

ГОВАРД ПАЙЛ

THE STORY OF JACK
BALLISTER'S FORTUNES

Howard Pyle

The Story of Jack Ballister's Fortunes

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INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most important problems that confronted the Virginia plantations in the earlier colonial days was the question as to how to obtain sufficient labor to till the soil and to raise tobacco for the English market.

Some of the colonial planters of Virginia owned thousands of acres of the richest tobacco land in the world – whole tracts of virgin earth where the priceless loam lay open to the rain, the air, and the warm sky; bountifully fruitful loam, only waiting for tillage to be coined into vast tobacco fortunes for the princely owners. All that was needed was human labor to dig the earth, to plant, to hoe, to cultivate, and to prepare the tobacco for market, for there was not a hundredth part enough labor to turn the waiting soil, that lay ready to yield at any time its thousands of hogsheads of tobacco, and the question was, where and how labor was to be obtained.

The easiest and quickest solution of the question appeared to be the importation of negro slave labor from Africa.

The introduction of such slave labor began almost in the earliest days of the provinces. Hundreds of shiploads of African negroes were brought across the ocean and set to work digging and hoeing in the tobacco fields, and slave trade became a regular traffic between the west coast of Africa and the Americas.

But the African slaves, when imported, were found only fit to do the very rudest and simplest sort of labor. They were poor, ignorant savages, who, until they were set to work on the plantations, knew almost nothing at all about such labor as was practised by civilized mankind. When they were told to dig the earth, they dug, but they labored without knowing either why they worked or wherefore. They did just as their masters or their overseers bade them, and nothing more. Beyond this they could be taught little or nothing, for not only were those earlier savages like children, incapable of learning much of anything; but, in most instances, they could not even speak a single word of the language of their masters, and so could not understand what their owners wanted of them. They were of use only to work as a dumb animal might work, and not as white men could work.

So the Virginia plantations were still without that intelligent labor which white men alone could bring to the tilling of the soil; labor that knew what it was about when it dug the earth, and which, when told to do so, could turn its hand to other things that might be required of it. And so it was that every means was used to bring English men and women to the Virginia plantations.

Even in the last part of the seventeenth century those immigrants who afterward developed our great country into what it now is, were beginning to pour into the colonies. But, of this immigrant labor, the best and the most intelligent did not come to Virginia or other of the southern provinces. It drifted to the New England or the Pennsylvania provinces rather than to those in the South. There, in the North, any man could obtain a farm for himself by hewing it out of the wilderness. In Virginia the land was nearly all owned by the great tobacco planters. Hence it was that only the poorest and least ambitious of these white men and women could in the earlier provincial days be induced to go thither, and hence white labor was so much more in demand in the South than in the North.

A certain class of the immigrants of that time were called “redemptioners” or “redemption servants.” They were so called because they had to redeem by their labor the cost of their passage across the ocean from England to America. Upon their arrival in the New World they were sold for a term of years – seven, eight, nine, ten, as the case might be – and the money received from such

sale was paid to the ship captain or the merchant who transported them from the Old World to the New. Thus their debt was redeemed, and hence their name.

Those who came thus as redemption servants from England were generally the poorest and most wretched of its people – paupers, outcasts, criminals – unfortunates who were willing to do almost anything to get away from their surroundings into a new life, where they hoped something better might be in store for them than that wretchedness which they had had to endure at home.

Thousands of such people were sent across the ocean to the Virginia and other plantations, where, poor and miserable as they often were, the demand for them grew ever greater and greater as the wilderness became more and more open to cultivation.

Every year higher and higher prices were paid for such servants, until, at last, a ship-load of redemptioners (provided the voyage across the ocean had been speedy and no contagious disease had developed aboard the vessel) became almost the most profitable cargo exported from England.

When the transportation of servants became thus so remunerative, the crimps who supplied them to merchants or to ship captains were oftentimes tempted, when other means failed, to resort to kidnapping, or man-stealing, to supply the demand.

During the earlier fifty years of the last century, thousands of men, women, and even children were stolen from England and sent away to the Americas, perhaps never to return, perhaps never even to be heard of again. In those days – “The kidnapper will catch you!” were words of terror to frighten children and gadding girls on all the coastways of England.

CHAPTER I

THE AMERICA MERCHANT

HEZEKIAH TIPTON had been a merchant in the America trade for upwards of forty years. He had shipped hundreds of servants to the Americas; they were as much a part of his cargo as tea or broad-cloth or books or silk stuffs.

Maybe he was not always scrupulously careful to know whence came some of the servants he thus transported. He was reasonably honest in his dealings, as the times went, and he would not often buy a servant from a crimp if he knew positively that the crimp had kidnapped the man. But if he was not positively sure, he would not go out of his way to inquire into things that did not concern him. He would either take the servant offered for sale, or else he would not take him; but he would not trouble himself to ask how the crimp obtained the man, or whether the man himself was or was not really willing to emigrate to the colonies.

There was, for instance, a good deal of talk at one time about three men whom Hezekiah had sent to South Carolina. A Dutchman had brought them into the harbor in his lugger. He said that the men desired to emigrate, and Hezekiah, who at that time had a ship just clearing for Charleston, expressed his willingness to pay the captain something for them, if he did not demand too much. Two of the men were stupefied with drink, and the third had a bloody clout wrapped around his head, and was cut and bruised as though he had been beaten with a club or a belaying-pin. It was an evident case of kidnapping, but nevertheless Hezekiah paid the Dutch captain for the men, and had them sent directly aboard the ship. One of the three men was sober the next morning. Hezekiah had come aboard the ship, and as he was rowed away toward the shore the man leaned over the rail above, shouting out curses after the old merchant, swearing that he would certainly come back to England some time and murder him. "You think you're safe," bawled the man after the departing boat, – "you think you're safe! Wait till you feel my knife in your back this day twelve-month – d'ye hear? – then you won't feel so safe." The men rowing the boat to the shore grinned and winked at one another. Old Hezekiah sat immovably in the stern, paying no attention to the man's threats and imprecations, which continued until the captain of the ship knocked him down, and so silenced his outcries.

This affair created, as was said, a good deal of talk at the time.

In the year 1719, beginning in February and ending in November, Hezekiah Tipton sent away to the American colonies or plantations in all over five score servants.

One day early in March, a company of nineteen men who had volunteered to emigrate to the Virginias was brought up from London to meet the brig *Arundel* at Southampton. They were quartered at the Golden Fish Inn, and during the morning the old America merchant went to look them over. The men were ranged in a row along by the wall of the inn yard, and the old man walked up and down in front of the line, peering at each man with half-shut eyes and wrinkled face, while a few people from the inn stood looking on with a sort of inert interest. He did not seem very well pleased with the appearance of the servants. There were only nineteen, and there should have been one and twenty. The agent explained that there had been twenty-one of them when he wrote from London, but that one of them had run away during the night, and that another would not sign the papers. "Twas," said he, "as fine, good a young lad of sixteen or eighteen as ever you see. But his mother, methinks it was, comes in crying at the last minute and takes him away from under our werry noses, so to speak." Hezekiah grunted a reply as he walked up and down along the row of grinning, shuffling men, looking them over. The big knotted joints of the old man's fingers gripped the cracked and yellow ivory head of his walking-stick, which he every now and then tapped, tapped on the stones of the court-yard. "That man," said he, in his cracked, querulous voice, poking his walking-stick as he spoke at a lean

little man standing in the line – “that man – why did ye bring him? How much d’ye think he’ll fetch in the Virginias? I’s warrant me not fifteen guineas.”

“Why, Master Tipton,” said the agent, referring to a slip of paper which he held in his hand, “there you are mightily mistook. Maybe, like enough, that man is worth more than any of ‘em. He’s a skilled barber and leecher, and a good man he is, and knows his trade, to be sure, and that werry well. Just you think, Master Tipton, how much he might be worth as a vally or body-servant to one of them there Virginia planters.”

“Humph!” grunted the old man, and he shook his lean head slowly from side to side. “I’ll tell you what it is, Master Dockray,” he said again, after a while, “they be not nigh so good as those I had last – and only nineteen where there should have been one and twenty.” The agent made no answer and the old man continued his inspection for a while. He did not say anything further, and by and by he turned away and, with the agent at his heels, entered the inn to receipt the papers, and with his going the inspection came to an end.

Finally, in making you acquainted with old Hezekiah Tipton, it may be said that he was a notable miser of his time. To see him hobbling along the street in his snuff-colored coat, threadbare at the seams, and here and there neatly patched and darned, one might take him, perhaps, for a poor decent school-teacher of narrow means, but certainly not for one of the richest men in the county, as he was reputed to be. There were a great many stories concerning him in Southampton, many of them doubtless apocryphal, some of them based upon a foundation of truth. One such story was that every Sunday afternoon the old man used to enter into his own room, bolt the door, and spread gold money out on the floor; that he would then strip himself and roll in the yellow wealth as though taking a bath. Another story was that he had three iron chests in the garret of his home, each chest bolted to the floor with iron bolts. That the one chest was full of Spanish doubloons, the second full of French louis d’ors, the third full of English guineas. The Southampton tradesmen used to say that it was more difficult to collect their bills from Hezekiah Tipton than from almost any one in the town.

CHAPTER II

JACK BALLISTER

JACK BALLISTER at this time was a little over sixteen years old, and had now been living with his uncle Tipton something over two years.

Jack's father at the time of his death had been vicar of Stalbridge for nearly nineteen years, so that Jack, until he had come to Southampton, had never known anything but that part of Wiltshire which immediately surrounded Stalbridge and Stalbridge vicarage. The only other inmates of the vicarage were old Janet, the housekeeper, and a farmer's daughter who helped about the house, and old Giles Cobb, who came up now and then to work in the garden.

There was, by the way, always a singular charm to Jack in the memories of this garden. Some of his earliest recollections were of playing out in the tangled sunny reaches while old Giles bent, with stooping shoulders and rounded back, over his work, digging and planting and picking about at the weeds in the brown, loamy beds. There was a yew hedge, and two bee hives that stood under a cherry tree, and a row of two or three cucumber frames that lay bright and shining, reflecting in their glassy surface the clouds and the warm sky above. There was always an association of flowers, of birds, and of warm yellow sunlight about the tangled, flowery space, and in the years afterwards, when Jack visited the old vicarage, one of the first places he went to was the garden. It looked strangely familiar yet strangely unfamiliar. It seemed more unkempt and uncared for. The birds were singing in the trees over beyond the hedge, but the two straw-thatched bee hives were gone. Nevertheless he could almost fancy that old Giles with his hunched shoulders and his smock frock might at any moment come in through the gate, trundling his squealing wheel-barrow before him.

Jack was not quite four years old when his mother had died. It seemed to him that he could remember her, yet the image he held in his mind might not have been an actual memory, but only some strong association connected with things that Janet had told him about her. Yet it seemed to him that he really did hold a mental impression of her in his memory of early things, an impression of a large, tender, shadowy figure, dressed in black, and with a white kerchief or shawl around her shoulders. He could almost fancy that he could remember a peculiar fragrance that lingered about the folds of her dress – a fragrance like that of the old lavender chest where Janet kept the house linen. This recollection of his mother might have been only an image conjured up out of what had been told him concerning her, but, as was said, it always seemed as though it were a real and living memory. It is sometimes difficult to tell where fancy ends and memory begins in those broken fragments of recollections of early childhood.

It seemed to him that the same figure was present in the memory of a certain time when he, as a little, little boy, had fallen down the steps and cut his chin. It seemed to him that it was she who had comforted him, singing to him while she scraped a crisp half-apple and fed him with the pulp from the point of a knife. Janet had said that that fall had not happened until the year after his mother's death, but it seemed to Jack that it was his mother's presence that had filled the memory of the accident, and he always felt that maybe it was Janet who was mistaken, and not his own recollections of the trivial event.

He often thought of his mother, as a motherless boy is apt to think of that missing presence, and it seemed to him that if she had only lived he would have loved her very much, and that his life would have been much sweeter to him.

Janet often talked to him about her. His grandmother, Janet told him, had adopted her as a little girl, and had brought her up with her own daughter, who was now Lady Arabella Sutton. She had been, Janet said, more of a companion than a waiting-maid. Of these stories of by-gone times, that children so delight to have told to them, Jack would make Janet tell him most often of the great

family quarrel that had happened when his father had told the others that he and Anne Tipton were going to be married. Janet always made the most out of the story, embellishing it more and more as the years passed by, and as her imagination suggested new details. "Indeed," she would maybe say, "you should ha' seen him stand up before your grandmother, as grand as you please, with his arms folded so. 'A Ballister, madam,' says he, 'can marry where he chooses.'"

Jack could not imagine his father as the hero of any such scene, still less could he image him as riding post-haste to Southampton when his mother had been sent away home from Grampton Hall.

He often heard people say that his father was a great scholar. The vicar was always silent and preoccupied, sometimes deep in his books, sometimes scribbling away with a busy pen, a litter of papers scattered all over the floor about him, and his wig pushed back awry from his smooth, round forehead; sometimes walking up and down the garden paths with his hands clasped behind his back, his head bent forward, and his eyes fixed on the ground. He used especially to walk thus while he was formulating in his mind the outlines of one of the pamphlets he used to write. Jack could not imagine that any one so absorbed in his books and his studies could ever have been the hero of such romance. And then he always seemed so very, very old to Jack. It was hard to imagine that such a dry and sapless life could ever have had the ichor of romance flowing through it.

Before Janet had come to Stalbridge she had been one of the dependents of the other Ballisters. "They be grand, grand folks," she would sometimes say, "and hold their heads as high as ever the Duke of Newcastle himself." She sometimes told Jack that if his father had not set his family all against him, he might have been a bishop as like as not. "I'd never come to Stalbridge only for your mother, poor soul," said she. "But she was fond of me, and I was fond of her, and so I came."

It seemed to Jack that he could hardly remember the time when his father did not teach him Latin and Greek. One of his first recollections as a little, little boy was of his father teaching him the Greek alphabet. He learned little or nothing else than the two languages, and it is not likely that his father thought anything else was worth learning. Jack once overheard the vicar say to old Sir Thomas Harding, "Sir, I will make the boy the best scholar in England." The words remained fixed in Jack's memory as such fragmentary speeches do sometimes fix themselves, for no especial reason, in the mind of boyhood. The promise of great scholarship was, however, never to be fulfilled, for Jack was only fourteen years old when the vicar died, and in the neglected two years at Southampton he never went to school a day, or studied six words of a lesson, or read a page of Greek or Latin, except one or two times when Mr. Stetson made him read a passage or two of Greek as a matter of curiosity.

Jack's father never said anything to him about his mother or his relations. His uncle Tipton had come up from Southampton just before his father's death, but that was the only time that Jack had ever really seen one of his own kindred.

During the fall of the year in which Jack's father had died, a messenger on horseback, with great jackboots and a suit of green livery turned up with scarlet, rode up to the vicarage and delivered a packet to Janet, who presently brought it in to the vicar, where he sat in the sagging wainscoted study, writing in the midst of a litter of papers scattered on the floor. The vicar set his pen in his mouth and took the letter, and Jack watched him as he broke the great red seal and began reading the packet, now and then frowning, either in the effort of reading the written words or else at the purport of the words themselves. When he had finished the letter he laid it to one side and resumed his writing where it had been interrupted. The messenger who had brought the letter did not immediately go away. Jack could hear now and then the jingle of his bridle or spurs, and now and then the sound of his whistling, as he lounged in the warm sunlight outside. Then there was the noise of voices talking together – the voices of Janet and the messenger – and presently the housekeeper came into the study to say that the man wanted to know when he could have his answer. The vicar looked up with the bewildered air he always wore when he was interrupted. "Eh!" he said, "eh! what d'ye say? Answer? Who wants an answer?" Then remembering, "oh, aye, there's no answer to send. You may tell him, there's no answer." And then presently the messenger rode clattering away whence he had come.

The letter lay where the vicar had left it until the next afternoon, and Jack, impelled by curiosity, managed to read a part of it. It was from his grand-aunt Lady Dinah Welbeck. She said that she was very ill, and she asked the vicar to come and see her before her end, and that all should be forgiven. The vicar did not go, either because he did not think of the message again, or else because he did not choose to resume his correspondence with his family. The letter lay about until the vicar tore a great strip off from it with which to light a candle in the next room, and the next day the written sheet was gone.

Some time after Lady Dinah Welbeck's death another communication, long and bulky, was brought to the vicarage. The vicar read it but paid no attention to it. Then another letter came and another. The last letter the vicar did not even open for several days. He was very busy at work upon a pamphlet, and the letter lay neglected upon the writing table until one morning Janet brought it and thrust it into his hand. "Eh!" said he, as though suddenly awakening to things about him, "what is this! what is this?" He took the letter and looked at it. "Why, this letter should have been given me three days ago," he said.

"So 'twas, master," said Janet, "but you did not read it."

"Did I not so?" said Jack's father, and then he broke the seal and read it. But still he paid no attention to it.

No doubt the vicar's family would long since have received him back among them if he had cared to have them do so. He and they had drifted far apart in the nineteen years that had passed. During that time all ill feeling – at least on the part of the family – had faded away and died. There was no intimacy, hardly any acquaintance, between the vicar and his brother, Sir Henry, neither was there any longer rancor between them.

Some of the letters written at this time had been written by Sir Henry, and after a number had been sent without eliciting any reply, the baronet sent the Grampton lawyer down to Stalbridge. The attorney and the vicar were closeted together for a long time, and when they at last came out of the study the vicar was very angry. It was the only time that Jack had ever seen him so. "They may keep it all!" he was saying in a great loud voice. "They may keep it all! I want none of it, I say. All that I want of them is to let me alone as I let them alone. I want, I say, none of their money or nothing that belongs to them. They may keep all for themselves."

Jack was leaning out of an upper window in the sunlight, looking down upon their heads, as they stood just below. Their voices came up to him through the warm air very distinctly.

"But, sir," said the lawyer, "do you not then consider the welfare of your own son?"

"Sir," said the vicar in the same loud voice, "that, I believe, is not your affair. I will look after my son's welfare mine own self. I tell you, sirrah, that those who sent you may e'en keep all of the money for themselves. I want nothing of them, and neither shall my son take aught from them."

"But, sir," said the lawyer, "you forget that the money hath been left to you individually. In taking it you do not take anything from them. It was not left to your brother, it is not a gift from him or, indeed, from any one, and it does not belong to any one but you. Your family cannot even receive it from you without process of law, and you cannot help taking it."

"Aye, but I can help taking it," cried out the vicar.

"Sir, sir!" said the lawyer, "pray be calm, sir. Pray look at this matter reasonably. Here is this money –"

"I will not hear anything more," cried out the vicar, "only I tell you I shall not touch a farthing of it."

Then the lawyer lost his temper. "Sir," said he, "I must needs tell you that you are the most unreasonable man that ever I met in all of my life."

The vicar drew himself up to his full height. "Sir," said he, "sure you forget yourself and to whom you speak. You forget who I am, sir. You are welcome to think as you choose about me, but you

are not welcome to tell me your opinion of me. Who are you, sirrah, to speak so to James Ballister?" And then he turned upon his heel back into the house, shutting the door behind him.

Jack, as he still leaned out into the sunlight, looking down from above, saw the stranger stand irresolutely for a while, then turn and go slowly out of the gate and mount his horse and ride away.

That winter the vicar died, and Jack went to Southampton to live.

Perhaps one of the bitterest days in Jack Ballister's boyhood life was the first evening after his arrival at his new home. His uncle had had the parlor opened, as though to do some honor to his coming. Jack sat for nearly an hour on the stiff uncomfortable chair, saying almost nothing, but just sitting there by the dim light of a candle. Old Hezekiah had tried to talk, but the conversation had lapsed and dwindled away into silence. Now he sat winking and blinking in the light of the candle, looking as though he were trying to think of something more to say, but yet saying nothing, and Jack, too miserable and depressed to talk, ventured nothing upon his own part. He was very glad when at last he was permitted to creep away miserably to bed and to yield himself fully to the luxury of hot tears and of utter loneliness and homesickness.

It seemed to him that night as though he never would be happy again, but even by the next morning he found himself awakened to a new and fresh hold upon his life. Things appeared bright and cheerful again in the fresh sunlight of a new day, and after he had finished his frugal breakfast he went out into the streets and down to the harbor, full of interest in the new surroundings in which he found himself placed. The harbor and the ships at anchor there seemed very wonderful to the boy fresh from the inland country. There was a great high-pooped battle-ship lying at anchor in the harbor that morning, and its sloping decks, whence came the distant rattle of a drum, seemed to teem with bustling life, lit every now and then by a spark of sunlight glinting on the slant of a musket-barrel. As Jack stood and gazed, he forgot how lonely he had been the night before.

In a little while – in a few weeks – his life had drifted into all these new circumstances, and had become one with them, and he presently found himself looking back to that old life at Stalbridge as a thing gone by and done with forever. All that remained was the memory of those things as episodes ended and done.

It is wonderful with what ductility life fits itself into new circumstances, becoming so accustomed to them, even in a few days, that they no longer seem to be new.

After that first formal reception in the musty, stuffy parlor, old Hezekiah seemed to consider his duty to his nephew as ended. Thereafter Jack was allowed to go where he pleased and to do as he chose. The old man hardly ever spoke to the lad excepting now and then in some dry and constrained fashion. Old Deborah, the housekeeper, used to send him on errands occasionally, but excepting for such little demands upon him, he had no ties to bind him to his new home except as it was a place wherein to eat his meals and to sleep at night.

He spent nearly all his time lounging about the harbor front, for there was a never-ending delight to him in the presence of the great ships and the rough sailors, who would talk of strange foreign countries – of having been to Calcutta, or to Shanghai, or to Jamaica, or to the Americas or the Brazils, as Jack might have talked of having been to the Isle of Wight. They spoke of the Caribbean Sea, or of the Indian Ocean, as he might speak of the Solent.

He often used to strike up an acquaintance with these sailors an acquaintance that would become, maybe, almost intimate for the two or three days that they were in the harbor.

It was an idle, aimless, useless life that he lived at this time. Sometimes – maybe when he was running on some petty, trivial errand for old Deborah – a sudden feeling of almost nauseating shame for his useless existence would come upon him and weigh him down with a leaden weight. It seemed almost as though an inner voice, as of conscience, would say: "Fie upon you! A great, big, hulking fellow like you to go carrying a little crock of yeast through the streets like this!" Generally when such an inner voice as of conscience would speak, he would satisfy himself by replying as with an

inner voice of his own: "Oh, well, 'tis Uncle Hezekiah's fault. If he'd only set me work to do, why, I'd do the work, and be glad enough of the chance."

Mr. Stetson, the rector, used sometimes to talk to him almost like an echo of that inner accusing voice. "'Tis a vast pity, Jack," he would sometimes say, "that such a great, stout fellow as thou art should live so in useless idleness. If nothing else better, why do you not study your books?" And Jack would be very uncomfortable with the heavy feeling that he had left some part of duty undone.

He used often to go to supper at the rectory. He felt more at ease there – less big-jointed and clumsy than almost anywhere else. And besides, he very heartily enjoyed the good things he had to eat at such times, for Deborah set a very poor and skimpy table at his uncle's house. They generally had preserved ginger and thin sweet cakes at these suppers at the rectory, and Jack used sometimes to contrive to slip a couple of cakes into his pocket to nibble after he got home.

Sometimes, especially if there were visitors present, the good old rector would insist upon talking to Jack about his uncle the baronet, or about Lady Dinah Welbeck, or about his aunt Lady Arabella Sutton. "Indeed," he would maybe say, "Jack's poor father was a very learned man, a *very* learned man. His pamphlet on the apostolic succession was the best that was writ at the time of the controversy. 'Tis, methinks, impossible for a man to be so perfectly ripe a scholar unless he hath good blood in his veins such as that of the Ballisters or haply of mine own. Why should it not be so? To be sure, you cannot make as good wine out of gooseberries as you can out of currants. Mine own father used often to say to me: 'Andrew, never forget that you have the blood of Roger Stetson in your veins.'"

Jack always felt a certain awkward constraint when the rector would talk in this way. It made him somehow feel ashamed, and he did not know just where to look or what to answer.

Sometimes Mr. Stetson would make him read aloud in Greek. "You should hear him read 'The Frogs,'" he would maybe say, and he would almost thrust a copy of Aristophanes into Jack's not very willing hand. Jack would read a page or two in a perfunctory sort of a way, while the rector would sit smiling and tapping his finger-tips on the table beside which he sat. "Thou hast the making of a fine scholar in thee, Jack," he would perhaps say, "and 'tis a vast pity thy uncle Tipton does not send thee to school. I will have a talk with him about it when the time comes."

Several times the rector spoke to old Hezekiah about his nephew. Once he walked all the way back from church with the old merchant, and almost into the parlor. But nothing ever came of such talks. "Hey!" said the old man; "go to school? What does he want to go to school for? Well, well! I'll see to it, and think it over by and by," and there the matter would rest.

Another friend whom Jack made was the attorney Burton. One day, as Jack was walking whistling along the street, the little lawyer came running out of his office and called after him to stop. "Master Jack! Master Jack! stop a little bit," he cried out. "Master Jack Ballister! – I have a word or two to say to you." He had run out bareheaded, and he was half breathless with his haste and his calling. He held an open letter in his hand. "Who d'ye think, young gentleman," said he, still panting a little, "I have heard from? Why, from your uncle Sir Henry Ballister, to be sure. He hath writ to me asking about you – how you are, what you are doing, and how Master Tipton is treating you. What shall I tell him?"

"Why, you may tell him," said Jack, "that I do very well."

This was the beginning of Jack's acquaintance with the attorney Burton. Several times afterward the little lawyer told him that Sir Henry had written about him. "He hath a mind, methinks," said the attorney, "to be more particular as to what your uncle Tipton is doing for you. Indeed, he hath asked me very especially about what he does for you. I know what I shall tell him, for I have talked to Master Stetson about you, and he tells me what a famous scholar you are. But harkee, Master Jack, if ever you have need of advice, you come to me, for so Sir Henry advised me to say to you."

Jack stood listening to the little man with a feeling of pleased and fatuous gratification. It was very pleasant to be so remembered by his grand relation. "Why, then, I take it very kind of Sir Henry,

Master Burton, and of you, too, for the matter of that,” said he. “And if ever I do have need of your advice, why, I will come to you just as freely as you give me leave to do.”

As he walked away down the street, thinking over what the attorney had said, he almost wished that he had some definite cause of complaint against his uncle Hezekiah, so that he might call upon the aid of Sir Henry and the attorney. How fine it would be to have Sir Henry take his part! He fancied to himself a talk with his uncle Hezekiah, in which he made himself perhaps say, “Sir, you shall not treat me so, for I tell you plain that there are those now to take my part against you, and that it is not just a poor orphaned boy with whom you have to deal.” Boys love to build up in their imagination such foolish scenes and fortunate conversations that never happen. Sometimes such fancyings seem so like the real thing that, like Jack, one almost forgets that they are not really likely to happen. But by and by the time came when Jack really did appeal to the lawyer and when he really did come to an understanding with his uncle.

That spring a young cooper named Dan Williamson had a boat that he wanted to sell. It had belonged partly to his brother, who had died during the fall before, and Dan, who was one of that sort who always had need of money, was very anxious to sell it. Jack’s great desire was to possess a boat of his own. It seemed to him that Dan’s boat was exactly the one that would best suit him. He used to think with a keen and vivid delight of how glorious it would be to own Dan’s boat. And then she was so very cheap. If the boat were his he would give her a fresh coat of paint, and name her the *Sea-gull*. If he could only get twenty pounds from his uncle Hezekiah, he could not only buy the boat, but add a new suit of sails.

He talked so often to Dan about the boat that at last the cooper began to believe that he might be able to sell it to Jack. “She’s the cheapest boat,” said Dan, “that was ever offered for sale in Southampton.”

“I don’t know about that,” said Jack; “but I do believe that she’s a good boat.”

“Good!” said Dan. “She’s the best boat in Southampton to-day, and, what is more, she’s as cheap as the dirt under your feet. You’d better buy her, for you’ll never get such another chance as long as you live.”

Jack shook his head. “I do believe she is a good boat, Dan,” he said; “but how shall I buy a boat without money to buy it with? I have no money in hand, and am not like to have any.”

“Well, well,” said Dan, “to be sure, that’s too bad”; and then, after a little space, he continued: “But I’ll tell you what, – you come down with me, and I’ll take you out in her; then you may see for yourself what a fine boat she is.”

“I’ll go out with you,” said Jack; “but I can’t buy her, though. I wish I could.”

Then they went off together down to the cooper-shops where Dan kept the boat.

Jack helped Dan step the mast. Then they pushed the boat off beyond the end of the shed. As the sail filled, Dan put down the helm, and brought the boat out under the stern of a bark lying at anchor a little distance from the shore. The watch on deck, a tipsy-looking sailor with his throat wrapped around with a woolen stocking, stood looking over the stern of the bark and down at them as they sailed by. Jack looked up at the towering hulk above him. The name of the bark – the *Prophet Elijah* – was painted in great, fat letters across the stern. At one side there was a picture of the prophet’s head, with his long beard. There was a rushing sound of water under the stern of the vessel. Then they were out in the wide, shining harbor, the warm air blowing mildly and softly about them.

“Look, how she lies up to the wind,” said Dan Williamson; “why, I do believe I could sail her straight into the wind’s eye if I chose to. I tell ‘ee what ’tis, Jack, you’ll never find such another chance as this to get what you want.”

“Maybe I won’t and maybe I will,” said Jack; “all the same, I sha’n’t buy her, for why, I have no money to buy her with.”

“No money!” said Dan Williamson; “why, if I had as much money as belongs to you, I’d give up coopering and live a gentleman all my life, I would. Why don’t ye go and ask your uncle Tipton

for eighteen pound straight and fair? Sure, the money's your own, and not his. Why don't ye ask him for it?"

"Ask him for it?" said Jack. "And what good would that do? Asking won't do any good. The money's mine, sure enough, yet I can't touch a penny of it till I am of age."

"T won't do any harm to ask him, anyway," said Dan Williamson. "Here, you come and take the tiller, and see for yourself how close up she sails."

Jack took the tiller, and then they sailed along for a while in silence. By and by Dan spoke again. "I'll tell you what 'tis, Jack, if I was you I'd go straight to Master Burton, I would, and I'd ask him about it. What did you say t' other evening down at the Golden Fish? Didn't you say that he told you to come to him if ever you wanted anything that your uncle Tipton wouldn't give you, and that he said your t' other uncle that's a lord would get it for you? Well, then, why don't you go to him and ask for eighteen or twenty pound? What you said was true, wasn't it?"

"Why, yes, 'twas true enough, as far as that goes," said Jack.

"Well, then," said Dan Williamson, "there you are."

Jack sat for a little while in silence, then he spoke.

"I tell you what it is, Dan, maybe you don't believe what I told you, but it is true enough. I tell you what – I'm going to go to Master Burton this very day, and ask him about what you say." He did not really entertain any hope, however, that he could get twenty pounds from his uncle Hezekiah.

As soon as he came ashore again, he went straight up to the little lawyer's house.

The little man was in his office – a musty, stuffy little den of a place, smelling of stale tobacco smoke, and set around with dusty cases of worn and yellow-backed books and tin boxes.

The attorney sat in the midst of the litter surrounding him like a little gray mouse. He had black, beady eyes, a long nose, and a thin, leathery face.

He sat looking with his little twinkling black eyes at Jack as he stated his case. "Why, as for your fortune, Master Jack, I must needs tell you plain that it might as well be locked up in the church belfry for all the good it may do you now. For so it is locked up in your father's will, tight and fast as if it were in a box, and your uncle hath the keeping of it for you."

"And can I get none of my money of him, then?" said Jack.

"Why, as for that, I don't say that, neither," said the little lawyer. "It may be a hard matter to get it, and yet, after all, I may be able to get it for you. I'll tell you what to do, Master Jack. Go you to your uncle and ask him plain and straight for what money you need. How much was it you wanted?"

"Well, say twenty pounds," said Jack.

"Well, then, you ask him for twenty pounds, plain and straight, and if he says you nay, then come back to me, and I'll see what I can do for you. Sir Henry hath asked me to look after you a trifle, and so I will do."

CHAPTER III

JACK AND HIS UNCLE

JACK, following the attorney's advice, had made up his mind to ask his uncle for the money that very night, but when he came face to face with doing it, it was very hard. They were sitting together over their poor frugal supper, and the old miser's utter unconsciousness of what Jack had it on his mind to say made the saying of it very hard. At last he suddenly spoke. "Uncle Hezekiah," said he.

The old man looked up sharply, almost as though startled at the sound of Jack's voice. He did not say anything, but he sat looking at Jack as though inviting him to continue.

"Uncle Hezekiah," said Jack again. He did not know in just what words to frame what he had to say. Then he continued: "I want to – to talk to you about a matter of business."

"Hey!" said the old man, "business! business! What d' ye mean – what d'ye mean by business?"

"Why," said Jack, "I want some money to buy something. I went to see Master Burton to-day, and he told me I had best come to you and ask you for it." Gradually Jack was becoming bolder as he became accustomed to the sound of his own voice. "Dan Williamson hath a boat for sale," he continued. "He wants eighteen pound for it, and if I had twenty pound it would be just enough to fit her up as I would like to have her. I went and talked to Master Burton, and he told me I had best come to you and ask you for the money."

The old man stared blankly at Jack, his lean jaw hanging gaping with speechless surprise. "Why! why! what's all this?" he said, finding his voice at last. "Twenty pound! Why, I do believe you're gone clean clear crazy. Twenty pound! What's Roger Burton got to do with my giving you twenty pound, I'd like to know? You'll not get a farden, and that's the long and the short of it. Master Burton, indeed! What business is it of his, I'd like to know?" He sat looking at Jack for a little while, and then he slowly resumed his interrupted supper again.

Jack sat leaning back in his chair, with his hands in his breeches' pockets, looking across the table at his uncle. His heart was swelling with a feeling of very choking and bitter disappointment and anger. It seemed to him that he had not expected much, but now that his uncle had denied him, his disappointment was very bitter. He watched his uncle as the old man continued eating in silence. "Very well," said he at last, "then I know what I'll do. I'll go back to Master Burton again. He told me what to do, and that if you said me nay I was to go back to him again. He says that Sir Henry Ballister has been writing to him about me, asking how you treated me and what you did for me, and he told me if you would not give me what I asked for, I was to go back to him, and he'd write to Sir Henry and tell him all about it, and that he'd see if something couldn't be done on my account."

Old Hezekiah looked up again. "Sir Henry Ballister?" said he. "What's he been writing to Roger Burton about, I should like to know! What's he got to do with it? He's not your guardeen, is he? I'm your guardeen, and the guardeen of your money as well. As for Sir Henry Ballister, why, he's got no more to do with you than the man in the moon." Then he went on eating again, and again Jack sat watching him in silence. In a little while Hezekiah finished his supper, chasing the fatty gravy around and around his plate with the point of his knife. Then he laid down his knife and fork, pushed away his plate, and arose from the table.

"Very well," said Jack, breaking the silence, "we'll see about all this business. I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to write to Sir Henry Ballister myself, and tell him about the way I'm treated by you. You never give me a farthing to spend, and as for being your own flesh and blood – why, I might as well be a dog in this house as to be your own kin. You keep all my money and use it as your own, and yet you don't speak six words to me in a month." Jack was dimly surprised at his own boldness in speaking. Now that he had made a beginning, it seemed very easy to say his say and to speak out all that lay on his mind. "I'm not going to be treated like a dog by you or by anybody," he said.

“Yes, I do speak to you, too,” said Hezekiah, stopping at the door. “What d’ ye want me to say to you, anyhow?” he added. “Don’t I give you all you want to eat and drink, and never charge you a farden for it? What more d’ ye want than that? You’re the most ungratefulest nevy that ever lived, so you are, to talk to me that way.”

Then he went out of the door, and along the dark passageway, and Jack heard him enter the office, and shut the door behind him. Then he began eating his supper again. He felt very bitter and very angry against the old man.

So he sat eating for a long time in lonely silence, broken only by the sound of Deborah clattering now and then among the pots and pans in the kitchen beyond. Suddenly he heard the office door open again, and the sound of his uncle’s steps coming back along the passage. He reached the door, and Jack heard his fingers fumbling for the latch in the darkness, and then the sharp click as it was raised. Then the door opened, and the old man came in. He stood for a moment, and then came straight across to the table where Jack sat. He stood leaning with both hands upon the table. Jack did not know exactly what to expect. He drew himself back, for the first thought that came into his mind was that the old man was going to attack him personally. “Lookee, Jacky,” said old Hezekiah, at last, “I’ve been thinking of that there twenty pound you was speaking of. Well, Jacky, you shall have that twenty pound, you shall.”

“What d’ ye mean, Uncle Hezekiah?” said Jack.

“Why,” said Hezekiah, “I mean what I said. You shall have that twenty pound, Jacky. I’ve been thinking about it, and what you said, and I’m going to give you what you want. I can’t give it to you just now, for twenty pound is a deal of money, and I haven’t that much to give you straight away. But I’ll give it to you after a while, I will, Jacky. I’ll give it to you – let me see – I’ll give it to you on Monday next. Will that be time enough?”

“Why, yes, it will,” said Jack, “if you really mean what you say.”

“Aye,” said the old man, “I mean it sure enough; but don’t you say anything more to Roger Burton, will ye? Just you come to me when you want anything, and don’t you go to him. I mean to be a good, kind uncle to you, Jacky, I do,” and he reached out a lean, tremulous hand, and pawed at Jack, who drew instinctively away from his approach. “I do, Jacky, I do,” said the old man, almost whining in his effort to be affectionate. “But don’t you be writing to Sir Henry Ballister about me, will you, Jacky?”

“I won’t write to him if you’ll treat me decently,” said Jack.

“Aye, aye,” said the old man, “I mean to do that, Jacky, I do. Only don’t you be talking any more to Lawyer Burton. I’ll give you that twenty pound. I’ll give it to you on – on Monday next, I will.”

Then he turned and went away again. Jack sat looking after him. He felt very uncomfortable. He could not understand why the old man had yielded so suddenly. He did not believe at all that he had yielded, or that he would give him what he asked for. He felt sure, in spite of his uncle’s words, that he had been put off with a barren promise that would never bear fruit.

CHAPTER IV

CAPTAIN BUTTS

ON the evening of the next day a number of boys were gathered at the end of the wharf in front of Hezekiah Tipton's warehouses. They were throwing stones into the water. Jack went out along the wharf to where they were. They were all of them boys younger than himself.

"Well, if that's all the better you can throw," said Jack, "to be sure you can't throw well. Just you watch me hit yon anchor-buoy out there with this pebble."

A brig had come into the harbor during the day, and now lay at anchor some distance off from the shore. The sails were half reefed and hung limp from the yards. The men were washing down the decks, and from the shore you could see them busy about the decks, and every now and then a gush of dirty water as it ran through the scupper-holes. A boat was just about putting off from the brig. Presently some one climbed down over the side of the vessel and into the boat, and then it was pushed off. Jack stopped throwing stones and stood looking. The boat came rowing straight toward the wharf where he and the other boys stood. It pulled in around the back of a sloop that lay fast to the end of the wharf, and was hidden from sight. Jack jumped down from the wharf to the deck of the sloop, and went across to see who was in the boat. It had come in under the side of the sloop, and two of the men were holding it to its place, grasping the chains. They looked up at Jack and the other boys as they came to the rail of the sloop and looked down at them. There were two men in the stern of the boat. One was just about to climb aboard the sloop, the other sat still. He who still sat in his place had a knit cap pulled down half over his ears. He held a pipe in his mouth and he had gold ear-rings in his ears. The other, who was about to climb aboard the sloop, was plainly the captain of the brig. He was short and thick-set. He wore a rough sea coat with great flapped pockets and brass buttons. One of the pockets bulged out with a short pistol, the brass butt of which stuck out from under the flap. He wore canvas petticoat-breeches strapped to his waist by a broad leather belt with a big flat brass buckle. His face and as much of the short bull-neck as Jack could see were tanned red-brown like russet leather, and his cheeks and chin were covered with an unshaven beard of two or three days' growth. He stood up in the boat, with his hand resting on the rail of the sloop.

"Do you know where Master Hezekiah Tipton lives?" he asked in a hoarse, rattling voice.

"Why, yes, I do," said Jack. "This is his wharf, and I'm his nephew."

"Well, then," said the man, "I wish you'd show me to him."

As Jack accompanied the other up the stony street to his uncle's house, he turned to look at his companion every now and then.

"Where do you hail from, captain?" said he.

"I hail from the land where every man minds his own business," said the other in his rattling voice. "Where do you hail from, my hearty?"

Jack did not know just what to reply at first. "Oh, well," he said, "if you don't choose to give me a civil answer, why, then you needn't."

After that they walked in silence till they reached the house. Jack looked into the office, but Hezekiah was not there. "If you'll come into the parlor," said he, "I'll go and tell him you're here, only I don't know who you are, to be sure." He opened the door of the room as he spoke, and showed the captain into the darkened parlor. It always smelled damp and musty and unused, and the fireplace had a cold, dark look as though no comforting fire had ever burned there.

"Tell Master Tipton 'tis Captain Butts of the *Arundel* wants to see him," said the stranger, laying aside his hat with its tarnished gilt lace and wiping his partly bald head with the corner of his red neckerchief. All the time he was looking strangely about him at his unfamiliar surroundings.

There was the sound of a knife and fork rattling against a plate in the distance, and Jack, following the sound, went along the passage to the room beyond, where he knew Hezekiah was sitting at supper.

"There's a man in the parlor," said Jack, "would like to see you. He says his name's Captain Butts of the *Arundel*."

Hezekiah was looking at Jack as he spoke. He laid down his knife and fork immediately, and pushed back his chair and arose. Jack followed him back to the parlor. He stood outside of the door, looking in. The stranger arose as Master Tipton came in, holding out to the old America merchant a big, brown, hairy hand with a hard, horny-looking palm.

"How d'ye do, Master Tipton?" said he in his rattling voice. "I be mightily glad to see you."

"Well, then, Master Captain Butts," said Hezekiah, giving him a limp, reluctant hand, "I be mightily glad to see you, too, – more glad than you are to see me, like enough, for I've been looking for you these three days past, and wondering where was the *Arundel*. There be them nineteen servants down at the 'Duck and Doe' that should have been took away yesterday morning. Their lodging at the inn is a matter of ten pence a day each. Now, who do you think's to pay for that there?"

"Well, well, Master," said the other, "'tweren't no fault of mine that I weren't here yesterday. Wind and tide be to blame, so whatever ye lose ye may just charge up ag'in' them. We can't sail without wind, can we? and we can't sail ag'in' the tide, can we? As for the men, why, the sooner I get my clearance papers and the men aboard the better 'twill suit me. The tide turns at eight o'clock, and if the wind comes up, as 'tis like to do, why, I'll drop out and away with the turn o' the water."

Master Hezekiah looked around. Jack was still standing in the doorway. "You go in and get your supper, Jacky," said he, and then he got up and closed the door, and Jack went back into the supper-room.

All the time that Jack sat at his meal old Deborah scolded him ceaselessly for being so late.

"'Tis always so," said she, her voice growing shriller and shriller. "You be always late, and think of nobody but your own self."

"No, I'm not always late, neither," said Jack; "I wasn't late to breakfast, or to supper either, yesterday."

"But you didn't come home to dinner at all," said old Deborah, "and I kept it for you, and I kept it for you, and the 'taties all like wax in the oven, and not fit to eat."

"I didn't want any dinner," said Jack. "I had something to eat down at the wharf."

"Well," said old Deborah, "you might just as well have been late as not to come at all, for I kept a-waiting and a-waiting for you till it was all dried up and wasted – aye, all wasted, and it what many a pore body 'u'd'a' been glad enough to 'a' had, too."

In the interval of her scolding Jack could occasionally hear the distant rumbling of Captain Butts's voice in the office.

It grew darker and darker in the twilight gloom of the kitchen, until Jack could hardly see the food upon his plate.

"I wish you'd bring a candle, Deborah," said he, "I can't see to find the way to my own mouth."

"A candle!" said Deborah; "if you'd come to your supper in time you'd not need a candle to see. Now you may just go without."

"Very well," said Jack, "I don't care, for I'm done."

"Then, if you're done, you may go down to the pump and fetch back some water."

Jack took the pail and went off with it. He was gone a long time, and the night was fairly settled when he came stumbling back into the kitchen, slopping the water upon the steps and the floor.

"Why," said Deborah, "I thought you was never coming. Your uncle's asking for you. He's over in the office now, and he wants to see you there."

"Very well," said Jack, "if I'd known that, may be I'd hurried and may be I wouldn't."

In the office he found Captain Butts seated at the tall desk, with a bottle of Hezekiah's old Jamaica rum before him. They had been looking over some papers, and the Captain had evidently been helping himself very freely to the rum. He smelt strong of the liquor. He was leaning over the desk, his chin resting upon his fists. He looked up at Jack with his keen gray eyes from under his bushy eyebrows. "Is this the boy?" said he. Hezekiah, who sat opposite to his visitor, nodded without speaking.

"Come hither, my hearty," said Captain Butts, beckoning to Jack. Jack came forward slowly. "And so ye're a hard one to manage, be ye? By blood! if I had ye aboard the *Arundel* for a few days, I'd manage ye."

"Who says I'm hard to manage?" demanded Jack, indignantly.

"That does your good uncle," said the Captain. As he spoke he reached out suddenly, and catching Jack by the arm held him tight, feeling up and down the length of his arm. "Ye be well put together, my hearty," said he; "ye'd make a valuable servant in the tobacco-fields," and he winked tipsily as he spoke. "Now, being as ye're so hard to manage, how'd you like it if you was to take a cruise to the Americas with old Benny Butts?"

Jack could smell the rum heavy upon the captain's breath, and he saw that he was a little tipsy. He jerked his arm away from the other's grasp.

"I am well enough off here as I am, thank you, Master Captain," said he, "and I don't choose to go to the Americas at all."

The Captain burst out laughing. He fetched a thump upon the desk before him that made the bottle of rum and the tumbler hop and jingle. "Harkee to that, now!" said he, "he don't choose to go to the Americas," and he gave another roar of laughter.

Master Hezekiah sat looking on at the two, resting his forehead upon his lean fingers, his hand shading his eyes from the light of the candle. Suddenly he cut into the talk. "Come, come, Captain Butts!" said he tartly, "let there be an end to this! Sure you forget what you're saying. Come hither," said he to Jack. Jack came around to him, and the old man lifted the lid of the desk and brought out a bundle of papers and a little bag of money. He counted out a few coins, which he made into a little pile. Then he untied the tape and chose a paper from among the others. Jack stood watching him. "Here be a list of the America servants down at the Golden Fish," said Hezekiah, "and this" – here he chinked the money between his fingers as he gave it to Jack – "is fifteen shillings ten-pence. I want you to do something for me, Jacky. I want you to go down to the Golden Fish and pay Landlord Evans his account, and then give this release to Dockray, who hath the America men in charge. After that I want you to take them down to the wharf and deliver them over to Captain Butts, and get his receipt. D'ye understand?"

"Why, yes, I do," said Jack; "but why do you want me to do this when the crimp can serve you so much better than I?" He could not understand why his uncle, who had never before made any demands upon him should suddenly prefer such a request as this.

"Why," said Hezekiah, "you ask me for money t'other day, didn't ye? Well, then, if you want money you must begin to do something for to earn it. What I want you to do now is to take these servants down and deliver them over to Captain Butts."

"Oh, well," said Jack, "I'm willing enough, but I don't see why you should choose me to do it. What am I to do with them? Tell me again."

"You're to take them down to the wharf, d'ye understand? Then Captain Butts will give you a receipt for 'em. Then you'll have nothing more to do with the business."

"Very well," said Jack; "methinks I understand. And now if the Captain is ready to go, why, I am, too."

As he and Captain Butts walked together down the street in the darkness, Jack said again: "I don't see why he wants me to take his servants down to the wharf. He never asked such a thing of me before."

Captain Butts, for reply, burst out laughing, and fetched him a clap on the shoulder that jarred him through and through. “Well, I do suppose you’ll find out some day why he sends you on his errands,” he said.

CHAPTER V

KIDNAPPED

AT THE END of the court the two parted, the Captain going on down to the wharf and Jack up to the Golden Fish. He found the crimp and gave him Hezekiah's release, and then the redemptioners immediately began to make themselves ready. There was something pitiful in the meagerness of their preparation. One or two of them had nondescript bundles tied up in handkerchiefs, and one had a pair of stockings wrapped up in a piece of dirty paper. Beyond this they had nothing at all to take with them to the new world to which they were bound. But they seemed to borrow very little trouble on that score. They were very restless and turbulent at the near prospect of sailing. They had somehow contrived to obtain some liquor, and two or three of them were more than half drunk.

The crimp brought them out into the court of the inn and arranged them in some sort of order, two by two, by the dim light of the lantern. They jostled and pushed one another, and leered in the lantern light at Jack as he stood looking at them helplessly. "I'll never be able to take them down to the wharf by myself," said he.

"Oh, you'll be able to take us," said a big, bull-necked fellow; "a baby'd lead us wherever he chose for to go," and then they all laughed.

"Well, I don't know," said the crimp, shaking his head as he looked them over; "like enough I'd better go with you as far as the wharf. I don't know why he should have sent you to take 'em, anyhow. Lookee!" said he to the huddled line of servants, in a suddenly-changed voice; "I won't have none of your tricks, d'ye understand? D'ye see this?" and he fetched a bludgeon out of his pocket and showed it to them. "The first man as tries any of his tricks, I knocks him on the head, d'ye understand?"

"Why, master," said one of the men, "you wouldn't hurt us, would you? We be your lambs."

"Never you mind," said the crimp, shaking his head. "Don't you go trying any of your tricks on me. Come along now, march!"

"Hurrah for the Golden Fish and Johnny Waddels!" cried out one of the men.

The others gave a broken and confused cheer as they marched away out of the court, the crimp walking beside the first couple, and Jack coming after to keep a lookout upon them. They marched along for a while, first down one street and then another until they had come to the water-front. The wind was blowing chilly. The bull-necked fellow had begun to sing. They walked along for some little distance and then crossed the street. Here the storehouses stood dark and deserted as they passed by them. At last they came to the wharf, across which the night wind swept without shelter.

"Well," said the crimp, "I'll leave you here. 'Tis no use my going any further."

"Yes," said Jack, "I can manage them very well now by myself, I suppose."

"I'll just wait under the lee of the shed here," said the crimp, "till I see you're all right."

"Very well," said Jack. "Come along," said he to the men as they stood shivering in their thin, ragged clothes. The bull-necked fellow had ceased his discordant singing. At Jack's bidding they now marched out along the wharf. There were lights out in the darkness at the end of the wharf, where the sloop lay black and shapeless in the night. When Jack came to where the light was he found two dark figures standing waiting for him on the wharf. One of them was Captain Butts, the other was the man in the knit cap, who now carried a lantern hanging over his arm. There were two or three men, two of them also with lanterns, standing on the deck of the sloop. Jack knew that the boat that had brought the Captain off from the brig was lying in the darkness beyond, for he could hear the sound of voices, and then the sound of the rattle of an oar.

Captain Butts had twisted his handkerchief well up about his throat. "Well," said he, "I thought you was never coming."

"I came as soon as I could," said Jack.

“Just bring the men out to the boat, across the sloop here,” said the Captain; and at Jack’s bidding the men, one after another, jumped down from the wharf to the deck of the sloop below. Jack followed them, and the Captain and the man with the lantern followed him. “Where’s your list?” said the Captain, and then, as Jack gave it to him: “Hold the lantern here, Dyce. That’s it.” He held the list to the dull light, referring to it as he counted the shivering transports who stood in line. “Sixteen – seventeen – eighteen – nineteen – nineteen all told. That’s right. Now, then, look alive, my hearties, and get aboard as quick as you can!”

Jack stood with his hands in his pockets and his back to the chill night breeze. The wharf and the sloop, deserted in the night, seemed a singularly dark and lonely background to the dimly moving figures. The water, driven by the wind, splashed and dashed noisily around the end of the wharf. One by one the redemptioners clambered clumsily over the rail of the sloop and down into the boat alongside, stumbling over the thwarts in the darkness and settling themselves amid the growling and swearing of the sailors. “Are you all right?” asked the Captain.

“All right, sir,” said Dyce.

Suddenly the Captain turned sharply toward Jack. “Now, then,” said he, “you get aboard too!” Jack gaped at him. “You get aboard too!” said Captain Butts again.

“What do you mean?” said Jack.

“I mean that you’re going aboard too,” said the Captain, and as he spoke he reached out and caught Jack by the collar. “That’s why you were sent here,” said he, “and that’s what I’m bound to do. I’m bound to take you to the Americas with me.”

Then Jack saw it all in a flash. He stood for one stunned instant, and then he began struggling fiercely to loosen himself from the Captain’s grasp upon his collar. The next instant he felt himself jerked violently backward and he heard the Captain’s voice saying: “You get into the boat down there! You’ll do as I tell you, if you know what’s good for you!”

Jack twisted and struggled desperately and frantically, but still the Captain held him in a grip like a vise. “Let me go!” gasped Jack. “Let me go!”

“Into the boat, I tell ye!” he heard the Captain’s voice growling in his ear, and at the same time he found himself flung forward violently toward the rail of the sloop. The boats and the dark waters were just below. He saw dimly, his sight blurred with the fury of his struggles, the dark figures of the men in the boat below. He flung out his feet against the rail, bracing himself against the Captain’s hold; at the same time he clutched hold of the stays. “Here, Dyce, loose his hand there,” said the Captain’s voice, panting with his struggles. “The young villain! What d’ye mean, anyhow?”

The man with the knit cap sprang forward at the Captain’s bidding, and, still holding the lantern, began to pluck Jack’s fingers loose from the stays. Then suddenly Jack screamed out, “Help! – Help! – Help!” three times, and at the same time he kicked backward violently against the Captain’s shins.

“You will, will you!” wheezed the Captain. As he spoke he jerked Jack violently backward. Jack had just time to see a whirling flash in the light of the lantern. Then there came a deafening, blinding crash. Ten thousand sparkling stars flew whirling around and around him. He felt a hot stream shoot down across his face, and he knew that it was blood. There was another crash, this time duller and more distant, then a humming that droned away into stillness – then nothing.

“By blood! Captain,” said Dyce, “I believe you’ve killed the boy.”

The Captain thrust the pistol with which he had struck Jack back again into his pocket. “The young villain!” he said, panting with his late efforts. “He’ll kick me, will he? And he’d’a’ had the town down on us if I hadn’t shut his noise.” He lowered down upon Jack’s figure lying deathly still and in a dark heap on the deck. Dyce bent over the senseless form, holding the lantern to the face. Jack’s eyes were upturned. His legs and body twitched; his head was streaming with blood and his face was bloody. Captain Butts stooped over him. “Oh! he’s all right,” said he roughly; “he’ll come to by and by; he’s only stunned a trifle. Get him aboard and be quick about it! There’s somebody coming along the wharf now. Here; here’s his hat. Catch it there.”

CHAPTER VI

ABOARD THE ARUNDEL

FOR a long while Jack was very light-headed and sick. He did not seem to have any strength. It seemed to him that several days passed while he lay in his berth, now partly waking, now partly sleeping. When he was partly awake his mind seemed to wander, and he could not separate the things he now saw from the things he had seen before. Both seemed grotesque and distorted. It seemed to him that his father was nearly always with him. He had a line of Greek to construe, but he could never get the words correctly. He kept trying and trying to get the words in their proper order, but always, when he would get the line nearly correct, it would fall to pieces, and he would have to begin all over again. He felt that his father was very angry with him, and that he was driving him on to complete the line, and he felt that if he could only finish the task he would have rest and be well again. But there were three words that never would fit rightly into the line, and he never could make them fit into it. With these several fancyings there commingled the actual things about him. His father seemed to him to be waiting and waiting for him to complete his task; but at the same time he saw the sloping deck of the vessel and the berths upon the other side, and could feel the brig rising and falling and rolling upon the sea. There was ever present in his ears the sound of creaking and groaning and rattling and sliding, and there were men talking together and smoking their pipes, the pungent smell of the tobacco helping to make him feel very sick. If he could only fit these words together into the line, then his father would go away, and he would be well and could go up on deck. Oh, how his head ached! He wished he could get away from these words that would not fit into the sentence.

Then the night would come, and he would be partly asleep. Sometimes he would lie half dreaming for an hour or more, and in the darkness the things of his fancy were very real.

Very soon after he had been brought aboard he had a dim, distorted vision of Dyce, the mate, coming with a lantern to where he lay, bringing somebody along with him. It seemed to him that the two men had leaned over him talking about him while a number of other people had stood near. The man who had come with the mate must have been Sim Tucker, a thin, little man, with a long, lean chin, who was a barber-leech. Jack had felt some one trim his hair, and then do something that had hurt him very much. It seemed to be a grotesque nightmare that the barber-leech had sewed up his head. Afterward a bandage was tied around his head, and then he felt more comfortable.

Jack knew very well that it had all been a dream, and he was always surprised to wake up and find the bandage around his head.

Now and then Sim Tucker would come and speak to him. "How d'ye feel now?" he would maybe say.

"Why," said Jack, "I would be all well if my father would only go away. But I can't construe that sentence."

"You can't what!"

"I can't get those Greek words right, and my father won't go away."

"Why, your father says they're all right."

"Does he?"

"Aye."

"But there are those four words. They won't fit."

"Why, yes, they fit all right. Don't you see?" Then it seemed to Jack that they did fit into the sentence, and for a little while he was more easy in his mind.

After a while he began to get better, and his head got clearer. Then one day he was so well that he was able to crawl up to the deck. He had not eaten anything at all and was very weak. He climbed up the companion-way and stood with his head just above the scuttle. He looked aft almost along

the level of the deck. In the distance was the rise of the poop-deck, with a man at the wheel just under the over-hang. The first mate, Dyce, still wearing his knit cap pulled down half over his ears, was walking up and down the poop-deck, smoking. With the rise and fall of the vessel, Jack could catch every now and then a glimpse of the wide, troubled ocean, moving and heaving with ceaselessly restless, crawling waves, cut keenly and blackly at the sharp rim of the horizon against the gray sky. Every now and then there was a great rush of air from the vast hollow sails overhead, that swept back and forth, back and forth across the wide, windy sky. The sailors looked at him as he stood there with the bandage wrapped around his head. He began to feel very sick and dizzy with the motion of the vessel, and presently he crept down below, back to his berth again.

“Be you feeling better?” said one of the men, coming to him.

“Yes, I think I am,” said Jack, “only it makes me sick and faint-like to stand up.”

“Well, you’ve been pretty sick,” said the man, “and that’s the sacred truth. I thought the Captain had killed you for sure when I saw him hit you that second crack with the pistol. I thought he’d smashed your head in.”

Several of the other men had gathered about his berth and stood looking down at him. Jack wished they would go away. He lay quite still, with his eyes shut, and by and by they did leave him.

He felt very lonely and deserted. A great lump rose in his throat when he thought of all that had happened to him. “I have not a friend in the world,” he said to himself, and then the hot tears forced themselves out from under his eyelids.

When next he opened his eyes he saw that Sim Tucker was standing over him. “How d’ye feel now?” said the barber-leech.

“Oh, I feel better,” said Jack irritably. “I wish you’d go away and let me alone.”

“Let me look at your head,” said the leecher. He unwound the bandage deftly with his long, lean fingers. “Aye,” said he, “ye’re getting along well now. To-morrow I’ll take out them stitches. He must have hit ye with the cock of the pistol to make a great, big, nasty cut like that.”

CHAPTER VII

ACROSS THE OCEAN

THE next morning Jack was up on deck again for a while, feeling very much better and stronger than the day before. In the afternoon Mr. Dyce came down into the steerage and told him that the Captain wanted to see him.

Jack, although he was now out of his bunk, was still very weak, and not yet accustomed to the rolling heave and pitch of the vessel at sea. He followed the mate along the deck in the direction of the round-house, balancing himself upon the slanting, unsteady plane, now and then catching at the rail or at the shrouds or stays to steady himself. Everything was still very fresh and new to him, so that, even though his mind was heavy with leaden apprehension concerning the coming interview with Captain Butts – the thought which weighed down his spirit with dull imaginings – even though his mind was full of this, the freshness and newness of everything was yet strong in his consciousness – the tumultuous noise of the sea, the sun shining bright and clear, the salt wind blowing strong and cold. Every now and then a cresting wave would flash out a vivid whitecap in the sunlight against the profound green of the limitless ocean; the sky was full of clouds, and purpling shadows dappled the wide stretch of ever-moving waters. The brig, plowing its way aslant to leeward, plunged every now and then with a thunderous clap of white foam into the oncoming wave, and the broad shadows of sail and rigging swept back across the sunlit deck with the backward and forward sweep of the masts against the sky high overhead. Of all these things Jack was strongly conscious as he walked along the deck, wondering, with that dull and heavy apprehension, what Captain Butts was going to say to him.

Two men on the poop-deck were heaving the log, one of them keeping tally with a slate; a third, with a red bandana handkerchief knotted about his head, stood gripping the wheel, holding the yawing vessel steadily to its course. The man with the slate looked at Jack as he came along the deck, clinging to the rail for support.

Captain Butts was waiting in the round-house, leaning with elbows upon the table. A bottle of rum and a half-emptied tumbler stood on the table at his elbow, and the cabin was full of the strong, pungent odor of the liquor. A chart, blackened and dirty as with long use, lay spread out on the table. Part way across it stretched a black line which the Captain had drawn – probably the supposed course of the vessel – for Captain Butts sailed by dead reckoning. He looked up from under his brows as Jack entered, frowning until his partly bald forehead swelled with knotted veins, but he did not immediately say anything. Jack had come forward and stood at the end of the table. The mate, who lingered close to the door, had taken out his pipe and was filling it with tobacco. Jack did not know how pale and thin he was, how sick he looked; he was conscious only of the weakness that seemed not only to make him unsteady upon his legs, but to unnerve him of all strength of spirit. As he stood there now, facing the Captain, he felt an hysterical choking in his throat, and he swallowed and swallowed upon the hard, dry lump that seemed to be there.

“Well, my hearty,” said the Captain, breaking the silence at last with his hoarse, rattling voice, “well, my hearty, you got your dose that time, or else I’m mistook. By Blood!” he continued with sudden savageness, “I’ll teach you to play with Benny Butts, I will, and to kick at his shins. By Blood! When you’re dealing with me, you’re not dealing with your poor old uncle as ye can bully and blatherskite as you please. By Blood! I’ll break your back if you go trying any of your airs with me, I will.” And as his anger rose with his own words, he opened his eyes wide and glared upon his victim. Jack did not dare to reply. He stood looking down, holding tight to the edge of the table and striving to balance himself to the lurching of the ship.

“Your uncle told me all about you, he did,” said Captain Butts, beginning again; “how you threatened him with the law and tried to make mischief atwixt him and your t’other folks. He told me how you stole his money away from him for to – ”

“I never stole a farthing in my life,” said Jack hoarsely.

“D’ye give me back talk?” roared the Captain, smiting his palm upon the table. “By Blood! if ye answer me any of your back talk, I’ll clap ye in irons as quick as look at ye. I say ye did steal money from your uncle.” Again he glared at Jack as though defying him to reply, and Jack, conscious of his utter powerlessness, did not venture to answer. “I say ye did steal money from your uncle,” repeated the Captain, “and that again and again. He might have sent ye to jail had he been so minded, and maybe he would ha’ done so only for the shame o’ the thing. Now I tell ye what you’re going to do. You ‘re going to the Americas to be put to work under a master who’ll keep you out o’ mischief for five years. That’s what you’re going to do. After you’ve served out your five years in the Americas under a master, why, then, maybe, you’ll know how to behave yourself arter you get back home again.”

The brig gave a sudden heaving lurch that sent the bottle and glass sliding across the table. The Captain caught them with a quick sweep of his hand, while Jack, losing his balance, partly fell, partly sat abruptly down upon the seat beside him. He was up again almost instantly and stood once more holding by the side of the table.

“Now, you listen to what I say. You behave yourself decent while you’re aboard this here brig, and you’ll be treated decent, but you go a makin’ any trouble for me, and by Blood! I’ll clap you in irons, I will, and I’ll lay ye down in the hold, and there ye’ll stay till we drop anchor in Yorktown. D’ye hear that?”

Jack nodded his head.

“Well, then, if ye hear me, why don’t ye answer me?”

“Yes, sir,” said Jack.

“Very well, then, you go and remember what I’ve said.”

Jack, so dismissed, went out of the round-house and into the wide, bright sunlight again. Nor was it until he had returned half way back across the slanting deck that anything like a full realization of his fate came upon him. Then suddenly it did seize upon him, gripping him almost like a physical pang. He stopped short and caught at the foremast stays under that sudden grip of despair, and bent leaning over the rail of the ship. Then, in an instant the sky and the ocean blurred together and were lost in the blinding flood, and hot tears went raining down his face in streams. He stood there for a long time facing the ocean and crying. No one knew what he was doing, and he was as much alone as though he stood all by himself in the midst of the empty universe, instead of aboard a brig with footsteps passing around him and the grumbling growl of men’s voices as they talked together sounding in his ears.

It had seemed to Jack at that time, when he stood there crying out into the face of the sea and the sky, as though life had no hope and no joy, and as though he never could be happy again. It was not so, however, and it never is so. We grow used to every sorrow and trouble that comes to us. Even by the next day he had begun to grow accustomed to the thought of his fate. He awoke to an immediate consciousness of it, and all day it stood there, a big, looming background to the passing events of his life, while he helped the other redemptioners wash down the decks, pattering about in the wet with his bare feet in the slushing slop of water; all the while he stood leaning over the rail, dumbly joying in the consciousness of the sweep and rush of wind and water – looking out astern of the vessel at the wake that spread away behind, over which hovered and dipped and skimmed the little black Mother Carey’s chickens. In all the things of his life it was thus present with him, but he did not again suffer a despair so poignant and so bitter as had struck him down that time he had stood there crying out toward the sky and the ocean with his back to the ship’s company. So it is that time so quickly wears away the sharp edges of trouble, until it grows so dull and blunted that it no longer hurts.

The crew had come somehow to know something of Jack's history. The first day he was out on deck after a spell of stormy weather into which the *Arundel* sailed, Tom Roberts, the carpenter, asked him if he had not an uncle as was a lord. "He's a baronet," said Jack, and Roberts said he knowed he was summat of the kind. The same day, as Jack was standing in line with the others waiting for his dinner to be served out to him, the carpenter passed close to him with a wink. "You come over along o' we," he said, "and you shall have a taste o' grog with your victuals," and Jack, after a hesitating moment, had, with a feeling of gratification and pleasure, followed him over to the forecastle scuttle, where a part of the crew sat eating in the sunshine that shone aslant under the foresail. After that he nearly always messed with the crew, and by the end of the voyage it had become a regularly established thing for him to do so.

Some of the crew had either lived in the Colonies, or had sailed from one to the other in coasting vessels, and Jack learned much about his future home from them. Roberts himself had lived for two years as ship-carpenter in Boston, in the province of Massachusetts, and one of the men, named Dred – Christian Dred – had lived for a while in North Carolina with Blackbeard, the famous pirate. He had been one of the pirate's men, and had sailed with the renowned freebooter in his famous ship, the *Queen Anne's Revenge*.

During the voyage Jack became better acquainted with Dred than with any one aboard the *Arundel*, and before they had reached Virginia the two had become very intimate. Dred was a silent, taciturn man, speaking but rarely to any one and saying what he had to say in as few words as possible. But he seemed pleased with Jack's friendship. He questioned Jack much as to his former life, and in return told a good deal about himself. He said he had left Blackbeard the year before and had surrendered upon the King's Proclamation of Pardon. He always carried his pardon about with him rolled up in oil-skin and hung about his neck by a bit of string, and he showed it to Jack one day, unrolling the oil-skin very carefully and gingerly, and then rolling it up again with just as particular care as he had opened it. He told Jack that after he had surrendered to the Pardon, Blackbeard and others of the pirates had also surrendered. He said that Blackbeard was now living on a farm down at Bath Town, in North Carolina, and had married a fine young "gell" of sixteen or thereabouts. He once told Jack that he had begun his "h – cruising," as he called it, when he had sailed from New York in a "Red Sea Trader" in '95, and that ever since then he had "smelled brimstone."

(The Red Sea Traders, it may be explained, were those who carried supplies of stores, chiefly of rum and gunpowder, to the pirates who then so infested the west coast of Africa, exchanging their commodities for plunder captured by those freebooters.)

Dred told Jack that he was only eighteen years old when he had sailed in the Red Sea trade. "Not much older than you be now," he added.

Once, when Dred was overhauling his gunny-bag, he brought out a string of a dozen or so jingling coins hung on a bit of silver wire. He held the trinket out at arm's length. "D'ye see this here string o' money?" said he; "I gave that to a Spanish gell once down in Port Royal, Jamaicy, and what's more, I took it off of her neck again arter she had died of yellow fever, and no one else'd go nigh her."

Jack grew to like Dred very heartily. He did not think of him as being a red-handed and wicked pirate. It did not seem to him that his new friend was, after all, very different from other men – excepting that he had had very wonderful adventures happen to him.

And yet Dred was indeed a red-handed pirate.

It was toward the latter part of the voyage that he told Jack the story of the taking of the English ship that Blackbeard afterward used as the flag-ship of his pirate fleet, and which became so famous under the name of the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Dred's was almost the most important part in that tragedy. He told the story almost naïvely, and did not at all seem to appreciate the significance of what he had done.

They – the pirates – had, he said, been cruising in the West Indies. Then they sailed northward until they came to Charleston. (Here he told incidentally how they had blockaded the town for over

a week, stopping and searching all incoming and outgoing vessels, and how they had even gone up boldly into the town in search of a chest of medicine.) After they had left Charleston, they had, he said, cruised away off shore with two sloops and a bark which they had taken. They “made no purchase,” as he phrased it, until one morning they sighted a sail, which proved to be an armed ship of some six or seven hundred tons burden, bound apparently for the Chesapeake Capes.

When they had come to within hailing distance of the vessel they ordered her to heave to. But she would not, and there was some exchange of shots before she would finally surrender. The ship had only one passenger aboard, a young Virginia gentleman, Mr. Edward Parker, who had been to college in England and who was now returning home, having finished his education. Dred said that the supercargo, on being threatened by Blackbeard, told the pirates that the young gentleman had in his charge a valuable chest of money and of goldsmiths’ bills of exchange. On hearing this Blackbeard and two or three of the pirates ran aft to the cabin, only to find that the young gentleman had locked himself in and refused to come out.

After some parleying the pirates tried to break in the door, but it was braced from within, and the young gentleman at once began firing at them through the panels. Two of the pirates were shot. “One on ‘em,” said Dred, “was Abraham Dolling, and he was shot that bad through the neck that we had to hale him off by the legs, and he died a little bit after just at the bottom of the poop ladder.”

His own part in the tragedy that followed Dred told somewhat thus:

“Seein’ as how we was makin’ nothing of it at all by the way we was doing, I climbs up on the poop-deck, thinking maybe to get a sight of my young gentleman through the sky-light. But no; he had blocked up the sky-light with mattresses from the captain’s berth. So then I went across the poop-deck to the stern falls. The boat had been shot away from the lee davit by our fire, and the lines hung loose from the falls over the stern. I lashed two on ‘em together and let myself down from the davits with one hand, holding my pistol with t’ other. I eased myself to one side until I was low enough, and then I peeped in at the stern window. There I could see my young gentleman off beyond in the captain’s cabin standing close by the door, and I can see him now as plain as I can see this here hand o’ mine. He had pulled a couple of sea chists to the door, and he had a plank from the captain’s berth set agin ‘em and propped agin the braces of the table. He was in his shirt sleeves, and he had a pistol in each hand. The captain o’ the ship was a’ talkin’ to him from t’ other side of the door, telling him he’d better gin up and surrender the money, and I could hear my young gentleman swearing by all that was holy that he would never gin up the money. He had his head turned to one side, and he didn’t see me, so I crawled in through the window. But I’d no more ‘n set foot on deck than all on a sudden he wheels around like a flash, and afore I knowed what he was at – Bang! – he fires his pistol fair for my head. I felt the wind of the ball and it smashed into a chiny closet just behind me. Then, seeing he had missed me, he ups with t’ other pistol and arter that ‘twas either him or me. So I let fly, and down he went all of a heap acrost the chist afore the door.”

“Was he dead?” asked Jack.

“I think he were,” said Dred. “Leastways he was dead afore we could get him out of the cabin.”

Dred told this story to Jack one afternoon as they were sitting together up under the lee-forecastle rail, and then he showed him the pardon in the oiskin bag hung around his neck.

In the intimacy between the two Jack talked much to Dred about his own prospects, and his new friend advised him to submit to his fate with patience. “Arter all,” he said, “five year be n’t so werry long – not nigh as long as death. And then you’ll see a deal o’ the world, and arter that you goes back home agin, an’ there ye be,” and the illogical words brought a good deal of comfort to Jack.

CHAPTER VIII

TO THE END OF THE VOYAGE

ON a long sea voyage you come to lose all sense of time. One day melts and blends into the other so that you can hardly tell them apart. They stretch along into weeks, and the weeks, perhaps, into months which can neither be called long nor short, but only just a monotonous reach of time.

The only thing that brings its change to the ceaseless monotony are the changes that happen in the weather. Twice they had a spell of heavy weather during the voyage; the first time, a few days after Jack had become well enough to be about on deck, Jack was very seasick, and so were nearly all of the transports.

It was quite a heavy storm, lasting for three or four days, and at one time Jack thought that the brig must really be in danger. As he lay prone in his bunk his heart quaked with every tumultuous lift of the vessel. Some of the crew were in the fore-castle beyond, and the deep sound of their talk and now and then a burst of laughter came to him where he lay. He did not see how they could be so indifferent to the loud and incessant creaking and groaning of the ship's timbers, alternated now and then with the noise of distant thumping and bumping, and always the gurgling rush of water, as though it were bursting through the straining timbers and streaming into the hold. It seemed to him sometimes as though the vessel must capsize, so tremendous was the mountainous lift and fall of the fabric, and so strenuous the straining of its timbers. Sometimes he would clutch tight hold of the box-like side of his bunk to save himself from being pitched out bodily upon the deck. The steerage became a horrible pit, where the transports rolled about stupefied with sickness, and when, by and by, he himself began to recover, it became impossible for him to bear it.

So the afternoon of the second day of the storm he crawled up to the decks above. The level stretch lay shining with sheets of drifting wet. Jack stood clinging dizzily to the shrouds looking about him. A number of the crew were strung out along the yard-arm high aloft, reefing the fore-topsail, clinging with feet and hands to the lines and apparently indifferent to the vast rush of the wet wind and the gigantic sweep of the uncertain foothold to which they clung. The hubbub of roaring wind and thundering waters almost stunned Jack as he stood clinging there. The voice of Dyce shouting his orders through a trumpet from the quarter-deck seemed to be upborne like a straw on that vast and tremendous sweep of uproar. One of the crew came running along the wet and slippery deck in his bare feet, cursing and swearing at Jack and waving to him to go below. The next moment, and before Jack could move to obey, the vessel plunged down into a wave, with a thunder-clap of sound and a cataract of salt water that nearly swept him off his feet and wet him to the skin.

Perhaps of all the actual events of the voyage, this episode and the two or three minutes' spectacle of the storm lingered most vividly of all in Jack's memory.

It was at this time that he first began to get better acquainted with the crew. When, at the bidding of the sailor, he went down below, wet and dripping, he could not bear to go back into the steerage, and the crew let him lie out in the fore-castle. They laughed at him and his plight, but they did not drive him back into the steerage.

Then there were many other days of bright sunlight and of smooth breezy sailing; and still other times of windy, starry nights, when the watch would sit smoking up under the lee sail, and Jack would sit or maybe lie stretched at length listening to them as they spun their yarns – yarns, which, if the truth must be told, were not always fit for the ears of a boy like Jack.

So the days came and went without any distinct definition of time, as they always do in a long voyage such as this, and then, one soft warm afternoon, Jack saw that there were sea-gulls hovering and circling around the wake of the brig. One of the crew told him that they had come within soundings

again, and when he looked over the side of the vessel he saw that the clear, tranquil green of the profounder depths of the ocean had changed to the cloudy, opalescent gray of shoaler waters.

Then it was the next morning and Jack felt some one shaking him awake. "What is it?" said he, opening his eyes heavily and looking up into the lean face of Sim Tucker that was bent over him.

The little man was all in a quiver of excitement. "'Tis land!" he cried in a shrill, exultant voice – "'tis land! We're in sight of land! Don't you want to get up and see it? You can see it from the deck." His voice piped shriller and shriller with the straining of his excitement.

Jack was out of his berth in an instant; and, almost before he knew it, up on deck, barefoot, in the cool brightness of the early day.

The deck was wet and chill with the dew of the early morning. The sun had not yet risen, but the day was bright, and as clear as crystal. The land lay stretched out sharp and clear-cut in the early morning light – a pure white, thread-like strip of sandy beach, a level strip of green marsh, and, in the far distance, a dark, ragged line of woodland standing against the horizon.

Jack had seen nothing but the water for so long, and his eyes had become so used to the measureless stretch of ocean all around him, that the land looked very near, although it must have been quite a league away. He stood gazing and gazing at it. The New World! The wonderful new world of which he had heard so much! And now he was really looking at it with his very living eyes. Virginia! That, then, was the New World. He stood gazing and gazing. In the long line of the horizon there was an open space free of trees. He wondered whether that was a tobacco-plantation. There was a single tree standing by itself – a straight, thin trunk, and a spread of foliage at the top. He wondered if it was a palm-tree. He did not then know that there were no palm-trees in Virginia, and that single, solitary tree seemed to him to be very wonderful in its suggestion of a strange and foreign country.

Then, as he stood gazing, a sudden recollection of the fate that now, in a little while, awaited him in this new world – of his five years of coming servitude. The recollection of this came upon him, gripping him with an almost poignant pang; and he bent suddenly over, clutching the rail tightly with both hands. How would it be with him then? What was in store for him in this new world upon which he was looking? Was it hope or despair, happiness or misery?

Captain Butts and Mr. Dyce were standing on the poop-deck, the Captain with a glass held to his eye looking out at the land. By and by he lowered the glass, and said something to the mate. Then he handed the glass to the other, who also took a long, steady look at the distant thread of shore.

Some of the crew were standing in a little group forward. Among the others was Dred, the red bandana handkerchief around his head blazing like a flame in the crystal brightness of the morning. As Jack, still possessed by that poignant remembrance of his coming fate, went up to where they stood, Dred turned and looked at him, almost smiling. The light of the rising sun glinted in his narrow black eyes, and cut in a sharp seam the crooked, jagged scar that ran down his cheek. He nodded at Jack ever so slightly; but he did not say anything, and then he turned and looked out again toward the land. Just then the mate shouted an order, and then the group of sailors broke asunder, some of them running across the deck in their bare feet, throwing loose the ropes from the belaying-pins, others scrambling up the ratlines higher and higher, until they looked like little blots in the mazy rigging against the blue, shining sky overhead.

It was after sunset when the brig, half sailing, half drifting, floated with the insweep of the tide up into the York River. Jack stood with the other redemption servants gazing silently and intently at the high bluff shores. Above the crest of the bluff they could see the roofs and brick chimneys of the little town. A half-dozen vessels of various sorts were riding at anchor in the harbor, looming darkly against the bright face of the water, just ruffled by the light breeze. The line of a long, straggling wharf reached some distance out across the water to a frame shed at the end. Along the shore toward the bluff were two or three small frame-houses and a couple of big brick buildings. Somebody had told Jack that they were the tobacco warehouses, and they appeared very wonderful to him. A boat was pulling off from the wharf – it was the custom officer's boat. Other boats were following it,

and a sail-boat came fluttering out from the shore into the bright stretch of water. Suddenly there was a thunderous splash. It was the anchor dropped. There was a quick rattling of the cable and a creaking as it drew taut. Then the *Arundel* swung slowly around with the sweep of the tide, and the voyage was ended.

A minute later the boat with the custom officer came alongside. Captain Butts met him at the gangway and took him into the cabin. In a little while boats, canoes, and dug-outs came clustering about the *Arundel*. They all seemed strange and foreign to Jack. Nearly everybody wanted to come aboard, but the mate, who stood at the gangway, allowed only a few to come up on deck. These he directed to the cabin, whither Captain Butts had taken the custom officer. The others remained in their boats below, looking up at the redemption servants who stood crowded at the rail, staring down at them. A ceaseless volley of questions and answers was called back and forth from those below to those above. "Where d'ye come from?" "Gravesend and Southampton." "What craft is this?" "The *Arundel* of Bristol." "Comes from Gravesend, d'ye say?" "Be there any man aboard that comes from Southwark?" "Hey, Johnnie Stivins, here be a man asks of Southwark." "Hi, there! what are ye doin', d'ye want to stave us in?" – a babel of a dozen voices at a time.

Jack stood looking down through the now falling twilight to the figures below, dim and shadowless in the pallid light. Just beneath where he stood was a dug-out that had come off from the shore among the first. It was rowed by a negro naked to the waist. A white man sat in the stern. He appeared to have a kind of hat of woven grasses upon his head. He wore loose cotton trousers and was smoking a leaf of tobacco rolled into a cigarro, the lighted tip of which alternately glowed and faded in the dimming light. How strange and wonderful it all was!

Just then Captain Butts came out of the cabin with the custom officer. He did not then pay any attention to the group of redemptioners gathered at the rail. He stood looking at the custom officer as he climbed down into the boat. Then he turned sharply around. "Here, Dyce!" he roared to the mate, "send those men down into the steerage. We'll have half on 'em running away in the dark next we knows on."

The transports grumbled and growled among themselves as they were driven below. One or two of them were disposed to joke, but the others swore as they climbed stumblingly down the forecastle ladder.

The day had been warm, and the steerage was close and hot; a lantern hung from the deck above, and in the dim, dusky light the men stood crowded together. Presently one of them began singing a snatch of a scurrilous song. Other voices joined in the refrain, and gradually the muttering and grumbling began to change into a noisy and rebellious turbulence. The singing grew louder and louder, breaking now and then into a shout or yell.

Jack had crept into his berth. It was close and stuffy and it smelt heavy and musty after the fresh air above. He felt very dull and numb, and the noises and tumult in the close confines of the steerage stunned and deafened him.

Suddenly Captain Butts's voice sounded from the open scuttle of the forecastle companion way. "What d' ye mean below there?" he roared; "are ye all gone drunk or crazy? Stop that there noise or I'll put a stopper on ye that'll be little enough to your liking! D' ye hear?"

A moment's lull followed his voice; then one of the men gave a shrill cat-call. It was, as a signal, instantly followed by a burst of yells and whistles and jeers. Jack expected to see Captain Butts down among them bodily, but he did not come, and for a while the transports whistled and yelled and shouted unchecked. Presently there was the noise of some one coming down into the forecastle beyond. It was Joe Barkley – one of the sailors. He came into the steerage, and at his coming an expectant lull fell upon the tumult. He carried a cocked and loaded pistol in his hand. His face was stolid and expressionless, and he looked neither to the right nor to the left. "What be ye going to do, Joe," called out one of the redemptioners. He did not answer; he went straight up to the lantern, opened it, blew out the light, closed it again, and then turned away without saying a word. He went

into the forecastle and blew out the lantern there, and then everything was instantly engulfed in an impenetrable and pitchy darkness. A burst of derisive yells followed Joe as he climbed clattering up the forecastle ladder again, but he paid no attention to the jibes and jeers, and the next moment Jack heard the rattling of the slide of the scuttle as it was closed, and then the snapping of the lock. For a while after the lights were put out the uproar was louder than ever. The men thumped and banged and kicked. But in time the pitchy darkness quelled their spirits in spite of themselves, and little by little the turmoil ceased. It broke out intermittently, it quieted again, and then at last it subsided into a muffled grumbling.

Jack lay in his berth staring into the darkness; his ears seemed to hum and tingle with the black stillness that surrounded him. He felt intensely wide awake as though he could never sleep again. Teeming thoughts passed vividly through his brain. Visions of all he had seen during the day – the sandy shore, the distant strip of pine woods, the restless, crawling waters between – he could almost see the water. But gradually thoughts and visions intermingled, and almost before he knew it he had drifted off into the ocean of sleep.

CHAPTER IX IN VIRGINIA

SINCE the capital of Virginia had been removed from Jamestown to Williamsburg, and since the Governor's palace and the Government House had been established there, it had become the center of fashion in the colony. Just now the Court was in session, and the Council sitting, and Governor Spottiswood was holding court every Thursday.

The day was rather close and warm, but there was an unusually large representation of the provincial aristocracy present. It was still not late in the afternoon, but there had already been a good many arrivals, and the gabbling sound of talking filled the assembly room. The Governor, where he stood at the end of the room, was the center of a group of gentlemen who were clustered about him and in his immediate vicinity. It was almost difficult for one to get past them to pay respect to his Excellency. A group, perhaps, would move a little aside to make way for newly arriving ladies and gentlemen, but such as were now coming in could only get to the Governor with a sense of discomfort and of being crowded. In parts of the room more distant from the Governor the talk was, perhaps, more of social matters, but near his Excellency the knots of men discussed things relating to colonial affairs.

Just then the talk was about a renewed trouble with pirates, who had begun again to infest the mouth of the bay and the North Carolina sounds.

It was just about this time that Blackbeard had broken his pardon and was again stopping vessels sailing between Virginia and the Carolinas.

The *Pearl* and the *Lyme*, ships of war, were then lying at Jamestown, and some of the officers had come over to pay their respects at the palace. Some of them were standing near listening to Councillor Page, who was just then speaking of the latest depredations of Blackbeard. "He was lying down at Ocracock," said Mr. Page. "I had a sloop coming from the Tar River with some shingle thatch for my new warehouse. Well, the villains stopped her and came aboard of her. They overhauled her cargo, and I do believe if they'd known 't was for me they would have thrown it all overboard. But Williams said naught about that, and so they did not know whose 't was. There was nothing on board to serve the villains' turn, and they might just as well have let the sloop go; but no, there that wretch, Blackbeard, held her for nearly two days, so that she might not give the alarm of his being there to any incoming vessels. Williams – he was the captain of my sloop – Williams said that while he was lying there under the pirates' guns, he himself saw Blackbeard stop and levy upon some nine vessels of different sorts, rummaging all over their cargoes. He said it was chiefly rum and cloth the villain was after. Williams said that 't was reported the villains held every boat that came through the inlet, and would neither let them go in nor come out, but made 'em all lie at anchor under his guns. He hath two armed sloops now and a crew altogether of some forty or sixty men, and twice or thrice as many more to call upon if he chooses."

Lieutenant Maynard, of the *Lyme*, was standing by, listening to the talk.

"Why, zounds!" said he, "Why then do you people here in the provinces put up with such a rascal as this Teach or Blackbeard or what-ye-call-him? I'd blow him out of the water, were I in his Excellency's place. Aye, I would fit out an expedition and send it down there and blow the villain clean out of the water and have done with him."

"What was that?" said the Governor, turning around smiling toward the speaker. "Tut, tut! Lieutenant, that shows how little you men of war know about civil affairs. How could I, as Governor of Virginia, fit out an expedition and send it down into North Carolina. Ocracock is under Governor Eden's jurisdiction, not under mine, and 'tis his place to move against pirates in the waters of his own province. They're inland waters, and under the jurisdiction of North Carolina."

“Well, your Excellency,” said Lieutenant Maynard, “to be sure I know naught about the law, and only about fighting. But if a villain stood at my neighbor’s door and stopped my own people from coming out and going in upon my business, and robbed them, By Zounds! your Excellency, I would have it out with him, even if I had to chase him into my neighbor’s house to do it.” The Governor laughed, and the little group around him joined in the laughter. Then his Excellency turned again to meet some new-comers who made their way toward him through the circle surrounding him.

“I do declare,” said Mr. Dillworth, “methinks Governor Eden of North Carolina is as bad as ever was Fletcher of New York at his worst times. ‘Twas through this Blackbeard that poor Ned Parker was murdered – the first young gentleman of Virginia. ’Tis currently known everywhere – and yet Eden grants the villain the King’s pardon as soon as he asks for it. ’Tis said his Excellency – Eden, I mean – has more than once had his share of the booty that the pirates have taken. Why, would you believe it, the villain pirate was only last year up here at Norfolk, coming and going as he pleased, carrying his Majesty’s pardon in his pocket and flaunting it in the eyes of everybody. Well, if ever we catch him, now he hath broken his pardon, ‘t will be a short enough shrift he’ll get of it, I’ll promise him.”

“How is Colonel Parker now?” asked Mr. Page.

“He’s about well now,” said Mr. Cartwright, a cousin of Colonel Parker’s. “I was at Marlborough last week, and his gout seems to have fairly left him.”

“Methinks he hath never been the same man since poor Master Ned was murdered,” said Mr. Dillworth. “I never saw anybody so broken by trouble as he was at that time.”

“His daughter, Miss Nelly, is a great beauty, I hear,” said Lieutenant Maynard.

“The girl is well enough,” said Mr. Cartwright briefly.

A group of some half dozen ladies and two gentlemen were gathered at one of the open windows, into which the warm air blew widely. One of the gentlemen was Mr. Harry Oliver, a young man about eighteen years old. He wore his own hair curled and hanging to his shoulders, and he put it back with his hand every now and then as he talked. He showed his white teeth when he smiled, and his large, dark eyes moved restlessly hither and thither.

“Yonder comes Dick Parker,” said he suddenly.

“Why, so it is,” said Miss Peggy Oliver. They all looked toward the new comer. “Upon my word,” she continued, “he is a man I can’t abide for the life of me. As proud, haughty a man as ever I saw. He turns me to a block of ice whenever I am near him, and I can’t find a word to say for myself.”

“Why, Peggy,” said Oliver, “that, then, must be why you can’t abide him,” and thereupon the group broke into a laugh.

Mr. Richard Parker, who had just come into the room, was standing quietly waiting to speak to the Governor. He did not try to push his way through the circle that surrounded his Excellency, and for a while nobody saw him. His handsome, florid face, surrounded by a fine powdered wig, looked calmly and steadily in the direction of the Governor. He stood quite impassive, waiting an opportunity to go forward when he would not have to push his way through the crowd. Presently some one saw him and spoke to the others, and they made way for him almost as with deference. He went forward calmly and paid his respects in a few brief words. He spoke with the Governor for a little while, or rather the Governor spoke to him, and he replied. All the time the Governor was speaking, Mr. Parker was looking steadily and composedly around the room, glancing back toward his interlocutor every now and then to reply. Presently there was a pause, and then at last Mr. Richard Parker bowed and withdrew to a little distance.

“Why, only look at him now,” said Peggy Oliver, “even his Excellency is not good enough for him.”

“Well, to be sure, Peggy,” said one of the elder ladies, “if Mr. Parker is proud, he hath enough to make him proud when you think what a great man of fashion he hath been in his day. ‘T is not every man who hath had the luck to be a friend of the Duke of Marlborough. ‘T is a wonder to me

that he should ever have come here to the provinces, seeing what a great man of fashion he was at home in England.”

The two gentlemen burst out laughing. “Why,” said Will Costigan, “for that matter, ‘t was Hobson’s choice betwixt Virginia or the debtor’s prison, madam.”

“They say old Dunmore Parker when he was alive used to send a fortune every year to England for him to spend,” said one of the ladies. “Tom told me t’ other day that he one time played a game of piquet for four days on end. ‘T was with a Frenchman; a nobleman – I forget his name – who was a prisoner at Malplaquet. Indeed it must have been mightily hard upon him after his father died to find that all the estate, except the Dunmore Plantation, was left to his brother.”

Just then Mr. Parker approached the group and the talk ceased. He nodded to Oliver and then passed by and stood at a little distance looking about him. Presently Harry Oliver edged over toward him. “How d’ ye do, Parker,” said he.

Mr. Parker turned his eyes toward the young man with an answering “How d’ ye do, Oliver.”

There was a moment’s pause. “That’s a prodigious handsome piece of lace you’ve got there, Parker,” said the young man, looking at Mr. Parker’s cravat.

“‘T is good enough,” said Mr. Parker briefly.

“Is it Flemish?”

“Yes, sir.”

“We don’t come across any such lace as that here in Virginia,” said the young man.

“Don’t you?”

Oliver stood for a while in silence. Almost unconsciously he assumed somewhat of the older man’s manner, standing with his hands behind him and looking indifferently around the room. “Tell me, Parker,” said he, “do you go down to Parrot’s to-morrow?”

Again Mr. Parker looked slowly toward him. “To Parrot’s?” said he. “What d’ ye mean?”

“Why, have you not heard?” exclaimed the young man eagerly, glad to have found something that promised to interest the other. “Why, to-morrow there’s to be fought seven as fine mains as ever were pitted in Virginia. There are to be six mains fought between the Gentlemen of Surry and the Gentlemen of Prince George’s. Will Costigan yonder hath brought his red cock over from t’ other side of the Bay. The bird hath been all the talk for six months past. He offers to pit it against the winner of all the mains. I heard say, too, that Ned Williamson purposes to bring down a three-year horse that he hath broke, and will run it in the afternoon, perhaps, against Tom Lawson’s Duke of Norfolk.”

Mr. Parker listened impassively. “I had not heard anything about it,” said he; “I only came down yesterday. What time do you go down to Parrot’s?” he asked presently.

“To-morrow morning. I’m going to stay at my uncle Tom’s over night. Will you go along?”

“Why,” said Mr. Parker, “I hadn’t thought of it before. Maybe I will go.”

“I start in the morning,” said Oliver, eagerly; “I’ll come over for you if you’ll go.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Parker, “you can come over, and if I find I can, I’ll go with you. Is not that Mistress Denham and her daughter coming into the room?”

Then Mr. Parker moved away across the room to speak to the two Maryland ladies.

It was early twilight of the next evening when Mr. Richard Parker and Harry Oliver rode up to Parrot’s house. The house itself was the largest of a cluster of unpainted frame buildings that stood just beyond a clearing, overlooking the bay from a low, sandy bluff. A number of outbuildings and sheds surrounded it to the rear. Three pine trees stood not far from the low porch that sheltered the doorway, and a dozen or more horses stood clustered around the shaggy resinous trunks. Near by them lounged a group of men, black and white, talking together with now and then the break of a laugh. They fell silent, and some of them took off their hats as Mr. Parker and Mr. Oliver rode up to the door and alighted. Mr. Oliver nodded in reply, but Mr. Parker paid no attention to any one. “Where is Parrot?” asked the younger man.

"He's inside, Mr. Oliver," answered one of the group. "They were at cards awhile ago, sir, and I reckon they be at it yet."

The two gentlemen went directly into the house. Tom Parrot's wife met them in the hallway, where was a scattered heap of hats and riding coats. From the room to one side came the deep sound of men talking, and then a sudden outburst of voices. "I be mortal proud to see ye, gentlemen," said Mrs. Parrot, dropping them a courtesy. "Indeed, Mr. Parker, you do honor us in coming. You'll find Tom and the gentlemen in yonder."

"You go ahead, Oliver," said Mr. Parker.

Another loud burst of voices greeted the two as they entered the room, so dense with tobacco smoke that at first they could see nothing at all. The room was full of the smell of rum. A great bowl of punch stood on the side-table, and there was a continual tinkle and jingle of glasses. Tom Parrot pushed back his chair noisily and rose to meet the new comers. He was a little stout man with a red face. It was redder than ever now, and bedewed with drops of sweat. He had laid aside his wig, and his bald head glistened with moisture. He wore no coat, his waistcoat was opened, and his breeches loosened at the waistband. He wiped his face and head with his shirt sleeve as he spoke. "Why, Mr. Parker," said he, "who'd a-thought to see you! You be mighty welcome, Mr. Parker. Won't you take a hand at the game, sir? Tim (to the negro), push up that there chair for Mr. Parker. Fetch a clean glass and fill it with punch. You know all the gentlemen here, don't you, Mr. Parker?" And then he stopped abruptly as though struck by a sudden thought.

Mr. Richard Parker looked briefly around the table. He did know, at least by sight, all who were there but one. That one was a stranger to him; a tall man with a long, thick, perfectly black beard tied into a knot with a piece of string. His thick, black hair was parted in the middle and brushed smoothly down upon either side of his head, and was trimmed squarely all around his neck. The locks at his temple were plaited into long strings, that hung down in front of his ears, in which twinkled a pair of gold ear-rings. His face was tanned by exposure to a leathery russet, but deepened to a bricky red in his cheeks. At the name of Parker the stranger had looked up sharply for an instant, and then had looked down again at the cards he was in the act of shuffling. A sudden hush as of expectancy had fallen upon the room. Everybody was looking attentively at Mr. Parker and at the stranger.

"Who is your friend yonder, Parrot?" asked Mr. Parker, "I don't know him."

"Him?" said Parrot, "why, he's no more a friend of mine than he is a friend of all the rest of us, Mr. Parker."

Seeing the other's hesitation, the stranger spoke up boldly and loudly. "My name is Teach," said he, "Captain Teach, and I hail from North Carolina. It's like enough you've heard of me before, as I've heard of you, sir. Well, then, I'm glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Parker." He reached a brown, hairy hand across the table toward Mr. Richard Parker, looking up at him as he did so with the most impudent coolness and steadiness. Mr. Richard Parker made no sign of having recognized the stranger's name. He and the pirate seemed to be the only self-possessed men in the room. He calmly ignored the proffered hand, but said in a perfectly equal voice: "Why, then, I am obliged to you for telling me who you are," and then coolly and composedly took his seat. "What game do you play, Parrot?" said he.

"Why, Mr. Parker," said Parrot eagerly, "'tis lanterloo, and Captain Teach is holding the bank just now. Will you take a hand, sir?"

By midnight the bowl of punch had been emptied and filled, and emptied again, and at times the uproar was stunning. Mr. Richard Parker had laid aside his coat and unbuttoned his waistcoat. His shirt was opened at his handsome, round throat, and the sweat trickled down his smooth red neck. "Harkee now, Captain Teach," he called across the table in a loud, rather hoarse, voice, "I know very well who you are, you bloody villain! You're a bloody pirate, d' ye hear?"

The other glowered with tipsy truculence back at him for a moment or two in silence. "You can't prove me pirate, Mr. Dick Parker," said he at last, "and no man can prove me pirate now. Maybe I am a pirate and maybe I'm none, but how can you prove I'm a pirate?"

Mr. Parker's flaming face did not change a shade in the heavy haughtiness of its expression. "A pirate you are," said he, "and what's more, you're at your tricks again. I've heard all about you, and I know all about you, d'ye see? Well, you've been losing at your cards all night, Mr. Pirate. You may do well enough in your villainy afloat, stabbing poor coasting captains and murdering young gentlemen of blood like my nephew Ned, but what a poor figure do you make ashore when you try your luck with the gentlemen at play. See what I've won of you! Look 'ee now, sirrah, I'll play you a game of hazard man to man, and clear you out o' all you have left if you dare to play me."

"Dare! Why should I not dare to play you, Dick Parker! D'ye think I'm afeard of you? I'll play you as long as ye can see. Why not?"

Harry Oliver pushed back his chair and rose. He came rather unsteadily to where Mr. Parker sat. "Don't do it, Dick," said he, thickly. "Don't you play that man. He's a bloody villain, Dick, and 'tisin't fit you should play him. D'ye forget what everybody knows, and that he had a hand in Ned's death?"

"Sit down, Oliver!" the other replied, wiping his face with his sleeve. "Here, Parrot, clear the table of these cards and hand the dice over here. There's your cup, you villain!" and he tossed the box across the table. "And now set your stakes and throw your cast."

Everybody gathered around the two to watch the game, and for a while nothing was heard but the rattle and fall of the dice. At first the luck ran all in Mr. Parker's favor, and Teach's face grew blacker and blacker. Then suddenly fortune changed, and in a little while the winner had lost everything he had gained. Again and again he threw, and again and again he lost. He played more and more desperately, and his opponent grinned at every cast.

"Don't play any more, Parker!" cried Harry Oliver. "Your luck's against you, and you've lost too much already." But the other only pushed him aside with his elbow, and gathered up the dice with trembling fingers. At last he dashed down the dice and box furiously, and thereupon Captain Teach burst out laughing. "And have ye had enough?" he exulted hoarsely.

Mr. Parker stared haughtily at him without deigning any reply. "Did you order out the horses, Oliver?" he said, pushing back his chair and rising.

"Yes, I did. They're waiting outside now, and have been this hour."

"Then, come along, let us go; 'tis nearly morning now."

The moon, nearing its last quarter, hung in the east like a flattened globe of white light. The air was chill and smelt rank of marsh and woodland. The mocking birds were singing in ceaseless medley from the inky-black thickets beyond. Blackbeard followed the two gentlemen as they came out of the house. "And when may I look for you to settle your losses, Mr. Parker?" said he.

"I'll talk with you to-morrow," said Mr. Parker, as he set his foot in the stirrup.

"But you'll give me some written obligation of some sort, won't you?"

"I tell you, sirrah, I'll talk with you to-morrow. Do you hear me? To-morrow." And then the two gentlemen rode away into the night, leaving the other standing looking after them.

CHAPTER X INTO BONDAGE

IT was the morning after the arrival at Yorktown. Jack was awake and up on deck bright and early. The sun had just risen upon a clear and cloudless day, and the brisk, fresh wind drove the crisp waves splashing against the brig as she rode at anchor. The foliage of the trees on shore whitened to the breeze, and the smoke blew sharply away here and there from some tall brick chimney. The town looked fresh and strangely new in the brightness of the morning. Three of the vessels that had lain in the harbor over night were getting under way. The yo-hoeing of the sailors, and the creaking and rattling of block and tackle, as the sails rose higher and higher apeak, sounded sharp and clear across the water. One large schooner, heeling over before the wind, slid swiftly and silently past the *Arundel*. Three or four sailors, clustered along the rail, were looking over toward the *Arundel* as they passed the brig, but the man at the helm – he wore a red woolen monteray cap – gazed out steadily ahead, stooping a little so as to see under the boom of the mainsail.

Several of the redemptioners had come up on deck; one or two of them, doubtless remembering the tumult and disorder of the night before, wore a hang-dog doubtful look. Suddenly Jack saw the mate coming toward them from aft. “What are ye doing up here on deck!” he called out. “Weren’t you ordered below last night? Very well then, you go down below now, and don’t ye come up till you’re sent for; d’ye hear?” The men, though sullen and lowering, had no thought of disobeying the mate’s orders, and Jack, with the others, climbed down the ladder into the forecabin again.

It was well toward the middle of the day, and Jack was lounging in his berth, when Dred suddenly appeared in the steerage. He stood looking silently around for a moment or two, and then, seeing Jack, beckoned to him. Dred did not speak until they were out in the forecabin. “The agent’s come from shore to take you all off, lad,” said he; “he’s with Captain Butts in the cabin now, and in a minute or two you’ll be sent for.”

“To take us ashore?” said Jack. A sudden, keen pang gripped his heart, followed instantly by an utter falling away of the spirits, that left him almost physically weak. “To take us ashore?” Had the time then come at last?

“Aye,” said Dred, “ye’ve got to go ashore now, lad. But sit you down there a bit,” and he pointed to a sea-chest. “I’ve a notion to try and tidy ye up a bit. I don’t choose to have ye looking like they riff-raff,” and he jerked his head toward the steerage. “D’ye see, we two ha’ been mates, ha’n’t we?” He had taken out his gunny-bag, and he now brought out of it his needle and thread. He looked up at Jack from under his brows and then looked away again. Jack did not return the look but sat with dry and choking throat, his breath coming hot and heavy from him. “Well, then,” said Dred, “seeing as we’re messmates, I won’t have ye going ashore looking like nothing but trash. Give me your coat and waistcoat.” He had threaded his needle and waxed the thread deftly. Jack stripped off his coat and waistcoat, and without a word Dred began mending the frayed and tattered edges of the waistcoat. Jack sat silently in his shirt-sleeves watching him. He knew that Dred was talking for the sake of talking. He felt almost stifled with his hot and labored breathing as he sat watching the other’s busy fingers.

“There, that looks betterish,” said Dred, holding the waistcoat off and looking at it, still carefully avoiding Jack’s eyes as he did so. “Here, take it,” and he tossed it to Jack. “And now for the coat. I be a wonderful man at mending clothes, ben’t I? Lord! what a hole is here, to be sure.” There was a long time of silence, Dred busily sewing away at the coat. “There,” said he at last, “what d’ ye think of that for a bit of mending? Well, well, lad, the time comes to all on us to part some time, so what matters it soon or late? Harkee, Jack; don’t you go making trouble for yourself. You be a good boy, and you’ll be treated well enough, I dare say. You’re mightily young yet, and five or six year won’t

matter so much to you, and then think o' what a deal you'll see in that time." He was talking very briskly, meantime putting away the needle and thread neatly.

Five years! Jack stood watching Dred fumbling in his gunny-bag. Presently he fetched out a pair of yarn stockings. "Here, put these on," said he, "the ones you got be all full of holes. Give 'em to me."

Jack did not dare to trust himself to speak. He began dumbly changing his stockings, Dred standing over him.

Suddenly the boatswain appeared at the companion-way of the forecastle, and piped all hands up on deck. Jack and Dred went up together. Captain Butts and the agent were standing waiting for the men, the agent holding a little packet of papers in his hand. Jack, in a glance, saw that the agent was a tall, lean man dressed in rusty black, wearing a long, black coat, and with the flaps of his hat tied up with leather thongs. His lips moved as he counted the redemptioners, one by one, as they came up out of the companion-way and were formed in a line before him by the boatswain. A great, flat boat, rowed by four negroes and with a white man in the stern, had been made fast to the side of the brig. "Nineteen, twenty – that's all of 'em, Captain," – the agent had counted Jack in with the others, – "and very lucky you've been with 'em. Now, Bo's'n, get 'em down as soon as you can."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the boatswain; and then to the men, "Now then, look alive, my hearties, and don't take all day about it!"

Then, suddenly, Jack went straight up to where the agent stood. "Sir," said he, hoarsely, "I have been ill-used. I was knocked down and kidnapped, and brought away from home against my will. Will you not listen to me and hear what I have to say?"

"Hold your noise!" roared the captain.

"No, I won't, neither," said Jack. He did not expect much, indeed he felt that he had no hope of escape, but still the effort was worth making. He stood chokingly looking at the agent, and he felt that his heart was beating very heavily within him.

"I don't know anything about what you say," said the agent. "The bill calls for twenty men shipped from Southampton, and your name must be among them. What's your name?"

"Jack Ballister."

"Yes, here 'tis – John Ballister – shipped for five years. If there is something wrong, you'll have to hold Captain Butts and Mr. Hezekiah Tipton to answer. I'm only an agent, and 'tis none of my business."

"I wish I had ye for a couple of days longer," said Captain Butts, "I'd answer ye, I would. I'd put my answer upon your back, I would, afore I let ye go."

"But Master Hezekiah Tipton is my own uncle," said Jack.

"I don't know anything about that," said the agent, "'Tis none of my business."

Jack did not say another word. He crossed the deck, hardly knowing what he was doing, and climbed down into the boat, where the other transports were already seating themselves. A moment or two, and the agent followed, and then immediately the boat was cast loose. As it pulled away toward the shore, Jack gave one look back across the widening stretch of water. It was almost like a dream; it seemed to him as though that which was passing was not really happening to him. Dred's red handkerchief gleamed like a flame against the blue sky as he stood on the rail looking after the departing boat. Then Jack turned his face quickly away. He could not trust himself to look again, lest he should break down before all the boat-full of men.

A little scattered cluster of men stood upon the wharf waiting for the flat boat as it drew nearer and nearer, and when it struck the piling with a bump half a dozen willing hands caught the line that was thrown them and made it fast. Jack scrambled with the others to the wharf under the curious gaze of those who stood looking on. They were formed into a line, two by two, and then marched down the wharf toward the shore. The loungers followed them scatteringly. Beyond the wharf they crossed a narrow strip of beach, and climbed a sloping, sandy road cut through the high bluff. At the crest they came out upon a broad, grassy street, upon which fronted the straggling houses, one

or two built of brick, but most of them unpainted frame-structures, with tall, sharp-pointed roofs and outside chimneys of brick. A curious smoky smell pervaded the air. People stood at their doors looking at Jack and his companions as they marched two by two down the center of the dusty street.

So at last they reached and were halted in front of a large brick warehouse. Then the agent opened the door, and they entered. Within it was perfectly empty, and smelt damp and earthy from disuse. The board floor was sunken unevenly, and the plaster was broken from the walls here and there in great patches. The two windows, which looked upon the rear of the adjoining houses, were barred across with iron. Jack heard his companions talking together. "Well, Jack," said Sim Tucker, "here we be at last."

Jack sometimes wondered whether the two days that followed passed very quickly or very slowly. Food was sent over three times a day to the warehouse by the agent, and twice a day all hands were allowed to walk about for a few minutes in a little yard back of the building. It seemed to him that he slept nearly all the rest of the time, except now and then when he stood on an empty box looking out of one of the windows. The windows overlooked a yard and a shed, beyond the roof of which was a cluster of trees, and beyond that again two tall chimneys. Nearly always there were pigeons on the roof of the shed. Now and then there was the noise of their clapping flight, but the gurgling coo of the strutting males sounded almost continuously through the warm silence.

About eleven o'clock of the third day, they were brought out of the storehouse, formed into line in front of the building, and then marched away in the hot sun down the street about a hundred yards to the custom-house. Jack saw a lounging, scattered crowd of men there gathered in a little group, and he guessed that that was where they were to be sold.

The agent and the auctioneer stood by a horse-block talking together in low tones as the man who had marched Jack and the others down from the warehouse formed them in line against the wall of the building. The agent held a slip of paper in his hand, which he referred to every now and then. At last the auctioneer mounted upon the horse-block.

"Gentlemen," Jack heard him say, "I have now to offer as fine a lot of servants as hath ever been brought to Virginia. There be only twenty, gentlemen, but every one choice and desirable. Which is the first one you have upon your list, Mr. Quillen?" said he, turning to the agent.

The agent referred to a slip of paper he held in his hand. "Sam Dawson," he called out in a loud voice. "Step out, Sam Dawson!" and in answer to the summons a big, lumbering man, with a heavy brow and dull face, stepped out from the line and stood beside the horse-block.

"This is Sam Dawson, gentlemen," said the auctioneer, addressing the crowd. "He hath no trade, but he is a first-rate, healthy fellow and well fitted for the tobacco fields. He is to be sold for five years."

"They're all to be sold for five years," said the agent.

"You have heard, gentlemen," said the auctioneer – "they're all to be sold for five years. This is a fine big fellow. How much have I bid for him? How much? Ten pounds is bid for his time – ten pounds is bid, gentlemen! I have ten pounds. Now I have twelve pounds! Now I have fifteen pounds!"

In a minute the price had run up to twenty pounds, and then a voice said quietly: "I will give you twenty-five pounds for the man."

"Mr. Simms bids twenty-five pounds for the man's time in behalf of Colonel Birchall Parker," said the salesman. "Have I any more bids for him?" But Mr. Simms's bid seemed to close the sale, for no one appeared to care to bid against him.

Jack had been so dazed and bewildered by coming out from the dark and chill warehouse into the sunlight and life, that he had scarcely noticed anything very particularly. Now he looked up at the man who had bought Sam Dawson's time, and saw that he was a stout, red-faced, plain-looking man, dressed very handsomely in snuff-colored clothes. As Jack wondered who he was, another man was called out from the line of servants. Again the bids had run up to ten or twelve pounds, and then

again Mr. Simms made a bid of twenty-five pounds, and once more no one bid against him. Another man and another man were sold, and then Jack heard his own name.

“Jack Ballister!” called the agent. “Stand out, boy, and be quick about it!” and Jack mechanically advanced from the others and took his place beside the block, looking around him, as he did so, at the circle of faces fronting him and all staring at him. His mouth felt very dry, and his heart was beating and pounding heavily. “Here is a fine, good boy, gentlemen,” said the salesman. “He is only sixteen years old, but he will do well as a serving or waiting-man in some gentleman’s house who hath need of such. He hath education, and reads and writes freely. Also, as you may see for yourselves, gentlemen, he is strong and well built. A lively boy, gentlemen – a good, lively boy! Come, boy, run to yonder post and back, and show the gentlemen how brisk ye be.”

Jack, although he heard the words, looked dumbly at the speaker. “D’ye hear me!” said the agent. “Do as I bid ye; run to yonder post and back!”

Then Jack did so. It seemed to him as though he were running in a nightmare. As he returned to his place he heard the agent saying: “The boy is strong, but doth not show himself off as well as he might. But he is a good boy, as you may see for yourselves.” The next thing he knew was that Mr. Simms had bought him for twenty pounds.

CHAPTER XI

MARLBOROUGH

MARLBOROUGH was the house of Colonel Birchall Parker. It was in its day, perhaps, the finest house in Virginia, not even excepting the Governor's palace at Williamsburgh. It stood upon the summit of a slope of the shore rising up from the banks of the James River. The trees in front nearly hid the house from the river as you passed, but the chimneys and the roof stood up above the foliage, and you caught a glimpse of the brick façade, and of the elaborate doorway, through an opening in the trees, where the path led up from the landing-place to the hall door. The main house was a large two-storied building capped by a tall, steep roof. From the center building long wings reached out to either side, terminating at each end in a smaller building or office standing at right angles to its wing, and, together with the main house, inclosing on three sides a rather shaggy, grassy lawn. From the front you saw nothing of the servants' quarters or outbuildings (which were around to the rear of the house), but only the imposing façade with its wings and offices.

Now it was early morning; Colonel Birchall Parker had arisen, and his servant was shaving him. He sat by the open window in his dressing-gown, and with slippers on his feet. His wig, a voluminous mass of finely curled black hair, hung from the block ready for him to put on. The sunlight came in at the open window, the warm mellow breeze just stirring the linen curtains drawn back to either side and bringing with it the multitudinous sounds of singing birds from the thickets beyond the garden. The bed-clothes were thrown off from a mountainously high bed, and the wooden steps, down which Colonel Parker had a little while before descended from his couch to the bare floor, were still standing beside the curtained bedstead. The room had all the confused look of having just been slept in.

Colonel Parker held the basin under his chin while the man shaved him. He had a large, benevolent face, the smooth double chin just now covered with a white mass of soap-suds. As he moved his face a little to one side to receive the razor he glanced out of the open window. "I see the schooner is come back again, Robin," said he.

"Yes, your honor," said the man, "it came back last night."

"Were there any letters?"

"I don't know, your honor; the schooner came in about midnight, and Mr. Simms is not about yet." The man wiped the razor as he spoke and began whetting it to a keener edge. "Mr. Richard came up with the schooner, your honor," said he.

"Did he?"

"Yes, your honor, and Mr. Simms fetched up a lot of new servants with him. They're quartered over in the empty store-house now. Will your honor turn your face a little this way?"

The noises of newly awakened life were sounding clear and distinct through the uncarpeted wainscoted spaces of the house – the opening and shutting of doors, the sound of voices, and now and then a break of laughter.

The great hall and the side rooms opening upon it, when Colonel Parker came down-stairs, were full of that singularly wide, cool, new look that the beginning of the morning always brings to accustomed scenes. Mr. Richard Parker, who had been down from his room some time, was standing outside upon the steps in the fresh, open air. He turned as Colonel Parker came out of the doorway. "Well, brother Richard," said Colonel Parker, "I am glad to see you; I hope you are well?"

"Thank you, sir," said the other, bowing, but without any change in his expression. "I hope you are in good health, sir?"

"Why, yes," said Colonel Parker, "I believe I have naught to complain of now." He came out further upon the steps, and stood at a little distance, with his hands clasped behind him, looking now up into the sky, now down the vista between the trees and across the river.

There was a sound of fresh young voices echoing through the upper hall, then the noise of laughter, and presently the sound of rapid feet running down the uncarpeted stairway. Then Eleanor Parker burst out of the house in a gale, caught her father by the coat, and standing on her tip-toes, kissed both of his cheeks in rapid succession.

Two young girl visitors and a young man of sixteen or seventeen followed her out of the house, the girls demurely, the young man with somewhat of diffidence in the presence of Mr. Richard Parker.

“My dear,” said Colonel Parker, “do you not then see your uncle?”

“Why, to be sure I do,” said she, “but how could you expect me to see anybody until I had first kissed you. How do you do, Uncle Richard?” and she offered him her cheek to kiss.

Mr. Richard Parker smiled, but, as he always did, as though with an effort. “Why, zounds, Nell!” said he, “sure you grow prettier every day; how long do you suppose ’twill be before you set all the gentlemen in the colony by the ears? If I were only as young as Rodney, yonder, I’d be almost sorry to be your uncle, except I would then not have the right to kiss your cheek as I have just done.”

The young girl blushed and laughed, with a flash of her eyes and a sparkle of white teeth between her red lips. “Why, Uncle Richard,” said she, “and in that case, if you were as handsome a man as you are now, I too would be sorry to have you for nothing better than an uncle.”

Just then a negro appeared at the door and announced that breakfast was ready, and they all went into the house.

Mistress Parker, or Madam Parker, as she was generally called, followed by her negro maid carrying a cushion, met them as they entered the hall. The three younger gentlemen bowed profoundly, and Madam Parker sank almost to the floor in a courtesy equally elaborate.

She was a thin little woman, very nervous and quick in her movements. She had a fine, sensitive face, and, like her daughter, very dark eyes, only they were quick and brilliant, and not soft and rich like those of the young girl.

The morning was very warm, and so, after breakfast was over, the negroes carried chairs out upon the lawn under the shade of the trees at some little distance from the house. The wide red-brick front of the building looked down upon them where they sat, the elder gentlemen smoking each a long clay pipe of tobacco, while Madam Parker sat with them talking intermittently. The young people chatted together in subdued voices at a little distance, with now and then a half-suppressed break of laughter.

“I hear, brother Richard,” said Colonel Parker, “that Simms brought up a lot of servants from Yorktown.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Parker, “there were about twenty altogether, I believe. And that brings a matter into my mind. There was one young fellow I would like very much to have if you can spare him to me – a boy of about sixteen or seventeen. I have no house-servant since Tim died, and so, if you have a mind to part with this lad, sir, I’d like mightily well to have him.”

“Why, brother Richard,” said Colonel Parker, “if Simms hath no use for the boy I see no reason why you should not have him. What hath Simms done with him?”

“He is with the other servants over at the old store-house, I believe, sir; Simms had them sent there last night. May I send for the lad, that you may see him?”

“I should be glad to see him,” said Colonel Parker.

Jack had come up from Yorktown packed with the other servants in the hold of the schooner. The hatch was tilted to admit some light and air, but he could see nothing of whither he was being taken, and his only sense of motion was in the slant of the vessel, the wind, and the rippling gurgle of the water alongside.

He had been wakened from a deep sleep to be marched past a clustering group of darkly black trees, across a grassy stretch of lawn, in the silent and profoundly starry night, to a brick building into which he and his companions were locked, as they had been locked in the old warehouse at Yorktown.

Now, as he followed the negro through the warm, bright sunlight, he gazed about him, half bewildered with the newness of everything, yet with an intense and vivid interest. He had seen really nothing of Marlborough as he had been marched up from the landing place at midnight with his companions the night before. As the negro led him around the end of the building, he gazed up curiously at the wide brick front. Then he saw that there was a party of ladies and gentlemen sitting in the shade across the lawn. He followed the negro as the other led him straight toward the group, and then he halted at a little distance, not knowing just what was expected of him.

Mr. Richard Parker beckoned to him. "Come hither, boy," said he, "this gentleman wants to see you." Jack obeyed, trying not to appear ungainly or uncouth in his movements, and feeling that he did not know just how to succeed.

"Look up, boy; hold up your head," said a gentleman whom he at once knew to be the great Colonel Parker of whom he had heard – a large, stout, noble-looking gentleman, with a broad, smooth chin and a diamond solitaire pinned in the cravat at his throat. As Jack obeyed he felt rather than saw that a pretty young lady was standing behind the gentleman's chair, looking at him with large, dark eyes. "Where did you come from?" asked the gentleman.

Jack, with the gaze of everybody upon him, felt shy of the sound of his own voice. "I came from Southampton," said he.

"Speak up, boy, speak up," said the gentleman.

"I came from Southampton," said Jack again, and this time it seemed to him that his voice was very loud indeed.

"From Southampton, hey?" said the gentleman. He looked at Jack very critically for a while in silence. "Well, brother Richard," said he at last, "'tis indeed a well-looking lad, and if Simms hath no special use for him I will let you have him. How long is he bound for?"

"Five years," said Mr. Parker. "They were all bound for five years. I spoke to Simms about him yesterday, and he said he could spare him. Simms gave twenty pounds for him, and I will be willing and glad enough to pay you that for him."

"Tut, tut, brother Richard," said Colonel Parker, "don't speak to me of paying for him; indeed, I give him to you very willingly."

"Then, indeed, sir, I am very much obliged to you. You may go now, boy." Jack hesitated for a moment, not knowing clearly if he understood. "You may go, I said," said Mr. Richard Parker again. And then Jack went away, still accompanied by the negro.

The gloomy interior of the store-house struck chill upon him as he reëntered it from the brightness and heat outside, and once more he was conscious of the dampness and all-pervading earthy smell. The transports, huddled together, were dull and silent. One or two of them were smoking, others lay sleeping heavily, others sat crouching or leaning against the wall doing nothing – perfectly inert. They hardly looked up as Jack entered.

CHAPTER XII

DOWN THE RIVER

IT was the next morning that the door of the store-house in which Jack and his companions were confined was suddenly opened by a white man. He was a roughly-dressed fellow, with a shaggy beard and with silver ear-rings in his ears. "Where's that there boy of Mr. Richard Parker's?" said he.

"D' ye mean me?" said Jack, "I am the only boy here."

"Why, then, if you are the only boy here, you must be the one," said the man with a grin. "Come along with me," he added, "and be quick about it."

"Am I going for good and all?" asked Jack.

"I reckon ye be."

The other redemptioners had roused themselves somewhat at the coming of the man and were listening. "Good-by, Jack," said one of them, as he was about to go, and the others took up the words: "Good-by – good-by, Jack." "Good-by," said Jack. He shook hands with them all, and then he and the man went out into the bright sunlight.

His conductor led the way down back of the great house, and past a clustered group of cabins, in front of which a number of negro children played like monkeys, half naked and bareheaded, who stopped their antics and stood in the sun, and watched Jack as he passed, while some negro women came to the doors and stood also watching him.

"Won't you tell me where I'm going to be taken?" said Jack, quickening his steps so as to come up alongside of his conductor.

"You're going with Mr. Richard Parker," said the man. "I reckon he'll be taking you down to the Roost with him."

"The Roost?" said Jack, "and where is the Roost?"

"Why, the Roost is Mr. Parker's house. It's some thirty or forty mile down the river."

As they were speaking they had come out past a group of trees at the end of the great house, and upon the edge of the slope. From where they were they looked down to the shore of the river, and upon a large flat-boat with a great square sail that lay at the landing place, a rod or so away. There was a pile of bags, and a lot of boxes and bundles of various sorts lying upon the wharf in the sun. Three or four negro men were slowly and indolently carrying the bags aboard the flat-boat.

"Are we going down the river in that boat?" asked Jack, as he descended the slope at the heels of the other.

"Yes," said the man briefly.

On the bank at the end of the wharf was a square brick building, in the shade of which stood Mr. Simms and Mr. Parker, the latter smoking a cigarro. Mr. Simms held in his hand a slip of paper, upon which he kept the tally of the bags as they were carried aboard. Jack went out along the wharf, watching the negro men at work, until Mr. Simms called out: "Get aboard the boat, young man." Thereupon he stepped into the boat, climbing over the seats to the bow, where he settled himself easily upon some bags of meal, and whence he watched the slow loading of the boat.

At last everything was taken aboard. "We're all ready now, Mr. Simms," called out the man who had brought Jack down from the storehouse.

Mr. Parker and Mr. Simms came down the wharf together. Mr. Parker stepped aboard the scow, and immediately it was cast loose and pushed off from the landing.

"Good-by, Mr. Parker, sir," called Mr. Simms across the widening stretch of water, and he lifted his hat as he spoke. Mr. Parker nodded a brief reply. The boat drifted farther and farther away with the sweeping stream as the negro rowers settled themselves in their places, and Mr. Simms still stood on the wharf looking after them. Then the oars creaked in the rowlocks and the head of the

boat came slowly around in the direction intended. Jack, lying upon and amid the meal bags, looked out astern. Before him were the naked, sinewy backs of the eight negro oarsmen, and away in the stern sat the white man – he was the overseer of the North Plantation – and Mr. Parker, who was just lighting a fresh cigarro. Presently the oars sounded with a ceaseless chug, chug, in the rowlocks, and then the overseer left the tiller for a moment and came forward and trimmed the square, brown sail, that now swelled out smooth and round with the sweep of the wind. The rugged, wooded shores crept slowly past them, and the now distant wharf and brick buildings, and the long front of the great house perched upon the slope, dropped further and further astern. Then the flat-boat crept around the bend of the river, and house and wharf were shut off by an intervening point of land.

Jack could not but feel the keen novelty of it all. The sky was warm and clear. The bright surface of the water, driven by the breeze, danced and sparkled in the drifting sunlight. It was impossible that he should not feel a thrill of interest that was like delight in the newness of everything.

About noon the overseer brought out a hamper-like basket, which he opened, and from which he took a plentiful supply of food. A couple of cold roast potatoes, a great lump of Indian-corn bread, and a thick slice of ham were passed forward to Jack. It seemed to him that he had never tasted anything so good.

After he had finished his meal he felt very sleepy. He curled himself down upon the bags in the sunlight, and presently dozed off.

The afternoon sun was slanting when he was aroused by a thumping and bumping and a stir on board. He opened his eyes, and sat up to see that the boat had again stopped at a landing-place. It was a straggling, uneven wharf, at the end of which, upon the shore, was an open shed. Thence a rough and rugged road ran up the steep bluff bank, and then turned away into the woody wilderness beyond. A wagon with a nondescript team of oxen and mules, and half a dozen men, black and white, were waiting beside the shed at the end of the wharf for the coming of the flat-boat.

Then followed the unloading of the boat.

Mr. Parker had gone ashore, and Jack could see him and the overseer talking together and inspecting a small boat that lay pulled up from the water upon a little strip of sandy beach. Jack himself climbed out from the boat upon the wharf, where he walked up and down, stretching himself and watching those at work. Presently he heard some one calling, "Where's that young fellow? Hi, you, come here!"

Then Jack saw that they had made ready the smaller boat at which they had been looking, and had got the sail hoisted upon it; it flapped and beat in the wind. A little group stood about it, and Jack saw that they were waiting for him. He ran along the wharf, and jumped down from it to the little strip of sandy beach. They were in the act of pushing off the boat when he climbed aboard. As it slid off into the water Mr. Parker stepped into it. Two men ran splashing through the water and pushed it off, and as it reached the deeper water, one of them jumped in over the stern with a dripping splash of his bare feet, catching the tiller and trimming the sail as he did so, and bringing the bow of the boat around before the wind. Then there was a gurgling ripple of water under the bows as the wind filled the sail more strongly, and presently the wharf and the flat-boat dropped rapidly astern, and once more Jack was sailing down the river, while wooded shores and high bluff banks, alternating one another, drifted by, and were dropped away behind.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ROOST

THE sun had set, and the dusk was falling rapidly. The boat was running toward a precipitous bluff shore, above the crest of which, and some forty or fifty yards inland, loomed the indistinct form of a house, the two tall chimneys standing out sharply against the fading sky. There was a dark mass of trees on the one side, and what appeared to be a cluster of huts on the other. The barking of two or three dogs sounded distantly across the water, and a dim light shone from one of the windows. The boat drew nearer and nearer to the dark shore; then at last, with a grinding jar of the keel upon the beach, the journey was ended.

A flight of high, ladder-like steps reached from the sandy beach to the summit of the bluff. Jack followed Mr. Parker up this stairway, leaving the man who had brought them to furl and tie the sail. Excepting the barking of dogs and the light in the window, there was at first no sign of life about the place as they approached. Then suddenly there was a pause in the dogs' barking; then a renewed clamorous burst from half a dozen throats at once. Suddenly the light in the room began to flicker and move, and Jack could see a number of dim forms come around the end of the house. The next minute a wide door was opened, and the figure of a woman appeared, holding a candle above her head. Instantly half a dozen hounds burst out of the house from behind her and came rushing down toward Jack and Mr. Parker, barking and baying.

Mr. Parker paid no attention to the dogs, but led the way directly up the flight of tall, steep steps and into the hallway. He nodded to the woman as he passed, speaking briefly to her, and calling her Peggy.

She was rather a handsome woman, with a broad face and black hair and eyes. She stood aside and the master passed her into the house, Jack following close at his heels. "Here are two letters for you," said the woman, and she gave them to him from the table; and Mr. Parker, without laying aside his hat, took them, tore one of them open and began reading it by the light of the candle which she held for him. As he read, his eyebrows drew together into a knot of a frown, and his handsome florid face lowered.

Meantime Jack stood gazing about him at the large, barren hallway barely lit by the light of the candle. At the further end he could just distinguish the dim form of a broad bare, stairway leading up to the floor above. It seemed to be very cheerless, and he felt strange and lonely in the dark, gloomy space. Several negroes were standing just outside of the door, looking in; he could see their forms dimly in the darkness. They appeared weird and unreal, with their black faces and shining teeth.

Suddenly Mr. Parker looked up from the letter he was reading and bade the woman, Peggy, to take Jack out to the kitchen and to give him something to eat.

When Jack entered the kitchen he found the man who had brought him and Mr. Parker down the river in the boat, sitting at the table eating, while a barefoot negro woman, with necklace and bracelets of blue glass beads, waited upon him. The man looked up and welcomed Jack as he came in, and then almost immediately began asking him questions about England. The feeling of loneliness and depression was settling more and more heavily upon Jack's spirits, and he replied vaguely hardly knowing what were the questions asked him, or what he said in answer. After he had ended his supper, he went and stood in the doorway, looking out into the starlit night. He thought he saw the dim forms of human figures moving about in the gloom, and the black outlines of rude buildings. The warm darkness was full of the ceaseless whispering noises of night, broken now and then by the sudden sound of loud gabbling negro voices. The mockingbirds were singing with intermittent melody from the dark stillness of the distant woods. His feeling of depression seemed to weigh upon Jack's soul like a leaden weight. He could almost have cried in his loneliness and homesickness.

When Jack woke at the dawning of the next day, in the little bare room at the end of the upper hall where he slept within easy call of Mr. Parker's voice, he did not at first know where he was. Then instantly came recollection, and with it a keen longing to see his new surroundings. He arose, dressed hastily, and went down-stairs and out of doors. Everything looked very different in the wide clear light of early morning. The buildings he had seen in the blackness of the night before resolved into a clustered jumble of negro huts, – some of frame, some of wattled sticks, – about which moved the wild figures of the half-savage black men, women, and children.

Jack walked out into the open yard, and turned and looked back at the house.

It was a great rambling frame structure, weather-beaten and gray. Several of the windows were open, and out of one of them hung a patchwork bed-coverlet, moving lazily now and then in the wind. A thin wreath of smoke curled away from one of the chimneys into the blue air. Everything looked very fresh and keen in the bright light of the morning.

A lot of negro children had been playing about the huts, some of them entirely naked. They ceased their play and stood staring at Jack as he came out into the open yard, and a negro lad of about his own age, who was standing in the door of a wattled hut at a little distance, came over and spoke to him. The black boy was lean and lanky, with over-grown, spider-like legs and arms. He had a little round, nut-like head covered with a close felt of wool. "Hi, boy!" he said, when he had come up close to Jack, "what your name?"

"My name's Jack Ballister," said Jack; "what's your name?"

"My name Little Coffee," and the negro boy grinned with a flash of his white teeth.

"Little Coffee! Why, to be sure, that's a very queer name for any Christian soul to have," said Jack.

The negro boy's grin disappeared into quick darkness. "My name no queer," he said, with a sudden childish sullenness. "My name Little Coffee all right. My fader Big Coffee – I Little Coffee."

"Well," said Jack, "I never heard of anybody named Coffee in all my life before."

"Where you come from?" asked the negro boy.

"I came from England," said Jack; "we drink coffee there; we don't give Coffee as a name to Christian souls. Where do you come from, Coffee?"

"Me come nowhere," said Coffee, with a returning grin. "Me born here in yan house."

Beyond the row of negro huts was a small wooden cabin of a better appearance than the others. Suddenly a white man came out of the door of this hut, stood looking for a moment, and then walked forward toward Jack. It was Dennis, the overseer. He – unless Peggy Pitcher be excepted – became almost the most intimate friend Jack had for the two months or so that he lived at the Roost; and in this curiously strange fragment of his life, perhaps the most vivid recollections that remained with him in his after memory were of intervals of time spent in Dennis's hut; of the great black, sooty fireplace; of the shelf-like floor at the further end of the cabin, where was the dim form of the bed with the bright coverlet; of Dennis's negro wife, pattering about the earthen floor in her bare feet, her scant red petticoat glowing like a flame of fire in the shadowy interior; of Dennis himself, crouching over the smoldering ashes, smoking his Indian clay pipe of tobacco. As Dennis now approached, Jack thought that he had hardly ever seen a stranger-looking figure, for a pair of gold ear-rings twinkled in his ears, a broad hat of woven grass shaded his face, he wore a pair of loose white cotton drawers, and a red beard covered his cheeks and chin and throat. "I do suppose," said Dennis, when he had come close enough to Jack – "I do suppose that you are the new boy that came last night."

"Yes," said Jack, "I am."

CHAPTER XIV IN ENGLAND

IT is not to be supposed that Jack could have disappeared so suddenly and entirely as he had done without leaving behind him much talk and wonder as to what had become of him.

One day, for instance, Mr. Stetson stopped old Hezekiah in the street and began asking after Jack. "I know nought of him, Master Stetson," said the old man. "He always was a main discontented, uneasy lad as ever I see. Time and time again have he talked to me about running away to sea – and that, whenever I would tell him 'twas time for him to be earning his own living by honest, decent work."

"But, Mr. Tipton," said the rector, "I do hear talk that he hath been kidnapped."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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