. He was once a doctor's mate on board a king's ship, and if all he says is true, has been the hero of some most extraordinary adventures ; but he has married a wife with money, and now sets up for a backer of fashion, in which he is to some extent successful. And besides money, he is possessed of most unbounded assurance. He is always followed about by a quaint fellow, whom he calls his valet ; but, if all is true, he and this man for many reasons should change places, but the 'valet master,' as some call him, is apparently content always to be a satellite to the great Roderick Random."

"Roderick Random !" I exclaimed. "Why, is he the man that was a doctor's mate at the time of the taking of Porto Bello ?"

"Yes ; he is said to ascribe the fall of Porto Bello to his own talents and bravery."

"Why, I saved him from drowning there, and he vowed immortal friendship."

"Well, that is a reason to speak to him now. I will send and say an old friend wishes to speak to him. Here, fellow"—to one of the drawers who was hovering about us—"d'ye you know which is Mr. Random ?"

"Certain, sir. Many's the flask I've brought him here where your honours are sitting."

"Just you go at once, then, to him and say that

a very old friend wishes him to share in a bottle of wine."

"Shall I say the gentleman's name, your worship?"

"No; go and give the message. There," said Dormer, as the man left, "Roderick Random will be sure to come to us on that. He is with some fine ladies now, but he will always desert them for the bottle; and it will be an excuse for him to leave Mistress Random, who, now she has him secured, keeps a pretty tight hand on him. Mark how that fellow I have sent hovers around. Now you see he is opening negotiations with Random's inseparable, the valet. Now the valet speaks to Random, and see, he is making his *congle* to the ladies and is coming here to us."

I could scarcely recognize in the rather overdressed man who now came towards us, with his suuff-box in his hand and his cane under his arm, the man whom I had saved so many years before when his dress was of the shabbiest and scantiest, and he hardly knew how to eke out his ship's rations so as to provide himself with enough to eat, and indeed was often glad enough of an excuse to attend sick on board the transports and merchantmen accompanying Admiral Vernon's fleet to get the satisfaction of a good meal.

He evidently did not recognize me, for when he came within three paces of us he halted, made us

a profound bow, and said, "I am at your service, gentlemen; but your messenger told me that an old friend wished me to share a flask of wine with him. Know that Roderick Random is not to be made a butt of with impunity. Which of you has sent for me on a fool's errand."

I was about to speak, when George Dormer said, "Surely, Mr. Random, no one would attempt any incivility with a gentleman of your parts ; but surely you must remember Captain Hawkins, who rescued you from drowning at Porto Bello."

"What, my preserver ! Fortune is indeed favourable that she permits me to embrace my saviour ;" and rushing at me, he folded me in his arms, and kissed me on either cheek, and then calling to the drawer, "Here, sirrah, bring us at once a flask of your best, and, hark ye, no delay."

We told him that we had invited him to join us, but he would not be denied, and turning to his servant, said, "Strap, wilt tell thy mistress that I have here discovered the saviour of my life of whom I have so often spoken, and say that I crave leave to present him to her."

Strap at once went away with this message, and we could see Mrs. Random, who was an elderly lady dressed with an affectation of extreme youth, looking at us through her spying-glass, and, after some parley with Strap, despatched him with a favourable reply to Mr. Random's request.

In the mean time I had introduced my friends and said something of the business which had brought me to town, and Mr. Random assured me that his interest was very great, and that whatever I had to ask, I might count upon as being granted, as he would make a point of speaking to the minister on my behalf.

When Strap returned, he said that his mistress would be most pleased to receive any friends of his master, and accompanying Mr. Random, we all went and made our bows to his wife and her companions.

Mistress Random was most gracious in her manner, and assured me that she must be ever grateful to the preserver of her husband's life at a time when he was obliged, by the enmity of his relations, to keep away from England for a period; and, bidding us be present at a rout she was giving on the following evening, she permitted us to depart, charging Mr. Random not to be later than five o'clock, as they had to attend at a levée given by Lady Furbelow at that hour.

After many bows and reverences, we returned to our seats, where we found the drawer awaiting us with the fresh flask, and we all entered into conversation, Mr. Random's description of his many and varied adventures being most entertaining. He begged us to give the post of surgeon on board the *Black Prince* to a young man whom he said

had been sent to him with the highest testimonials, and for whom he had intended to obtain the post of surgeon's mate on board a man-of-war, but who he thought would be better bestowed with us, and of whose capabilities and acquirements he gave a most glowing description.

We asked to have this prodigy sent to our inn with his testimonials, and promised that if he seemed fitted for the post he should be given it, and then we proposed going on board the *Folly* to dine.

"Why, the *Folly* ! 'Tis a low haunt ; apprentices and adventurers frequent it. I would rather we should dine at some tavern of repute."

"No," said George Dormer. "I wish Captain Hawkins to see the *Folly* ; there is no place that I have seen like it, and the very admixture of which you speak renders the society the more entertaining. I am often amused to see persons supposed to be of the highest respectability and decorum there, playing the rake with some notorious demirep ; and as for the society, if you do see some cutpurses and highwaymen, you may also rub shoulders with dukes and lords."

"Well, let it be so ; but, gentlemen, you must permit me to be your host on the happy occasion of my meeting my preserver, and I propose that we take a stroll to give us an appetite for our dinner."

To this we consented, and it astonished me to see how many persons of the highest fashion Mr. Random was acquainted with, and how all the time we were in the Mall he was exchanging bows and salutations with the frequenters of that fashionable resort.

Just as we were leaving to make our way to the river-bank the cry was raised that the king was coming, and all the crowd of idlers drew up as his Majesty walked up and down the centre of the Mall, attended by the Duke of Newcastle and several courtiers, but evidently, though respect was generally paid the king and his *entourage*, they were both unpopular, and some confusion was caused by some persons in the throng making outcries about Hanoverian and Hessian troops, whom the king was at that time desirous of bringing into England. All this seemed most strange to me who had always thought of England as a nation, and had never paid heed to the different parties. Certainly I remembered the attempt of the young Chevalier, but now that the Protestant succession was assured, I had, in my simple sailor mind, supposed that all the differences were healed, and that we could show an united front against any foe.

News had arrived of the danger of Minorca, and this had added to the dissatisfaction of the nation with the king and his ministers, and as

Mr. Random told us there was a great deal of sympathy with the Jacobites still felt in London.

The king soon withdrew into St. James' Palace, and we, making our way through the throng, took boat from the Savoy, and went on board the floating hostelry and tavern yclept the *Folly*; and here Mr. Random at once ordered us a private compartment, where we could dine at our ease and apart from the general company, but where we could still see the guests, whose variety formed one of the charms of the *Folly*. We were much pestered at first by the flower-girls, who pressed us to buy bouquets, but were at length routed by the strategy of Strap, who kept close to his master's shoulder.

As we sat at dinner we were much entertained by the description given us of people who passed near. One was a Jesuit priest, another a common pickpocket, another a noble peer, another a horse jockey; verily, it was the most extraordinary medley that I had ever seen. At last there came one tall handsome-looking fellow, who evidently was the centre of much attention, whom we first remarked from his swaggering air, and then his features seemed familiar to both Tom and myself and Strap. On asking him who he was, as his master professed his ignorance, he said it was the great Captain Starlight, a notorious highwayman; and then it at once flashed upon us that this was the cavalier who had attacked us after leaving Harrow-on-the-Hill, and

the possession of whose horse had caused us so much trouble.

I was for at once sending for an officer and causing his arrest, but my companions dissuaded me, saying that long before an officer could be found he would be away, and that the attempt to bring one on board the *Folly*, which was a licensed alsatin, would cause a riot and disturbance.

Captain Starlight evidently thought himself in perfect safety, for he had the assurance as he passed near us to touch his hat and ask us how his horse was, and to apologize for the inconvenience to which we had been put by being mistaken for him. It was with difficulty that my companions restrained me from chastising him then and there ; but he passed on with a nod and a swagger, and was soon lost in the crowd.

Our friend Mr. Random seemed so determined on celebrating our meeting in a festive manner, that we were obliged to plead our being engaged in order to get away before the wine had made an inroad on our senses ; and giving Strap the name of our inn, we proceeded there, to inquire after our wounded friend, whom we had almost forgotten.

When we arrived at the Golden Lion, and inquired for Mr. Griffiths, we were told that he had got up, and, professing himself very hungry, had called for a beefsteak and a tankard of ale, which he was even then discussing. As we went into

the room he opened out on George Dormer, and began rating him good-humouredly for having left him so long.

He said that his head was rather painful, but that he thought that both that and the wound in his shoulder would soon be well.

"All right, Will ; but I'm going to send you home to your people, as I'm going to leave London in a few days, and I don't think you can be trusted by yourself. Now you can dress, and put your arm in a sling, and then you may come with us to my aunt's house."

We could see Mr. Griffiths's face light up at this proposal, and he said there was nothing that would please him better, and as he left the room to get ready. George said that he thought it was not Lady Dormer that he wanted to see, but one of her fair daughters.

CHAPTER VI.

THE evening at Lady Dormer's was a pleasant one, both she and her daughters making much of Tom Merrick and myself, for what they were pleased to term our bravery; and as for Mr. Griffiths, I think he'd have been contented to be wounded every day in the week if it always resulted in such tender pity and care being lavished on him. George Dormer laughed at this, and told the story of the steak and the tankard, at which Lady Dormer said she would have no more such pranks, and that Master Griffiths should lie at her house, and gave orders for a bed to be prepared for him.

At about ten o'clock, the company began to disperse, so, wishing our friends good night, Tom and I, with George Dormer, returned to the Golden Lion, and there George told us some more of his love tales. It seemed that he was employed on the Mediterranean in a man-of-war, when they fell in with a Spanish craft which had just been captured by an Algerian corsair and set on fire. On board

the burning ship they found some wounded men, who had been left to their fate by the pirates, and from them they learnt that a Spanish nobleman and his niece who had been on board had been taken prisoners, together with the remainder of the crew, and that their captors had made off to the south-west.

His Majesty's ship *Revenge*, on board which ship George was serving, made sail in chase, and the corsair fortunately, having been crippled in her action with the Spanish vessel, was overtaken that same night, and became an easy prize to the English. The Spanish captives, among whom were Don Luis da Sotomayor, a grandee of the first class, and his niece, Donna Juanita, were, together with their captors, brought on board the *Revenge*, and while the captain of the corsair, who was an English renegade, was hung, his Turkish companions were reserved to be exchanged for English galley slaves.

A few days after, a Spanish Polocca ship was fallen in with, bound for Cartagena, and all the Spaniards and corsairs were transferred to her, and George Dormer sent with them in charge of a guard of seamen.

During the voyage to Cartagena, and his stay there, which lasted some considerable time, George and the fair Juanita were much in each other's company, and became mutually enamoured of each

other, and George asked Don Luis to permit their union. This was refused, and George had to leave Cartagena soon after, but had, by means of some correspondents of his uncle's who were established there, heard of Don Luis da Sotomayor having been appointed Governor-General of the Canaries, and also had received letters from the fair Donna herself, saying that she would if he could manage it at any time be ready to make her escape with him, as her uncle and the priests wished to force her to marry her cousin, a son of Don Luis, whom she hated and detested.

George, who had been intending to go to Spain before he received this letter, had been lately casting about for a means of going to Las Palmas, and he thought that our ship afforded him the best opportunity that he was likely to get.

I, separated in a somewhat similar manner from Muriel Penmore, fully sympathized with him, and offered my cordial assistance, while Tom Merrick said it would only add a little interest to a voyage which he hoped would be both exciting and eventful.

Next day, at the hour he had named, Sir John called for us in his coach, and proceeding to the Navy board, the question of our obtaining a letter of marque against the French was easily arranged, and the necessary documents were drawn up, and my name was inserted as captain of the *Black*

Prince. The sealing, stamping, and paying of fees took some two or three days longer, and then bidding farewell to our London friends, Tom Merrick, George Dormer, and myself set out for Liverpool, accompanied by one Donald McAllister, who was the surgeon recommended by Mr. Random, and who had such testimonials as fully warranted us in giving him the berth.

Our journey for the first three days was uneventful, but on the evening of the fourth a horseman joined our party, and said, "Good evening, gentlemen. May I ride with you?" It was rather dark at the time, and we readily assented; but shortly after, a gleam of moonlight falling on our companion, showed him to be no other than our old acquaintance Captain Starlight, mounted on the self-same horse which had caused us so much trouble before.

I at once drew my pistol, when he said, "Pray do not be hasty, Captain Hawkins. I am quite alone, and would fain have a little conversation with you."

I said, "What have you done with the man we sent away on that horse?"

"Oh, he's safe enough. Here is a letter saying that at Harrow-on-the-Hill the horse was claimed and another given him. He was made to go on by threats, or he would have returned to tell you of it; but long ere this he is safe in Liverpool, and the

horse he was provided with was a good one, and I gave him a paper which would protect him from all gentlemen of the road?" and he handed me a scrap of paper, on which Standen had scrawled his name as witness to a statement that the story that Captain Starlight had told us was true.

I asked what made Captain Starlight come to us now, and he replied—

"I was once a seaman, and am of respectable family, but having been implicated in the Jacobite rising, I have been forced to become a highwayman, but I have never cared for the life, and now if you will take me in your ship as a foremast hand, you shall never have cause to regret it."

There was something so open and frank in his manner, that I and my companions said we would consider his proposal and give him our answer on our arrival at Liverpool, whither he could accompany us if he chose.

He thanked us, and, telling us that his name was Ralph Trevor, fell back alongside Toby, whom we told to look after him, telling him he had been taken for the devil on the night when he had attacked us.

We reached Liverpool without further adventure of any sort, and I was glad to find that the work of fitting out the *Black Prince* had proceeded apace during my absence, and that now she only required her guns and cargo to be placed aboard, and her sails bent, to be ready for sea.

Messrs. Merrick and Floyd had received our letters by the hand of Standen, who said the exchange of horses had been carried out in the civilest manner imaginable, and that the paper that had been given him had proved of use when on two occasions he had been stopped by highwaymen. The seamen we had sent down by the waggon we found had arrived, and according to Mr. Trenal's report were all good working hands, so that with them and the men I had shipped before leaving for London, and some who had been engaged during my absence we had very nearly a full ship's company.

The morning after our arrival my host Pye came to me, and said there was a sailor wishing to speak to me. I at once went to see who it was, and found Ralph Trevor changed from the dashing horseman who had accompanied us on the road into a smart seaman. He said he now wished his horse to pass into good hands, and hoped that we would give him the chance he had asked for by letting him ship as a sailor in the *Black Prince*; to this I now agreed, and said also that I would ask Mr. Merrick to take his horse into his stables, where it would be sure to be well looked after. For this he thanked me, and said that he had news that press-gangs were being sent out in all directions, and that unless we got away to sea quickly, even our letter of marque might not prevent us losing some of our

men. I thanked him, and, giving him a note to Mr. Trenal, told him to go on board and turn to work, whilst I went down to Mr. Merrick's. George Dormer came with me, and we were soon busy discussing whether we should be able to fall in with his plans for carrying off his lady-love from Las Palmas.

At first Mr. Merrick looked upon the undertaking as quite an impracticable one, and that it would most probably result in the loss of the ship and our falling into the hands of the Inquisition, which in these Canary Islands still kept up its worst traditions. George argued strongly in favour of our sending in a boat, and then he was sure he would find some safe means of communicating with Donna Juanita and arranging some plan for her escape from her uncle's guardianship. This plan Mr. Merrick would not listen to, when Mr. Floyd said—

"Why can't you visit one of the other islands—say, Lanzerote—and get hold of an island craft, man her with your men except enough to speak and land in the boat, and keep the greater portion of her crew on board the *Black Prince*, as hostages for those you take not betraying you?"

"That, certainly, we could do. That shall be the plan. Mr. Floyd, you must be in love yourself," said George.

Mr. Floyd, who was an old bachelor, said that he had almost forgotten all about such things, and

he thought that it was owing to love being blind that George had not hit upon such an obvious plan before.

I now looked at the list of seamen who had been shipped. Counting Jack Jago and his friends, twenty-five men had been shipped before I went to London, and then there were the six whose acquaintance we had made in the watchhouse, and twelve more had been shipped since ; so that, counting our highwayman, we had now forty-four men before the mast.

"Come, sir," I said, "that's enough to work the ship, but not to fight her. I should like another twenty seamen ; and then if I could get a gang of slaves like those I had on board the *Elizabeth*, we should be able to do very well."

In this George agreed with me, and I therefore sent him on board to see the work carried on, and station the men properly, while I and Tom Merrick went to the slave market to see if we could find only slaves there who would serve our purpose, and this we were fortunate enough to do, as two or three ships had lately come home from the West Indies, who had had to fill up losses caused in their crews by yellow fever with negroes, and of these we were able to select some twenty fine hearty fellows, whom, when they had bought, Mr. Merrick and Mr. Floyd took before the mayor, and gave certificates of freedom.

On their being shipped I had to make a declaration as follows :—

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY WHOM IT MAY CONCERN that in the month of May one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six" (here followed the names of the negroes and their places of birth) "free black men voluntarily entered themselves on board the ship *Black Prince* of and belonging to the port of Liverpool in the County of Lancaster and Kingdom of Great Britain and that since they have been freed they have continued in Liverpool aforesaid exercising and enjoying their freedom in as ample and beneficial manner to all intents and purposes whatsoever as any free subject of this realm and that the said black men intend to sail in the said *Black Prince* with Robert Hawkins on her now intended round voyage from Liverpool to Guinea and the West Indies returning to Liverpool.

"Witness my hand at Liverpool aforesaid this twenty-third day of May 1756

"ROBERT HAWKINS."

"TO ALL TO WHOM these presents may come I Stephen Hollis of Liverpool in the County of Lancaster and Kingdom of Great Britain mayor of the said town do certify that on the day and year above written before me personally appeared Robert Hawkins and by solemn oath upon God's

Holy Gospels before me deposed to be true the contents of the above-written certificate and

"IN FAITH AND TESTIMONY whereof I the said Stephen Hollis at the request of the said Robert Hawkins have caused the seal of my office to be affixed the day and year aforesaid

L. S.

"STEPHEN HOLLIS."

This having been settled, I myself went on board the ship, and found that the lighters with her guns and arms had come alongside, and that George Dormer had made a start in hoisting them in, and was by no means sorry to see the twenty blacks I had brought to give him a pull. Jago was in his element, placing the guns ; but I had to break him off, and leave this work to John Beer, and tell him to go ashore and beat me up another twenty men, which, as he could say now that the letter of marque had been granted, I did not anticipate that he would have any trouble in doing the same day.

The main-deck we armed with seven eighteen-pounders on either side, and on the quarter-deck and forecastle we mounted twelve-pounders, and on the poop four six-pounders, whilst the tops and rails were provided with a plentiful supply of swivel pieces and musquetoons.

Under Dormer's active superintendence, matters soon began to assume an orderly appearance. Racks for muskets, pikes, and pistols, were fitted wherever experience pointed out that they were necessary, and when at the end of the day we knocked off work, I had the satisfaction of knowing that in four days more we could drop down to the bar ready to sail with the first favourable wind.

When Messrs. Merrick and Floyd heard this, they said they would draw up my sailing orders, but that very much would necessarily have to be left to my own discretion, especially in the matter of George Dormer's enterprise, and told me that they would have them ready for me before sailing. At my inn I found Black Jack waiting for me with twice the number of men I had sent him to look for, and had no difficulty in picking out a good set of seasoned hardy men who were all good seamen.

The next three days were fully occupied in bending sails, stowing cargo, and getting provisions and water on board, and McAllister busied himself in making all preparations for the fitting treatment of wounded in action, until, when I was able to report the *Black Prince* ready for sea, George Dormer said that he had never seen any ship, not even one of his Majesty's, so perfectly prepared for all that might happen.

CHAPTER VII.

AT last all being ready, we loosed the fore-topsail and fired a gun as a signal for all to come on board, and soon after we unmoored, and then Mr. Merrick and Mr. Floyd came on board with a party of friends, to accompany us as far as the bar, and wish us Godspeed. The wind was blowing from the north-eastward and a bright sun was shining, and everything seemed to augur well for a prosperous voyage.

As soon as the owners and their friends were on board, I gave orders to Dormer to make sail and weigh, and, casting towards the Liverpool shore, we ran down the river under jib and topsails against the end of the flood tide, having in tow a well-manned barge to take our visitors back to the shore.

As the wind was fair, we did not propose anchoring outside, and Mr. Merrick, after addressing a few words of advice to the crew and wishing us all Godspeed, handed me a copy of my orders. He then drained a bumper with us, and, with Mr.

Floyd and his friends, left us, bidding me be careful of his son, and not to run too great a risk in Lieutenant Dormer's project of making a bold stroke for a bride. We hove to, and hauled the boat up to let him leave, and as the boat shoved off we manned the rigging, and gave three hearty cheers, supplemented by a salvo from our main-deck guns.

I now gave the orders to fill and make sail, and we shaped our course so as to give us a good offing, and then set the watch. This being done, and after having had a careful look round, I gave charge of the deck to Mr. Trenal, and, calling Dormer, Merrick, and the surgeon into the great cabin, I read my orders to them, which were as follows :—

"LIVERPOOL.

"CAPTAIN ROBERT HAWKINS

Examined. "You being now ready to sail in our ship *Black Prince* with cargo on board agreeable to the annexed invoice are with the first opportunity to sail and make the best of your way to the Canary Islands where if without imminent risk you see prospect of its accomplishment you are to the best of your endeavours to aid Lieutenant George Dormer now sailing as your mate in his intention of bringing away from Las Palmas the lady Donna Juanita da Sotomayor. If you are successful

in this enterprise or deem it too hard for accomplishment you are to make the best of your way to the African Coast and there barter your cargo for Slaves, Ivory, Camwood, and what other articles may offer an advantage to your credence. We would not have you purchase any old or very young slaves as they are found on experiance not to be profitable. When you arrive on the coast the first thing you will have to do will be to inform yourself of what quantity of goods the ships are paying per head, that information you may get from the Kings deputy who resides at the place of trade, but observe you must be always on your guard so far as to think before you speak, if you dont you lay yourself open to the person you wish to get information from and take particular care how you make any promise to any of the Traders, the Kings officers or any black person you may have transactions with in business, don't deceive them always leave every place in Africa in such a manner that the Natives will be glad to see you again. Disputs between the black Traders and Captains of ships are often brought on by entering into agreements to have their slaves at such a price, you are not to enter into any such agreement nor even meet on such business, you go to Africa to make your purchas on the best terms you can according as the times are but not to throw your cargo away but make

the most of it as the times are, Keep your mind to yourself and the best temprance you keep the better both for your owners interest and your own health, one half of the Captains that die at Africa is owing to intemprance, them that drink the least wine or any intoxicating liquors are the best off, he that drinks the most tea and coffee, he is the fittest for business, his head is always clear, there is no part of Africa but the Black Traders very soon find the weak side of a man they do business with, if you purchase indiffrent people at begining of your Trade you will never see but indiffrent ones, as sure as you see a man with his head clean shaved you may be sure he is old and gray headed every one you purchas grown up or young see they have a good leg broad on the brest, not very short necks, let there be a proportion in their make according to the age of growing people. When you have finished your trade there is a custom of paying your Broker or King's Officer according to the service he has done for you be sure you have a reserve of goods for that purpose—and take particular care how your provisions go on for your White and black people, mind your water for your middle passage, take care none of your ships Compa. are ill treated and mind your ships Compa. are not suffered to use any of the Slaves with the least severity on any acc. whatever. be calm and steady at the begining of your Voyage,

use no boysterus ill language to your Crew only let them know you are Master of the Ship and will be so. Then you will prevent many disputes during your Voyage, a noisey swearing man never can carry a good Command, a drunkard of any denomination on shore or on board ship is allmost to much to bear with in the Common Sailor or Officer, but more so in the Cap. who should shew a good example to his Officers and Ship's compa. Forced courage is only a state of madness, true Courage is never better found than in temperance and *Religon*, no Man is fitt to be sent on any business that cant keep his head cool and clear, go to bed with a cool head then you will rise in the the morning fitt for business, if your officer's are not so good as you wish for you are not to fight or strike them nor use any blackguard low language before your ships Compa.—if any of your Mates are fond of liquor always tell them in your Cabbin of that or any other Missconduct you see in them, the ships duty must be done and can be done without bullying noisy low language, a man who commands any Vessell on a voyage to Africa is not to hear every word that is said let him keep on the quarter deck, then he may see both ends of his ship, make your officers happy and agreeable amongst themselves, never make over free with any one, good manners is due to all even to common Sailors or landsmen—Rise early in the

morning, never lay in bed after day light, make your apperance on deck, walk round the ship, look aloft see what sail is sett, then you may go into your Cabbin and read or write untill breakfast time if the weather admits—but should you see anything amiss on your coming on deck in a morning do not swear and make a noise, Call the Officer who as the watch and tell him whats wrong. if you should have any troublsom hands on board mind you keep on good terms with your Officers and let them insert in the log book any misconduct any of the Ships Compa. are guilty of and mind keep your hands to yourself. don't strike man or boy, be sure to command your passion be cool in althings fear nothing a Cool man never shews any fear, use every man well. if the worst man in your ship is sick take as much care of him as your brother use no Wine but for your sick black and white people, take care of all. In any part of Africa go were you will the Traders will try to find your temper by one means or other, therefore always be on your guard let them say what they please don't shew the least anger then you may give such ansrs. that will satisfie. them. you are not to be imposed on, be steady at the begining of your Trade and that will save you much trouble before you have done, little presents will gain respect when properly given but first know somthing of the person before you make a

present, the Africans will promise more than ever they mean to perform, but dont you follow their deceptions—One thing you are never to Omitt that is to Keep a clean ship below as well as above deck, set one day after dinner eather Saturday or Wednesday to clean all below and marke it in your Logbook in your passages out and home, never neglect it, except the weather prevent your doing it when that is the case be sure and take the next favourable day, and remark in your LogBook why it was omitted on the day you sett apart for that business, take care your provisions are not wasted be frugal in all things you dont Know the length of your Voyage be saveing at the begining and then you wont meet distress at the end which as and may be the case again, take care your Ship's Company keep themselves clean Observe Sunday let all hands shave wash and put on clean cloths, and not do any other duty than the wind and weather permits on that day. In regard to your passage out take care to keep as far west as Madeira always mind your Lattidue take care you dont run in the night when you come near the Cape de Verd Islands many Ships have been lost there by the imprudence of the commanders wantonly carrying Sail in the night—When you are past the Cape de Verds stretch in until you fetch the main keeping your lead going in the night time and dont forget Lead Lattitude and Look

out the very best Navigator cannot be depended upon that neglects the three Ls it is a very poor excuse for a man to tell the underwriters that he did not think himself so near the land or in running down a latitude to say the Ship was a hundred leagues ahead of him, some men have so good an Opinion of them Selves they think they know everything but Sailors in general know as little as most people and, therefore dont you neglect to read this over once when you sail and every Sunday morning after—you will find every voyage you go to sea you will learn something you never knew before and every year you live on shore something will be new and strange to you so it as been with all men before you.

“As some part of your cargo is in bales take particular care it does not receive any damage in your passage out you know how careless sailors are even of what belong to themselves one can of water spild on a bale of goods will heat and damage the whole bale, you have everything in the ship under your care therefore dont blame the officers for not keeping a look out, think every night what you have to do next day and dont put that off untill another day every day brings is work when you lay in the open air (*i.e.* without being roofed in) I think it may be as well to wash your decks every morning there will be time for them to dry before the Slaves come upon deck.

Take care their provisions are well dressed—The super cargo will settle all questions of prices for the sale of slaves whether at Barbadoes or Jamaica You will apprehend that although your letter of marque enables you to make prizes privateering is not to be considered as the principal object of your voyage untill you have discharged your slaves at some port in the West Indies where you will also tranship your other cargo if a favourable opportunity offers of sending the same to this port—Nevertheless if a favourable opportunity presents itself you may in the earlier part of your voyage make captures taking care not to weaken your crew unwisely. Excercise your men duly in the use of great guns and small arms and see that at all times good order is maintained. In the event of your mortality Mr. Dormer will succeed to the command and next Mr. Trenal but the advice of the super cargo Mr. Merrick is always to be listened to with deference—We trust that you may have a happy and prosperous voyage and a good deliverance and that you and all of you may return in health and safety to your families.

"We are Sir your affectionate Friends

"MERRICK & FLOYD."

"There, gentlemen," I said, "you have now heard our orders. Mr. Merrick, you have the wishes of the owners as to what ports we should visit, and how

- we shall arrange with any other vessels belonging to the firm. We may, I believe, take slaves from them, so as to expedite our departure for the West Indies, and I trust that as we are so strong we may be able to visit the freetraders at Sierra Leone, and perchance there we may be able to make some passable bargains."
-

Merrick replied to me, "My father, I know, is too cautious to give any directions as to dealing with the gentlemen who frequent Sierra Leone, and who now are termed pirates; but as you know well, neither he nor Mr. Floyd are averse to turning an honest penny, and perhaps among the free-traders we may find some honest fellows who have only been driven into that business by their loyalty to the Stuarts, like our friend Ralph Trevor was forced, according to his own account, to the road."

"Well," said Dormer, "I confess I am astonished at your proposing to have any dealings with the pirates. They should all be hung."

"Ah!" I answered, "you think of those of the Barbary States, and the followers of Kidd and others in the Spanish main. The African free-traders are a different sort—at least, the English portion. They have never been known to attack a countryman; on the contrary, they have even assisted British ships when attacked by foreigners or in distress, and the utmost they have done against us is being rather free in the manner they supply

their wants, forcing an exchange at times of articles, certainly valuable, but not easily disposed of. Several Jacobite gentlemen are supposed at one time to have been on the African coast."

"Well, have it your own way. We had better go on deck and see all snug for the night; for, if I mistake not, it will blow harder before it blows less, and we must watch this new rigging, as it will stretch and give."

"Certainly, Mr. Dormer. Call all hands, and shorten sail to topsails and courses, and then see all the men at their quarters."

All was soon made snug, and then we went round all the men at their guns, and I was glad to see that, owing to our having shipped the twenty blacks, I always would have an efficient body of sail-trimmers to work the ship under all circumstances, without having to call any men from their guns.

By the time all had been properly seen to, we were able to alter our course to due south, and when sails were trimmed it was already night, and I was glad, when the watches were set, to be able to turn in, knowing that, as far as human foresight could say, we had begun our voyage well and prosperously.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEXT morning, by Dormer's advice, I exercised my men at their guns, and in tacking and veering, and we continued this sort of practice every day, and also manœuvred the ship in every way that could possibly occur in action. We also saw all our boarding nettings properly fitted, and toggled our lifts and braces, snaked all our stays and backstays, and, in short, did all that experience could devise to make the *Black Prince* perfectly ready to meet any foe. We also made arrangements in case of fire, and taught our black sail-trimmers how to act in case any necessity might arise for their services being required to extinguish flames in action. All these things took time, and soon after passing the Scillys we met a south-west wind that at first we were able to beat against, but which soon forced us to shorten sail, and after a time we could neither tack nor veer, and had to furl our square-sails, and try under fore and main stay-sails, and to house our jibboom and top gallant-masts, and get the sprit-sail yard fore and aft.

After four days, during which we were unable to open the hatches or light a fire, the gale moderated and the wind drew round to the north-west, so that we were again able to lie our course, and I intended that we should keep well for Finisterre, in order to get a departure ; but we had been driven so far to the westward of what I thought, that we were embayed in the Bay of Biscay, and sighted the north coast of Spain some thirty leagues to the eastward of that point. I brought the ship to the wind on the port tack, to make a leg to the northward, and had hardly made above four leagues on that course when the look-out man reported a sail on our lee bow.

"Where away?"

"Just under the black cloud, sir. She is not very large."

I ordered the ship to be kept away, and we soon closed on the stranger, which proved to be a large *chasse-marée*. When we were seen to be bearing down on her, she also kept away, and set more sail ; but as the sea was running pretty heavily, we soon drew up within gun fire, when, hoisting the English colours, I ordered a gun to be fired as a signal for her to bring to.

In reply, she hoisted the white flag of France, but instead of shortening sail, set her topsails, and for a time seemed to be drawing away from us, but soon after, her mainyard carrying away in a

squall, we rapidly overhauled her, and, though she was well armed, she hauled down her colours without firing a shot.

I ran close to windward of her, and hailed that all her men were to leave the deck and go below, or else I would fire into her, as I had some fear that treachery was intended ; and then we lowered one of our boats, and Dormer went on board to take possession. He had much difficulty in getting alongside the prize, but at last succeeded ; and, placing guards over the hatchways, ordered the captain on deck with his papers, and found that the name of the craft was the *Saint Pierre*, bound from Bourdeaux to Senegal, with wine, provisions, and a mixed cargo.

I ordered the Frenchmen to be sent on board the *Black Prince*, and in a short time they were ranged on our quarter-deck, and I sent a prize crew, under Mr. Trenal, to take charge of the *Saint Pierre*, and then we both made sail, the yard of the *chasse-marée* having been fished immediately Dormer went on board.

The French skipper, Jean Amarre, told us that he had been out five days, and seemed broken-hearted at his capture, as he was part owner of the vessel, and the cargo mostly belonged to one of his brothers. I could not help feeling sorry for him ; but, at the same time, I was very pleased to think that at so early a period of our voyage we

had secured so good a prize, for the manifest of the cargo showed it to be of considerable value. His crew numbered sixteen, all told, and for them we cleared a space to live in the main hold, whilst Amarre himself, and his mate, Guillaume Boudin, we allowed to join our cabin mess.

Soon after all was settled the wind shifted to the eastward, and we were able to shape a good course for Finisterre, off which point we found ourselves early the next morning. I had a long consultation with George Dormer and Tom Merrick as to what we should do with our prize, the proper course being to send her to an English port for adjudication ; but this would entail our weakening our crew, which so early in our cruise I was very loth to do, especially as we should have to send the Frenchmen in her, and the prize crew would have to be strong enough to prevent any attempt at recapture succeeding.

After a time George Dormer said, " Well, I think I see a way out of our difficulties, which, even if it is not strictly legal, will satisfy every one."

"What is it? I should be glad to know what you propose."

"Why, this. If we go into Las Palmas in the ship, we shall excite all manner of suspicion ; and I propose that I should take the *Saint Pierre* in with a number of our men on board, and the French crew, and let it appear that she has put in

for water ; and then I shall manage somehow to communicate with Donna Juanita, and get her on board, and then clear out at once to rejoin you."

"That may be very well, but the Frenchmen will be sure to betray you."

"Not so ; for I shall propose afterwards to let them go free."

"Well, that is right for you ; but you must remember our crew, for they will not care to forego their share of the prize. I would willingly give up mine, and I'm sure Merrick would do the same, and you could easily arrange with his father and Mr. Floyd about theirs."

"As for the prize-money, that will be soon settled ; for I will undertake to pay the whole value, and the men shall all have orders on my uncle for their shares ; and so shall you and Mr. Merrick, and of course I will recoup the owners for theirs."

"But, my dear fellow, 'tis a big sum you are talking of. The *Saint Pierre* must be worth nearly one thousand pounds, and her cargo, by the invoices, must be worth double that."

"You must remember that I did not sail with Anson for nothing ; and my father was older than Sir John, and had a larger share in their business, whilst my mother's fortune was by no means inconsiderable."

"You may be a very rich man, but still three thousand pounds is a large sum to pay."

"You say you are in love. Would you grudge that to marry Miss Penmore?"

"Certainly not, if I had it."

"Well, my dear fellow, I will pay the three thousand willingly, and will pay the men that go with me, besides."

"All right, then; I will have no objection, and suppose Jean Amarre will not have any either, as it is all on his way to Goree."

"Well, if you consent, I will make my own terms with him. But now I think you are still keeping too far east; I should make Madeira, if I were you."

"All right. I will prick the ship off on the chart, and then set her course."

I soon marked the ship's position on the chart, and then came on deck, where I found Dormer talking to Ralph Trevor; and as soon as he saw me he called me to come, for Trevor had some important news for me.

"What is it?" I asked. "Has he, during the time he has been on the road, learnt how to carry off young ladies as well as to rifle the mails of wayfarers?"

"Not so, sir. I would fain have you know that, though on the road, I was not there by choice, but by necessity; but that is not the matter in hand.

I would have you know that, as an adherent of our rightful sovereign, my father, who was a country squire, had to live in France, and that at an early age I was intrusted with the carrying of messages between France and England, and on my father's death I took to the sea, and for some time I commanded a craft like this you have captured, and have had many a narrow escape of capture from the cruisers of the Hanoverians, who now rule England. After the retreat from Derby I was instrumental in getting many of the followers of the young Chevalier away to France, and had much communication with the agents of the worthy knight Sir John Dormer. About four years ago I lost my craft on the Kentish coast, and then I was employed in keeping up communications with different parts of the kingdom for the London committee appointed by the court at St. Germain, and in so doing I availed myself of the services of some of the gentlemen of the road, and when my work for the Jacobites ceased, I, not knowing what to do, threw in my lot with them ; but 'tis a hard and dangerous life, and I was delighted to have an opportunity of leaving it."

"I am glad," I replied, "you have taken again to an honest life ; but I do not see how the matter affects us."

"No, sir ; but, for the matter of honesty, I see not much difference between the road and privateering."

"Out, rogue! I only capture the property of the enemies of his most sacred Majesty George II. God bless him."

"Ay, sir; and I levied tribute on the enemies of the king over the water."

"You bandy words well," said George Dormer; "but tell Captain Hawkins what you e'en now said to me."

"Why, sir, it is this that I had to say: I have a good knowledge of French, and can patter with the Crapauds in their own tongue, and many of my crew, when I commanded the *Prince Charlie*, were Frenchmen; and I have been speaking to some of the fellows you have confined in the hold, and it so chances that some of them are from the Channel Islands, and claim to be English, though not a word of our language can they speak, and they now request that you would be pleased to make them part of your crew, and then I thought, perchance, if you would listen to them, that I and this half-dozen men might prove of use on board the prize, as, saving your presence, your square-rigged seamen know little of the management of these small craft, and she would prove of use to you in many ways."

"Tis well what you say; but what hold can I have over you and them that you might not make off with the *Saint Pierre*?"

"Egad, sir, that I would not. But we should

only be seven, and I reckon that your mate and the twelve men he has now on board might surely prove a match for us if we wished to be so unloyal."

"Enough. I will even consider what you say ; but mind, not one word to the prisoners of what you have said."

Ralph Trevor pulled his forelock in true seaman style, and left the poop, and when he had gone, I turned to Dormer to ask him what he thought of what he had told us, and called Tom Merrick into our counsels.

When Merrick heard it, he said that now we could manage to carry out George Dormer's plan of carrying off his lady-love without giving up the prize, and that there was no law to prevent us having a prize with us as long as we chose, and no doubt the *Saint Pierre* would be most useful to us as a tender on the coast of Africa.

"You see now that Dormer can, with this scape-grace Trevor and the Channel Islanders, personate the French crew ; and if we chase the *chasse-marée* into the roads of Las Palmas, and only apparently give up because we come close to the batteries of the town, there will be no suspicion as to her arrival there, and we might also get information of what ships belonging to the French had passed lately for Goree, and might very likely pick up a good prize about the islands."

I quite agreed with this, and said the only

question would be how far we could put faith in Trevor.

Dormer said, "Faith! the fellow seems a reckless one, but there is that in his manner which bids me trust him, and whilst we are in company 'twill be hard for him to play us any tricks, and as for Las Palmas, we can put another of your lads aboard, and make him know that any double dealing would be the cause of his death."

I said that to tell Trevor now about our plans for the carrying off Donna Juanita would be quite unnecessary, but that to put him and the Jersey men on board the prize would be a very good plan, and that certainly if he had commanded a *chasse-marée*, he would be most useful, for though Trenal was a good blue-water seaman, he had never had any experience in small craft.

Both my friends agreed with me in this, and I ordered all the prisoners to be brought on deck, and sent for Trevor to pick out the men he said hailed from Jersey.

When Jean Amarre saw these being separated from the rest, he divined what we were about, and burst into a torrent of abuse, calling them "*Cochins, sacré canaille, coquins*," and every opprobrious epithet that could be found in the vocabulary of an old *loup de mer*, in which he was joined by his mate and the real Frenchmen among his crew. I paid little attention to his voice, as I thought it would

be best to let him run himself down ; but instead of decreasing, his passion seemed to feed upon words, and he at last so forgot himself as to come from the poop, where he had been left, on to the quarter-deck, where the men were ranged, and making at me, would doubtless have struck me, if Black Jack, who was standing hard by, had not divined his intention, and, seizing him by the scruff of his neck and his waistband, given him a twist and landed him on his back on the deck.

I could hardly help laughing at him as he lay there, for he was a most ludicrous figure. He was crying with passion, and his jacket and petticoat trousers split and torn from Black Jack's vigorous handling ; and he rolled from side to side, endeavouring to regain his feet. His mate Boudin and one or two of his crew came to his rescue, and he was put on his feet, when he continued storming away, and among the words which flowed like a torrent from his lips I could at times distinguish, *Lâches, Bêtes des Anglais* and *Grande nation*.

As this continued too long, I had to tell Trevor to inform him, that unless he restrained himself, I should be under the disagreeable necessity of confining him and Boudin apart, and that he would only have to thank himself for my doing it. On hearing this, he quieted down, and went off to repair the damage to his clothing. His crew did not, after a bit, seem to be so much enraged as he

did ; but, on the contrary, when they found that those of their companions who hailed from the Channel Islands were to be liberated and allowed to join us, they nearly all claimed to be Channel Islanders ; but Ralph Trevor knew enough of the *patois* and dialects of France to make sure that those he chose were really what they claimed to be.

When the selection was finished, one of the men we had chosen, called Jacques Legrand, said that he had some important news for us, and this was that he believed that Amarre had been intrusted with some important papers for the French Governor at Goree, and that he thought they were hidden in the rudder casing of the *Saint Pierre*.

I again sent for Amarre, and asked him if there were any truth in the story, but he stoutly denied it, and said that he was not a man to be trusted with such papers, and called upon all the saints in heaven to prove what he said was true. Ralph Trevor said there was no use in questioning him, and that if I would give him permission, as he knew where similar documents were usually concealed, having had much experience in that way himself, he would rummage about until he found them.

To this I readily acceded, and we soon put him and the men he had picked out of the French crew on board the *Saint Pierre*, and both vessels went

on merrily in company, as we found that the prize could sail quite as well as the *Black Prince*, and that it was only owing to the fortunate accident of her mainyard carrying, that we captured her as we did, and not until after a long and tedious chase.

CHAPTER IX.

WE now ran into warm fine weather, and could constantly speak the prize, and ask if Trevor had been able to find anything of the papers which were supposed to be concealed on board. For the first three days the answer always was that he had been unsuccessful, but on the fourth morning the *Saint Pierre* ran close up on our weather quarter, and we could see Trevor waving a large packet of papers, and making signs that we should send for them, and, as far as we could make out his hail, his find was a most important one.

We soon hove to, and sent a boat, and we saw, not only Trevor get into the boat, but a heavy chest also passed down into her. When she came alongside, he came on deck and said he had not only found the papers, but also a chest of treasure, and that he had found them in one of the casks which were supposed to be full of wine. The chest was hoisted in at once, and was found to contain five thousand louis, which was a most welcome addition to our prize's value; but the papers were still more important, as they were

despatches to the Governor of Senegal, telling him that a squadron was being fitted out at Brest, which would rendezvous at Goree, and then proceed down the African coast, in the hopes of destroying all the British settlements and factories, and capturing the English ships trading there; in short, the purport was, that this squadron was intended to entirely destroy British trade on the West Coast of Africa, and that everything was to be in readiness at Goree for supplying this squadron with water and provisions, and the governor was also to find if there were any pirates to be met with at Sierra Leone or elsewhere, who would accept letters of marque to act against the English.

After reading these despatches, George Dormer said they were sufficiently important for us to be bound to make them known at the nearest British port; and he proposed, as we were now abreast of Cape St. Vincent, that we should at once haul our wind and make the best of our way to Gibraltar.

"That will make a long hole in our time," remarked Merrick, "and I do not see how your plan can be carried out about using the *Saint Pierre* at the Grand Canary, as she will have to be put into the prize court at Gibraltar, and there are sure to be delays there."

"Never mind, most grave and reverend signior.

I think we can get our prize condemned and sold in the same day, if we expend some money to grease the ways, and can find a purchaser. And the last part is certain, for I will buy her myself. If there is an admiral there, we can get a letter of marque for her, and I will equip and sail her, and you can make that good fellow Trenal first mate in my place."

"You certainly are a magnificent lover," I said, "and difficulties only arise for you to surmount them; but bear in mind that though your purse may be a long one, it is not bottomless, and you may come to an end of your resources."

"Never mind, most prudent sir. I suppose that this freak of mine will not cost me more than two thousand guineas, and that and more you know I have said I will spend."

"All right; you can give the order to trim sails and shape our course for Gibraltar. How is the wind now? We can make a good course."

No sooner were the orders given than they were obeyed, and we hauled up to the wind and were able to lay up well to windward of Tarifa, and we had every prospect of reaching Gibraltar in eight and forty hours. Next morning we sighted the coast of Spain near Cadiz, and finding ourselves well to the northward, I ordered the ship to be kept away, and we were soon running, with the wind rather abaft the beam, at the rate of over ten

knots an hour; but just as we opened the land past Cape Trafalgar, we made out a large ship standing towards us. I asked George Dormer his opinion of her, and he said he thought she looked like a heavy frigate, and perhaps might be a Spaniard making her way to Cadiz. As we were not at war with Spain, though we knew our relations with that country were not friendly, I saw no use in avoiding the stranger, and we rapidly neared each other. Suddenly, a puff of smoke burst from the other vessel's bow, and a shot ricocheted across our forefoot. On this I ordered our colours, which we had not yet shown, to be hoisted, and called the men to their quarters. Fortunately, we had cleared for action previously, for the strange vessel now hoisted French colours, and fired a whole broadside at us, which fortunately fell short.

"Hallo!" said Merrick, "we've caught a tartar, Bob!"

"Never you mind, Tom," said I; "we are a long way off a French prison yet. Dormer, you take charge of the guns, and see if you can wing that fellow, while I work the sails with the black fellows. —Hard up with the helm, weather after braces, round in."

My orders were obeyed as soon as given, and we were soon running before the wind with every stitch of canvas set, and the Frenchman booming along behind us.

Dormer got two guns into the stern ports, and kept on firing at our enemy, who from time to time yawed and fired a bow-chaser at us. I soon saw that the *Saint Pierre* had no chance dead before the wind like this, and was much afraid that the frigate, even if he could not catch us, might yet recapture her, and I watched most anxiously to see what Trenal would do. As I was looking at her, I saw her suddenly lower all her sails by the run, and said to Merrick, who was standing by me—

"I should have given credit to Trenal for not giving in so quickly. Perhaps he thinks the frigate will send a boat to take possession of him, and that will delay her, and give us a chance of escape."

"Don't be afraid, Bob. Trenal might think of that; but Trevor has brains, and you may be sure he is going to play the Crapauds some trick. Now watch, you see the frigate is shortening sail."

I looked, and saw the frigate's upper sails taken in, her courses hauled up, and that she hauled to the wind and hove to, and was clumsy enough to do this to leeward of the *Saint Pierre*. This gave Trenal or Trevor, whoever was the author, an opportunity for the trick they had wanted to try; for they had got the *chasse-marée's* bow to the eastward, and as soon as the frigate had lowered a boat, they hoisted all their sails, and hauling close to the wind, shot away on a course which the frigate could not lie. As soon as the Frenchman under-

stood the ruse, he fired a broadside at the *chasse-marée*; but it was badly aimed, and I was delighted to see the *Saint Pierre* get away unscathed. By this time we were some distance from the frigate, and although he had an advantage from being to windward of us, I had such complete confidence in the sailing qualities of the *Black Prince*, and especially on a wind, that I determined on again shaping my course for Gibraltar, and gave orders for the sails to be trimmed, and the port tacks to be brought aboard.

By the time the Frenchman had hoisted up his boat again, and filled and made sail, he was distant about half a league on the weather quarter, but as he was going freer than we were, he was rapidly closing on us, though drawing more and more astern.

I went round the ship, and saw every sail properly set and drawing, and as the breeze was freshening, saw lifts and trusses taut, and ordered preventor backstays to be got up, and extra parrells to the topsail-yards. I soon saw that, though we might ultimately make good our escape, we should not be able to shake off our pursuer without again coming under fire, and ordered the stern guns to be again manned, and sent for Black Jack and his friend Bloodred Bill, as the two best shots among our crew, to be captains of them.

Amarre and Boudin were on the poop, and had

been watching the whole course of events with intense interest. I pointed out to them how they would be exposed to the fire of their countrymen, and urged them to go down below to where the other prisoners were, where they would be in safety. This they refused to do ; so telling them that I would not be responsible for anything that occurred to them, I allowed them to remain on deck.

In about half an hour the enemy had drawn to within gunshot of us ; but, at the same time, I was glad to see that he was almost astern of us, and unless he wanted to fall to leeward, would be obliged to hold as close to the wind as we did, I went to the conin, and putting Sam Moxon and John Beer at the wheel, I was determined that not an inch should be lost by careless steering, while I told Dormer to take charge of the guns, and open fire as soon as he thought he could do so with effect. I was delighted to see from my position that the *Saint Pierre* was well away to windward, and that whatever happened to us, she was safe from recapture.

Moxon, at the weather helm, steered to a nicety, and answered my every word and motion as I either eased the ship or brought her up, so as not to lose a foot of way by either lifting the sails or letting her ramp off. "Dyce and no higher," I was just saying, when I was wetted through by the splash of a cannon-ball, which plunged into the

sea a few feet to windward of the ship, and at the same moment I heard George Dormer saying, "Now, Jack, let them have it. Aim at the bowsprit cap, and then our gun. Capital! that's into her bows, if it did not wound a spar. Now, Cundy, try your hand. Be smart and load again, Jack." If on our side the fire was kept up smartly, the enemy was not far behind us in pelting at us, and we were hulled several times, and some shot passed through our sails. Looking round from time to time, I could see that we were not shaking off our pursuer, and said that we had better have some bar and chainshot ready in case any of our spars or sails were carried away, and the Frenchman came close enough to us to make use of them.

Just as I said this I heard a cheer from the men round the guns, and Dormer came running to me. "All right; we've shot away her sprit-sail yard, and her jibboom's gone, and there her foretop-mast is following it."

Jumping off the nettings, I ran aft, and saw that the frigate had lost both jibboom and foretop-mast, and had come up head to wind. As I arrived aft she let fly her whole broadside at us, and one of the shots struck and wounded the mizzentop-mast. I sprang and let go the topsail halyards, and gave orders to let fly topgallant sheets and halyards; but Amarre, who was watching all that happened, snatched up an axe that was lying on the poop

and, before he could be prevented, cut the lanyards of the weather topmast backstay.

He was promptly seized by some of the men standing by, but the mischief had been done, and the mizzentop-mast went over the side, snapping short off about half-way up, where the wound was. Fortunately for us it fell nearly clear, and only damaged the quarter-deck nettings, and carried away the boat on that side, and by giving a turn of lee helm smartly we were able to keep the ship from falling off, and in a few minutes we had cut all the rigging that confined the wreck, and began rapidly to draw away from our adversary, who fired a few more broadsides at us, but without doing any further damage.

Amarre would have been thrown overboard by the men who had seized him, but I interfered and had him placed in the bilboes, there to have leisure to reflect on the consequences of his treacherous action, whilst I looked round to see what damage had been done by the enemy's fire. I found that two men had been wounded by splinters, but that McAllister reported that their injuries were only slight, and that, though we had been struck several times, no serious damage had been done to hull, spars, or rigging, except the loss of the mizzen-topmast and boat.

I ordered the main brace to be spliced, and the men gave three hearty cheers in honour of our

escape from the Frenchman, and then we turned to to rig a jury topmast. Our late pursuer, we could see, was hampered with the wreck of her foretopmast and jibboom, and, though the men were clustering about her bows as thick as bees, they did not seem to make much progress in their work. The *Saint Pierre*, as soon as she saw we had shaken off the frigate, ran down to us, and said they had had three men wounded by musketry-fire when they were hoisting their sails again, but that none were seriously hurt, and could easily wait for the doctor's attention until our arrival at Gibraltar.

We were now well past Cape Trafalgar, and had a leading wind for Tarifa, for which we now steered, and about sunset were abreast of that point, and could see the rock of Gibraltar lying like a grim lion guarding the entrance to the Mediterranean, and hauled up to the wind. As we opened Algeciras we could see the lights of a number of shipping lying off that place, and soon after the lights of a squadron lying under the rock. We had to make two or three tacks to fetch up to the anchorage, and about midnight anchored close outside the line of ships, and immediately were boarded by a boat from the ship having the guard.

As the lieutenant hailed us to know who and what we were, Dormer said he knew the voice, and that it was one of his old messmates, Hoste,

and called to him by name, saying that we were the *Black Prince*, privateer of Liverpool, with her prize, the *Saint Pierre*, in company, and that we had found despatches on board her.

Hoste was on deck immediately, and was much astonished at meeting Dormer, who at once introduced him to me. From him we learnt of the action between Byng and the French off the Balearic Isles, and said that the admiral had left for England with part of his fleet, and that the remainder were here now watching a French squadron, which was lying in the Spanish part of the bay off Algeciras. I told Lieutenant Hoste of the despatches we had found on board the *Saint Pierre*, and he said that he would at once take me on board the flagship, to report to Admiral Forsyth, who was in command.

I left Dormer to see the sails furled and all made snug, and went on board the *Majestic*, a three-decker of a hundred guns, on board which the admiral's flag was flying; and immediately we got on board, the officer of the watch sent for the flag-lieutenant and flag-captain, who decided that the admiral ought to be woke and told at once of the news we brought. In about ten minutes I was ushered into the admiral's cabin, where I found him wrapped up in a boat-cloak, with his nightcap on, and not in the best of humours at being disturbed.

"Well, sir," he said, "I suppose you think you

have some news. Now, tell me at once, what is it?"

I answered, "I left Liverpool——"

"Of course; I know that. But what have you done, sir?"

"We captured in the bay a *chasse-marée*, bound from Bourdeaux to Goree, and on board her we found these despatches concealed;" and I handed them to him.

He snatched them out of my hand, and, opening them, said, after he had glanced at them, that he couldn't read the d——d foreign lingo. "Do you know what they mean?"

I replied that they related to the despatch of a French squadron, which was to rendezvous, and then to proceed to attack the English settlements on the West Coast.

"Well, why do you come here with them. Why didn't you go down to the coast to warn our ports and ships?"

"I thought it my duty, sir, to come here, and I wanted to get my prize condemned."

"Your prize? Where is your letter of marque?"

"On board my ship, sir."

"What d'ye mean by coming on board here without it. Go back at once and bring it with you."

"Very well, sir; but I was chased by a French frigate on my way here, and we left her disabled

by the loss of her fore-topmast and jibboom, a little to the south of Cape Trafalgar."

"D'ye hear, go and bring your own papers. The officer of the guard should have seen you brought them. Now go, and be back quickly."

I made a bow and left the cabin, and, going on deck, asked for a boat to take me to my ship. The officer of the watch said I should go back in the guard-boat, which would be alongside in a minute, and asked what the admiral had said.

I told him, and he said there was no need to be in a very great hurry, as, when the admiral was in the temper he then showed, there was a great chance of his keeping me waiting for hours before he would see me again. After about a quarter of an hour, the guard-boat took me on board the *Black Prince* again, where I was eagerly assailed by Dormer and Merrick as to how I had been received by the admiral.

George Dormer laughed when I told him, and said that I should have to wait for some time before I should get another interview with him, but that then I would find him as civil as he had now appeared bearish. "I expect you will have to wait till eight o'clock, and then you will be asked to breakfast with him. He can be most kind and courteous, and, if you permit, I will come on board the flagship about half-past seven. Now go dress yourself in your best, and go back with your papers.

If he should think of asking for you again, and you are not there, he will continue his present manner, and put all sorts of difficulties in your way."

I soon dressed, and, putting all my papers in a bag, ordered a boat to be manned, and returned to the flagship.

CHAPTER X.

ON regaining ~~her~~ deck, I found the flag-captain walking up and down with the officer of the watch, and he immediately began asking me about ~~the~~ French frigate which had chased us, and ~~where~~ I had left her.

As soon as I had described her, he said that she must be the *Cerf*, and that she had the reputation of being a very fast sailer, and we were fortunate to have got off so easily as we did. "Two of our frigates will start at daylight to see if they can pick her up, and with this wind she will not be able to make Cadiz, so they may have a chance, unless the mounseers are better sailors than I take them to be. But now you must be tired, and the admiral will not see you before the morning, so, if you choose to lie down in my cabin on the lockers, you will find a cloak to wrap yourself up in, and I will send you notice when you are wanted."

I thanked him, and at once availed myself of his kind offer, and in a few minutes was sound asleep. I do not think I had been asleep for

more than a couple of hours, when I was awoke by a noise of people moving about on the poop over my head, and, jumping up, arranged my dress and went on deck.

It was now daylight, and the two frigates which had been ordered to go in search of the *Cerf* were already standing out of the bay with every stitch of canvas set, and we could see signs of movement among the Frenchmen off Algeciras. Two frigates and a line-of-battle ship were making sail and were soon under way, and standing out as with an intention of cutting off the *Racehorse* and *Tweed*, which were the two English frigates. This was reported to the admiral, and he sent up orders for the fleet to unmoor and prepare to weigh, but not to loose sails unless the whole French squadron were seen to be getting under way.

It was a lovely morning, and we could see the two English frigates rapidly approaching the French ones, the French liner being a little in rear of her consorts. The flag-captain, who was standing near me on the poop, said, "This will never do. The liner will be on top of them the moment they engage;" and went down to the admiral, and, returning on deck, gave orders for the *Melampus* 74, to be signalled to weigh and proceed to the support of the *Racehorse* and *Tweed*. And then, turning to me, said, "I hope you will see a pretty action to-day. We want to tempt those fellows out of

Algeciras, and give them a drubbing to make up for Byng's action."

I said, "Why, you beat the French then."

"Beat them! yes, after a manner. But we've lost Port Mahon, and it was all because we did not go on hammering them. Byng was a brave man and a good seaman, but he could not make up his mind to run the risk of a defeat. There, that's pretty! There are two more French liners weighing."

A message now came up from the admiral for the outer division to weigh, and in half an hour they were standing across after the *Melampus* and frigates, who by this time were smartly engaged with the enemy. The Frenchmen did not wait for these fresh ships to come up, but they all weighed, evidently hoping to divide the English ships under way from those still at anchor. When this was reported to the admiral, he came on deck, and as he stepped on the quarter-deck was most ceremoniously saluted by all, both men and officers. He came on the poop, looking quite joyous, and, seeing me, said, "Good morning, sir. You will breakfast with me;" and his manner was now most courteous. I of course thanked him, and accepted, but said I hoped that he would soon have other work on hand.

"Yes. I want to get Monsieur Laporte well out from his anchorage; but we can have breakfast first, and thrash him afterwards."

He watched the French fleet carefully, and

signalled to the division he had detached to avoid action at first, and stand well out into the straits. After a bit, however, the leading French ships began to close on our vessels, and the flag-captain said, "They are an overmatch, sir. Won't you signal for the ships to weigh?"

The admiral for some time refused, but at last, seeing that the five English liners and two frigates were going to receive the attack of twelve Frenchmen, gave the order to weigh, and hoisted the signal for close action. "Now, sir, we will breakfast," he said, and led the way into his cabin, where breakfast was laid, and where he acted the host to perfection, and was seemingly quite forgetful of the impending conflict.

We had, however, hardly commenced when the flag-captain came down and reported that the Frenchmen were returning to their anchorage; on which the admiral said, "Pardon me, gentlemen. I must go on deck; but pray consider yourselves at home."

I wished much to go on deck, and so did the other guests of the admiral, and we soon followed him. The two fleets were nearly equally matched in numbers, the French, if anything, having the superiority; but now they saw the English fleet standing out, they evidently intended to refuse a general action and return to their anchorage in neutral waters.

Admiral Forsyth was endeavouring to prevent this. "Ah!" he said, "I was sure, Smythe"—to his flag-captain—"we weighed too soon. They'll escape us."

We managed to come into gunshot, however, before the Frenchmen could really avoid us, and, running down their line, we engaged warmly, and succeeded in separating the three liners that had preceded the rest from the main body, and these, not being supported by their friends, we handled severely. One of them, whose captain must have been a good seaman and a plucky fellow, succeeding in passing through our ships and regaining the anchorage. But the other two and the frigates, being surrounded by our ships, were soon disabled, but still fought bravely on.

"Well, Smythe, we must board. Run alongside that nearest fellow."

And in a few minutes we were grinding alongside, and our boarders swarming on board. The English flag was soon waving over the lilies of France. In the mean time the other French liner had caught fire and was dismasted, and hauled her colours down, and the two frigates, seeing that escape was impossible, followed her example.

Admiral Forsyth was among the first to spring on board the *Redoubtable*, which was the ship we boarded; and I, seizing a pike, followed close behind him. In the hand-to-hand struggle which

followed, his sword broke, and a big French seaman was going to cut him down, when I was fortunately able to thrust my pike full in his face. As I did this I felt a stinging sensation in my left shoulder, but, not regarding it, let go the pike, and, drawing my sword, stood over the admiral, who had slipped and fallen, and kept off the attacks of several Frenchmen; but in a moment they were driven back, and I was able to help the admiral to his feet.

We soon got back on board the flagship, and the admiral, turning himself to me, said, "I have to thank you, sir, for saving my life; but you are wounded!" and at the same moment I fainted away.

When I regained consciousness I found myself in a cot, under the poop of the flagship, and a man sitting by my side, who, when he saw me open my eyes, went to call the surgeon. When the surgeon came, he told me I had received a bullet-wound in the shoulder, and had fainted from loss of blood; but that he had already extracted the bullet, and that I need apprehend no permanent evil consequences. Whilst he was speaking, the admiral himself came to see me, and told me the results of the action, but said he was very sorry he had weighed so soon as he did, as he had hoped to bring on a general action, in which case he had counted on capturing or destroying at least ten of

the enemy; whereas now he had to be content with the two frigates and one liner captured, and the one which had caught fire destroyed.

"I have to thank you, young man, for having saved my life, and you may rely on me as a friend. I have sent on board your ship to make a new mizzen-topmast and repair the other damages, and you can be supplied with a boat to replace the one you lost from the naval stores here, for which you can give a bill on your owners in payment."

"Thank you very much, sir," I replied; "but I want to get on on my voyage, and I want to get my prize condemned."

"Fair and softly, lad. I have told my secretary to prepare all the papers, and Mr. Dormer is with him now. All you will have to do is to sign them when ready, and then I will go on shore and see the governor; but now what you have to do is to keep quiet for a bit, for you have lost a good deal of blood. So now good-bye."

The surgeon came in as the admiral left, and, after looking to the dressing of my wound, made me take some soup, and then gave me some draught, the effect of which was to make me go to sleep at once.

When I next woke it was night, but a dim light was burning, and by it I could see that some one was sitting in a chair close by my cot, and by his regular and measured breathing I could tell that

whoever it was was sound asleep. I felt very stiff about my shoulder, and was also very thirsty, so I called out two or three times to try and wake the slumberer, that he might give me something to drink.

At last he awoke, and I heard Tom Merrick's voice saying, "Thank God, Bob, I can hear you again; for, faith! when I saw you yesterday, covered with blood and lying senseless, I was in fear that you were done for. Here is some lemonade; take a drink, and then just go to sleep again."

He gave me the lemonade, which was most grateful to my parched throat, and then I said, "What is the news."

"Why, not much. The ship will be refitted in a couple of days; but you, I am afraid, will not be ready so soon."

"Nonsense, man. I don't feel any pain, and the surgeon said I should soon be all right."

"Yes, he did; but I know you looked like a corpse yesterday. Any way, McAllister is in the next cabin, and I will call him to have a look at you."

McAllister, when he came in, felt my pulse, and said there was less fever than he expected, and that with care I might be about in a day or two, but that probably I would have to keep my arm in a sling for a fortnight or so.

"There now, Tom," I said, "there's nothing serious. What is the time?"

"It is just one bell in the morning watch."

"Half-past four! How I must have slept!"

"Yes; and you will just go to sleep again now, or I'll have to give you some more of your medicine to make you do so."

"No, man; no medicine for me; but do you know I feel hungry."

At this both Merrick and McAllister burst out laughing, and said that I would do, and asked what I wanted.

I said I did not much care, but thought a beef-steak would not be a bad thing.

"Weel, weel," said McAllister, "I dinna ken that a collop of beef wouldna be a good thing; but ye are na sair wounded, and it behoves ye mainly to take gude nourishment. I will e'en see that body they ca' the admiral's steward, and will speir gin he can gie ye something."

Merrick, as McAllister went out, said, "I suppose, as you saved the admiral's life, he will not mind it, but it's a curious time to be getting beefsteaks."

"Never mind; I'm hungry, and if they can't cook now, I could manage a piece of cold salt beef."

"Well, you are getting on; but let McAllister forage for you. Do you know, those two inseparables, Black Jack and Bloodred Bill, when the news first came on board that you were hurt and, as the rumour was, killed, came aft, and I thought they both would have burst into tears.

They have insisted on coming on board here, and are now lying down near the entry port, and asked to be allowed to see you as soon as you were able to speak to them."

"Well, send for them ; they are good fellows."

The two seamen came into the cabin on being sent for, and Cundy, as usual acting as spokesman, said, "Your honour, I and my mate here wishes to ask how your honour does—that's so, Bo?"

"Ay," said Jago.

"Oh, I'm getting on first-rate. Thanks for coming to see me."

"Well, your honour, beg pardon if we make bold, but, as it seems to us, you have not been fair to us."

"Why, how so?"

"Please, your honour, you've been fighting the mounseers, and we weren't with you. We shipped to be under you, and, blow high, blow low, in boarding or in broadside work, we should be with you. If so be you'd lost the number of your mess, how should we have got a cap'n for the ship?"

"Why, my good fellows, I can't help being wounded, and shall soon be about."

"No, your honour, my mate and I can't figure it out nohow—the skipper having a fight and not having his crew with him. We wants you to promise that next time you will have us with you—that's so, Bo?"

"Ay," said Jack, as usual.

"All right, my good fellows. I hope I'll be able to show you fighting enough before we've done."

"Now," said Merrick, "you both must go and leave the captain quiet ; and here comes the beef-steak. How now, McAllister ; what have you there ?"

"I've just got a gude dish of collops, and the admiral he speired how the captain was progressing, and ask if he might drink wine. I've a bottle of Burgundy, whilk will mak' bluid, and gin the captain can drink some it will na do him ony ill."

The collops, as McAllister called them, and the Burgundy were most acceptable, and as I ate and drank, each mouthful seemed to give me new strength and life, and when I had finished I went to sleep again.

CHAPTER XI.

AT eight o'clock I was woke again by the firing of a gun, and found that Merrick had been replaced by George Dormer, and that my boy Toby was also in the cabin, with a change of clothes and things for shaving and dressing me.

"Why, what's the matter?" I said. "What are they firing for?"

"Oh, it's only an unfortunate fellow to be tried by court-martial for hazarding his ship," said George.

"What d'ye mean, 'hazarding his ship?'"

"'Whosoever shall negligently suffer his ship to be split, stranded, or hazarded,' go the words; but there is a lieutenant to be tried for a fire-ship which he commanded having been on shore, and, though he has got her off and will gain credit for the way he did it, the form must be gone through. But come, you must be shaved, and then we will arrange you so as to receive visitors, if you are able."

"No! I won't stop in bed; I'll get up. I feel quite well, except my larboard fin is trussed in so

I can't move it, and my shoulder seems to throb ; but otherwise I'm fit to dance a hornpipe."

"Well ! you are a docile patient ; but never mind, I was told you might dress if you liked, and Toby and I will rig you out, if you will trust yourself in our hands."

Both my valets were as tender as women in handling me, but they had to call in the aid of the ship's tailor to cut my coat and vest so as not to incommode my wounded shoulder, which he did skilfully, and tied the openings together with pieces of ribbon.

As soon as I was dressed I went on deck, and on the poop I found the admiral, who again thanked me for having, as he said, saved his life, and told me that as soon as we had breakfasted he would take me on shore in his barge, to pay my respects to the governor, though, added he, laughing, "I hear you had breakfast rather early this morning."

"Yes, sir," I answered. "I am afraid I gave trouble."

"No ; you are Richard Forsyth's guest, and he is insulted if his guests don't consider what he has as their own. The dons say, *A la disposicion de usted*, but I say it and mean it."

We continued walking up and down on the poop, and I was pleased to see that the damage that had been done to the *Black Prince* was being rapidly

made good, and George told me that the topmast of a prize had been found to be the same size as that we had lost, and that before sunset we should be all a-taut again.

At breakfast the admiral proved himself a most charming host and perfect gentleman, and very different from the morose old sea-bear he had seemed to be when I saw him on my first coming on board. After breakfast his secretary brought the declaration and other papers necessary relative to the capture of the *Saint Pierre* for me to sign, and then, with Dormer and the flag-lieutenant, we accompanied the admiral to the shore.

At the Ragged Staff landing the guard was turned out to welcome the admiral, and as I looked round and saw the wonderful strength of the fortress, with its batteries and casements, the more astonished I was at its having been captured and surprised by a handful of men under Rooke, and, as I was told, almost by accident.

The governor's house was an old convent, and it, with aide-de-camps and officers in uniform, and all the bustle and pomp surrounding a military commander's presence, offered a very different appearance to what it must have done when it was only tenanted by nuns in their sombre dresses. The governor we found in the patio, or courtyard, round which the house was built, and he welcomed the admiral very warmly, and congratulated him

on the result of the action of the day before, and paid me a most handsome compliment for what he was pleased to call my gallantry in saving the admiral's life.

A great deal of work was going on in the increasing of the strength of the fortifications since the declaration of war, and though Spain had not yet joined France, still she was evidently on the eve of doing so, and supplies of bullocks and provisions for the garrison could only be obtained from Morocco, and not from Spain, as was the case in ordinary times, while large bodies of Spanish troops were encamped round Algeciras and St. Roque, and parties of men could be seen every day busy in the construction of forts and batteries just beyond the neck of land which connects Gibraltar to the main.

As soon as I could I asked about the prize court, and when it would be possible for us to bring the capture of the *Saint Pierre* before it, and the governor at once ordered one of his aides to show Dormer and myself the way to where the court held its sittings, and we found that the next day a court would be held, when the case would be disposed of, and, as we said that the vessel would be bought by George Dormer, it was arranged that the sale of her and her cargo should take place immediately after her condemnation.

I was not much inclined for rambling about or

company, and therefore begged to be excused the governor's invitation to dine with him, and went on board my own ship ; and as I stepped on board, was gratified by being received with three hearty cheers by my ship's company. I thanked them for their sympathy, and then, having had a glance at the repairs, which were being rapidly proceeded with, I went into my cabin, and, with Merrick, composed a letter to our owners, to tell them how our voyage had progressed up to that time.

Next day the prize court condemned our prize immediately—indeed, I do not think the whole proceedings occupied over twenty-five minutes—and then the sale took place. No one appeared to bid against George Dormer for the vessel herself, and the wine found ready purchasers among the officers of the fleet and garrison. A few casks of the best we reserved for ourselves, and sent one each to the admiral and governor in return for their kindness and civility. The miscellaneous cargo, being suited for African trade, we bought in on account of Messrs. Merrick and Floyd.

Our next proceeding was the fitting of the *chasse-marée* for fighting purposes, and by the kindness of the admiral, no difficulty was experienced in arming her efficiently, and he granted George Dormer a letter of marque, with Tom Merrick and myself as his sureties. To find a crew was at first sight a difficult matter ; but even here money

worked wonders, and an idea that we were lucky more, and from some transports that were in the bay, we got about thirty good seamen, who, with the Jersey men, George said would be sufficient for all purposes, and he begged me to let him keep Ralph Trevor as his mate. To this I readily assented, and having filled up with water we were soon ready again for sea. I went on board the flagship to bid good-bye to Admiral Forsyth, and before I left he had all his ship's company called aft on the quarter-deck and before them all presented me with a handsome sword, which is hanging up before me as I write these lines.

As the French were still lying off Algeciras, we waited for an easterly wind and a dark night for sailing, and weighing about nine o'clock, ran right over to the African coast, and by daylight next morning were off Cape Spartel. We went on for two or three days without anything occurring, but on the fourth day we sighted two vessels to the westward of us and standing in towards the land. As soon as they saw us they hauled to the wind, and we made sail in chase.

The *Saint Pierre*, fore and aft rigged as she was, outstripped us, and about twelve in the afternoon came up on the weather quarter of the two strangers, which at that time were about three miles from us and a mile from each other. The sternmost of the two was a bluff-built brig, and

the other a smartly rigged ship, with a huge lateen sail on her mizzen-mast, which Jack Jago said he was sure was an Algerian or Moorish pirate.

"The second must be a prize, I suppose. I do not expect they will give her up without a tussel," said Tom Merrick, who was standing by me on the poop.

"Why, yes, I expect we shall have a fight. Mr. Trenal, call the men to quarters, and have the boarding nettings up, as these Moors carry any number of men, and will probably try, if we come to close quarters, to carry us by boarding. See, there is Dormer opening the ball; he is firing at the brig."

"Yes, and the ship's going about. George must take care what he is about, and not get too close to her before we come up."

Dormer, as soon as he saw the ship tacking, kept right away and ran down under the brig's stern, and we could see that evidently a struggle was taking place on board the brig, as her foretop-sail was lowered half-way down and then hoisted again.

Jago, who had come up to speak to me, said, "The crew is on board, sir, I expect, and they are trying to master the Moors."

"Yes. I hope Captain Dormer won't fire into her hull, or he may wound friends instead of enemies."

"Captain Dormer knows what he's about, sir. See, the shot are falling far ahead of the brig. He

is trying to knock her spars away. Hurrah, there's her maintop-mast down. Now, sir, Master George can leave her alone. Signal him to close. You see the pirate is standing down towards us on the port tack. He'll fight. You put the ship under topsails."

I saw that Jago's advice was good, and hauled the courses up and furled the topgallant sails, an example which was immediately followed by the enemy. The two ships now closed rapidly, and when we were within four hundred yards of each other the pirate put her helm up, and tried to run across our bows to rake us. I saw that if I kept away to prevent this, we should run into her, and give her an opportunity of boarding, so put the helm down and tacked, exchanging broadsides with the enemy whilst we were in stays. Not much damage was done to either of us by the firing; but we had obtained the weather gage. The enemy hauled to the wind again on the port tack, and we, being now on the same tack, kept on exchanging broadsides, while Dormer took up a position just astern of us and with a long Spanish brass gun, which he had shipped at Gibraltar, galled him considerably.

It was very difficult for me to obtain any advantage by manœuvring as the pirate was very smartly worked, but I soon saw that simple broadside work would not give either side any superiority, so after a bit resolved to try a daring measure to

rake the enemy. I gradually edged down towards our opponent, and then, when only at pistol-shot distance, I put the helm down, and, squaring my yards, let run the foresail, and made a stern board across her stern, giving her the starboard broadside as I did so. The pirate, seeing our manœuvre, went in stays, but too late to avoid that broadside, and, bracing the head-yards a box, I paid the *Black Prince* off again, and gave her the port broadside at pistol-shot distance, without her being able to return a shot. The effect of these two broadsides was immediately visible, and disastrous to the enemy, as her mizzen-mast was shot away by the board, and her steering gear disabled. Dormer, seeing the position of the enemy, now got into a position on her bow, and commenced annoying her from there, whilst I wore short round on my heel and managed again to pass under his stern, and give him another raking broadside, and this time we shot away the pirate's mainyard in the slings, and she fell off right before the wind.

I had now time to look at the brig, and saw that she was attempting to make off before the wind. Leaving the *chasse-marée* to harass the enemy, I made sail after the brig, and after about half an hour came up with her, and running her alongside, called the boarders. I myself, owing to my wounded shoulder, was unable to lead them, but Merrick, closely followed by Black Jack and Blood-

red Bill, sprang on board instantly, and in another moment about forty of my brave fellows were on her decks.

The Moorish prize crew were outnumbered, and, though they resisted and fought savagely, they could not hold out, and in less than ten minutes we were in possession of the *Betsy* of Bristol, which had been captured two days before by the rover. Her crew, which had consisted of only twenty hands in the first place, had surrendered, after heaving their guns and much of their cargo overboard in their endeavours to escape. The Moors had put a prize crew of thirty men on board, but, contrary to their usual practice, had not transferred their prisoners to their own vessel; perhaps, as they were close to Salee, not thinking it worth while to do so. When the Englishmen had seen us, they had attempted to shorten sail, but had, after a plucky struggle—in which, though unarmed, they had inflicted much damage on their captors with handspikes and marlinspikes—been forced to succumb, with the third of their number killed or wounded. These had all been thrown overboard, and the remainder had been lashed to the best bower cable, and some of the cruel devils whom we had conquered were just about to cut the lashings of the anchor, when Black Jack and his chum, who saw what they were going to do, cut the men down who were about it. Taking

a leaf out of their book, we lashed all our captives to the cables, and then, leaving Trenal with four of our men to assist the survivors of the brig's crew, we stood again towards the Moorish ship which was being severely handled by George Dormer with his long gun.

As we drew near, the pirates managed to sweep their bow round, so that their broadside should bear on us, and saluted us warmly, being evidently determined to fight to the last. As they seemed wishful of a good thrashing I did not disappoint them, and, manœuvring so as to get across their bows, poured in broadside after broadside. They fought gallantly and stubbornly, and again managed to get some guns to bear on us, and, although we soon knocked a hole in their bows, through which the Lord Mayor could have driven his coach, stuck to them like fiends.

I found that we were losing men and our masts were wounded, so that I had to lower our topsails, and was about to run her on board and bring the fight to an end that way, when Jago, who heard me giving the orders, begged me to desist, as he said, notwithstanding the pounding we had given them, they could still muster two or three to our one, and that, in such a struggle as would ensue no quarter could be asked or given. "Tell the men to fire low, and sink her, sir!"

I gave orders to depress the guns, and soon we

saw that the enemy was getting lower in the water, while we ourselves had received some shots between wind and water, which had necessitated my sending my black sail-trimmers to the pumps.

In about another twenty minutes, we could see that the pirate was evidently settling fast, but the fiends who manned her showed no signs of surrendering; and still to the best of their ability returned our fire. Soon she was rolling her main-deck guns under water, but from guns on her fore-castle they yet fired at us.

Suddenly she gave a great lurch and rolling over on one side sank, leaving floating a quantity of wreckage, among which could be seen the forms of a numbers of swimmers. Anxious, if possible, even now to save life, I stood into the midst of it, and ordered ropes to be thrown to the drowning men; but out of the whole of her crew, we were only successful in rescuing about thirty, and these until they were made prisoners seemed inclined to fight against us.

Merrick shouted out to me as I was superintending the work of securing the prisoners, "Lord, what's up with the brig? She's showing signals of distress. Why, she's on fire!"

Jumping on the poop, I looked in her direction, and saw a great smoke rising from her main hatch-way, and that the men on board were getting her boats out. I could not until my masts were secured

go to her assistance ; but Dormer ran down to her in the *Saint Pierre*, and, launching his boat, brought all away from her, as Trenal had been only able to get one boat out, and that was only large enough to carry the English without the Moors. As soon as all were out of her, the flames obtained a complete mastery ; and all the satisfaction we had for our hard day's fighting was the knowledge that we had sunk a pirate, and rescued half a dozen Englishmen from slavery or worse.

CHAPTER XII.

DORMER came on board, bringing his prisoners with him, and I had them secured with the rest ; and Trenal coming too, I learnt that when the brig had been retaken, some of the Moors must have gone below and fired the ship, as when the flames were first discovered they were extinguished, but immediately afterwards it was found that the ship was on fire in some half-dozen places, and that work as they might, they could not prevent the flames obtaining the mastery ; and when they had attempted to get the boats out, and released the prisoners to take them out of the burning vessel, they had given great trouble, and it was only when the boat from the *Saint Pierre* came to their assistance, that they had been able to keep them in any order.

The condition of the *Black Prince* was now sufficiently serious to occupy my whole attention, and McAllister had his hands full in attending to the wounded, as, in such a severe action as we had fought, we could not have been expected to escape

without loss of men, and I was grieved to find that five men had been killed and ten wounded, of whom three could not be expected to recover.

The shot-holes we soon plugged from within, and then, the weather being fine, I ordered stages to be slung over the side, to have patches nailed on and cleated over them ; and, sending down all my top hamper, I set the men to fish my lower masts, and by working night and day, thirty-six hours after the action was over I was able to make sail and stand on my course towards the Canary Islands.

But before this we had an exciting occurrence, which I will relate as it happened. When the Moorish prisoners were secured on board the *Black Prince*, I thought that Black Jack, having been a prisoner at Algiers, and understanding something of their lingo, would be the properest man to have charge of their guards. He took good care to secure them well, and among them he found two negro slaves, who, he thought, were not such blood-thirsty desperadoes as the rest of them, and with these he made shift to enter into conversation, and found that the ship we had sunk was an Algerine corsair, called the *Golden Lion*, and that she had been commanded by a Genoese renegado, and that she had been, in company with two other Algerines, to Salee. Her consorts had returned to Algiers ; but her captain had thought that perhaps there would be a chance of making a prize if he stood

boldly out into the Atlantic. In this he had been successful, having captured the *Betsy*. These negroes told Black Jack that the prisoners had decided on setting fire to our ship, and trusted in the consequent confusion, if not to seize the ship, at all events to be able to make their escape in our boats.

When this was reported to me, I considered that keeping such a gang of desperate fellows on board would be always a source of danger, and decided, as they had an idea of taking to the boats, to give them an opportunity at once, and put them all in the boat of the *Betsy* and one of ours; and, giving them provisions and water, oars, sails, and a compass, set them their course for Salee.

Soon after they left the sun set, and about nine o'clock I was surprised to hear firing on board the *Saint Pierre*. I was unable to render any assistance; but by the light of a blue light which was burnt on board the *chasse-marée*, I made out that she was attacked by the boats. We could hear the struggle going on for some time, but about ten o'clock it ceased, and soon after George Dormer came on board, to report that he had been boarded, and very nearly carried by surprise, by our late prisoners. He said he was standing by the helm, the *chasse-marée* being hove to under just enough sail to keep her steady, and nearly all hands were asleep after the fatigues of the day, when he suddenly thought

he heard the sound of oars ; and, rushing to the vessel's side, he saw the two boats pulling towards them. Instantly he called all hands, and, seizing a musket, discharged it at the boats. In a moment they were alongside, and the Moors swarmed over the low sides of the *Saint Pierre*, and a desperate struggle commenced.

Though the corsairs were fewer in numbers than our men, this was to a great extent made up by the latter being taken by surprise, and roused out of their sleep to contend with desperate foe. One side was about equal with the other as regarded arms, as the men seized whatever came first to hand ; but fortunately a body of the Moors who were making their way forward, trod on the main hatches which were not properly shipped, and were pitched down in the hold, from which not one of them succeeded in escaping with life, all being bent down, as they attempted to struggle on deck, with handspikes and musket-butts, whilst a happy thought coming into the minds of those who were resisting their struggles, to pitch round shot down on them, those who were once beaten down could not again make an attempt to gain the deck.

This accident turned the tide in our favour, and the remaining corsairs, who one and all refused quarter, were either killed or driven overboard. On our side several men were injured, but none killed, and I soon had the satisfaction of receiving

a report from McAllister, whom I had sent on board, that the worst cases were two men with broken arms, the rest of the cases being bad bruises and broken heads.

I now sent for the men of the *Betsy*, who I found were willing enough to ship with us, and formed a welcome addition to our numbers, after the severe losses we had sustained in this action. The *Betsy*, I found was a Bristol craft, which had been bound down to Old Calabar, and though but an indifferent sailer, her captain had attempted to escape by sailing, and in order to aid in that had thrown his guns overboard, and thus, when overtaken by the Algerine, had fallen an easy prey. The captain and officers had, when it came to close quarters, shown a gallant example to their men, but had all been killed, and those that we had rescued were only A.B.'s, and could tell us little about the vessel or her owners, except their names.

We now shaped our course for the Peak of Teneriffe, and George Dormer and I consulted earnestly as to what would be the most advisable steps for us to take to enable him to get Donna Juanita away from the care of her uncle. At last we decided to get close off the Grand Canary in company, and then early one morning the *Saint Pierre* should run into the anchorage off Las Palmas under French colours, and that we should apparently pursue her, and that Trevor should

take the part of a French captain, and, with the Jersey men, make all communications with the Spaniards.

We did not doubt that very little suspicion would be entertained of the real character of the *Saint Pierre*, and we would afford her an excuse for remaining there by hovering off the port, and Trevor could go on shore every day, and by all the means in his power endeavour to open communications with Donna Juanita, and when once he had done so, tell her that George was on board the *chasse-marée*, and find out from her some way in which she could be conveyed on board. We in the mean time, whilst keeping off in the day-time, should after nightfall each day stand in as close as we could without risk, and cover the escape of the *Saint Pierre*, if Don Luis should discover the absence of his niece before she was safe from pursuit.

In order to make the risks as small as possible, we put twenty extra hands on board the *Saint Pierre*, and cleared out a portion of the hold, where they and the other English hands could remain hid in the day-time, and we arranged a code of signals, which could be used without exciting suspicion, to inform me of what success attended their surprise.

Dormer promised to all hands such a handsome gift if he was successful, that the good wishes of

all were enlisted on his behalf ; and I felt sure that the crews of both vessels were so confident in the good fortune which had hitherto attended us, that they were all sure of success, and if need were, they would readily attempt to land, and endeavour to carry the lady off by force, in case the stratagems which we intended to make use of failed.

After a few days we sighted the Peak, and then we steered towards Las Palmas, and the wind serving us, we were able at daylight one morning to commence our sham chase of the *Saint Pierre*. As we drew in towards the town, we could see lying at anchor a large vessel, flying the scarlet and gold banner of Spain, which we soon made out to be a frigate, and besides her there were only several island craft lying at anchor, though inside the mole we could make out some half-dozen large gunboats. As we drew near to the anchorage firing at the *Saint Pierre*, we could make out that troops were being marched into the batteries, and the frigate was being cleared for action.

We stood almost within gunshot of the batteries, firing at the *Saint Pierre*, which ran close in to the mole and anchored ; whilst we, hauling to the wind, stood off and on, as if watching for her to make an attempt to run out again.

From our main ^{up} we could see the people down on the mole, and the batteries all manned, and immediately the *chasse-marée* anchored, a boat

put off to her. This was to me the anxious time, as I was doubtful how Ralph Trevor would carry off his assumption of the character of a French skipper. The signal agreed on that he was not suspected was that he should hoist the Spanish colours and salute them. This he did ; and afterwards hoisted the French over the English colours. At this we fired a shot, as if in defiance, and commenced to beat up to windward.

At nightfall we stood down again, cleared for action, in order to cover the escape of the *Saint Pierre*, but at three o'clock she hoisted two lanterns, one above the other, as a signal that there had been no chance of communicating with Donna Juanita, and we again beat to windward, so as to be well out of the way of the examination of the Spaniards.

This went on for a whole week, and I was very anxious, for fear that George Dormer might become so impatient, that he would run some hazardous risk in order to be able to communicate with his lady-love, and would fall into the hands of the Spaniards, in which case, I felt sure he would be handed over to the tender mercies of the Inquisition, which still flourished, in all its horrors, in these island dependencies of Spain.

At last, one night, as we stood in, we saw that the town was in *fête*, and that many of the public buildings, and especially the cathedral, were illumi-

nated. We could hear the clanging of the bells and the music of military bands, and, at about ten o'clock, there was evidently a procession by torch-light, which, after passing all round the town, stopped in front of the cathedral.

Merrick, who was by me on the poop watching what was going on, said, "I should not wonder if George made his bold stroke for a bride to-night. All the people will be going to the cathedral, and no doubt Donna Juanita will have to accompany her uncle, and perhaps she may be able to slip away on leaving, and the festa will be an excuse for a boat to be in at the mole all night."

"That's true," I replied; "and we must keep a good look-out. I will stand in closer than usual. I expect many of the crews of the Spanish ships will be on shore. What an opportunity it would be if war with Spain had been declared! We could run in and give a few broadsides, and run out again, without receiving a shot in exchange."

We went as close in as we possibly could, and then I shortened sail to topsails, jib, and driver, and had all ready for making sail again in a moment, and watched earnestly for any disturbance on shore.

At last we heard the music of a band suddenly stop, and could see lights moving about on the mole, as if some struggle were going on, and then a sharp musketry fire from the molehead, which was soon taken up by ships and boats. We could

trace the progress of a boat from the mole towards the *Saint Pierre*, by the direction in which this fire was directed, and soon the signal agreed on, of three lanterns disposed horizontally, was hoisted on board the *chasse-marée*, to tell us that the attempt had been made, but whether it had been successful or not, we were still in ignorance.

I instantly gave orders to make sail, and stood in so as to protect the *Saint Pierre* from the fire of the Spanish frigate. On shore and on board the frigate bugles and guns were calling the men to arms; and by the starlight I could see the *Saint Pierre's* sails hoisted, and that she was slipping away from the anchorage, pursued by some large row-boats, with which she was interchanging a lively fire.

The frigate evidently was preparing to get under way, and we could make out she was loosing her sails, and soon she commenced firing from her foremost guns at the *Saint Pierre*. As we closed on her, she transferred some of her attention to ourselves, and gave me an excuse for carrying out the plan I had in my head, of running close across her bows, and giving her a raking broadside. As our plans were that the *Saint Pierre* should beat up at first to windward, immediately I had delivered this broadside I hove in stays, and again crossed the frigate's bows, and repeated my salute. All on board her

was evidently in confusion, and we must have shot away her riding-cable, for we could see she was drifting down on the shore, and by the phosphorescent light caused by the splash that she had let go another anchor.

Leaving her to her own devices, we stood after the *Saint Pierre*, which had shaken off all her pursuers save two large gunboats, each pulling about forty oars, which had put out from inside the mole, and, passing by the smaller boats which had started at first, were rapidly closing on the *Saint Pierre*, which had got a gun aft, and was peppering away at them as hard as she could, whilst they were replying from the guns they had mounted in their bows. We fortunately were now able, the frigate having her own affairs to attend to, to join in the game; and, shooting the ship up in the wind, I let fly a broadside of grape case and landgridge, at musket-shot range, into the nearer of the two, and completely crippled her.

I boxed off again, and stood on after the other, which had now got so close to the *Saint Pierre*, that I could not fire at her without danger of damaging our friends. The *chasse-marée*, though she went well through the water, could not shake off this persistent pursuer, and at last we could see that the gunboat had got alongside and grappled. I knew that these gunboats sometimes carried, in addition to their crews, some sixty soldiers, and

was much afraid lest George and his crew should be overpowered before we could get up to them, as they were so far to windward that I had to make a couple of short boards before I was able to run the ship alongside.

However, our fellows held gallantly out, and fighting for an idea and for the happiness of a brother salt, they, in spite of superior numbers, kept the Dons at bay, until I could pour my men down into the gunboat. The Spaniards, assailed in front and rear, threw down their arms and begged for quarter; so, pitching their gun and arms overboard, and taking their oars on board, we let her go adrift, but just before we did so, Black Jack and Bill Cundy shouted out, "Here's a padre here on this boat; shall we keep him?"

"Keep him? what for?" said George and I in a breath, as we were shaking hands and congratulating each other on the success of our enterprise.

"Why, your honours," said Bill, "I don't want to be wanting in respect; but perhaps the young lady won't be quite satisfied with a ship marriage, and this here gentleman in black may be able to buckle her and Cap'n Dormer together shipshape and Bristol fashion. That's so, Bo'."

"Ay," said Jack. "He seems a decent lad for a priest, and when he's done his duty there, he won't be a bad hand for a mate to the doctor."

"All right, my men," I said; "pass him on board. But now, George, where is the lady?"

"Oh, she and two of her women are below."

"All right. Now I think the ladies will be best on board the *Black Prince*, where they can have the great cabin and the state rooms off it, and surely Trevor can look out for the *Saint Pierre* for a bit. Where is he, by-the-by?"

"I don't know; I know he's on board; but if you'd seen him knock the Spaniards over with an eight-foot wax-candle——"

"Never mind stories now; we must get away. There are some more gunboats inside the mole, and they and the frigate would be nasty customers in daylight. Ah! here comes Trevor.—What's the matter, man?" I said, as I saw he had his head bound up.

"Nothing much, sir. My skull's too thick for a Spaniard; but I've had a crack from one of them, and I feel somewhat queer."

"Well, get on board the ship, and I'll send Trenal here to take command for the time."

"No, sir, I shall be all right. Jean Artimon can sail and handle the craft as well as I, and a couple of hours' sleep will put me all to rights; I've had many shrewder knocks than this."

"Well, well, now bear a hand, and let's get away from here as quick as we may."

We soon passed the ladies up on board the *Black*

Prince, where, in anticipation of this event, I had arranged the cabins for them as well as the means at my disposal would allow, having, with the full concurrence of my super-cargo, Tom Merrick, broached cargo, and got up some of the more valuable stuffs, with which to form curtains and hangings, and in some measure veil the roughness of our quarters.

We were by no means too quick about this, for, although much to my astonishment and delight, the frigate did not come out after us, three more large gunboats were despatched in pursuit, soon after we had again made sail, and being very swift under oars, they became very annoying; and as I found that they would not come to close quarters, nor yet be driven away by our fire, I determined on giving one which was hanging on my beam at about a cable and a half distance the stem, and give his companions some work in rescuing his crew from drowning.

I accordingly squared away my afteryards and put my helm hard up. The officer in command of the gunboat at first did not understand what I was doing; but when he saw me paying off, he lost his head, and, instead of ceasing from pulling and backing his oars so that I should pass ahead of him, we could hear him giving orders to pull, and the boatswains swearing and threshing the men as they tugged at their huge oars. As I could quite

understand what he was intending, I righted my helm before we had paid right off, and we caught him a fair blow just about ten feet from his stern.

The crash was a startling one, and though we did not go over the gunboat, as I had almost expected, we cut her down to the water's edge, and swung her right alongside, carrying away all her port oars as we rushed past her, and at the same time we gave her a volley from our small arms.

As soon as we were clear, I hauled to the wind again, and was glad to see that the two remaining gunboats gave up the chase, and went to the assistance of their disabled consort.

We continued to beat to windward, and when day dawned we were safe from pursuit, although we could still make out the shipping off Las Palmas, and could see the frigate lying over on her side close off the molehead.

"I say," said Merrick, "we're safe now; that second anchor can't have held, and she's drifted ashore."

"Yes," I said; "but what will be said about all this if the news gets to England? We're not at war with his most Catholic Majesty."

"Never mind; George has got his bride. But where is he? Here he comes. Now, George, we want to have an account of all that you have been doing. You went for one lady, and you've got three and a priest."

But George's story may begin another chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

GEORGE began, "All's well that ends well, old friends ; but if it had not been for the sheer audacity of that fellow Trevor, we should never have been here. I've been masquerading as a Jacobite with the Irish refugees on shore there, and have sworn to pilot I don't know how many vessels up the Thames, or where not I know not."

"What ! Irish refugees ?"

"Yes ; there are many Irish families here who left Ireland after the battle of the Boyne, and some of these have been mixed up in every Jacobite plot that there has been. Three men we met were out in the '45, and one of them Trevor had run across the Channel. Some of these fellows must be on board the *Saint Pierre* now, and I expect Trevor will have some difficulty with them ; but he's a fellow of marvellous resource and infinite wit and variety, and I doubt not that he will find some means of satisfying them."

"Let him settle with them, then ; but now you must allow us to pay our respects to the Lady

Juanita, and then we shall have the account of your adventures and settle on our future proceedings."

On our entering the cabin, we found Donna Juanita and her two attendants sitting down, and evidently very anxious as to what had happened; and as soon as they saw us, they sprang to their feet, and Donna Juanita, rushing to George, threw herself into his arms, and commenced weeping and sobbing. After a time she became quiet, and I could, when I saw her, quite understand the willingness of my friend to undergo any risks in order to obtain possession of so beautiful a creature.

George presented me and Merrick to her, and I endeavoured to muster up enough Spanish to assure her that she was now perfectly safe, and that I and every man under my command would sooner lay down our lives than she should be torn from the arms of her lover.

She replied in the prettiest possible broken English, that she was intensely thankful for the assistance that we had been to her dear George, in assisting her to make her escape from the custody of her uncle, and said that we were her countrymen, as she was now no longer a Spaniard, but an Englishwoman. "And you, Signor Captain," she finished with saying, "are now separated from your heart's love. Let us hope that you will, like George, find brave friends to assist you in the

attainment of your desires as you and your friends have assisted George."

I thanked her for her good wishes, and telling her to ask for whatever she might want, withdrew leaving George Dormer with her.

After some time George came on deck again, and said that Donna Juanita, worn out by the fatigue and excitement of the previous day, was endeavouring to sleep.

"And now," he said, "I will endeavour to tell you what has happened whilst we were at anchor off Las Palmas.

"As soon as we anchored, a boat came off from the shore, in which was an officer, sent by the governor to ask who and what we were. Trevor said that we were the *Saint Pierre* of Bourdeaux, bound for Goree, and that we had left France almost immediately after the declaration of war between England and France. This seemed to cause astonishment, as no news had arrived of war having broken out. Trevor then said he had been chased by you, and had run into a Spanish port, as the Kings of Spain and France were allies, and that, although there was yet no war between England and Spain, it was to be expected at any moment.

"All the resources of the port were at once placed at the disposal of Trevor, and he has filled up with water and provisions, and has got a lot of

fowls, eggs, and vegetables on board. He was asked to go on shore to tell the governor all the news, and take his papers with him. Fortunately, he had kept copies of the despatches which had been on board, and the old French log-book, which latter he had filled up with fictitious entries of a voyage from the time we had picked her up.

"In the evening he came on board again, and, coming into the cabin where I was remaining hid away, told me that almost immediately on landing, he had heard a man saying, 'Why, Master Trevor, what are ye doing here?' Looking round, he saw an Irish gentleman named Patrick O'Connor, whom he had conveyed from London to the Continent after the Jacobite rising of 1845.

"He at once saw that to deny his identity would be dangerous, and, though he wished his quondam acquaintance fathoms deep, he at once returned his greeting, and said—

"'I might repeat your question; but my name now is Amarre, and I'm skipper of this *chasse-marée* which was chased into the anchorage by that Hanoverian ship this morning.'

"'Come,' said O'Connor, 'ye're none the worse for a change of name; but an honest gentleman who belongs to the true Church, and has remained faithful to his king, will be welcome.'

"'How did you come here?' said Trevor.

"'Why, there's just a colony of Irish have been

here for the last fifty years, and when I found that 'twas useless to try to get a living in France—for though I might get a bite by St. Patrick, 'twas difficult to get a sup,—I, and some others who had been hanging about St. Germain's, decided on making our way here, where we had relations; and now I am a captain in the island militia.'

"'I'm glad to hear it,' said Trevor, 'and after I have paid my *devoirs* to his Excellency the Governor, I will e'en come and pay you a visit.'

"Captain O'Connor insisted on accompanying Trevor to the governor's palace, and told all he met that he was like himself, an honest gentleman who had been forced to leave his country on account of his attachment to his lawful king.

"This rumour had, when Trevor was ushered into the governor's presence, reached him, and he subjected the ex-Jacobite highwayman to a severe cross-examination, which he succeeded in passing successfully. Whilst in the governor's palace he kept a good look-out to see if he could see any ladies, or any means of communicating with them, but in this he did not succeed. When at last he was able to leave the governor, he found Captain O'Connor and some other Irishmen waiting outside for him; and they insisted on carrying him to the house of one of them, and entertaining him most hospitably. In the course of conversation, they said that there were going to be a series

of *fêtes* and festas, in honour of the anniversary of the settlement of this place by the Spaniards, and that these were to commence on the following day by a masked ball at the palace.

"When he came on board, he told me of this, and said that he would go to the ball, and it would be hard indeed if he did not get speech of Donna Juanita, and tell her that I had come to rescue her from the tyrannical guardianship of her uncle. I proposed that I should accompany him, as it would be easy enough to go to the ball in a domino without being found out; but he said he thought it would be very dangerous, and urged that he would be able to manage better if he were not hampered by the fear of my being discovered. After some time I agreed to what he said, and only stipulated that I should be one of the boat's crew, which should wait for him at the mole whilst he was at the ball.

"Next morning, however, before we were dressed, a boat came off to the vessel, and in this was Captain O'Connor; and before I could leave the cabin and get away forward among the crew, he was on board and asking for his dear friend and comrade Captain Trevor, and in a couple of minutes more, notwithstanding the endeavours of Artimon and some others, insisted on coming below.

"'Sure, my hearty,' he said, 'ye would not be so cruel as to kape me waitin' on deck; I've come to

pay you a visit, and while you're here ye can come ashore and stop with the gentlemen you met yesterday, and drink confusion to the Hanoverian rats.'

"I attempted to get out of the cabin without being noticed by the irrepressible Irishman, but he put up his hand to stop me, and I, forgetting that we were supposed to be French, told him in English to let me pass.

"He said, 'Trevor, why, what are you? are all your crew refugees, my dear?'

"And Trevor answered, 'Why no; but that is my mate, a worthy English gentleman, who has been sentenced to be hung, drawn, and quartered, and who managed to make his escape from Carlisle gaol, and, in order to gain a livelihood, has been glad to come to sea.'

"'Sure,' said O'Connor, who, notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, had been drinking heavily, 'I'm proud of the honour of meeting him, and if he will accompany you, we can all drink the young Cavalier's health together.'

"I was delighted at the turn affairs had taken, and professed my readiness to accept the invitation, if Trevor would give me permission.

"He said that there was work to be done on board, and acted the hard-hearted skipper to perfection. I was too sensible of the risk I had already run to interfere with him, but he at last

said that he would have no objection to my coming on shore for an hour or two after the day's work was finished, and then, in order to keep O'Connor from finding out how many English there were on board, proposed to him to go on shore at once, in order to have a look at the place.

"Soon after they were gone, I had another fright, for a boat came from the Spanish frigate to know if we had received any damage whilst being chased by you, and to offer assistance, and I had to run the gauntlet of the questions of the officer, and to tell as many stories as if I had been an army contractor. I refused all the offers, and managed to prevent any of the boat's crew coming on board, and the officer I entertained in the cabin with a bottle of wine, and managed to tell him something of the same story that Trevor had told O'Connor; but I could not help thinking how unfortunate was the presence of these Irish Jacobites in the island. At last the Spanish officer left; and, in order to keep up our character, I had to send some of our Jersey men away with the boat and casks to get water, though during the whole time they were absent I was in an agony of fear, lest some indiscretion on their part should cause our real character to be discovered.

"Luckily nothing happened, and when at four o'clock I went ashore to meet O'Connor and Trevor, I left word with Artimon not to allow any

boats to come alongside, and that as soon as it was dark, he was to loose the sails and have them ready for hoisting, and axes placed to cut the cable in a moment, if we succeeded in bringing Donna Juanita off.

"Trevor, with two Irishmen, met me as I landed, and I found that our friend O'Connor had been so engaged in pledging the Jacobite cause that he was unable to leave his house. We first went for a walk through the town, and I carefully noticed every street and turning, so that if I were successful in getting speech of Juanita, and she could get away, we should not lose our way in making for the boat.

"When we had finished our stroll our Irish friends invited us into the house belonging to one of them and then we were all introduced to his wife and daughters, who were busy in their preparations for the masked ball. I again proposed that we should go, and they at once entertained the idea, and sent out to get us masks and dominoes; and about seven o'clock, lighted by some slaves carrying torches, we all made our way to the palace. When we got in we found the rooms crowded, and I was fearful lest, among so many people all masked and dressed alike, I should fail in recognizing her for whose sake I was running the risk. I had one of the Irish ladies (or rather, one of the half-Irish, half-Spanish ladies) on my arm, and she

amused herself by telling me, as far as she could guess, who the different masks were.

"At last she led me to the principal saloon, and said, 'Now I will show you some one who, if you could see her with her mask off, you would consider the most beautiful woman you had ever seen.'

"My heart leaped to my mouth, for I was sure she could mean none other than Juanita; but, concealing my agitation as best I could, I asked her who she meant.

"'Why, the governor's niece, Donna Juanita da Sotomayor. It will be easy to recognize her, for I have found out that she is to wear a white domino with gold embroidery. Ah! there she is, Does not she walk and move gracefully?'

"Notwithstanding that her face was masked and her lovely figure shrouded by the folds of her domino, I had no difficulty in recognizing Juanita, and now my whole energies were turned to the solution of the problem of how I could manage to speak to her. I thought of many plans, and last decided to write a few words on a slip of paper and, pretending to pick it up near her, ask her if she had dropped it. In order to do this I had to get clear of my partner, and, making an excuse that I felt faint and overcome by the heat of the room, I asked Trevor, who was close by and alone, to take care of the fair senhorita.

"I immediately went out, and, tearing a sheet out of my pocket-book, wrote on it a few lines, telling Juanita that I was there, and that if she would tell me how it could be managed, we were ready to carry her off in the *Saint Pierre*.

"Returning to the ballroom, I watched for an opportunity of carrying out my intention, and at last fortune favoured me, for Juanita asked the cavalier on whose arm she was leaning to take her into a room where there were but few people, as she felt the heat oppressive, and then, taking a seat, sent him to procure her some lemonade. I had followed her closely, and the instant her partner had quitted her I approached, and, stooping down, pretended to pick up my note and gave it her.

"At first she said she had dropped nothing, but then she recognized my voice, and gave a scream and sprang to her feet, trembling violently, and seemed as if she would have fallen. I put my arm round her waist and replaced her in her seat, and begged her to compose herself, and, above all, to carefully guard the paper I had given her. Our action had attracted the attention of the other occupants of the room, and they came flocking round us. I said that the lady had been taken ill, and I would go and send her attendants to her if the ladies present would in the mean time attend to her wants, and was making my way out of the room, when I met her partner returning with a

glass of lemonade. I took it from him, and asked to at once send her women to her, and, returning to where I had left her, I found that she had removed her mask, and was being fanned by some of the ladies. I requested them to give her air, and stand aside while I gave her the lemonade, and in a whisper begged her to restrain her feelings, and to read the paper I had given her when she should have reached the privacy of her chamber. She gave me a look expressive of the fondest devotion, and said, 'I will be brave, my beloved ; but now go, for if my uncle should recognize you he will not scruple to hand you over to the Inquisition, and then ay-de-mi ;' and she shuddered at the thoughts of what might befall me.

"By this time her uncle and her attendants had arrived, and I slipped away, and, finding Trevor, told him what had occurred, and as he said search would be sure to be made for the unknown who had spoken to Donna Juanita, we agreed to leave at once and get on board. We soon got down to the mole, and, finding our boat in readiness, pulled on board.

"I was so agitated that I could not sleep, and remained pacing up and down the deck till early dawn, when, as no symptoms of any suspicion attaching to us having appeared, I ordered the sails to be furled, and, going below, flung myself into my berth to snatch a short repose.

"In the morning Patrick O'Connor and two of the other Irish gentlemen came on board, and they were full of the occurrence of the night before, and said that it had been given out that the governor wanted to find who was the mysterious gentleman who had been speaking to his niece the night before, and whom she declared she did not know. I was fearful of showing any undue anxiety, though I was longing to know if she had suffered any ill effects from the shock of seeing me, and dared not ask any question about her; but Trevor, divining my thoughts, said, 'And how is the lady herself?'

"'Oh,' answered O'Connor, 'she's none the worse. I met the doctor who attends on her this morning, and he says all she was suffering from was the heat of the rooms, and that she will be right in a few hours.'

"I was relieved to hear this, and was glad when our visitors left, taking Trevor with them. I refused all their entreaties to accompany them, as I was sure that Juanita's woman's wits would provide her with some means of informing me of her plans, and giving me directions as to how I should best co-operate with her in arranging her escape.

"In this I was not disappointed, for in the afternoon a boat came alongside, ostensibly for the purpose of selling vegetables and fruit to the crew; and the padrona sent into the cabin a huge bouquet, which he begged to offer to the Senhor Capitan as

a present in return for his being allowed to trade with the men. I at first thought that this was only a piece of ordinary civility on his part, and did not look at it carefully ; but, time hanging heavily on my hands, after a time I took it up, and then saw that the flowers were arranged so as to form a "J" in the centre. I immediately divined who had sent it, and, undoing it carefully, I found in the centre a long letter from my sweetheart. She began by reproaching me for running risks for her sake, but said that she could not blame me, as she would risk anything for me. This bouquet she had managed to get brought off by one of her women, who was devoted to her, suggesting to the boatman, who was her lover, that it would be a capital opportunity of making money to sell fruit, vegetables, and eggs to the French vessel which had just arrived, and said she would give him a bouquet for the captain, so as to ensure his being well treated on board. It would be dangerous, she said, to send any message in return by the same means ; but that on the mole, if I landed, I would find a woman selling oranges and other fruit, and also nosegays composed entirely of red and white flowers. To this woman I was to give any letters which I wished to send to her, but before I did so I was to ask if she came from Teneriffe, and she would answer no ; that she was a native of Lanzerote, which were the passwords she had agreed upon. I could easily buy

some flowers from this woman, and in paying her give her my letter. Answers would be sent to me by the boatman, who would each day have flowers or fruit which he would try specially to sell to me ; and in the arrangement of these her woman would take a part, and insert any letters she wished to have conveyed to me. She also said that for the next two days she would be unable to leave her own apartments, as the doctor said she was unwell, and required quiet ; but she assured me that the happiness of thinking that I was near her was sufficient to cure any illness. After that she would appear again in public, and told me of last night's festa, at which she would make a point of being present, and suggested that she should endeavour to make her escape then ; and that, as an excuse for a large number of our men being present, we should request to be allowed, at the service in the cathedral, to offer public thanks for our escape from capture.

"This seemed a very good plan to me, but the arrangement of the details would require both care and foresight, and I determined on at once going on shore to send Juanita a letter, saying that I had received her note, and fully agreed with all she said, and that as soon as possible I would let her know what I had decided upon doing."

CHAPTER XIV.

"ON the mole I saw many women selling flowers and fruit, and as I looked at their baskets all pressed forward to sell. I had some difficulty in finding the one I was looking for, but at last I lighted upon her. It was easy to see, from the way in which her wares were arranged, that some one of superior taste had had a hand in it, and the red and white bouquets were arranged in a circle round oranges and other fruits.

"'Ah!' I said, 'I see you come from Teneriffe. I will buy some of your flowers.'

"'No, indeed, senhor. I am from Lanzerote.'

"I took a bunch of flowers, and, giving her a doubloon, I at the same time slipped into her hand my letter to Donna Juanita.

"I was delighted to feel a pressure of her hand, and, looking at her carefully, I saw that she was one of the girls I had seen constantly in attendance on Juanita at Cartagena.

"I now made my way to the house where I had been with Trevor the day before, and found our

Irish friends bent on showing their hospitality ; and they insisted on us accompanying them to the cockpit to see a main fought, the Canary Islands being famous for their breed of gamecocks. Here we found a number of people assembled, as there was a match between the cocks of the priest of one of the villages and those of a merchant in the town. Officers, monks, priests, sailors, soldiers, and even Guanche peasantry (as the original inhabitants of the island are termed), were crowded round the pit, wagering all they could afford, and often more, on the success of the champions struggling in the pit.

"I took little interest in the sport, but I could not help being struck by the intense devotion to it displayed by all. The wager was to be decided by three mains, and in the first the priest's bird was defeated, and great was the joy of the town party. In the second the priest proved victorious, and now the betting and excitement became intense. For some time the struggle seemed doubtful, but at last the ecclesiastical champion struck his steel spur clean through the brain of his opponent, who instantly fell dead. The victor sprang on the body of his conquered foe and commenced a crow of triumph, but in the midst of it he too fell dead, having been mortally wounded just before delivering the stroke which gained the victory. The fat priest, his owner, did not seem to mind the death of the brave bird, but to be much more intent on

pouching the doubloons and dollars which were being paid to him by all round.

"After the bets had been settled, the priest, flushed by victory and the wine he had been drinking, challenged any one present to match another bird he had in readiness for fifty doubloons.

"A ragged-looking Guanche, wrapped in a dirty blanket, stepped forward and announced his readiness to accept the priest's offer. He was greeted with shouts of laughter and inquiries as to where he would find either a cock or fifty pesetas to wager. Utterly unmoved by the jeers of the company, he produced a dirty rag from under his blanket, and counted out the fifty doubloons, and asked that the priest would do the same. Notwithstanding his winnings, the reverend (?) gentleman had to borrow from some of his friends to make up the amount; but, as he divided with his late antagonist the reputation of being the best trainer and breeder of gamecocks on the island, he was soon accommodated.

"The new champions were soon pitted against each other, and the boasted bird of the priest proved to be the veriest craven, and, after a few preliminary spars, turned tail and fled ignominiously.

"The Guanche picked up his bird and his money, and made his way out, while the priest swore that he could only have been defeated by magic, and would lay an information at the holy office.

"This broke up the meeting, and I was able to get Trevor away from our companions and tell him of the news I had received. He said that a lady's wit was worth more than that of a dozen men in enterprises like that we were engaged upon, and he would instantly make arrangements for the thanksgiving on the occasion of the *fête*.

"I went on board again, and in a couple of hours Trevor returned, saying he had seen the clergy of the cathedral, and that they thought the proposition a most proper and laudable one, and that, in the service which was to be held, they would make arrangements for his presenting his thank-offering.

"'Now,' he said, 'what d'ye think? I shall go, and go into the church with four of the Jersey men to make our offering. I will give some money, and each of the men a big candle, and you with some dozen of the rest will come up as a guard of honour, and wait for us outside the church door. Together we shall be able to keep back any number of the Spaniards, if Donna Juanita's escape is discovered. I find that there is a special sort of box in the gallery round the centre of the church, where the ladies of the governor's family sit. Now, can you make her understand that when she sees us come into the part in the middle of the church, and lay our votive offerings at the feet of the bishop on his throne, she must pretend to be taken ill again, and get her women to assist her out of

the church. Then some one of her attendants must get into the chair instead of her, and she must make her way down to the boat, where you can, on some pretext or another, follow her at once. I have told the priest I saw that I should like to leave immediately our part of the ceremony is performed, as I believe that the saints will aid me on that night in escaping from the heretics who are watching for me outside. You bring Donna Juanita at once on board, and leave your men to keep the mole until I come down, and then we will make a push for it. Don't wait for me if we are long. I have been through so many risks, that even if Jack Spaniard does catch me, I've no doubt but I shall weather him in the long run.'

"No, my good fellow, I will not desert you ; but will not the governor discover his niece's absence from the church ?'

"Not at all ; he has to support the bishop and clergy, and after the first part of the service, during which he and all the civil and military officials have to stand behind the bishop's throne, they have to join in a procession to the high altar, and there receive Mass. No one will be able to speak to them or him for an hour after I leave.'

"I will write all this to Donna Juanita, and she will tell me how far she agrees with our arrangements.'

"It boots not to tell you all our correspondence,

but it was all arranged as Trevor had proposed ; and Juanita wrote that we should pretend to make room for her to get into her chair, and that, instead of doing so, she would slip through it, and leave inside her outer dress, which should cover one similar to that of the woman who received my letters ; and that two of her women would go down to the mole, whilst she went to the cathedral, and there be in readiness to accompany her on board.

"Trevor, for his four candles, got the largest the island afforded, of pure wax, and each was as big as a strong man could carry comfortably ; and for his own offering, which, in order to make the priests listen favourably to his arguments for leaving before High Mass had been celebrated, we made up to fifteen doubloons, he had a handsome cushion worked, on which the money was disposed. For me and the escort, he procured the ordinary wooden candles, about eight feet long, on top of which were pieces of wax candle eighteen inches in length, and he said that for keeping back a crowd the wooden parts would make most admirable weapons.

"All went well except that last night just before we landed. O'Connor and two other Irishmen came on board suddenly, and came straight down into the cabin, where Trevor and I were making our final arrangements, and where Sam Moxon was speaking to us.

"No sooner did they hear us speaking English to him, than they said, 'Here's some treachery!' and tried to get on deck to give the alarm to the boat that had brought them off. We managed to prevent this, and secured them, and sent the boat to the shore, telling its crew that the Irish gentlemen would accompany us. We saw that we should have to deal promptly with our uninvited guests, so we told them that, 'as they had come without being asked, they could not be permitted to leave without our permission, and, in the mean time, we were under the unpleasant necessity of borrowing their clothes for a time.'

"In these we rigged up three of our men, and they joined in our procession, as if the Irishmen were accompanying us out of friendship.

"We landed safely, Trevor walking in the middle, supported by the four men carrying the candles that were to be given to the church, and I and the other men marched in a line on either side of them, with our candles burning; whilst in front, a priest and half a dozen choristers led the way, chanting a *Te Deum*. At the church doors I halted my men and drew on one side, while Trevor and his four went inside. Soon after our arrival, the sedan chair of Juanita, borne by eight negroes in gorgeous liveries, and followed by women and pages arrived; and I could see her get out, and that in her hand she carried a red and

white bouquet, which was the signal that we had agreed on that so far all had gone well.

"Soon after the governor and all his staff in glittering uniforms entered the cathedral, and his escort of soldiers filed in after him, so that we were left almost alone outside. A few of the peasantry and poorer people only were left in the streets, as at all the churches Mass was to be celebrated at the same moment; and all the troops, the crews of the gunboats, and some of the men from the frigate had to be present at one or other of these celebrations, which were in honour of the foundation of the colony.

"For some time we waited patiently, and could hear the pealing of the organ and the voices of the choristers, when suddenly a small door was opened, and some ladies came out, supporting one who seemed to be fainting.

"‘Call the Donna Juanita’s chair,’ said one of them; and I instantly ran to where it was standing, ordered the slaves to bring it up, and opened the door myself and assisted in placing Juanita in it.

"She pressed my hand, and then one of her women managed somehow to help her to slip off her dress, whilst I and my men kept off those who were pressing round. In less time than I can tell you she was out of the chair again, leaving this woman inside, and I ordered the slaves to carry their mistress home. Juanita herself, accompanied

by me and two of my men, now sped away towards the mole, which we reached safely ; but as I was placing her in the boat, some of the guard began to interfere, and one of them recognized her and gave the alarm. I drew my sword and kept back the men from the boat, and in a few moments, though none too soon, I was joined by Trevor and the rest of our men. Soldiers and sailors from the neighbouring churches were flocking to the spot, and we had to ply our wooden candles lustily to keep them back whilst we embarked, and at last only Trevor and I were left on the quay, when, telling our men to shove off and pull, we kept the foremost Spaniards off till the boat was twenty yards away, and then, springing into the water, gained her by swimming. Of what has happened since you know as much as I do ; but if O'Connor and his friends have not escaped, we must arrange some means for sending them back."

"All right, my dear George. But now, when are you to be married?"

"Married!" replied Dormer. "Why, I never thought of it. When we get to some civilized place, I suppose."

I told him of Black Jack's capture of the padre, at which he laughed very much, and said that he would see Donna Juanita about it at once.

"She's ready enough, I'm sure," I answered ; "but I think first you had better see the padre and get

him to consent to perform the ceremony, because you can't be sure of that yet."

"Very well. Where is he?"

"I hardly know; but we can soon have him up."

The prisoner was accordingly brought on the poop, and for some time his temper got the better of his discretion, for he devoted us to all the pains and penalties imaginable, and said that we would, being under the anathema of the Church, be unfortunate in all we undertook; and that when we were taken, as it was certain we should be, we would all be handed over to the holy office, and burnt for the crimes of heresy and sacrilege.

"Threatened men live long," said George. "Now, Senhor Padre, I will make you an offer. You retract your curses and marry me to a lady that is on board, and you shall receive twenty doubloons."

The poor padre, who, to judge from his figure and appearance, had never seen such a sum, at first said that we were adding to our sin and condemnation by attempting to bribe him; but, when he saw the heavy pieces of gold counted out, began to waver, and at last, after a little bargaining, consented to do what we wished for twenty-five. "Only," said he, "you must take me with you, for I dare never return to Las Palmas again."

"Certainly," said George. "You shall be my wife's private chaplain, if you like."

This being settled, George went down to speak

to the Donna Juanita, and I, running close to the *Saint Pierre*, hailed Trevor to know if he had the Irishmen on board.

"Yes, sir," he answered ; "and they are as happy as possible down below, with a bowl of punch and a pack of cards, and say if they had only known there had been a lady in the case they would never have attempted to spoil sport."

"Well, tell them we shall take the first opportunity of sending them back ; and as we are far enough to windward, we will run to the southward until we are in the latitude of Cape St. Mary, and then we will haul into the Gambia to refit, as both of us need an overhaul after these two actions."

The two craft were soon running with the wind on their beam, and George, coming up from the cabin, where I thought he had been an unconscionably long time, told me that he had arranged for the marriage to take place the next morning.

Accordingly, the next day Don Sebastian, as the padre was called, performed the ceremony at a temporary altar erected for that purpose in the great cabin. This much pleased the lady, but George said even though they were married, he was determined to be spliced in a proper seamanlike manner, whenever he came across a properly commissioned Church of England parson. He now began to think how he could get back to England for the object of his voyage was completed.

"I can't ask you to give up your voyage," he said to me, "and as for the *Saint Pierre*, though she's a wholesome enough little craft, there is no place for a lady on board her."

"Trust to your luck, my dear fellow. We may find a ship homeward bound at the Gambia, and if you put some of your men and guns on board from the *Saint Pierre*, any ship trading to the African coast would be strong enough to beat off any enemy's vessel smaller than a frigate; and even if we don't find one there, we shall soon after."

"Yes, that is very well. You who have been in the Guinea trade do not care for fevers and all the illnesses that are on the African coast; but to have brought my wife away from her family and friends to die on board a ship, would be a sorry thing for me to think of for the rest of my life."

"Don't be down-hearted, man. I am sure Mrs. Dormer does not think like you. She is as brave as she is beautiful, and I'll warrant that she would keep her heart and spirits up even if we had illness on board; but you are sure to be able to get a ship home from the Gambia."

CHAPTER XV.

HAVING run our latitude down, we beat in toward and soon made Cape St. Mary, and then, keeping our lead going, we worked into the anchorage, where we found no fewer than four ships, three being traders, of which two were homeward bound, and the fourth his Majesty's forty-gun frigate *Thetis*.

We brought to these the first news of war having been declared between England and France, and the captain of the *Thetis*, who was under orders for Gibraltar, offered the homeward-bound ships a convoy as far as that place, where they could fall in with one of the convoys that constantly kept passing that place on their way to and from the Levant.

"Now, George," I said, as we anchored close under the stern of the *Thetis*, "you will have a ship to take you home, and a man-of-war of that size is sure to have a chaplain on board, and you shall be spliced as well as married at once."

As soon as our cable was secured and sails

furled, we lowered our boat and pulled on board the *Thetis*, where, on stepping on the quarter-deck, George was welcomed by the Honourable Thomas Beaufoy, an old shipmate and companion of his in Anson's celebrated voyage.

"Why, George, old ship, what are you doing here?" he said.

"It's a long story, but first, have you a chaplain on board?"

"A chaplain? yes. But what the deuce do you want with a chaplain?"

"I want him to marry me."

"Marry you! What, have you come to the Gambia to be married to one of the dusky and greasy maidens that we see lading the ships, while their lords and masters lie under the trees, smoking and gambling."

"No nonsense. Come on board the *Black Prince*, and you shall see my wife."

"Your wife. You've got a wife, and you want to be married again? Why, you are as bad as the Grand Turk or a three-tailed Bashaw."

"Do cease from your raillery. Let me tell you how it is I'm only half married."

"Half married! Half witted, I think. Pray sir"—to me—"can you explain what he means?"

I had been laughing at the play of words, and said, "Yes, sir. Strange as it is, all he has said is true;" and then I explained as shortly as possible

what had happened, and Captain Beaufoy was much amused at the story, though he said that he hoped for all our sakes that war between Spain and England would soon be declared, or else such serious complaints would be addressed by the Spaniard to the Court of St. James, "that inquiries will be made, and somehow or another they may find out who you are. You see, the name of your prize, the *Saint Pierre*, is known at Las Palmas, and that may lead to your identification; and, friend George, you may be sure that Don Luis da Sotomayor, Grandee of the first class, and all the rest of it, will know that his niece has gone off with that 'heretical English sailor she was so fond of.'"

"I hope you won't say anything about it."

"No, but I should advise you to get rid of your *chasse-marée* in some way, and that you and your bride should, when you get to England, keep out of the way till this has blown over, unless war is declared with Spain, in which case you will be a hero."

"Yes, I think I'll burn the *chasse-marée*, and Hawkins, I'm sure, will take the crew on board, and as for such as he does not want and her guns, I can let these other ships have."

"All right; but now I'm dying to see Mrs. half Dormer. How do you call her?"

"No more nonsense, prithee, Beaufoy. Will you send for your parson and tell him of the case?"

"Certainly."

And the Reverend Simon Jones was sent for, and told that the next morning he was to go on board the *Black Prince* to marry two persons.

He asked whether it would not be better that the marriage should take place on board the frigate, as her log was an official document and would be preserved, and the entry of the performance of the ceremony in it would always be a proof that the marriage had actually taken place, if for any reason such a proof should be required.

"You have reason, sir," said George Dormer, "and at ten of the clock, if it will suit, the lady and myself will repair on board here."

This having been arranged, George Dormer went to the larger of the two homeward-bound merchant ships, the *Indian Queen*, to see if he could engage a passage for himself and his wife, at all events, as far as Gibraltar, whilst I turned my attention to the refitting of the *Black Prince*, and soon had all our upper spars on deck, and the temporary fishes we had put on the lower masts after our fight with the corsair taken off, in order that they might be properly and substantially repaired. Tom Merrick said, as there was apparently nothing for him to do, that he would go on shore to the factory of the African Company, and see if there was any chance of doing some trade.

Whilst some of our men turned their attention

to our rigging and spars, others under our carpenter looked to the hull, and I was sorry to hear that, though the patches we had put on the shot-holes had so far prevented us from leaking that two hours a day at the pump would keep the ship free, still the damage was such that it could not be properly made good unless the ship were either beached or hove down, and that if we met with foul weather and laboured heavily while in our present condition, it was more than probable that we should leak badly.

With my wounded lower masts, heaving down was out of the question, and beaching on the Gambia mud would, in my opinion and that of McAllister, be certain to be followed by an epidemic of fever among the crew.

This to my mind was almost worse than the chance of our meeting with bad weather, and I was sorely puzzled to know what to do. In the evening, Captain Beaufoy came on board to dine, and Donna Juanita, or rather, as I must now call her, Mrs. Dormer, did the honours of the table, and enchanted him by her beauty, so that he said, if he had been fortunate enough to be loved by her he would have risked half a dozen wars, and congratulated George most heartily on being the fortunate possessor of so rare and beautiful a woman.

After dinner we left Dormer and his wife alone

and Captain Beaufoy, Merrick, and myself had some conversation on the poop, in which I spoke about the repairs we required to our hull.

"Why," said Captain Beaufoy, "just before coming here I looked into Sierra Leone, and there are two or three coves most admirably adapted for your purpose, where you can beach your ship on good sound ground; and on the sides of one there are some large houses, built by the marauding gentry at some time or another, and which are still in very good repair, where you might house your men comfortably; and the entrance to that cove—'tis the first after you pass the point—is defended by a couple of good block-houses, in the which, if you are likely to be some time there, you may mount some of your ship's guns, and the settlers always keep a look-out on the hills for the approach of any strange sail. You can get good water there; and, though there are few supplies immediately in the neighbourhood, at Porto Lokko, where a large river falls into the sea, you will find people who are eager for trade, and from whom you can obtain cattle. You can easily send your tender up there while you are repairing your own ship, and afterwards you can make away with the *chasse-marée* as you like."

"That certainly is not bad news, and I will get down there as soon as possible. But when do you sail?"

"I can't say exactly; in about two or three days. The *Indian Queen* and the *Monarch* are waiting for some boats to come down from the wharves up stream, and I have heard that there are some Mandingoes, or some such tribe, coming in to-morrow, and they bring down with them a considerable amount of gold."

"Do they?" said Merrick. "I wonder if they will trade with us?"

"You will have to be careful if you do, for the people at the factory, through their charter, have the right of trade here, and all the three vessels now in the river have been consigned to them; but I should not wonder, if you paid them something on your trade, you may be permitted to try your hand."

"I will have a try, then, to-morrow morning, and see if the factor can be induced to allow me to trade here. But meanwhile, Captain Beaufoy, can you tell me what sort of a place Sierra Leone is?"

"Place? it's scarce a place at all. There are some forty white men there, and three or four times as many mulattoes, and all are engaged in the slave-trade, and are not at all averse, if all that is said is true, to indulging in a little piracy, if a good opportunity offers. Indeed, some of the people were companions of Roberts, the pirate, when he drove out the African Company's people

in 1730, and now there is no really settled head of the Europeans there."

As he was telling us this, a message was brought me that Ralph Trevor was on board, and wished to see me. I sent down for him to come up on the poop, and when he came he said, "I beg pardon of you and your company, sir, but I have come to ask you if it be true as I hear that the *chasse-marée* is to be abandoned or destroyed?"

"Why, how did you hear that? Certainly we have thought of it. Captain Dormer is going home in the *Indian Queen* with his wife, and he intends putting some of your guns on board her, and then any of the men that chose can come on board this ship."

"Well, your honour, I know it's small use attempting to see Captain Dormer to-night, but I want to beg the life of the *Saint Pierre*, and I can show you, gentlemen, how it would be useful. With a craft like that, I could go back to my old business of running across the Channel on dark nights, and whilst before I carried letters between the Jacobites at home and abroad, now I can bring news for the English Government from the Continent, and I shall never be suspected by the Frenchmen. I know every smuggler from the Start to the North Foreland—ay, and up to Gravesend and to Harwich, if need be. The only thing is, that I must not be suspected by them."

"What! Do you want to get back to your old haunts?"

"Not so, sir. But the *chasse-marée* is well fitted for a run across the Channel, and out here she is not the most comfortable of vessels, nor can she carry a cargo across to the Indies. She would reach Antigua or Jamaica safely enough, but she can only carry water for her own crew for a long voyage."

"Well, there is truth in what you say. What is your idea?"

"Why, sir, let me run home with a cargo for Captain Dormer's uncle, the city knight, and he is at one end of the continental trade, and I know who are at the other, and there shall nothing happen in France that he shan't have knowledge of."

"Well, to settle this I must see Captain Dormer, and Mr. Merrick will have to provide you with a cargo. I will think over the matter, but I had trusted to fill up my vacancies from your men. There were eight men lost in the action with the *Golden Lion*, and there are some ten wounded and sick, whom I am going to take this opportunity of sending home, as the surgeon do not think that they are likely to recover for a long time."

"I don't want many hands, sir. If you give me a paper, I can pass for a Frenchman or an Englishman, as I like, and shan't have any fighting. Ten hands will be enough for me."

"That will do. I will see what we can do for you."

"Thank you, sir; and you will find some day that Ralph Trevor can be grateful, if you trust him." And then he bade us "Good night."

"Who is that? He makes a pretty good request, to be given a vessel and a cargo which there is nothing to prevent him running into a French port and selling."

"Yes, and though our first meeting was owing to his being a highwayman, and my friend Tom Merrick and myself have been in prison on his account, I do not know a man who I would sooner trust."

"A highwayman? Why, just now, which was daring before me, he said, or as good as said, he was a smuggler."

"Well, he has been that too, but he is a Jacobite, and Dormer, who has seen much more of him on board the *chasse-marée*, is very fond of him, and declares him to be a thorough gentleman, and if it is only a question of his purse-strings, we shall soon see Trevor have all he now asks for."

"Well, it's a curious thing. Here he is, a Jacobite, and he has those Irish gentlemen aboard, mayn't they conspire with the French part of his crew."

"No, there's no danger of that. I will send for Dormer, and ask him what he wants to arrange for to-morrow, and also to tell him of Trevor's request."

When George came up, he said that Donna—no; I mean Mrs. Dormer would go on board the *Thetis* next morning at ten o'clock, and he hoped I would accompany her, and take upon myself the duty of giving her away, whilst Merrick could be his groomsman, and the women attendants of the lady could act as bridesmaids. As for the *Saint Pierre*, he said he didn't care much, but he would do anything to give Trevor pleasure, and that he was certain that he would hold to his plighted word.

Next morning we all went on board the *Thetis*, and the marriage was duly solemnized; and after the due entries had been made in the log-book, there was an entertainment on board the *Black Prince*, to which Captain Beaufoy, his chaplain, and officers were asked, and also the captains of the other ships present, and Dormer and his wife insisted upon Trevor sitting down with us, which at first he was loth to do.

After the more solid portion of our fare had been disposed of, we pledged the bride and bridegroom in brimming beakers, and wished them happiness, long life, and prosperity. George Dormer thanked us all, and said that, as he had gained his bride in the commencement of the voyage he hoped that before the end I should be joined to one whom he would not name, and wound up my saying that he, as a token of the appreciation

he had for the services Trevor had rendered him, gave him the *Saint Pierre* to do what he wished with; and to the men of the *Black Prince* he gave up all his share of prize-money, and a thousand guineas to be divided as they themselves should arrange.

"Faith!" said Captain Beaufoy. "George, you were always something of a magnifico, but you seem inclined to out-do every one in generosity."

The entertainment after this broke up, and we carried on our refit aloft with all diligence, whilst Merrick and I made arrangements with the factor of the African Company to buy a cargo for the *Saint Pierre*, and also, as some of our stuffs happened to be in much demand, and of a kind of which there were none in his stores, we were able to buy a good quantity of gold from some black Moors who came from a distance in the interior, mounted on shaggy little ponies, and accompanied by a number of slaves.

In three days all the arrangements were made, and the *Thetis*, accompanied by the *Monarch* and *Indian Queen*, sailed for Gibraltar, Dormer and his bride being cheered to the echo as they were seen standing on the poop of the last, as she passed us on her way out. Trevor said he would not leave at the same time, but would rather accompany us to Sierra Leone, where he might prove of use, and thence make his voyage to England alone.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR own passage to Sierra Leone was quick and uneventful, and on arriving there, we found the cove that Captain Beaufoy had told us of was admirably adapted for the purpose of beaching the ship. After we had communicated with the settlers, and obtained their permission to repair our ship, we hauled into it and cleared our holds out, putting our goods and stores into the sheds on shore, which, I was happy to find, were protected by a stout barricade, as the Europeans I found at the town certainly did not by their appearance belie the description I had received of them, and I made careful arrangements to prevent any surprises by night, and gave charge of our guards to Merrick, whilst Trevor anchored the *Saint Pierre* at the entrance to the cove, so as to keep a watch against any attempts from that side.

But while taking every precaution against the predatory instincts of the Sierra Leonites, we found it necessary to be on the best of terms with them,

as they had among their numbers some skilled shipwrights, who were willing to come and work at the repairs of the *Black Prince*, and we also were able to obtain about a hundred slaves in very good condition for a most moderate price.

The principal man in the place, who had been elected to the headship over them by his fellows, was an old weather-beaten Scot, of whose antecedents nothing was certainly known before he arrived there some twelve years previously, in a small boat with two negroes, who with himself, he said, were the sole survivors of the crew and cargo of a slaver which he had commanded, and which had been capsized in a tornado, and foundered in a few moments.

He soon showed himself able to use both hands and head, and had now a large amount of property, and had built himself some small schooners, in which he used to collect slaves to fill his barracoons, and two years before our arrival had been unanimously declared by his fellows the most fit and proper man to rule over them. McCullum, as he called himself, referred many disputes to the duello, and in consequence, as he never, when once he had given an order for an engagement to take place, permitted the encounter to be evaded, there was more semblance of order among his subjects than in many a civilized town. The mulattoes, however, were tyrannized over by the

whites, and they in their turn exercised every kind of cruelty over those of the blacks who were unfortunate enough to fall into their hands.

I had to see McCullum constantly, as I had employed many of his men whom he had taught shipbuilding, and one day he told me he would show me his barracoons.

"Why," I said, "I see them every day when I come to your house."

"Hoot, mon, dinna ye ken that whiles we hae the deils o' neagurs roun' us as thick as bummle-bees, an' nae pairson could live there, na, na, mon, we maun mak tent to save our chattels;" and he took me down into large cellars dug out in the hill, where he assured me he could, if necessity arose stow away three thousand slaves, and these and some other similar ones were now considered the property of the community, and it was to protect them that the forts which I saw in progress were being built.

I asked him if there was now much difficulty with the natives round about, and he said that since his councils had prevailed they had become friendly enough, but, with a grim smile, he said, "I had to be unco' shairp wie the feckless creaturs." And some time after, as I was strolling round the settlement, I found that he had been indeed "unco' shairp," for I suddenly came upon a sort of cleared line in the bush, and hanging on a tree I saw

the remains of a native's corpse, and, looking along to the right and left, I saw that, as far as I could see, at every ten or fifteen yards there was a man hanging. I was afterwards told that a raid of the natives, soon after McCullum had assumed the reins of government, had been nearly successful, and the Europeans were so closely surrounded in what was then their fort that, being able to obtain no supplies they were about to surrender through famine, when McCullum proposed the following desperate stratagem, which was completely successful: they threw open their gates and allowed the natives to enter, but when about two hundred were inside the gates were closed, and those that had pressed forward, in the hope of booty and plunder, found themselves in a trap, and were all slaughtered or made prisoners. Some of the prisoners were chiefs, and were held as hostages, whilst agreements were made with the rest of the besiegers to retire.

After the siege was raised, the prisoners were forced to cut this line, and then, except those whose lives had been promised, they were hung along it, and a message sent to their countrymen to say that any of them that crossed it without permission would be added to the number of those hanging there, and that a great fetish had been made to prevent their ever being successful if they came across in numbers. Since that time every native who had been discovered inside the line without

permission had been summarily hung, and the trade in slaves, which was the only one the inhabitants of Sierra Leone engaged in in those days, was carried on without interruption.

Our repairs were pushed on with all despatch, and on the seventh day after we had beached, we were able to haul off the *Black Prince* to our anchors, for which I was not at all sorry, as several of my crew had begun to show symptoms of fever, and I was afraid of losing many of them if they had to continue sleeping on shore.

We at once commenced to embark our cargo, and by sunset had a considerable portion on board, so that I had to divide the crew, leaving some men on shore to watch the goods there under Tom Merrick, and taking some on board to watch the ship.

At two bells in the middle watch I was awoken by a rattle of musketry from the *Saint Pierre* and the blockhouses, and, calling the men to arms, I ran on deck, to find that we were assailed by about forty canoes of "Timanis," or "Timmis," who came on yelling and screaming, and tried to carry the ship by boarding. As in the darkness it was hard to distinguish foe from friend, I lighted the fires under two pitch-kettles, in which was pitch and tar with which we intended in the morning to black the bends.

I could soon see that the object of our assailants

was more plunder than slaughter, and although they cut some of the rigging, we were able to drive them out of the ship after half an hour's or more hard fighting; but, though we had been opposing them by force all this time, some had managed to get below and open bales of goods, and these fellows we had to hunt up from all the holes and corners, and some we secured, but others tried to jump overboard with their plunder. The pitch and tar, by this being hot, we found most effective in dislodging these fellows from some of the nooks and crannies in which they bestowed themselves, and whence a man could not haul them out without danger of being wounded, whereas a few drops of hot tar or pitch was as effectual in bolting them as ever a terrier was in bolting a fox.

Among our prisoners was the brother of the Chief of Porto Lokko, and him we took in the morning before McCullum to see what we should do with him.

On shore Merrick had been as successful or more so than we were; for, aroused by the firing from the *Saint Pierre*, he had been able to man his palisades before any of the black thieves were able to gain an entrance, and he kept them all, with the exception of two, who were killed immediately they got inside, from scaling his defences. It was to Trevor, however, that the real credit of the repulse of our assailants was due, for he was him-

self on deck seeing that a vigilant look-out was kept, as before sunset he had noticed a lot of canoes coming down from the Rokelle, and as they did not come right down to the settlement, nor yet steer for the Bissagos or Isles do Los, he suspected that they meant some treachery, but as all the *Black Prince's* men had had a heavy day's work, he did not think it well to hinder them from their rest by making his suspicions known.

We found McCullum holding a court or council when we came into his house. He himself was seated on a chair on the end of the room, with a small table before him, on which were pipes and tumblers; and his colleagues were mostly similarly accommodated, whilst in the middle of the room a cask of rum had been set abroad.

"Eh! sairs," said McCullum as we entered, "talkin' is unco' drouthy work. See just tak a tumbler of toddy, and then we will speir intil the saircumstances of the past nicht."

We soon found places, and little negro boys brought us pipes, rum, water, and limes, and when we had prepared our refreshment we were allowed to speak.

I briefly narrated what had occurred, and asked that the chief might be made to pay for his treacherous attempt on us.

McCullum and his counsellors, after much rum and discussion, imposed a fine on the chief of a

hundred slaves for us, and two hundred for his having attacked a friend of the settlement, and which were to be divided among McCullum and his friends. Our hundred slaves, McCullum said, we should have to wait long for, so he said he would give us fifty at once for them.

I felt inclined to dispute this monstrous offer, but both McAllister and Merrick urged me to accept it, as we should be sure to have serious illness among our crew if we remained; so I told the old sinner that I hoped he would send the slaves on board the next day, as I wished to sail as soon as possible.

"Dinna fast, young mon. I dinna care to feed another body's cattle, but ye are a decent lad, and I will e'en gie ye some news. I hae received information that there's a muckle French slaver off Cape Mount, and she has a wheen blacks aboard. Gin ye could find him, ye need no pay for a cargo. He was ower muckle for my wee boaties to tackle, and sae I will just present him to you, and I'll tak tent he no hears that ye are looking for him."

I thanked McCullum for this information; but he said, "I hae been pondering on how muckle ye should pay for your information, and hae concluded that twenty-five slaves is a fair price; and, sae that shall be nae ill-feelin' between the twa of us I will send ye the quarter of a hoondred the morn."

I saw it was no use making any resistance to

his extortion, and accepted this, but determined I would if I could serve him a trick in the payment for the repairs.

We restowed our holds, and now, having to arrange our 'tween decks for the reception of the slaves we were to receive, and that we hoped to capture, we had to do so with great care.

Early in the morning we bent sails and hauled out into the fairway, ready to go to sea as soon as the sea-breeze made, and looked out anxiously for the slaves that McCullum had promised to send us ; but instead of the slaves, we saw the old man coming off himself, and when he got on board he said, " Eh ! my braw lad, ye ha' no sent the siller to pay for my carpenters."

" Why," I replied, " I have it all ready for you, and intended to send it by the boats that brought the slaves on board."

" Na, mon, ye will na pay Andrew McCullum wi' the fore-taupsle. Ye can gie me the siller, an' I will ha' the slaves aboard of ye immediately."

I asked him down in the cabin and paid him the money, and then leaving Merrick to entertain him with Jamaica rum and Virginia tobacco, I went on deck and shortened in cable, and loosed sails, sheeting the top-sails home, but leaving them on the caps to wait for the slaves.

All being ready, and the sea-breeze commencing to blow, and no signs of the slaves to be seen, I

went to McCullum and said, "Now, sir, I must be off."

"Aweel, sir, but I'm sair fashed the slaves ha' na come aboard yet. Gin ye can wait a couple of hours, I will ga ashore an' mak' them bustle."

"Oh no, never mind now; I think you will do as well. You can act as pilot for us down to Cape Mount. I dare say if you want any clothes we can manage to supply you on board."

"Hoot awa, my birkie; ye dinna mean to say ye'd carry Sandy McCullum away from Sierra Leone?"

"I do, indeed, unless we have those twenty-five slaves in half an hour, or you return the money I have paid you for your shipwrights' work."

"Na, na, ye will na carry me off, I'll no credit it; and gin there were other ships ye could na do it."

"Well, Mr. McCullum, I have no wish to take you away, but you said I should have twenty-five slaves to-day, and they have not come. I must have them or the money."

"Siller is siller, and I will na gie ye a bawbee?"

"Very well, I see you intend to try and rob me; I will give you half an hour to consider, and then if you do not pay me the price of the slaves I shall get under way."

"Aweel, aweel, I will send a bit letter ashore, and ye shall have the slaves in ae hour."

McCullum, much to his disgust, wrote the note, and gave it to his boatmen to take ashore, and then applied himself to the rum bottle with renewed vigour. Trevor, who was on board to bid me good-bye, told me I had better beware, or instead of slaves, the traders might send off some men to try and carry the ship. And though I did not believe they would be bold enough to do this, I thought it as well to take precautions, and had all the boarding nettings triced up, and the great guns and small arms loaded.

As the hour wore away, and I could see no boat coming, I was thinking that McCullum's friends ashore would not send the slaves ; but just before it was up I saw two large boats coming off under sail.

Trevor said, "I am sure there are more than the slaves there ; one of those boats could carry eighty or a hundred. I will say good-bye to you and Mr. Merrick, and get the *Saint Pierre* under way ; I shall be able to help you then ; and mind you do not let more than a few men on board, and that those they say are slaves have passed down below at once. Now I will thank you for having given me a chance to become an honest man again, and when you return to England with your bride—as I hope you will—I trust that you will find me in the position I once held."

"Many thanks for your good wishes—you have

mine ;" and wringing Merrick's and my hands, Trevor left us for the *Saint Pierre*, amid the cheers of our men, with whom he was an universal favourite.

I now sent down to McCullum, and asked him to come on deck, as the boats were close to ; and when he came up on the poop and saw our boarding nettings triced up, asked if we were afraid of another attack from the natives. I said no, but that his dealings with us had not been fair and above board, and that I thought it was as well to take precautions against any surprise ; and " Now," said I, " you will just tell those boats to put all the slaves into one of them, and pull her alongside, as if they both attempt to run alongside at once, I will fire into them."

" Ye're a canny lad," said McCullum, " and I will na' deny that I had some thoughts that your ship wad prove advantageous to the colony, but I will e'en do as you wish."

The boats, on his hailing them, lowered their sails, and it proved that Trevor's suspicions were correct, as there were no slaves in them, but they were crowded with armed men.

I said to McCullum that he deserved to be chucked overboard, but that, as he had been of assistance to us, I would give him the opportunity of repaying us the money I had given him, and then would let one of his boats come alongside to

take him away, but not one of his men would I permit to put his foot on our decks.

"Aweel, aweel, I must e'en do as ye wish ; but gin ye ha' the bawbees ye can gie me a keg of rum, and a wheen tobacco."

I could not help laughing, and as soon as he had paid over the money I allowed the boat alongside, and passed the rum and tobacco down into her, and told McCullum he could follow as soon as he wished.

The old fellow, who was pretty well in his cups, said, "I will e'en say farewell, and next time ye come to Sierra Leone, I will hae some braw niggers for ye, for ye're a douce lad."

Merrick and I both laughed, and said good-bye to him ; and then giving the orders to masthead the topsails and weigh the anchor, we were soon following the *Saint Pierre* out to sea.

As soon as we had made an offing, I kept away to the southward, and giving the St. Anne shoals a wide berth, I shaped my course for Cape Mount, and soon lost sight of our consort.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE made Cape Mount early one morning, and saw there a large ship lying at anchor, and on our hoisting French colours she did the same, and we were able to approach close to her without exciting any suspicion. When we were within fifty yards, I triced up my ports and ran my guns out, hoisted the English colours, and hailed her to strike.

Putting my helm down, I shot the *Black Prince* alongside the stranger, and whilst some of our men lashed our fore to her main rigging, the rest poured on board, and in almost less time than it takes to relate we had driven the French crew, who were utterly taken by surprise, down below, and we found ourselves in possession of the French ship *Foudre*, of four hundred and fifty tons, and fourteen guns, with a cargo of slaves on board, they having only completed shipping them that morning.

On securing the crew, I found that the captain and a portion of the crew were on shore, or, as the mate (Guillaume Perroquet) took care to inform us,

we should have had more difficulty in making her our own. He had no knowledge of the war between England and France, and wept copiously over his ill luck. I did not wait for many explanations from him, but bundled him and his men into their boats, and giving Trenal charge of the prize, I had the two ships under way and standing away from the anchorage within half an hour of our boarding the Frenchman, and we had been fortunate enough in this brief affair not to have had a single man hurt.

"Well, Tom," I said to Merrick, "this prize makes up for our barren victory over the Algerine ; but now I wonder if the Frenchman has sufficient water and provisions to make the passage to the West Indies, because if she has I think we had better let her make at once for Antigua, where, when we have filled up with slaves, we will follow her ; but I think first we had better anchor some way down the coast and thoroughly overhaul her and her cargo."

"Certainly," said Tom. "I wonder at the Frenchmen being so careless. From what you have told me of the Guinea trade, as well as what I have heard from others, I should have thought no ship would have allowed another to approach her without being prepared for action."

"Why, yes ; but you see the French are never so careful as we are, and we may put down this

capture more to our good fortune than to good management. The men must be pleased with this ship and the *Saint Pierre*, as well as Dormer's present to them; they have made more than they would in three or four ordinary voyages."

The next place off which we anchored was Grand Cess, and here, on examining our prize carefully, we found that she had three hundred and seventy slaves on board, and Trenal, who had overhauled her cargo and papers, was able to tell us that there was much of her trade goods still on board, as she had not paid the dealers on shore, for her slaves, but that she was short both of water and provisions.

At Grand Cess we got a few good slaves, and from there made our way along the coast, meeting a few Bristol men, to whom we gave notice of the war, and at last anchored off Behin, in Apollonia, where there was an English fort, and where the Chief Quacco Blay had a large number of slaves for sale.

Before we could deal with the chief, however, we had to take what slaves the English factor had in the fort, and then to pay him ten per cent. commission on all our dealings with the chief. But even with this drawback the price of slaves was so reduced by the fear that the war with France would interfere with the trade, that we were able to drive a most profitable bargain.

The factor in charge of the fort, James Collins,

as soon as we anchored sent off his surf-boat to ask the captains and super-cargoes of the ships to come ashore and take up our quarters with him ; and when Merrick and I landed, in compliance with his invitation, lodged us in large and airy rooms in a house built on the top of the fort, where he and his two assistants lived with their native wives and families in country fashion. Native clerks and servants, sufficient to man the guns under the direction of ten English soldiers, had quarters in the fort, but they had also houses for their families outside. One could not but be astonished at the amount of comfort that the factor had managed to secure around him, and at the good table that he kept.

I had found from Trenal before coming on shore that he could still manage to put some forty more slaves on board the *Foudre*, and after paying for these, there was still a considerable amount of valuable cargo left on board her, which we disposed of for other slaves for the *Black Prince*, and had in this way the good fortune to secure more than half her number before we touched our own stores.

Amongst the articles on board the *Foudre* were several cases of choice liquors, wines, and preserved provisions, which Mr. Collins was glad to secure for his own use, and for which he paid us well in gold-dust and ivory. A few, however, I reserved for a present for King Blay, who, as one of the principal

chiefs in this part of Africa, required a heavy dash before he would consent to open business, and his secretaries and other hangers-on had also to be gratified according to their position and influence.

With Mr. Collins our business was easily concluded, but that with the chief was more tedious, as first we had to have several palavers as to our terms, and then the slaves he proposed to supply us with had to be collected in lots varying from two or three or a dozen from the different villages under his rule.

The first day after our arrival the king sent his messengers to say that he hoped the next day to come and pay us a visit ; and sent me a present of a bullock, six goats, twenty-four fowls, and ten ducks, and a quantity of yams and sweet potatoes. In return, I sent him six gallons of rum, four demijohns of Geneva, and a case of cordial waters.

In the morning Mr. Collins had the biggest room in the fort prepared for his reception, and all the garrison of the fort dressed in their best, while Merrick and I had ten of our finest seamen, headed by Jago and Cundy, on shore to support our dignity, armed with fusils and cutlasses.

At ten o'clock a messenger arrived to say that the king was coming, and Mr. Collins, according to the etiquette on these occasions, closed the gates, and sent all the men to their stations on the walls

as if we were preparing to resist the attack of an enemy rather than to welcome a friend.

We could hear the sound of drums and native music, and soon, from the fence surrounding the chief's houses, we saw the procession coming towards us. At the head marched men beating drums, round which were hung the skulls of enemies slain in battle; and following them, two and two, were forty men armed with muskets, who formed part of King (or more properly Ehin) Blay's body-guard. Next came six men bearing six fantastically shaped swords of state, the handles of which were overlaid with thin plates of gold, sewn together with thin gold-wire.

After these came a huge red umbrella, on the top of which was Blay's crest of an elephant, and underneath this, dressed in crimson and yellow silk, with his wrists and ankles encircled with heavy rings of gold, marched an old grey-headed negro, carrying the sacred cow-tail, emblem of Ehin Blay's royalty, and to obtain or retain possession of which many bloody wars had been waged.

Next, under a silken canopy, came the monarch himself, borne on the shoulders of eight sturdy negroes in a finely worked basket, about six feet long by two wide, and lined with various coloured silks. King Blay, as he reclined on the cushions with which the basket was filled, was dressed in a scarlet gold-laced coat and waistcoat, and on his

head, which was wrapped round with an old bandana, was a three-cornered hat, elaborately decorated with gold lace and feathers, whilst his legs and the lower part of his body were covered with a handsome leopard-skin, the edges of which were fringed with golden bells.

On either side walked his councillors and favourite wives, who kept calling out his titles, or strong names. Behind the cradle of the king came some fetish-men, covered with grigris and charms, and then some more musketeers, and the procession was closed by a number of men armed with spears and shields, followed by another body of drummers.

I remarked to Mr. Collins that Ehin Blay seemed to hold great state. He replied that it was indeed so, and that he was willing to pay anything for whatever he considered added to his dignity. "Now, you see his procession ; in a few minutes you will see those of his head men, and these fellows will be walking, though they will have their hammocks or litters with them, but they only dare have four carriers, and must not be carried when in attendance on the ehin."

I looked with great interest at this procession, and admired the order and regularity with which these fellows marched and wheeled, as they formed into double line outside the gates, and let the men carrying the chief approach.

As he came near, Mr. Collins inquired who he

was and what he wanted, and the answer was, "Quacco Blay Ehin, and he comes to pay a friendly visit."

On this the gates were thrown open, and a salvo fired from the guns of the fort, and Ehin Blay, descending from his basket, entered the fort, accompanied by his treasurer (otofosanfo), his mouth or interpreter (okyami), and his obofo, or messenger, as well as by his sword-bearers, the bearer of the cowtail and fetish-men, and half a dozen boys carrying fly-flappers. Four of his wives also accompanied him, and, being received by us at the gate, the whole party was conducted to a sort of gallery above the gate, to wait for the arrival of his head men. The next to appear was the sopahin, or captain of war, and then there came five panins, or chiefs of villages. All these were accompanied by retinues similar to those of King Blay, only smaller in number and not so gorgeously caparisoned; and each, as he arrived, came and paid his respects to the king.

As soon as they were all assembled, we adjourned to the large hall, where, on a raised dais, were large armchairs covered with red velvet, for the Ehin, Mr. Collins, Tom Merrick, and myself—the chiefs, and Mr. Collins' writers, and the head men being accommodated with ordinary chairs on a step to the dais, whilst the rest of the assembly had to be content with stools on the floor.

As soon as we were all seated, all the natives began reciting King Blay's strong names or titles as loudly as they could bawl, and he answered mechanically at intervals, "Quacco Blay ! atinasu marrah" (Quacco Blay, here I am). After this had gone on for about a quarter of an hour, Mr. Collins clapped his hands, and some of his servants handed round liquors to all the assembly, but carefully discriminated the quality of the drink according to the rank of the recipient. When the drinking was finished, without which no African business can be conducted, Mr. Collins formally introduced me and Tom Merrick to his Majesty, and we made him a present, which we had prepared for this occasion, consisting of two large red velvet umbrellas, a plush coat guarded with silver lace, and half a dozen pieces of flowered silk.

This was taken charge of by some of Ehin Blay's attendants, and then the treasurer presented me with a bag of gold dust, containing two peregrains and two small nuggets, the latter being a mark of especial favour, while Merrick received a smaller bag of gold dust holding twenty ackies. The presentation of the presents and the consequent thanks having been concluded, more drink was handed round, and the meeting broke up for the day, it not being etiquette to transact any business at these ceremonial visits.

As the processions left the fort another salvo

was fired, and we had the place to ourself for some time, but about four o'clock the obofo came to the fort to say that Ehin Blay requested us to pay him a return visit the next day, and brought, as a token of his office, a large stick or cane surmounted by the king's badge of an elephant with a sword in his trunk. We, of course, accepted the invitation, and then the obofo said that Ehin Blay would come privately to see us that evening and have supper with us.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ACCORDINGLY, at a little before sunset, Ehin Blay arrived on foot, accompanied only by the okyami and obofo, and two boys with fly-flappers. The ehin alone joined us at the table, his retainers sitting on stools a little behind him, and to them he kept on handing morsels from his plate, or giving them his glass to drink out of. After supper was over, the chief told us that, besides gold, he had a good amount of ivory to sell, and that he had heard of the presence of elephants, which, in the time of his grandfather, used to be very plentiful at a short distance, away on the Bousaha river, near a village called Niba, and that the next day he was going with his fetish-men to make komfo or magic for a party of his warriors, whom he was going to send in chase of them.

"Faith, Bob," said Tom Merrick to me, "I have never seen an elephant; why should we not go with these fellows? We must be here over a week, and after our luck with the *Foudre*, the partners will never complain if we do delay a day or two."

Mr. Collins said, "I have been here on the Gold Coast for a matter of fifteen years, man and boy, and though I have strolled out at times with a birding-piece, I have never joined the blacks in their hunts after elephants, leopards, or other wild beasts, nor can I say that I have ever heard of any other Europeans doing the like, not even the Hollanders, though they have forts and factories for a long distance up the Ancobra river."

"Well," I said, "when I was in the East Indies I saw many elephants, but I have never seen any in their native wilds, and I should much like to make a short trip away from the coast."

I asked the okyami to inquire of the king if he would allow us to accompany his hunters, and see them slay the elephants.

The answer from his Majesty, who was by this time getting pretty well fuddled, was that he could give no answer until he had stirred his komfo on the following morning.

With this answer we had to be content, and the royal party shortly took their departure, Ehin Blay's basket being in waiting for him at the fort gates; and it was well that it was so, for his legs were so affected by his potations that they certainly would not have carried him unaided to his palace.

I own I felt that the drink I had imbibed had made some innovation in my brains, and I was only too glad to be able to make an excuse of

being obliged to go on board the next morning to look up a fresh present for the king, and, therefore, wishing to retire to bed at once.

Mr. Collins stoutly stood out against Merrick and me leaving him, swearing that the night was yet young, and that the real way to avoid African fevers was to take plenty of sound liquor. If practice proves faith he certainly was a believer in his maxim, for long after Tom and I were in our beds we could hear snatches of songs and shouts and toasts in the dining-hall.

In the morning at daylight we rose, and could find no one stirring for some time ; but at last we roused out one of the native clerks, who was just going to muster the slaves, and he ordered a surf-boat to be manned to take us on board, which, as the beach was good, was fortunately not a dangerous undertaking, though I could see that getting water on board would be both difficult and tedious, as the only way in which it could be done would be by anchoring a boat outside the surf and veering the empty casks ashore, and hauling them off when filled.

Trenal, we found, had made good headway with preparing for the reception of the slaves, and also in arranging the great cabin of the *Black Prince* as a trade-room. To select a present which we thought would please Ehin Blay after his display of the day before, we found more difficult than we

had expected; but, fortunately, on board the *Foudre* we found some large crates of glass and china ware, consisting of vases, candelabra, and a quantity of plates and dishes. Of these we made a selection, and added to them some large pewter flagons, which were polished up as bright as silver.

These we packed up most carefully to take on shore with us, and after telling Trenal that we were likely to be absent for some days with the hunters, but that before we went we would arrange as to the rate at which he was to pay for slaves, we returned to the shore. On regaining the fort, we found Mr. Collins waiting breakfast for us, and showing no signs of his previous night's debauch, though he owned to us that he had kept it up till after midnight.

When breakfast was finished, bearers and hammocks were in readiness to conduct us to Ehin Blay's palace, and, surrounded by our seamen and a party of men from the fort, we proceeded thither. On arriving at the gateway, we were received by the obofo and okyami, and conducted through two large courtyards to a mud or swish building about seventy feet long by forty wide, with a high pitched roof, outside which we found the ehin dressed in his fetish robes, which were sewn all over with small bells and charms, or grigris, and on either side of the doorway were two huge

earthen pots, full of all sorts of filth, which he had been compounding as komfo, or magic.

He welcomed us most warmly, and leading us into the building, which was composed of three rooms, he seated us on armchairs close by his throne, which was a very handsome carved chair that had been presented to his father some years before, on the occasion of his having stood by the English traders when they were attacked by the Hollanders from the fort at Axim, assisted by a large body of Fantis.

Our fresh presents were now shown, and Ehin Blay, who had never seen anything like them before, was much delighted, and, in addition to the regulation present of gold, he gave me and Merrick five and twenty young and lusty slaves.

After this palaver was over, we were conducted into another house, where a banquet, according to native ideas, was prepared for us.

The arrangement of the table was very curious, as gold and silver vessels of native manufacture were mixed up with coarse earthenware, also made by the natives ; but the viands were by no means to be despised. There were several sorts of soups and meats, and among the contents of the dishes were some most delicious prawns and oysters.

Ehin Blay pressed us to eat, and seemed much disappointed that our appetites were not more commensurate with his preparations than they

were. The usual amount of drinking accompanied the eating, and we were pressed to drink palm wine, schnapps, and all sorts of liquors and cordials, and it was hard indeed to resist the pressing hospitality of our host.

This breakfast, or whatever it might be called, concluded the formal part of our business with the king, and, returning to the fort, we soon began to arrange a scale for the price of slaves, and found that we should be able to buy here, without making a serious impression on our own cargo, some three hundred and twenty in all, which would fill up the *Foudre* and make more than half of what we could take on board the *Black Prince*; so I told Merrick that, as I found that these men had to be collected in small quantities, and that watering would also be a tedious business, I would even agree to go to the village of Niba with the sofahin and his men, if Ehin Blay's stirring of the komfo proved favourable to our request.

Whether it was that the augury was favourable, or that our presents had disposed the chief favourably towards us, we received a visit in the afternoon from the okyami, to say that Ehin Blay was willing that we should go to the elephant-hunt with the sofahin, whose name was Kwamina Ensa, and that the party were to start the next day.

Mr. Collins said, "Well, you may go, and, as for

the people, go safely, for Blay has never suffered an Englishman to be harmed ; but you may get fevers, fluxes, and all sorts of malignant diseases ; but if you get ill and die, do not say I did not warn you."

Tom was so bent on seeing an elephant that no warnings or persuasions would turn him from his purpose, and seeing him so determined on it, I would not put any difficulties in the way of our starting, and, sending on board for guns and ammunition, made all our preparations for an early start the next morning.

At daylight we found hammocks waiting for us, and, accompanied by Toby and six of our black crew to carry our belongings, we went to Ehin Blay's house, where we found the sofahin and a party of forty men ready to start ; but before leaving, Blay insisted on our taking a dram to keep off the ill effects of the morning air.

Our road at first led across an open grassy savannah, which showed signs of being flooded in the rainy season ; and after about an hour's march, we arrived at a large expanse of water called the Ebumesu lagoon, which ran nearly due east and west, where canoes were waiting for us outside a belt of reeds which fringed the shore. After some trouble, we were carried through the reeds and put in the canoes, the largest of which were some twenty-five feet long by two wide, whilst some

were no more than fifteen long, and hardly wide enough for a man to squat down in them. In one of the larger ones the sofahin, Merrick, and I, with two men paddling—one sitting up in the stern, and the other kneeling in the bow—we got away, leaving the rest to follow as quickly as they could, and after paddling for twenty minutes, we rounded a small headland, and saw a most extraordinary sight.

On either side of the lagoon were clearings where provisions were raised, but the village, instead of being on shore, consisted of a number of huts built on piles at some distance from the shore. The platforms on which the huts stood were some four or five feet above the water, and were large and spacious, about one-half being covered by the hut, and the rest serving as a place to cook, lounge, or sleep on, and where at night the natives plied their trade of fishermen.

To one of these huts we pulled, and, clambering up on the platform, waited for the remainder of our party to arrive, and had our breakfasts. Some fish had been caught during the night, which Toby fried for us, and proved most delicious. The sofahin also brought us some soup made of native cured fish, which is eaten with a pudding made of pounded plantains, called foofoo, and which, if it had not been for the monstrous amount of peppers which these people put in all their food, would have been

most palatable. We were also supplied with fresh palm wine, which is a pleasant, cool, and refreshing drink, and not at all intoxicating, whilst when it has been kept a few hours it becomes unpleasant to the smell and taste, and is very heady. It is in this condition that it is consumed by the natives, who value all their drinks by their potent qualities—the greatest happiness of these west-coast negroes being apparently to get drunk ; if there is a greater one, it is being able to remain in that condition.

The hut at which we took our meal was that of the chief or panin of the village, and during the whole time we were there, the inhabitants kept crowding to stare at the white men, many of them, although at so short a distance from the coast, never having seen one before ; and at times there must have been more than fifty people on the platform, and I was apprehensive whether it would not give way under such a burthen, and that we should all be precipitated into the water, but, though apparently frail, it gave no signs of yielding.

When we again took to our canoes, a number of the villagers followed, not having satisfied their curiosity while we were on the platform ; but on coming to the end of the lagoon, where we entered a small passage through the reeds, the sofahin ordered them, under pain of the displeasure of Ehin Blay, to cease from following us. We paddled for a considerable distance up this passage through

the reeds, the heat being most trying, as there was not a breath of air, and the sun was pouring its almost vertical rays on us. At last the passage widened out, and we found ourselves in the Bousaha river, up which it was said that canoes could proceed for three or four days.

The banks of the stream were lined by dense jungle, which was matted together with masses of creepers, many covered with gorgeous flowers, and here and there the tall spiky feathers of the rattan palm ran many feet into the air, relieving the heavy appearance of the forest. Among the trees we could occasionally see the glimpses of monkeys and birds of varied form and plumage keep flitting across, and flocks of parrots and touracons flying high above the trees added to the charm of the scene. After some hours' paddling we arrived at a large village, which the sofahin told us was our destination, Niba, and here we landed, and were conducted to a large, clean, and airy house built of bamboos, which, we were told, was placed entirely at our disposal.

The people here exhibited the same curiosity as those at the lake village, but we were prevented from being disagreeably incommoded by the sofahin posting men to prevent them from crowding in on us. As soon as Toby had arranged our things in the hut, the sofahin and the panin of the village came to see us, and informed us that men had

been out watching the elephants, but that they were too far distant for us to go after them from Niba ; and that the next day it would be necessary for us to proceed further up the stream to another village, called Esnati, where they had only a day or two before destroyed many of the plantations.

Tom and I made ourselves very comfortable, and in the evening we amused ourselves by a stroll round the village, and were much astonished by the general air of plenty and comfort which pervaded it, and which contrasted favourably with many English villages. Groves of plantains, palm trees, patches of corn, rice, sweet potatoes, yams, and ground nuts, provided all the necessaries of life ; and the people also owned many goats and fowls, and near almost every hut were pepper plants and patches of tobacco. Every here and there we came on signs of the belief of the people in fetish, in the shape of pots of komfo and charms, consisting of bones, skulls, and other objects ; whilst in a small hut in the centre of the village were ranged the fetish drums of the village, hung round with human skulls, whilst hanging to the roof were horns and whistles, made of small tusks of ivory and human leg-bones.

The hut was cool, and the bedplaces of bamboos and mats were by no means uncomfortable, and we enjoyed a thoroughly good night's rest, and were quite ready to start in the morning when Toby

came and told us the canoes were ready. We continued up the stream until past midday, passing several small villages on the banks of the stream, and seeing near most of them fishing-weirs and baskets of a most ingenious construction for catching prawns.

At Esnati the people were very glad to see us approach, as the elephants had been committing great depredations in their plantations, and they were most anxious to have them either driven away or killed, and had hitherto been prevented from doing either by the orders of Ehin Blay.

As soon as we landed, the sofahin sent to the panin, and told him to send men to tell all the men in the neighbouring village to assemble to receive his orders as to the dispositions for the morrow's hunt.

CHAPTER XIX.

A GOODLY number were soon mustered and despatched to various points, so as to drive the elephants towards an open glade in the forest, where the sofahin and his warriors would be lying in wait for them, and where a perch would be in one of the trees, from which Tom and I could view the sport without danger.

The hut in which we had our quarters was similar to the one at Niba, and as we should have to leave at four in the morning for our post, as the drive was to begin at daylight, we went to bed early. Toby called us soon after three, and had some hot soup ready, which we considered a better specific against the night air than a dram of Schnapp's, which the sofahin pressed on our acceptance. Four men with lighted torches of palm branches, which they kept alight by striking against the trees, led us to the place where we were to climb into the tree, and the path, which was but a mere track in the jungle, would have been bad enough in the broad light of day,

necessitated our picking our footsteps with care, and fallen trunks of trees and hanging creepers had to be carefully avoided. It was nearly sunrise when we were ensconced on the platform in the tree branches which had been contrived for us, and here we and Toby with our guns waited anxiously for the sounds of the beaters.

As soon as the first rays of the sun were seen gilding the tops of the forest, we heard the beating of a big drum, and this was the signal for others, accompanied by shouts and the braying of horns, to commence in all directions. In the open space below us we could see the sofahin moving about posting his men, but soon they had all concealed themselves, and no sign of life save an occasional bird or butterfly could be seen in the grassy glade.

We waited patiently for a long time, the noise meanwhile growing closer and closer, and at last we heard a crashing among the trees about forty yards from us. I could see the heads of the hunters as they peered anxiously from their lurking places, and the sofahin signing energetically to them not to move, and then there came out into the open a little elephant, not more than five feet high.

"Well," said Merrick, "I have heard of traveller's tales; but certainly I would never have come out here to see an elephant, if I thought it was no

bigger than that. Why, it's no taller than a good-sized horse."

"Hush!" I said; "that's only a baby. See, the hunters are none of them moving. Wait a bit, and you will see something in a moment."

At that instant we heard a shrill trumpeting, and a huge tusker, with his trunk up in the air and his ears cocked back, burst right into the middle of the open space, and was followed by four or five others, one of whom was evidently the mother of the small one we saw first.

The sofahin gave a loud yell, and, springing from his hiding-place, hurled a spear at the big elephant's hind quarters. The monster turned instantly, as if to trample his pigmy assailant under foot; but now the other warriors broke from their cover, and in a few moments the huge beast was riddled with spears and sank to the ground, expiring from pain and the loss of blood. His consorts were assailed by spears and poisoned arrows, but the only ones that succumbed to their wounds beside the large tusker were the little one that we had first seen and its mother, which fell a victim to her maternal solicitude. The others broke through the surrounding bands of beaters, but their tracks were followed up by detachments of experienced hunters, and, all having been wounded by poisoned arrows, would be found dead within a few miles.

Merrick proposed that we should follow up one of the largest, but the sofahin said the road was impassable for hammocks, and when we said we would go on foot, averred that he was responsible for our safety to Ehin Blay, and he would not allow us to go far in the jungle without carriers. While we were still disputing about this, a messenger arrived from Mr. Collins, saying that the governor of the Dutch fort, Santo Antonio at Axim, had sent his cane-bearer with a message, announcing that he was about to pay a visit to his English *confrère* at Axim, and that he hoped to be able to do trade with the two English vessels, which he heard had arrived at the latter place; and Mr. Collins urged on us to return back at once, as it was very rare that the Hollanders departed from their exclusive habit of dealing only with their own countrymen, and that their doing so in this instance proved that they must have some special reason for it, which would no doubt prove greatly to our advantage.

Tom and I instantly agreed to return without delay, and getting back to Esnati, we got our canoes and paddled quickly down the Bousaha, passing Niba and the lake village without stopping, and then again taking hammocks, we arrived at the fort soon after sunset.

Mr. Collins professed himself to be very glad to see us back again, and said he hoped we should

feel no ill effect from what he termed our hare-brained expedition. I found that during our absence the surf had been heavy, and that both watering and shipping the slaves had had to be discontinued, and I was very sorry to hear that some of the water-casks had been broken up in attempting to haul them off to the boats.

Next morning runners came in saying that the Dutch governor had slept at Esriménu, and would be with us in the course of the day.

Accordingly soon after noon we saw him and his escort, preceded by a huge Dutch flag, coming along the beach, and turned out to meet him. Following the flag were first half a dozen hammocks containing white soldiers, each of whom was attended by men carrying their muskets and necessities, then came twenty armed natives, and then in litters with handsome awnings were the Dutch factor and one of his writers, and then came a miscellaneous crowd of carriers bearing the luggage, and the whole was brought up in rear by another detachment of armed natives.

We welcomed our visitors with a salvo from the fort and ships, and then conducted Mynheer Van Stecken and his writer into the reception-room of the fort. As soon as he was seated he began about the business which had brought him to Behin. It seemed that a few days before the long boat of the ship belonging to the Dutch African Company,

which should have brought the supplies and trade goods for six months to Axim, had arrived in charge of one of her mates, and had reported that she had been lost off Grand Lahou, and that the captain and most of the crew had been massacred by the natives, and that the mate and seven men only had escaped, and, after great difficulties and hardships, had managed to reach Axim. Mynheer Van Stecken said that at Axim he was much in want of arms and powder, and also of trade goods of all kinds, and that he had a large number of slaves collected, in anticipation of the ship's arrival, which, unless he disposed of them, he would be obliged to feed for another six months, as no other ship of his company was expected for that time.

I professed myself willing to trade with him, and, as a large portion of our cargo consisted of powder and arms, we were able to settle upon very advantageous terms. I promised as soon as I had shipped the slaves I had bought at Behin and filled up with water, I would drop down to Axim, and there take on board those slaves he wished to sell me.

At this Mynheer laughed, and said, "What! you wait here to ship your slaves and water? You see the beach is bad now, and the bad season is coming on. You will be lucky if you have one day in a week when you can get slaves on board, and you may wait for a month before you can get your water-

casks on board. Now at Axim you can always land easily. Close your business here as soon as you can, send your slaves down by land, and when you get to Axim, I will put all your slaves on board in two days, and fill you up with water and cassava in three or four more."

Mr. Collins confirmed what he said, and said that he would have proposed our going there before, only that he had not thought that our presence would have been welcomed by Mynheer Van Stecken.

Our conversation was interrupted by Ehin Blay's obofo coming with his master's cane, to say that he would come the next morning to call on the Dutch governor, and of course he had to be gratified and sent back with an answer in the affirmative.

The next two days were spent in ceremonials similar to those described, but there being little surf, I was able to press on with the shipment of slaves and gold and ivory, and when on the third day Mynheer Van Stecken returned to Axim I was able to promise him to follow two days after.

When we closed our books with Mr. Collins and Ehin Blay, Merrick was able to tell me that we had made a most successful trade, and that at Axim we should be able to fill the *Black Prince* with slaves and still have a most satisfactory surplus of goods for the further purchase of gold.

This was indeed good news, and, what with my share of the prize-money we had, and of the profits on the trade, I hoped that on my return to England, I should be possessed of such a sum of money that, if I managed at Charleston, which under my orders I could and intended to visit, to induce Muriel to throw in her lot with mine, she would not be subjected to any of the trials of poverty.

The beach remaining good, we completed our work at Behin in the time I had named, and after farewell interviews with Ehin Blay, and making handsome presents to all his officials and his favourite wife, I bade Mr. Collins good-bye, with hearty thanks for his kindness and assistance, and going on board, ordered the two ships to weigh their anchors, and stood down to Axim, which place we reached after a few hours' sail, noticing on our way the ruins of the fort Elise Cartago, on the point to the eastward of the entrance to the Ancobra river.

When we anchored off Axim I caused the Dutch flag to be saluted in proper man-of-war fashion, which was duly returned from Fort Santo Antonio, and soon after Mynheer Van Stecken came off in his boat to carry me and Merrick ashore to lodge with him.

We passed on the way ashore the peninsula of Bobowasua, where our host informed us that Admiral Van Ruyter had planted the battery

which compelled the Portuguese to surrender the fort of Santo Antonio, which was then a mere block, house and battery. The present fort had been commenced by the Dutch Governor Schoorwas, whose grave inside he showed, with a slab above it on which was rudely cut—

"WILLEM
SCHOORWAS
COMMAD. OP. AXEM
1659."

The fort was well garrisoned, and mounted twenty-two iron guns, besides pateraroes, and the landward side was protected by two bastions and a doorway which opened on a loopholed courtyard. I was much astonished at the state kept up by Mynheer Van Stecken, and the caution which he displayed in his dealings with the natives. Instead of, as at Behin, the native chiefs being permitted to come into the fort, they were never allowed to penetrate beyond the courtyard, where all palavers with them were held, and where shortly after our arrival the king of the place and his chiefs came to pay their respects to the governor and his visitors.

In the town were large barracoons, which had been filled with slaves, in anticipation of the visit of the ship which had been wrecked, and we soon made arrangements for completing our cargo and filling up with water, and also for a large supply of

cassava meal and dried fish for feeding the slaves on the passage across the Atlantic.

I found that, notwithstanding the distrust evinced by the Hollanders towards the natives, they exercised much more control over them than Mr. Collins did at Behin, and Mynheer Van Stecken told me that they had forts a long way up the Ancobra river, beside smaller stations at some of the gold mines, where slaves were employed in digging for the precious metal for the benefit of the Dutch African Company.

In addition to filling up with slaves, I was able to make most advantageous purchases of gold with the surplus of my cargo, and in four days after my anchoring at Axim, was able to weigh anchor again, having on board as valuable a cargo as had ever been shipped on board a Liverpool ship.

During our stay I was witness to the barbarity of the natives in a most revolting manner. I was walking out one evening with the governor, when we heard a great drumming and blowing of horns, and going to where the noise proceeded from, we found a great crowd of people surrounding the chiefs and some of his head men, who were superintending the execution of some poor wretches who had been found guilty of witchcraft. Two unfortunate creatures were being burnt, and four others were being slowly hacked to death, fingers and toes being first chopped off, and then hands and feet,

and little children were encouraged to make chops and cuts at the bodies of the victims, which, though not sufficient to cause fatal injury, must have added much to the sufferings of the poor wretches who were being massacred. Into these cuts red peppers were rubbed, and the contortions of the miserable sufferers seemed to afford intense glee to the lookers-on.

One woman, the others who were being judicially murdered being men, was tied hand and foot, and on my companion asking what was going to be done to her, we were informed that she was reserved for a still more horrid fate than her companions in misfortune, as she was to be taken to where there was a run of driver ants, and there to be eaten alive by them.

We were too late to save any of the men, but although Mynheer Van Stecken much objected to interfering with any of these proceedings of the natives, which had nothing to do with trade, he at last yielded to my insistence, and after some trouble I was able to purchase the woman and rescue her from her horrid fate, and send her on board the ship.

Bidding farewell to the Hollanders, I determined before standing across the Atlantic, though it might somewhat lengthen my voyage, to visit Cape Coast Castle, and inform the governor there of the war between England and France, and of the contents

of the despatches we had captured on board the *Saint Pierre*, for which I received his hearty thanks, and a promise that he would write to the council of the African Company to inform them of the service I had rendered him.

As we made sail away from the African coast for Antigua, Tom Merrick congratulated me on the successful conclusion of what might be considered the first half of our voyage, and also that while we had been on the coast we had had very little illness to call for McAllister's attention.

Our voyage across the Atlantic was like most voyages with a favouring trade wind, and our time was principally employed with airing and looking after the slaves, and in training a certain number of them to serve at the guns, so that if by any chance we fell in with any enemy we should have all the guns of both ships fully manned.

CHAPTER XX.

NOTHING worthy of note occurred till we got close to the West Indies, where we fell in with a privateer schooner (or more likely a pirate) who, at daylight one morning ran towards us under French colours, and fired a shot across our bows, as a signal for us to heave to, but meeting with a warmer reception than he had bargained for, hauled off again.

"In four days more we shall be at Antigua," I was saying to Tom Merrick the evening after this episode, when he said, pointing to the horizon, "What does that mean?"

"I don't know ; it looks very curious. Why, I am afraid it presages a hurricane ; but the trade wind is still holding, and a hurricane will not blow against it."

Scarcely were these words out of my mouth when it suddenly fell stark calm, and looking again in the direction which Tom had pointed out, I saw heavy clouds and lightning flashing from them. I instantly turned the hands up to shorten sail, and

soon got the ship under close reefed fore and main-top-sails and forestay-sail, and sent down my upper masts and yards, at the same time signalling to Trenal in the *Foudre* to follow my motions, and make all snug for bad weather.

As soon as sail was shortened we double breached our guns, barred in our ports, shipped the deadlights and battened down the hatches, except two small scuttles, which we were forced to leave open to afford some air for the slaves, who had all to be kept below.

Soon after sunset the heavens became overclouded, and the darkness was as a darkness which might be felt, save when the vivid flashes of lightning illumined the quarter from which the storm was approaching, while the calm was so profound that a naked candle burnt on the poop without flickering.

The feeling that we should soon have to contend with the storm, while as yet we could do nothing was most oppressive, and the men moved about as if afraid of disturbing the dread silence which weighed upon us all, and if any one spoke it was only in a whisper. After a time a few flickering breaths of wind came on in intermittent puffs, and then we heard a roar as of a heavy surf, and could see all the sea to windward of us converted into a mass of fire by the falling rain. A brilliant and blinding flash of lightning, followed by a

deafening peal of thunder, and then the rain fell on us as if the gates of heaven had been opened and forced us to hold on to ropes and rigging to prevent our being beaten to the decks.

The rain ceased almost as suddenly as it had commenced, and we were again left in a dead calm; but this only lasted for a few moments, for with a line of white foam the full force of wind broke on us, and, though fortunately we were not taken aback, we were thrown almost on our beam-ends, and the fore and maintop-sails were blown out of their bolt ropes with a report like a cannon shot. Luckily the stay-sail held on, and we paid off before the gale, and soon were running before it, and almost fouled the *Foudre*, who had not fallen off so quickly as we had.

I now ordered the men to get a tarpaulin in the mizzen rigging, to try and bring the ship by the wind again, but such was the force of the wind, that they were unable to do so, and as the fore-stay-sail sheet carried away, the sail split to ribbons, and I, being unable to run, had to try some means to come by the wind, which I at last managed by manning the mizzen rigging, and then, after intense labour and trouble, we got a small tarpaulin up. The ship now rode more easily over the waves, and I burnt a blue light, to show our position to the *Foudre*. The scene on our decks was one of confusion, the sea having made a clean breach over

the waist nettings, and the boomboats and spare spars, notwithstanding their having had extra lashings put on, had been washed from their places, whilst from below we could hear the shrieks and moans of the slaves, who evidently were frightened almost out of their lives.

The *Foudre* replied to our light by burning another, and we could see that she had suffered even more than we had, for both her fore and main top-sail yards were gone, and the mizzentop-sail was blown out of the gaskets and fluttering in ribbons, but this no doubt had helped Trenal in getting her by the wind.

All night long the gale continued without intermission, and we had to labour without remission to secure the spare spars, and get the wreck of the boats overboard, in which work several of our men were hurt. At last the sun rose, and we could see more what to do, and that our consort was still keeping by the wind in our wake. About ten o'clock the wind fell as suddenly as it had risen, but left a heavy confused sea which seemed to be running from all points of the compass, whilst round us we could see clouds and wrack driven furiously in all directions.

We rolled and strained so heavily that it was not long before we sprang a leak, and were forced to set our pumps going, with slaves to work them, who were glad enough to purchase exemption

from the horrors of the holds and 'tween decks by participation in this arduous toil.

Suddenly the wind struck us again, and the *Foudre*, being caught aback, was driven furiously astern, and we thought that she would founder before our eyes without our being able to stretch out a hand to help our comrades ; but fortunately, though her decks were swept, her hatches proved staunch, and after a few minutes she paid off on the port tack, on which we also were, though not before she had cut her mizzen-mast away. For two hours more we remained trying by the wind when its force somewhat moderated, and being able to steer in the direction we wished with the wind abaft the beam, we loosed our foresail and mainstay-sails. Soon after the *Foudre* signalled to us that her rudder, which had been damaged when she was taken aback, was now useless, and that she had had again to bring to the wind and try. We did the same, and for a night and part of the following day we lay by her, when, the weather having moderated, we were able to stand on again, the *Foudre* steering by means of a boat with the plug out, veered astern at the end of a heavy hawser, and controlled by whips led through spars rigged well out on either quarter.

We had all hands in both ships busy repairing damages, and had all the slaves up on deck to give them air and exercise, and I was much con-

cerned to find that in the rolling and pitching of the ship several had been injured, no fewer than ten on board the *Black Prince* suffering from broken limbs, while two had expired from injuries they had received. Our leak in the *Black Prince* began to assume serious dimensions, and the water threatened to gain on us, notwithstanding that the pumps were kept going unceasingly and gangs of slaves with buckets put on to assist by bailing.

At last I went down into the hold to try if I by any means could discover its whereabouts, and after much patient search I found that one of the shot-holes received in our action with the *Algerine* had reopened, and the water was pouring in in jets with every motion of the ship.

I lost no time in having a spare sprit-sail thrummed, and then, with much trouble, we managed to get it under the leak, and I had the satisfaction of finding it was much diminished, and that the pumps alone gained considerably on the water.

Tom said to me, when this was done, "We have been congratulating ourselves rather too soon, Bob ; for with worse ships or less seamanship we might have found ourselves in Davy Jones' locker."

"True, Tom ; but we've pulled out of this mess, and many poor fellows, no doubt, have been lost ; but we should be thankful for our good fortune."

At this moment the look-out man hailed that he

saw a large vessel on our starboard bow, and we soon ran towards her, when we could see that she was a frigate with her masts gone, and as we drew near she hoisted French colours.

She had sheers up forward, and we could make out that the men on board were trying to rig up a jury mast, but they seemed very few in number, and not to have much idea of what they were about. I hoisted the English colours and stood towards her, and as I drew near could make out that her ports were all open, and her guns had been thrown overboard.

"Well, Tom," I said, "here's another stroke of luck. We will take that fellow into Antigua with us, and she will pay for the damages we have received in the hurricane."

Calling to quarters, we took up a position about a pistol-shot on her bow, and ordered them to strike, enforcing the command by throwing a shot across her forefoot. They hauled down their colours at once, and, going on board, I found our prize was the *Tonnant*, a French frigate, homeward bound with despatches, which had been caught by the hurricane when quite unprepared, and her masts had been blown clean out of her when most of her crew were aloft endeavouring to shorten sail. Her crew, which before had been much reduced by the ravages of yellow fever, was by this catastrophe brought down to only forty or fifty men, and of

these many had been injured in the hurricane by some of the guns getting adrift.

When I told the captain, Monsieur L'Estrange, Knight of the Order of St. Louis, that he was captured by a Liverpool slaver with a letter of marque, and that he was the third prize we had taken, I thought he would have fainted from annoyance; but he was a high-minded gentleman, and ordered the remnants of his crew to assist in getting hawsers on board from us, so that we might take him in tow. Scarcely had this been finished when a squadron hove in sight, which proved to be the English West Indian fleet, under the command of Admiral Sir Harry Jones, and which also had been severely injured in the hurricane. A line-of-battle ship, a brig, and two transports were missing, and two other ships were dismantled, whilst not one of the whole squadron was in such good trim as the *Black Prince*.

Three days more of favourable weather brought both us and the squadron into the harbour of Falmouth, in Antigua.

From some of the crew of the *Tonnant*—for Captain L'Estrange had thrown his despatches overboard—we found that the French fleet was about to rendezvous at Guadeloupe, and that there was an intention of trying to capture some of the English islands. Besides men-of-war, we learned that the French had also many transports full of

soldiers expected from Europe; and Sir Harry Jones was bent on refitting his squadron with all despatch, so as to entrap these and their envoy before they could join the main body.

With organized labour, zeal, and good seamanship, it is wonderful what can be done, and the dismantled and unserviceable-looking ships, that had with difficulty managed to reach the anchorage, soon began to resume the appearance of British men-of-war. But we had to wait before we could get any assistance from the shore, until the more pressing needs of the men-of-war had been attended to.

Our first business was to put our two prizes into the Vice-Admiralty Court, and to get permission to land the slaves out of the *Foudre*. This was at once granted, and all the slaves from both the *Foudre* and *Black Prince* were landed, and placed under the charge of Mr. Stevenson, the correspondent of Messrs. Merrick and Floyd. Mr. Stevenson, with West Indian hospitality, urged Tom and myself to take up our quarters with him, and extended the same kindness to Monsieur L'Estrange, who was released on parole.

The legal formalities at the prize court did not take long, and Sir Harry Jones, who was in want of frigates and smaller vessels, bought both of them into the king's navy, the *Tonnant* under her own name, and the *Foudre* as the *Satellite*, and both of

them, in the hands of naval officers, did much good work in the West Indies.

Although in the still water of a land-locked harbour, when we removed the thrummed sail, the *Black Prince* did not leak to a dangerous degree, still, I knew that it would not be wise to go to sea again until she had been thoroughly overhauled. I, therefore, cleared her out entirely, and sent down all her spars, leaving only her lower masts and bowsprit standing, and, caulking in her ports and hatchways, I made preparations for heaving her down. We bolted on large strong outriggers abreast of the lower masts, and over these, from the mast-heads, we set up preventor shrouds to span, under the ship's bottom, and, hiring some large capstan lighters, which we ballasted well, we hove her keel clean out of the water. On examining the bottom we found that water had got inside the sheathing, so as to necessitate the removal of the whole of it, and we had also to remove some six or seven of the planks of her bottom, and two timbers were so damaged that we had to through-bolt strengthening pieces to them on the inside. When we came up the purchases and righted the ship, I found that the mainmast, which had been the most severely wounded of the three masts, was so wrung that we were obliged to take it out and make a new one; and all this took a very considerable amount of time; but in two months after our

arrival at Antigua, I had the pleasure of seeing the *Black Prince* all ataunto again, and as fit for sea as the day we left Liverpool.

Sir Harry Jones had sailed long before this, but the *Tonnant* and *Satellite* were only completed about the same time as we were, and were awaiting orders, when news came in of the defeat of the French squadron by Sir Harry Jones, brought by the *Rover*, brig; and orders were sent by her for the *Tonnant* and *Satellite* to proceed to Jamaica, to join the squadron there. As I had only been able to dispose of a portion of my slaves in Antigua, I determined to accompany them to Kingston.

Our passage there was short and uneventful, and I had no difficulty in getting rid of the rest of my negroes at a good price. This being done, Tom Merrick and I had a consultation as to what we had best do. War had been declared with Spain, and there was an opening for making some prize-money in the Spanish main, if we went down there; but still we had already been so successful, that I thought we might fairly commence our voyage home, and I was most anxious to get to Charleston, to try and obtain a glimpse of my Muriel; for though I knew the dear girl would be faithful to me, still I could not help feeling afraid that her father might try to force upon her some one whom he considered an eligible suitor,

Tom proposed our taking a run down to westward of Cuba, and then returning east to the north of that island, and making use of the current to get up past the Bahamas, and out of the Florida Channel. In this way, he argued, we should be killing two birds with one stone, having a cruise, and also getting on our way home. I was inclined to decide on this course, but freights home by a ship which, like the *Black Prince*, could make the passage without a convoy should be easily obtainable, and if I were only able to get an offer of freight by a merchant who would require me to call at Charleston, I determined on accepting it.

Whilst I was still undecided as to what course I should adopt, I received a message from the admiral, requesting me to wait on him without delay, and on repairing on board his flagship, the *Implacable*, Sir Harry asked me if I were willing to hire my ship to the Government.

I answered him that it depended on the circumstances, but that if practicable I should only be too glad to consider his offer. He then told me that he wished to send despatches to a small squadron which was expected by the windward channel from England, telling them that he was going to leave Jamaica to make an attack on Guadeloupe, and giving them orders to rendezvous off that place ; next I was to go to Nassau, New Providence, and there leave similar orders for any

ships which might call in there; and after that to visit Charleston and Halifax, at which latter place I should be at liberty either to conclude or renew my engagement.

This jumped so well with my ideas, that I told Sir Harry it would depend principally upon terms, and that as my super-cargo was son of the senior partner in the firm to which the ship belonged, I would have to consult him about it.

"Get along, sir, then, and return as quick as you can; for if you consent, I want you to be off to-morrow with the first of the sea breeze."

Tom came back with me at once to the admiral, and we soon agreed upon terms, and the admiral invited us both to dine with him that evening, which was a most unusual condescension on his part. At and after dinner he asked us many particulars of our voyage, and expressed himself much amused about George Dormer stealing his wife from the Grand Canary, and told me to bring the ship's log on board with me when I came for my sailing orders in the morning, in order that he might examine the account of our action with the *Algerine*, and write on it a recommendation that we should be rewarded by the Admiralty for having destroyed one of these pests of civilization. He laughed very much at our other three prizes having been taken with so small trouble, but he warned us that while carrying despatches,

although we were to resist to the utmost any attempts to capture us, still the safe delivery of our despatches was of far more importance than any captures that we could possibly make, and that we were therefore to avoid any action as much as possible, and not to fight unless it were absolutely necessary.

When he rose from the table and wished us good night, we received a message from the lieutenant's mess, in which there were some old mess-mates of Dormer's, to go down there, and over a glass of grog again narrate the story of how he won his bride ; and it was not till the ship's bell struck seven in the first watch that we were able to escape from their hospitality, all of them averring that both Merrick and I ought to be naval officers instead of privateersmen.

Next morning I went on board for my despatches and orders, and besides the true despatches, which were to be thrown overboard or destroyed if we saw any risk of our being captured, I was also given false ones, which I was to suffer to fall into the enemies' hand. Sir Harry Jones told me that I was to make the best of my way to the windward channel, and then to beat about for ten days, by which time, if I did not fall in with the squadron, for which I was to look out, I was to conclude that it had chosen some other route, and I was to proceed on my way to Nassau.

He, as he had promised, made a most handsome notation in our log about our action, which finished up by saying, that not only did the officers and crew of the *Black Prince* deserve a money reward for the destruction of the corsair, but that he hoped that her master, Mr. Robert Hawkins, would receive some special mark of approbation from his Majesty's Government for the valour and seamanship displayed on this occasion.

"And now, my lad," said the gallant officer, "a pleasant voyage and a prosperous one, and may you be as prosperous in love as you have been in war."

CHAPTER XXI.

RETURNING on board, I found Trenal had the topsails sheeted home and mastheaded, the yards braced abox, and the cable shortened in to short stay. My boat was soon hanging at the davits and the anchor run up to the bow. As the ship fell off, we braced round the head-yards, and ran up the jib and topmaststay-sail, and then made all plain sail on a wind, passing under the admiral's stern, and dipping our colours to him as we did so, which compliment was duly acknowledged, the admiral himself waving his hat to us from his stern gallery.

We beat up to the east end of Jamaica, and then as soon as we were far enough to windward made a leg to the northward, and in a few days were in the position where we were to look out for the squadron from England. I kept beating to windward under easy sail during the day-time, and, lowering the topsails on the cap, let the ship run down again in the night-time what she had made good in the daylight; but day after day passed,

and we saw nothing of the squadron, though we sighted some small schooners, all of which gave us a clear berth. At last, when our time was nearly up, just before daylight we heard heavy firing to windward. I instantly made sail, and, hauling to the wind, beat up in its direction, and soon came upon one of the most beautiful, and at the same time most terrible, of spectacles—a naval engagement.

The English squadron consisted of five line-of-battle ships and four frigates, and was accompanied by a large convoy of transports and merchant ships. A French squadron of rather superior force had attempted to cut off some of the convoy, but had been foiled in their attempt, and brought to action by the English. When we arrived on the scene the fortune of the day had already declared in favour of the English, for two of the French ships had struck their colours, and one of their frigates was dismasted, although still making a gallant resistance against an English frigate, which was just running her on board. The English, as might be expected, had not come off scotfree, three of the line-of-battle ships being unable to pursue the remainder of the French squadron, which was now making all sail to escape, hotly pursued by those of the English which were in a condition to do so.

A large frigate was in advance of the Frenchmen,

and as she seemed likely to make good her escape I stood towards her, and as soon as we came within gunshot opened fire upon her. She at once returned the compliment, aiming principally at our spars in order to disable us. As she was running and had to pass close to us, I determined to try the effect of a broadside of chain and bar-shot at close range, and, though we suffered somewhat in our sails and rigging, held on before delivering it until we were so close that we could have chucked a biscuit on board of her, and then gave the order to fire. Our broadside was most effective, carrying away her mainyard and foretop-mast, though at the same moment our maintop-mast came crashing about our ears, and Tom Merrick, who was standing on the poop, was severely wounded by a splinter. I had no time to look after him as he was carried below, for the maintop-mast in falling had masked some of the guns, and the sails had caught fire, so that all the energies of my crew, except those who were working the bow guns, had to be turned to extinguishing the flames. Fortunately for us, the wreck of the Frenchman's foretop-mast falling over his bows prevented his manœuvring, and placed him in such a position that our guns which were in action would bear on his stern, and we were enabled to gall him severely, though from his small-arm men stationed in the tops he was able to very much annoy those of our men who

were engaged in extinguishing the flames and clearing away the wreck.

The other French ships in passing went on the other side of the frigate, and we in consequence received but little hurt from them, but the captain of the leading English line-of-battle ship, seeing how matters were, thrust his ship in between us and the frigate, and as he passed poured a broad-side into her stern, which brought down her main and mizzen-masts, and gave her such an argument to surrender, that she instantly struck her colours. The English captain hailed me to send a boat on board and take possession, and thus for the second time within three months I received the sword of a French captain on his own quarter-deck.

Relieved from the annoyance of the enemy, our men soon put the fire out and, working smartly, cleared away the wreck and got the spare maintop-mast on end. On board the frigate, I cut away all the wreckage, and managed to get her before the wind and set the foresail to follow up the English squadron.

Two more line-of-battle ships and another frigate were taken by noon, and then the English admiral, seeing no hopes of catching up the other French ships, which had the heels of him, hauled to the wind, and made signals for his squadron to reform and the convoy to gather itself together.

I brought the French frigate close to the liner which had caused her to strike, and requested them to send some men on board to take charge of her, as I was charged with despatches, and after going on board, the admiral said he wished me to proceed on to my destination. A prize crew under a lieutenant, soon came on board from the *Centurion*, as the liner was called, and to him I turned over the *Sanglier*, which was the name of the frigate, to his charge; and going on board my own ship, I went and paid a visit to Tom, who was lying bandaged up in a cot under the poop, and, though in great pain, was very cheerful at the result of the day's action, and said—

"Why, Bob, when you get home, you will be made a hero of—two frigates, a slaver, a corsair, and a *chasse-marée*, all captured by the *Black Prince*, Captain Hawkins, You have had more luck than many a captain in the navy who has been a man-of-war from his youth up."

McAllister reported to me that we had seven men wounded and three killed, and, curiously enough, that the three killed were survivors of the crew of the *Betsy*, who thus seemed to be the victims of persistent ill-fortune.

As soon as I had seen the wounded, I took my log and despatches on board the admiral's ship, the *Dreadnought*, of eighty guns.

Admiral Thompson, who was in command of

the squadron, welcomed me as I came over the side, and said, "I have to compliment you on your gallant behaviour in bringing the frigate to action ; and I consider that the credit of her capture is due to you and your ship's company."

I thanked him for his approval, and handed him the despatches which Sir Henry Jones had intrusted to me, which he hastily perused, and sending for his flag-captain, gave him orders to make a signal for all the captains to repair on board immediately. I then asked him if he would look at the notation Sir Harry had made in my log, and if he would be kind enough to make a similar entry about this action.

"Certainly, sir," he replied. "It seems that you have a good idea both of how to handle your ship and how to fight ; but first do you require any assistance for your ship or your wounded ? I see you have your maintop-mast up again ; you certainly have not lost any time about it."

I thanked him, and said that I had a skilful surgeon on board, and that all my wounded had been well attended to, but that I should be thankful for some coils of small rope, to replace such of my running rigging as had been shot away.

He said that I should have it at once, and gave orders for it to be passed down into my boat. "And now," he said, "while my secretary prepares the report of the action, you had better come into

my cabin for some refreshment, which I am sure you must need after the day's work."

After I had partaken of some wine and biscuits, the admiral told me to make the best of my way to Nassau, and there leave the despatches for that place, after which I was to proceed to Charleston, where I was to transfer my despatches for Halifax to some other ship, for he wished me to take the report of the action home, and added, "I hope that on your presenting them at the Admiralty you will receive some substantial mark of favour from the Government, in reward for your conduct to-day, of which I have made especial mention, as well as making a notation in your log according to your wish. Now make haste on board, for I see your fellows are ready, and I must say that your damages have been as promptly and smartly made good as it has ever been my fortune to see similar work done. Good-bye, and a prosperous voyage."

Thanking the admiral for his kindness, I hurried on board the *Black Prince*, and, continuing our course to the northward, we soon lost sight of the squadron. As soon as we had made sail I looked at the entry in my log, and found that Admiral Thompson had written as follows :—

"To be read by Mr. Hawkins to his officers and crew.

"My thanks are due to the master of the *Black Prince*, Mr. Robert Hawkins, and the officers and

men under his command, for the gallant and skilful manner in which the *Sanglier* was brought to action which resulted in her capture ; and I would recommend the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to allow the master, officers, and crew to share in the prize-money resulting from to-day's action as if they actually belonged to one of his Majesty's vessels of war.

“JOHN THOMPSON,

“Rear Admiral of the *Blue*.”

As soon as I had read this the men gave three cheers, and when I told them that after arriving at Charleston we were to proceed direct to England with the report of the engagement, their delight knew no bounds, as they were all desirous to have an opportunity of spending their well-earned prize money.

We soon stretched up the windward channel, and then among the Cays of the Bahamas we had some dangerous navigation, which required much care and caution. The low coral reefs, in some cases covered with waving cocoanut palms, under which were the thatched and whitewashed cottages of the fishermen and wreckers who made these islets their head-quarters, and the small craft in which they plied their vocation, with their white sails flitting here and there and contrasting with the deep blue of the waters, made a scene of beauty

which it was hard to surpass ; but in calms, when the water was smooth and we were near the shore, one had only to look over the ship's side to see a scene which none of the fables of fairyland could equal. Corals of varied form and hue could be seen growing from a bottom of silver sand, on which even at a depth of twenty fathoms, so crystal clear was the water, every shell could be seen ; waving plumes of seaweed of many colours ; and fishes, some most beautiful and others most grotesque in form, some shining as if their scales were burnished gold, and some blue, vermillion, green, or yellow, passing in all directions ;—it needed but little imagination to fancy that we were passing over the haunts of mermen and mermaids, and one almost expected to see some hoary Triton blowing a summons on his couch to summon the forces of Neptune to drive away the mortals who had dared to trespass on his realms.

But though all was beautiful, we had to exercise care and caution, not only on account of reefs and currents, but also against human foes ; for the inhabitants of these fairy isles bore no good reputation, and although Blackbeard and other pirates had long paid the penalty of their crimes, there were many among the wreckers who lacked but the opportunity, though not the will, to become as great pests as their predecessors to the peaceful and defenceless merchantman.

We had often to anchor to prevent drifting, and one night we were becalmed, and though at first we could get no bottom, after a time we struck soundings in twenty fathoms, and soon found the water shoaling rapidly, so at nine fathoms I let go the stream anchor, and, tricing up the boarding nettings, I ordered the watch on deck to sleep at their guns; and leaving Trenal in charge of the deck, I went down to sit by the side of Merrick, whose condition was causing me considerable anxiety, as the fever was running high, and his wound was not healing in so kindly a manner as we could wish.

He was somewhat delirious, and babbled of his home and of George Dormer, and spoke as if I was absent. Suddenly he raised himself up in a sitting position, and said, "Hist! there are the Moors, George," and apparently was listening intently. I tried to quiet him and make him lie down, as I could hear nothing; but he struggled, and said, "Where's my sword?" and endeavoured to get out of his cot.

At this moment I heard the cheep of oars in the rowlocks, and, shouting to McAllister to look after Merrick, I rushed on deck and called to Trenal to give the alarm. The men instantly rushed to their arms, and, running forward to the, knightheads, I could make out four large boats pulling down towards us, and beyond them a

schooner's hull and masts, and the gleams of the rising moon falling on her, I could make out that she had her sweeps out.

I gave orders for the guns to be loaded with langridge, and those that could be brought to bear pointed at the boats, but told the men not to fire without orders, and to maintain perfect silence. At last the boats came close and divided, so as to attack us on either bow, and being about fifty yards off, I gave the order to fire; one boat was sunk, but the rest pulled straight on, and soon some fifty or sixty desperate devils were climbing up the bows.

Fortunately whilst I was forward Trenal had been able to pass a hawser from aft, and bend it on to the sheet cable outside the hawsepipe, and now taking off the deck stoppers, we let the cable run so as to spring our broadside towards the schooner. With the sail-trimmers and the men from the foremost guns, I made shift to beat down the boarders, and hove cold shot into their boats, while Trenal commanded the broadside guns and opened fire on the schooner.

In the uncertain light it was difficult to take a good aim with guns, and the schooner swept steadily on towards us, whilst I could make out that the men under the bow were trying to cut the cable. Seeing this, I ordered Black Jack, who had been beating the boarders down with a handspike,

to get a man with him, and cut the ring and shank stoppers of the small bower anchor. Some of the pirates—for such there was now no doubt our assailants were—were on the anchor as it fell from the bows, and went crashing through one of their boats. The sheet cable fortunately still held on, and we managed with blunderbusses to keep up such a fire on the men attempting to cut it, that we drove them off; but, in the mean time, some few fellows got a footing on our fore cable.

At this moment too, the schooner, though she had suffered heavily from our fire, came alongside, and we had to close our ports between our shots to prevent the desperadoes from boarding through them. It soon became a question of hand-to-hand fighting, for our boarding nettings, though well tarred and sanded, were soon hacked to bits, and the pirates swarmed into the waist of the ship.

On the forecastle we had managed to dispose of our assailants, and Trenal, seeing that the pirates were on board, called his men on to the poop, and then from our barricadoes, or close fights, we poured a hail of small shot, which after a time caused our assailants to waver, though not before our waist and quarter-deck were converted into a shambles. As soon as these commenced to recoil, I and Trenal poured down with our men from poop and forecastle, and literally forced the pirates over the side into their own craft. Lying on the

up-stream broadside of the ship, they could not clear away, and, manning our guns, I ordered them to be depressed to the utmost, and poured round shot into her. Soon we heard the men on board the schooner shouting out that she was sinking, and they again attempted to board us; but letting go the spring, we allowed the *Black Prince* to swing to the current, and fended the schooner off, and she slowly drifted astern. A few hung on to our chains and to ropes ends that were towing overboard, but these we soon got rid of, and were able to turn our attention to our own men and their needs. Favoured, as we had been, by our position, our losses were not so heavy as might have been expected, but my party at the bow had lost four men killed, stabbed to death by the long knives of the pirates, and no fewer than sixteen were wounded, which, added to the losses we had experienced in our action with the *Sanglier*, left us shorthanded indeed. The stream cable had parted soon after we let go the warp, and on hauling in the loose end, it was marvellous how it had held on so long, for it had been cut more than three-quarters through.

When daylight came, I found that we were in a bight of reefs, the nearest of which rose from the sea about fifty yards from us. The pirate schooner had drifted on this, and the sea was now making a clear breach over her. A few of her crew could be

seen on her masts, and some more scattered here and there on the Cay.

I proposed that we should fetch them aboard and take them to Nassau, to hand over to the civil power for piracy; but, after much consideration, we determined only to get those which were on the masts, and even these we had some difficulty in securing, as they knew well that their fate would be a short shrift and a long rope, and it was not until we had shot three of them, that we persuaded the rest, six in number, to come down into the boat, where they were instantly secured.

CHAPTER XXII.

AS soon as I could quit the deck I went to see after poor Tom, whom McAllister told me he had had great difficulty in restraining from rushing out on deck to join in the fray; but since then his fever had abated, and he was now in a calm and refreshing sleep, from which he would doubtless awake much better, and probably free from fever.

To get out of the bight in which we were embayed we had to lay out our kedges, and, weighing our anchor, we began this disagreeable and tedious work of warping out, and fortunately, when we got outside the breeze sprang up, and we were able again to stand on our course towards Nassau.

I had our prisoners brought on deck, and a more villainous-looking and repulsive lot it would be hard to imagine; one was a Spaniard, with matted moustachios and hair, and one eye knocked out, whilst the rest were a motley lot of mulattoes and negroes. I tried to find out who or what their leader had been, but they were all sulky, and

would say nothing ; so I had them confined down in the 'tween decks, and though they were ironed put two men to keep guard over them.

Two days after this brush with the pirates, we anchored off Nassau, and landed our despatches for that place and also the pirates. As I found that it would delay the ship if I remained to give evidence against them, I left behind three of the blacks I had shipped at Liverpool, and who expressed a desire to settle in the Bahamas, to act as evidence ; and weighing again, made the best of our way to Charleston, where we arrived without any occurrence worthy of note.

As soon as possible after I had delivered up my despatches to the governor I, as may be imagined, made inquiries about Muriel Penmore, and had hopes that, perhaps by this time, more especially after the success which had attended the cruise of the *Black Prince*, her father might be prevailed upon to favour my suit, or, that if he still proved obdurate, I might take a leaf out of George Dormer's book, and persuade her to trust her fortunes on board my ship.

Judge, then, of my disappointment when I found that Mr. Penmore and all his family had sailed for England only four days before, on account of news having arrived that, owing to the death of a cousin, he had succeeded to a baronetcy and large estates. I came on board in a most desponding

mood, and told Tom, who by this time was convalescent, that all my hopes were dashed to the ground ; for if plain Mr. Penmore, a Carolina planter, thought a merchant sailor presumptuous in daring to aspire to his daughter's hand, what would now be the opinion of Sir Rupert Penmore ?

"Never mind, Bob," said this true and staunch friend. "We must sail at once, and it's as likely as not that we shall be in England as soon as the *Mohawk*, and then you surely can find some way to marry your Muriel."

I lost no time in filling up with water and provisions, and two days after our arrival, carrying on all the sail that the *Black Prince* could stagger under, we commenced our voyage for England. We stood well to the northward, and then getting a strong westerly wind we shaped our course for the Land's End. We soon ran into thick weather, and then came upon a quantity of icebergs, among which we had to navigate with the greatest possible caution, but fortunately got clear of them without loss, though one night the voyage of the *Black Prince* and this narrative had been like to be brought to an abrupt close together.

At sunset, as we had all through the day been in sight of large icebergs, I put the ship under easy sail, and stationed extra look-outs, relieving them every half-hour, as the cold was so severe as to greatly try men who had so recently been in a

tropical climate, and remained on deck all night myself. About eleven o'clock, I could feel that the temperature had decidedly fallen, while the fog and mist had increased in density; I, fearing that we were approaching close to some great mass of ice, brought to the wind and laid the maintop-sail aback. Soon, however, I heard the sound of waves breaking as if on a reef of rocks, but did not dare to fill on beat to windward, as the sounds were not only to leeward but also ahead and astern of us. I tried, as did every one on board, all hands having rushed on deck under a sense of impending danger, to pierce the gloom and mist, but without avail, when suddenly we were taken aback by an eddy wind, and, a gleam of moonlight breaking through the mist, we saw close alongside and towering high above our mast heads, a huge mountain of ice. Fortunately, we paid off to the eddy, and bracing round the head-yards, we filled, and commenced to draw away from this undesirable neighbour, when suddenly, with a report as of a thousand cannon, a large portion of the berg came thundering into the sea, which it tore in foam, several large pieces of ice falling on our poop, and some carrying away one of our quarter boats. The ship rolled and rocked in the waves caused by this, and every one felt that we had escaped from most imminent peril.

At this instant Cundy, who had made some

voyages in whalers, rushed aft to me, and said, "For God's sake, sir, make sail and get out of this; the berg will capsize, and may come up under our bottom."

I was just giving the necessary orders, when I felt the ship being lifted bodily up. What he feared had occurred, and the submerged portion of the berg was rising up under us. Soon we found ourselves lying over at an angle of forty-five degrees, and clean out of water, with our bows some thirty feet higher than the stern. This had been done rapidly, though without any violent shock, and after three or four oscillations the berg regained its equilibrium, leaving us in the position described.

The men were, as were Tom and I, much alarmed at our position, and clambered aft to the weather side of the poop, some begging me to abandon the ship, others asking what should be done, and all lamenting the evil fortune which had befallen us. Cundy retained his presence of mind, and asked me to order the hatches all to be battened down, and the men to lash themselves to the rigging and bitts, as the ship might slide off the berg at any moment, and there was no telling how deep she might plunge in doing so, and unless the men were lashed they might be washed away.

I at once gave the necessary orders, and then we had nothing to do but to hope for the best and wait for daylight. The cold and dreary hours

dragged wearily away until the morning broke, and then, fortunately, the mist cleared away, and I was able to take a survey of our position. Astern of us the berg rose to a height of over two hundred feet, and we were lying in a sort of crevice, in which the ship was docked on a low, sloping spur, and prevented from sliding down into the sea, which was about forty yards from us, by a thick barrier of ice across our bows.

I, with Jago, Cundy, and some of my smartest seamen, got out on the ice, and proceeded to examine this barrier, in order to see if by any means we could remove it.

"Ah, sir," said Cundy, "if we had only some ice-saws and spades, we could soon cut that away and launch the ship again."

As we had none of these appliances we had to try and devise other means. After much scrambling about, we found several large holes in the lower part of the barrier, and these we determined on charging with powder and trying to blow the mass of ice up.

This work I intrusted to Cundy, and as there was a danger that the ship, as she plunged into the sea, might capsize, I got the rest of the ship's company to work to get the boats launched and stored with provisions and water, in case we should have, as a last resort, to take to them. I also got an anchor out over the stern, and, embedding it in

the ice, passed a cable out through the stern ports and made it fast to it. I took a round turn round the main-mast with this cable, and then brought it to the capstan, so that we might as far as possible check the speed of the ship in sliding down the incline into the sea. All these preparations took time, and I was glad to see that as the ice melted under the rays of the sun the ship got more upright, and by the time the mines were charged and ready for firing that she was not heeling over more than ten degrees, and the berg had also so far altered its slope that the ship was not so much on end.

Cundy came and reported to me that all was ready, and that he thought it would be wise to have the boats taken away to some distance, and not to attempt to ease the ship down as she might either carry the cable away, or else the capstan would take charge, but that all hands should take to the boats except those who had to fire the mines, and these should get away to a distant part of the berg as fast as their legs could carry them.

This was soon arranged, and I told Trenal and Merrick to pull the boats away to a safe distance, while I remained behind with Jago and Cundy to fire the mines. Tom tried to persuade me to let him take my place, but I would not hear of it, and at a quarter-past three we lighted the matches, which had been timed to burn for ten minutes, and

then we three took to our heels, and as fast as the soft and treacherous surface of the berg would permit us, made our way to a place of safety. At last, much out of breath, we reached a solid bit of ice, where we considered we were out of danger, and there waited to watch the explosion. In a few minutes we saw the mass of ice astern of the ship rise, and a great gush of smoke, amid which blocks and lumps of ice were hurled higher than her mastheads, and then there was a dull, sullen roar, and the ship began to move, at first slowly, but then more quickly, and in a moment was lost to sight in a mass of foam and spray as she plunged into the sea. The masts could be seen as she rolled violently to and fro, and then her hull emerged from the waves, with water pouring from her scuppers and upper deckports, which had been left open.

We had not much time to watch the ship and our boats, for the whole lower part of the berg broke up, and the piece we were on rolled over and over, and we were thrown into the sea. As I rose to the surface I scrambled on to a piece of ice, and was able to lend a hand to Jago to help him on to the same fragment, but we could not see Cundy, and were afraid he had been imprisoned under the ice, when we heard his voice some twenty yards off, and, scrambling over the intervening ice, found him clinging to the edge of a flat

table piece, on which Black Jack and I, after much trouble, managed to haul him. The floating pieces of ice between us and the boats were far higher than our heads, and though we could see the mast-heads of the ship, we scarcely knew how we were to get to her.

Cundy at once said, "We must not stop still and get frozen, so follow me as best you can; but, first, can we make any thing of a rope to use in case one slips down between the pieces of ice?"

I had on a long sash round my waist, which, with mufflers we were all three wearing round our necks, we knotted together, which made altogether a length of twenty feet. Cundy leading the way, we now proceeded in the direction of the ship, and jumping, slipping, and scrambling, we made our way from fragment to fragment, and, though we received a good many bruises, and got more than one ducking, we at last got on a large flat piece of ice, beyond the outer edge of which we could not proceed.

Here we could see that some of the boats had already regained the ship, but that two others were searching the ice for us. Unfortunately, for some time, though we shouted and waved and performed all sorts of antics, both to attract attention and also to keep up our circulation, no one either on board the ship nor yet in the boats saw us. At last one of the boats headed in our direction, and

I turned round to my two companions, who were rather behind, to tell them of it, when, fifteen paces in their rear, I saw an enormous white bear coming over the ice directly towards us.

I said, "Look out, there's a bear on us!" and Black Jack and Bloodred Bill instantly turned towards where I was pointing.

"Never fear, sir," said Cundy; "you run to the left, and, Jack, you clear to the right. I'll settle this fellow."

The bear, seeing he was observed, instantly quickened his pace, and Jago and I did not require twice telling to make us do as Cundy said. Cundy tore off his coat and flung it on the ice, and, while the bear stopped to smell and worry it, he ran after Jago, who was carrying the sash and mufflers. The bear spent some little time in sniffing and smelling at Cundy's coat, which he tore in pieces, and then he set off at a fast run after me. I soon heard him panting close behind me, and determined to turn and face him, and trust to the boat, which was now close to, with the men straining every nerve at their oars to rescue me.

The bear, to my astonishment, did not come on, but stopped, and, raising itself up on its hind legs, commenced beating the air with its front paws. Close behind it I saw Jago and Cundy, and they made signs to me to keep quiet, but what for I could not understand. The bear soon began to advance

on me again, and I was about to try to make a dash past it to join my men, when I saw them get a round turn round its neck with the scarf, and commence pulling with all their might on both ends. The bear, taken by surprise and half-strangled, was thrown on its back, but would soon have been free, but, the boat dashing up at this moment, some of the men sprang on shore with muskets and boat-hooks, and in a few minutes Master Bruin was a corpse.

We were soon all on board the ship, and the bear instead of making a meal of me was cut up and put into the coppers to furnish a fresh mess for us, and the skin salted down and put in cask as a memorial of the adventure. I was delighted to find that, although much of the outer sheathing had been rubbed off, the carpenter on sounding the well had found the ship as tight as a bottle, but that the rudder had been jumped out of its place, and though it had gone back again, the head was much wrung, and we had to clap purchases on the rudder pendants, and, leading them to spars on either quarter, bring the falls to the wheel, by which means we managed to steer fairly well.

From the masthead we could now see a long lane through the ice, leading to open water to the eastward, and pushing through it, by sunset we had left the ice behind.

Next morning, though there was a fresh north-

west breeze, the sea was quite smooth, and in that direction was a long line of bergs, which accounted for this. We were all glad at having escaped from the danger of the day before, and I did not forget to make a suitable acknowledgment to Black Jack and Bloodred Bill for the courage they had displayed in rescuing me from the bear.

Soon after mid-day the masthead men reported two sail ahead, and by sunset they were little more than courses down, and one of them from her rigging was evidently a large and powerful ship, and, from the narrowness of the head of her topsails, probably a Frenchman, while the other had the appearance, as far as one could judge at such a distance, of an English merchantship.

I did not care to come to close quarters with the strangers during the night, and therefore when by the moonlight I could make out that we were within about three miles, I shortened sail, and waited for daylight, to determine on my plan of action.

Tom said, "Why, Bob, why don't you slip past them? You have despatches. By our picking them up as we have, we must have the heels of them, and there is no use risking all just at the end of the voyage."

"True, Tom ; but I do not know what it is, but I have a kind of certainty that the smaller ship is the *Mohawk*, and that Sir Rupert and Lady Penmore and Muriel are prisoners to the French."

"Nonsense, Bob. Why, the *Mohawk* got away some days before us ; and consider how we have been delayed by the ice."

"Yes ; but mayn't the *Mohawk* have been delayed by the ice ?"

"Not very likely ; and besides, what good can it do Miss Penmore for you to get this ship taken."

"I don't know, but I will have a try to save her if the ship is the *Mohawk*."

"All right, Bob. I will, you know, stand by you in all you do ; but you know there is something due to the men who have stood by you so loyally all through the voyage."

"That's right ; but I have an idea in my head which is this : If the Frenchman took the *Mohawk*, she can sail faster than the *Mohawk* ; we know that we can sail faster than she can, or at least we believe we can, from the way in which we have drawn up to her since we first sighted her. Now, my plan is, draw the Frenchman down to leeward, and away from the *Mohawk*, and when we are some distance away to get round her, and, fetching the *Mohawk* again, recapture her before the big fellow can get up, and start her away whilst we hang about the Frenchman and hamper him until the *Mohawk* had got clean off."

"It is a good thing if you can do it, but you will find it difficult."

"Never mind ; I'll try."

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT daylight I made sail again, and stood on after the strangers, both of whom hoisted English colours; I did the same, and stood on as if I had no suspicion of their real character.

The larger vessel, which was a heavy frigate mounting over forty guns, shortened sail to topsails, and took up her position on the weather beam of the smaller, on the stern of which as we drew up we could see the words, "*MOHAWK*, Liverpool," and soon a man jumped up on her taffrail and hailed us: "For God's sake, sir, mind what you are doing; we are prize to the French." He was instantly hauled down, and we could see that there was a scuffle on the poop, but we had not much time to pay attention to him, as, putting my helm down, I hauled to the wind, and, shooting up in the wind under the frigate's stern, delivered a raking broadside before her commander had any idea of my intention, and paid off on the other tack and stood away to the south-west with every stitch of canvas set,

On board the Frenchman they were thrown into confusion by my unexpected salute, but in a very short time they wore round after me, but not until I had placed a considerable interval between us. On board the *Mohawk* I could make out that all was not going smoothly for the prize crew, as, although she had squared her after-yards as if to wear in company with the frigate, her head-sails were partly hauled down, and foretop-sail sheets and haulyards let go.

"There, Tom my boy," I said, "there is a trump card I did not count upon, the French having been fools enough to leave the English crew on board, as they have evidently done, and they seem to be strong enough to make a good struggle with the prize crew."

I found, though I had counted upon being able to outsail the Frenchman, either the *Black Prince's* rest on the iceberg had considerably damaged her sailing qualities, or else that our pursuer was faster than most other ships; and it was as much as we could do to hold our own from her. This did not quite suit my plans, as I hoped to have been able to get clear out of gun-fire, and then have lured her on in chase, without any risk of damage to ourselves.

I soon saw, though it would not take us so fast away from the *Mohawk*, which was my principal object, that as we were flying very light it would give us the best chance to get right before the

wind, and so kept south-east. The frigate followed our every motion like a greyhound after a hare, and soon began to open fire on us with her bow chasers, and we returned the same from the after guns, which we transported into our stern ports.

Although the Frenchman had to yaw in order to fire at us, still our steering, owing to the damage we had received in the ice, was so bad, that what she lost on that account was more than compensated for.

"I say, Tom," I said, "I ought to have listened to your advice, for we are rather in a tight hole now, and we will have to do all we know to get clear. I think we had better stow all that gold-dust away where they cannot find it, in case they do capture us. Here, Mr. Trenal, you take charge of the deck, whilst Mr. Merrick and I go down below to stow the gold and despatches away."

Under the poop, as we passed on our way to the after-hold, where we had made a strong room for the gold, we saw Jago and Cundy stripped to their waists, with handkerchiefs tied tightly round heads and waists, working their guns, and I said, "Ten guineas to the man that knocks away a spar."

"We don't want to be paid for that, sir; we've no idea to see the inside of a French prison this voyage," answered Cundy.

I and Merrick, with the carpenter and a few other hands, soon got the gold, which might have

been worth seventeen thousand pounds, down into a space below the tiers, and then covering it with firewood and dunnage, coiled away a hawser on it.

"There, they won't find that in a hurry. Now I will stow my log away ; and the despatches, I will slip them up under a skirting-board. I know there is no news that can hurt in them, and even if we are taken, we may recapture the ship again."

At this moment we heard a ringing cheer from our men, and running on deck, we found that the enemy's spritsail-yard had been shot away, and fallen, with sail attached, across her forefoot, checking her way, and that we were perceptibly drawing away from her. I was for at once hauling to the wind, but just as I was giving the necessary orders a shot struck the outrigger on the port quarter through a block on which the rudder-pendant was worked, and we were rendered quite unmanageable for the time. I had to put the helm hard a-port to steady the rudder, and stood away to the west-south-west, which brought me open to the fire of the frigate's broadside, but not much damage was done before I had, by slinging men over the stern in bow-lines, got hold of the rudder pendant again, and got a fresh outrigger rigged out. But whilst I was doing this the Frenchmen cleared away the wreck of their spritsail-yard, and got a spare topsail-yard out and across instead of it, and she was again

closing on us. One thing which gave me much pleasure, though I could see no hope of our escaping capture, was that I saw the *Mohawk* had evidently been retaken by her own crew, and was now standing to the eastward, but I could not understand why the frigate did not give up the chase after us and make sure of the prize she had already taken.

At last, the frigate gaining on us whatever course we steered or ruse we tried, I thought we would try the effect, being dead ahead of him, of hauling with the wind on the port quarter suddenly to the wind on the starboard tack, and giving him a broadside as we did so, and, trusting to our men being smarter than his, to get it in before he could let us have one in return.

I gave the necessary orders, and, shoving the helm hard a-port, I brought her short round, and let the enemy have a most destructive broadside at close range ; but she was quite as ready as we were, and repaid us in kind, bringing down our main and mizzentop-masts and jibboom. She had not fared better, but indeed rather worse, for amid the smoke we could see her foremast totter and fall, and when the smoke cleared away could see that it was clean gone fifteen feet above the deck.

Some on both sides were now employed in clearing wreck, and though I managed to get so far on her quarter that only a few of her guns would bear, we were rapidly being overpowered

by her superior weight of metal, and soon our bowsprit and foretop-mast went, and then the mizzen-mast, while the carpenter came and told me that we had several shot between wind and water, and three feet of water in the hold.

"I am afraid, Tom, we must chuck the sponge up; but I will try for another ten minutes by the glass. Now, lads, we must beat them from their guns."

My gallant fellows responded with a cheer, though they had suffered sadly from the fire of the enemy, and fired so quickly and sharply, that the heated guns jumped as they were fired, and some of them carried their breechings away. The enemy's main-mast went during the next five minutes, and then fortunately we drifted so that by getting out a sweep, we were able to slue our broadside toward the stern of our injurious foe, and were only annoyed by his stern guns, whilst our whole broadside bore on him. Nevertheless I found that the water was increasing on us so rapidly, and the pumps having been shot away, that I considered that it would be absolutely necessary to strike in a few minutes to save the lives of my crew.

"Keep it up, Bob," said Tom Merrick; "they must get sick of this. There! now there's a fire on board the enemy; fire's worse than water."

Sure enough there was a volume of smoke

issuing from the frigate before her main-mast, and I, considering that would give them some employment, withdrew some of my men from the guns, and, rigging whips over the main hatch, set them to work to bale, while the carpenter and his crew were repairing the pumps.

The two ships were all this time drawing nearer, and I soon had an unpleasant reminder, by the enemy commencing a sharp fire of musketry, and I myself was struck by a bullet on the head, and fell senseless to the deck.

When I recovered myself, I found myself lying in a cot under the poop, which bore signs of the action we had been through, and Tom Merrick and McAllister looking at me. I felt as if my head was surrounded by a circle of burning iron, and putting up my hand felt that it was all bandaged up.

Tom said, "Thank God, Bob, you are alive! I thought you were killed when I saw you fall."

"Na, Master Merrick. It was a sair clout, nae doot; but the captain's harns are safe the noo. Ye see the bullet struck obliquely, and nae penetrated the cranium.—Eh, but captain, ye maun be thankful gin yere sconce is a good stout ane, or ye wad be no lying here the noo."

I slowly began to remember what had happened, and said, "Are we taken? or what has happened?"

"No," said Tom. "Your fortune has not deserted you, for just after you were knocked over we heard

guns away to the north-east, and looking out, we saw two English frigates standing down toward us, in company with the *Mohawk*. The Frenchman must have seen them about the same time, for he hauled down his colours, and hailed that he surrendered. We had no boat that would float to send on board to take possession ; but anyway we have saved the money we should have had to pay our frigates on the recapture, and we now instead share in the prize-money of the Frenchman, which is the *Vénus* of forty-four guns."

"But how about our leaks and spars?"

"Don't you mind anything now, we have the shotholes plugged, and the ship's dry. The two English frigates, who were cruising here in search of the *Vénus*, who had been picking up a good many homeward-bound ships, have both of us in tow ; we are astern of the *Calliope*, and the *Vénus* is taken charge of by the *Inconstant*, and we are getting jury masts ready. Now you must go to sleep again."

"One word more, Tom. The Penmores—Muriel, is she safe?"

"Safe ! certainly they are ! Sir Rupert and all the family are safe, I heard from the lieutenant of the *Calliope*, who is in charge of a working party on board here to help us to repair damages."

"I must see Muriel, I must."

"All right, we will have you see her ; but first

you must have some rest. I say, McAllister, the captain is not fit to go wooing now."

"Nae, nae ; he wad terrify the bonny leddy gin she saw him the noo. He main be patient and in twa or three days he will be mair fit for seeing leddies."

"Two or three days! nonsense," I said.

"Hoot, mon ; I'll hae na sech cantrips. Ye maun be douce or ye will hae fever an ither complications, whilk wad be very dangerous."

Tom also soothed me down, and I after a bit went off to sleep again.

The next few days passed away quietly. Jury-spars were rigged up on board both the *Black Prince* and *Vénus*, and all the five ships made their way homewards in company, and every day signals were made from the *Mohawk* asking after me, as it was generally known that I had been severely wounded, but curiously enough they never asked after me by name. Under our jury-masts the *Vénus* and ourselves were both fairly able to keep up with the *Inconstant*, *Calliope*, and *Mohawk*.

I ordered the *Black Prince* to be kept as near to the last-named ship as possible, and was often able to see ladies on her deck, but never could make sure that I saw my Muriel. I rapidly recovered, the bullet which had wounded me having passed underneath the scalp without damaging what McAllister called the cranium,

and was soon able to resume the active command of my ship. I wished very much to be able to go on board the *Mohawk* and urge my suit with Sir Rupert, thinking after I had saved him and his family from captivity in France, and also from a severe pecuniary loss—the whole of the cargo, according to what I had heard at Charleston, being his property,—that he might be disposed to listen to me favourably. One morning when I came on deck I found that it had fallen a dead calm, and the *Mohawk* made a signal that Sir Rupert would come on board to thank our captain in person.

I had all on board put in the highest state of order that our means permitted, and as far as possible hid the damages caused to us by the shot of the *Vénus*. I could scarcely control my excitement when I saw the *Mohawk* lower a boat and watched to see if any ladies got into her; but no, only the tall form of Sir Rupert could be seen as she neared us. She was soon alongside, and Merrick and I stood at the gangway in readiness to welcome our visitor as he stepped over the side.

He made a most profound bow as soon as he came on our quarter-deck, which Tom and I returned, and then he commenced, "I have come, sir, to thank you——" when he stopped as if he had been shot, and said, "What the d——l is this? I have come to see the captain of this ship."

I answered, "I am he, Sir Rupert. What is your will?"

"You, sir! I do not believe it. You wretched fellow, you have had the presumption——"

I here interrupted him, and proposed if he had anything to say that he should come into the cabin.

He would not answer a word, and, turning on his heel, went down into the boat again, and gave orders to return on board the *Mohawk*.

Tom said, "I do not envy you your father-in-law, Bob; but will you let me go on board and see if I can make him listen to reason?"

"Faith, Tom, I see little use; but the cutter has been repaired, and if you wish to try a forlorn hope you may e'en do so."

"Don't be downhearted, lad. I'll go on board, and perchance I can make the buckram old baronet listen to reason. He was ready enough to thank an unknown man, and you have told me that before he discovered your affection for Miss Penmore he was civil to you. Perhaps he may be induced to listen to reason."

"Well, Tom, you may go; but I don't expect you will have any success with him."

"Nonsense, man. Any way I can but try."

The cutter was soon ready, and Tom said "What has come over you? you have forgotten one of the most important things."

"What have I forgotten?"

"Why, to write a letter to Miss Penmore. Toby can go in the boat with me, and he will manage that some one shall give it her, and surely she will be able to send you an answer. If you two are staunch to each other, I'm certain that you will overcome Sir Rupert's repugnance to your marriage."

"Certainly, old friend, I will;" and I soon wrote a few lines to Muriel and assured her of my undying and unutterable attachment and devotion, and begged her if she possibly could to let me know that she still regarded me with love and affection. As soon as I had written this, Tom left for the *Mohawk*, and had scarcely gone before Trenal reported to me that a boat was coming from the *Calliope*.

When she came alongside, I saw that the captain of the *Calliope* was in the sternsheets. As he came on deck I received him, and he said he was glad to see me on deck, as he had been afraid that my wound had been a serious one. "'Egad," he said, "it is a wonder to me you did not all lose the number of your mess, tackling a ship so much superior in force as the *Vénus*. But is not my uncle on board?"

"Your uncle!" I said. "Who do you mean?"

"Why, Sir Rupert Penmore. He came to see you this morning?"

"Yes," I said; "but he left immediately he recognized me, and has gone back to the *Mohawk*."

"Recognized you. Why, do you know him?"

"Yes, at least I did; but if you would come into the cabin I will explain matters to you."

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAPTAIN HAROLD PENMORE, for that was the name of my visitor, assented at once ; and I told him as briefly as I could the story of my acquaintance with his uncle and of my love for his cousin.

"So you are the Robert Hawkins my uncle's letters have been full of—and so, for the matter of that, have Muriel's too ; but he said you were a worthless adventurer. I thought my cousin, whom I saw a good deal of at one time when I was at Charleston, was not a likely girl to throw herself away on an unworthy object. Come, tell me your history, and if I think my uncle is mistaken, there is the hand of a brother sailor, that I will do my utmost to help you ; for I can't believe that a man who can fight and handle his ship as you have done can be anything but a gentleman."

When I had finished, he said, "Even without your own merits, as your father's son I ought to be glad to do anything for you, for your father when in the navy saved my father's life. Did he never tell you anything about his friend Penmore?"

"No; I never heard the name until I met your uncle at Charleston."

"'Tis curious he never spoke to you about our fathers, for he knew well what friends they were."

"Perhaps he did not think of it, for you know Hawkins is not an uncommon name, and although I commanded the *Elizabeth* when I stopped at his house, you must remember I was only a mate without a ship when I volunteered for her."

"No matter, man; you are a gentleman born. And even if my uncle had some reason to object to your suit then, surely, now you have saved him from a French prison, that ought to weigh with him; but if you will permit, I will go on board the *Mohawk* now, and try to make him listen to reason. Why, you, with your prize-money from this voyage, must be well off, and if you were only in the navy you would be certain of knighthood for the successful actions you have fought. Three frigates within four months! Why, man, there is not a captain in the service that would not give his eyes to have had your good fortune. Now, may I go?"

"Certainly; and you have my warmest thanks; but my friend and super-cargo has gone on board the *Mohawk* now to try and get speech of your uncle."

"So much the better. We will keep at him, and he must yield in the end. Good-bye, and mind, I shall expect to dance at your wedding."

Captain Penmore left me to go on board the *Mohawk*, but a breeze springing up, he had to go on board his own ship. Tom came back also to us, and as soon as the boat was hoisted up and sail made, he reported to me the outcome of his mission.

"First, my dear Bob, I have seen Miss Penmore, and I don't wonder at your love for her. If she were not already bespoke, I do not know but what I might aspire to her myself; but as for her father, he might be a three-tailed Bashaw, or the Grand Turk himself, for the airs he assumes, and the manner in which he looks down on ordinary mortals. When I first got on board my gentleman was in the cabin, and sent out word to say he would not see me. As I knew that your name would only confirm him in his determination, I sent in to say that I represented the owners of the *Black Prince*, and wished to see him on business. An answer came back to say that I could have no business with him. I had by this time ascertained from the captain that the ship was chartered by Sir Rupert, and I sent back to say that I must insist on seeing him, as I had important business on which to speak to him. After some little delay he came out, and said—

"Well, sir, and what may be this important business? Be quick and let me know. It must be important indeed for you to intrude on my

leisure in this unmannerly and unwarrantable manner."

"I told him that I should be obliged if he would give me a statement of the value of the ship and cargo, in order that we might make out our claims for having assisted in her recapture.

"'Recapture, sir! You can tell that upstart captain of yours that I acknowledge no claims; the ship was recaptured by her own crew, and I am sorry that the frigates came up to save you and your friend from your well-merited fate of a French prison.'

"'Thank you, sir,' I said. 'I do not in this appear for Captain Hawkins; I represent the owners, and must request you to give me the information I require.' He refused point-blank, but his daughter now appeared on deck, so I said, 'On behalf of Captain Hawkins, I now request that you will allow him to pay his addresses to your daughter.' I could see Miss Penmore listening, so I added, 'For you may be assured that Captain Hawkins does not intend to take your refusal as final.'

"He turned to his daughter, and said, 'Muriel it is not fitting that you should hear what this person says; I must request that you will at once withdraw to the cabin.'

"'I will, father; but, sir' (to me), 'pray tell me how is Captain Hawkins; is his wound dangerous?'

"I replied that you were fast recovering, when Sir Rupert, in a towering rage, turned to her, and, taking her by the arm, led her into the cabin.

"A message was shortly after brought to me by the master, who seems a good honest man, to say that Sir Rupert would not see me again, and that as for any claim we might have on the recapture of the *Mohawk* he would not entertain it for one moment. The captain added he had owned it before, 'and surely if you had not attacked the *Vénus*, we could never have dared under her guns to try for freedom.'

"Fortunately the *Vénus* had sent so many men away in prizes that she only sent a few men on board the *Mohawk*, and made the English crew navigate her, and therefore, when the action between the *Vénus* and ourselves commenced, they had not much difficulty in regaining possession of their ship.

"Whilst I was talking with the captain Toby came to me, and said that the breeze was springing up, and I knew from the self-satisfied grin he had on his sable countenance, that he had got an answer to your note. On getting into the boat he gave it me; and here it is."

"Thank you, my dear fellow; but I fear much your advocacy has not done me much good. But I must read this letter."

Muriel had only been able to write a few lines, in

which she assured me of her unalterable affection, and told me that until she got my letter that she had no idea of my presence on board the *Black Prince*. Her mother, she said, she had won round to consent to our union, but her father, whenever my name was mentioned, always manifested intense displeasure, and said that he would never permit her to think of me. "Needless to say," she continued, "I cannot obey him in this, for, my dearest Robert, you are ever present in my thoughts and prayers."

I told Tom Merrick of what Captain Penmore had said, and also that Lady Penmore was favourable to my suit, and he clapped me on my back, saying, "Courage, Bob; you have friends in high quarters, and I'll be present at your wedding within a month after our arrival in England."

I could not help hoping that Sir Rupert might be won over to consent to our marriage, but, of course, could decide on no plan of action until our arrival in England. With favouring winds we soon sighted Cape Clear, and soon after I parted company from the other ships, and, running up the Irish Channel, arrived at Liverpool without any further occurrence worthy of note.

Our appearance, as we sailed up the Mersey under jury masts, and showing manifest signs of the action we had fought with the *Vénus*, caused great excitement; and when we anchored in our

old berth opposite Messrs. Merrick and Floyd's office, we were surrounded by quite a fleet of boats, crowded with people anxious to know what had happened to us, and the interest was intensified when it became known how successful our voyage had been, and that we had despatches on board, telling of a naval victory, and cheer after cheer went up.

It was not long before Mr. Merrick and Mr. Floyd were on board, and Tom and his father's meeting may be more readily imagined than described; nor were they wanting in kind and cordial appreciation of my services. I said that I must immediately start for London to deliver my despatches at the Admiralty, and proposed sleeping for the night at my old quarters at the Woolpack, and leaving in the morning; but Mr. Merrick would not hear of this, and insisted on my stopping at his house, and said, "The highwayman's horse is ready for you, and I will speak to the mayor that you shall have a fitting escort; for it is proper, when Liverpool sends despatches like these to London, that she should make a suitable display."

When I landed, the mayor was on the quay-side, and I had with him to go to the town hall, and there, to the burgesses and merchants of the town, I had again to narrate the principal occurrences of our voyage, and to none was more appre-

ciation shown than to George Dormer's successful carrying off of his bride ; and something of my suit for Miss Penmore's hand having been spread abroad, some one in the audience shouted, "Young mon, thee should tak' a leaf oot o' thy friend's book," a remark which elicited much laughter and applause.

At Mr. Merrick's in the evening we had to fight all our battles over again, and Tom's mother and sisters shuddered, and wept, and laughed, and declared that he should never again tempt the dangers of the sea.

At ten o'clock I begged leave to retire, as I should have to leave early in the morning ; and Tom said, "I, too, must go to rest, as I must go with Bob."

His mother persuaded him to remain at home but he stoutly insisted that he would not leave me until I was safely married to Miss Penmore.

At six in the morning the household was all astir to see us start. Standen, who was delighted to see his young master home again, made one of the party, and Toby was again put on a horse, much to his disgust, as he said he had forgotten all about riding since he had been away in the *Black Prince*. Six stout fellows, well mounted and armed, had been provided by the mayor to accompany me, and the mayor himself, who had come to wish us God speed, told me I was not to

scruple for expense to rig them out in London, so that I might make a show when I went to present my despatches at the Admiralty. I would fain have taken Jago and Cundy with me, but they said that horses were craft they knew nothing about, and that they would tramp to London to see me married. I could not hear of this, but asked Mr. Merrick to see that they were sent up by waggon to the Golden Lion, where Tom and I intended as before to put up when in London.

Our journey to London was almost a triumphal progress, our escort spreading everywhere the news that we were the bearers of despatches ; and country squires, parson and all, where we had to stay the nights, vied in showing us hospitality. As we passed the place where Trevor had been frightened by Toby's black face, I said to Tom—

"I wonder where Trevor is now?"

"Yes, I wonder," answered Merrick. "He has done something good, for he has paid for the *Saint Pierre*, and since then my father has heard nothing of him ; but I dare say that Sir John Dormer will be able to give us some news about him."

As soon as we arrived at the Golden Lion, we sent a messenger to Sir John to apprise him of our arrival, and in less than an hour George Dormer came to see us, with a reply from his uncle, that he

had sent to the Admiralty to say that we should present our despatches at nine o'clock on the following morning.

As may be imagined, we had much to talk about, and George declared himself to be the happiest and luckiest dog alive, and that every day he found fresh reason to thank his stars that he had married Donna Juanita.

I asked him if he had heard anything of Trevor, when he smiled and said that Trevor was now in London, and that he had sent to him to tell of our arrival, and that we would most likely see him in the morning, when he would tell his own story. My courtship of Muriel was also spoken about, and George told us that he had seen Captain Penmore that morning as he arrived from Plymouth, where he had left his ship, and he had told him that Sir Rupert and his family would soon be in London, but that, though he had spoken to his uncle on my behalf, he still remained obdurate. "But never mind, Bob ; you have helped in my marriage, and I am determined to be present at yours. It will go hard with us if we do not find some way of bringing the old gentleman to listen to reason, and if he won't, there are ways and means of doing without his consent."

We were now interrupted by the arrival of the tailor we had sent for, and had to busy ourselves in preparing for our escort and ourselves to appear

in fitting trim when we went to the Admiralty on the following morning; and when this was done, we were by no means sorry to seek our beds. George, on leaving us, said that he would come for us with his uncle in the morning at eight o'clock, and that he would make arrangements for us to leave the *Golden Lion* the next day, and lodge with him in a house which he had taken in one of the new streets near the Haymarket.

We were up betimes in the morning, and dressed ourselves carefully, and looked to the appearance of the men the mayor had sent with us from Liverpool, who made a brave show in their new coats and clothes. The despatches of Admiral Thompson and my log-book I had wrapped up in a handsome piece of silk, and then all being ready, Tom and I had our breakfasts. We were just finishing our meal, and had sent orders for our men to mount their horses and bring out ours, when we heard a great shouting and hurrahing in the street, and sending for the landlord to inquire the reason, he told us that a large crowd had assembled, having heard that there was a captain lodging there who had beat the French, and that they were all eager for a view of him.

"Last time, Bob, they put us down as highway-men, and howled at us. You should go and show yourself to them."

"Do, your honour," said the host. "They are

good-humoured now, but a small thing puts them out, and they may begin throwing stones."

I would fain have not gone out, but the noise increased so much that, to pacify the mob, Tom and I showed ourselves at one of the windows, and were greeted with volleys of cheers for England and her navy, and howls against the French and Spaniards.

When the uproar was at its height, I saw the coach of Sir John, attended by four running footmen making way for it. Sir John was evidently popular with the crowd, for when they recognized him they cheered and shouted for him.

After some difficulty the coach drew up at the door, and Tom and I got in, and found George Dormer with his uncle.

"Welcome, Captain Hawkins," said Sir John, "and welcome, Mr. Merrick. I hear you have been fighting like Paladins, and come home covered with glory and renown. This nephew of mine, too, has to thank you for winning him a bonnie bride. I own I don't like our English folk marrying papists and foreigners, but his wife says she is neither one nor the other now; and the Jack Priest whom you caught has unfrocked himself, and is now the most sedate of major-domos for Master George."

We thanked Sir John, and asked after his

wife and daughters, whom he said were well, and hoped to see us after our visit to the Admiralty.

All the way to the Admiralty we were followed by shouting crowds, and it took all the efforts of Sir John's footmen, aided by my men from Liverpool, to clear a way for us. When we arrived we were ushered into a waiting-room, and told that Lord Temple would see us in a few minutes. We had scarcely to wait at all before a gentleman came and said his lordship was waiting for us, and, following him into another room, we found Lord Temple and some other gentlemen waiting for us.

CHAPTER XXV.

SIR JOHN DORMER, who was well known to his lordship, presented Merrick and myself to his lordship, and I handed Admiral Thompson's despatches to him, and also showed him the entries in my log-book.

"For Gad, sir," said Lord Temple, "you have done well indeed, and I do not know how we can thank you. I will speak to Mr. Pitt about you. Admiral Thompson's victory was a most important one, and it enabled Sir Harry Smith to carry out his plans successfully. Those despatches, too, that you took and gave Admiral Forsyth, have enabled us to turn the tables on the French. Instead of their sweeping our trade from the west coast of Africa, we have stopped the squadron they were sending there, and are now fitting out an expedition against Goree. Fore George, sir, you ought to join it!"

The other gentlemen, some of whom I learned were admirals, and some members of the Government, shook hands with me, and congratulated me

on what they were pleased to term my gallant achievements; and then, on a hint from Sir John we withdrew, Lord Temple telling me that I should hear from him shortly.

On leaving the Admiralty, we all went to Sir John's house, and there Lady and the Miss Dormers made us tell all our story over again, while George went to fetch his wife, who, he said, was dying to thank Merrick and me for the share we had had in promoting their union. I was delighted, when Mrs. Dormer came, with her charming manner and the delicate way in which she consoled me about Muriel.

Just before the dinner-hour the door opened, and a servant announced Sir Ralph Trevor. I started, and, looking up, saw the whilom Captain Starlight walking into the room, dressed in the height of the fashion. I stared at George and Tom, and the former said, "Let me introduce you to Sir Ralph Trevor, baronet, of Trevor Royal, in the county of Northumberland."

"What does this all mean?" I said.

"It is a long story," said Sir Ralph, "but through the good offices of Sir John, I have had my title and estates restored to me, and I will tell you all about it afterwards; but you I must indeed congratulate. There are broadsheets being hawked about the streets, containing a full, true, and veracious account of the voyage of the *Black*

Prince, including desperate fights with murdering pirates, and total destruction of the French fleet, with a life of her captain, Robert Hawkins. I'faith, you are the most famous man in London town to-day."

All the swagger of Captain Starlight had vanished, and so had the salt-water manners of the seaman. Trevor and Sir Ralph now conducted himself like the high-bred gentleman he really was; and I could, both at dinner and afterwards, see that the younger Miss Dormer was by no means indifferent to the handsome baronet, and that both Sir John and Lady Dormer looked upon his suit with favouring eyes.

After dinner, when the ladies had left us, Sir Ralph, in a few words, told me what had been his fortune since he left us at Sierra Leone. He had made a remarkably quick passage home, and had come to London to see Sir John, who had put him in communication with the Government, with a view of his obtaining information from France for them. His services were accepted, and he was able to prove of great use, and, on being asked if he wanted any reward, he asked to be permitted to assume the title of his grandfather, who had been beheaded in 1715, for taking part in the Jacobite plots of that time. His father having died abroad, this was at once granted, and since that he had managed, with Sir John's assistance,

to get his family estates restored to him, and was now, as he said, in his proper position ; " Though," he said, " if you had not taken me by the hand when you did, I know not what I should have ended in becoming.'

I was delighted to hear of Trevor's good fortune, and would have questioned him further, when the entry of Captain Penmore put a stop to our conversation, as I had what to me was much more interesting matter to talk about.

Captain Penmore told me that he had seen his uncle at Plymouth, and had endeavoured to urge my suit, but without avail ; and that, as he could see no hopes of moving him, he advised me, when Sir Rupert arrived in London, to carry off Muriel, and, having a clergyman in waiting, marry her out of hand. He had proposed this to Muriel in a short talk he had managed to have with her alone, and the brave girl had consented. " And now," said he, " I am sure all your friends will help you." George Dormer, Trevor, and Tom Merrick all said that they would assist in any way they could, and, on our taking Sir John into our confidence, he said that as soon as I was married I could bring my bride to his house, and he would guarantee that Sir Rupert would not molest us. " Anyway, when once you're married he can't unmarry you, and will have to accept you as a son-in-law."

I felt very unsettled waiting for the arrival of

Muriel in London, for until she came we could decide upon no plan of operations. In the mean time, Lord Temple did not forget his promise of mentioning me to his brother-in-law, the great minister, Pitt, who did me the honour of desiring me to wait upon him, which I accordingly did, and he received me in a most courteous manner, and said that he had mentioned my name to his Majesty, who was graciously pleased to express a desire to see me, and hear from my own lips a narration of the cruise of the *Black Prince*.

I was introduced to the king at St. James's Palace, after the conclusion of a council, by the prime minister, and on my kneeling and kissing his hand, his Majesty said, "Get up," and, speaking with a strong foreign accent, told me to tell my own story in my own way. I, as briefly as I could, narrated the principal events that had taken place during my voyage, the king repeatedly ejaculating, "It is wonderful;" and, when I had finished, extended his hand for me to kiss, and dismissed me, saying that he would not forget me. Mr. Pitt, when we left the presence, told me that he had recommended me for the honour of knighthood, but that the King had said that he could not remember any precedent for knighting a captain of a privateer, and that, though he had urged that Drake and Raleigh would be considered with most of the Elizabethan naval worthies as privateers in the present

age, his Majesty had replied that times were changed, but that he believed and hoped that his Majesty would be prevailed on to reconsider his determination.

Three days after my interview with the King, Captain Penmore came to George Dormer's house, where I was now staying together with Tom Merrick, and told me that his uncle and his family had arrived in London the day before, and had taken up their abode in a house in St. James's Square, which he had inherited with his title and estates, and that his intention was to bring Muriel out into the gay world, in the hopes that she might make a marriage which he would consider befitting her family and fortune.

"Now, Senhor Hawkins," said Mrs. Dormer, "you will have to do as George did, and steal your wife. At these balls and festas to which Miss Penmore must go, you will meet her, and you must one night do what you have not done before—run away, only you must have your prize when you run."

"Certainly, madam, I will do my best, and I shall, with the example of your husband before me, be bold and hopeful of success."

Muriel was soon noted everywhere for her beauty, and became one of the reigning toasts, and, although I often saw her at drums and receptions at court, I could never manage to get a word with her, so closely and jealously was she watched by her father,

though her eyes told me, perhaps, more eloquently than words could have done that her feelings towards me were unchanged. I watched for an opportunity to carry her off, but though I had many times men ready with my friends to carry off her chair on her way to and from the different entertainments, her father, who evidently suspected that I intended something of the kind, had her always guarded by footmen and linkbearers in such numbers that, without causing a riot and disturbance, we could not carry our plans into effect, more especially as her father always shared her sedan with her, and would have had to be carried off with her. Matters continued for some time in this most unsatisfactory state, and I was beginning almost to despair of compassing my object, when one day I received a message from Mr. Pitt, desiring me to call on him without delay.

On my repairing to his house, much wondering at what could be the cause of his wishing to see me, he told me that the governorship of South Carolina was vacant, and that, if I would accept of the appointment, he had decided on recommending me to his Majesty for the post, and added that there had been precedents for the conferring of knighthood on Colonial governors, and that the King could no longer refuse me that honour, which he was pleased to say I fully merited.

This offer took me quite by surprise, and I could

hardly express my thanks in a fitting manner to the minister, but I told him I did not see how I could accept it.

He seemed both surprised and vexed, and pressed me to give my reasons, and at last I told him of my relations with Muriel, and of her father's persistent refusal to countenance my suit.

Mr. Pitt said, "Accept this, and however madly proud of his family Sir Rupert may be, he surely cannot refuse the hand of his daughter to the governor of the colony where but a short time ago he was a merchant and planter; and I am sure Sir Robert Hawkins is as good a name as Sir Rupert Penmore. Why, the name of Hawkins, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, gained a lustre which no history has shed on that of Penmore."

I replied that certainly I was proud of my ancestor.

"Your ancestor, sir? and Sir Rupert talks of family! Go to! Accept this, and Sir Rupert must give you permission to marry his daughter or, if he won't, I will assist you to marry her without his will."

I accordingly expressed my readiness to accept the post he so kindly offered to me, and made haste to tell Dormer and Merrick of my good fortune. Whilst we were speaking about it Captain Penmore came in, and instantly proposed that he should be bearer of formal proposals on my behalf

to his uncle—"for," he said, "surely he cannot be so mad as to continue his objections now."

Merrick, when Captain Penmore had left, said "Well, now I and Trevor may be married."

"Married! What do you mean?"

"Why, man, you have been so occupied with your own affairs that you have been blind to all else. Sir John's two daughters have promised their hands to Sir Ralph and myself, but they protest that they will not marry until you are united to Miss Penmore, as they say we should have assisted you to carry her off long ere this."

I waited most anxiously for the return of Captain Penmore, and fell into a mood of reverie and castle-building, thinking what I should do when I was married. From these dreams I was rudely aroused by the return of Captain Penmore, whose face bore an expression of discontent and vexation, and who burst out, as he entered the room, "That uncle of mine is the most unreasonable, cantankerous old curmudgeon that ever breathed! He says the King may make knights and governors, but he cannot give a man a pedigree, and raved of Pol, Tre, and Pen, King Arthur, and all sorts of nonsense, till I verily believed his head was turned by his vanity. But never say die, my lad. Muriel was in the room when I first saw my uncle, though he ordered her out pretty soon, and she told me to tell you that if she had to wait a hundred years

she would marry no one but you. This, as you may imagine, has not improved Sir Rupert's temper; but I'm determined that you shall be my cousin, even if you have to carry my uncle off, as well as his daughter."

I was on the point of going back to Mr. Pitt, to tell him I could not leave England, but my friends dissuaded me from such a rash step, and we all together went to Sir John Dormer to tell him our news.

Sir John said he was delighted to hear of my good fortune. "And now, see if an old man's wit is not as good as that of all you boys together. I will give a banquet to the new governor, and I shall invite Mr. Pitt and all the merchants interested in the colony, and Sir Rupert Penmore, who will not be able to refuse, for it would be making his family differences a public matter."

"I cannot see how that would help me, sir," I replied.

"Gently, my boy, if Sir Rupert comes, he must leave his daughter alone, and I will send Lady Dormer to ask for her to come to a drum at my house after the banquet, and her mother, who you say is in favour of your marriage, will not refuse. I shall have a clergyman in waiting, and you shall be married in this house immediately after the banquet, and I shall have the pleasure of introducing Sir Robert and Lady Hawkins to Sir Rupert."

"If you can manage it, sir, I see no objection."

"Of course you don't."

The worthy knight told me to leave all in his hands, and not to mention the matter to any one, save Mr. Pitt, if he should ask me any questions about it.

Soon after this I received a message from the prime minister, to say that I was to have an audience of the King the next morning, to kiss hands on my appointment, and also to receive the honour of knighthood.

I accordingly, the next morning, went to the prime minister's house, and the first thing he spoke about was my marriage. I told him of Sir John's plans, and he said, "I will be one of the witnesses of the wedding." The audience of the King was very brief, but I do not know that there was a happier or more hopeful man than I, when, after the "accolade," he said, "Rise up Sir Robert Hawkins."

Sir Rupert Penmore at first refused to be present at the banquet given by Sir John Dormer, but Mr. Pitt caused an intimation to be conveyed to him that his absence would be regarded by the King with disfavour. He was fain to come, although at the banquet his face was quite out of keeping with the genial looks of those by whom he was surrounded.

When the banquet was finished, Mr. Pitt singled

out Sir Rupert, and said he wanted much to speak to him about South Carolina, and begged him to accompany him to Sir John Dormer's house for the purpose, and Sir Rupert was not able to refuse. I had gone there before them, and found my Muriel waiting for me, with her mother and Lady Dormer and a clergyman.

All was in readiness for the marriage, and I begged the parson to proceed at once, but he said he had Mr. Pitt's commands not to commence until he arrived. We had not long to wait, and Mr. Pitt gave my blushing bride away, and then, the knot being tied, we all proceeded to a saloon, where the company were assembled, and Mr. Pitt, leading us up to Sir Rupert, presented us to him as Sir Robert and Lady Hawkins.

Sir Rupert's face paled with rage, but he said never a word, and left the room. Lady Penmore went after him to try and calm him, and the guests, understanding what had occurred, soon left, and I and my wife, after receiving the congratulations of my tried friends, were left alone.

Next day Muriel received a violent letter from her father ; but Mr. Pitt also wrote, and said that he intended to persuade the King to interfere, and a few days after, Sir Rupert, in obedience to the royal command, received my wife and me, and I must in honour say that, violent and unreasonable as his opposition to our marriage was, from that

day to this he has never, in any one way, shown that he ever regarded me as an unsuitable son-in-law. Captain Penmore, in the *Calliope*, was ordered to take me to the seat of my government, and I was glad to say that the *Black Prince's* crew to a man shipped on board her at my recommendation. Before we sailed, however, I was present at the weddings of Tom Merrick and Sir Ralph Trevor; and Tom, on behalf of his father, on his wedding-day, told the worthy Trenal that he was to be the master of the *Black Prince*.

In South Carolina, Muriel's relations ensured me a warm reception, and when, after seven years, we returned to England, I was rejoiced to find all my friends alive and prosperous, and so, I am happy to say, we and they continue to the present time.

THE END.

