James Fenimore Cooper

The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea

original

Джеймс Фенимор Купер
The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea

Текст предоставлен правообладателем
http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=33813472
The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea / J. F. Cooper: T8RUGRAM; Москва; 2018
ISBN 978-5-521-06446-5

Аннотация

In 1823, Cooper began writing *The Pilot,* which he saw as a sea novel that seamen would appreciate for its fidelity and yet one that landsmen could understand.

The hero of *The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea* – modeled on John Paul Jones – leads the American Navy in dangerous raids on the English coast. James Fenimore Cooper's fourth novelhelped start the genre of sea novels.

Содержание

James Fenimore Cooper
The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea

* * *

TO WILLIAM BRANFORD SHUBRICK, ESQ.,
U. S. NAVY.

MY DEAR SHUBRICK,

Each year brings some new and melancholy chasm in what is now the brief list of my naval friends and former associates. War, disease, and the casualties of a hazardous profession have made fearful inroads in the limited number; while the places of the dead are supplied by names that to me are those of strangers. With the consequences of these sad changes before me, I cherish the recollection of those with whom I once lived in close familiarity with peculiar interest, and feel a triumph in their growing reputations, that is but little short of their own honest pride. But neither time nor separation has shaken our intimacy: and I know that in dedicating to you this volume, I tell you nothing new, when I add that it is a tribute paid to an enduring friendship, by

Your old Messmate,
THE AUTHOR.

Preface

It is probable a true history of human events would show that a far larger proportion of our acts are the results of sudden impulses and accident, than of that reason of which we so much boast. However true, or false, this opinion may be in more important matters, it is certainly and strictly correct as relates to the conception and execution of this book.

The Pilot was published in 1823. This was not long after the appearance of «The PIRATE,» a work which, it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, has a direct connection with the sea. In a conversation with a friend, a man of polished taste and extensive reading, the authorship of the Scottish novels came under discussion. The claims of Sir Walter were a little distrusted, on account of the peculiar and minute information that the romances were then very generally thought to display. The Pirate was cited as a very marked instance of this universal knowledge, and it was wondered where a man of Scott's habits and associations could have become so familiar with the sea. The writer had frequently observed that there was much looseness in this universal knowledge, and that the secret of its success was to be traced to the power of creating that *resemblance,* which is so remarkably exhibited in those worldrenowned fictions, rather than to any very accurate information on the part of their author. It would have been hypercritical to object to the

Pirate, that it was not strictly nautical, or true in its details; but, when the reverse was urged as a proof of what, considering the character of other portions of the work, would have been most extraordinary attainments, it was a sort of provocation to dispute the seamanship of the Pirate, a quality to which the book has certainly very little just pretension. The result of this conversation was a sudden determination to produce a work which, if it had no other merit, might present truer pictures of the ocean and ships than any that are to be found in the Pirate. To this unpremeditated decision, purely an impulse, is not only the Pilot due, but a tolerably numerous school of nautical romances that have succeeded it.

The author had many misgivings concerning the success of the undertaking, after he had made some progress in the work; the opinions of his different friends being anything but encouraging. One would declare that the sea could not be made interesting; that it was tame, monotonous, and without any other movement than unpleasant storms, and that, for his part, the less he got of it the better. The women very generally protested that such a book would have the odor of bilge water, and that it would give them the *maladie de mer.* Not a single individual among all those who discussed the merits of the project, within the range of the author's knowledge, either spoke, or looked, encouragingly. It is probable that all these persons anticipated a signal failure.

So very discouraging did these ominous opinions get to be that the writer was, once or twice, tempted to throw his manuscript

aside, and turn to something new. A favorable opinion, however, coming from a very unexpected quarter, put a new face on the matter, and raised new hopes. Among the intimate friends of the writer was an Englishman, who possessed most of the peculiar qualities of the educated of his country. He was learned even, had a taste that was so just as always to command respect, but was prejudiced, and particularly so in all that related to this country and its literature. He could never be persuaded to admire Bryant's Water-Fowl, and this mainly because if it were accepted as good poetry, it must be placed at once amongst the finest fugitive pieces of the language. Of the Thanatopsis he thought better, though inclined to suspect it of being a plagiarism. To the tender mercies of this one- sided critic, who had never affected to compliment the previous works of the author, the sheets of a volume of the Pilot were committed, with scarce an expectation of his liking them. The reverse proved to be the case; – he expressed himself highly gratified, and predicted a success for the book which it probably never attained.

Thus encouraged, one more experiment was made, a seaman being selected for the critic. A kinsman, a namesake, and an old messmate of the author, one now in command on a foreign station, was chosen, and a considerable portion of the first volume was read to him. There is no wish to conceal the satisfaction with which the effect on this listener was observed. He treated the whole matter as fact, and his criticisms were strictly professional, and perfectly just. But the interest he

betrayed could not be mistaken. It gave a perfect and most gratifying assurance that the work would be more likely to find favor with nautical men than with any other class of readers.

The Pilot could scarcely be a favorite with females. The story has little interest for them, nor was it much heeded by the author of the book, in the progress of his labors. His aim was to illustrate vessels and the ocean, rather than to draw any pictures of sentiment and love. In this last respect, the book has small claims on the reader's attention, though it is hoped that the story has sufficient interest to relieve the more strictly nautical features of the work.

It would be affectation to deny that the Pilot met with a most unlooked- for success. The novelty of the design probably contributed a large share of this result. Sea-tales came into vogue, as a consequence; and, as every practical part of knowledge has its uses, something has been gained by letting the landsman into the secrets of the seaman's manner of life. Perhaps, in some small degree, an interest has been awakened in behalf of a very numerous, and what has hitherto been a sort of proscribed class of men, that may directly tend to a melioration of their condition.

It is not easy to make the public comprehend all the necessities of a service afloat. With several hundred rude beings confined within the narrow limits of a vessel, men of all nations and of the lowest habits, it would be to the last degree indiscreet to commence their reformation by relaxing the bonds of discipline, under the mistaken impulses of a false philanthropy. It has a

lofty sound, to be sure, to talk about American citizens being too good to be brought under the lash, upon the high seas; but he must have a very mistaken notion who does not see that tens of thousands of these pretending persons on shore, even, would be greatly benefited by a little judicious flogging. It is the judgment in administering, and not the mode of punishment, that requires to be looked into; and, in this respect, there has certainly been a great improvement of late years. It is seldom, indeed, that any institution, practice, or system, is improved by the blind interference of those who know nothing about it. Better would it be to trust to the experience of those who have long governed turbulent men, than to the impulsive experiments of those who rarely regard more than one side of a question, and that the most showy and glittering; having, quite half of the time, some selfish personal end to answer.

There is an uneasy desire among a vast many well-disposed persons to get the fruits of the Christian Faith, without troubling themselves about the Faith itself. This is done under the sanction of Peace Societies, Temperance and Moral Reform Societies, in which the end is too often mistaken for the means. When the Almighty sent His Son on earth, it was to point out the way in which all this was to be brought about, by means of the Church; but men have so frittered away that body of divine organization, through their divisions and subdivisions, all arising from human conceit, that it is no longer regarded as the agency it was so obviously intended to be, and various contrivances are to be

employed as substitutes for that which proceeded directly from the Son of God!

Among the efforts of the day, however, there is one connected with the moral improvement of the sailor that commands our profound respect. Cut off from most of the charities of life for so large a portion of his time, deprived altogether of association with the gentler and better portions of the other sex, and living a man in a degree proscribed, amid the many signs of advancement that distinguish the age, it was time that he should be remembered and singled out, and become the subject of combined and Christian philanthropy. There is much reason to believe that the effort, now making in the right direction and under proper auspices, will be successful; and that it will cause the lash to be laid aside in the best and most rational manner, – by rendering its use unnecessary.

COOPERSTOWN, *August* 20, 1829.

Chapter I

"Sullen waves, incessant rolling,
Rudely dash'd against her sides."

Song

A single glance at the map will make the reader acquainted with the position of the eastern coast of the Island of Great Britain, as connected with the shores of the opposite continent. Together they form the boundaries of the small sea that has for ages been known to the world as the scene of maritime exploits, and as the great avenue through which commerce and war have conducted the fleets of the northern nations of Europe. Over this sea the islanders long asserted a jurisdiction, exceeding that which reason concedes to any power on the highway of nations, and which frequently led to conflicts that caused an expenditure of blood and treasure, utterly disproportioned to the advantages that can ever arise from the maintenance of a useless and abstract right. It is across the waters of this disputed ocean that we shall attempt to conduct our readers, selecting a period for our incidents that has a peculiar interest for every American, not only because it was the birthday of his nation, but because it was also the era when reason and common sense began to take the place of custom and feudal practices in the management of the affairs

of nations.

Soon after the events of the revolution had involved the kingdoms of France and Spain, and the republics of Holland, in our quarrel, a group of laborers was collected in a field that lay exposed to the winds of the ocean, on the north-eastern coast of England. These men were lightening their toil, and cheering the gloom of a day in December, by uttering their crude opinions on the political aspects of the times. The fact that England was engaged in a war with some of her dependencies on the other side of the Atlantic had long been known to them, after the manner that faint rumors of distant and uninteresting events gain on the ear; but now that nations, with whom she had been used to battle, were armed against her in the quarrel, the din of war had disturbed the quiet even of these secluded and illiterate rustics. The principal speakers, on the occasion, were a Scotch drover, who was waiting the leisure of the occupant of the fields, and an Irish laborer, who had found his way across the Channel, and thus far over the island, in quest of employment.

"The Nagurs wouldn't have been a job at all for ould England, letting alone Ireland," said the latter, "if these French and Spanishers hadn't been troubling themselves in the matter. I'm sure its but little reason I have for thanking them, if a man is to kape as sober as a praist at mass, for fear he should find himself a souldier, and he knowing nothing about the same."

"Hoot! mon! ye ken but little of raising an airmy in Ireland, if ye mak' a drum o' a whiskey keg," said the drover, winking to the

listeners. “Noo, in the north, they ca’ a gathering of the folk, and follow the pipes as graciously as ye wad journey kirkward o’ a Sabbath morn. I’ve seen a’ the names o’ a Heeland raj’ment on a sma’ bit paper, that ye might cover wi’ a leddy’s hand. They war’ a’ Camerons and M’Donalds, though they paraded sax hundred men! But what ha’ ye gotten here! That chield has an ow’r liking to the land for a seafaring body; an’ if the bottom o’ the sea be onything like the top o’t, he’s in gr’at danger o’ a shipwreck!”

This unexpected change in the discourse drew all eyes on the object toward which the staff of the observant drover was pointed. To the utter amazement of every individual present, a small vessel was seen moving slowly round a point of land that formed one of the sides of the little bay, to which the field the laborers were in composed the other. There was something very peculiar in the externals of this unusual visitor, which added in no small degree to the surprise created by her appearance in that retired place. None but the smallest vessels, and those rarely, or, at long intervals, a desperate smuggler, were ever known to venture so close to the land, amid the sand-bars and sunken rocks with which that immediate coast abounded. The adventurous mariners who now attempted this dangerous navigation in so wanton, and, apparently, so heedless a manner, were in a low black schooner, whose hull seemed utterly disproportioned to the raking masts it upheld, which, in their turn, supported a lighter set of spars, that tapered away until their upper extremities appeared no larger than the lazy pennant, that in vain endeavored to display

its length in the light breeze.

The short day of that high northern latitude was already drawing to a close, and the sun was throwing his parting rays obliquely across the waters, touching the gloomy waves here and there with streaks of pale light. The stormy winds of the German Ocean were apparently lulled to rest; and, though the incessant rolling of the surge on the shore heightened the gloomy character of the hour and the view, the light ripple that ruffled the sleeping billows was produced by a gentle air, that blew directly from the land. Notwithstanding this favorable circumstance, there was something threatening in the aspect of the ocean, which was speaking in hollow but deep murmurs, like a volcano on the eve of an eruption, that greatly heightened the feelings of amazement and dread with which the peasants beheld this extraordinary interruption to the quiet of their little bay. With no other sails spread to the action of the air than her heavy mainsail, and one of those light jibs that projected far beyond her bows, the vessel glided over the water with a grace and facility that seemed magical to the beholders, who turned their wondering looks from the schooner to each other in silent amazement. At length the drover spoke in a low solemn voice:

"He's a bold chield that steers her! and if that bit craft has wood in her bottom, like the brigantines that ply between Lon'on and the Frith at Leith, he's in mair danger than a prudent mon could wish. Ay! he's by the big rock that shows his head when the tide runs low, but it's no mortal man who can steer long in

the road he's journeying and not speedily find land wi' water a-top o't."

The little schooner, however, still held her way among the rocks and sand-pits, making such slight deviations in her course as proved her to be under the direction of one who knew his danger, until she entered as far into the bay as prudence could at all justify, when her canvas was gathered into folds, seemingly without the agency of hands, and the vessel, after rolling for a few minutes on the long billows that hove in from the ocean, swung round in the currents of the tide, and was held by her anchor.

The peasants now began to make their conjectures more freely concerning the character and object of their visitor; some intimating that she was engaged in contraband trade, and others that her views were hostile, and her business war. A few dark hints were hazarded on the materiality of her construction, for nothing of artificial formation, it was urged, would be ventured by men in such a dangerous place, at a time when even the most inexperienced landsman was enabled to foretell the certain gale. The Scotchman, who, to all the sagacity of his countrymen, added no small portion of their superstition, leaned greatly to the latter conclusion, and had begun to express this sentiment warily with reverence, when the child of Erin, who appeared not to possess any very definite ideas on the subject interrupted him, by exclaiming:

"Faith! there's two of them! a big and a little! sure the bogles of the saa likes good company the same as any other Christians!"

"Twa!" echoed the drover; "twa! ill luck bides o' some o' ye. Twa craft a sailing without hand to guide them, in sic a place as this, whar' eyesight is na guid enough to show the dangers, bodes evil to a' that luik thereon. Hoot! she's na yearling the tither! Luik, mon! luik! she's a gallant boat, and a gr'at:" he paused, raised his pack from the ground, and first giving one searching look at the objects of his suspicions, he nodded with great sagacity to the listeners, and continued, as he moved slowly towards the interior of the country, "I should na wonder if she carried King George's commission aboot her: weel, weel, I wull journey upward to the town, and ha' a crack wi' the good mon; for they craft have a suspeecious aspect, and the sma' bit thing wu'ld nab a mon quite easy, and the big ane wu'ld hold us a' and no feel we war' in her."

This sagacious warning caused a general movement in the party, for the intelligence of a hot press was among the rumors of the times. The husbandmen collected their implements of labor, and retired homewards; though many a curious eye was bent on the movements of the vessels from the distant hills, but very few of those not immediately interested in the mysterious visitors ventured to approach the little rocky cliffs that lined the bay.

The vessel that occasioned these cautious movements was a gallant ship, whose huge hull, lofty masts, and square yards loomed in the evening's haze, above the sea, like a distant mountain rising from the deep. She carried but little sail, and though she warily avoided the near approach to the land that the

schooner had attempted, the similarity of their movements was sufficiently apparent to warrant the conjecture that they were employed on the same duty. The frigate, for the ship belonged to this class of vessels, floated across the entrance of the little bay, majestically in the tide, with barely enough motion through the water to govern her movements, until she arrived opposite to the place where her consort lay, when she hove up heavily into the wind, squared the enormous yards on her mainmast, and attempted, in counteracting the power of her sails by each other, to remain stationary; but the light air that had at no time swelled her heavy canvas to the utmost began to fail, and the long waves that rolled in from the ocean ceased to be ruffled with the breeze from the land. The currents and the billows were fast sweeping the frigate towards one of the points of the estuary, where the black heads of the rocks could be seen running far into the sea, and in their turn the mariners of the ship dropped an anchor to the bottom, and drew her sails in festoons to the yards. As the vessel swung round to the tide, a heavy ensign was raised to her peak, and a current of air opening for a moment its folds, the white field and red cross, that distinguish the flag of England, were displayed to view. So much even the wary drover had loitered at a distance to behold; but when a boat was launched from either vessel, he quickened his steps, observing to his wondering and amused companions, that "they craft were a'thegither mair bonny to luik on than to abide wi'."

A numerous crew manned the barge that was lowered from

the frigate, which, after receiving an officer, with an attendant youth, left the ship, and moved with a measured stroke of its oars directly towards the head of the bay. As it passed at a short distance from the schooner a light whale-boat, pulled by four athletic men, shot from her side, and rather dancing over than cutting through the waves, crossed her course with a wonderful velocity. As the boats approached each other, the men, in obedience to signals from their officers, suspended their efforts, and for a few minutes they floated at rest, during which time there was the following dialogue:

"Is the old man mad!" exclaimed the young officer in the whale-boat, when his men had ceased rowing; "does he think that the bottom of the Ariel is made of iron, and that a rock can't knock a hole in it! or does he think she is manned with alligators, who can't be drowned!"

A languid smile played for a moment round the handsome features of the young man, who was rather reclining than sitting in the stern-sheets of the barge, as he replied:

"He knows your prudence too well, Captain Barnstable, to fear either the wreck of your vessel or the drowning of her crew. How near the bottom does your keel lie?"

"I am afraid to sound," returned Barnstable. "I have never the heart to touch a lead-line when I see the rocks coming up to breathe like so many porpoises."

"You are afloat!" exclaimed the other, with a vehemence that denoted an abundance of latent fire.

"Afloat!" echoed his friend; "ay, the little Ariel would float in air!" As he spoke, he rose in the boat, and lifting his leathern sea-cap from his head, stroked back the thick clusters of black locks which shadowed his sun-burnt countenance, while he viewed his little vessel with the complacency of a seaman who was proud of her qualities. "But it's close work, Mr. Griffith, when a man rides to a single anchor in a place like this, and at such a nightfall. What are the orders?"

"I shall pull into the surf and let go a grapnel; you will take Mr. Merry into your whale-boat, and try to drive her through the breakers on the beach."

"Beach!" retorted Barnstable; "do you call a perpendicular rock of a hundred feet in height a beach!"

"We shall not dispute about terms," said Griffith, smiling, "but you must manage to get on the shore; we have seen the signal from the land, and know that the pilot, whom we have so long expected, is ready to come off!"

Barnstable shook his head with a grave air, as he muttered to himself, "This is droll navigation; first we run into an unfrequented bay that is full of rocks, and sandpits, and shoals, and then we get off our pilot. But how am I to know him?"

"Merry will give you the password, and tell you where to look for him. I would land myself, but my orders forbid it. If you meet with difficulties, show three oar-blades in a row, and I will pull in to your assistance. Three oars on end and a pistol will bring the fire ofmy muskets, and the signal repeated from the barge

will draw a shot from the ship."

"I thank you, I thank you," said Barnstable, carelessly; "I believe I can fight my own battles against all the enemies we are likely to fall in with on this coast. But the old man is surely mad, I would – –"

"You would obey his orders if he were here, and you will now please to obey mine," said Griffith, in a tone that the friendly expression of his eye contradicted. "Pull in, and keep a lookout for a small man in a drab pea-jacket; Merry will give you the word; if he answer it, bring him off to the barge."

The young men now nodded familiarly and kindly to each other, and the boy who was called Mr. Merry having changed his place from the barge to the whale-boat, Barnstable threw himself into his seat, and making a signal with his hand, his men again bent to their oars. The light vessel shot away from her companion, and dashed in boldly towards the rocks; after skirting the shore for some distance in quest of a favorable place, she was suddenly turned, and dashing over the broken waves, was run upon a spot where a landing could be effected in safety.

In the mean time the barge followed these movements, at some distance, with a more measured progress, and when the whale-boat was observed to be drawn up alongside of a rock, the promised grapnel was cast into the water, and her crew deliberately proceeded to get their firearms in a state for immediate service. Everything appeared to be done in obedience to strict orders that must have been previously communicated;

for the young man, who has been introduced to the reader by the name of Griffith, seldom spoke, and then only in the pithy expressions that are apt to fall from those who are sure of obedience. When the boat had brought up to her grapnel, he sunk back at his length on the cushioned seats of the barge, and drawing his hat over his eyes in a listless manner, he continued for many minutes apparently absorbed in thoughts altogether foreign to his present situation. Occasionally he rose, and would first bend his looks in quest of his companions on the shore, and then, turning his expressive eyes toward the ocean, the abstracted and vacant air, that so often usurped the place of animation and intelligence in his countenance, would give place to the anxious and intelligent look of a seaman gifted with an experience beyond his years. His weather beaten and hardy crew, having made their dispositions for offence, sat in profound silence, with their hands thrust into the bosoms of their jackets, but with their eyes earnestly regarding every cloud that was gathering in the threatening atmosphere, and exchanging looks of deep care, whenever the boat rose higher than usual on one of those long heavy groundswells, that were heaving in from the ocean with increasing rapidity and magnitude.

Chapter II

"A horseman's coat shall hide
thy taper shape and comeliness of side:
And with a bolder stride and looser air,
Mingled with men, a man thou must appear."
Prior.

When the whale-boat obtained the position we have described, the young lieutenant, who, in consequence of commanding a schooner, was usually addressed by the title of captain, stepped on the rocks, followed by the youthful midshipman, who had quitted the barge to aid in the hazardous duty of their expedition.

"This is, at best, but a Jacob's ladder we have to climb," said Barnstable, casting his eyes upward at the difficult ascent, "and it's by no means certain that we shall be well received, when we get up, even though we should reach the top."

"We are under the guns of the frigate," returned the boy; "and you remember, sir, three oar-blades and a pistol, repeated from the barge, will draw her fire."

"Yes, on our own heads. Boy, never be so foolish as to trust a long shot. It makes a great smoke and some noise, but it's a terrible uncertain manner of throwing old iron about. In such a business as this, I would sooner trust Tom Coffin and his harpoon to back me, than the best broadside that ever rattled out

of the three decks of a ninety-gun ship. Come, gather your limbs together, and try if you can walk on terra firma, Master Coffin."

The seaman who was addressed by this dire appellation arose slowly from the place where he was stationed as cockswain of the boat, and seemed to ascend high in air by the gradual evolution of numberless folds in his body. When erect, he stood nearly six feet and as many inches in his shoes, though, when elevated in his perpendicular attitude, there was a forward inclination about his head and shoulders that appeared to be the consequence of habitual confinement in limited lodgings. His whole frame was destitute of the rounded outlines of a well-formed man, though his enormous hands furnished a display of bones and sinews which gave indication of gigantic strength. On his head he wore a little, low, brown hat of wool, with an arched top, that threw an expression of peculiar solemnity and hardness over his hard visage, the sharp prominent features of which were completely encircled by a set of black whiskers that began to be grizzled a little with age. One of his hands grasped, with a sort of instinct, the staff of a bright harpoon, the lower end of which he placed firmly on the rock, as, in obedience to the order of his commander, he left the place where, considering his vast dimensions, he had been established in an incredibly small space.

As soon as Captain Barnstable received this addition to his strength, he gave a few precautionary orders to the men in the boat, and proceeded to the difficult task of ascending the rocks. Notwithstanding the great daring and personal agility

of Barnstable, he would have been completely baffled in this attempt, but for the assistance he occasionally received from his cockswain, whose prodigious strength and great length of limbs enabled him to make exertions which it would have been useless for most men to attempt. When within a few feet of the summit, they availed themselves of a projecting rock to pause for consultation and breath, both of which seemed necessary for their further movements.

"This will be but a bad place for a retreat, if we should happen to fall in with enemies," said Barnstable. "Where are we to look for this pilot, Mr. Merry, or how are we to know him; and what certainty have you that he will not betray us?"

"The question you are to put to him is written on this bit of paper," returned the boy, as he handed the other the word of recognition; "we made the signal on the point of the rock at yon headland, but, as he must have seen our boat, he will follow us to this place. As to his betraying us, he seems to have the confidence of Captain Munson, who has kept a bright lookout for him ever since we made the land."

"Ay," muttered the lieutenant, "and I shall have a bright lookout kept on him now we are *on* the land. I like not this business of hugging the shore so closely, nor have I much faith in any traitor. What think you of it, Master Coffin?"

The hardy old seaman, thus addressed, turned his grave visage on his commander, and replied with a becoming gravity:

"Give me a plenty of sea-room, and good canvas, where there

is no occasion for pilots at all, sir. For my part, I was born on board a chebacco-man, and never could see the use of more land than now and then a small island to raise a few vegetables, and to dry your fish – I'm sure the sight of it always makes me feel uncomfortable, unless we have the wind dead offshore."

"Ah! Tom, you are a sensible fellow," said Barnstable, with an air half comic, half serious. "But we must be moving; the sun is just touching those clouds to seaward, and God keep us from riding out this night at anchor in such a place as this."

Laying his hand on a projection of the rock above him, Barnstable swung himself forward, and following this movement with a desperate leap or two, he stood at once on the brow of the cliff. His cockswain very deliberately raised the midshipman after his officer, and proceeding with more caution but less exertion, he soon placed himself by his side.

When they reached the level land that lay above the cliffs and began to inquire, with curious and wary eyes, into the surrounding scenery, the adventurers discovered a cultivated country, divided in the usual manner, by hedges and walls. Only one habitation for man, however, and that a small dilapidated cottage, stood within a mile of them, most of the dwellings being placed as far as convenience would permit from the fogs and damps of the ocean.

"Here seems to be neither anything to apprehend, nor the object of our search," said Barnstable, when he had taken the whole view in his survey: "I fear we have landed to no purpose,

Mr. Merry. What say you, long Tom; see you what we want?"

"I see no pilot, sir," returned the cockswain; "but it's an ill wind that blows luck to nobody; there is a mouthful of fresh meat stowed away under that row of bushes, that would make a double ration to all hands in the Ariel."

The midshipman laughed, as he pointed out to Barnstable the object of the cockswain's solicitude, which proved to be a fat ox, quietly ruminating under a hedge near them.

"There's many a hungry fellow aboard ofus," said the boy, merrily, "who would be glad to second long Tom's motion, if the time and business would permit us to slay the animal."

"It is but a lubber's blow, Mr. Merry," returned the cockswain, without a muscle of his hard face yielding, as he struck the end of his harpoon violently against the earth, and then made a motion toward poising the weapon; "let Captain Barnstable but say the word, and I'll drive the iron through him to the quick; I've sent it to the seizing in many a whale, that hadn't a jacket of such blubber as that fellow wears."

"Pshaw! you are not on a whaling-voyage, where everything that offers is game," said Barnstable, turning himself pettishly away from the beast, as if he distrusted his own forbearance; "but stand fast! I see some one approaching behind the hedge. Look to your arms, Mr. Merry, – the first thing we hear may be a shot."

"Not from that cruiser," cried the thoughtless lad; "he is a younker, like myself, and would hardly dare run down upon such a formidable force as we muster."

"You say true, boy," returned Barnstable, relinquishing the grasp he held on his pistol. "He comes on with caution, as if afraid. He is small, and is in drab, though I should hardly call it a pea-jacket – and yet he may be our man. Stand you both here, while I go and hail him."

As Barnstable walked rapidly towards the hedge, that in part concealed the stranger, the latter stopped suddenly, and seemed to be in doubt whether to advance or to retreat. Before he had decided on either, the active sailor was within a few feet of him.

"Pray, sir," said Barnstable, "what water have we in this bay?"

The slight form of the stranger started, with an extraordinary emotion, at this question, and he shrunk aside involuntarily, as if to conceal his features, before he answered, in a voice that was barely audible:

"I should think it would be the water of the German Ocean."

"Indeed! you must have passed no small part of your short life in the study of geography, to be so well informed," returned the lieutenant; "perhaps, sir, your cunning is also equal to telling me how long we shall sojourn together, if I make you a prisoner, in order to enjoy the benefit of your wit?"

To this alarming intimation, the youth who was addressed made no reply; but as he averted his face, and concealed it with both his hands, the offended seaman, believing that a salutary impression had been made upon the fears of his auditor, was about to proceed with his interrogatories. The singular agitation of the stranger's frame, however, caused the lieutenant

to continue silent a few moments longer, when, to his utter amazement, he discovered that what he had mistaken for alarm was produced by an endeavor, on the part of the youth, to suppress a violent fit of laughter.

"Now, by all the whales in the sea," cried Barnstable, "but you are merry out of season, young gentleman. It's quite bad enough to be ordered to anchor in such a bay as this with a storm brewing before my eyes, without landing to be laughed at by a stripling who has not strength to carry a beard if he had one, when I ought to be getting an offing for the safety of both body and soul. But I'll know more of you and your jokes, if I take you into my own mess, and am giggled out of my sleep for the rest of the cruise."

As the commander of the schooner concluded, he approached the stranger, with an air of offering some violence, but the other shrank back from his extended arm, and exclaimed, with a voice in which real terror had gotten the better of mirth:

"Barnstable! dear Barnstable! would you harm me?"

The sailor recoiled several feet, at this unexpected appeal, and rubbing his eyes, he threw the cap from his head, before he cried:

"What do I hear! and what do I see! There lies the Ariel – and yonder is the frigate. Can this be Katherine Plowden!"

His doubts, if any doubts remained, were soon removed, for the stranger sank on the bank at her side, in an attitude in which female bashfulness was beautifully contrasted with her attire, and gave vent to her mirth in an uncontrollable burst of merriment.

From that moment, all thoughts of his duty, and the pilot, or

even of the Ariel, appeared to be banished from the mind of the seaman, who sprang to her side, and joined in her mirth, though he hardly knew why or wherefore.

When the diverted girl had in some degree recovered her composure, she turned to her companion, who had sat goodnaturedly by her side, content to be laughed at, and said:

"But this is not only silly, but cruel to others. I owe you an explanation of my unexpected appearance, and perhaps, also, of my extraordinary attire."

"I can anticipate everything," cried Barnstable; "you heard that we were on the coast, and have flown to redeem the promises you made me in America. But I ask no more; the chaplain of the frigate —"

"May preach as usual, and to as little purpose," interrupted the disguised female; "but no nuptial benediction shall be pronounced over me, until I have effected the object of this hazardous experiment. You are not usually selfish, Barnstable; would you have me forgetful of the happiness of others?"

"Of whom do you speak?"

"My poor, my devoted cousin. I heard that two vessels answering the description of the frigate and the Ariel were seen hovering on the coast, and I determined at once to have a communication with you. I have followed your movements for a week, in this dress, but have been unsuccessful till now. Today I observed you to approach nearer to the shore than usual, and happily, by being adventurous, I have been successful."

"Ay, God knows we are near enough to the land! But does Captain Munson know of your wish to get on board his ship?"

"Certainly not – none know of it but yourself. I thought that if Griffith and you could learn our situation, you might be tempted to hazard a little to redeem us from our thraldom. In this paper I have prepared such an account as will, I trust, excite all your chivalry, and by which you may govern your movements."

"Our movements!" interrupted Barnstable. "You will pilot us in person."

"Then there's two of them!" said a hoarse voice near them.

The alarmed female shrieked as she recovered her feet, but she still adhered, with instinctive dependence, to the side of her lover. Barnstable, who recognized the tones of his cockswain, bent an angry brow on the sober visage that was peering at them above the hedge, and demanded the meaning of the interruption.

"Seeing you were hull down, sir, and not knowing but the chase might lead you ashore, Mr. Merry thought it best to have a lookout kept. I told him that you were overhauling the mailbags of the messenger for the news, but as he was an officer, sir, and I nothing but a common hand, I did as he ordered."

"Return, sir, where I commanded you to remain," said Barnstable, "and desire Mr. Merry to wait my pleasure."

The cockswain gave the usual reply of an obedient seaman; but before he left the hedge, he stretched out one of his brawny arms towards the ocean, and said, in tones of solemnity suited to his apprehensions and character:

"I showed you how to knot a reef-point, and pass a gasket, Captain Barnstable, nor do I believe you could even take two half-hitches when you first came aboard of the Spalmacitty. These be things that a man is soon expart in, but it takes the time of his nat'ral life to larn to know the weather. There be streaked wind-galls in the offing, that speak as plainly to all that see them, and know God's language in the clouds, as ever you spoke through a trumpet, to shorten sail; besides, sir, don't you hear the sea moaning as if it knew the hour was at hand when it was to wake up from its sleep!"

"Ay, Tom," returned his officer, walking to the edge of the cliffs, and throwing a seaman's glance at the gloomy ocean, "'tis a threatening night indeed; but this pilot must be had – and —"

"Is that the man?" interrupted the cockswain, pointing toward a man who was standing not far from them, an attentive observer of their proceedings, the same time that he was narrowly watched himself by the young midshipman. "God send that he knows his trade well, for the bottom of a ship will need eyes to find its road out of this wild anchorage."

"That must indeed be the man!" exclaimed Barnstable, at once recalled to his duty. He then held a short dialogue with his female companion, whom he left concealed by the hedge, and proceeded to address the stranger. When near enough to be heard, the commander of the schooner demanded:

"What water have you in this bay?"

The stranger, who seemed to expect this question, answered

without the least hesitation:

"Enough to take all out in safety, who have entered with confidence."

"You are the man I seek," cried Barnstable; "are you ready to go off?"

"Both ready and willing," returned the pilot, "and there is need of haste. I would give the best hundred guineas that ever were coined for two hours more use of that sun which has left us, or for even the time of this fading twilight."

"Think you our situation so bad?" said the lieutenant. "Follow this gentleman to the boat then; I will join you by the time you can descend the cliffs. I believe I can prevail on another hand to go off with us."

"Time is more precious now than any number of hands," said the pilot, throwing a glance of impatience from under his lowering brows, "and the consequences of delay must be visited on those who occasion it."

"And, sir, I will meet the consequences with those who have a right to inquire into my conduct," said Barnstable, haughtily.

With this warning and retort they separated; the young officer retracing his steps impatiently toward his mistress, muttering his indignation in suppressed execrations, and the pilot, drawing the leathern belt of his pea-jacket mechanically around his body, as he followed the midshipman and cockswain to their boat, in moody silence.

Barnstable found the disguised female who had announced

herself as Katherine Plowden, awaiting his return, with intense anxiety depicted on every feature of her intelligent countenance. As he felt all the responsibility of his situation, notwithstanding his cool reply to the pilot, the young man hastily drew an arm of the apparent boy, forgetful of her disguise, through his own, and led her forward.

"Come, Katherine," he said, "the time urges to be prompt."

"What pressing necessity is there for immediate departure?" she inquired, checking his movements by withdrawing herself from his side.

"You heard the ominous prognostic of my cockswain on the weather, and I am forced to add my own testimony to his opinion. Tis a crazy night that threatens us, though I cannot repent of coming into the bay, since it has led to this interview."

"God forbid that we should either of us have cause to repent of it," said Katherine, the paleness of anxiety chasing away the rich bloom that had mantled the animated face of the brunette. "But you have the paper – follow its directions, and come to our rescue; you will find us willing captives, if Griffith and yourself are our conquerors."

"What mean you, Katherine!" exclaimed her lover; "you at least are now in safety – 'twould be madness to tempt your fate again. My vessel can and shall protect you, until your cousin is redeemed; and then, remember, I have a claim on you for life."

"And how would you dispose of me in the interval?" said the young maiden, retreating slowly from his advances.

"In the Ariel – by heaven, you shall be her commander; I will bear that rank only in name."

"I thank you, thank you, Barnstable, but distrust my abilities to fill such a station," she said, laughing, though the color that again crossed her youthful features was like the glow of a summer's sunset, and even her mirthful eyes seemed to reflect their tints. "Do not mistake me, saucy one. If I have done more than my sex will warrant, remember it was through a holy motive, and if I have more than a woman's enterprise, it must be —"

"To lift you above the weakness of your sex," he cried, "and to enable you to show your noble confidence in me."

"To fit me for, and to keep me worthy of being one day your wife." As she uttered these words she turned and disappeared, with a rapidity that eluded his attempts to detain her, behind an angle of the hedge, that was near them. For a moment, Barnstable remained motionless, through surprise, and when he sprang forward in pursuit, he was able only to catch a glimpse of her light form, in the gloom of the evening, as she again vanished in a little thicket at some distance.

Barnstable was about to pursue, when the air lighted with a sudden flash, and the bellowing report of a cannon rolled along the cliffs, and was echoed among the hills far inland.

"Ay, grumble away, old dotard!" the disappointed young sailor muttered to himself, while he reluctantly obeyed the signal; "you are in as great a hurry to get out of your danger as you were to run into it."

The quick reports of three muskets from the barge beneath where he stood urged him to quicken his pace, and as he threw himself carelessly down the rugged and dangerous passes of the cliffs, his experienced eye beheld the well-known lights displayed from the frigate, which commanded “the recall of all her boats.”

Chapter III

In such a time as this it is not meet
That every nice offence should bear its comment.

Shakespeare

The cliffs threw their dark shadows wide on the waters, and the gloom of the evening had so far advanced as to conceal the discontent that brooded over the ordinarily open brow of Barnstable as he sprang from the rocks into the boat, and took his seat by the side of the silent pilot. “Shove off,” cried the lieutenant, in tones that his men knew must be obeyed. “A seaman’s curse light on the folly that exposes planks and lives to such navigation; and all to burn some old timberman, or catch a Norway trader asleep! give way, men, give way!”

Notwithstanding the heavy and dangerous surf that was beginning to tumble in upon the rocks in an alarming manner, the startled seamen succeeded in urging their light boat over the waves, and in a few seconds were without the point where danger was most to be apprehended. Barnstable had seemingly disregarded the breakers as they passed, but sat sternly eyeing the foam that rolled by them in successive surges, until the boat rose regularly on the long seas, when he turned his looks around the bay in quest of the barge.

"Ay, Griffith has tired of rocking in his pillowed cradle," he muttered, "and will give us a pull to the frigate, when we ought to be getting the schooner out of this hard-featured landscape. This is just such a place as one of your sighing lovers would doat on; a little land, a little water, and a good deal of rock. Damme, long Tom, but I am more than half of your mind, that an island now and then is all the terra firma that a seaman needs."

"It's reason and philosophy, sir," returned the sedate cockswain; "and what land there is, should always be a soft mud, or a sandy ooze, in order that an anchor might hold, and to make soundings sartin. I have lost many a deep-sea, besides hand leads by the dozen, on rocky bottoms; but give me the roadstead where a lead comes up light and an anchor heavy. There's a boat pulling athwart our forefoot, Captain Barnstable; shall I run her aboard or give her a berth, sir?"

"'Tis the barge!" cried the officer; "Ned has not deserted me, after all!"

A loud hail from the approaching boat confirmed this opinion, and in a few seconds the barge and whale-boat were again rolling by each other's side. Griffith was no longer reclining on the cushions of his seats, but spoke earnestly, and with a slight tone of reproach in his manner.

"Why have you wasted so many precious moments, when every minute threatens us with new dangers? I was obeying the signal, but I heard your oars, and pulled back to take out the pilot. Have you been successful?"

"There he is; and if he finds his way out, through the shoals, he will earn a right to his name. This bids fair to be a night when a man will need a spy-glass to find the moon. But when you hear what I have seen on those rascally cliffs, you will be more ready to excuse my delay, Mr. Griffith."

"You have seen the true man, I trust, or we incur this hazard to an evil purpose."

"Ay, I have seen him that is a true man, and him that is not," replied Barnstable, bitterly; "you have the boy with you, Griffith – ask him what his young eyes have seen."

"Shall I!" cried the young midshipman, laughing; "then I have seen a little clipper, in disguise, out sail an old man-of-war's man in a hard chase, and I have seen a straggling rover in long-togs as much like my cousin – –"

"Peace, gabbler!" exclaimed Barnstable in a voice of thunder; "would you detain the boats with your silly nonsense at a time like this? Away into the barge, sir, and if you find him willing to hear, tell Mr. Griffith what your foolish conjectures amount to, at your leisure."

The boy stepped lightly from the whale-boat to the barge, whither the pilot had already preceded him, and, as he sunk, with a mortified air, by the side of Griffith, he said, in a low voice:

"And that won't be long, I know, if Mr. Griffith thinks and feels on the coast of England as he thought and felt at home."

A silent pressure of his hand was the only reply that the young lieutenant made, before he paid the parting compliments

to Barnstable, and directed his men to pull for their ship.

The boats were separating, and the plash of the oars was already heard, when the voice of the pilot was for the first time raised in earnest.

"Hold!" he cried; "hold water, I bid ye!"

The men ceased their efforts at the commanding tones of his voice, and turning toward the whale-boat, he continued:

"You will get your schooner under way immediately, Captain Barnstable, and sweep into the offing with as little delay as possible. Keep the ship well open from the northern headland, and as you pass us, come within hail."

"This is a clean chart and plain sailing, Mr. Pilot," returned Barnstable; "but who is to justify my moving without orders, to Captain Munson? I have it in black and white, to run the Ariel into this feather-bed sort of a place, and I must at least have it by signal or word of mouth from my betters, before my cutwater curls another wave. The road may be as hard to find going out as it was coming in – and then I had daylight as well as your written directions to steer by."

"Would you lie there to perish on such a night?" said the pilot, sternly. "Two hours hence, this heavy swell will break where your vessel now rides so quietly."

"There we think exactly alike; but if I get drowned now, I am drowned according to orders; whereas, if l knock a plank out of the schooner's bottom, by following your directions, 'twill be a hole to let in mutiny, as well as sea-water. How do I know but

the old man wants another pilot or two."

"That's philosophy," muttered the cockswain of the whaleboat, in a voice that was audible: "but it's a hard strain on a man's conscience to hold on in such an anchorage!"

"Then keep your anchor down, and follow it to the bottom," said the pilot to himself; "it's worse to contend with a fool than a gale of wind; but if – –"

"No, no, sir – no fool neither," interrupted Griffith. "Barnstable does not deserve that epithet, though he certainly carries the point of duty to the extreme. Heave up at once, Mr. Barnstable, and get out of this bay as fast as possible."

"Ah! you don't give the order with half the pleasure with which I shall execute it; pull away, boys – the Ariel shall never lay her bones in such a hard bed, if l can help it."

As the commander of the schooner uttered these words with a cheering voice, his men spontaneously shouted, and the whaleboat darted away from her companion, and was soon lost in the gloomy shadows cast from the cliffs.

In the mean time, the oarsmen of the barge were not idle, but by strenuous efforts they forced the heavy boat rapidly through the water, and in a few minutes she ran alongside of the frigate. During this period the pilot, in a voice which had lost all the startling fierceness and authority it had manifested in his short dialogue with Barnstable, requested Griffith to repeat to him, slowly, the names of the officers that belonged to his ship. When the young lieutenant had complied with this request, he observed

to his companion:

"All good men and true, Mr. Pilot; and though this business in which you are just now engaged may be hazardous to an Englishman, there are none with us who will betray you. We need your services, and as we expect good faith from you, so shall we offer it to you in exchange."

"And how know you that I need its exercise?" asked the pilot, in a manner that denoted a cold indifference to the subject.

"Why, though you talk pretty good English, for a native," returned Griffith, "yet you have a small bur-r-r in your mouth that would prick the tongue of a man who was born on the other side of the Atlantic."

"It is but of little moment where a man is born, or how he speaks," returned the pilot, coldly, "so that he does his duty bravely and in good faith."

It was perhaps fortunate for the harmony of this dialogue, that the gloom, which had now increased to positive darkness, completely concealed the look of scornful irony that crossed the handsome features of the young sailor, as he replied: "True, true, so that he does his duty, as you say, in good faith. But, as Barnstable observed, you must know your road well to travel among these shoals on such a night as this. Know you what water we draw?"

"Tis a frigate's draught, and I shall endeavor to keep you in four fathoms; less than that would be dangerous."

"She's a sweet boat!" said Griffith, "and minds her helm as a

marine watches the eye of his sergeant at a drill; but you must give her room in stays, for she fore-reaches, as if she would put out the wind's eye."

The pilot attended, with a practised ear, to this description of the qualities of the ship that he was about to attempt extricating from an extremely dangerous situation. Not a syllable was lost on him; and when Griffith had ended, he remarked, with the singular coldness that pervaded his manner:

"That is both a good and a bad quality in a narrow channel. I fear it will be the latter to-night, when we shall require to have the ship in leading-strings."

"I suppose we must feel our way with the lead?" said Griffith.

"We shall need both eyes and leads," returned the pilot, recurring insensibly to his soliloquizing tone of voice. "I have been both in and out in darker nights than this, though never with a heavier draught than a half-two."

"Then, by heaven, you are not fit to handle that ship among these rocks and breakers!" exclaimed Griffith; "your men of a light draught never know their water; 'tis the deep keel only that finds a channel; – pilot! pilot! beware how you trifle with us ignorantly; for 'tis a dangerous experiment to play at hazards with an enemy."

"Young man, you know not what you threaten, nor whom," said the pilot sternly, though his quiet manner still remained undisturbed; "you forget that you have a superior here, and that I have none."

"That shall be as you discharge your duty," said Griffith; "for if – –"

"Peace!" interrupted the pilot; "we approach the ship, let us enter in harmony."

He threw himself back on the cushions when he had said this; and Griffith, though filled with the apprehensions of suffering, either by great ignorance or treachery on the part of his companion, smothered his feelings so far as to be silent, and they ascended the side of the vessel in apparent cordiality.

The frigate was already riding on lengthened seas, that rolled in from the ocean at each successive moment with increasing violence, though her topsails still hung supinely from her yards; the air, which continued to breathe occasionally from the land, being unable to shake the heavy canvas of which they were composed.

The only sounds that were audible, when Griffith and the pilot had ascended to the gangway of the frigate, were produced by the sullen dashing of the sea against the massive bows of the ship, and the shrill whistle of the boatswain's mate as he recalled the side-boys, who were placed on either side of the gangway to do honor to the entrance of the first lieutenant and his companion.

But though such a profound silence reigned among the hundreds who inhabited the huge fabric, the light produced by a dozen battle- lanterns, that were arranged in different parts of the decks, served not only to exhibit faintly the persons of the crew, but the mingled feeling of curiosity and care that dwelt on

most of their countenances.

Large groups of men were collected in the gangways, around the mainmast, and on the booms of the vessel, whose faces were distinctly visible, while numerous figures, lying along the lower yards or bending out of the tops, might be dimly traced in the background, all of whom expressed by their attitudes the interest they took in the arrival of the boat.

Though such crowds were collected in other parts of the vessel, the quarter-deck was occupied only by the officers, who were disposed according to their several ranks, and were equally silent and attentive as the remainder of the crew. In front stood a small collection of young men, who, by their similarity of dress, were the equals and companions of Griffith, though his juniors in rank. On the opposite side of the vessel was a larger assemblage of youths, who claimed Mr. Merry as their fellow. Around the capstan three or four figures were standing, one of whom wore a coat of blue, with the scarlet facings of a soldier, and another the black vestments of the ship's chaplain. Behind these, and nearer the passage to the cabin from which he had just ascended, stood the tall, erect form of the commander of the vessel.

After a brief salutation between Griffith and the junior officers, the former advanced, followed slowly by the pilot, to the place where he was expected by his veteran commander. The young man removed his hat entirely, as he bowed with a little more than his usual ceremony, and said:

"We have succeeded, sir, though not without more difficulty

and delay than were anticipated."

"But you have not brought off the pilot," said the captain, "and without him, all our risk and trouble have been in vain."

"He is here,"" said Griffith, stepping aside, and extending his arm towards the man that stood behind him, wrapped to the chin in his coarse pea-jacket, and his face shadowed by the falling rims of a large hat, that had seen much and hard service.

"This!" exclaimed the captain; "then there is a sad mistake – this is not the man I would have, seen, nor can another supply his place."

"I know not whom you expected, Captain Munson," said the stranger, in a low, quiet voice; "but if you have not forgot ten the day when a very different flag from that emblem of tyranny that now hangs over yon taffrail was first spread to the wind, you may remember the hand that raised it,"

"Bring here the light!" exclaimed the commander, hastily.

When the lantern was extended towards the pilot, and the glare fell strong on his features, Captain Munson started, as he beheld the calm blue eye that met his gaze, and the composed but pallid countenance of the other. Involuntarily raising his hat, and baring his silver locks, the veteran cried:

"It is he! though so changed – –"

"That his enemies did not know him," interrupted the pilot, quickly; then touching the other by the arm as he led him aside, he continued, in a lower tone, "neither must his friends, until the proper hour shall arrive."

Griffith had fallen back to answer the eager questions of his messmates, and no part of this short dialogue was overheard by the officers, though it was soon perceived that their commander had discovered his error, and was satisfied that the proper man had been brought on board his vessel. For many minutes the two continued to pace a part of the quarter-deck, by themselves, engaged in deep and earnest discourse.

As Griffith had but little to communicate, the curiosity of his listeners was soon appeased, and all eyes were directed toward that mysterious guide, who was to conduct them from a situation already surrounded by perils, which each moment not only magnified in appearance, but increased in reality.

Chapter IV

"Behold the threaden sails,
Borne with the invisible and creeping winds,
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,
Breasting the lofty surge."

Shakespeare.

It has been already explained to the reader, that there were threatening symptoms in the appearance of the weather to create serious forebodings of evil in the breast of a seaman. When removed from the shadows of the cliffs, the night was not so dark but objects could be discerned at some little distance, and in the eastern horizon there was a streak of fearful light impending over the gloomy waters, in which the swelling outline formed by the rising waves was becoming each moment more distinct, and, consequently, more alarming. Several dark clouds overhung the vessel, whose towering masts apparently propped the black vapor, while a few stars were seen twinkling, with a sickly flame, in the streak of clear sky that skirted the ocean. Still, light currents of air occasionally swept across the bay, bringing with them the fresh odor from the shore, but their flitting irregularity too surely foretold them to be the expiring breath of the land breeze. The roaring of the surf, as it rolled on the margin of the bay, produced a dull, monotonous sound,

that was only Interrupted at times by a hollow bellowing, as a larger wave than usual broke violently against some cavity in the rock. Everything, in short, united to render the scene gloomy and portentous, without creating instant terror, for the ship rose easily on the long billows, without even straightening the heavy cable that held her to her anchor.

The higher officers were collected around the capstan, engaged in earnest discourse about their situation and prospects, while some of the oldest and most favored seamen would extend their short walk to the hallowed precincts of the quarterdeck, to catch, with greedy ears, the opinions that fell from their superiors. Numberless were the uneasy glances that were thrown from both officers and men at their commander and the pilot, who still continued their secret communion in a distant part of the vessel. Once, an ungovernable curiosity, or the heedlessness of his years, led one of the youthful midshipmen near them; but a stern rebuke from his captain sent the boy, abashed and cowering, to hide his mortification among his fellows. This reprimand was received by the elder officers as an intimation that the consultation which they beheld was to be strictly inviolate; and, though it by no means suppressed the repeated expressions of their impatience, it effectually prevented an interruption to the communications, which all, however, thought were unreasonably protracted for the occasion.

"This is no time to be talking over bearings and distances," observed the officer next in rank to Griffith; "but we should call

the hands up, and try to kedge her off while the sea will suffer a boat to live."

"'Twould be a tedious and bootless job to attempt warping a ship for miles against a head-beating sea," returned the first lieutenant; "but the land-breeze yet flutters aloft, and if our light sails would draw, with the aid of this ebb tide we might be able to shove her from the shore."

"Hail the tops, Griffith," said the other, "and ask if they feel the air above; 'twill be a hint at least to set the old man and that lubberly pilot in motion."

Griffith laughed as he complied with the request, and when he received the customary reply to his call, he demanded in a loud voice:

"Which way have you the wind, aloft?"

"We feel a light catspaw, now and then, from the land, sir," returned the sturdy captain of the top; "but our topsail hangs in the clewlines, sir, without winking."

Captain Munson and his companion suspended their discourse while this question and answer were exchanged, and then resumed their dialogue as earnestly as if it had received no interruption.

"If it did wink, the hint would be lost on our betters," said the officer of the marines, whose ignorance of seamanship added greatly to his perception of the danger, but who, from pure idleness, made more jokes than any other man in the ship. "That pilot would not receive a delicate intimation through his ears, Mr.

Griffith; suppose you try him by the nose."

"Faith, there was a flash of gunpowder between us in the barge," returned the first lieutenant, "and he does not seem a man to stomach such hints as you advise. Although he looks so meek and quiet, I doubt whether he has paid much attention to the book of Job."

"Why should he?" exclaimed the chaplain, whose apprehensions at least equaled those of the marine, and with a much more disheartening effect; "I am sure it would have been a great waste of time: there are so many charts of the coast, and books on the navigation of these seas, for him to study, that I sincerely hope he has been much better employed."

A loud laugh was created at this speech among the listeners, and it apparently produced the effect that was so long anxiously desired, by putting an end to the mysterious conference between their captain and the pilot. As the former came forward towards his expecting crew, he said, is the composed, steady manner that formed the principal trait in his character:

"Get the anchor, Mr. Griffith, and make sail on the ship; the hour has arrived when we must be moving."

The cheerful "Ay! ay! sir!" of the young lieutenant was hardly uttered, before the cries of half a dozen midshipmen were heard summoning the boatswain and his mates to their duty.

There was a general movement in the living masses that clustered around the mainmast, on the booms, and in the gangways, though their habits of discipline held the crew a

moment longer in suspense. The silence was first broken by the sound of the boatswain's whistle, followed by the hoarse cry of" All hands, up anchor, ahoy!" – the former rising on the night air, from its first low mellow notes to a piercing shrillness that gradually died away on the waters; and the latter bellowing through every cranny of the ship, like the hollow murmurs of distant thunder.

The change produced by the customary summons was magical. Human beings sprang out from between the guns, rushed up the hatches, threw themselves with careless activity from the booms, and gathered from every quarter so rapidly, that in an instant the deck of the frigate was alive with men. The profound silence, that had hitherto been only interrupted by the low dialogue of the officers, was now changed for the stern orders of the lieutenants, mingled with the shriller cries of the midshipmen, and the hoarse bawling of the boatswain's crew, rising above the tumult of preparation and general bustle.

The captain and the pilot alone remained passive, in this scene of general exertion; for apprehension had even stimulated that class of officers which is called "idlers" to unusual activity, though frequently reminded by their more experienced messmates that, instead of aiding, they retarded the duty of the vessel. The bustle, however, gradually ceased, and in a few minutes the same silence pervaded the ship as before.

"We are brought-to, sir," said Griffith, who stood overlooking the scene, holding in one hand a short speaking, trumpet, and

grasping with the other one of the shrouds of the ship, to steady himself in the position he had taken on a gun.

"Heave round, sir," was the calm reply.

"Heave round!" repeated Griffith, aloud.

"Heave round!" echoed a dozen eager voices at once, and the lively strains of a fife struck up a brisk air, to enliven the labor. The capstan was instantly set in motion, and the mea sured tread of the seamen was heard, as they stamped the deck in the circle of their march. For a few minutes no other sounds were heard, if we except the voice of an officer, occasionally cheering the sailors, when it was announced that they "were short;" or, in other words, that the ship was nearly over her anchor.

"Heave and pull," cried Griffith; when the quivering notes of the whistle were again succeeded by a general stillness in the vessel.

"What is to be done now, sir?" continued the lieutenant; "shall we trip the anchor? There seems not a breath of air; and as the tide runs slack, I doubt whether the sea do not heave the ship ashore."

There was so much obvious truth in this conjecture, that all eyes turned from the light and animation afforded by the decks of the frigate, to look abroad on the waters, in a vain desire to pierce the darkness, as if to read the fate of their apparently devoted ship from the aspect of nature.

"I leave all to the pilot," said the captain, after he had stood a short time by the side of Griffith, anxiously studying the heavens

and the ocean. “What say you, Mr. Gray?”

The man who was thus first addressed by name was leaning over the bulwarks, with his eyes bent in the same direction as the others; but as he answered he turned his face towards the speaker, and the light from the deck fell full upon his quiet features, which exhibited a calmness bordering on the supernatural, considering his station and responsibility.

“There is much to fear from this heavy ground-swell,” he said, in the same unmoved tones as before; “but there is certain destruction to us, if the gale that is brewing in the east finds us waiting its fury in this wild anchorage. All the hemp that ever was spun into cordage would not hold a ship an hour, chafing on these rocks, with a northeaster pouring its fury on her. If the powers of man can compass it, gentlemen, we must get an offing, and that speedily.”

“You say no more, sir, than the youngest boy in the ship can see for himself,” said Griffith – “ha! here comes the schooner!”

The dashing of the long sweeps in the water was now plainly audible, and the little Ariel was seen through the gloom, moving heavily under their feeble impulse. As she passed slowly under the stern of the frigate, the cheerful voice of Barnstable was first heard, opening the communications between them.

“Here’s a night for spectacles, Captain Munson!” he cried; “but I thought I heard your fife, sir. I trust in God, you do not mean to ride it out here till morning?”

“I like the berth as little as yourself, Mr. Barnstable,” returned

the veteran seaman, in his calm manner, in which anxiety was, however, beginning to grow evident. “We are short; but are afraid to let go our hold of the bottom, lest the sea cast us ashore. How make you out the wind?”

“Wind!” echoed the other; “there is not enough to blow a lady’s curl aside. If you wait, sir, till the land-breeze fills your sails, you will wait another moon. I believe I’ve got my eggshell out of that nest of gray-caps; but how it has been done in the dark, a better man than myself must explain.”

“Take your directions from the pilot, Mr. Barnstable,” returned his commanding officer, “and follow them strictly and to the letter.”

A deathlike silence, in both vessels, succeeded this order; for all seemed to listen eagerly to catch the words that fell from the man on whom, even the boys now felt, depended their only hopes for safety. A short time was suffered to elapse, before his voice was heard, in the same low but distinct tones as before:

“Your sweeps will soon be of no service to you,” he said, “against the sea that begins to heave in; but your light sails will help them to get you out. So long as you can head east-and-by-north, you are doing well, and you can stand on till you open the light from that northern headland, when you can heave to and fire a gun; but if, as I dread, you are struck aback before you open the light, you may trust to your lead on the larboard tack; but beware, with your head to the southward, for no lead will serve you there.”

"I can walk over the same ground on one tack as on the other," said Barnstable, "and make both legs of a length."

"It will not do," returned the pilot. "If you fall off a point to starboard from east-and-by-north, in going large, you will find both rocks and points of shoals to bring you up; and beware, as I tell you, of the starboard tack."

"And how shall I find my way? you will let me trust to neither time, lead, nor log."

"You must trust to a quick eye and a ready hand. The breakers only will show you the dangers, when you are not able to make out the bearings of the land. Tack in season, sir, and don't spare the lead when you head to port."

"Ay, ay," returned Barnstable, in a low muttering voice. "This is a sort of blind navigation with a vengeance, and all for no purpose that I can see – see! damme, eyesight is of about as much use now as a man's nose would be in reading the Bible." "Softly, softly, Mr. Barnstable," interrupted his commander – for such was the anxious stillness in both vessels that even the rattling of the schooner's rigging was heard, as she rolled in the trough of the sea – "the duty on which Congress has sent us must be performed, at the hazard of our lives."

"I don't mind my life, Captain Munson," said Barnstable, "but there is a great want of conscience in trusting a vessel in such a place as this. However, it is a time to do, and not to talk. But if there be such danger to an easy draught of water, what will become of the frigate? had I not better play jackal, and try and

feel the way for you?"

"I thank you," said the pilot; "the offer is generous, but would avail us nothing. I have the advantage of knowing the ground well, and must trust to my memory and God's good favor. Make sail, make sail, sir, and if you succeed, we will venture to break ground."

The order was promptly obeyed, and in a very short time the Ariel was covered with canvas. Though no air was perceptible on the decks of the frigate, the little schooner was so light that she succeeded in stemming her way over the rising waves, aided a little by the tide; and in a few minutes her low hull was just discernible in the streak of light along the horizon, with the dark outline of her sails rising above the sea, until their fanciful summits were lost in the shadows of the clouds.

Griffith had listened to the foregoing dialogue, like the rest of the junior officers, in profound silence; but when the Ariel began to grow indistinct to the eye, he jumped lightly from the gun to the deck, and cried:

"She slips off, like a vessel from the stocks! Shall I trip the anchor, sir, and follow?"

"We have no choice," replied his captain. "You hear the question, Mr. Gray? shall we let go the bottom?"

"It must be done, Captain Munson; we may want more drift than the rest of this tide to get us to a place of safety," said the pilot "I would give five years from a life that I know will be short, if the ship lay one mile further seaward."

This remark was unheard by all, except the commander of the frigate, who again walked aside with the pilot, where they resumed their mysterious communications. The words of assent were no sooner uttered, however, than Griffith gave forth from his trumpet the command to "heave away!" Again the strains of the fife were followed by the tread of the men at the capstan. At the same time that the anchor was heaving up, the sails were loosened from the yards, and opened to invite the breeze. In effecting this duty, orders were thundered through the trumpet of the first lieutenant, and executed with the rapidity of thought. Men were to be seen, like spots in the dim light from the heavens, lying on every yard or hanging as in air, while strange cries were heard issuing from every part of the rigging and each spar of the vessel. "Ready the foreroyal," cried a shrill voice, as if from the clouds; "ready the fore yard," uttered the hoarser tones of a seaman beneath him; "all ready aft, sir," cried a third, from another quarter; and in a few moments the order was given to "let fall."

The little light which fell from the sky was now excluded by the falling canvas, and a deeper gloom was cast athwart the decks of the ship, that served to render the brilliancy of the lanterns even vivid, while it gave to objects outboard a more appalling and dreary appearance than before.

Every individual, excepting the commander and his associate, was now earnestly engaged in getting the ship under way. The sounds of" we're away" were repeated by a burst from fifty

voices, and the rapid evolutions of the capstan announced that nothing but the weight of the anchor was to be lifted. The hauling of cordage, the rattling of blocks, blended with the shrill calls of the boatswain and his mates, succeeded; and though to a landsman all would have appeared confusion and hurry, long practice and strict discipline enabled the crew to exhibit their ship under a cloud of canvas, from her deck to the trucks, in less time than we have consumed in relating it.

For a few minutes, the officers were not disappointed by the result; for though the heavy sails flapped lazily against the masts, the light duck on the loftier spars swelled outwardly, and the ship began sensibly to yield to their influence.

"She travels! she travels!" exclaimed Griffith joyously; "ah! the hussy! she has as much antipathy to the land as any fish that swims: it blows a little gale aloft yet!"

"We feel its dying breath," said the pilot, in low, soothing tones, but in a manner so sudden as to startle Griffith, at whose elbow they were unexpectedly uttered. "Let us forget, young man, everything but the number of lives that depend, this night, on your exertions and my knowledge."

"If you be but halfas able to exhibit the one as I am willing to make the other, we shall do well," returned the lieutenant, in the same tone. "Remember, whatever may be your feelings, that *we* are on an enemy's coast, and love it not enough to wish to lay our bones there."

With this brief explanation they separated, the vessel

requiring the constant and close attention of the officer to her movements.

The exultation produced in the crew by the progress of their ship through the water was of short duration; for the breeze that had seemed to await their motions, after forcing the vessel for a quarter of a mile, fluttered for a few minutes amid their light canvas, and then left them entirely. The quartermaster, whose duty it was to superintend the helm, soon announced that he was losing the command of the vessel, as she was no longer obedient to her rudder. This ungrateful intelligence was promptly communicated to his commander by Griffith, who suggested the propriety of again dropping an anchor.

"I refer you to Mr. Gray," returned the captain; "he is the pilot, sir, and with him rests the safety of the vessel."

"Pilots sometimes lose ships as well as save them," said Griffith: "know you the man well, Captain Munson, who holds all our lives in his keeping, and so coolly as if he cared but little for the venture?"

"Mr. Griffith, I do know him; he is, in my opinion, both competent and faithful. Thus much I tell you, to relieve your anxiety; more you must not ask; – but is there not a shift of wind?"

"God forbid!" exclaimed his lieutenant; "if that northeaster catches us within the shoals, our case will be desperate indeed!"

The heavy rolling of the vessel caused an occasional expansion, and as sudden a reaction, in their sails, which left

the oldest seaman in the ship in doubt which way the currents of air were passing, or whether there existed any that were not created by the flapping of their own canvas. The head of the ship, however, began to fall off from the sea, and notwithstanding the darkness, it soon became apparent that she was driving in, bodily, towards the shore.

During these few minutes of gloomy doubt, Griffith, by one of those sudden revulsions of the mind that connect the opposite extremes of feeling, lost his animated anxiety, and elapsed into the listless apathy that so often came over him, even in the most critical moments of trial and danger. He was standing with one elbow resting on his capstan, shading his eyes from the light of the battle-lantern that stood near him with one hand, when he felt a gentle pressure of the other, that recalled his recollection. Looking affectionately, though still recklessly, at the boy who stood at his side, he said:

"Dull music, Mr. Merry."

"So dull, sir, that I can't dance to it," returned the midshipman. "Nor do I believe there is a man in the ship who would not rather hear 'The girl I left behind me,' than those execrable sounds."

"What sounds, boy? The ship is as quiet as the Quaker meeting in the Jerseys, before your good old grandfather used to break the charm of silence with his sonorous voice."

"Ah! laugh at my peaceable blood, if thou wilt, Mr. Griffith," said the arch youngster, "but remember, there is a mixture of it in all sorts of veins. I wish I could hear one of the old gentleman's

chants now, sir; I could always sleep to them, like a gull in the surf. But he that sleeps to-night, with that lullaby, will make a nap of it."

"Sounds! I hear no sounds, boy, but the flapping aloft; even that pilot, who struts the quarter-deck like an admiral, has nothing to say."

"Is not that a sound to open a seaman's ear?"

"It is in truth a heavy roll of the surf, lad, but the night air carries it heavily to our ears. Know you not the sounds of the surf yet, younker?"

"I know it too well, Mr. Griffith, and do not wish to know it better. How fast are we tumbling in towards that surf, sir?"

"I think we hold our own," said Griffith, rousing again; "though we had better anchor. Luff, fellow, luff – you are broadside to the sea!"

The man at the wheel repeated his former intelligence, adding a suggestion, that he thought the ship "was gathering stern way."

"Haul up your courses, Mr. Griffith," said Captain Munson, "and let us feel the wind."

The rattling of the blocks was soon heard, and the enormous sheets of canvas that hung from the lower yards were instantly suspended "in the brails." When this change was effected, all on board stood silent and breathless, as if expecting to learn their fate by the result. Several contradictory opinions were, at length, hazarded among the officers, when Griffith seized the candle from the lantern, and springing on one of the guns, held it on

high, exposed to the action of the air. The little flame waved, with uncertain glimmering, for a moment, and then burned steadily, in a line with the masts. Griffith was about to lower his extended arm, when, feeling a slight sensation of coolness on his hand, he paused, and the light turned slowly toward the land, flared, flickered, and finally deserted the wick.

"Lose not a moment, Mr. Griffith," cried the pilot aloud; "clew up and furl everything but your three topsails, and let them be double-reefed. Now is the time to fulfill your promise."

The young man paused one moment, in astonishment, as the clear, distinct tones of the stranger struck his ears so unexpectedly; but turning his eyes to seaward, he sprang on the deck, and proceeded to obey the order, as if life and death depended on his dispatch.

Chapter V

"She rights! she rights, boys! ware off shore!"
Song.

The extraordinary activity of Griffith, which communicated itself with promptitude to the crew, was produced by a sudden alteration in the weather. In place of the well-defined streak along the horizon, that has been already described, an immense body of misty light appeared to be moving in, with rapidity, from the ocean, while a distinct but distant roaring announced the sure approach of the tempest that had so long troubled the waters. Even Griffith, while thundering his orders through the trumpet, and urging the men, by his cries, to expedition, would pause, for instants, to cast anxious glances in the direction of the coming storm; and the faces of the sailors who lay on the yards were turned, instinctively, towards the same quarter of the heavens, while they knotted the reef-points, or passed the gaskets that were to confine the unruly canvas to the prescribed limits.

The pilot alone, in that confused and busy throng, where voice rose above voice, and cry echoed cry, in quick succession, appeared as if he held no interest in the important stake. With his eye steadily fixed on the approaching mist, and his arms folded together in composure, he stood calmly waiting the result.

The ship had fallen off, with her broadside to the sea, and was

become unmanageable, and the sails were already brought into the folds necessary to her security, when the quick and heavy fluttering of canvas was thrown across the water, with all the gloomy and chilling sensations that such sounds produce, where darkness and danger unite to appall the seaman.

"The schooner has it!" cried Griffith: "Barnstable has held on, like himself, to the last moment. – God send that the squall leave him cloth enough to keep him from the shore!"

"His sails are easily handled," the commander observed, "and she must be over the principal danger. We are falling off before it, Mr. Gray; shall we try a cast of the lead?"

The pilot turned from his contemplative posture, and moved slowly across the deck before he returned any reply to this question – like a man who not only felt that everything depended on himself, but that he was equal to the emergency.

"'Tis unnecessary," he at length said; "'twould be certain destruction to be taken aback; and it is difficult to say, within several points, how the wind may strike us."

"'Tis difficult no longer," cried Griffith; "for here it comes, and in right earnest!"

The rushing sounds of the wind were now, indeed, heard at hand; and the words were hardly past the lips of the young lieutenant, before the vessel bowed down heavily to one side, and then, as she began to move through the water, rose again majestically to her upright position, as if saluting, like a courteous champion, the powerful antagonist with which she was about

to contend. Not another minute elapsed, before the ship was throwing the waters aside, with a lively progress, and, obedient to her helm, was brought as near to the desired course as the direction of the wind would allow. The hurry and bustle on the yards gradually subsided, and the men slowly descended to the deck, all straining their eyes to pierce the gloom in which they were enveloped, and some shaking their heads, in melancholy doubt, afraid to express the apprehensions they really entertained. All on board anxiously waited for the fury of the gale; for there were none so ignorant or inexperienced in that gallant frigate, as not to know that as yet they only felt the infant effects of the wind. Each moment, however, it increased in power, though so gradual was the alteration, that the relieved mariners began to believe that all their gloomy forebodings were not to be realized. During this short interval of uncertainty, no other sounds were heard than the whistling of the breeze, as it passed quickly through the mass of rigging that belonged to the vessel, and the dashing of the spray that began to fly from her bows, like the foam of a cataract.

"It blows fresh," cried Griffith, who was the first to speak in that moment of doubt and anxiety; "but it is no more than a capful of wind after all. Give us elbow-room, and the right canvas, Mr. Pilot, and I'll handle the ship like a gentleman's yacht, in this breeze."

"Will she stay, think ye, under this sail?" said the low voice of the stranger.

"She will do all that man, in reason, can ask of wood and iron,"

returned the lieutenant; “but the vessel don’t float the ocean that will tack under double-reefed topsails alone, against a heavy sea. Help her with her courses, pilot, and you shall see her come round like a dancing-master.”

“Let us feel the strength of the gale first,” returned the man who was called Mr. Gray, moving from the side of Griffith to the weather gangway of the vessel, where he stood in silence, looking ahead of the ship, with an air of singular coolness and abstraction.

All the lanterns had been extinguished on the deck of the frigate, when her anchor was secured, and as the first mist of the gale had passed over, it was succeeded by a faint light that was a good deal aided by the glittering foam of the waters, which now broke in white curls around the vessel in every direction. The land could be faintly discerned, rising like a heavy bank of black fog above the margin of the waters, and was only distinguishable from the heavens by its deeper gloom and obscurity. The last rope was coiled, and deposited in its proper place, by the seamen, and for several minutes the stillness of death pervaded the crowded decks. It was evident to every one, that their ship was dashing at a prodigious rate through the waves; and as she was approaching, with such velocity, the quarter of the bay where the shoals and dangers were known to be situated, nothing but the habits of the most exact discipline could suppress the uneasiness of the officers and men within their own bosoms. At length the voice of Captain Munson was heard, calling to the pilot:

"Shall I send a hand into the chains, Mr. Gray," he said, "and try our water?"

Although this question was asked aloud, and the interest it excited drew many of the officers and men around him, in eager impatience for his answer, it was unheeded by the man to whom it was addressed. His head rested on his hand, as he leaned over the hammock-cloths of the vessel, and his whole air was that of one whose thoughts wandered from the pressing necessity of their situation. Griffith was among those who had approached the pilot; and after waiting a moment, from respect, to hear the answer to his commander's question, he presumed on his own rank, and leaving the circle that stood at a little distance, stepped to the side of the mysterious guardian of their lives.

"Captain Munson desires to know whether you wish a cast of the lead?" said the young officer, with a little impatience of manner. No immediate answer was made to this repetition of the question, and Griffith laid his hand unceremoniously on the shoulder of the other, with an intent to rouse him before he made another application for a reply, but the convulsive start of the pilot held him silent in amazement.

"Fall back there," said the lieutenant, sternly; to the men, who were closing around them in compact circle; "away with you to your stations, and see all clear for stays." The dense mass of heads dissolved, at this order, like the water of one of the waves commingling with the ocean, and the lieutenant and his companions were left by themselves.

"This is not a time for musing, Mr. Gray," continued Griffith; "remember our compact, and look to your charge – is it not time to put the vessel in stays? of what are you dreaming?

The pilot laid his hand on the extended arm of the lieutenant, and grasped it with a convulsive pressure, as he answered:

"Tis a dream of reality. You are young, Mr. Griffith, nor am I past the noon of life; but should you live fifty years longer, you never can see and experience what I have encountered in my little period of three-and-thirty years!"

A good deal astonished at this burst of feeling, so singular at such a moment, the young sailor was at a loss for a reply; but as his duty was uppermost in his thoughts, he still dwelt on the theme that most interested him.

"I hope much of your experience has been on this coast, for the ship travels lively," he said, "and the daylight showed us so much to dread, that we do not feel over-valiant in the dark. How much longer shall we stand on, upon this tack?"

The pilot turned slowly from the side of the vessel, and walked towards the commander of the frigate, as he replied, in a tone that seemed deeply agitated by his melancholy reflections:

"You have your wish, then; much, very much of my early life was passed on this dreaded coast. What to you is all darkness and gloom, to me is as light as if a noon-day sun shone upon it. But tack your ship, sir, tack your ship; I would see how she works before we reach the point where she *must* behave well, or we perish."

Griffith gazed after him in wonder, while the pilot slowly paced the quarter-deck, and then, rousing from his trance, gave forth the cheering order that called each man to his station, to perform the desired evolution. The confident assurances which the young officer had given to the pilot respecting the qualities of his vessel and his own ability to manage her, were fully realized by the result. The helm was no sooner put a-lee, than the huge ship bore up gallantly against the wind, and, dashing directly through the waves, threw the foam high into the air, as she looked boldly into the very eye of the wind; and then, yielding gracefully to its power, she fell off on the other tack, with her head pointed from those dangerous shoals that she had so recently approached with such terrifying velocity. The heavy yards swung round, as if they had been vanes to indicate the currents of the air; and in a few moments the frigate again moved, with stately progress, through the water, leaving the rocks and shoals behind her on one side of the bay, but advancing towards those that offered equal danger on the other.

During this time the sea was becoming more agitated, and the violence of the wind was gradually increasing. The latter no longer whistled amid the cordage of the vessel, but it seemed to howl, surlily, as it passed the complicated machinery that the frigate obtruded on its path. An endless succession of white surges rose above the heavy billows, and the very air was glittering with the light that was disengaged from the ocean. The ship yielded, each moment, more and more before the storm,

and in less than half an hour from the time that she had lifted her anchor, she was driven along with tremendous fury by the full power of a gale of wind. Still the hardy and experienced mariners who directed her movements held her to the course that was necessary to their preservation, and still Griffith gave forth, when directed by their unknown pilot, those orders that turned her in the narrow channel where alone safety was to be found.

So far, the performance of his duty appeared easy to the stranger, and he gave the required directions in those still, calm tones, that formed so remarkable a contrast to the responsibility of his situation. But when the land was becoming dim, in distance as well as darkness, and the agitated sea alone was to be discovered as it swept by them in foam, he broke in upon the monotonous roaring of the tempest with the sounds of his voice, seeming to shake off his apathy, and rouse himself to the occasion.

"Now is the time to watch her closely, Mr. Griffith," he cried; "here we get the true tide and the real danger. Place the best quartermaster of your ship in those chains, and let an officer stand by him, and see that he gives us the right water."

"I will take that office on myself," said the captain; "pass a light into the weather main-chains."

"Stand by your braces!" exclaimed the pilot, with startling quickness. "Heave away that lead!"

These preparations taught the crew to expect the crisis, and every officer and man stood in fearful silence, at his assigned

station, awaiting the issue of the trial. Even the quartermaster at the cun gave out his orders to the men at the wheel, in deeper and hoarser tones than usual, as if anxious not to disturb the quiet and order of the vessel.

While this deep expectation pervaded the frigate, the piercing cry of the leadsman, as he called "By the mark seven," rose above the tempest, crossed over the decks, and appeared to pass away to leeward, borne on the blast like the warnings of some water-spirit.

"'Tis well," returned the pilot, calmly; "try it again."

The short pause was succeeded by another cry, "And a half-five!"

"She shoals! she shoals!" exclaimed Griffith: "keep her a good full."

"Ay! you must hold the vessel in command, now," said the pilot, with those cool tones that are most appalling in critical moments because they seem to denote most preparation and care.

The third call, "By the deep four," was followed by a prompt direction from the stranger to tack.

Griffith seemed to emulate the coolness of the pilot, in issuing the necessary orders to execute this manoeuvre.

The vessel rose slowly from the inclined position into which she had been forced by the tempest, and the sails were shaking violently, as if to release themselves from their confinement, while the ship stemmed the billows, when the well-known voice

of the sailing-master was heard shouting from the forecastle:

"Breakers! breakers, dead ahead!"

This appalling sound seemed yet to be lingering about the ship, when a second voice cried:

"Breakers on our lee bow!"

"We are in a bite of the shoals, Mr. Gray," cried the commander. "She loses her way; perhaps an anchor might hold her."

"Clear away that best bower!" shouted Griffith through his trumpet.

"Hold on!" cried the pilot, in a voice that reached the very hearts of all who heard him; "hold on everything."

The young man turned fiercely to the daring stranger who thus defied the discipline of his vessel, and at once demanded:

"Who is it that dares to countermand my orders? Is it not enough that you run the ship into danger, but you must interfere to keep her there? If another word – –"

"Peace, Mr. Griffith," interrupted the captain, bending from the rigging, his gray locks blowing about in the wind and adding a look of wildness to the haggard care that he exhibited by the light of his lantern; "yield the trumpet to Mr. Gray; he alone can save us."

Griffith threw his speaking-trumpet on the deck, and as he walked proudly away, muttered in bitterness of feeling:

"Then all is lost, indeed! and among the rest the foolish hopes with which I visited this coast."

There was, however, no time for reply; the ship had been rapidly running into the wind, and as the efforts of the crew were paralyzed by the contradictory orders they had heard, she gradually lost her way, and in a few seconds all her sails were taken aback.

Before the crew understood their situation the pilot had applied the trumpet to his mouth, and in a voice that rose above the tempest, he thundered forth his orders. Each command was given distinctly, and with a precision that showed him to be master of his profession. The helm was kept fast, the head-yards swung up heavily against the wind, and the vessel was soon whirling round on her heel, with a retrograde movement.

Griffith was too much of a seaman not to perceive that the pilot had seized, with a perception almost intuitive, the only method that promised to extricate the vessel from her situation. He was young, impetuous, and proud – but he was also generous. Forgetting his resentment and his mortification, he rushed forward among the men, and, by his presence and example, added certainty to the experiment. The ship fell off slowly before the gale, and bowed her yards nearly to the water, as she felt the blast pouring its fury on her broadside, while the surly waves beat violently against her stern, as if in reproach at departing from her usual manner of moving.

The voice of the pilot, however, was still heard, steady and calm, and yet so clear and high as to reach every ear; and the obedient seamen whirled the yards at his bidding in despite of

the tempest, as if they handled the toys of their childhood. When the ship had fallen off dead before the wind, her head-sails were shaken, her after-yards trimmed, and her helm shifted, before she had time to run upon the danger that had threatened, as well to leeward as to windward. The beautiful fabric, obedient to her government, threw her bows up gracefully towards the wind again; and, as her sails were trimmed, moved out from among the dangerous shoals, in which she had been embayed, as steadily and swiftly as she had approached them.

A moment of breathless astonishment succeeded the accomplishment of this nice manoeuvre, but there was no time for the usual expressions of surprise. The stranger still held the trumpet, and continued to lift his voice amid the howlings of the blast, whenever prudence or skill required any change in the management of the ship. For an hour longer there was a fearful struggle for their preservation, the channel becoming at each step more complicated, and the shoals thickening around the mariners on every side. The lead was cast rapidly, and the quick eye of the pilot seemed to pierce the darkness with a keenness of vision that exceeded human power. It was apparent to all in the vessel that they were under the guidance of one who understood the navigation thoroughly, and their exertions kept pace with their reviving confidence. Again and again the frigate appeared to be rushing blindly on shoals where the sea was covered with foam, and where destruction would have been as sudden as it was certain, when the clear voice of the stranger

was heard warning them of the danger, and inciting them to their duty. The vessel was implicitly yielded to his government; and during those anxious moments when she was dashing the waters aside, throwing the spray over her enormous yards, each ear would listen eagerly for those sounds that had obtained a command over the crew that can only be acquired, under such circumstances, by great steadiness and consummate skill. The ship was recovering from the inaction of changing her course, in one of those critical tacks that she had made so often, when the pilot, for the first time, addressed the commander of the frigate, who still continued to superintend the all-important duty of the leadsman.

"Now is the pinch," he said, "and if the ship behaves well, we are safe – but if otherwise, all we have yet done will be useless."

The veteran seaman whom he addressed left the chains at this portentous notice, and calling to his first lieutenant, required of the stranger an explanation of his warning.

"See you yon light on the southern headland?" returned the pilot; "you may know it from the star near it? – by its sinking, at times, in the ocean. Now observe the hummock, a little north of it, looking like a shadow in the horizon – 'tis a hill far inland. if we keep that light open from the hill, we shall do well – but if not, we surely go to pieces."

"Let us tack again," exclaimed the lieutenant.

The pilot shook his head, as he replied:

"There is no more tacking or box-hauling to be done tonight.

We have barely room to pass out of the shoals on this course; and if we can weather the 'Devil's Grip,' we clear their outermost point – but if not, as I said before, there is but an alternative."

"If we had beaten out the way we entered," exclaimed Griffith, "we should have done well."

"Say, also, if the tide would have let us do so," returned the pilot, calmly. "Gentlemen, we must be prompt; we have but a mile to go, and the ship appears to fly. That topsail is not enough to keep her up to the wind; we want both jib and mainsail."

"'Tis a perilous thing to loosen canvas in such a tempest!" observed the doubtful captain.

"It must be done," returned the collected stranger; "we perish without it – see the light already touches the edge of the hummock; the sea casts us to leeward."

"It shall be done," cried Griffith, seizing the trumpet from the hand of the pilot.

The orders of the lieutenant were executed almost as soon as issued; and, everything being ready, the enormous folds of the mainsail were trusted loose to the blast. There was an instant when the result was doubtful; the tremendous threshing of the heavy sail seemed to bid defiance to all restraint, shaking the ship to her centre; but art and strength prevailed, and gradually the canvas was distended, and bellying as it filled, was drawn down to its usual place by the power of a hundred men. The vessel yielded to this immense addition of force, and bowed before it like a reed bending to a breeze. But the success of the measure

was announced by a joyful cry from the stranger, that seemed to burst from his inmost soul.

"She feels it! she springs her luff! observe," he said, "the light opens from the hummock already: if she will only bear her canvas we shall go clear."

A report, like that of a cannon, interrupted his exclamation, and something resembling a white cloud was seen drifting before the wind from the head of the ship, till it was driven into the gloom far to leeward.

"'Tis the jib, blown from the bolt-ropes," said the commander of the frigate. "This is no time to spread light duck – but the mainsail may stand it yet."

"The sail would laugh at a tornado," returned the lieutenant; "but the mast springs like a piece of steel."

"Silence all!" cried the pilot. "Now, gentlemen, we shall soon know our fate. Let her luff – luff you can!"

This warning effectually closed all discourse, and the hardy mariners, knowing that they had already done all in the power of man to insure their safety, stood in breathless anxiety, awaiting the result. At a short distance ahead of them the whole ocean was white with foam, and the waves, instead of rolling on in regular succession, appeared to be tossing about in mad gambols. A single streak of dark billows, not half a cable's length in width, could be discerned running into this chaos of water; but it was soon lost to the eye amid the confusion of the disturbed element. Along this narrow path the vessel moved more heavily

than before, being brought so near the wind as to keep her sails touching. The pilot silently proceeded to the wheel, and, with his own hands, he undertook the steerage of the ship. No noise proceeded from the frigate to interrupt the horrid tumult of the ocean; and she entered the channel among the breakers, with the silence of a desperate calmness. Twenty times, as the foam rolled away to leeward, the crew were on the eve of uttering their joy, as they supposed the vessel past the danger; but breaker after breaker would still heave up before them, following each other into the general mass, to check their exultation. Occasionally, the fluttering of the sails would be heard; and when the looks of the startled seamen were turned to the wheel, they beheld the stranger grasping its spokes, with his quick eye glancing from the water to the canvas. At length the ship reached a point where she appeared to be rushing directly into the jaws of destruction, when suddenly her course was changed, and her head receded rapidly from the wind. At the same instant the voice of the pilot was heard shouting:

"Square away the yards! – in mainsail!"

A general burst from the crew echoed, "Square away the yards!" and, quick as thought, the frigate was seen gliding along the channel before the wind. The eye had hardly time to dwell on the foam, which seemed like clouds driving in the heavens, and directly the gallant vessel issued from her perils, and rose and fell on the heavy waves of the sea.

The seamen were yet drawing long breaths, and gazing

about them like men recovered from a trance, when Griffith approached the man who had so successfully conducted them through their perils. The lieutenant grasped the hand of the other, as he said:

"You have this night proved yourself a faithful pilot, and such a seaman as the world cannot equal."

The pressure of the hand was warmly returned by the unknown mariner, who replied:

"I am no stranger to the seas, and I may yet find my grave in them. But you, too, have deceived me; you have acted nobly, young man, and Congress – –"

"What of Congress?" asked Griffith, observing him to pause.

"Why, Congress is fortunate if it has many such ships as this," said the stranger, coldly, walking away toward the commander.

Griffith gazed after him a moment in surprise; but, as his duty required his attention, other thoughts soon engaged his mind.

The vessel was pronounced to be in safety. The gale was heavy and increasing, but there was a clear sea before them; and as she slowly stretched out into the bosom of the ocean, preparations were made for her security during its continuance. Before midnight, everything was in order. A gun from the Ariel soon announced the safety of the schooner also, which had gone out by another and an easier channel, that the frigate had not dared to attempt; when the commander directed the usual watch to be set, and the remainder of the crew to seek their necessary repose.

The captain withdrew with the mysterious pilot to his own cabin. Griffith gave his last order; and renewing his charge to the officer instructed with the care of the vessel, he wished him a pleasant watch, and sought the refreshment of his own cot. For an hour the young lieutenant lay musing on the events of the day. The remark of Barnstable would occur to him, in connection with the singular comment of the boy; and then his thoughts would recur to the pilot, who, taken from the hostile shores of Britain, and with her accent on his tongue, had served them so faithfully and so well. He remembered the anxiety of Captain Munson to procure this stranger, at the very hazard from which they had just been relieved, and puzzled himself with conjecturing why a pilot was to be sought at such a risk. His more private feelings would then resume their sway, and the recollection of America, his mistress, and his home, mingled with the confused images of the drowsy youth. The dashing of the billows against the side of the ship, the creaking of guns and bulkheads, with the roaring of the tempest, however, became gradually less and less distinct, until nature yielded to necessity, and the young man forgot even the romantic images of his love, in the deep sleep of a seaman.

Chapter VI

– "The letter! ay! the letter!
'Tis there a woman loves to speak her wishes;
It spares the blushes of the love-sick maiden.
And every word's a smile, each line a tongue."

Duo.

The slumbers of Griffith continued till late on the following morning, when he was awakened by the report of a cannon, issuing from the deck above him. He threw himself, listlessly, from his cot, and perceiving the officer of marines near him, as his servant opened the door of his stateroom, he inquired, with some little interest in his manner, if "the ship was in chase of anything, that a gun was fired?"

""Tis no more than a hint to the Ariel," the soldier replied, "that there is bunting abroad for them to read. It seems as if all hands were asleep on board her, for we have shown her signal, these ten minutes, and she takes us for a collier, I believe, by the respect she pays it."

"Say, rather, that she takes us for an enemy, and is wary," returned Griffith. "Brown Dick has played the English so many tricks himself, that he is tender of his faith."

"Why, they have shown him a yellow flag over a blue one, with a cornet, and that spells Ariel, in every signal-book we

have; surely he can't suspect the English of knowing how to read Yankee."

"I have known Yankees read more difficult English," said Griffith, smiling; "but, in truth, I suppose that Barnstable has been, like myself, keeping a dead reckoning of his time, and his men have profited by the occasion. She is lying to, I trust."

"Ay! like a cork in a mill-pond, and I dare say you are right. Give Barnstable plenty of sea-room, a heavy wind, and but little sail, and he will send his men below, put that fellow he calls long Tom at the tiller, and follow himself, and sleep as quietly as I ever could at church."

"Ah! yours is a somniferous orthodoxy, Captain Manual," said the young sailor, laughing, while he slipped his arms into the sleeves of a morning round-about, covered with the gilded trappings of his profession; "sleep appears to come most naturally to all you idlers. But give me a passage, and I will go up, and call the schooner down to us in the turning of an hourglass."

The indolent soldier raised himself from the leaning posture he had taken against the door of the stateroom, and Griffith proceeded through the dark wardroom, up the narrow stairs that led him to the principal battery of the ship, and thence, by another and broader flight of steps to the open deck.

The gale still blew strong, but steadily; the blue water of the ocean was rising in mimic mountains, that were crowned with white foam, which the wind, at times, lifted from its kindred element, to propel in mist, through the air, from summit to

summit. But the ship rode on these agitated billows with an easy and regular movement that denoted the skill with which her mechanical powers were directed.

The day was bright and clear, and the lazy sun, who seemed unwilling to meet the toil of ascending to the meridian, was crossing the heavens with a southern inclination, that hardly allowed him to temper the moist air of the ocean with his genial heat. At the distance of a mile, directly in the wind's eye, the Ariel was seen obeying the signal which had caused the dialogue we have related. Her low black hull was barely discernible, at moments, when she rose to the crest of a larger wave than common; but the spot of canvas that she exposed to the wind was to be seen, seeming to touch the water on either hand, as the little vessel rolled amid the seas. At times she was entirely hid from view, when the faint lines of her raking masts would again be discovered, issuing, as it were, from the ocean, and continuing to ascend, until the hull itself would appear, thrusting its bows into the air, surrounded by foam, and apparently ready to take its flight into another element.

After dwelling a moment on the beautiful sight we have attempted to describe, Griffith cast his eyes upward to examine, with the keenness of a seaman, the disposition of things aloft, and then turned his attention to those who were on the deck of the frigate.

His commander stood, in his composed manner, patiently awaiting the execution of his order by the Ariel, and at his

side was placed the stranger who had so recently acted such a conspicuous part in the management of the ship. Griffith availed himself of daylight and his situation to examine the appearance of this singular being more closely than the darkness and confusion of the preceding night had allowed. He was a trifle below the middle size in stature, but his form was muscular and athletic, exhibiting the finest proportions of manly beauty. His face appeared rather characterized by melancholy and thought, than by that determined decision which he had so powerfully displayed in the moments of their most extreme danger; but Griffith well knew that it could also exhibit looks of the fiercest impatience. At present, it appeared, to the curious youth, when compared to the glimpses he had caught by the lights of their lanterns, like the ocean at rest, contrasted with the waters around him. The eyes of the pilot rested on the deck, or, when they did wander, it was with uneasy and rapid glances. The large pea-jacket, that concealed most of his other attire, was as roughly made, and of materials as coarse, as that worn by the meanest seaman in the vessel; and yet it did not escape the inquisitive gaze of the young lieutenant, that it was worn with an air of neatness and care that was altogether unusual in men of his profession. The examination of Griffith ended here, for the near approach of the Ariel attracted the attention of all on the deck of the frigate to the conversation that was about to pass between their respective commanders.

As the little schooner rolled along under their stern, Captain

Munson directed his subordinate to leave his vessel and repair on board the ship. As soon as the order was received, the Ariel rounded to, and drawing ahead into the smooth water occasioned by the huge fabric that protected her from the gale, the whale-boat was again launched from her decks, and manned by the same crew that had landed on those shores which were now faintly discerned far to leeward, looking like blue clouds on the skirts of the ocean.

When Barnstable had entered his boat, a few strokes of the oars sent it, dancing over the waves, to the side of the ship. The little vessel was then veered off to a distance, where it rode in safety under the care of a boat-keeper, and the officer and his men ascended the side of the lofty frigate.

The usual ceremonials of reception were rigidly observed by Griffith and his juniors, when Barnstable touched the deck; and though every hand was ready to be extended toward the reckless seaman, none presumed to exceed the salutations of official decorum, until a short and private dialogue had taken place between him and their captain.

In the mean time, the crew of the whale-boat passed forward, and mingled with the seamen of the frigate, with the exception of the cockswain, who established himself in one of the gangways, where he stood in the utmost composure, fixing his eyes aloft, and shaking his head in evident dissatisfaction, as he studied the complicated mass of rigging above him. This spectacle soon attracted to his side some half-dozen youths, with Mr. Merry at

their head, who endeavored to entertain their guest in a manner that should most conduce to the indulgence of their own waggish propensities.

The conversation between Barnstable and his superior soon ended; when the former, beckoning to Griffith, passed the wondering group who had collected around the capstan, awaiting his leisure to greet him more cordially, and led the way to the wardroom, with the freedom of one who felt him self no stranger. As this unsocial manner formed no part of the natural temper or ordinary deportment of the man, the remainder of the officers suffered their first lieutenant to follow him alone, believing that duty required that their interview should be private. Barnstable was determined that it should be so, at all events; for he seized the lamp from the mess-table, and entered the stateroom of his friend, closing the door behind them and turning the key. When they were both within its narrow limits – pointing to the only chair the little apartment contained, with a sort of instinctive deference to his companion's rank – the commander of the schooner threw himself carelessly on a sea-chest; and, placing the lamp on the table, he opened the discourse as follows:

"What a night we had of it! Twenty times I thought I could see the sea breaking over you; and I had given you over as drowned men, or, what is worse, as men driven ashore, to be led to the prison-ships of these islanders, when I saw your lights in answer to my gun. Had you hoisted the conscience of a murderer, you wouldn't have relieved him more than you did me, by showing

that bit of tallow and cotton, tipped with flint and steel. But, Griffith, I have a tale to tell of a different kind – –"

"Of how you slept when you found yourself in deep water, and how your crew strove to outdo their commander, and how all succeeded so well that there was a gray-head on board here, that began to shake with displeasure," interrupted Griffith; "truly, Dick, you will get into lubberly habits on board that bubble in which you float about, where all hands go to sleep as regularly as the inhabitants of a poultry-yard go to roost."

"Not so bad, not half so bad, Ned," returned the other, laughing; "I keep as sharp a discipline as if we wore a flag. To be sure, forty men can't make as much parade as three or four hundred; but as for making or taking in sail, I am your better any day."

"Ay, because a pocket-handkerchief is sooner opened and shut than a table-cloth. But I hold it to be un-seamanlike to leave any vessel without human eyes, and those open, to watch whether she goes east or west, north or south."

"And who is guilty of such a dead man's watch?"

"Why, they say aboard here, that when it blows hard, you seat the man you call long Tom by the side of the tiller, tell him to keep her head to sea, and then pipe all hands to their night-caps, where you all remain, comfortably stowed in your hammocks, until you are awakened by the snoring of your helmsman."

"'Tis a damned scandalous insinuation," cried Barnstable, with an indignation that he in vain attempted to conceal. "Who gives

currency to such a libel, Mr. Griffith?"

"I had it of the marine," said his friend, losing the archness that had instigated him to worry his companion, in the vacant air of one who was careless of everything; "but I don't believe half of it myself – I have no doubt you all had your eyes open last night, whatever you might have been about this morning."

"Ah! this morning! there was an oversight, indeed! But I was studying a new signal-book, Griffith, that has a thousand times more interest for me than all the bunting you can show, from the head to the heel of your masts."

"What! have you found out the Englishman's private talk?"

"No, no," said the other, stretching forth his hand, and grasping the arm of his friend. "I met last night one on those cliffs, who has proved herself what I always believed her to be, and loved her for, a girl of quick thought and bold spirit."

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Katherine – –"

Griffith started from his chair involuntarily at the sound of this name, and the blood passed quickly through the shades of his countenance, leaving it now pale as death, and then burning as if oppressed by a torrent from his heart. Struggling to overcome an emotion, which he appeared ashamed to betray even to the friend he most loved, the young man soon recovered himself so far as to resume his seat, when he asked, gloomily:

"Was she alone?"

"She was; but she left with me this paper and this invaluable

book, which is worth a library of all other works."

The eye of Griffith rested vacantly on the treasure that the other valued so highly, but his hand seized eagerly the open letter which was laid on the table for his perusal. The reader will at once understand that it was in the handwriting of a female, and that it was the communication Barnstable had received from his betrothed on the cliffs. Its contents were as follows:

"Believing that Providence may conduct me where we shall meet, or whence I may be able to transmit to you this account, I have prepared a short statement of the situation of Cecila Howard and myself; not, however, to urge you and Griffith to any rash or foolish hazards, but that you may both sit down, and, after due consultation, determine what is proper for our relief.

"By this time, you must understand the character of Colonel Howard too well to expect he will ever consent to give his niece to a rebel. He has already sacrificed to his loyalty, as he calls it (but I whisper to Cecilia, 'tis his treason), not only his native country, but no small part of his fortune also. In the frankness of my disposition (you know my frankness, Barnstable, but too well!), I confessed to him, after the defeat of the mad attempt Griffith made to carry off Cecilia, in Carolina, that I had been foolish enough to enter into some weak promise to the brother officer who had accompanied the young sailor in his traitorous visits to the plantation. Heigho! I sometimes think it would have been better for us all, if your ship had never been chased into the river, or, after she was there, if Griffith had made no attempt

to renew his acquaintance with my cousin. The colonel received the intelligence as such a guardian would hear that his ward was about to throw away thirty thousand dollars and herself on a traitor to his king and country. I defended you stoutly: said that you had no king, as the tie was dissolved; that America was your country, and that your profession was honorable; but it would not all do. He called you rebel; that I was used to. He said you were a traitor; that, in his vocabulary, amounts to the same thing. He even hinted that you were a coward; and that I knew to be false, and did not hesitate to tell him so. He used fifty opprobrious terms that I cannot remember; but among others were the beautiful epithets of 'disorganizer,' 'leveller, 'democrat,' and 'jacobin' (I hope he did not mean a monk!). In short, he acted Colonel Howard in a rage. But as his dominion does not, like that of his favorite kings, continue from generation to generation, and one short year will release me from his power, and leave me mistress of my own actions – that is, if your fine promises are to be believed – I bore it all very well, being resolved to suffer anything but martyrdom, rather than abandon Cecilia. She, dear girl, has much more to distress her than I can have; she is not only the ward of Colonel Howard, but his niece and his sole heir. I am persuaded this last circumstance makes no difference in either her conduct or her feelings; but he appears to think it gives him a right to tyrannize over her on all occasions. After all, Colonel Howard is a gentleman when you do not put him in a passion, and, I believe, a thoroughly honest man; and Cecilia even loves

him. But a man who is driven from his country, in his sixtieth year, with the loss of near half his fortune, is not apt to canonize those who compel the change.

"It seems that when the Howards lived on this island, a hundred years ago, they dwelt in the county of Northumberland. Hither, then, he brought us, when political events, and his dread of becoming the uncle to a rebel, induced him to abandon America, as he says, forever. We have been here now three months, and for two-thirds of that time we lived in tolerable comfort; but latterly, the papers have announced the arrival of the ship and your schooner in France; and from that moment as strict a watch has been kept over us as if we had meditated a renewal of the Carolina flight. The colonel, on his arrival here, hired an old building, that is, part house, part abbey, part castle, and all prison; because it is said to have once belonged to an ancestor of his. In this delightful dwelling there are many cages that will secure more uneasy birds than we are. About a fortnight ago an alarm was given in a neighboring village which is situated on the shore, that two American vessels, answering your description, had been seen hovering along the coast; and, as people in this quarter dream of nothing but that terrible fellow, Paul Jones, it was said that he was on board one of them. But I believe that Colonel Howard suspects who you really are. He was very minute in his inquiries, I hear; and since then has established a sort of garrison in the house, under the pretence of defending it against marauders, like those who are said to have laid my Lady Selkirk

under contribution.

"Now, understand me, Barnstable; on no account would I have you risk yourself on shore; neither must there be blood spilt, if you love me; but that you may know what sort of a place we are confined in, and by whom surrounded, I will describe both our prison and the garrison. The whole building is of stone, and not to be attempted with slight means. It has windings and turnings, both internally and externally, that would require more skill than I possess to make intelligible; but the rooms we inhabit are in the upper or third floor of a wing, that you may call a tower, if you are in a romantic mood, but which, in truth, is nothing but a wing. Would to God I could fly with it! If any accident should bring you in sight of the dwelling, you will know our rooms by the three smoky vanes that whiffle about its pointed roof, and also, by the windows in that story being occasionally open. Opposite to our windows, at the distance of half a mile, is a retired unfrequented ruin, concealed, in a great measure, from observation by a wood, and affording none of the best accommodations, it is true, but shelter in some of its vaults or apartments. I have prepared, according to the explanations you once gave me on this subject, a set of small signals, of differently colored silks, and a little dictionary of all the phrases that I could imagine as useful to refer to, properly numbered to correspond with the key and the flags, all of which I shall send you with this letter. You must prepare your own flags, and of course I retain mine, as well as a copy of the key and book. If opportunity should

ever offer, we can have, at least, a pleasant discourse together; you from the top of the old tower in the ruins, and I from the east window of my dressing-room! But now for the garrison. In addition to the commandant, Colonel Howard, who retains all the fierceness of his former military profession, there is, as his second in authority, that bane of Cecilia's happiness, Kit Dillon, with his long Savannah face, scornful eyes of black, and skin of the same color. This gentleman, you know, is a distant relative of the Howards, and wishes to be more nearly allied. He is poor, it is true, but then, as the colonel daily remarks, he is a good and loyal subject, and no rebel. When I asked why he was not in arms in these stirring times, contending for the prince he loves so much, the colonel answers that it is not his profession, that he has been educated for the law, and was destined to fill one of the highest judicial stations in the colonies, and that he hoped he should yet live to see him sentence certain nameless gentlemen to condign punishment. This was consoling, to be sure; but I bore it. However, he left Carolina with us, and here he is, and here he is likely to continue, unless you can catch him, and anticipate his judgment on himself. The colonel has long desired to see this gentleman the hus band of Cecilia, and since the news of your being on the coast, the siege has nearly amounted to a storm. The consequences are, that my cousin at first kept her room, and then the colonel kept her there, and even now she is precluded from leaving the wing we inhabit. In addition to these two principal jailers, we have four men- servants, two black and two white;

and an officer and twenty soldiers from the neighboring town are billeted on us, by particular desire, until the coast is declared free from pirates! yes, that is the musical name they give you – and when their own people land, and plunder, and rob, and murder the men and insult the women, they are called heroes! It's a fine thing to be able to invent names and make dictionaries – and it must be your fault, if mine has been framed for no purpose. I declare, when I recollect all the insulting and cruel things I hear in this country of my own and her people, it makes me lose my temper and forget my sex; but do not let my ill humor urge you to anything rash; remember your life, remember their prisons, remember your reputation, but do not, do not forget your

"KATHERINE PLOWDEN.

"P. S. I had almost forgotten to tell you, that in the signal-book you will find a more particular description of our prison, where it stands, and a drawing of the grounds, etc."

When Griffith concluded this epistle, he returned it to the man to whom it was addressed, and fell back in his chair, in an attitude that denoted deep reflection.

"I knew she was here, or I should have accepted the command offered to me by our commissioners in Paris," he at length uttered; "and I thought that some lucky chance might throw her in my way; but this is bringing us close, indeed! This intelligence must be acted on, and that promptly. Poor girl, what does she not suffer in such a situation!"

"What a beautiful hand she writes!" exclaimed Barnstable;

"'tis as clear, and as pretty, and as small, as her own delicate fingers. Griff, what a log-book she would keep!"

"Cecilia Howard touch the coarse leaves of a log-book!" cried the other in amazement; but perceiving Barnstable to be poring over the contents of his mistress' letter, he smiled at their mutual folly, and continued silent. After a short time spent in cool reflection, Griffith inquired of his friend the nature and circumstances of his interview with Katherine Plowden. Barnstable related it, briefly, as it occurred, in the manner already known to the reader.

"Then," said Griffith, "Merry is the only one, besides ourselves, who knows of this meeting, and he will be too chary of the reputation of his kinswoman to mention it."

"Her reputation needs no shield, Mr. Griffith," cried her lover; "'tis as spotless as the canvas above your head, and – –"

"Peace, dear Richard; I entreat your pardon; my words may have conveyed more than I intended; but it is important that our measures should be secret, as well as prudently concerted."

"We must get them both off," returned Barnstable, forgetting his displeasure the moment it was exhibited, "and that, too, before the old man takes it into his wise head to leave the coast. Did you ever get a sight of his instructions, or does he keep silent?"

"As the grave. This is the first time we have left port, that he has not conversed freely with me on the nature of the cruise; but not a syllable has been exchanged between us on the subject,

since we sailed from Brest."

"Ah! that is your Jersey bashfulness," said Barnstable; "wait till I come alongside him, with my eastern curiosity, and I pledge myself to get it out of him in an hour."

"'Twill be diamond cut diamond, I doubt," said Griffith, laughing; "you will find him as acute at evasion, as you can possibly be at a cross-examination."

"At any rate, he gives me a chance to-day; you know, I suppose, that he sent for me to attend a consultation of his officers on important matters."

"I did not," returned Griffith, fixing his eyes intently on the speaker; "what has he to offer?"

"Nay, that you must ask your pilot; for while talking to me, the old man would turn and look at the stranger, every minute, as if watching for signals how to steer."

"There is a mystery about that man, and our connection with him, that I cannot fathom," said Griffith. "But I hear the voice of Manual calling for me; we are wanted in the cabin. Remember, you do not leave the ship without seeing me again."

"No, no, my dear fellow; from the public we must retire to another private consultation."

The young men arose, and Griffith, throwing off the roundabout in which he had appeared on deck, drew on a coat of more formal appearance, and taking a sword carelessly in his hand, they proceeded together along the passage already described, to the gun-deck, where they entered, with the proper

ceremonials, into the principal cabin of the frigate.

Chapter VII

"Sempronius, speak."
Cato.

The arrangements for the consultation were briefand simple. The veteran commander of the frigate received his officers with punctilious respect; and pointing to the chairs that were placed around the table, which was a fixture in the centre of his cabin, he silently seated himself, and his example was followed by all without further ceremony. In taking their stations, however, a quiet but rigid observance was paid to the rights of seniority and rank. On the right of the captain was placed Griffith, as next in authority; and opposite to him was seated the commander of the schooner. The officer of marines, who was included in the number, held the next situation in point of precedence, the same order being observed to the bottom of the table, which was occupied by a hard-featured, square-built, athletic man, who held the office of sailing-master. When order was restored, after the short interruption of taking their places, the officer who had required the advice of his inferiors opened the business on which he demanded their opinions.

"My instructions direct me, gentlemen," he said, "after making the coast of England, to run the land down – –"

The hand of Griffith was elevated respectfully for silence, and

the veteran paused, with a look that inquired the reason of his interruption.

"We are not alone," said the lieutenant, glancing his eye toward the part of the cabin where the pilot stood, leaning on one of the guns, in an attitude of easy indulgence.

The stranger moved not at this direct hint; neither did his eye change from its close survey of a chart that lay near him on the deck. The captain dropped his voice to tones of cautious respect, as he replied:

"'Tis only Mr. Gray. His services will be necessary on the occasion, and therefore nothing need be concealed from him."

Glances of surprise were exchanged among the young men; but Griffith bowing his silent acquiescence in the decision of his superior, the latter proceeded:

"I was ordered to watch for certain signals from the headlands that we made, and was furnished with the best of charts, and such directions as enabled us to stand into the bay we entered last night. We have now obtained a pilot, and one who has proved himself a skilful man; such a one, gentlemen, as no officer need hesitate to rely on, in any emergency, either on account of his integrity or his knowledge."

The veteran paused, and turned his looks on the countenances of the listeners, as if to collect their sentiments on this important point. Receiving no other reply than the one conveyed by the silent inclinations of the heads of his hearers, the commander resumed his explanations, referring to an open paper in his hand:

"It is known to you all, gentlemen, that the unfortunate question of retaliation has been much agitated between the two governments, our own and that of the enemy. For this reason, and for certain political purposes, it has become an object of solicitude with our commissioners in Paris to obtain a few individuals of character from the enemy, who may be held as a check on their proceedings, while at the same time it brings the evils of war, from our own shores, home to those who have caused it. An opportunity now offers to put this plan in execution, and I have collected you, in order to consult on the means."

A profound silence succeeded this unexpected communication of the object of their cruise. After a short pause, their captain added, addressing himself to the sailing-master:

"What course would you advise me to pursue, Mr. Boltrope?"

The weather beaten seaman who was thus called on to break through the difficulties of a knotty point with his opinion, laid one of his short, bony hands on the table, and began to twirl an inkstand with great industry, while with the other he conveyed a pen to his mouth, which was apparently masticated with all the relish that he could possibly have felt had it been a leaf from the famous Virginian weed. But perceiving that he was expected to answer, after looking first to his right hand and then to his left, he spoke as follows, in a hoarse, thick voice, in which the fogs of the ocean seemed to have united with sea-damps and colds to destroy everything like melody:

"If this matter is ordered, it is to be done, I suppose," he said;

"for the old rule runs, 'obey orders, if you break owners'; though the maxim which says, 'one hand for the owner, and t'other for yourself,' is quite as good, and has saved many a hearty fellow from a fall that would have balanced the purser's books. Not that I mean a purser's books are not as good as any other man's; but that when a man is dead, his account must be closed, or there will be a false muster. Well, if the thing is to be done, the next question is, how is it to be done? There is many a man that knows there is too much canvas on a ship, who can't tell how to shorten sail. Well, then, if the thing is really to be done, we must either land a gang to seize them, or we must show false lights and sham colors, to lead them off to the ship. As for landing, Captain Munson, I can only speak for one man, and that is myself; which is to say, that if you run the ship with her jib-boom into the king of England's parlor-windows, why, I'm consenting, nor do I care how much of his crockery is cracked in so doing; but as to putting the print of my foot on one of his sandy beaches, if I do, that is always speaking for only one man, and saving your presence, may I hope to be d – d."

The young men smiled as the tough old seaman uttered his sentiments so frankly, rising with his subject, to that which with him was the climax of all discussion; but his commander, who was but a more improved scholar from the same rough school, appeared to understand his arguments entirely, and without altering a muscle of his rigid countenance, he required the opinion of the junior lieutenant.

The young man spoke firmly, but modestly, though the amount of what he said was not much more distinct than that uttered by the master, and was very much to the same purpose, with the exception that he appeared to entertain no personal reluctance to trusting himself on dry ground.

The opinions of the others grew gradually more explicit and clear, as they ascended in the scale of rank, until it came to the turn of the captain of marines to speak. There was a trifling exhibition of professional pride about the soldier, in delivering his sentiments on a subject that embraced a good deal more of his peculiar sort of duty than ordinarily occurred in the usual operations of the frigate.

"It appears to me, sir, that the success of this expedition depends altogether upon the manner in which it is conducted." After this lucid opening, the soldier hesitated a moment, as if to collect his ideas for a charge that should look down all opposition, and proceeded. "The landing, of course, will be effected on a fair beach, under cover of the frigate's guns, and could it be possibly done, the schooner should be anchored in such a manner as to throw in a flanking fire on the point of debarkation. The arrangements for the order of march must a good deal depend on the distance to go over; though I should think, sir, an advanced party of seamen, to act as pioneers for the column of marines, should be pushed a short distance in front, while the baggage and baggage-guard might rest upon the frigate, until the enemy was driven into the interior, when it could advance without

danger. There should be flank-guards, under the orders of two of the oldest midshipmen; and a light corps might be formed of the topmen to co-operate with the marines. Of course, sir, Mr. Griffith will lead, in person, the musket-men and boarders, armed with their long pikes, whom I presume he will hold in reserve, as I trust my military claims and experience entitle me to the command of the main body."

"Well done, field-marshal!" cried Barnstable, with a glee that seldom regarded time or place; "you should never let salt-water mould your buttons; but in Washington's camp, ay! and in Washington's tent, you should swing your hammock in future. Why, sir, do you think we are about to invade England?"

"I know that every military movement should be executed with precision, Captain Barnstable," returned the marine. "I am too much accustomed to hear the sneers of the sea-officers, to regard what I know proceeds from ignorance. If Captain Munson is disposed to employ me and my command in this expedition, I trust he will discover that marines are good for something more than to mount guard and pay salutes." Then, turning haughtily from his antagonist, he continued to address himself to their common superior, as if disdaining further intercourse with one who, from the nature of the case, must be unable to comprehend the force of what he said. "It will be prudent, Captain Munson, to send out a party to reconnoitre, before we march; and as it may be necessary to defend ourselves in case of a repulse, I would beg leave to recommend that a corps be provided with

entrenching tools, to accompany the expedition. They would be extremely useful, sir, in assisting to throw up fieldworks; though, I doubt not, tools might be found in abundance in this country, and laborers impressed for the service, on an emergency."

This was too much for the risibility of Barnstable, who broke forth in a fit of scornful laughter, which no one saw proper to interrupt; though Griffith, on turning his head to conceal the smile that was gathering on his own face, perceived the fierce glance which the pilot threw at the merry seaman, and wondered at its significance and impatience. When Captain Munson thought that the mirth of the lieutenant was concluded, he mildly desired his reasons for amusing himself so exceedingly with the plans of the marine.

"Tis a chart for a campaign!" cried Barnstable, "and should be sent off express to Congress, before the Frenchmen are brought into the field!"

"Have you any better plan to propose, Mr. Barnstable?" inquired the patient commander.

"Better! ay, one that will take no time, and cause no trouble, to execute it," cried the other; "'tis a seaman's job, sir, and must be done with a seaman's means."

"Pardon me, Captain Barnstable," interrupted the marine, whose jocular vein was entirely absorbed in his military pride; "if there be service to be done on shore, I claim it as my right to be employed."

"Claim what you will, soldier; but how will you carry on the

war with a parcel of fellows who don't know one end of a boat from the other?" returned the reckless sailor. "Do you think that a barge or a cutter is to be beached in the same manner you ground firelock, by word of command? No, no, Captain Manual – I honor your courage, for I have seen it tried, but d – e if – –"

"You forget, we wait for your project, Mr. Barnstable," said the veteran.

"I crave your patience, sir; but no project is necessary. Point out the bearings and distance of the place where the men you want are to be found, and I will take the heel of the gale, and run into the land, always speaking for good water and no rocks. Mr. Pilot, you will accompany me, for you carry as true a map of the bottom of these seas in your head as ever was made of dry ground. I will look out for good anchorage; or if the wind should blow offshore, let the schooner stand off and on, till we should be ready to take the broad sea again. I would land, out of my whaleboat, with long Tom and a boat's crew, and finding out the place you will describe, we shall go up, and take the men you want, and bring them aboard. It's all plain sailing; though, as it is a well-peopled country, it may be necessary to do our shore work in the dark."

"Mr. Griffith, we only wait for your sentiments," proceeded the captain, "when, by comparing opinions, we may decide on the most prudent course."

The first lieutenant had been much absorbed in thought during the discussion of the subject, and might have been, on that

account, better prepared to give his opinion with effect. Pointing to the man who yet stood behind him, leaning on a gun, he commenced by asking:

"Is it your intention that man shall accompany the party?"

"It is."

"And from him you expect the necessary information, sir, to guide our movements?"

"You are altogether right."

"If, sir, he has but a moiety of the skill on the land that he possesses on the water, I will answer for his success," returned the lieutenant, bowing slightly to the stranger, who received the compliment by a cold inclination of his head. "I must desire the indulgence of both Mr. Barnstable and Captain Manual," he continued, "and claim the command as of right belonging to my rank."

"It belongs naturally to the schooner," exclaimed the impatient Barnstable.

"There may be enough for us all to do," said Griffith, elevating a finger to the other, in a manner and with an impressive look that was instantly comprehended. "I neither agree wholly with the one nor the other of these gentlemen. Tis said that, since our appearance on the coast, the dwellings of many of the gentry are guarded by small detachments of soldiers from the neighboring towns."

"Who says it?" asked the pilot, advancing among them with a suddenness that caused a general silence.

"I say it, sir," returned the lieutenant, when the momentary surprise had passed away.

"Can you vouch for it?"

"I can."

"Name a house, or an individual, that is thus protected?"

Griffith gazed at the man who thus forgot himself in the midst of a consultation like the present, and yielding to his native pride, hesitated to reply. But mindful of the declarations of his captain and the recent services of the pilot, he at length said, with a little embarrassment of manner:

"I know it to be the fact, in the dwelling of a Colonel Howard, who resides but a few leagues to the north of us."

The stranger started at the name, and then raising his eye keenly to the face of the young man, appeared to study his thoughts in his varying countenance. But the action, and the pause that followed, were of short continuance. His lip slightly curled, whether in scorn or with a concealed smile, would have been difficult to say, so closely did it resemble both, and as he dropped quietly back to his place at the gun, he said:

"'Tis more than probable you are right, sir; and if I might presume to advise Captain Munson, it would be to lay great weight on your opinion."

Griffith turned, to see if he could comprehend more meaning in the manner of the stranger than his words expressed, but his face was again shaded by his hand, and his eyes were once more fixed on the chart with the same vacant abstraction as before.

"I have said, sir, that I agree wholly neither with Mr. Barnstable nor Captain Manual," continued the lieutenant, after a short pause. "The command of this party is mine, as the senior officer, and I must beg leave to claim it. I certainly do not think the preparation that Captain Manual advises necessary; neither would I undertake the duty with as little caution as Mr. Barnstable proposes. If there are soldiers to be encountered, we should have soldiers to oppose them; but as it must be sudden boat-work, and regular evolutions must give place to a seaman's bustle, a sea-officer should command. Is my request granted, Captain Munson?"

The veteran replied, without hesitation:

"It is, sir; it was my intention to offer you the service, and I rejoice to see you accept it so cheerfully."

Griffith with difficulty concealed the satisfaction with which he listened to his commander, and a radiant smile illumined his pale features, when he observed:

"With me then, sir, let the responsibility rest. I request that Captain Manual, with twenty men, may be put under my orders, if that gentleman does not dislike the duty." The marine bowed, and cast a glance of triumph at Barnstable. "I will take my own cutter, with her tried crew, go on board the schooner, and when the wind lulls, we will run in to the land, and then be governed by circumstances."

The commander of the schooner threw back the triumphant look of the marine, and exclaimed, in his joyous manner:

'"Tis a good plan, and done like a seaman, Mr. Griffith. Ay, ay, let the schooner be employed; and if it be necessary, you shall see her anchored in one of their duck-ponds, with her broadside to bear on the parlor-windows of the best house in the island! But twenty marines! they will cause a jam in my little craft."

"Not a man less than twenty would be prudent," returned Griffith. "More service may offer than that we seek."

Barnstable well understood his allusion, but still he replied:

"Make it all seamen, and I will give you room for thirty. But these soldiers never know how to stow away their arms and legs, unless at a drill. One will take the room of two sailors; they swing their hammocks athwart-ships, heads to leeward, and then turn out wrong end uppermost at the call. Why, damn it, sir, the chalk and rottenstone of twenty soldiers will choke my hatches!"

"Give me the launch, Captain Munson!" exclaimed the indignant marine, "and we will follow Mr. Griffith in an open boat, rather than put Captain Barnstable to so much inconvenience."

"No, no, Manual," cried the other, extending his muscular arm across the table, with an open palm, to the soldier; "you would all become so many Jonahs in uniform, and I doubt whether the fish could digest your cartridge-boxes and bayonet-belts. You shall go with me, and learn, with your own eyes, whether we keep the cat's watch aboard the Ariel that you joke about."

The laugh was general, at the expense of the soldier, if we except the pilot and the commander of the frigate. The former

was a silent, and apparently an abstracted, but in reality a deeply interested listener to the discourse; and there were moments when he bent his looks on the speakers, as if he sought more in their characters than was exhibited by the gay trifling of the moment. Captain Munson seldom allowed a muscle of his wrinkled features to disturb their repose; and if he had not the real dignity to repress the untimely mirth of his officers, he had too much good nature to wish to disturb their harmless enjoyments. He expressed himself satisfied with the proposed arrangements, and beckoned to his steward to place before them the usual beverage, with which all their consultations concluded.

The sailing-master appeared to think that the same order was to be observed in their potations as in council, and helping himself to an allowance which retained its hue even in its diluted state, he first raised it to the light, and then observed:

"This ship's water is nearly the color of rum itself; if it only had its flavor, what a set of hearty dogs we should be! Mr. Griffith, I find you are willing to haul your land-tacks aboard. Well, it's natural for youth to love the earth; but there is one man, and he is sailing-master of this ship, who saw land enough last night, to last him a twelvemonth. But if you will go, here's a good land-fall, and a better offing to you. Captain Munson, my respects to you. I say, sir, if we should keep the ship more to the south'ard, it's my opinion, and that's but one man's, we should fall in with some of the enemy's homeward bound West-Indiamen, and find wherewithal to keep the life in us when we see fit to go ashore

ourselves."

As the tough old sailor made frequent application of the glass to his mouth with one hand, and kept a firm hold of the decanter with the other, during this speech, his companions were compelled to listen to his eloquence, or depart with their thirst unassuaged. Barnstable, however, quite coolly dispossessed the tar of the bottle, and mixing for himself a more equal potation, observed, in the act:

"That is the most remarkable glass of grog you have, Boltrope, that I ever sailed with; it draws as little water as the Ariel, and is as hard to find the bottom. If your spirit-room enjoys the same sort of engine to replenish it, as you pump out your rum, Congress will sail this frigate cheaply."

The other officers helped themselves with still greater moderation, Griffith barely moistening his lips, and the pilot rejecting the offered glass altogether. Captain Munson continued standing, and his officers, perceiving that their presence was no longer necessary, bowed, and took their leave. As Griffith was retiring last, he felt a hand laid lightly on his shoulder, and turning, perceived that he was detained by the pilot.

"Mr. Griffith," he said, when they were quite alone with the commander of the frigate, "the occurrences of the last night should teach us confidence in each other; without it, we go on a dangerous and fruitless errand."

"Is the hazard equal?" returned the youth. "I am known to all to be the man I seem – am in the service of my country

– belong to a family, and enjoy a name, that is a pledge for my loyalty to the cause of America – and yet I trust myself on hostile ground, in the midst of enemies, with a weak arm, and under circumstances where treachery would prove my ruin. Who and what is the man who thus enjoys your confidence, Captain Munson? I ask the question less for myself than for the gallant men who will fearlessly follow wherever I lead."

A shade of dark displeasure crossed the features of the stranger, at one part of this speech, and at its close he sank into deep thought. The commander, however, replied:

"There is a show of reason in your question, Mr. Griffith – and yet you are not the man to be told that implicit obedience is what I have a right to expect. I have not your pretensions, sir, by birth or education, and yet Congress have not seen proper to overlook my years and services. I command this frigate – –"

"Say no more," interrupted the pilot "There is reason in his doubts, and they shall be appeased. I like the proud and fearless eye of the young man, and while he dreads a gibbet from my hands, I will show him how to repose a noble confidence. Read this, sir, and tell me if you distrust me now?"

While the stranger spoke, he thrust his hand into the bosom of his dress, and drew forth a parchment, decorated with ribands, and bearing a massive seal, which he opened, and laid on the table before the youth. As he pointed with his finger impressively to different parts of the writing, his eye kindled with a look of unusual fire, and there was a faint tinge discernible on his pallid

features when he spoke.

"See!" he said, "royalty itself does not hesitate to bear witness in my favor, and that is not a name to occasion dread to an American."

Griffith gazed with wonder at the fair signature of the unfortunate Louis, which graced the bottom of the parchment; but when his eye obeyed the signal of the stranger, and rested on the body of the instrument, he started back from the table, and fixing his animated eyes on the pilot, he cried, while a glow of fiery courage flitted across his countenance:

"Lead on! I'll follow you to death!"

A smile of gratified exultation struggled around the lips of the stranger, who took the arm of the young man and led him into a stateroom, leaving the commander of the frigate standing, in his unmoved and quiet manner, a spectator of, but hardly an actor in, the scene.

Chapter VIII

"Fierce bounding, forward sprang the ship
Like a greyhound starting from the slip,
To seize his flying prey."

Lord of the Isles.

Although the subject of the consultation remained a secret with those whose opinions were required, yet enough of the result leaked out among the subordinate officers, to throw the whole crew into a state of eager excitement. The rumor spread itself along the decks of the frigate, with the rapidity of an alarm, that an expedition was to attempt the shore on some hidden service, dictated by the Congress itself; and conjectures were made respecting its force and destination, with all that interest which might be imagined would exist among the men whose lives or liberties were to abide the issue. A gallant and reckless daring, mingled with the desire of novelty, however, was the prevailing sentiment among the crew, who would have received with cheers the intelligence that their vessel was commanded to force the passage of the united British fleet. A few of the older and more prudent of the sailors were exceptions to this thoughtless hardihood, and one or two, among whom the cockswain of the whale-boat was the most conspicuous, ventured to speak

doubtingly of all sorts of land service, as being of a nature never to be attempted by seamen.

Captain Manual had his men paraded in the weathergangway, and after a short address, calculated to inflame their military ardor and patriotism, acquainted them that he required twenty volunteers, which was in truth half their number, for a dangerous service. After a short pause, the company stepped forward, like one man, and announced themselves as ready to follow him to the end of the world. The marine cast a look over his shoulder, at this gratifying declaration, in quest of Barnstable; but observing that the sailor was occupied with some papers on a distant part of the quarter-deck, he proceeded to make a most impartial division among the candidates for glory; taking care at the same time to cull his company in such a manner as to give himself the flower of his men, and, consequently, to leave the ship the refuse.

While this arrangement was taking place, and the crew of the frigate was in this state of excitement, Griffith ascended to the deck, his countenance flushed with unusual enthusiasm, and his eyes beaming with a look of animation and gayety that had long been strangers to the face of the young man. He was giving forth the few necessary orders to the seamen he was to take with him from the ship, when Barnstable again motioned him to follow, and led the way once more to the stateroom.

"Let the wind blow its pipe out," said the commander of the Ariel, when they were seated; "there will be no landing on the eastern coast of England till the sea goes down. But this Kate was

made for a sailor's wife! See, Griffith, what a set of signals she has formed, out of her own cunning head."

"I hope your opinion may prove true, and that you may be the happy sailor who is to wed her," returned the other. "The girl has indeed discovered surprising art in this business! Where could she have learnt the method and system so well?"

"Where! why, where she learnt better things; how to prize a wholehearted seaman, for instance. Do you think that my tongue was jammed in my mouth, all the time we used to sit by the side of the river in Carolina, and that we found nothing to talk about!"

"Did you amuse your mistress with treatises on the art of navigation, and the science ofsignals?" said Griffith, smiling.

"I answered her questions, Mr. Griffith, as any civil man would to a woman he loved. The girl has as much curiosity as one of my own townswomen who has weathered cape forty without a husband, and her tongue goes like a dog-vane in a calm, first one way and then another. But here is her dictionary. Now own, Griff, in spite of your college learning and sentimentals, that a woman of ingenuity and cleverness is a very good sort of a helpmate."

"I never doubted the merits of Miss Plowden," said the other, with a droll gravity that often mingled with his deeper feelings, the result of a sailor's habits, blended with native character. "But this indeed surpasses all my expectations! Why, she has, in truth, made a most judicious selection of phrases. 'No. 168. **** indelible;' '169. **** end only with life;' '170. **** I fear yours misleads me;' '171. – –'"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Barnstable, snatching the book from before the laughing eyes of Griffith; "what folly, to throw away our time now on such nonsense! What think you of this expedition to the land?"

"That it may be the means of rescuing the ladies, though it fail in making the prisoners we anticipate."

"But this pilot! you remember that he holds us by our necks, and can run us all up to the yard-arm of some English ship, whenever he chooses to open his throat at their threats or bribes."

"It would have been better that he should have cast the ship ashore, when he had her entangled in the shoals; it would have been our last thought to suspect him of treachery then," returned Griffith, "I follow him with confidence, and must believe that we are safer with him than we should be without him."

"Let him lead to the dwelling of his fox-hunting ministers of state," cried Barnstable, thrusting his book of signals into his bosom: "but here is a chart that will show us the way to the port we wish to find. Let my foot once more touch terra firma, and you may write craven against my name, if that laughing vixen slips her cable before my eyes, and shoots into the wind's eye again like a flying-fish chased by a dolphin. Mr. Griffith, we must have the chaplain with us to the shore."

"The madness of love is driving you into the errors of the soldier. Would you lie by to hear sermons, with a flying party like ours?"

"Nay, nay, we must lay to for nothing that is not unavoidable;

but there are so many tacks in such a chase, when one has time to breathe, that we might as well spend our leisure in getting that fellow to splice us together. He has a handy way with a prayer book, and could do the job as well as a bishop; and I should like to be able to say, that this is the last time these two saucy names, which are written at the bottom of this letter, should ever be seen sailing in the company of each other."

"It will not do," said his friend, shaking his head, and endeavoring to force a smile which his feelings suppressed; "it will not do, Richard; we must yield our own inclinations to the service of our country; nor is this pilot a man who will consent to be led from his purpose."

"Then let him follow his purpose alone," cried Barnstable. "There is no human power, always saving my superior officer, that shall keep me from throwing abroad these tiny signals, and having a private talk with my dark-eyed Kate. But for a paltry pilot! he may luff and bear away as he pleases, while I shall steer as true as a magnet for that old ruin, where I can bring my eyes to bear on that romantic wing and three smoky vanes. Not that I'll forget my duty? no, I'll help you catch the Englishman; but when that is done, hey! for Katherine Plowden and my true love!"

"Hush, madcap! the wardroom holds long ears, and our bulkheads grow thin by wear. I must keep you and myself to our duty. This is no children's game that we play; it seems the commissioners at Paris have thought proper to employ a frigate in the sport."

Barnstable's gayety was a little repressed by the grave manner of his companion; but after reflecting a moment, he started on his feet, and made the usual movements for departure.

"Whither?" asked Griffith, gently detaining his impatient friend.

"To old Moderate; I have a proposal to make that may remove every difficulty."

"Name it to me, then; I am in his council, and may save you the trouble and mortification of a refusal."

"How many of those gentry does he wish to line his cabin with?"

"The pilot has named no less than six, all men of rank and consideration with the enemy. Two of them are peers, two more belong to the commons' house of parliament, one is a general, and the sixth, like ourselves, is a sailor, and holds the rank of captain. They muster at a hunting-seat near the coast, and, believe me, the scheme is not without its plausibility."

"Well, then, there are two apiece for us. You follow the pilot, if you will; but let me sheer off for this dwelling of Colonel Howard, with my cockswain and boat's crew. I will surprise his house, release the ladies, and on my way back, lay my hands on two of the first lords I fall in with. I suppose, for our business, one is as good as another."

Griffith could not repress a faint laugh, while he replied:

"Though they are said to be each other's peers, there is, I believe, some difference even in the quality of lords. England

might thank us for ridding her of some among them. Neither are they to be found like beggars, under every hedge. No, no, the men we seek must have something better than their nobility to recommend them to our favor. But let us examine more closely into this plan and map of Miss Plowden; something may occur that shall yet bring the place within our circuit, like a contingent duty of the cruise."

Barnstable reluctantly relinquished his own wild plan to the more sober judgment of his friend, and they passed an hour together, inquiring into the practicability, and consulting on the means, of making their public duty subserve the purpose of their private feelings.

The gale continued to blow heavily during the whole of that morning; but toward noon the usual indications of better weather became apparent. During these few hours of inaction in the frigate, the marines, who were drafted for service on the land, moved through the vessel with a busy and stirring air, as if they were about to participate in the glory and danger of the campaign their officer had planned, while the few seamen who were to accompany the expedition steadily paced the deck, with their hands thrust into the bosoms of their neat blue jackets, or occasionally stretched toward the horizon, as their fingers traced, for their less experienced shipmates, the signs of an abatement in the gale among the driving clouds. The last lagger among the soldiers had appeared, with his knapsack on his back, in the lee gangway, where his comrades were collected, armed

and accoutered for the strife, when Captain Munson ascended to the quarter-deck, accompanied by the stranger and his first lieutenant. A word was spoken by the latter in a low voice to a midshipman, who skipped gayly along the deck, and presently the shrill call of the boatswain was beard, preceding the hoarse cry of:

"Away there, you Tigers, away!"

A smart roll of the drum followed, and the marines paraded, while the six seamen who belonged to the cutter that owned so fierce a name made their preparations for lowering their little bark from the quarter of the frigate into the troubled sea. Everything was conducted in the most exact order, and with a coolness and skill that bade defiance to the turbulence of the angry elements. The marines were safely transported from the ship to the schooner, under the favoring shelter of the former, though the boat appeared, at times, to be seeking the cavities of the ocean, and again to be riding in the clouds, as she passed from one vessel to the other.

At length it was announced that the cutter was ready to receive the officers of the party. The pilot walked aside and held private discourse, for a few moments, with the commander, who listened to his sentences with marked and singular attention. When their conference was ended, the veteran bared his gray head to the blasts, and offered his hand to the other, with a seaman's frankness, mingled with the deference of an inferior. The compliment was courteously returned by the stranger, who

turned quickly on his heel, and directed the attention of those who awaited his movements, by a significant gesture, to the gangway.

"Come, gentlemen, let us go," said Griffith, starting from a reverie, and bowing his hasty compliments to his brethren in arms.

When it appeared that his superiors were ready to enter the boat, the boy, who, by nautical courtesy, was styled Mr. Merry, and who had been ordered to be in readiness, sprang over the side of the frigate, and glided into the cutter, with the activity of a squirrel. But the captain of marines paused, and cast a meaning glance at the pilot, whose place it was to precede him. The stranger, as he lingered on the deck, was examining the aspect of the heavens, and seemed unconscious of the expectations of the soldier, who gave vent to his impatience, after a moment's detention, by saying:

"We wait for you, Mr. Gray."

Aroused by the sound of his name, the pilot glanced his quick eye on the speaker, but instead of advancing, he gently bent his body, as he again signed toward the gangway with his hand. To the astonishment not only of the soldier, but of all who witnessed this breach of naval etiquette, Griffith bowed low, and entered the boat with the same promptitude as if he were preceding an admiral. Whether the stranger became conscious of his want of courtesy, or was too indifferent to surrounding objects to note occurrences, he immediately followed himself, leaving to the

marine the post of honor. The latter, who was distinguished for his skill in all matters of naval or military etiquette, thought proper to apologize, at a fitting time, to the first lieutenant for suffering his senior officer to precede him into a boat, but never failed to show a becoming exultation, when he recounted the circumstance, by dwelling on the manner in which he had brought down the pride of the haughty pilot.

Barnstable had been several hours on board his little vessel, which was every way prepared for their reception; and as soon as the heavy cutter of the frigate was hoisted on her deck, he announced that the schooner was ready to sail. It has been already intimated that the Ariel belonged to the smallest class of sea-vessels; and as the symmetry of her construction reduced even that size in appearance, she was peculiarly well adapted to the sort of service in which she was about to be employed. Notwithstanding her lightness rendered her nearly as buoyant as a cork, and at times she actually seemed to ride on the foam, her low decks were perpetually washed by the heavy seas that dashed against her frail sides, and she tossed and rolled in the hollows of the waves, In a manner that compelled even the practised seamen who trod her decks to move with guarded steps. Still she was trimmed and cleared with an air of nautical neatness and attention that afforded the utmost possible room for her dimensions; and, though in miniature, she wore the trappings of war as proudly as if the metal she bore was of a more fatal and dangerous character. The murderous gun, which, since the

period of which we are writing, has been universally adopted in all vessels of inferior size, was then in the infancy of its invention, and was known to the American mariner only by reputation, under the appalling name of a "smasher." of a vast calibre, though short and easily managed, its advantages were even in that early day beginning to be appreciated, and the largest ships were thought to be unusually well provided with the means of offence, when they carried two or three cannon of this formidable invention among their armament. At a later day, this weapon has been improved and altered, until its use has become general in vessels of a certain size, taking its appellation from the Carron, on the banks of which river it was first moulded. In place of these carronades, six light brass cannon were firmly lashed to the bulwarks of the Ariel, their brazen throats blackened by the sea-water, which so often broke harmlessly over these engines of destruction. In the centre of the vessel, between her two masts, a gun of the same metal, but of nearly twice the length of the other, was mounted on a carriage of a new and singular construction, which admitted of its being turned in any direction, so as to be of service in most of the emergencies that occur in naval warfare.

The eye of the pilot examined this armament closely and then turned to the well-ordered decks, the neat and compact rigging, and the hardy faces of the fine young crew, with manifest satisfaction. Contrary to what had been his practice during the short time he had been with them, he uttered his gratification freely and aloud.

"You have a tight boat, Mr. Barnstable," he said, "and a gallant-looking crew. You promise good service, sir, in time of need, and that hour may not be far distant."

"The sooner the better," returned the reckless sailor; "I have not had an opportunity of scaling my guns since we quitted Brest, though we passed several of the enemy's cutters coming up channel, with whom our bulldogs longed for a conversation. Mr. Griffith will tell you, pilot, that my little sixes can speak, on occasion, with a voice nearly as loud as the frigate's eighteens."

"But not to as much purpose," observed Griffith; "'vox et praeterea nihil,' as we said at school."

"I know nothing of your Greek and Latin, Mr. Griffith," retorted the commander of the Ariel; "but if you mean that those seven brass playthings won't throw a round-shot as far as any gun of their size and height above the water, or won't scatter grape and canister with any blunderbuss in your ship, you may possibly find an opportunity that will convince you to the contrary, before we part company."

"They promise well," said the pilot, who was evidently, ignorant of the good understanding that existed between the two officers, and wished to conciliate all under his directions; "and I doubt not they will argue the leading points of a combat with good discretion. I see that you have christened them – I suppose for their respective merits. They are indeed expressive names!"

"Tis the freak of an idle moment," said Barnstable, laughing, as he glanced his eye to the cannon, above which were painted

the several quaint names of “boxer,” “plumper,” “grinder,” “scatterer,” “exterminator” and nail-driver.”

“Why have you thrown the midship gun without the pale of your baptism?” asked the pilot; “or do you know it by the usual title of the ‘old woman’?”

“No, no, I have no such petticoat terms on board me,” cried the other; “but move more to starboard, and you will see its style painted on the cheeks of the carriage; it’s a name that need not cause them to blush either.”

“’Tis a singular epithet, though not without some meaning!”

“It has more than you, perhaps, dream of, sir. That worthy seaman whom you see leaning against the foremast, and who would serve, on occasion, for a spare spar himself, is the captain of that gun, and more than once has decided some warm disputes with John Bull, by the manner in which he has wielded it. No marine can trail his musket more easily than my cockswain can train his nine-pounder on an object; and thus from their connection, and some resemblance there is between them in length, it has got the name which you perceive it carries – that of‘long Tom.’”

The pilot smiled as he listened, but turning away from the speaker, the deep reflection that crossed his brow but too plainly showed that he trifled only from momentary indulgence; and Griffith intimated to Barnstable, that as the gale was sensibly abating they would pursue the object of their destination.

Thus recalled to his duty, the commander of the schooner

forgot the delightful theme of expatiating on the merits of his vessel, and issued the necessary orders to direct their movements. The little schooner slowly obeyed the impulse of her helm, and fell off before the wind, when the folds of her square-sail, though limited by a prudent reef, were opened to the blasts, and she shot away from her consort, like a meteor dancing across the waves. The black mass of the frigate's hull soon sunk in distance; and long before the sun had fallen below the hills of England, her tall masts were barely distinguishable by the small cloud of sail that held the vessel to her station. As the ship disappeared, the land seemed to issue out of the bosom of the deep; and so rapid was their progress, that the dwellings of the gentry, the humbler cottages, and even the dim lines of the hedges, became gradually more distinct to the eyes of the bold mariners, until they were beset with the gloom of evening, when the whole scene faded from their view in the darkness of the hour, leaving only the faint outline of the land visible in the tract before them, and the sullen billows of the ocean raging with appalling violence in their rear.

Still the little Ariel held on her way, skimming the ocean like a waterfowl seeking its place of nightly rest, and shooting in towards the land as fearlessly as if the dangers of the preceding night were already forgotten. No shoals or rocks appeared to arrest her course, and we must leave her gliding into the dark streak that was thrown from the high and rocky cliffs, that lined a basin of bold entrance, where the mariners often sought and found a refuge from the dangers of the German Ocean.

Chapter IX

"Sirrah! how dare you leave your barley-broth
To come in armor thus, against your king?"

Drama.

The large irregular building inhabited by Colonel Howard well deserved the name it had received from the pen of Katherine Plowden. Notwithstanding the confusion in its orders, owing to the different ages in which its several parts had been erected, the interior was not wanting in that appearance of comfort which forms the great characteristic of English domestic life. Its dark and intricate mazes of halls, galleries, and apartments were all well provided with good and substantial furniture; and whatever might have been the purposes of their original construction, they were now peacefully appropriated to the service of a quiet and well-ordered family.

There were divers portentous traditions of cruel separations and blighted loves, which always linger, like cobwebs, around the walls of old houses, to be heard here also, and which, doubtless, in abler hands, might easily have been wrought up into scenes of high interest and delectable pathos. But our humbler efforts must be limited by an attempt to describe man as God has made him, vulgar and unseemly as he may appear to sublimated

faculties, to the possessors of which enviable qualifications we desire to say, at once, that we are determined to eschew all things supernaturally refined, as we would the devil. To all those, then, who are tired of the company of their species we would bluntly insinuate, that the sooner they throw aside our pages, and seize upon those of some more highly gifted bard, the sooner will they be in the way of quitting earth, if not of attaining heaven. Our business is solely to treat of man, and this fair scene on which he acts, and that not in his subtleties, and metaphysical contradictions, but in his palpable nature, that all may understand our meaning as well as ourselves – whereby we may manifestly reject the prodigious advantage of being thought a genius, by perhaps foolishly refusing the mighty aid of incomprehensibility to establish such a character.

Leaving the gloomy shadows of the cliffs, under which the little Ariel had been seen to steer, and the sullen roaring of the surf along the margin of the ocean, we shall endeavor to transport the reader to the dining parlor of St. Ruth's Abbey, taking the evening of the same day as the time for introducing another collection of those personages, whose acts and characters it has become our duty to describe.

The room was not of very large dimensions, and every part was glittering with the collected light of halfa dozen Candles, aided by the fierce rays that glanced from the grate, which held a most cheerful fire of sea-coal. The mouldings of the dark oak wainscoting threw back upon the massive table of mahogany

streaks of strong light, which played among the rich fluids that were sparkling on the board in mimic haloes. The outline of this picture of comfort was formed by damask curtains of a deep red, and enormous oak chairs with leathern backs and cushioned seats, as if the apartment were hermetically sealed against the world and its chilling cares.

Around the table, which still stood in the centre of the floor, were seated three gentlemen, in the easy enjoyment of their daily repast. The cloth had been drawn, and the bottle was slowly passing among them, as if those who partook of its bounty well knew that neither the time nor the opportunity would be wanting for their deliberate indulgence in its pleasures.

At one end of the table an elderly man was seated, who performed whatever little acts of courtesy the duties of a host would appear to render necessary, in a company where all seemed to be equally at their ease and at home. This gentleman was in the decline of life, though his erect carriage, quick movements, and steady hand, equally denoted that it was an old age free from the usual infirmities. In his dress, he belonged to that class whose members always follow the fashions of the age anterior to the one in which they live, whether from disinclination to sudden changes of any kind, or from the recollections of a period which, with them, has been hallowed by scenes and feelings that the chilling evening of life can neither revive nor equal. Age might possibly have thrown its blighting frosts on his thin locks, but art had labored to conceal the ravages with the

nicest care. An accurate outline of powder covered not only the parts where the hair actually remained, but wherever nature had prescribed that hair should grow. His countenance was strongly marked in features, if not in expression, exhibiting, on the whole, a look of noble integrity and high honor, which was a good deal aided in its effect by the lofty receding forehead, that rose like a monument above the whole, to record the character of the aged veteran. A few streaks of branching red mingled with a swarthiness of complexion, that was rendered more conspicuous by the outline of unsullied white, which nearly surrounded his prominent features.

Opposite to the host, who it will at once be understood was Colonel Howard, was the thin yellow visage of Mr. Christopher Dillon, that bane to the happiness of her cousin, already mentioned by Miss Plowden.

Between these two gentlemen was a middle-aged hard-featured man, attired in the livery of King George, whose countenance emulated the scarlet of his coat, and whose principal employment, at the moment, appeared to consist in doing honor to the cheer of his entertainer.

Occasionally, a servant entered or left the room in silence, giving admission, however, through the opened door, to the rushing sounds of the gale, as the wind murmured amid the angles and high chimneys of the edifice.

A man, in the dress of a rustic, was standing near the chair of Colonel Howard, between whom and the master of the mansion

a dialogue had been maintained which closed as follows. The colonel was the first to speak, after the curtain is drawn from between the eyes of the reader and the scene:

"Said you, farmer, that the Scotchman beheld the vessels with his own eyes?"

The answer was a simple negative.

"Well, well," continued the colonel, "you can withdraw."

The man made a rude attempt at a bow, which being returned by the old soldier with formal grace, he left the room. The host turning to his companions, resumed the subject.

"If those rash boys have really persuaded the silly dotard who commands the frigate, to trust himself within the shoals on the eve of such a gale as this, their case must have been hopeless indeed! Thus may rebellion and disaffection ever meet with the just indignation of Providence! It would not surprise me, gentleman, to hear that my native land had been engulfed by earthquakes, or swallowed by the ocean, so awful and inexcusable has been the weight of her transgressions! And yet it was a proud and daring boy who held the second station in that ship! I knew his father well, and a gallant gentleman he was, who, like my own brother, the parent of Cecilia, preferred to serve his master on the ocean rather than on the land. His son inherited the bravery of his high spirit, without its loyalty. One would not wish to have such a youth drowned, either."

This speech, which partook much of the nature of a soliloquy, especially toward its close, called for no immediate reply; but the

soldier, having held his glass to the candle, to admire the rosy hue of its contents, and then sipped of the fluid so often that nothing but a clear light remained to gaze at, quietly replaced the empty vessel on the table, and, as he extended an arm toward the blushing bottle, he spoke, in the careless tones of one whose thoughts were dwelling on another theme:

"Ay, true enough, sir; good men are scarce, and, as you say, one cannot but mourn his fate, though his death be glorious; quite a loss to his majesty's service, I dare say, it will prove."

"A loss to the service of his majesty!" echoed the host – "his death glorious! no, Captain Borroughcliffe, the death of no rebel can be glorious; and how he can be a loss to his majesty's service, I myself am quite at a loss to understand."

The soldier, whose ideas were in that happy state of confusion that renders it difficult to command the one most needed, but who still, from long discipline, had them under a wonderful control for the disorder of his brain, answered, with great promptitude:

"I mean the loss of his example, sir. It would have been so appalling to others to have seen the young man executed instead of shot in battle."

"He is drowned, sir."

"Ah! that is the next thing to being hanged; that circumstance had escaped me."

"It is by no means certain, sir, that the ship and schooner that the drover saw are the vessels you take them to have been," said

Mr. Dillon, in a harsh, drawling tone of voice. “I should doubt their daring to venture so openly on the coast, and in the direct track of our vessels of war.”

“These people are our countrymen, Christopher, though they are rebels,” exclaimed the colonel. “They are a hardy and brave nation. When I had the honor of serving his majesty, some twenty years since, it was my fortune to face the enemies of my king in a few small affairs, Captain Borroughcliffe; such as the siege of Quebec, and the battle before its gates, a trifling occasion at Ticonderoga, and that unfortunate catastrophe of General Braddock – with a few others. I must say, sir, in favor of the colonists that they played a manful game on the latter day; and this gentleman who now heads the rebels sustained a gallant name among us for his conduct in that disastrous business. He was a discreet, well-behaved young man, and quite a gentleman. I have never denied that Mr. Washington was very much of a gentleman.”

“Yes!” said the soldier, yawning, “he was educated among his majesty’s troops, and he could hardly be other wise. But I am quite melancholy about this unfortunate drowning, Colonel Howard. Here will be an end of my vocation, I suppose; and I am far from denying that your hospitality has made these quarters most agreeable to me.”

“Then, sir, the obligation is only mutual,” returned the host, with a polite inclination of his head: “but gentlemen who, like ourselves, have been made free of the camp, need not bandy idle

compliments about such trifles. If it were my kinsman Dillon, now, whose thoughts ran more on Coke upon Littleton than on the gayeties of a mess-table and a soldier's life, he might think such formalities as necessary as his hard words are to a deed. Come, Borroughcliffe, my dear fellow, I believe we have given an honest glass to each of the royal family (God bless them all!), let us swallow a bumper to the memory of the immortal Wolfe."

"An honest proposal, my gallant host, and such a one as a soldier will never decline," returned the captain, who roused himself with the occasion. "God bless them all! say I, in echo; and if this gracious queen of ours ends as famously as she has begun, 'twill be such a family of princes as no other army of Europe can brag of around a mess-table."

"Ay, ay, there is some consolation in that thought, in the midst of this dire rebellion of my countrymen. But I'll vex myself no more with the unpleasant recollections; the arms of my sovereign will soon purge that wicked land of the foul stain."

"Of that there can be no doubt," said Borroughcliffe, whose thoughts still continued a little obscured by the sparkling Madeira that had long lain ripening under a Carolinian sun; "these Yankees fly before his majesty's regulars, like so many dirty clowns in a London mob before a charge of the horse-guards."

"Pardon me, Captain Borroughcliffe," said his host, elevating his person to more than its usually erect attitude; "they may be misguided, deluded, and betrayed, but the comparison is unjust. Give them arms and give them discipline, and he who gets an

inch of their land from them, plentiful as it is, will find a bloody day on which to take possession."

"The veriest coward in Christendom would fight in country where wine brews itself into such a cordial as this," returned the cool soldier. "I am a living proof that you mistook my meaning; for had not those loose-flapped gentlemen they call Vermontese and Hampshire-granters (God grant them his blessing for the deed) finished two-thirds of my company, I should not have been at this day under your roof, a recruiting instead of a marching officer; neither should I have been bound up in a covenant, like the law of Moses, could Burgoyne have made head against their long-legged marchings and countermarchings. Sir, I drink their healths, with all my heart; and with such a bottle of golden sunshine before me, rather than displease so good a friend, I will go through Gates' whole army, regiment by regiment, company by company, or, if you insist on the same, even man by man, in a bumper."

"On no account would I tax your politeness so far," returned the colonel, abundantly mollified by this ample concession; "I stand too much your debtor, Captain Borroughcliffe, for so freely volunteering to defend my house against the attacks of my piratical, rebellious, and misguided countrymen, to think of requiring such a concession."

"Harder duty might be performed, and no favors asked, my respectable host," returned the soldier. "Country quarters are apt to be dull, and the liquor is commonly execrable; but in such

a dwelling as this, a man can rock himself in the very cradle of contentment. And yet there is one subject of complaint, that I should disgrace my regiment did I not speak of – for it is incumbent on me, both as a man and a soldier, to be no longer silent."

"Name it, sir, freely, and its cause shall be as freely redressed," said the host in some amazement.

"Here we three sit, from morning to night," continued the soldier; "bachelors all, well provisioned and better liquored, I grant you, but like so many well-fed anchorites, while two of the loveliest damsels in the island pine in solitude within a hundred feet of us, without tasting the homage of our sighs. This, I will maintain, is a reproach both to your character, Colonel Howard, as an old soldier and to mine as a young one. As to our old friend, Coke on top of Littleton here, I leave him to the quiddities of the law to plead his own cause."

The brow of the host contracted for a moment, and the sallow cheek of Dillon, who had sat during the dialogue in a sullen silence, appeared to grow even livid; but gradually the open brow of the veteran resumed its frank expression, and the lips of the other relaxed into a Jesuitical sort of a smile, that was totally disregarded by the captain, who amused himself with sipping his wine while he waited for an answer, as if he analyzed each drop that crossed his palate.

After an embarrassing pause of a moment, Colonel Howard broke the silence:

"There is reason in Borroughcliffe's hint, for such I take it to be – –"

"I meant it for a plain, matter-of-fact complaint," interrupted the soldier.

"And you have cause for it," continued the colonel. "It is unreasonable, Christopher, that the ladies should allow their dread of these piratical countrymen of ours to exclude us from their society, though prudence may require that they remain secluded in their apartments. We owe the respect to Captain Borroughcliffe, that at least we admit him to the sight of the coffee-urn in an evening."

"That is precisely my meaning," said the captain: "as for dining with them, why, I am well provided for here; but there is no one knows how to set hot water a hissing in so professional a manner as a woman. So forward, my dear and honored colonel, and lay your injunctions on them, that they command your humble servant and Mr. Coke unto Littleton to advance and give the countersign of gallantry."

Dillon contracted his disagreeable features into something that was intended for a satirical smile, before he spoke as follows:

"Both the veteran Colonel Howard and the gallant Captain Borroughcliffe may find it easier to overcome the enemies of his majesty in the field than to shake a woman's caprice. Not a day has passed these three weeks, that I have not sent my inquiries to the door of Miss Howard as became her father's kinsman, with a wish to appease her apprehensions of the pirates; but little has

she deigned me In reply, more than such thanks as her sex and breeding could not well dispense with."

"Well, you have been, as fortunate as myself, and why you should be more so, I see no reason," cried the soldier, throwing a glance of cool contempt at the other: "fear whitens the cheek, and ladies best love to be seen when the roses flourish rather than the lilies."

"A woman is never so interesting, Captain Borroughcliffe, said the gallant host," as when she appears to lean on man for support; and he who does not feel himself honored by the trust is a disgrace to his species."

"Bravo! my honored sir, a worthy sentiment, and spoken like a true soldier; but I have heard much of the loveliness of the ladies of the abbey since I have been in my present quarters, and I feel a strong desire to witness beauty encircled by such loyalty as could induce them to flee their native country, rather than to devote their charms to the rude keeping of the rebels."

The colonel looked grave, and for a moment fierce, but the expression of his displeasure soon passed away in a smile of forced gayety, and, as he cheerfully rose from his seat, he cried: "You shall be admitted this very night, and this instant, Captain Borroughcliffe, We owe it, sir, to your services here, as well as in the field, and those forward girls shall be humored no longer. Nay, it is nearly two weeks since I have seen my ward myself; nor have I laid my eyes on my niece but twice in all that time, Christopher, I leave the captain under your good care while I go

seek admission into the cloisters, we call that part of, the building the cloisters, because it holds our nuns, sir! You will pardon my early absence from the table, Captain Borroughcliffe."

"I beg it may not be mentioned; you leave an excellent representative behind you, sir," cried the soldier, taking in the lank figure of Mr. Dillon in a sweeping glance, that terminated with a settled gaze on his decanter. "Make my devoirs to the recluses, and say all that your own excellent wit shall suggest as an apology for my impatience, Mr. Dillon, I meet you in a bumper to their healths and in their honor."

The challenge was coldly accepted; and while these gentlemen still held their glasses to their lips, Colonel Howard left the apartment, bowing low, and uttering a thousand excuses to his guest, as he proceeded, and even offering a very unnecessary apology of the same effect to his habitual inmate, Mr. Dillon.

"Is fear so very powerful within these old walls," said the soldier, when the door closed behind their host, "that your ladies deem it necessary to conceal themselves before even an enemy is known to have landed?"

Dillon coldly replied:

"The name of Paul Jones is terrific to all on this coast, I believe; nor are the ladies of St. Ruth singular in their apprehensions."

"Ah! the pirate has bought himself a desperate name since the affair of Flamborough Head. But let him look to't, if he trusts himself in another Whitehaven expedition, while there is

a detachment of the – th in the neighborhood, though the men should be nothing better than recruits."

"Our last accounts leave him safe in the court of Louis," returned his companion; "but there are men as desperate as himself, who sail the ocean under the rebel flag, and from one or two of them we have had much reason to apprehend the vengeance of disappointed men. It is they that we hope we lost in this gale."

"Hum! I hope they were dastards, or your hopes are a little unchristian, and – –"

He would have proceeded, but the door opened, and his orderly entered, and announced that a sentinel had detained three men, who were passing along the highway, near the abbey, and who, by their dress, appeared to be seamen.

"Well, let them pass," cried the captain; "what, have we nothing to do better than to stop passengers, like footpads on the king's highway! Give them of your canteens, and let the rascals pass. Your orders were to give the alarm if any hostile party landed on the coast, not to detain peaceable subjects on their lawful business."

"I beg your honor's pardon," returned the sergeant; "but these men seemed lurking about the grounds for no good, and as they kept carefully aloof from the place where our sentinel was posted, until to-night, Downing thought it looked suspiciously and detained them."

"Downing is a fool, and it may go hard with him for his

officiousness. What have you done with the men?"

"I took them to the guardroom in the east wings your honor."

"Then feed them; and hark ye, sirrah! liquor them well, that we hear no complaints, and let them go."

"Yes, sir, yes, your honor shall be obeyed; but there is a straight, soldierly-looking fellow among them, that I think might be persuaded to enlist, if he were detained till morning. I doubt, sir, by his walk, but he has served already."

"Ha! what say you!" cried the captain, pricking up his ears like a hound who hears a well-known cry; "served, think ye, already?"

"There are signs about him, your honor, to that effect An old soldier is seldom deceived in such a thing; and considering his disguise, for it can be no other, and the place where we took him, there is no danger of a have-us corpses until he is tied to us by the laws of the kingdom."

"Peace, you knave!" said Borroughcliffe, rising, and making a devious route toward the door; "you speak in the presence of my lord chief justice that is to be, and should not talk lightly of the laws. But still you say reason: give me your arm, sergeant, and lead the way to the east wing; my eyesight is good for nothing in such a dark night. A soldier should always visit his guard before the tattoo beats."

After emulating the courtesy of their host, Captain Borroughcliffe retired on this patriotic errand, leaning on his subordinate in a style of most familiar condescension. Dillon continued at the table, endeavoring to express the rancorous

feelings of his breast by a satirical smile of contempt, that was necessarily lost on all but himself, as a large mirror threw back the image of his morose and unpleasant features.

But we must precede the veteran colonel in his visits to the "cloisters."

Chapter X

– "And kindness like their own
Inspired those eyes, affectionate and glad,
That seem'd to love whate'er they looked upon;
Whether with Hebe's mirth her features shone,
Or if a shade more pleasing them o'ercast —
Yet so becomingly th' expression past,
That each succeeding look was lovelier than the last."

Gertrude of Wyoming.

The western wing of St. Ruth house or abbey, as the building was indiscriminately called, retained but few vestiges of the uses to which it had been originally devoted. The upper apartments were small and numerous, extending on either side of a long, low, and dark gallery, and might have been the dormitories of the sisterhood who were said to have once inhabited that portion of the edifice; but the ground-floor had been modernized, as it was then called, about a century before, and retained just enough of its ancient character to blend the venerable with what was thought comfortable in the commencement of the reign of the third George. As this wing had been appropriated to the mistress of the mansion, ever since the building had changed its spiritual character for one of a more carnal nature, Colonel Howard continued the arrangement, when he became

the temporary possessor of St. Ruth, until, in the course of events, the apartments which had been appropriated for the accommodation and convenience of his niece were eventually converted into her prison. But as the severity of the old veteran was as often marked by an exhibition of his virtues as of his foibles, the confinement and his displeasure constituted the sole subjects of complaint that were given to the young lady. That our readers may be better qualified to judge of the nature of their imprisonment, we shall transport them, without further circumlocution, into the presence of the two females, whom they must be already prepared to receive.

The withdrawing-room of St. Ruth's was an apartment which, tradition said, had formerly been the refectory of the little bevy of fair sinners who sought a refuge within its walls from the temptations of the world. Their number was not large, nor their entertainments very splendid, or this limited space could not have contained them. The room, however, was of fair dimensions, and an air of peculiar comfort, mingled with chastened luxury, was thrown around it, by the voluminous folds of the blue damask curtains that nearly concealed the sides where the deep windows were placed, and by the dark leathern hangings, richly stamped with cunning devices in gold, that ornamented the two others. Massive couches in carved mahogany, with chairs of a similar material and fashion, all covered by the same rich fabric that composed the curtains, together with a Turkey carpet, over the shaggy surface of which all the colors of the rainbow

were scattered in bright confusion, united to relieve the gloomy splendor of the enormous mantel, deep heavy cornices, and the complicated carvings of the massive woodwork which cumbered the walls. A brisk fire of wood was burning on the hearth, in compliment to the willful prejudice of Miss Plowden, who had maintained, in her most vivacious manner, that sea-coal was "only tolerable for blacksmiths and Englishmen." In addition to the cheerful blaze from the hearth, two waxen lights, in candlesticks of massive silver, were lending their aid to enliven the apartment. One of these was casting its rays brightly along the confused colors of the carpet on which it stood, flickering before the active movements of the form that played around it with light and animated inflections. The posture of this young lady was infantile in grace, and, with one ignorant of her motives, her employment would have been obnoxious to the same construction. Divers small square pieces of silk, strongly contrasted to each other in color, lay on every side of her, and were changed, as she kneeled on the floor, by her nimble hands, into as many different combinations as if she was humoring the fancies of her sex, or consulting the shades of her own dark but rich complexion in the shop of a mercer. The close satin dress of this young female served to display her small figure in its true proportions, while her dancing eyes of jet black shamed the dyes of the Italian manufacturer by their superior radiance. A few ribbons of pink, disposed about her person with an air partly studied, and yet carelessly coquettish, seemed rather to

reflect than lend the rich bloom that mantled around her laughing countenance, leaving to the eye no cause to regret that she was not fairer.

Another female figure, clad in virgin white, was reclining on the end of a distant couch. The seclusion in which they lived might have rendered this female a little careless of her appearance, or, what was more probable, the comb had been found unequal to its burden; for her tresses, which rivaled the hue and gloss of the raven, had burst from their confinement, and, dropping over her shoulders, fell along her dress in rich profusion, finally resting on the damask of the couch, in dark folds, like glittering silk. A small hand, which seemed to blush at its own naked beauties, supported her head, embedded in the volumes of her hair, like the fairest alabaster set in the deepest ebony. Beneath the dark profusion of her curls, which, notwithstanding the sweeping train that fell about her person, covered the summit of her head, lay a low spotless forehead of dazzling whiteness, that was relieved by two arches so slightly and truly drawn that they appeared to have been produced by the nicest touches of art. The fallen lids and long silken lashes concealed the eyes that rested on the floor, as if their mistress mused in melancholy. The remainder of the features of this maiden were of a kind that is most difficult to describe, being neither regular nor perfect in their several parts, yet harmonizing and composing a whole that formed an exquisite picture of female delicacy and loveliness. There might or there might not

have been a tinge of slight red in her cheeks, but it varied with each emotion of her bosom, even as she mused in quiet, now seeming to steal insidiously over her glowing temples, and then leaving on her face an almost startling paleness. Her stature, as she reclined, seemed above the medium height of womanhood, and her figure was rather delicate than full, though the little foot that rested on the damask cushion before her displayed a rounded outline that any of her sex might envy.

"Oh! I'm as expert as if I were signal officer to the lord high admiral of this realm!" exclaimed the laughing female on the floor, clapping her hands together in girlish exultation. "I do long, Cecilia, for an opportunity to exhibit my skill."

While her cousin was speaking, Miss Howard raised her head, with a faint smile, and as she turned her eyes toward the other, a spectator might have been disappointed, but could not have been displeased, by the unexpected change the action produced in the expression of her countenance.

Instead of the piercing black eyes that the deep color of her tresses would lead him to expect, he would have beheld two large, mild, blue orbs, that seemed to float in a liquid so pure as to be nearly invisible and which were more remarkable for their tenderness and persuasion, than for the vivid flashes that darted from the quick glances of her companion.

"The success of your mad excursion to the seaside, my cousin, has bewildered your brain," returned Cecilia; "but I know not how to conquer your disease, unless we prescribe salt water for

the remedy, as in some other cases of madness."

"Ah! I am afraid your nostrum would be useless," cried Katherine; "it has failed to wash out the disorder from the sedate Mr. Richard Barnstable, who has had the regimen administered to him through many a hard gale, but who continues as fair a candidate for Bedlam as ever. Would you think it, Cicely, the crazy one urged me, in the ten minutes' conversation we held together on the cliffs, to accept of his schooner as a shower-bath!"

"I can think that your hardihood might encourage him to expect much, but surely he could not have been serious in such a proposal!"

"Oh! to do the wretch justice, he did say something of a chaplain to consecrate the measure, but there was boundless impudence in the thought. I have not, nor shall I forget it, or forgive him for it, these six-and-twenty years. What a fine time he must have had of it, in his little Ariel, among the monstrous waves we saw tumbling in upon the shore to-day, coz! I hope they will wash his impudence out of him! I do think the man cannot have had a dry thread about him, from sun to sun. I must believe it as a punishment for his boldness, and, be certain, I shall tell him of it. I will form half a dozen signals, this instant, to joke at his moist condition, in very revenge."

Pleased with her own thoughts, and buoyant with the secret hope that Her adventurous undertaking would be finally crowned with complete success, the gay girl shook her black locks, in

infinite mirth, and tossed the mimic flags gaily around her person, as she was busied in forming new combinations, in order to amuse herself with her lover's disastrous situation. But the features of her cousin clouded with the thoughts that were excited by her remarks, and she replied, in a tone that bore some little of the accents of reproach:

"Katherine! Katherine! can you jest when there is so much to apprehend? Forget you what Alice Dunscombe told us of the gale, this morning? and that she spoke of two vessels, a ship and a schooner, that had been seen venturing with fearful temerity within the shoals, only six miles from the abbey, and that unless God in his gracious providence had been kind to them, there was but little doubt that their fate would be a sad one? Can you, that know so well who and what these daring mariners are, be merry about the self-same winds that caused their danger?"

The thoughtless, laughing girl was recalled to her recollection by this remonstrance, and every trace of mirth vanished from her countenance, leaving a momentary death-like paleness crossing her face, as she clasped her hands before her, and fastened her keen eyes vacantly on the splendid pieces of silk that now lay unheeded around her. At this critical moment the door of the room slowly opened, and Colonel Howard entered the apartment with an air that displayed a droll mixture of stern indignation, with a chivalric and habitual respect to the sex.

"I solicit your pardon, young ladies, for the interruption," he said; "I trust, however, that an old man's presence can never be

entirely unexpected In the drawing-room of his wards."

As he bowed, the colonel seated himself on the end of the couch, opposite to the place where his niece had been reclining, for Miss Howard had risen at his entrance, and continued standing until her uncle had comfortably disposed of himself Throwing a glance which was not entirely free from self-commendation around the comfortable apartment, the veteran proceeded, in the same tone as before:

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.