ФРЕДЕРИК МАРРИЕТ

THE PHANTOM SHIP

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The Phantom Ship

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The Phantom Ship:

Содержание

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Chapter I

About the middle of the seventeenth century, in the outskirts of the small but fortified town of Terneuse, situated on the right bank of the Scheldt, and nearly opposite to the island of Walcheren, there was to be seen, in advance of a few other even more humble tenements, a small but neat cottage, built according to the prevailing taste of the time. The outside front had, some years back, been painted of a deep orange, the windows and shutters of a vivid green. To about three feet above the surface of the earth, it was faced alternately with blue and white tiles. A small garden, of about two rods of our measure of land, surrounded the edifice; and this little plot was flanked by a low hedge of privet, and encircled by a moat full of water, too wide to be leaped with ease. Over that part of the moat which was in front of the cottage door, was a small and narrow bridge, with ornamented iron hand-rails, for the security of the passenger. But the colours, originally so bright, with which the cottage had been decorated, had now faded; symptoms of rapid decay were evident in the window-sills, the door-jambs, and other wooden parts of the tenement, and many of the white and blue tiles had

fallen down, and had not been replaced. That much care had once been bestowed upon this little tenement, was as evident as that latterly it had been equally neglected.

The inside of the cottage, both on the basement and the floor above, was divided into two larger rooms in front, and two smaller behind; the rooms in front could only be called large in comparison with the other two, as they were little more than twelve feet square, with but one window to each. The upper floor was, as usual, appropriated to the bedrooms; on the lower, the two smaller rooms were now used only as a wash-house and a lumber-room; while one of the larger was fitted up as a kitchen, and furnished with dressers, on which the metal utensils for cookery shone clean and polished as silver. The room itself was scrupulously neat; but the furniture, as well as the utensils, were scanty. The boards of the floor were of a pure white, and so clean that you might have laid anything down without fear of soiling it. A strong deal table, two wooden-seated chairs, and a small easy couch, which had been removed from one of the bedrooms upstairs, were all the movables which this room contained. The other front room had been fitted up as a parlour; but what might be the style of its furniture was now unknown, for no eye had beheld the contents of that room for nearly seventeen years, during which it had been hermetically sealed, even to the inmates of the cottage.

The kitchen, which we have described, was occupied by two persons. One was a woman, apparently about forty years of age,

but worn down by pain and suffering. She had evidently once possessed much beauty: there were still the regular outlines, the noble forehead, and the large dark eye; but there was a tenuity in her features, a wasted appearance, such as to render the flesh transparent; her brow, when she mused, would sink into deep wrinkles, premature though they were; and the occasional flashing of her eyes strongly impressed you with the idea of insanity. There appeared to be some deep-seated, irremovable, hopeless cause of anguish, never for one moment permitted to be absent from her memory: a chronic oppression, fixed and graven there, only to be removed by death. She was dressed in the widow's coif of the time; but although clean and neat, her garments were faded from long wear. She was seated upon the small couch which we have mentioned, evidently brought down as a relief to her, in her declining state.

On the deal table in the centre of the room sat the other person, a stout, fair-headed, florid youth of nineteen or twenty years old. His features were handsome and bold, and his frame powerful to excess; his eye denoted courage and determination, and as he carelessly swung his legs, and whistled an air in an emphatic manner, it was impossible not to form the idea that he was a daring, adventurous, and reckless character.

"Do not go to sea, Philip; oh, promise me *that*, my dear, dear child," said the female, clasping her hands.

"And why not go to sea, mother?" replied Philip; "what's the use of my staying here to starve?—for, by Heaven! it's little

better. I must do something for myself and for you. And what else can I do? My uncle Van Brennen has offered to take me with him, and will give me good wages. Then I shall live happily on board, and my earnings will be sufficient for your support at home."

"Philip—Philip, hear me. I shall die if you leave me. Whom have I in the world but you? O my child, as you love me, and I know you *do* love me, Philip, don't leave me; but if you will, at all events do not go to sea."

Philip gave no immediate reply; he whistled for a few seconds, while his mother wept.

"Is it," said he at last, "because my father was drowned at sea, that you beg so hard, mother?"

"Oh, no—no!" exclaimed the sobbing woman. "Would to God —"

"Would to God what, mother?"

"Nothing—nothing. Be merciful—be merciful, O God!" replied the mother, sliding from her seat on the couch, and kneeling by the side of it, in which attitude she remained for some time in fervent prayer.

At last she resumed her seat, and her face wore an aspect of more composure.

Philip, who, during this, had remained silent and thoughtful, again addressed his mother.

"Look ye, mother. You ask me to stay on shore with you, and starve,—rather hard conditions:—now hear what I have to say.

That room opposite has been shut up ever since I can remember —why, you will never tell me; but once I heard you say, when we were without bread, and with no prospect of my uncle's return— you were then half frantic, mother, as you know you sometimes are—"

"Well, Philip, what did you hear me say?" enquired his mother with tremulous anxiety.

"You said, mother, that there was money in that room which would save us; and then you screamed and raved, and said that you preferred death. Now, mother, what is there in that chamber, and why has it been so long shut up? Either I know that, or I go to sea."

At the commencement of this address of Philip, his mother appeared to be transfixed, and motionless as a statue; gradually her lips separated, and her eyes glared; she seemed to have lost the power of reply; she put her hand to her right side, as if to compress it, then both her hands, as if to relieve herself from excruciating torture: at last she sank, with her head forward, and the blood poured out of her mouth.

Philip sprang from the table to her assistance, and prevented her from falling on the floor. He laid her on the couch, watching with alarm the continued effusion.

"Oh! mother—mother, what is this?" cried he, at last, in great distress.

For some time his mother could make him no reply; she turned further on her side, that she might not be suffocated by the

discharge from the ruptured vessel, and the snow-white planks of the floor were soon crimsoned with her blood.

"Speak, dearest mother, if you can," repeated Philip, in agony; "what shall I do? what shall I give you? God Almighty! what is this?"

"Death, my child, death!" at length replied the poor woman, sinking into a state of unconsciousness.

Philip, now much alarmed, flew out of the cottage, and called the neighbours to his mother's assistance. Two or three hastened to the call; and as soon as Philip saw them occupied in restoring his mother, he ran as fast as he could to the house of a medical man, who lived about a mile off—one Mynheer Poots, a little, miserable, avaricious wretch, but known to be very skilful in his profession. Philip found Poots at home, and insisted upon his immediate attendance.

"I will come—yes, most certainly," replied Poots, who spoke the language but imperfectly; "but Mynheer Vanderdecken, who will pay me?"

"Pay you! my uncle will, directly that he comes home."

"Your uncle de Skipper Van Brennen: no, he owes me four guilders, and he has owed me for a long time. Besides, his ship may sink."

"He shall pay you the four guilders, and for this attendance also," replied Philip, in a rage; "come directly, while you are disputing my mother may be dead."

"But, Mr Philip, I cannot come, now I recollect; I have to

see the child of the burgomaster at Terneuse," replied Mynheer Poots.

"Look you, Mynheer Poots," exclaimed Philip, red with passion; "you have but to choose,—will you go quietly, or must I take you there? You'll not trifle with me."

Here Mynheer Poots was under considerable alarm, for the character of Philip Vanderdecken was well known.

"I will come by-and-bye, Mynheer Philip, if I can."

"You'll come now, you wretched old miser," exclaimed Philip, seizing hold of the little man by the collar, and pulling him out of his door.

"Murder! murder!" cried Poots, as he lost his legs, and was dragged along by the impetuous young man.

Philip stopped, for he perceived that Poots was black in the face.

"Must I then choke you, to make you go quietly? for, hear me, go you shall, alive or dead."

"Well, then," replied Poots, recovering himself, "I will go, but I'll have you in prison to-night: and, as for your mother, I'll not —no, that I will not—Mynheer Philip, depend upon it."

"Mark me, Mynheer Poots," replied Philip, "as sure as there is a God in heaven, if you do not come with me, I'll choke you now; and when you arrive, if you do not do your best for my poor mother, I'll murder you there. You know that I always do what I say, so now take my advice, come along quietly, and you shall certainly be paid, and well paid—if I sell my coat."

This last observation of Philip, perhaps, had more effect than even his threats. Poots was a miserable little atom, and like a child in the powerful grasp of the young man. The doctor's tenement was isolated, and he could obtain no assistance until within a hundred yards of Vanderdecken's cottage; so Mynheer Poots decided that he would go, first, because Philip had promised to pay him, and secondly, because he could not help it.

This point being settled, Philip and Mynheer Poots made all haste to the cottage; and on their arrival, they found his mother still in the arms of two of her female neighbours, who were bathing her temples with vinegar. She was in a state of consciousness, but she could not speak. Poots ordered her to be carried upstairs and put to bed, and pouring some acids down her throat, hastened away with Philip to procure the necessary remedies.

"You will give your mother that directly, Mynheer Philip," said Poots, putting a phial into his hand; "I will now go to the child of the burgomaster, and will afterwards come back to your cottage."

"Don't deceive me," said Philip, with a threatening look.

"No, no, Mynheer Philip, I would not trust to your uncle Van Brennen for payment, but you have promised, and I know that you always keep your word. In one hour I will be with your mother; but you yourself must now be quick."

Philip hastened home. After the potion had been administered, the bleeding was wholly stopped; and in half an

hour, his mother could express her wishes in a whisper. When the little doctor arrived, he carefully examined his patient, and then went downstairs with her son into the kitchen.

"Mynheer Philip," said Poots, "by Allah! I have done my best, but I must tell you that I have little hopes of your mother rising from her bed again. She may live one day or two days, but not more. It is not my fault, Mynheer Philip," continued Poots, in a deprecating tone.

"No, no; it is the will of Heaven," replied Philip, mournfully.

"And you will pay me, Mynheer Vanderdecken?" continued the doctor, after a short pause.

"Yes," replied Philip in a voice of thunder, and starting from a reverie. After a moment's silence, the doctor recommenced.

"Shall I come to-morrow, Mynheer Philip? You know that will be a charge of another guilder: it is of no use to throw away money or time either."

"Come to-morrow, come every hour, charge what you please; you shall certainly be paid," replied Philip, curling his lip with contempt.

"Well, it is as you please. As soon as she is dead, the cottage and the furniture will be yours, and you will sell them of course. Yes, I will come. You will have plenty of money. Mynheer Philip, I would like the first offer of the cottage, if it is to let."

Philip raised his arm in the air as if to crush Mynheer Poots, who retreated to the corner.

"I did not mean until your mother was buried," said Poots, in

a coaxing tone.

"Go, wretch, go!" said Philip, covering his face with his hands, as he sank down upon the blood-stained couch.

After a short interval, Philip Vanderdecken returned to the bedside of his mother, whom he found much better; and the neighbours, having their own affairs to attend to, left them alone. Exhausted with the loss of blood, the poor woman slumbered for many hours, during which she never let go the hand of Philip, who watched her breathing in mournful meditation.

It was about one o'clock in the morning when the widow awoke. She had in a great degree recovered her voice, and thus she addressed her son:—

"My dear, my impetuous boy, and have I detained you here a prisoner so long?"

"My own inclination detained me, mother. I leave you not to others until you are up and well again."

"That, Philip, I shall never be. I feel that death claims me; and, O, my son, were it not for you, how should I quit this world rejoicing! I have long been dying, Philip,—and long, long have I prayed for death."

"And why so, mother?" replied Philip, bluntly; "I've done my best."

"You have, my child, you have: and may God bless you for it. Often have I seen you curb your fiery temper—restrain yourself when justified in wrath—to spare a mother's feelings. 'Tis now some days that even hunger has not persuaded you to disobey

your mother. And, Philip, you must have thought me mad or foolish to insist so long, and yet to give no reason. I'll speak—again—directly."

The widow turned her head upon the pillow, and remained quiet for some minutes; then, as if revived, she resumed:

"I believe I have been mad at times—have I not, Philip? And God knows I have had a secret in my heart enough to drive a wife to frenzy. It has oppressed me day and night, worn my mind, impaired my reason, and now, at last, thank Heaven! it has overcome this mortal frame: the blow is struck, Philip,—I'm sure it is. I wait but to tell you all,—and yet I would not,—'twill turn your brain as it has turned mine, Philip."

"Mother," replied Philip, earnestly, "I conjure you, let me hear this killing secret. Be heaven or hell mixed up with it, I fear not. Heaven will not hurt me, and Satan I defy."

"I know thy bold, proud spirit, Philip,—thy strength of mind. If anyone could bear the load of such a dreadful tale, thou couldst. My brain, alas! was far too weak for it; and I see it is my duty to tell it to thee."

The widow paused as her thoughts reverted to that which she had to confide; for a few minutes the tears rained down her hollow cheeks; she then appeared to have summoned resolution, and to have regained strength.

"Philip, it is of your father I would speak. It is supposed—that he was—drowned at sea."

"And was he not, mother?" replied Philip, with surprise.

"O no!"

"But he has long been dead, mother?"

"No,—yes,—and yet—no," said the widow, covering her eyes.

Her brain wanders, thought Philip, but he spoke again:

"Then where is he, mother?"

The widow raised herself, and a tremor visibly ran through her whole frame, as she replied—

"IN LIVING JUDGMENT."

The poor woman then sank down again upon the pillow, and covered her head with the bedclothes, as if she would have hid herself from her own memory. Philip was so much perplexed and astounded, that he could make no reply. A silence of some minutes ensued, when, no longer able to beat the agony of suspense, Philip faintly whispered—

"The secret, mother, the secret; quick, let me hear it."

"I can now tell all, Philip," replied his mother, in a solemn tone of voice. "Hear me, my son. Your father's disposition was but too like your own;—O may his cruel fate be a lesson to you, my dear, dear child! He was a bold, a daring, and, they say, a first-rate seaman. He was not born here, but in Amsterdam; but he would not live there, because he still adhered to the Catholic religion. The Dutch, you know, Philip, are heretics, according to our creed. It is now seventeen years or more that he sailed for India, in his fine ship the *Amsterdammer*, with a valuable cargo. It was his third voyage to India, Philip, and it was to have been, if it

had so pleased God, his last, for he had purchased that good ship with only part of his earnings, and one more voyage would have made his fortune. O! how often did we talk over what we would do upon his return, and how these plans for the future consoled me at the idea of his absence, for I loved him dearly, Philip, —he was always good and kind to me; and after he had sailed, how I hoped for his return! The lot of a sailor's wife is not to be envied. Alone and solitary for so many months, watching the long wick of the candle, and listening to the howling of the wind —foreboding evil and accident—wreck and widowhood. He had been gone about six months, Philip, and there was still a long dreary year to wait before I could expect him back. One night, you, my child, were fast asleep; you were my only solace—my comfort in my loneliness. I had been watching over you in your slumbers; you smiled and half pronounced the name of mother; and at last I kissed your unconscious lips, and I knelt and prayed —prayed for God's blessing on you, my child, and upon him too —little thinking, at the time, that he was so horribly, so fearfully CURSED."

The widow paused for breath, and then resumed. Philip could not speak. His lips were sundered, and his eyes riveted upon his mother, as he devoured her words.

"I left you and went downstairs into that room, Philip, which since that dreadful night has never been re-opened. I sate me down and read, for the wind was strong, and when the gale blows, a sailor's wife can seldom sleep. It was past midnight, and the

rain poured down. I felt unusual fear,—I knew not why. I rose from the couch and dipped my finger in the blessed water, and I crossed myself. A violent gust of wind roared round the house, and alarmed me still more. I had a painful, horrible foreboding; when, of a sudden, the windows and window-shutters were all blown in, the light was extinguished, and I was left in utter darkness. I screamed with fright; but at last I recovered myself, and was proceeding towards the window that I might reclose it, when whom should I behold, slowly entering at the casement, but —your father,—Philip!—Yes, Philip,—it was your father!"

"Merciful God!" muttered Philip, in a low tone almost subdued into a whisper.

"I knew not what to think,—he was in the room; and although the darkness was intense, his form and features were as clear and as defined as if it were noon-day. Fear would have inclined me to recoil from,—his loved presence to fly towards him. I remained on the spot where I was, choked with agonising sensations. When he had entered the room, the windows and shutters closed of themselves, and the candle was relighted—then I thought it was his apparition, and I fainted on the floor.

"When I recovered I found myself on the couch, and perceived that a cold (O how cold!) and dripping hand was clasped in mine. This reassured me, and I forgot the supernatural signs which accompanied his appearance. I imagined that he had been unfortunate, and had returned home. I opened my eyes, and beheld my loved husband and threw myself into his arms. His

clothes were saturated with the rain: I felt as if I had embraced ice —but nothing can check the warmth of a woman's love, Philip. He received my caresses, but he caressed not again: he spoke not, but looked thoughtful and unhappy. 'William—William,' cried I! 'speak, Vanderdecken, speak to your dear Catherine.'

"'I will,' replied he, solemnly, 'for my time is short.'

"'No, no, you must not go to sea again: you have lost your vessel, but you are safe. Have I not you again?'

"'Alas! no—be not alarmed, but listen, for my time is short. I have not lost my vessel, Catherine, BUT I HAVE LOST!!! Make no reply, but listen; I am not dead, nor yet am I alive. I hover between this world and the world of Spirits. Mark me.

"'For nine weeks did I try to force my passage against the elements round the stormy Cape, but without success; and I swore terribly. For nine weeks more did I carry sail against the adverse winds and currents, and yet could gain no ground; and then I blasphemed,—ay, terribly blasphemed. Yet still I persevered. The crew, worn out with long fatigue, would have had me return to the Table Bay; but I refused; nay, more, I became a murderer,—unintentionally, it is true, but still a murderer. The pilot opposed me, and persuaded the men to bind me, and in the excess of my fury, when he took me by the collar, I struck at him; he reeled; and, with the sudden lurch of the vessel, he fell overboard, and sank. Even this fearful death did not restrain me; and I swore by the fragment of the Holy Cross, preserved in that relic now hanging round your neck, that I would

gain my point in defiance of storm and seas, of lightning, of heaven, or of hell, even if I should beat about until the Day of Judgment.

"'My oath was registered in thunder, and in streams of sulphurous fire. The hurricane burst upon the ship, the canvas flew away in ribbons; mountains of seas swept over us, and in the centre of a deep o'erhanging cloud, which shrouded all in utter darkness, were written in letters of livid flame, these words—UNTIL THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

"'Listen to me, Catherine, my time is short. *One Hope* alone remains, and for this am I permitted to come here. Take this letter.' He put a sealed paper on the table. 'Read it, Catherine, dear, and try if you can assist me. Read it and now farewell—my time is come.'

"Again the window and window-shutters burst open—again the light was extinguished, and the form of my husband was, as it were, wafted in the dark expanse. I started up and followed him with outstretched arms and frantic screams as he sailed through the window;—my glaring eyes beheld his form borne away like lightning on the wings of the wild gale, till it was lost as a speck of light, and then it disappeared. Again the windows closed, the light burned, and I was left alone!

"Heaven, have mercy! My brain!—my brain!—Philip!—Philip!" shrieked the poor woman; "don't leave me—don't—don't—pray don't!"

During these exclamations the frantic widow had raised

herself from the bed, and, at the last, had fallen into the arms of her son. She remained there some minutes without motion. After a time Philip felt alarmed at her long quiescence; he laid her gently down upon the bed, and as he did so her head fell back —her eyes were turned—the widow Vanderdecken was no more.

Chapter II

Philip Vanderdecken, strong as he was in mental courage, was almost paralysed by the shock when he discovered that his mother's spirit had fled; and for some time he remained by the side of the bed with his eyes fixed upon the corpse, and his mind in a state of vacuity. Gradually he recovered himself; he rose, smoothed down the pillow, closed her eyelids, and then clasping his hands, the tears trickled down his manly cheeks. He impressed a solemn kiss upon the pale white forehead of the departed, and drew the curtains round the bed.

"Poor mother!" said he, sorrowfully, as he completed his task, "at length thou hast found rest,—but thou hast left thy son a bitter legacy."

And as Philip's thoughts reverted to what had passed, the dreadful narrative whirled in his imagination and scathed his brain. He raised his hands to his temples, compressed them with force, and tried to collect his thoughts, that he might decide upon what measures he should take. He felt that he had no time to indulge his grief. His mother was in peace: but his father—where was he?

He recalled his mother's words—"One hope alone remained." Then there was hope. His father had laid a paper on the table—could it be there now? Yes, it must be; his mother had not had the courage to take it up. There was hope in that paper, and it

had lain unopened for more than seventeen years.

Philip Vanderdecken resolved that he would examine the fatal chamber—at once he would know the worst. Should he do it now, or wait till daylight?—but the key, where was it? His eyes rested upon an old japanned cabinet in the room: he had never seen his mother open it in his presence: it was the only likely place of concealment that he was aware of. Prompt in all his decisions, he took up the candle, and proceeded to examine it. It was not locked; the doors swung open, and drawer after drawer was examined, but Philip discovered not the object of his search; again and again did he open the drawers, but they were all empty. It occurred to Philip that there might be secret drawers, and he examined for some time in vain. At last he took out all the drawers, and laid them on the floor, and lifting the cabinet off its stand he shook it. A rattling sound in one corner told him that in all probability the key was there concealed. He renewed his attempts to discover how to gain it, but in vain. Daylight now streamed through the casements, and Philip had not desisted from his attempts: at last, wearied out, he resolved to force the back panel of the cabinet; he descended to the kitchen, and returned with a small chopping-knife and hammer, and was on his knees busily employed forcing out the panel, when a hand was placed upon his shoulder.

Philip started; he had been so occupied with his search and his wild chasing thoughts, that he had not heard the sound of an approaching footstep. He looked up and beheld the Father

Seysen, the priest of the little parish, with his eyes sternly fixed upon him. The good man had been informed of the dangerous state of the widow Vanderdecken, and had risen at daylight to visit and afford her spiritual comfort.

"How now, my son," said the priest: "fearest thou not to disturb thy mother's rest? and wouldst thou pilfer and purloin even before she is in her grave?"

"I fear not to disturb my mother's rest, good father," replied Philip, rising on his feet, "for she now rests with the blessed. Neither do I pilfer or purloin. It is not gold I seek, although if gold there were, that gold would now be mine. I seek but a key, long hidden, I believe, within this secret drawer, the opening of which is a mystery beyond my art."

"Thy mother is no more, sayest thou, my son? and dead without receiving the rites of our most holy church! Why didst thou not send for me?"

"She died, good father, suddenly—most suddenly, in these arms, about two hours ago. I fear not for her soul, although I can but grieve you were not at her side."

The priest gently opened the curtains, and looked upon the corpse. He sprinkled holy water on the bed, and for a short time his lips were seen to move in silent prayer. He then turned round to Philip.

"Why do I see thee thus employed? and why so anxious to obtain that key? A mother's death should call forth filial tears and prayers for her repose. Yet are thine eyes dry, and thou art

employed upon an indifferent search while yet the tenement is warm which but now held her spirit. This is not seemly, Philip. What is the key thou seekest?"

"Father, I have no time for tears—no time to spare for grief or lamentation. I have much to do and more to think of than thought can well embrace. That I loved my mother, you know well."

"But the key thou seekest, Philip?"

"Father, it is the key of a chamber which has not been unlocked for years, which I must—will open; even if—"

"If what, my son?"

"I was about to say what I should not have said. Forgive me, Father; I meant that I must search that chamber."

"I have long heard of that same chamber being closed; and that thy mother would not explain wherefore, I know well, for I have asked her, and have been denied. Nay, when, as in duty bound, I pressed the question, I found her reason was disordered by my importunity, and therefore I abandoned the attempt. Some heavy weight was on thy mother's mind, my son, yet would she never confess or trust it with me. Tell me, before she died, hadst thou this secret from her?"

"I had, most holy father."

"Wouldst thou not feel comfort if thou didst confide to me, my son? I might advise—assist—"

"Father, I would indeed—I could confide it to thee, and ask for thy assistance—I know 'tis not from curious feeling thou wouldst have it, but from a better motive. But of that which has been told

it is not yet manifest—whether it is as my poor mother says, or but the phantom of a heated brain. Should it indeed be true, fain would I share the burthen with you—yet little you might thank me for the heavy load. But no—at least not now—it must not, cannot be revealed. I must do my work—enter that hated room alone."

"Fearest thou not?"

"Father, I fear nothing. I have a duty to perform—a dreadful one, I grant; but I pray thee, ask no more; for, like my poor mother, I feel as if the probing of the wound would half unseat my reason."

"I will not press thee further, Philip. The time may come when I may prove of service. Farewell, my child; but I pray thee to discontinue thy unseemly labour, for I must send in the neighbours to perform the duties to thy departed mother, whose soul I trust is with its God."

The priest looked at Philip; he perceived that his thoughts were elsewhere; there was a vacancy and appearance of mental stupefaction, and as he turned away, the good man shook his head.

"He is right," thought Philip, when once more alone; and he took up the cabinet, and placed it upon the stand. "A few hours more can make no difference: I will lay me down, for my head is giddy."

Philip went into the adjoining room, threw himself upon his bed, and in a few minutes was in a sleep as sound as that

permitted to the wretch a few hours previous to his execution.

During his slumbers the neighbours had come in, and had prepared everything for the widow's interment. They had been careful not to wake the son, for they held as sacred the sleep of those who must wake up to sorrow. Among others, soon after the hour of noon arrived Mynheer Poots; he had been informed of the death of the widow, but having a spare hour, he thought he might as well call, as it would raise his charges by another guilder. He first went into the room where the body lay, and from thence he proceeded to the chamber of Philip, and shook him by the shoulder.

Philip awoke, and, sitting up, perceived the doctor standing by him.

"Well, Mynheer Vanderdecken," commenced the unfeeling little man, "so it's all over. I knew it would be so, and recollect you owe me now another guilder, and you promised faithfully to pay me; altogether, with the potion, it will be three guilders and a half—that is, provided you return my phial."

Philip, who at first waking was confused, gradually recovered his senses during this address.

"You shall have your three guilders and a half, and your phial to boot, Mr Poots," replied he, as he rose from off the bed.

"Yes, yes; I know you mean to pay me—if you can. But look you, Mynheer Philip, it may be some time before you sell the cottage. You may not find a customer. Now, I never wish to be hard upon people who have no money, and I'll tell you what I'll

do. There is a something on your mother's neck. It is of no value, none at all, but to a good Catholic. To help you in your strait, I will take that thing, and then we shall be quits. You will have paid me, and there will be an end of it."

Philip listened calmly: he knew to what the little miser had referred,—the relic on his mother's neck—that very relic upon which his father swore the fatal oath. He felt that millions of guilders would not have induced him to part with it.

"Leave the house," answered he abruptly. "Leave it immediately. Your money shall be paid."

Now, Mynheer Poots, in the first place, knew that the setting of the relic, which was in a square frame of pure gold, was worth much more than the sum due to him: he also knew that a large price had been paid for the relic itself, and as at that time such a relic was considered very valuable, he had no doubt but that it would again fetch a considerable sum. Tempted by the sight of it when he entered the chamber of death, he had taken it from the neck of the corpse, and it was then actually concealed in his bosom, so he replied—

"My offer is a good one, Mynheer Philip, and you had better take it. Of what use is such trash?"

"I tell you, no," cried Philip, in a rage.

"Well, then, you will let me have it in my possession till I am paid, Mynheer Vanderdecken—that is but fair. I must not lose my money. When you bring me my three guilders and a half and the phial, I will return it to you."

Philip's indignation was now without bounds. He seized Mynheer Poots by the collar, and threw him out of the door. "Away immediately," cried he, "or by—"

There was no occasion for Philip to finish the imprecation. The doctor had hastened away with such alarm, that he fell down half the steps of the staircase, and was limping away across the bridge. He almost wished that the relic had not been in his possession; but his sudden retreat had prevented him, even if so inclined, from replacing it on the corpse.

The result of this conversation naturally turned Philip's thoughts to the relic, and he went into his mother's room to take possession of it. He opened the curtains—the corpse was laid out—he put forth his hand to untie the black ribbon. It was not there. "Gone!" exclaimed Philip. "They hardly would have removed it—never would—. It must be that villain Poots—wretch; but I will have it, even if he has swallowed it, though I tear him limb from limb!"

Philip darted down the stairs, rushed out of the house, cleared the moat at one bound, and without coat or hat, flew away in the direction of the doctor's lonely residence. The neighbours saw him as he passed them like the wind; they wondered, and they shook their heads. Mynheer Poots was not more than half-way to his home, for he had hurt his ankle. Apprehensive of what might possibly take place should his theft be discovered, he occasionally looked behind him; at length, to his horror, he beheld Philip Vanderdecken at a distance bounding on in

pursuit of him. Frightened almost out of his senses, the wretched pilferer hardly knew how to act; to stop and surrender up the stolen property was his first thought, but fear of Vanderdecken's violence prevented him; so he decided on taking to his heels, thus hoping to gain his house, and barricade himself in, by which means he would be in a condition to keep possession of what he had stolen, or at least make some terms ere he restored it.

Mynheer Poots had need to run fast, and so he did; his thin legs bearing his shrivelled form rapidly over the ground; but Philip, who, when he witnessed the doctor's attempt to escape, was fully convinced that he was the culprit, redoubled his exertions, and rapidly came up with the chase. When within a hundred yards of his own door, Mynheer Poots heard the bounding step of Philip gain upon him, and he sprang and leaped in his agony. Nearer and nearer still the step, until at last he heard the very breathing of his pursuer, and Poots shrieked in his fear, like the hare in the jaws of the greyhound. Philip was not a yard from him; his arm was outstretched, when the miscreant dropped down paralysed with terror, and the impetus of Vanderdecken was so great that he passed over his body, tripped, and after trying in vain to recover his equilibrium, he fell and rolled over and over. This saved the little doctor; it was like the double of a hare. In a second he was again on his legs, and before Philip could rise and again exert his speed, Poots had entered his door and bolted it within. Philip was, however, determined to repossess the important treasure; and as he panted, he cast his eyes around, to see if any means

offered for his forcing his entrance into the house. But as the habitation of the doctor was lonely, every precaution had been taken by him to render it secure against robbery; the windows below were well barricaded and secured, and those on the upper story were too high for anyone to obtain admittance by them.

We must here observe, that although Mynheer Poots was, from his known abilities, in good practice, his reputation as a hard-hearted, unfeeling miser was well established. No one was ever permitted to enter his threshold, nor, indeed, did any one feel inclined. He was as isolated from his fellow-creatures as was his tenement, and was only to be seen in the chamber of disease and death. What his establishment consisted of no one knew. When he first settled in the neighbourhood, an old decrepit woman occasionally answered the knocks given at the door by those who required the doctor's services; but she had been buried some time, and, ever since, all calls at the door had been answered by Mynheer Poots in person, if he were at home, and if not, there was no reply to the most importunate summons. It was then surmised that the old man lived entirely by himself, being too niggardly to pay for any assistance. This Philip also imagined; and as soon as he had recovered his breath, he began to devise some scheme by which he would be enabled not only to recover the stolen property, but also to wreak a dire revenge.

The door was strong, and not to be forced by any means which presented themselves to the eye of Vanderdecken. For a few minutes he paused to consider, and as he reflected, so did his

anger cool down, and he decided that it would be sufficient to recover his relic without having recourse to violence. So he called out in a loud voice:—

"Mynheer Poots, I know that you can hear me. Give me back what you have taken, and I will do you no hurt; but if you will not, you must take the consequence, for your life shall pay the forfeit before I leave this spot."

This speech was indeed very plainly heard by Mynheer Poots, but the little miser had recovered from his fright, and, thinking himself secure, could not make up his mind to surrender the relic without a struggle; so the doctor answered not, hoping that the patience of Philip would be exhausted, and that by some arrangement, such as the sacrifice of a few guilders, no small matter to one so needy as Philip, he would be able to secure what he was satisfied would sell at a high price.

Vanderdecken, finding that no answer was returned, indulged in strong invective, and then decided upon measures certainly in themselves by no means undecided.

There was part of a small stack of dry fodder standing not far from the house, and under the wall a pile of wood for firing. With these Vanderdecken resolved upon setting fire to the house, and thus, if he did not gain his relic, he would at least obtain ample revenge. He brought several armfuls of fodder and laid them at the door of the house, and upon that he piled the fagots and logs of wood, until the door was quite concealed by them. He then procured a light from the steel, flint, and tinder, which

every Dutchman carries in his pocket, and very soon he had fanned the pile into a flame. The smoke ascended in columns up to the rafters of the roof while the fire raged below. The door was ignited, and was adding to the fury of the flames, and Philip shouted with joy at the success of his attempt.

"Now, miserable despoiler of the dead—now, wretched thief, now you shall feel my vengeance," cried Philip, with a loud voice. "If you remain within, you perish in the flames; if you attempt to come out you shall die by my hands. Do you hear, Mynheer Poots—do you hear?"

Hardly had Philip concluded this address when the window of the upper floor furthest from the burning door was thrown open.

"Ay,—you come now to beg and to entreat; but no—no," cried Philip—who stopped as he beheld at the window what seemed to be an apparition, for, instead of the wretched little miser, he beheld one of the loveliest forms Nature ever deigned to mould—an angelic creature, of about sixteen or seventeen, who appeared calm and resolute in the midst of the danger by which she was threatened. Her long black hair was braided and twined round her beautifully-formed head; her eyes were large, intensely dark, yet soft; her forehead high and white, her chin dimpled, her ruby lips arched and delicately fine, her nose small and straight. A lovelier face could not be well imagined; it reminded you of what the best of painters have sometimes, in their more fortunate moments, succeeded in embodying, when they would represent a beauteous saint. And as the flames wreathed and the smoke burst out in

columns and swept past the window, so might she have reminded you in her calmness of demeanour of some martyr at the stake.

"What wouldst thou, violent young man? Why are the inmates of this house to suffer death by your means?" said the maiden, with composure.

For a few seconds Philip gazed, and could make no reply; then the thought seized him that, in his vengeance, he was about to sacrifice so much loveliness. He forgot everything but her danger, and seizing one of the large poles which he had brought to feed the flame, he threw off and scattered in every direction the burning masses, until nothing was left which could hurt the building but the ignited door itself; and this, which as yet—for it was of thick oak plank—had not suffered very material injury, he soon reduced, by beating it, with clods of earth, to a smoking and harmless state. During these active measures on the part of Philip, the young maiden watched him in silence.

"All is safe now, young lady," said Philip. "God forgive me that I should have risked a life so precious. I thought but to wreak my vengeance upon Mynheer Poots."

"And what cause can Mynheer Poots have given for such dreadful vengeance?" replied the maiden calmly.

"What cause, young lady? He came to my house—despoiled the dead—took from my mother's corpse a relic beyond price."

"Despoiled the dead!—he surely cannot—you must wrong him, young sir."

"No, no. It is the fact, lady,—and that relic—forgive me—but

that relic I must have. You know not what depends upon it."

"Wait, young sir," replied the maiden; "I will soon return."

Philip waited several minutes, lost in thought and admiration: so fair a creature in the house of Mynheer Poots! Who could she be? While thus ruminating, he was accosted by the silver voice of the object of his reveries, who, leaning out of the window, held in her hand the black ribbon to which was attached the article so dearly coveted.

"Here is your relic, sir," said the young female; "I regret much that my father should have done a deed which well might justify your anger: but here it is," continued she, dropping it down on the ground by Philip; "and now you may depart."

"Your father, maiden! can he be your *father*?" said Philip, forgetting to take up the relic which lay at his feet.

She would have retired from the window without reply, but Philip spoke again—

"Stop, lady, stop one moment, until I beg your forgiveness for my wild, foolish act. I swear by this sacred relic," continued he, taking it from the ground and raising it to his lips, "that had I known that any unoffending person had been in this house, I would not have done the deed, and much do I rejoice that no harm hath happened. But there is still danger, lady; the door must be unbarred, and the jambs, which still are glowing, be extinguished, or the house may yet be burnt. Fear not for your father, maiden, for had he done me a thousand times more wrong, you will protect each hair upon his head. He knows me well

enough to know I keep my word. Allow me to repair the injury I have occasioned, and then I will depart."

"No, no; don't trust him," said Mynheer Poots, from within the chamber.

"Yes, he may be trusted," replied the daughter; "and his services are much needed, for what could a poor weak girl like me, and a still weaker father, do in this strait? Open the door, and let the house be made secure." The maiden then addressed Philip —"He shall open the door, sir, and I will thank you for your kind service. I trust entirely to your promise."

"I never yet was known to break my word, maiden," replied Philip; "but let him be quick, for the flames are bursting out again."

The door was opened by the trembling hands of Mynheer Poots, who then made a hasty retreat upstairs. The truth of what Philip had said was then apparent. Many were the buckets of water which he was obliged to fetch before the fire was subdued; but during his exertions neither the daughter nor the father made their appearance.

When all was safe, Philip closed the door, and again looked up at the window. The fair girl made her appearance, and Philip, with a low obeisance, assured her that there was then no danger.

"I thank you, sir," replied she—"I thank you much. Your conduct, although hasty at first, has yet been most considerate."

"Assure your father, maiden, that all animosity on my part hath ceased, and that in a few days I will call and satisfy the

demand he hath against me."

The window closed, and Philip, more excited, but with feelings altogether different from those with which he had set out, looked at it for a minute, and then bent his steps to his own cottage.

Chapter III

The discovery of the beautiful daughter of Mynheer Poots had made a strong impression upon Philip Vanderdecken, and now he had another excitement to combine with those which already overcharged his bosom. He arrived at his own house, went upstairs, and threw himself on the bed from which he had been roused by Mynheer Poots. At first, he recalled to his mind the scene we have just described, painted in his imagination the portrait of the fair girl, her eyes, her expression, her silver voice, and the words which she had uttered; but her pleasing image was soon chased away by the recollection that his mother's corpse lay in the adjoining chamber, and that his father's secret was hidden in the room below.

The funeral was to take place the next morning, and Philip, who, since his meeting with the daughter of Mynheer Poots, appeared even to himself not so anxious for immediate examination of the room, resolved that he would not open it until after the melancholy ceremony. With this resolution he fell asleep; and exhausted with bodily and mental excitement, he did not wake until the next morning, when he was summoned by the priest to assist at the funeral rites. In an hour all was over; the crowd dispersed, and Philip, returning to the cottage, bolted the door that he might not be interrupted, and felt happy that he was alone.

There is a feeling in our nature which will arise when we again find ourselves in the tenement where death has been, and all traces of it have been removed. It is a feeling of satisfaction and relief at having rid ourselves of the memento of mortality, the silent evidence of the futility of our pursuits and anticipations. We know that we must one day die, but we always wish to forget it. The continual remembrance would be too great a check upon our mundane desires and wishes; and although we are told that we ever should have futurity in our thoughts, we find that life is not to be enjoyed if we are not permitted occasional forgetfulness. For who would plan what rarely he is permitted to execute, if each moment of the day he thought of death? We either hope that we may live longer than others, or we forget that we may not.

If this buoyant feeling had not been planted in our nature, how little would the world have been improved even from the deluge! Philip walked into the room where his mother had lain one short hour before, and unwittingly felt relief. Taking down the cabinet, he now recommenced his task; the back panel was soon removed, and a secret drawer discovered; he drew it out, and it contained what he presumed to be the object of his search,—a large key with a slight coat of rust upon it, which came off upon its being handled. Under the key was a paper, the writing on which was somewhat discoloured; it was in his mother's hand, and ran as follows:—

"It is now two nights since a horrible event took place which has induced me to close the lower chamber, and my brain is still

bursting with terror. Should I not, during my lifetime, reveal what occurred, still this key will be required, as at my death the room will be opened. When I rushed from it I hastened upstairs, and remained that night with my child; the next morning I summoned up sufficient courage to go down, turn the key, and bring it up into my chamber. It is now closed till I close my eyes in death. No privation, no suffering, shall induce me to open it, although in the iron cupboard under the buffet farthest from the window, there is money sufficient for all my wants; that money will remain there for my child, to whom, if I do not impart the fatal secret, he must be satisfied that it is one which it were better should be concealed, —one so horrible as to induce me to take the steps which I now do. The keys of the cupboards and buffets were, I think, lying on the table, or in my workbox, when I quitted the room. There is a letter on the table, at least I think so. It is sealed. Let not the seal be broken but by my son, and not by him unless he knows the secret. Let it be burnt by the priest,—for it is cursed;—and even should my son know all that I do, oh! let him pause,—let him reflect well before he breaks the seal,—for 'twere better he should know NO MORE!"

"Not know more!" thought Philip, as his eyes were still fixed upon the paper. "Yes, but I must and will know more! so forgive me, dearest mother, if I waste no time in reflection. It would be but time thrown away, when one is resolved as I am."

Philip pressed his lips to his mother's signature, folded up the paper, and put it into his pocket; then, taking the key, he

proceeded downstairs.

It was about noon when Philip descended to open the chamber; the sun shone bright, the sky was clear, and all without was cheerful and joyous. The front door of the cottage being closed, there was not much light in the passage when Philip put the key into the lock of the long-closed door, and with some difficulty turned it round. To say that when he pushed open the door he felt no alarm, would not be correct; he did feel alarm, and his heart palpitated; but he felt more than was requisite of determination to conquer that alarm, and to conquer more, should more be created by what he should behold. He opened the door, but did not immediately enter the room: he paused where he stood, for he felt as if he was about to intrude into the retreat of a disembodied spirit, and that that spirit might reappear. He waited a minute, for the effort of opening the door had taken away his breath, and, as he recovered himself, he looked within.

He could but imperfectly distinguish the objects in the chamber, but through the joints of the shutters there were three brilliant beams of sunshine forcing their way across the room, which at first induced him to recoil as if from something supernatural; but a little reflection reassured him. After about a minute's pause, Philip went into the kitchen, lighted a candle, and, sighing deeply two or three times as if to relieve his heart, he summoned his resolution, and walked towards the fatal room. He first stopped at the threshold, and, by the light of the candle, took a hasty survey. All was still: and the table on which the

letter had been left, being behind the door, was concealed by its being opened. It must be done, thought Philip: and why not at once? continued he, resuming his courage; and, with a firm step, he walked into the room and went to unfasten the shutters. If his hands trembled a little when he called to mind how supernaturally they had last been opened, it is not surprising. We are but mortal, and we shrink from contact with aught beyond this life. When the fastenings were removed and the shutters unfolded, a stream of light poured into the room so vivid as to dazzle his eyesight; strange to say, this very light of a brilliant day overthrew the resolution of Philip more than the previous gloom and darkness had done; and with the candle in his hand, he retreated hastily into the kitchen to re-summon his courage, and there he remained for some minutes, with his face covered, and in deep thought.

It is singular that his reveries at last ended by reverting to the fair daughter of Mynheer Poots, and her first appearance at the window; and he felt as if the flood of light which had just driven him from the one, was not more impressive and startling than her enchanting form at the other. His mind dwelling upon the beauteous vision appeared to restore Philip's confidence; he now rose and boldly walked into the room. We shall not describe the objects it contained as they chanced to meet the eyes of Philip, but attempt a more lucid arrangement.

The room was about twelve or fourteen feet square, with but one window; opposite to the door stood the chimney and

fireplace, with a high buffet of dark wood on each side. The floor of the room was not dirty, although about its upper parts spiders had run their cobwebs in every direction. In the centre of the ceiling, hung a quicksilver globe, a common ornament in those days, but the major part of it had lost its brilliancy, the spiders' webs enclosing it like a shroud. Over the chimney piece were hung two or three drawings framed and glazed, but a dusty mildew was spotted over the glass, so that little of them could be distinguished. In the centre of the mantel-piece was an image of the Virgin Mary, of pure silver, in a shrine of the same metal, but it was tarnished to the colour of bronze or iron; some Indian figures stood on each side of it. The glass doors of the buffets on each side of the chimney-piece were also so dimmed that little of what was within could be distinguished; the light and heat which had been poured into the room, even for so short a time, had already gathered up the damp of many years, and it lay as a mist and mingled with the dust upon the panes of glass: still here and there a glittering of silver vessels could be discerned, for the glass doors had protected them from turning black, although much dimmed in lustre.

On the wall facing the window were other prints, in frames equally veiled in damp and cobwebs, and also two bird-cages. The bird-cages Philip approached, and looked into them. The occupants, of course, had long been dead; but at the bottom of the cages was a small heap of yellow feathers, through which the little white bones of the skeletons were to be seen, proving

that they had been brought from the Canary Isles; and, at that period, such birds were highly valued. Philip appeared to wish to examine everything before he sought that which he most dreaded, yet most wished, to find. There were several chairs round the room: on one of them was some linen; he took it up. It was some that must have belonged to him when he was yet a child. At last, Philip turned his eyes to the wall not yet examined (that opposite the chimney-piece), through which the door was pierced, and behind the door as it lay open, he was to find the table, the couch, the workbox, and the FATAL LETTER. As he turned round, his pulse, which had gradually recovered its regular motion, beat more quickly; but he made the effort, and it was over. At first he examined the walls, against which were hung swords and pistols of various sorts, but chiefly Asiatic bows and arrows, and other implements of destruction. Philip's eyes gradually descended upon the table, and little couch behind it, where his mother stated herself to have been seated when his father made his awful visit. The workbox and all its implements were on the table, just as she had left them. The keys she mentioned were also lying there, but Philip looked, and looked again; there was no letter. He now advanced nearer, examined closely—there was none that he could perceive, either on the couch or on the table—or on the floor. He lifted up the workbox to ascertain if it was beneath—but no. He examined among its contents, but no letter was there. He turned over the pillows of the couch, but still there was no letter to be found. And Philip felt

as if there had been a heavy load removed from his panting chest. "Surely, then," thought he, as he leant against the wall, "this must have been the vision of a heated imagination. My poor mother must have fallen asleep, and dreamt this horrid tale. I thought it was impossible, at least I hoped so. It must have been as I suppose; the dream was too powerful, too like a fearful reality, partially unseated my poor mother's reason." Philip reflected again, and was then satisfied that his suppositions were correct.

"Yes, it must have been so, poor dear mother! how much thou hast suffered! but thou art now rewarded, and with God."

After a few minutes (during which he surveyed the room again and again with more coolness, and perhaps some indifference, now that he regarded the supernatural history as not true), Philip took out of his pocket the written paper found with the key, and read it over—"The iron cupboard under the buffet farthest from the window." "'Tis well." He took the bunch of keys from off the table, and soon fitted one to the outside wooden doors which concealed the iron safe. A second key on the bunch opened the iron doors; and Philip found himself in possession of a considerable sum of money, amounting, as near as he could reckon, to ten thousand guilders, in little yellow sacks. "My poor mother!" thought he; "and has a mere dream scared thee to penury and want, with all this wealth in thy possession?" Philip replaced the sacks, and locked up the cupboards, after having taken out of one, already half emptied, a few pieces for his immediate wants. His attention was next directed to the buffets

above, which, with one of the keys, he opened; he found that they contained china, silver flagons, and cups of considerable value. The locks were again turned, and the bunch of keys thrown upon the table.

The sudden possession of so much wealth added to the conviction, to which Philip had now arrived, that there had been no supernatural appearance, as supposed by his mother, naturally revived and composed his spirits; and he felt a reaction which amounted almost to hilarity. Seating himself on the couch, he was soon in a reverie, and as before, reverted to the lovely daughter of Mynheer Poots, indulging in various castle-buildings, all ending, as usual, when we choose for ourselves, in competence and felicity. In this pleasing occupation he remained for more than two hours, when his thoughts again reverted to his poor mother and her fearful death.

"Dearest, kindest mother!" apostrophised Philip aloud, as he rose from his leaning position, "here thou wert, tired with watching over my infant slumbers, thinking of my absent father and his dangers, working up thy mind and anticipating evil, till thy fevered sleep conjured up this apparition. Yes, it must have been so, for see here, lying on the floor, is the embroidery, as it fell from thy unconscious hands, and with that labour ceased thy happiness in this life. Dear, dear mother!" continued he, a tear rolling down his cheek as he stooped to pick up the piece of muslin, "how much hast thou suffered when—God of Heaven!" exclaimed Philip, as he lifted up the embroidery, starting back

with violence, and overturning the table, "God of Heaven and of Judgment, there is—there *is*," and Philip clasped his hands, and bowed his head in awe and anguish, as in a changed and fearful tone he muttered forth—"the LETTER!"

It was but too true,—underneath the embroidery on the floor had lain the fatal letter of Vanderdecken. Had Philip seen it on the table when he first went into the room, and was prepared to find it, he would have taken it up with some degree of composure; but to find it now, when he had persuaded himself that it was all an illusion on the part of his mother; when he had made up his mind that there had been no supernatural agency; after he had been indulging in visions of future bliss and repose, was a shock that transfixed him where he stood, and for some time he remained in his attitude of surprise and terror. Down at once fell the airy fabric of happiness which he had built up during the last two hours; and as he gradually recovered from his alarm, his heart filled with melancholy forebodings. At last he dashed forward, seized the letter, and burst out of the fatal room.

"I cannot, dare not, read it here," exclaimed he: "no, no, it must be under the vault of high and offended Heaven, that the message must be received." Philip took his hat, and went out of the house; in calm despair he locked the door, took out the key, and walked he knew not whither.

Chapter IV

If the reader can imagine the feelings of a man who, sentenced to death, and having resigned himself to his fate, finds himself unexpectedly reprieved; who, having recomposed his mind after the agitation arising from a renewal of those hopes and expectations which he had abandoned, once more dwells upon future prospects, and indulges in pleasing anticipations: we say, that if the reader can imagine this, and then what would be that man's feelings when he finds that the reprieve is revoked, and that he is to suffer, he may then form some idea of the state of Philip's mind when he quitted the cottage.

Long did he walk, careless in which direction, with the letter in his clenched hand, and his teeth firmly set. Gradually he became more composed: and out of breath with the rapidity of his motion, he sat down upon a bank, and there he long remained, with his eyes riveted upon the dreaded paper, which he held with both his hands upon his knees.

Mechanically he turned the letter over; the seal was black. Philip sighed.—"I cannot read it now," thought he, and he rose and continued his devious way.

For another half-hour did Philip keep in motion, and the sun was not many degrees above the horizon. Philip stopped and looked at it till his vision failed. "I could imagine that it was the eye of God," thought Philip, "and perhaps it may be. Why then,

merciful Creator, am I thus selected from so many millions to fulfil so dire a task?"

Philip looked about him for some spot where he might be concealed from observation—where he might break the seal, and read this mission from a world of spirits. A small copse of brushwood, in advance of a grove of trees, was not far from where he stood. He walked to it, and sat down, so as to be concealed from any passers-by. Philip once more looked at the descending orb of day, and by degrees he became composed.

"It is thy will," exclaimed he; "it is my fate, and both must be accomplished."

Philip put his hand to the seal,—his blood thrilled when he called to mind that it had been delivered by no mortal hand, and that it contained the secret of one in judgment. He remembered that that one was his father; and that it was only in the letter that there was hope,—hope for his poor father, whose memory he had been taught to love, and who appealed for help.

"Coward that I am, to have lost so many hours!" exclaimed Philip; "yon sun appears as if waiting on the hill, to give me light to read."

Philip mused a short time; he was once more the daring Vanderdecken. Calmly he broke the seal, which bore the initials of his father's name, and read as follows:—

"To CATHERINE.

> "One of those pitying spirits whose eyes rain tears for mortal crimes has been permitted to inform me by what

means alone my dreadful doom may be averted.

"Could I but receive on the deck of my own ship the holy relic upon which I swore the fatal oath, kiss it in all humility, and shed one tear of deep contrition on the sacred wood, I then might rest in peace.

"How this may be effected, or by whom so fatal a task will be undertaken, I know not. O Catherine, we have a son —but, no, no, let him not hear of me. Pray for me, and now, farewell.

"I. VANDERDECKEN."

"Then it is true, most horribly true," thought Philip; "and my father is even now IN LIVING JUDGMENT. And he points to me—to whom else should he? Am I not his son, and is it not my duty?

"Yes, father," exclaimed Philip aloud, falling on his knees, "you have not written these lines in vain. Let me peruse them once more."

Philip raised up his hand; but although it appeared to him that he had still hold of the letter, it was not there—he grasped nothing. He looked on the grass to see if it had fallen—but no, there was no letter, it had disappeared. Was it a vision?—no, no, he had read every word. "Then it must be to me, and me alone, that the mission was intended. I accept the sign.

"Hear me, dear father,—if thou art so permitted,—and deign to hear me, gracious Heaven—hear the son who, by this sacred relic, swears that he will avert your doom, or perish. To that will he devote his days; and having done his duty, he will die

in hope and peace. Heaven, that recorded my rash father's oath, now register his son's upon the same sacred cross, and may perjury on my part be visited with punishment more dire than his! Receive it, Heaven, as at the last I trust that in thy mercy thou wilt receive the father and the son! and if too bold, O pardon my presumption."

Philip threw himself forward on his face, with his lips to the sacred symbol. The sun went down, and twilight gradually disappeared; night had, for some time, shrouded all in darkness, and Philip yet remained in alternate prayer and meditation.

But he was disturbed by the voices of some men, who sat down upon the turf but a few yards from where he was concealed. The conversation he little heeded; but it had roused him, and his first feeling was to return to the cottage, that he might reflect over his plans; but although the men spoke in a low tone, his attention was soon arrested by the subject of their conversation, when he heard the name mentioned of Mynheer Poots. He listened attentively, and discovered that they were four disbanded soldiers, who intended that night to attack the house of the little doctor, who had, they knew, much money in his possession.

"What I have proposed is the best," said one of them; "he has no one with him but his daughter."

"I value her more than his money," replied another; "so, recollect before we go, it is perfectly understood that she is to be my property."

"Yes, if you choose to purchase her, there's no objection,"

replied a third.

"Agreed; how much will you in conscience ask for a puling girl?"

"I say five hundred guilders," replied another.

"Well, be it so, but on this condition, that if my share of the booty does not amount to so much, I am to have her for my share, whatever it may be."

"That's very fair," replied the other; "but I'm much mistaken if we don't turn more than two thousand guilders out of the old man's chest."

"What do you two say—is it agreed—shall Baetens have her?"

"O yes," replied the others.

"Well, then," replied the one who had stipulated for Mynheer Poots' daughter, "now I am with you, heart and soul. I loved that girl, and tried to get her,—I positively offered to marry her, but the old hunks refused me, an ensign, an officer; but now I'll have revenge. We must not spare him."

"No, no," replied the others.

"Shall we go now, or wait till it is later? In an hour or more the moon will be up,—we may be seen."

"Who is to see us? unless, indeed, some one is sent for him. The later the better, I say."

"How long will it take us to get there? Not half an hour, if we walk. Suppose we start in half an hour hence, we shall just have the moon to count the guilders by."

"That's all right. In the meantime I'll put a new flint in my

lock, and have my carbine loaded. I can work in the dark."

"You are used to it, Jan."

"Yes, I am,—and I intend this ball to go through the old rascal's head."

"Well, I'd rather you should kill him than I," replied one of the others, "for he saved my life at Middleburgh, when everyone made sure I'd die."

Philip did not wait to hear any more; he crawled behind the bushes until he gained the grove of trees, and passing through them, made a detour, so as not to be seen by these miscreants. That they were disbanded soldiers, many of whom were infesting the country, he knew well. All his thoughts were now to save the old doctor and his daughter from the danger which threatened them; and for a time he forgot his father, and the exciting revelations of the day. Although Philip had not been aware in what direction he had walked when he set off from the cottage, he knew the country well; and now that it was necessary to act, he remembered the direction in which he should find the lonely house of Mynheer Poots: with the utmost speed he made his way for it, and in less than twenty minutes he arrived there, out of breath.

As usual, all was silent, and the door fastened. Philip knocked, but there was no reply. Again and again he knocked, and became impatient. Mynheer Poots must have been summoned, and was not in the house; Philip therefore called out, so as to be heard within. "Maiden, if your father is out, as I presume he must be,

listen to what I have to say—I am Philip Vanderdecken. But now I overheard four wretches who have planned to murder your father, and rob him of his gold. In one hour or less they will be here, and I have hastened to warn and to protect you, if I may. I swear upon the relic that you delivered to me this morning that what I state is true."

Philip waited a short time, but received no answer.

"Maiden," resumed he, "answer me, if you value that which is more dear to you, than even your father's gold to him. Open the casement above, and listen to what I have to say. In so doing there is no risk; and even if it were not dark, already have I seen you."

A short time after this second address, the casement of the upper window was unbarred, and the slight form of the fair daughter of Mynheer Poots was to be distinguished by Philip through the gloom.

"What wouldst thou, young sir, at this unseemly hour? and what is it thou wouldst impart, but imperfectly heard by me, when thou spokest this minute at the door?"

Philip then entered into a detail of all that he had overheard, and concluded by begging her to admit him, that he might defend her.

"Think, fair maiden, of what I have told you. You have been sold to one of those reprobates, whose name I think they mentioned, was Baetens. The gold, I know, you value not; but think of thine own dear self—suffer me to enter the house, and think not for one moment that my story's feigned. I swear to thee,

by the soul of my poor dear mother, now, I trust, in heaven, that every word is true."

"Baetens, said you, sir?"

"If I mistook them not, such was the name; he said he loved you once."

"That name I have in memory—I know not what to do or what to say—my father has been summoned to a birth, and may be yet away for many hours. Yet how can I open the door to you—at night—he is not at home—I alone? I ought not—cannot—yet do I believe you. You surely never could be so base as to invent this tale."

"No—upon my hopes of future bliss I could not, maiden! You must not trifle with your life and honour, but let me in."

"And if I did, what could you do against such numbers? They are four to one—would soon overpower you, and one more life would be lost."

"Not if you have arms; and I think your father would not be left without them. I fear them not—you know that I am resolute."

"I do indeed—and now you'd risk your life for those you did assail. I thank you—thank you kindly, sir—but dare not open the door."

"Then, maiden, if you'll not admit me, here will I now remain; without arms, and but ill able to contend with four armed villains; but still, here will I remain and prove my truth to one I will protect against any odds—yes, even here!"

"Then shall I be thy murderer!—but that must not be. Oh! sir

—swear, swear by all that's holy, and by all that's pure, that you do not deceive me."

"I swear by thyself, maiden, than all to me more sacred!"

The casement closed, and in a short time a light appeared above. In a minute or two more the door was opened to Philip by the fair daughter of Mynheer Poots. She stood with the candle in her right hand, the colour in her cheeks varying—now flushing red, and again deadly pale. Her left hand was down by her side, and in it she held a pistol half concealed. Philip perceived this precaution on her part but took no notice of it; he wished to reassure her.

"Maiden!" said he, not entering, "if you still have doubts—if you think you have been ill-advised in giving me admission—there is yet time to close the door against me: but for your own sake I entreat you not. Before the moon is up, the robbers will be here. With my life I will protect you, if you will but trust me. Who indeed could injure one like you?"

She was indeed (as she stood irresolute and perplexed from the peculiarity of her situation, yet not wanting in courage when, it was to be called forth) an object well worthy of gaze and admiration. Her features thrown into broad light and shade by the candle which at times was half extinguished by the wind—her symmetry of form and the gracefulness and singularity of her attire—were matter of astonishment to Philip. Her head was without covering, and her long hair fell in plaits behind her shoulders; her stature was rather under the middle size, but

her form perfect; her dress was simple but becoming, and very different from that usually worn by the young women of the district. Not only her features but her dress would at once have indicated to a traveller that she was of Arab blood, as was the fact.

She looked in Philip's face as she spoke—earnestly, as if she would have penetrated into his inmost thoughts; but there was a frankness and honesty in his bearing, and a sincerity in his manly countenance, which reassured her. After a moment's hesitation she replied—

"Come in, sir; I feel that I can trust you."

Philip entered. The door was then closed and made secure.

"We have no time to lose, maiden," said Philip: "but tell me your name, that I may address you as I ought."

"My name is Amine," replied she, retreating a little.

"I thank you for that little confidence; but I must not dally. What arms have you in the house, and have you ammunition?"

"Both. I wish that my father would come home."

"And so do I," replied Philip, "devoutly wish he would, before these murderers come; but not, I trust, while the attack is making, for there's a carbine loaded expressly for his head, and if they make him prisoner, they will not spare his life, unless his gold and your person are given in ransom. But the arms, maiden—where are they?"

"Follow me," replied Amine, leading Philip to an inner room on the upper floor. It was the sanctum of her father, and was

surrounded with shelves filled with bottles and boxes of drugs. In one corner was an iron chest, and over the mantel-piece were a brace of carbines and three pistols.

"They are all loaded," observed Amine, pointing to them, and laying on the table the one which she had held in her hand.

Philip took down the arms, and examined all the primings. He then took up from the table the pistol which Amine had laid there, and threw open the pan. It was equally well prepared. Philip closed the pan, and with a smile observed,

"So this was meant for me, Amine?"

"No—not for you—but for a traitor, had one gained admittance."

"Now, maiden," observed Philip, "I shall station myself at the casement which you opened, but without a light in the room. You may remain here, and can turn the key for your security."

"You little know me," replied Amine. "In that way at least I am not fearful; I must remain near you and reload the arms—a task in which I am well practised."

"No, no," replied Philip; "you might be hurt."

"I may. But think you I will remain here idly, when I can assist one who risks his life for me? I know my duty, sir, and I shall perform it."

"You must not risk your life, Amine," replied Philip; "my aim will not be steady, if I know that you're in danger. But I must take the arms into the other chamber, for the time is come."

Philip, assisted by Amine, carried the carbines and pistols

into the adjoining chamber; and Amine then left Philip, carrying with her the light. Philip, as soon as he was alone, opened the casement and looked out—there was no one to be seen; he listened, but all was silent. The moon was just rising above the distant hill, but her light was dimmed by fleecy clouds, and Philip watched for a few minutes; at length he heard a whispering below. He looked out, and could distinguish through the dark the four expected assailants, standing close to the door of the house. He walked away softly from the window, and went into the next room to Amine, whom he found busy preparing the ammunition.

"Amine, they are at the door, in consultation. You can see them now, without risk. I thank them, for they will convince you that I have told the truth."

Amine, without reply, went into the front room and looked out of the window. She returned, and laying her hand upon Philip's arm, she said—

"Grant me your pardon for my doubts. I fear nothing now but that my father may return too soon, and they seize him."

Philip left the room again, to make his reconnaissance. The robbers did not appear to have made up their mind—the strength of the door defied their utmost efforts, so they attempted stratagem. They knocked, and as there was no reply, they continued to knock louder and louder: not meeting with success they held another consultation, and the muzzle of a carbine was then put to the keyhole, and the piece discharged. The lock of the door was blown off, but the iron bars which

crossed the door within, above and below, still held it fast.

Although Philip would have been justified in firing upon the robbers when he first perceived them in consultation at the door, still there is that feeling in a generous mind which prevents the taking away of life, except from stern necessity; and this feeling made him withhold his fire until hostilities had actually commenced. He now levelled one of the carbines at the head of the robber nearest to the door, who was busy examining the effect which the discharge of the piece had made, and what further obstacles intervened. The aim was true, and the man fell dead, while the others started back with surprise at the unexpected retaliation. But in a second or two a pistol was discharged at Philip, who still remained leaning out of the casement, fortunately without effect; and the next moment he felt himself drawn away, so as to be protected from their fire. It was Amine, who, unknown to Philip, had been standing by his side.

"You must not expose yourself, Philip," said she, in a low tone.

She called me Philip, thought he, but made no reply.

"They will be watching for you at the casement now," said Amine. "Take the other carbine, and go below in the passage. If the lock of the door is blown off, they may put their arms in perhaps, and remove the bars. I do not think they can, but I'm not sure; at all events, it is there you should now be, as there they will not expect you."

"You are right," replied Philip, going down.

"But you must not fire more than once there; if another

fall, there will be but two to deal with, and they cannot watch the casement and force admittance to. Go—I will reload the carbine."

Philip descended softly and without a light. He went up to the door and perceived that one of the miscreants, with his arms through the hole where the lock was blown off, was working at the upper iron bar, which he could just reach. He presented his carbine, and was about to fire the whole charge into the body of the man under his raised arm, when there was a report of fire-arms from the robbers outside.

"Amine has exposed herself," thought Philip, "and may be hurt."

The desire of vengeance prompted him first to fire his piece through the man's body, and then he flew up the stairs to ascertain the state of Amine. She was not at the casement; he darted into the inner room, and found her deliberately loading the carbine.

"My God! how you frightened me, Amine. I thought by their firing that you had shown yourself at the window."

"Indeed I did not; but I thought that when you fired through the door they might return your fire, and you be hurt; so I went to the side of the casement and pushed out on a stick some of my father's clothes, and they who were watching for you fired immediately."

"Indeed, Amine! who could have expected such courage and such coolness in one so young and beautiful?" exclaimed Philip,

with surprise.

"Are none but ill-favoured people brave, then?" replied Amine, smiling.

"I did not mean that, Amine—but I am losing time. I must to the door again. Give me that carbine, and reload this."

Philip crept downstairs that he might reconnoitre, but before he had gained the door he heard at a distance the voice of Mynheer Poots. Amine, who also heard it, was in a moment at his side with a loaded pistol in each hand.

"Fear not, Amine," said Philip, as he unbarred the door, "there are but two, and your father shall be saved."

The door was opened, and Philip, seizing his carbine, rushed out; he found Mynheer Poots on the ground between the two men, one of whom had raised his knife to plunge it into his body, when the ball of the carbine whizzed through his head. The last of the robbers closed with Philip, and a desperate struggle ensued; it was, however, soon decided by Amine stepping forward and firing one of the pistols through the robber's body.

We must here inform our readers that Mynheer Poots, when coming home, had heard the report of fire-arms in the direction of his own house. The recollection of his daughter and of his money—for to do him justice he did love her best—had lent him wings; he forgot that he was a feeble old man and without arms; all he thought of was to gain his habitation. On he came, reckless, frantic, and shouting, and rushed into the arms of the two robbers, who seized and would have despatched him, had

not Philip so opportunely come to his assistance.

As soon as the last robber fell, Philip disengaged himself and went to the assistance of Mynheer Poots, whom he raised up in his arms, and carried into the house as if he were an infant. The old man was still in a state of delirium from fear and previous excitement.

In a few minutes Mynheer Poots was more coherent.

"My daughter!" exclaimed he—"my daughter! where is she?"

"She is here, father, and safe," replied Amine.

"Ah! my child is safe," said he, opening his eyes and staring. "Yes, it is even so—and my money—my money—where is my money?" continued he, starting up.

"Quite safe, father."

"Quite safe—you say quite safe—are you sure of it?—let me see."

"There it is, father, as you may perceive, quite safe—thanks to one whom you have not treated so well."

"Who—what do you mean?—Ah, yes, I see him now—'tis Philip Vanderdecken—he owes me three guilders and a half, and there is a phial—did he save you—and my money, child?"

"He did, indeed, at the risk of his life."

"Well, well, I will forgive him the whole debt—yes, the whole of it; but—the phial is of no use to him—he must return that. Give me some water."

It was some time before the old man could regain his perfect reason. Philip left him with his daughter, and, taking a brace of

loaded pistols, went out to ascertain the fate of the four assailants. The moon having climbed above the banks of clouds which had obscured her, was now high in the heavens, shining bright, and he could distinguish clearly. The two men lying across the threshold of the door were quite dead. The others, who had seized upon Mynheer Poots, were still alive, but one was expiring and the other bled fast. Philip put a few questions to the latter, but he either would not or could not make any reply; he removed their weapons and returned to the house, where he found the old man attended by his daughter, in a state of comparative composure.

"I thank you, Philip Vanderdecken—I thank you much. You have saved my dear child, and my money—that is little, very little—for I am poor. May you live long and happily!"

Philip mused; the letter and his vow were, for the first time since he fell in with the robbers, recalled to his recollection, and a shade passed over his countenance.

"Long and happily—no, no," muttered he, with an involuntary shake of the head.

"And I must thank you," said Amine, looking inquiringly in Philip's face. "O, how much have I to thank you for!—and indeed I am grateful."

"Yes, yes, she is very grateful," interrupted the old man; "but we are poor—very poor. I talked about my money because I have so little, and I cannot afford to lose it; but you shall not pay me the three guilders and a half—I am content to lose that, Mr Philip."

"Why should you lose even that, Mynheer Poots?—I promised

to pay you, and will keep my word. I have plenty of money—thousands of guilders, and know not what to do with them."

"You—you—thousands of guilders!" exclaimed Poots. "Pooh, nonsense, that won't do."

"I repeat to you, Amine," said Philip, "that I have thousands of guilders: you know I would not tell you a falsehood."

"I believed you when you said so to my father," replied Amine.

"Then perhaps, as you have so much, and I am so very poor, Mr Vanderdecken—"

But Amine put her hand upon her father's lips, and the sentence was not finished.

"Father," said Amine, "it is time that we retire. You must leave us for to-night, Philip."

"I will not," replied Philip; "nor, you may depend upon it, will I sleep. You may both to bed in safety. It is indeed time that you retire—good-night, Mynheer Poots. I will but ask a lamp, and then I leave you—Amine, good-night."

"Good-night," said Amine, extending her hand, "and many, many thanks."

"Thousands of guilders!" muttered the old man, as Philip left the room and went below.

Chapter V

Philip Vanderdecken sat down at the porch of the door; he swept his hair from his forehead, which he exposed to the fanning of the breeze; for the continued excitement of the last three days had left a fever on his brain which made him restless and confused. He longed for repose, but he knew that for him there was no rest. He had his forebodings—he perceived in the vista of futurity a long-continued chain of danger and disaster, even to death; yet he beheld it without emotion and without dread. He felt as if it were only three days that he had begun to exist; he was melancholy, but not unhappy. His thoughts were constantly recurring to the fatal letter—its strange supernatural disappearance seemed pointedly to establish its supernatural origin, and that the mission had been intended for him alone; and the relic in his possession more fully substantiated the fact.

It is my fate, my duty, thought Philip. Having satisfactorily made up his mind to these conclusions, his thoughts reverted to the beauty, the courage, and presence of mind shown by Amine. And, thought he, as he watched the moon soaring high in the heavens, is this fair creature's destiny to be interwoven with mine? The events of the last three days would almost warrant the supposition. Heaven only knows, and Heaven's will be done. I have vowed, and my vow is registered, that I will devote my life to the release of my unfortunate father—but does that prevent

my loving Amine?—No, no; the sailor on the Indian seas must pass months and months on shore before he can return to his duty. My search must be on the broad ocean, but how often may I return? and why am I to be debarred the solace of a smiling hearth?—and yet—do I right in winning the affections of one who, if she loves, would, I am convinced, love so dearly, fondly, truly—ought I to persuade her to mate herself with one whose life will be so precarious? but is not every sailor's life precarious, daring the angry waves, with but an inch of plank 'tween him and death? Besides, I am chosen to fulfil a task—and if so, what can hurt me, till in Heaven's own time it is accomplished? but then how soon, and how is it to end? in death! I wish my blood were cooler, that I might reason better.

Such were the meditations of Philip Vanderdecken, and long did he revolve such chances in his mind. At last the day dawned, and as he perceived the blush upon the horizon, less careful of his watch he slumbered where he sat. A slight pressure on the shoulder made him start up and draw the pistol from his bosom. He turned round and beheld Amine.

"And that pistol was intended for me," said Amine, smiling, repeating Philip's words of the night before.

"For you, Amine?—yes, to defend you, if 'twere necessary, once more."

"I know it would—how kind of you to watch this tedious night after so much exertion and fatigue! but it is now broad day."

"Until I saw the dawn, Amine, I kept a faithful watch."

"But now retire and take some rest. My father is risen—you can lie down on his bed."

"I thank you, but I feel no wish for sleep. There is much to do. We must to the burgomaster and state the facts, and these bodies must remain where they are until the whole is known. Will your father go, Amine, or shall I?"

"My father surely is the more proper person, as the proprietor of the house. You must remain; and if you will not sleep, you must take some refreshment. I will go in and tell my father; he has already taken his morning's meal."

Amine went in, and soon returned with her father, who had consented to go to the burgomaster. He saluted Philip kindly as he came out; shuddered as he passed on one side to avoid stepping over the dead bodies, and went off at a quick pace to the adjacent town, where the burgomaster resided.

Amine desired Philip to follow her, and they went into her father's room, where, to his surprise, he found some coffee ready for him—at that time a rarity, and one which Philip did not expect to find in the house of the penurious Mynheer Poots; but it was a luxury which, from his former life, the old man could not dispense with.

Philip, who had not tasted food for nearly twenty-four hours, was not sorry to avail himself of what was placed before him. Amine sat down opposite to him, and was silent during his repast.

"Amine," said Philip at last, "I have had plenty of time for reflection during this night, as I watched at the door. May I speak

freely?"

"Why not?" replied Amine. "I feel assured that you will say nothing that you should not say, or should not meet a maiden's ear."

"You do me justice, Amine. My thoughts have been upon you and your father. You cannot stay in this lone habitation."

"I feel it is too lonely; that is, for his safety—perhaps for mine—but you know my father—the very loneliness suits him, the price paid for rent is little, and he is careful of his money."

"The man who would be careful of his money should place it in security—here it is not secure. Now hear me, Amine. I have a cottage surrounded, as you may have heard, by many others, which mutually protect each other. That cottage I am about to leave—perhaps for ever; for I intend to sail by the first ship to the Indian seas."

"The Indian seas! why so?—did you not last night talk of thousands of guilders?"

"I did, and they are there; but, Amine, I must go—it is my duty. Ask me no more, but listen to what I now propose. Your father must live in my cottage; he must take care of it for me in my absence; he will do me a favour by consenting; and you must persuade him. You will there be safe. He must also take care of my money for me. I want it not at present—I cannot take it with me."

"My father is not to be trusted with the money of other people."

"Why does your father hoard? He cannot take his money with him when he is called away. It must be all for you—and is not then my money safe?"

"Leave it then in my charge, and it will be safe; but why need you go and risk your life upon the water, when you have such ample means?"

"Amine, ask not that question. It is my duty as a son, and more I cannot tell, at least at present."

"If it is your duty, I ask no more. It was not womanish curiosity—no, no—it was a better feeling, I assure you, which prompted me to put the question."

"And what was the better feeling, Amine?"

"I hardly know—many good feelings perhaps mixed up together—gratitude, esteem, respect, confidence, good-will. Are not these sufficient?"

"Yes, indeed, Amine, and much to gain upon so short an acquaintance; but still I feel them all, and more, for you. If, then, you feel so much for me, do oblige me by persuading your father to leave this lonely house this day, and take up his abode in mine."

"And where do you intend to go yourself?"

"If your father will not admit me as a boarder for the short time I remain here, I will seek some shelter elsewhere; but if he will, I will indemnify him well—that is, if you raise no objection to my being for a few days in the house?"

"Why should I? Our habitation is no longer safe, and you offer us a shelter. It were, indeed, unjust and most ungrateful to turn

you out from beneath your own roof."

"Then persuade him, Amine. I will accept of nothing, but take it as a favour; for I should depart in sorrow if I saw you not in safety.—Will you promise me?"

"I do promise to use my best endeavours—nay, I may as well say at once it shall be so; for I know my influence. Here is my hand upon it. Will that content you?"

Philip took the small hand extended towards him. His feelings overcame his discretion; he raised it to his lips. He looked up to see if Amine was displeased, and found her dark eye fixed upon him, as once before when she admitted him, as if she would see his thoughts—but the hand was not withdrawn.

"Indeed, Amine," said Philip, kissing her hand once more, "you may confide in me."

"I hope—I think—nay, I am sure I may," at last replied she.

Philip released her hand. Amine returned to the seat, and for some time remained silent and in a pensive attitude. Philip also had his own thoughts, and did not open his lips. At last Amine spoke.

"I think I have heard my father say that your mother was very poor—a little deranged; and that there was a chamber in the house which had been shut up for years."

"It was shut up till yesterday."

"And there you found your money? Did your mother not know of the money?"

"She did, for she spoke of it on her death-bed."

"There must have been some potent reasons for not opening the chamber."

"There were."

"What were they, Philip?" said Amine, in a soft and low tone of voice.

"I must not tell, at least I ought not. This must satisfy you —'twas the fear of an apparition."

"What apparition?"

"She said that my father had appeared to her."

"And did he, think you, Philip?"

"I have no doubt that he did. But I can answer no more questions, Amine. The chamber is open now, and there is no fear of his reappearance."

"I fear not that," replied Amine, musing. "But," continued she, "is not this connected with your resolution of going to sea?"

"So far will I answer you, that it has decided me to go to sea; but I pray you ask no more. It is painful to refuse you, and my duty forbids me to speak further."

For some minutes they were both silent, when Amine resumed —

"You were so anxious to possess that relic, that I cannot help thinking it has connection with the mystery. Is it not so?"

"For the last time, Amine, I will answer your question—it has to do with it: but now no more."

Philip's blunt and almost rude manner of finishing his speech was not lost upon Amine, who replied,

"You are so engrossed with other thoughts, that you have not felt the compliment shown you by my taking such interest about you, sir."

"Yes, I do—I feel and thank you too, Amine. Forgive me, if I have been rude; but recollect, the secret is not mine—at least, I feel as if it were not. God knows, I wish I never had known it, for it has blasted all my hopes in life."

Philip was silent; and when he raised his eyes, he found that Amine's were fixed upon him.

"Would you read my thoughts, Amine, or my secret?"

"Your thoughts perhaps—your secret I would not; yet do I grieve that it should oppress you so heavily as evidently it does. It must, indeed, be one of awe to bear down a mind like yours, Philip."

"Where did you learn to be so brave, Amine?" said Philip, changing the conversation.

"Circumstances make people brave or otherwise; those who are accustomed to difficulty and danger fear them not."

"And where have you met with them, Amine?"

"In the country where I was born, not in this dank and muddy land."

"Will you trust me with the story of your former life, Amine? I can be secret, if you wish."

"That you can be secret perhaps, against my wish, you have already proved to me," replied Amine, smiling; "and you have a claim to know something of the life you have preserved. I cannot

tell you much, but what I can will be sufficient. My father, when a lad on board of a trading vessel, was taken by the Moors, and sold as a slave to a Hakim, or physician, of their country. Finding him very intelligent, the Moor brought him up as an assistant, and it was under this man that he obtained a knowledge of the art. In a few years he was equal to his master; but, as a slave, he worked not for himself. You know, indeed it cannot be concealed, my father's avarice. He sighed to become as wealthy as his master, and to obtain his freedom; he became a follower of Mahomet, after which he was free, and practised for himself. He took a wife from an Arab family, the daughter of a chief whom he had restored to health, and he settled in the country. I was born; he amassed wealth, and became much celebrated; but the son of a Bey dying under his hands was the excuse for persecuting him. His head was forfeited, but he escaped; not, however, without the loss of all his beloved wealth. My mother and I went with him; he fled to the Bedouins, with whom we remained some years. There I was accustomed to rapid marches, wild and fierce attacks, defeat and flight, and oftentimes to indiscriminate slaughter. But the Bedouins paid not well for my father's services, and gold was his idol. Hearing that the Bey was dead, he returned to Cairo, where he again practised. He was allowed once more to amass until the heap was sufficient to excite the cupidity of the new Bey; but this time he was fortunately made acquainted with the intentions of the ruler. He again escaped, with a portion of his wealth, in a small vessel, and gained the Spanish coast; but he

never has been able to retain his money long. Before he arrived in this country he had been robbed of almost all, and has now been for these three years laying up again. We were but one year at Middleburgh, and from thence removed to this place. Such is the history of my life, Philip."

"And does your father still hold the Mahomedan faith, Amine?"

"I know not. I think he holds no faith whatever: at least he hath taught me none. His god is gold."

"And yours?"

"Is the God who made this beautiful world, and all which it contains—the God of nature—name him as you will. This I feel, Philip, but more I fain would know; there are so many faiths, but surely they must be but different paths leading alike to heaven. Yours is the Christian faith, Philip. Is it the true one? But everyone calls his own the true one, whatever his creed may be."

"It is the true and only one, Amine. Could I but reveal—I have such dreadful proofs—"

"That your faith is true; then is it not your duty to reveal these proofs? Tell me, are you bound by any solemn obligation never to reveal?"

"No, I am not; yet do I feel as if I were. But I hear voices—it must be your father and the authorities—I must go down and meet them."

Philip rose, and went downstairs. Amine's eyes followed him as he went, and she remained looking towards the door.

"Is it possible," said she, sweeping the hair from off her brow, "so soon,—yes, yes, 'tis even so. I feel that I would sooner share his hidden woe—his dangers—even death itself were preferable with him, than ease and happiness with any other. And it shall be strange indeed if I do not. This night my father shall move into his cottage: I will prepare at once."

The report of Philip and Mynheer Poots was taken down by the authorities, the bodies examined, and one or two of them recognised as well-known marauders. They were then removed by the order of the burgomaster. The authorities broke up their council, and Philip and Mynheer Poots were permitted to return to Amine. It will not be necessary to repeat the conversation which ensued: it will be sufficient to state that Poots yielded to the arguments employed by Amine and Philip, particularly the one of paying no rent. A conveyance for the furniture and medicines was procured, and in the afternoon most of the effects were taken away. It was not, however, till dusk that the strong box of the doctor was put into the cart, and Philip went with it as a protector. Amine also walked by the side of the vehicle, with her father. As may be supposed, it was late that night before they had made their arrangements, and had retired to rest.

Chapter VI

"This, then, is the chamber which has so long been closed," said Amine, on entering it the next morning, long before Philip had awakened from the sound sleep produced by the watching of the night before. "Yes, indeed, it has the air of having long been closed." Amine looked around her, and then examined the furniture. Her eyes were attracted to the bird-cages; she looked into them:—"Poor little things!" continued she, "and here it was his father appeared unto his mother. Well, it may be so,—Philip saith that he hath proofs; and why should he not appear? Were Philip dead, I should rejoice to see his spirit,—at least it would be something. What am I saying—unfaithful lips, thus to betray my secret?—The table thrown over;—that looks like the work of fear; a workbox, with all its implements scattered,—only a woman's fear: a mouse might have caused all this; and yet there is something solemn in the simple fact that, for so many years, not a living being has crossed these boards. Even that a table thus overthrown could thus remain for years, seems scarcely natural, and therefore has its power on the mind. I wonder not that Philip feels there is so heavy a secret belonging to this room—but it must not remain in this condition—it must be occupied at once."

Amine, who had long been accustomed to attend upon her father, and perform the household duties, now commenced her intended labours.

Every part of the room, and every piece of furniture in it, were cleaned; even the cobwebs and dust were cleared away, and the sofa and table brought from the corner to the centre of the room; the melancholy little prisons were removed; and when Amine's work of neatness was complete, and the sun shone brightly into the opened window, the chamber wore the appearance of cheerfulness.

Amine had the intuitive good sense to feel that strong impressions wear away when the objects connected with them are removed. She resolved then to make Philip more at ease; for, with all the fire and warmth of blood inherent in her race, she had taken his image to her heart, and was determined to win him. Again and again did she resume her labour, until the pictures about the room, and every other article, looked fresh and clean.

Not only the bird-cages, but the workbox, and all the implements, were removed; and the piece of embroidery, the taking up of which had made Philip recoil, as if he had touched an adder, was put away with the rest. Philip had left the keys on the floor. Amine opened the buffets, cleaned the glazed doors, and was busy rubbing up the silver flagons when her father came into the room.

"Mercy on me!" exclaimed Mynheer Poots; "and is all that silver?—then it must be true, and he has thousands of guilders; but where are they?"

"Never do you mind, father; yours are now safe, and for that you have to thank Philip Vanderdecken."

"Yes, very true; but as he is to live here—does he eat much—what will he pay me? He ought to pay well, as he has so much money."

Amine's lips were curled with a contemptuous smile, but she made no reply.

"I wonder where he keeps his money; and he is going to sea as soon as he can get a ship? Who will have charge of his money when he goes?"

"I shall take charge of it, father," replied Amine.

"Ah—yes—well—we will take charge of it; the ship may be lost."

"No, *we* will not take charge of it, father; you will have nothing to do with it. Look after your own."

Amine placed the silver in the buffets, locked the doors, and took the keys with her when she went out to prepare breakfast, leaving the old man gazing through the glazed doors at the precious metal within. His eyes were riveted upon it, and he could not remove them. Every minute he muttered, "Yes, all silver."

Philip came downstairs; and as he passed by the room, intending to go into the kitchen, he perceived Mynheer Poots at the buffet, and he walked into the room. He was surprised as well as pleased with the alteration. He felt why and by whom it was done, and he was grateful. Amine came in with the breakfast, and their eyes spoke more than their lips could have done; and Philip sat down to his meal with less of sorrow and gloom upon his brow.

"Mynheer Poots," said Philip, as soon as he had finished, "I intend to leave you in possession of my cottage, and I trust you will find yourself comfortable. What little arrangements are necessary, I will confide to your daughter previous to my departure."

"Then you leave us, Mr Philip, to go to sea? It must be pleasant to go and see strange countries—much better than staying at home. When do you go?"

"I shall leave this evening for Amsterdam," replied Philip, "to make my arrangements about a ship, but I shall return, I think, before I sail."

"Ah! you will return. Yes—you have your money and your goods to see to; you must count your money—we will take good care of it. Where is your money, Mr Vanderdecken?"

"That I will communicate to your daughter this forenoon, before I leave. In three weeks at the furthest you may expect me back."

"Father," said Amine, "you promised to go and see the child of the burgomaster; it is time you went."

"Yes, yes—by-and-bye—all in good time; but I must wait the pleasure of Mr Philip first—he has much to tell me before he goes."

Philip could not help smiling when he remembered what had passed when he first summoned Mynheer Poots to the cottage, but the remembrance ended in sorrow and a clouded brow.

Amine, who knew what was passing in the minds of both her

father and Philip, now brought her father's hat, and led him to the door of the cottage; and Mynheer Poots, very much against his inclination, but never disputing the will of his daughter, was obliged to depart.

"So soon, Philip?" said Amine, returning to the room.

"Yes, Amine, immediately. But I trust to be back once more before I sail; if not, you must now have my instructions. Give me the keys."

Philip opened the cupboard below the buffet, and the doors of the iron safe.

"There, Amine, is my money; we need not count it, as your father would propose. You see that I was right when I asserted that I had thousands of guilders. At present they are of no use to me, as I have to learn my profession. Should I return some day, they may help me to own a ship. I know not what my destiny may be."

"And should you not return?" replied Amine, gravely.

"Then they are yours—as well as all that is in this cottage, and the cottage itself."

"You have relations, have you not?"

"But one, who is rich; an uncle, who helped us but little in our distress, and who has no children. I owe him but little, and he wants nothing. There is but one being in this world who has created an interest in this heart, Amine, and it is you. I wish you to look upon me as a brother—I shall always love you as a dear sister."

Amine made no reply. Philip took some more money out of the bag which had been opened, for the expenses of his journey, and then locking up the safe and cupboard, gave the keys to Amine. He was about to address her, when there was a slight knock at the door, and in entered Father Seysen, the priest.

"Save you, my son; and you, my child, whom as yet I have not seen. You are, I suppose, the daughter of Mynheer Poots?"

Amine bowed her head.

"I perceive, Philip, that the room is now opened, and I have heard of all that has passed. I would now talk with thee, Philip, and must beg this maiden to leave us for awhile alone."

Amine quitted the room, and the priest, sitting down on the couch, beckoned Philip to his side. The conversation which ensued was too long to repeat. The priest first questioned Philip relative to his secret, but on that point he could not obtain the information which he wished; Philip stated as much as he did to Amine, and no more. He also declared his intention of going to sea, and that, should he not return, he had bequeathed his property—the extent of which he did not make known—to the doctor and his daughter. The priest then made inquiries relative to Mynheer Poots, asking Philip whether he knew what his creed was, as he had never appeared at any church, and report said that he was an infidel. To this Philip, as usual, gave his frank answer, and intimated that the daughter, at least, was anxious to be enlightened, begging the priest to undertake a task to which he himself was not adequate. To this request Father Seysen, who

perceived the state of Philip's mind with regard to Amine, readily consented. After a conversation of nearly two hours, they were interrupted by the return of Mynheer Poots, who darted out of the room the instant he perceived Father Seysen. Philip called Amine, and having begged her as a favour to receive the priest's visits, the good old man blessed them both and departed.

"You did not give him any money, Mr Philip?" said Mynheer Poots, when Father Seysen had left the room.

"I did not," replied Philip; "I wish I had thought of it."

"No, no—it is better not—for money is better than what he can give you; but he must not come here."

"Why not, father," replied Amine, "if Mr Philip wishes it? It is his own house."

"O yes, if Mr Philip wishes it; but you know he is going away."

"Well, and suppose he is—why should not the Father come here? He shall come here to see me."

"See you, my child!—what can he want with you? Well, then, if he comes, I will not give him one stiver—and then he'll soon go away."

Philip had no opportunity of further converse with Amine; indeed he had nothing more to say. In an hour he bade her farewell in presence of her father, who would not leave them, hoping to obtain from Philip some communication about the money which he was to leave behind him.

In two days Philip arrived at Amsterdam, and having made the necessary inquiries, found that there was no chance of vessels

sailing for the East Indies for some months. The Dutch East India Company had long been formed, and all private trading was at an end. The Company's vessels left only at what was supposed to be the most favourable season for rounding the Cape of Storms, as the Cape of Good Hope was designated by the early adventurers. One of the ships which were to sail with the next fleet was the *Ter Schilling*, a three-masted vessel, now laid up and unrigged.

Philip found out the captain, and stated his wishes to sail with him, to learn his profession as a seaman; the captain was pleased with his appearance, and as Philip not only agreed to receive no wages during the voyage, but to pay a premium as an apprentice learning his duty, he was promised a berth on board as the second mate, to mess in the cabin; and he was told that he should be informed whenever the vessel was to sail. Philip having now done all that he could in obedience to his vow, determined to return to the cottage; and once more he was in the company of Amine.

We must now pass over two months, during which Mynheer Poots continued to labour at his vocation, and was seldom within doors, and our two young friends were left for hours together. Philip's love for Amine was fully equal to hers for him. It was more than love—it was a devotion on both sides, each day increasing. Who, indeed, could be more charming, more attractive in all ways than the high-spirited, yet tender Amine? Occasionally the brow of Philip would be clouded when he reflected upon the dark prospect before him; but Amine's smile would chase away the gloom, and, as he gazed on her, all

would be forgotten. Amine made no secret of her attachment; it was shown in every word, every look, and every gesture. When Philip would take her hand, or encircle her waist with his arm, or even when he pressed her coral lips, there was no pretence of coyness on her part. She was too noble, too confiding; she felt that her happiness was centred in his love, and she lived but in his presence. Two months had thus passed away, when Father Seysen, who often called, and had paid much attention to Amine's instruction, one day came in as Amine was encircled in Philip's arms.

"My children," said he, "I have watched you for some time: this is not well. Philip, if you intend marriage, as I presume you do, still it is dangerous. I must join your hands."

Philip started up.

"Surely I am not deceived in thee, my son," continued the priest, in a severe tone.

"No, no, good Father; but I pray you leave me now: to-morrow you may come, and all will be decided. But I must talk with Amine."

The priest quitted the room, and Amine and Philip were again alone. The colour in Amine's cheek varied and her heart beat, for she felt how much her happiness was at stake.

"The priest is right, Amine," said Philip, sitting down by her. "This cannot last;—would that I could ever stay with you: how hard a fate is mine! You know I love the very ground you tread upon, yet I dare not ask thee to wed to misery."

"To wed with thee would not be wedding misery, Philip," replied Amine, with downcast eyes.

"'Twere not kindness on my part, Amine. I should indeed be selfish."

"I will speak plainly, Philip," replied Amine. "You say you love me,—I know not how men love,—but this I know, how I can love. I feel that to leave me now were indeed unkind and selfish on your part; for, Philip, I—I should die. You say that you must go away,—that fate demands it,—and your fatal secret. Be it so; —but cannot I go with you?"

"Go with me, Amine—unto death?"

"Yes, death; for what is death but a release? I fear not death, Philip; I fear but losing thee. Nay, more; is not your life in the hands of Him who made all? then why so sure to die? You have hinted to me that you are chosen—selected for a task;—if chosen, there is less chance of death; for until the end be fulfilled, if chosen, you must live. I would I knew your secret, Philip: a woman's wit might serve you well: and if it did not serve you, is there no comfort, no pleasure, in sharing sorrow as well as joy with one you say you dote upon?"

"Amine, dearest Amine; it is my love, my ardent love alone, which makes me pause: for, O Amine, what pleasure should I feel if we were this hour united! I hardly know what to say, or what to do. I could not withhold my secret from you if you were my wife, nor will I wed you till you know it. Well, Amine, I will cast my all upon the die. You shall know this secret, learn what a doomed

wretch I am, though from no fault of mine, and then you yourself shall decide. But remember, my oath is registered in heaven, and I must not be dissuaded from it; keep that in mind, and hear my tale,—then if you choose to wed with one whose prospects are so bitter, be it so,—a short-lived happiness will then be mine, but for you, Amine—"

"At once the secret, Philip," cried Amine, impatiently.

Philip then entered into a detail of what our readers are acquainted with. Amine listened in silence; not a change of feature was to be observed in her countenance during the narrative. Philip wound up with stating the oath which he had taken. "I have done," said Philip, mournfully.

"'Tis a strange story, Philip," replied Amine: "and now hear me;—but give me first that relic,—I wish to look upon it. And can there be such virtue—I had nigh said, such mischief—in this little thing? Strange; forgive me, Philip,—but I've still my doubts upon this tale of *Eblis*. You know I am not yet strong in the new belief which you and the good priest have lately taught me. I do not say that it *cannot* be true: but still, one so unsettled as I am may be allowed to waver. But, Philip, I'll assume that all is true. Then, if it be true, without the oath you would be doing but your duty; and think not so meanly of Amine as to suppose she would restrain you from what is right. No, Philip, seek your father, and, if you can, and he requires your aid, then save him. But, Philip, do you imagine that a task like this, so high, is to be accomplished at one trial? O! no;—if you have been so chosen to fulfil it, you

will be preserved through difficulty and danger until you have worked out your end. You will be preserved, and you will again and again return;—be comforted—consoled—be cherished—and be loved by Amine as your wife. And when it pleases Him to call you from this world, your memory, if she survive you, Philip, will equally be cherished in her bosom. Philip, you have given me to decide;—dearest Philip, I am thine."

Amine extended her arms, and Philip pressed her to his bosom. That evening Philip demanded his daughter of the father, and Mynheer Poots, as soon as Philip opened the iron safe and displayed the guilders, gave his immediate consent.

Father Seysen called the next day and received his answer; and three days afterwards, the bells of the little church of Terneuse were ringing a merry peal for the union of Amine Poots and Philip Vanderdecken.

Chapter VII

It was not until late in the autumn that Philip was roused from his dream of love (for what, alas! is every enjoyment of this life but a dream?) by a summons from the captain of the vessel with whom he had engaged to sail. Strange as it may appear, from the first day which put him in possession of his Amine, Philip had no longer brooded over his future destiny: occasionally it was recalled to his memory, but immediately rejected, and, for the time, forgotten. Sufficient he thought it to fulfil his engagement when the time should come; and although the hours flew away, and day succeeded day, week week, and month month, with the rapidity accompanying a life of quiet and unvarying bliss, Philip forgot his vow in the arms of Amine, who was careful not to revert to a topic which would cloud the brow of her adored husband. Once, indeed, or twice, had old Poots raised the question of Philip's departure, but the indignant frown and the imperious command of Amine (who knew too well the sordid motives which actuated her father, and who, at such times, looked upon him with abhorrence) made him silent, and the old man would spend his leisure hours in walking up and down the parlour with his eyes riveted upon the buffets, where the silver tankards now beamed in all their pristine brightness.

One morning, in the month of October, there was a tapping with the knuckles at the cottage door. As this precaution implied

a stranger, Amine obeyed the summons, "I would speak with Master Philip Vanderdecken," said the stranger, in a half-whispering sort of voice.

The party who thus addressed Amine was a little meagre personage, dressed in the garb of the Dutch seamen of the time, with a cap made of badger-skin hanging over his brow. His features were sharp and diminutive, his face of a deadly white, his lips pale, and his hair of a mixture between red and white. He had very little show of beard—indeed, it was almost difficult to say what his age might be. He might have been a sickly youth early sinking into decrepitude, or an old man, hale in constitution, yet carrying no flesh. But the most important feature, and that which immediately riveted the attention of Amine, was the eye of this peculiar personage—for he had but one; the right eye-lid was closed, and the ball within had evidently wasted away; but his left eye was, for the size of his face and head, of unusual dimensions, very protuberant, clear and watery, and most unpleasant to look upon, being relieved by no fringe of eyelash either above or below it. So remarkable was the feature, that when you looked at the man, you saw his eye and looked at nothing else. It was not a man with one eye, but one eye with a man attached to it: the body was but the tower of the lighthouse, of no further value, and commanding no further attention, than does the structure which holds up the beacon to the venturous mariner; and yet, upon examination, you would have perceived that the man, although small, was neatly made; that his hands were very different in

texture and colour from those of common seamen; that his features in general, although sharp, were regular; and that there was an air of superiority even in the obsequious manner of the little personage, and an indescribable something about his whole appearance which almost impressed you with awe. Amine's dark eyes were for a moment fixed upon the visitor, and she felt a chill at her heart for which she could not account, as she requested that he would walk in.

Philip was greatly surprised at the appearance of the stranger, who, as soon as he entered the room, without saying a word, sat down on the sofa by Philip in the place which Amine had just left. To Philip there was something ominous in this person taking Amine's seat; all that had passed rushed into his recollection, and he felt that there was a summons from his short existence of enjoyment and repose to a life of future activity, danger, and suffering. What peculiarly struck Philip was, that when the little man sat beside him, a sensation of sudden cold ran through his whole frame. The colour fled from Philip's cheek, but he spoke not. For a minute or two there was a silence. The one-eyed visitor looked round him, and turning from the buffets he fixed his eyes on the form of Amine, who stood before him; at last the silence was broken by a sort of giggle on the part of the stranger, which ended in—

"Philip Vanderdecken—he! he!—Philip Vanderdecken, you don't know me?"

"I do not," replied Philip, in a half-angry tone.

The voice of the little man was most peculiar—it was a sort of subdued scream, the notes of which sounded in your ear long after he had ceased to speak.

"I am Schriften, one of the pilots of the *Ter Schilling*," continued the man; "and I'm come—he! he!"—and he looked hard at Amine—"to take you away from love"—and looking at the buffets—"he! he! from comfort, and from this also," cried he, stamping his foot on the floor as he rose from the sofa—"from terra firma—he! he!—to a watery grave perhaps. Pleasant!" continued Schriften, with a giggle; and with a countenance full of meaning he fixed his one eye on Philip's face.

Philip's first impulse was to put his new visitor out of the door; but Amine, who read his thoughts, folded her arms as she stood before the little man, and eyed him with contempt, as she observed:—

"We all must meet our fate, good fellow; and, whether by land or sea, death will have his due. If death stare him in the face, the cheek of Philip Vanderdecken will never turn as white as yours is now."

"Indeed!" replied Schriften, evidently annoyed at this cool determination on the part of one so young and beautiful; and then fixing his eye upon the silver shrine of the Virgin on the mantel-piece—"You are a Catholic, I perceive—he!"

"I am a Catholic," replied Philip; "but does that concern you? When does the vessel sail?"

"In a week—he! he!—only a week for preparation—only

seven days to leave all—short notice!"

"More than sufficient," replied Philip, rising up from the sofa. "You may tell your captain that I shall not fail. Come, Amine, we must lose no time."

"No, indeed," replied Amine, "and our first duty is hospitality: Mynheer, may we offer you refreshment after your walk?"

"This day week," said Schriften, addressing Philip, and without making a reply to Amine. Philip nodded his head, the little man turned on his heel and left the room, and in a short time was out of sight.

Amine sank down on the sofa. The breaking-up of her short hour of happiness had been too sudden, too abrupt, and too cruelly brought about for a fondly doting, although heroic, woman. There was an evident malignity in the words and manner of the one-eyed messenger, an appearance as if he knew more than others, which awed and confused both Philip and herself. Amine wept not, but she covered her face with her hands as Philip, with no steady pace, walked up and down the small room. Again, with all the vividness of colouring, did the scenes half forgotten recur to his memory. Again did he penetrate the fatal chamber—again was it obscure. The embroidery lay at his feet, and once more he started as when the letter appeared upon the floor.

They had both awakened from a dream of present bliss, and shuddered at the awful future which presented itself. A few minutes were sufficient for Philip to resume his natural self-

possession. He sat down by the side of his Amine, and clasped her in his arms. They remained silent. They knew too well each other's thoughts; and, excruciating as was the effort, they were both summoning up their courage to bear, and steeling their hearts against the conviction that, in this world, they must now expect to be for a time, perhaps for ever, separated.

Amine was the first to speak: removing her arms, which had been wound round her husband, she first put his hand to her heart, as if to compress its painful throbbings, and then observed —

"Surely that was no earthly messenger, Philip! Did you not feel chilled to death when he sat by you? I did, as he came in."

Philip, who had the same thought as Amine, but did not wish to alarm her, answered confusedly—

"Nay, Amine, you fancy—that is, the suddenness of his appearance and his strange conduct have made you imagine this; but I saw in him but a man who, from his peculiar deformity, has become an envious outcast of society—debarred from domestic happiness, from the smiles of the other sex; for what woman could smile upon such a creature? His bile raised at so much beauty in the arms of another, he enjoyed a malignant pleasure in giving a message which he felt would break upon those pleasures from which he is cut off. Be assured, my love, that it was nothing more."

"And even if my conjecture were correct, what does it matter?" replied Amine. "There can be nothing more—nothing

which can render your position more awful and more desperate. As your wife, Philip, I feel less courage than I did when I gave my willing hand. I knew not then what would be the extent of my loss; but fear not, much as I feel here," continued Amine, putting her hand to her heart—"I am prepared, and proud that he who is selected for such a task is my husband." Amine paused. "You cannot surely have been mistaken, Philip?"

"No! Amine, I have not been mistaken, either in the summons or in my own courage, or in my selection of a wife," replied Philip, mournfully, as he embraced her. "It is the will of Heaven."

"Then may its will be done," replied Amine, rising from her seat. "The first pang is over. I feel better now, Philip. Your Amine knows her duty."

Philip made no reply; when, after a few moments, Amine continued:

"But one short week, Philip—"

"I would it had been but one day;" replied he; "it would have been long enough. He has come too soon—the one-eyed monster."

"Nay, not so, Philip. I thank him for the week—'tis but a short time to wean myself from happiness. I grant you, that were I to tease, to vex, to unman you with my tears, my prayers, or my upbraidings (as some wives would do, Philip), one day would be more than sufficient for such a scene of weakness on my part, and misery on yours. But, no, Philip, your Amine knows her duty better. You must go like some knight of old to perilous encounter,

perhaps to death; but Amine will arm you, and show her love by closing carefully each rivet to protect you in your peril, and will see you depart full of hope and confidence, anticipating your return. A week is not too long, Philip, when employed as I trust I shall employ it—a week to interchange our sentiments, to hear your voice, to listen to your words (each of which will be engraven on my heart's memory), to ponder on them, and feed my love with them in your absence and in my solitude. No! no! Philip; I thank God that there is yet a week."

"And so do I, then, Amine; and, after all, we knew that this must come."

"Yes! but my love was so potent, that it banished memory."

"And yet during our separation your love must feed on memory, Amine."

Amine sighed. Here their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mynheer Poots, who, struck with the alteration in Amine's radiant features, exclaimed, "Holy Prophet! what is the matter now?"

"Nothing more than what we all knew before," replied Philip; "I am about to leave you—the ship will sail in a week."

"Oh! you will sail in a week?"

There was a curious expression in the face of the old man as he endeavoured to suppress, before Amine and her husband, the joy which he felt at Philip's departure. Gradually he subdued his features into gravity, and said—

"That is very bad news, indeed."

No answer was made by Amine or Philip, who quitted the room together.

We must pass over this week, which was occupied in preparations for Philip's departure. We must pass over the heroism of Amine, who controlled her feelings, racked as she was with intense agony at the idea of separating from her adored husband. We cannot dwell upon the conflicting emotions in the breast of Philip, who left competence, happiness, and love, to encounter danger, privation, and death. Now, at one time, he would almost resolve to remain, and then at others, as he took the relic from his bosom and remembered his vow registered upon it, he was nearly as anxious to depart. Amine, too, as she fell asleep in her husband's arms, would count the few hours left them; or she would shudder, as she lay awake and the wind howled, at the prospect of what Philip would have to encounter. It was a long week to both of them, and, although they thought that time flew fast, it was almost a relief when the morning came that was to separate them; for to their feelings, which, from regard to each other, had been pent up and controlled, they could then give vent; their surcharged bosoms could be relieved; certainty had driven away suspense, and hope was still left to cheer them and brighten up the dark horizon of the future.

"Philip," said Amine, as they sat together with their hands entwined, "I shall not feel so much when you are gone. I do not forget that all this was told me before we were wed, and that for my love I took the hazard. My fond heart often tells me that you

will return; but it may deceive me—return you *may*, but not in life. In this room I shall await you; on this sofa, removed to its former station, I shall sit; and if you cannot appear to me alive, O refuse me not, if it be possible, to appear to me when dead. I shall fear no storm, no bursting open of the window. O no! I shall hail the presence even of your spirit. Once more; let me but see you—let me be assured that you are dead—and then I shall know that I have no more to live for in this world, and shall hasten to join you in a world of bliss. Promise me, Philip."

"I promise all you ask, provided Heaven will so permit; but, Amine," and Philip's lips trembled, "I cannot—merciful God! I am indeed tried. Amine, I can stay no longer."

Amine's dark eyes were fixed upon her husband—she could not speak—her features were convulsed—nature could no longer hold up against her excess of feeling—she fell into his arms, and lay motionless. Philip, about to impress a last kiss upon her pale lips, perceived that she had fainted.

"She feels not now," said he, as he laid her upon the sofa; "it is better that it should be so—too soon will she awake to misery."

Summoning to the assistance of his daughter Mynheer Poots, who was in the adjoining room, Philip caught up his hat, imprinted one more fervent kiss upon her forehead, burst from the house, and was out of sight long before Amine had recovered from her swoon.

Chapter VIII

Before we follow Philip Vanderdecken in his venturous career, it will be necessary to refresh the memory of our readers by a succinct recapitulation of the circumstances that had directed the enterprise of the Dutch towards the country of the East, which was now proving to them a source of wealth which they considered as inexhaustible.

Let us begin at the beginning. Charles the Fifth, after having possessed the major part of Europe, retired from the world, for reasons best known to himself, and divided his kingdoms between Ferdinand and Philip. To Ferdinand he gave Austria and its dependencies; to Philip Spain; but to make the division more equal and palatable to the latter, he threw the Low Countries, with the few millions vegetating upon them, into the bargain. Having thus disposed of his fellow-mortals much to his own satisfaction, he went into a convent, reserving for himself a small income, twelve men, and a pony. Whether he afterwards repented his hobby, or mounted his pony, is not recorded; but this is certain—that in two years he died.

Philip thought (as many have thought before and since) that he had a right to do what he pleased with his own. He therefore took away from the Hollanders most of their liberties: to make amends, however, he gave them the Inquisition; but the Dutch grumbled, and Philip, to stop their grumbling, burnt

a few of them. Upon which, the Dutch, who are aquatic in their propensities, protested against a religion which was much too warm for their constitutions. In short, heresy made great progress; and the Duke of Alva was despatched with a large army, to prove to the Hollanders that the Inquisition was the very best of all possible arrangements, and that it was infinitely better that a man should be burnt for half-an-hour in this world than for eternity in the next.

This slight difference of opinion was the occasion of a war, which lasted about eight years, and which, after having saved some hundreds of thousands the trouble of dying in their beds, at length ended in the Seven United Provinces being declared independent. Now we must go back again.

For a century after Vasco de Gama had discovered the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, the Portuguese were not interfered with by other nations. At last the adventurous spirit of the English nation was roused. The passage to India by the Cape had been claimed by the Portuguese as their sole right, and they defended it by force. For a long time no private company ventured to oppose them, and the trade was not of that apparent value to induce any government to embark in a war upon the question. The English adventurers, therefore, turned their attention to the discovery of a north-west passage to India, with which the Portuguese could have no right to interfere, and in vain attempts to discover that passage, the best part of the fifteenth century was employed. At last they abandoned

their endeavours, and resolved no longer to be deterred by the Portuguese pretensions.

After one or two unsuccessful expeditions, an armament was fitted out and put under the orders of Drake. This courageous and successful navigator accomplished more than the most sanguine had anticipated. He returned to England in the month of May, 1580, after a voyage which occupied him nearly three years; bringing home with him great riches, and having made most favourable arrangements with the king of the Molucca Islands.

His success was followed up by Cavendish and others in 1600. The English East India Company, in the meanwhile, received their first charter from the government, and had now been with various success carrying on the trade for upwards of fifty years.

During the time that the Dutch were vassals to the crown of Spain, it was their custom to repair to Lisbon for the productions of the East, and afterwards to distribute them through Europe; but when they quarrelled with Philip, they were no longer admitted as retailers of his Indian produce: the consequence was, that, while asserting, and fighting for, their independence, they had also fitted out expeditions to India. They were successful; and in 1602 the various speculators were, by the government, formed into a company, upon the same principles and arrangement as those which had been chartered in England.

At the time, therefore, to which we are reverting, the English and Dutch had been trading in the Indian seas for more than fifty years; and the Portuguese had lost nearly all their power, from

the alliances and friendships which their rivals had formed with the potentates of the East, who had suffered from the Portuguese avarice and cruelty.

Whatever may have been the sum of obligation which the Dutch owed to the English for the assistance they received from them during their struggle for independence, it does not appear that their gratitude extended beyond the Cape; for, on the other side of it, the Portuguese, English, and Dutch fought and captured each other's vessels without ceremony; and there was no law but that of main force. The mother countries were occasionally called upon to interfere, but the interference up to the above time had produced nothing more than a paper war; it being very evident that all parties were in the wrong.

In 1650, Cromwell usurped the throne of England, and the year afterwards, having, among other points, vainly demanded of the Dutch satisfaction for the murder of his regicide ambassador, which took place in this year, and some compensation for the cruelties exercised on the English at Amboyne some thirty years before he declared war with Holland. To prove that he was in earnest, he seized more than two hundred Dutch vessels, and the Dutch then (very unwillingly) prepared for war. Blake and Van Tromp met, and the naval combats were most obstinate. In the "History of England" the victory is almost invariably given to the English, but in that of Holland to the Dutch. By all accounts, these engagements were so obstinate, that in each case they were both well beaten. However, in 1654, peace was signed; the

Dutchman promising "to take his hat off" whenever he should meet an Englishman on the high seas—a mere act of politeness which Mynheer did not object to, as it *cost nothing*. And now, having detailed the state of things up to the time of Philip's embarkation, we shall proceed with our story.

As soon as Philip was clear of his own threshold, he hastened away as though he were attempting to escape from his own painful thoughts. In two days he arrived at Amsterdam, where his first object was to procure a small, but strong, steel chain to replace the ribbon by which the relic had hitherto been secured round his neck. Having done this, he hastened to embark with his effects on board of the *Ter Schilling*. Philip had not forgotten to bring with him the money which he had agreed to pay the captain, in consideration of being received on board as an apprentice rather than a sailor. He had also furnished himself with a further sum for his own exigencies. It was late in the evening when he arrived on board of the *Ter Schilling*, which lay at single anchor, surrounded by the other vessels composing the Indian fleet. The captain, whose name was Kloots, received him with kindness, showed him his berth, and then went below in the hold to decide a question relative to the cargo, leaving Philip on deck to his own reflections.

And this, then, thought Philip, as he leaned against the taffrail and looked forward—this, then, is the vessel in which my first attempt is to be made. First and—perhaps, last. How little do those with whom I am about to sail imagine the purport of my

embarkation? How different are my views from those of others? Do *I* seek a fortune? No! Is it to satisfy curiosity and a truant spirit? No! I seek communion with the dead. Can I meet the dead without danger to myself and those who sail with me? I should think not, for I cannot join it but in death. Did they surmise my wishes and intentions, would they permit me to remain one hour on board? Superstitious as seamen are said to be, they might find a good excuse, if they knew my mission, not only for their superstition, but for ridding themselves of one on such an awful errand. Awful indeed! and how to be accomplished? Heaven alone, with perseverance on my part, can solve the mystery. And Philip's thoughts reverted to his Amine. He folded his arms and, entranced in meditation, with his eyes raised to the firmament, he appeared to watch the flying scud.

"Had you not better go below?" said a mild voice, which made Philip start from his reverie.

It was that of the first mate, whose name was Hillebrant, a short, well-set man of about thirty years of age. His hair was flaxen, and fell in long flakes upon his shoulders, his complexion fair, and his eyes of a soft blue; although there was little of the sailor in his appearance, few knew or did their duty better.

"I thank you," replied Philip; "I had, indeed, forgotten myself, and where I was: my thoughts were far away. Good-night, and many thanks."

The *Ter Schilling*, like most of the vessels of that period, was very different in her build and fitting from those of the present

day. She was ship-rigged, and of about four hundred tons burden. Her bottom was nearly flat, and her sides fell in (as she rose above the water), so that her upper decks were not half the width of the hold.

All the vessels employed by the Company being armed, she had her main deck clear of goods, and carried six nine-pounders on each broadside; her ports were small and oval. There was a great spring in all her decks,—that is to say, she ran with a curve forward and aft. On her forecastle another small deck ran from the knight-heads, which was called the top-gallant forecastle. Her quarter-deck was broken with a poop, which rose high out of the water. The bowsprit staved very much, and was to appearance almost as a fourth mast: the more so, as she carried a square spritsail and sprit-topsail. On her quarter-deck and poop-bulwarks were fixed in sockets implements of warfare now long in disuse, but what were then known by the names of cohorns and patteraroes; they turned round on a swivel, and were pointed by an iron handle fixed to the breech. The sail abaft the mizen-mast (corresponding to the driver or spanker of the present day) was fixed upon a lateen-yard. It is hardly necessary to add (after this description) that the dangers of a long voyage were not a little increased by the peculiar structure of the vessels, which (although with such top hamper, and so much wood above water, they could make good way before a favourable breeze) could hold no wind, and had but little chance if caught upon a lee-shore.

The crew of the *Ter Schilling* were composed of the captain,

two mates, two pilots, and forty-five men. The supercargo had not yet come on board. The cabin (under the poop) was appropriated to the supercargo; but the main-deck cabin to the captain and mates, who composed the whole of the cabin mess.

When Philip awoke the next morning he found that the topsails were hoisted, and the anchor short-stay apeak. Some of the other vessels of the fleet were under weigh and standing out. The weather was fine and the water smooth, and the bustle and novelty of the scene were cheering to his spirits. The captain, Mynheer Kloots, was standing on the poop with a small telescope, made of pasteboard, to his eye, anxiously looking towards the town. Mynheer Kloots, as usual, had his pipe in his mouth, and the smoke which he puffed from it for a time obscured the lenses of his telescope. Philip went up the poop ladder and saluted him.

Mynheer Kloots was a person of no moderate dimensions, and the quantity of garments which he wore added no little to his apparent bulk. The outer garments exposed to view were, a rough fox-skin cap upon his head, from under which appeared the edge of a red worsted nightcap; a red plush waistcoat, with large metal buttons; a jacket of green cloth, over which he wore another of larger dimensions of coarse blue cloth, which came down as low as what would be called a spencer. Below he had black plush breeches, light blue worsted stockings, shoes, and broad silver buckles; round his waist was girded, with a broad belt, a canvas apron which descended in thick folds nearly to his

knee. In his belt was a large broad-bladed knife in a sheath of shark's skin. Such was the attire of Mynheer Kloots, captain of the *Ter Schilling*.

He was as tall as he was corpulent. His face was oval, and his features small in proportion to the size of his frame. His grizzly hair fluttered in the breeze, and his nose (although quite straight) was, at the tip, fiery red from frequent application to his bottle of schnapps, and the heat of a small pipe which seldom left his lips, except for *him* to give an order, or for *it* to be replenished.

"Good morning, my son," said the captain, taking his pipe out of his mouth for a moment. "We are detained by the supercargo, who appears not over-willing to come on board; the boat has been on shore this hour waiting for him, and we shall be last of the fleet under weigh. I wish the Company would let us sail without these *gentlemen*, who are (*in my opinion)* a great hindrance to business; but they think otherwise on shore."

"What is their duty on board?" replied Philip.

"Their duty is to look after the cargo and the traffic, and if they kept to that, it would not be so bad; but they interfere with everything else and everybody, studying little except their own comforts; in fact, they play the king on board, knowing that we dare not affront them, as a word from them would prejudice the vessel when again to be chartered. The Company insist upon their being received with all honours. We salute them with five guns on their arrival on board."

"Do you know anything of this one whom you expect?"

"Nothing, but from report. A brother captain of mine (with whom he has sailed) told me that he is most fearful of the dangers of the sea, and much taken up with his own importance."

"I wish he would come," replied Philip; "I am most anxious that we should sail."

"You must be of a wandering disposition, my son: I hear that you leave a comfortable home, and a pretty wife to boot."

"I am most anxious to see the world," replied Philip; "and I must learn to sail a ship before I purchase one, and try to make the fortune that I covet." (Alas! how different from my real wishes, thought Philip, as he made this reply.)

"Fortunes are made, and fortunes are swallowed up too, by the ocean," replied the captain. "If I could turn this good ship into a good house, with plenty of guilders to keep the house warm, you would not find me standing on this poop. I have doubled the Cape twice, which is often enough for any man; the third time may not be so lucky."

"Is it so dangerous, then?" said Philip.

"As dangerous as tides and currents, rocks and sand-banks, hard gales and heavy seas, can make it,—no more! Even when you anchor in the bay, on this side of the Cape, you ride in fear and trembling, for you may be blown away from your anchor to sea, or be driven on shore among the savages, before the men can well put on their clothing. But when once you're well on the other side of the Cape, then the water dances to the beams of the sun as if it were merry, and you may sail for weeks with a cloudless sky

and a flowing breeze, without starting tack or sheet, or having to take your pipe out of your mouth."

"What port shall we go into, Mynheer?"

"Of that I can say but little. Gambroon, in the Gulf of Persia, will probably be the first rendezvous of the whole fleet. Then we shall separate: some will sail direct for Bantam, in the island of Java; others will have orders to trade down the Straits for camphor, gum, benzoin, and wax; they have also gold and the teeth of the elephant to barter with us: there (should we be sent thither) you must be careful with the natives, Mynheer Vanderdecken. They are fierce and treacherous, and their curved knives (or creeses, as they, call them) are sharp and deadly poisoned. I have had hard fighting in those Straits both with Portuguese and English."

"But we are all at peace now."

"True, my son; but when round the Cape, we must not trust to papers signed at home: and the English press us hard, and tread upon our heels wherever we go. They must be checked; and I suspect our fleet is so large and well appointed in expectation of hostilities."

"How long do you expect your voyage may occupy us?"

"That's as may be: but I should say about two years;—nay, if not detained by the factors, as I expect we shall be, for some hostile service, it may be less."

Two years, thought Philip, two years from Amine! and he sighed deeply, for he felt that their separation might be for ever.

"Nay, my son, two years is not so long," said Mynheer Kloots, who observed the passing cloud on Philip's brow. "I was once five years away, and was unfortunate, for I brought home nothing, not even my ship. I was sent to Chittagong, on the east side of the great Bay of Bengala, and lay for three months in the river. The chiefs of the country would detain me by force; they would not barter for my cargo, or permit me to seek another market. My powder had been landed, and I could make no resistance. The worms ate through the bottom of my vessel, and she sank at her anchors. They knew it would take place, and that then they would have my cargo at their own price. Another vessel brought us home. Had I not been so treacherously served, I should have had no need to sail this time; and now my gains are small, the Company forbidding all private trading. But here he comes at last; they have hoisted the ensign on the staff in the boat; there—they have shoved off. Mynheer Hillebrant, see the gunners ready with their linstocks to salvo the supercargo."

"What duty do you wish me to perform?" observed Philip. "In what can I be useful?"

"At present you can be of little use, except in those heavy gales in which every pair of hands is valuable. You must look and learn for some time yet; but you can make a fair copy of the journal kept for the inspection of the Company, and may assist me in various ways, as soon as the unpleasant nausea, felt by those who first embark, has subsided. As a remedy, I should propose that you gird a handkerchief tight round your body so as

to compress the stomach, and make frequent application of my bottle of schnapps, which you will find always at your service. But now to receive the factor of the most puissant Company. Mynheer Hillebrant, let them discharge the cannon."

The guns were fired, and soon after the smoke had cleared away, the boat, with its long ensign trailing on the water, was pulled alongside. Philip watched the appearance of the supercargo, but he remained in the boat until several of the boxes with the initials and arms of the Company were first handed on the deck; at last the supercargo appeared.

He was a small, spare, wizen-faced man, with a three-cornered cocked hat, bound with broad gold lace, upon his head, under which appeared a full-bottomed flowing wig, the curls of which descended low upon his shoulders. His coat was of crimson velvet, with broad flaps: his waistcoat of white silk, worked in coloured flowers, and descending half-way down to his knees. His breeches were of black satin, and his legs were covered with white silk stockings. Add to this, gold buckles at his knees and in his shoes, lace ruffles to his wrists, and a silver-mounted cane in his hand, and the reader has the entire dress of Mynheer Jacob Janz Von Stroom, the supercargo of the Hon. Company, appointed to the good ship *Ter Schilling*.

As he looked round him, surrounded at a respectful distance by the captain, officers, and men of the ship, with their caps in their hands, the reader might be reminded of the picture of the "Monkey who had seen the World" surrounded by his tribe.

There was not, however, the least inclination on the part of the seamen to laugh, even at his flowing, full-bottomed wig: respect was at that period paid to dress; and although Mynheer Von Stroom could not be mistaken for a sailor, he was known to be the supercargo of the Company, and a very great man. He therefore received all the respect due to so important a personage.

Mynheer Von Stroom did not, however, appear very anxious to remain on deck. He requested to be shown into his cabin, and followed the captain aft, picking his way among the coils of ropes with which his path was encumbered. The door was opened, and the supercargo disappeared. The ship was then got under weigh, the men had left the windlass, the sails had been trimmed, and they were securing the anchor on board, when the bell of the poop-cabin (appropriated to the supercargo) was pulled with great violence.

"What can that be?" said Mynheer Kloots (who was forward), taking the pipe out of his mouth. "Mynheer Vanderdecken, will you see what is the matter?"

Philip went aft, as the pealing of the bell continued, and opening the cabin door, discovered the supercargo perched upon the table and pulling the bell-rope, which hung over its centre, with every mark of fear in his countenance. His wig was off, and his bare skull gave him an appearance peculiarly ridiculous.

"What is the matter, sir?" inquired Philip.

"Matter!" spluttered Mynheer Von Stroom; "call the troops in with their firelocks. Quick, sir. Am I to be murdered, torn

to pieces, and devoured? For mercy's sake, sir, don't stare, but do something—look, it's coming to the table! O dear! O dear!" continued the supercargo, evidently terrified out of his wits.

Philip, whose eyes had been fixed on Mynheer Von Stroom, turned them in the direction pointed out, and, much to his astonishment perceived a small bear upon the deck who was amusing himself with the supercargo's flowing wig, which he held in his paws, tossing it about, and now and then burying his muzzle in it. The unexpected sight of the animal was at first a shock to Philip, but a moment's consideration assured him that the animal must be harmless, or it never would have been permitted to remain loose in the vessel.

Nevertheless, Philip had no wish to approach the animal, whose disposition he was unacquainted with, when the appearance of Mynheer Kloots put an end to his difficulty.

"What is the matter, Mynheer?" said the captain. "O! I see: it is Johannes," continued the captain, going up to the bear, and saluting him with a kick, as he recovered the supercargo's wig. "Out of the cabin, Johannes! Out, sir!" cried Mynheer Kloots, kicking the breech of the bear till the animal had escaped through the door. "Mynheer Von Stroom, I am very sorry—here is your wig. Shut the door, Mynheer Vanderdecken, or the beast may come back, for he is very fond of me."

As the door was shut between Mynheer Von Stroom and the object of his terror, the little man slid off the table to the high-backed chair near it, shook out the damaged curls of his wig, and

replaced it on his head; pulled out his ruffles, and, assuming an air of magisterial importance, struck his cane on the deck, and then spoke.

"Mynheer Kloots, what is the meaning of this disrespect to the supercargo of the puissant Company?"

"God in Heaven! no disrespect, Mynheer;—the animal is a bear, as you see; he is very tame, even with strangers. He belongs to me. I have had him since he was three months old. It was all a mistake. The mate, Mynheer Hillebrant, put him in the cabin, that he might be out of the way while the duty was carrying on, and he quite forgot that he was here. I am very sorry, Mynheer Von Stroom; but he will not come here again, unless you wish to play with him."

"Play with him! I! supercargo to the Company, play with a bear! Mynheer Kloots, the animal must be thrown overboard immediately."

"Nay, nay; I cannot throw overboard an animal that I hold in much affection, Mynheer Von Stroom; but he shall not trouble you."

"Then, Captain Kloots, you will have to deal with the Company, to whom I shall represent the affair. Your charter will be cancelled, and your freight-money will be forfeited."

Kloots was, like most Dutchmen, not a little obstinate, and this imperative behaviour on the part of the supercargo raised his bile. "There is nothing in the charter that prevents my having an animal on board," replied Kloots.

"By the regulations of the Company," replied Von Stroom, falling back in his chair with an important air, and crossing his thin legs, "you are required to receive on board strange and curious animals, sent home by the governors and factors to be presented to crowned heads,—such as lions, tigers, elephants, and other productions of the East;—but in no instance is it permitted to the commanders of chartered ships to receive on board, on their own account, animals of any description, which must be considered under the offence of private trading."

"My bear is not for sale, Mynheer Von Stroom."

"It must immediately be sent out of the ship, Mynheer Kloots; I order you to send it away,—on your peril to refuse."

"Then we will drop the anchor again, Mynheer Von Stroom, and send on shore to head-quarters to decide the point. If the Company insists that the brute be put on shore, be it so; but recollect, Mynheer Von Stroom, we shall lose the protection of the fleet, and have to sail alone. Shall I drop the anchor, Mynheer?"

This observation softened down the pertinacity of the supercargo; he had no wish to sail alone, and the fear of this contingency was more powerful than the fear of the bear.

"Mynheer Kloots, I will not be too severe; if the animal is chained, so that it does not approach me, I will consent to its remaining on board."

"I will keep it out of your way as much as I can; but as for chaining up the poor animal, it will howl all day and night, and

you will have no sleep, Mynheer Von Stroom," replied Kloots.

The supercargo, who perceived that the captain was positive, and that his threats were disregarded, did all that a man could do who could not help himself. He vowed vengeance in his own mind, and then, with an air of condescension, observed: "Upon those conditions, Mynheer Kloots, your animal may remain on board."

Mynheer Kloots and Philip then left the cabin; the former, who was in no very good humour, muttering as he walked away —"If the Company send their *monkeys* on board, I think I may well have my *bear*" And, pleased with his joke, Mynheer Kloots recovered his good humour.

Chapter IX

We must allow the Indian fleet to pursue its way to the Cape with every variety of wind and weather. Some had parted company; but the rendezvous was Table Bay, from which they were again to start together.

Philip Vanderdecken was soon able to render some service on board. He studied his duty diligently, for employment prevented him from dwelling too much upon the cause of his embarkation, and he worked hard at the duties of the ship, for the exercise procured for him that sleep which otherwise would have been denied.

He was soon a favourite of the captain, and intimate with Hillebrant, the first mate; the second mate, Struys, was a morose young man, with whom he had little intercourse. As for the supercargo, Mynheer Jacob Janz Von Stroom, he seldom ventured out of his cabin. The bear Johannes was not confined, and therefore Mynheer Von Stroom confined himself; hardly a day passed that he did not look over a letter which he had framed upon the subject, all ready to forward to the Company; and each time that he perused it he made some alteration, which he considered would give additional force to his complaint, and would prove still more injurious to the interests of Captain Kloots.

In the meantime, in happy ignorance of all that was passing

in the poop-cabin, Mynheer Kloots smoked his pipe, drank his schnapps, and played with Johannes. The animal had also contracted a great affection for Philip, and used to walk the watch with him.

There was another party in the ship whom we must not lose sight of—the one-eyed pilot, Schriften, who appeared to have imbibed a great animosity towards our hero, as well as to his dumb favourite the bear. As Philip held the rank of an officer, Schriften dared not openly affront, though he took every opportunity of annoying him, and was constantly inveighing against him before the ship's company. To the bear he was more openly inveterate, and seldom passed it without bestowing upon it a severe kick, accompanied with a horrid curse. Although no one on board appeared to be fond of this man, everybody appeared to be afraid of him, and he had obtained a control over the seamen which appeared unaccountable.

Such was the state of affairs on board the good ship *Ter Schilling*, when, in company with two others, she lay becalmed about two days' sail to the Cape. The weather was intensely hot, for it was the summer in those southern latitudes, and Philip, who had been lying down under the awning spread over the poop, was so overcome with the heat that he had fallen asleep. He awoke with a shivering sensation of cold over his whole body, particularly at his chest, and half-opening his eyes, he perceived the pilot, Schriften, leaning over him, and holding between his finger and his thumb a portion of the chain which had not been

concealed, and to which was attached the sacred relic. Philip closed them again, to ascertain what were the man's intentions: he found that he gradually dragged out the chain, and, when the relic was clear, attempted to pass the whole over his head, evidently to gain possession of it. Upon his attempt Philip started up and seized him by the waist.

"Indeed!" cried Philip, with an indignant look, as he released the chain from the pilot's hand.

But Schriften appeared not in the least confused at being detected in his attempt: looking with his malicious one eye at Philip, he mockingly observed:

"Does that chain hold her picture?—he! he!"

Vanderdecken rose, pushed him away, and folded his arms.

"I advise you not to be quite so curious, Master Pilot, or you may repent it."

"Or perhaps," continued the pilot, quite regardless of Philip's wrath, "it may be a child's caul, a sovereign remedy against drowning."

"Go forward to your duty, sir," cried Philip.

"Or, as you are a Catholic, the finger-nail of a saint; or, yes, I have it—a piece of the holy cross."

Philip started.

"That's it! that's it!" cried Schriften, who now went forward to where the seamen were standing at the gangway. "News for you, my lads!" said he; "we've a bit of the holy cross aboard, and so we may defy the devil!"

Philip, hardly knowing why, had followed Schriften as he descended the poop-ladder, and was forward on the quarter-deck, when the pilot made this remark to the seamen.

"Ay! ay!" replied an old seaman to the pilot; "not only the devil, but the *Flying Dutchman* to boot."

"The *Flying Dutchman*" thought Philip, "can that refer to—?" and Philip walked a step or two forward, so as to conceal himself behind the mainmast, hoping to obtain some information, should they continue the conversation. In this he was not disappointed.

"They say that to meet with him is worse than meeting with the devil," observed another of the crew.

"Who ever saw him?" said another.

"He has been seen, that's sartain, and just as sartain that ill-luck follows the vessel that falls in with him."

"And where is he to be fallen in with?"

"O! they say that's not so sartain—but he cruises off the Cape."

"I should like to know the whole long and short of the story," said a third.

"I can only tell what I've heard. It's a doomed vessel; they were pirates, and cut the captain's throat, I believe."

"No! no!" cried Schriften, "the captain is in her now—and a villain he was. They say that, like somebody else on board of us now, he left a very pretty wife, and that he was very fond of her."

"How do they know that, pilot?"

"Because he always wants to send letters home when he boards

vessels that he falls in with. But, woe to the vessel that takes charge of them!—she is sure to be lost, with every soul on board!"

"I wonder where you heard all this," said one of the men. "Did you ever see the vessel?"

"Yes, I did!" screamed Schriften; but, as if recovering himself, his scream subsided into his usual giggle, and he added, "but we need not fear her, boys; we've a bit of the true cross on board." Schriften then walked aft as if to avoid being questioned, when he perceived Philip by the mainmast.

"So, I'm not the only one curious?—he! he! Pray did you bring that on board, in case we should fall in with the *Flying Dutchman?*"

"I fear no *Flying Dutchman*," replied Philip, confused.

"Now I think of it, you are of the same name; at least they say that his name was Vanderdecken—eh?"

"There are many Vanderdeckens in the world besides me," replied Philip, who had recovered his composure; and having made this reply, he walked away to the poop of the vessel.

"One would almost imagine this malignant one-eyed wretch was aware of the cause of my embarkation," mused Philip; "but no! that cannot be. Why do I feel such a chill whenever he approaches me? I wonder if others do; or whether it is a mere fancy on the part of Amine and myself. I dare ask no questions. —Strange, too, that the man should feel such malice towards me. I never injured him. What I have just overheard confirms all; but

there needed no confirmation. Oh, Amine! Amine! but for thee, and I would rejoice to solve this riddle at the expense of life. God in mercy check the current of my brain," muttered Philip, "or my reason cannot hold its seat!"

In three days the *Ter Schilling* and her consorts arrived at Table Bay, where they found the remainder of the fleet at anchor waiting for them. Just at that period the Dutch had formed a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, where the Indian fleets used to water and obtain cattle from the Hottentot tribes who lived on the coast, and who for a brass button or a large nail would willingly offer a fat bullock. A few days were occupied in completing the water of the squadron, and then the ships, having received from the Admiral their instructions as to the rendezvous in case of parting company, and made every preparation for the bad weather which they anticipated, again weighed their anchors, and proceeded on their voyage.

For three days they beat against light and baffling winds, making but little progress; on the third, the breeze sprang up strong from the southward, until it increased to a gale, and the fleet were blown down to the northward of the bay. On the seventh day the *Ter Schilling* found herself alone, but the weather had moderated. Sail was again made upon the vessel, and her head put to the eastward, that she might run in for the land.

"We are unfortunate in thus parting with all our consorts," observed Mynheer Kloots to Philip, as they were standing at the gangway; "but it must be near meridian, and the sun will enable

me to discover our latitude. It is difficult to say how far we may have been swept by the gale and the currents to the northward. Boy, bring up my cross-staff, and be mindful that you do not strike it against anything as you come up."

The cross-staff at that time was the simple instrument used to discover the latitude, which it would give to a nice observer to within five or ten miles. Quadrants and sextants were the invention of a much later period. Indeed, considering that they had so little knowledge of navigation and the variation of the compass, and that their easting and westing could only be computed by dead reckoning, it is wonderful how our ancestors traversed the ocean in the way they did, with comparatively so few accidents.

"We are full three degrees to the northward of the Cape," observed Mynheer Kloots, after he had computed his latitude. "The currents must be running strong; the wind is going down fast, and we shall have a change, if I mistake not."

Towards the evening it fell calm, with a heavy swell setting towards the shore; shoals of seals appeared on the surface, following the vessel as she drove before the swell; the fish darted and leaped in every direction, and the ocean around them appeared to be full of life as the sun slowly descended to the horizon.

"What is that noise we hear?" observed Philip; "it sounds like distant thunder."

"I hear it," replied Mynheer Kloots. "Aloft there; do you see

the land?"

"Yes," replied the man, after a pause in ascending the topmast shrouds. "It is right ahead—low sand-hills, and the sea breaking high."

"Then that must be the noise we hear. We sweep in fast with this heavy ground-swell. I wish the breeze would spring up."

The sun was dipping under the horizon, and the calm still continued: the swell had driven the *Ter Schilling* so rapidly on the shore that now they could see the breakers, which fell over with the noise of thunder.

"Do you know the coast, pilot?" observed the captain to Schriften, who stood by.

"Know it well," replied Schriften; "the sea breaks in twelve fathoms at least. In half an hour the good ship will be beaten into toothpicks, without a breeze to help us." And the little man giggled as if pleased at the idea.

The anxiety of Mynheer Kloots was not to be concealed; his pipe was every moment in and out of his mouth. The crew remained in groups on the forecastle and gangway, listening with dismay to the fearful roaring of the breakers. The sun had sunk down below the horizon, and the gloom of night was gradually adding to the alarm of the crew of the *Ter Schilling*.

"We must lower down the boats," said Mynheer Kloots to the first mate, "and try to tow her off. We cannot do much good, I'm afraid; but at all events the boats will be ready for the men to get into before she drives on shore. Get the tow ropes out and lower

down the boats, while I go in to acquaint the supercargo."

Mynheer Von Stroom was sitting in all the dignity of his office, and it being Sunday had put on his very best wig. He was once more reading over the letter to the Company, relative to the bear, when Mynheer Kloots made his appearance, and informed him in a few words that they were in a situation of peculiar danger, and that in all probability the ship would be in pieces in less than half an hour. At this alarming intelligence, Mynheer Von Stroom jumped up from his chair, and in his hurry and fear knocked down the candle which had just been lighted.

"In danger! Mynheer Kloots!—why, the water is smooth and the wind down! My hat—where is my hat and my cane? I will go on deck. Quick! A light—Mynheer Kloots, if you please to order a light to be brought; I can find nothing in the dark. Mynheer Kloots, why do you not answer? Mercy on me! he is gone and has left me."

Mynheer Kloots had gone to fetch a light, and now returned with it. Mynheer Von Stroom put on his hat, and walked out of the cabin. The boats were down and the ship's head had been turned round from the land; but it was now quite dark, and nothing was to be seen but the white line of foam created by the breakers as they dashed with an awful noise against the shore.

"Mynheer Kloots, if you please, I'll leave the ship directly. Let my boat come alongside—I must have the largest boat for the Honourable Company's service—for the papers and myself."

"I'm afraid not, Mynheer Von Stroom," replied Kloots; "our

boats will hardly hold the men as it is, and every man's life is as valuable to himself as yours is to you."

"But, Mynheer, I am the Company's supercargo. I order you —I will have one—refuse if you dare."

"I dare, and do refuse," replied the captain, taking his pipe out of his mouth.

"Well, well," replied Mynheer Von Stroom, who now lost all presence of mind—"we will, sir as soon as we arrive—Lord help us!—we are lost. O Lord! O Lord!" And here Mynheer Von Stroom, not knowing why, hurried down to the cabin, and in his haste tumbled over the bear Johannes, who crossed his path, and in his fall his hat and flowing wig parted company with his head.

"O mercy! where am I? Help—help here! for the Company's honourable supercargo!"

"Cast off there in the boats, and come on board," cried Mynheer Kloots; "we have no time to spare. Quick now, Philip, put in the compass, the water, and the biscuit; we must leave her in five minutes."

So appalling was the roar of the breakers, that it was with difficulty that the orders could be heard. In the meantime Mynheer Von Stroom lay upon the deck, kicking, sprawling, and crying for help.

"There is a light breeze off the shore," cried Philip, holding up his hand.

"There is, but I'm afraid it is too late. Hand the things into the boats, and be cool, my men. We have yet a chance of saving her,

if the wind freshens."

They were now so near to the breakers that they felt the swell in which the vessel lay becalmed turned over here and there on its long line, but the breeze freshened, and the vessel was stationary! the men were all in the boats, with the exception of Mynheer Kloots, the mates, and Mynheer Von Stroom.

"She goes through the water now," said Philip.

"Yes, I think we shall save her," replied the captain: "steady as you go, Hillebrant," continued he to the first mate, who was at the helm. "We leave the breakers now—only let the breeze hold ten minutes."

The breeze was steady, the *Ter Schilling* stood off from the land, again it fell calm, and again she was swept towards the breakers; at last the breeze came off strong, and the vessel cleaved through the water. The men were called out of the boats; Mynheer Von Stroom was picked up along with his hat and wig, carried into the cabin, and in less than an hour the *Ter Schilling* was out of danger.

"Now we will hoist up the boats," said Mynheer Kloots, "and let us all, before we lie down to sleep, thank God for our deliverance."

During that night the *Ter Schilling* made an offing of twenty miles, and then stood to the southward; towards the morning the wind again fell, and it was nearly calm.

Mynheer Kloots had been on deck about an hour, and had been talking with Hillebrant upon the danger of the evening, and

the selfishness and pusillanimity of Mynheer Von Stroom, when a loud noise was heard in the poop-cabin.

"What can that be?" said the captain; "has the good man lost his senses from the fright? Why, he is knocking the cabin to pieces."

At this moment the servant of the supercargo ran out of the cabin.

"Mynheer Kloots, hasten in—help my master—he will be killed—the bear!—the bear!"

"The bear! what; Johannes?" cried Mynheer Kloots. "Why, the animal is as tame as a dog. I will go and see."

But before Mynheer Kloots could walk into the cabin, out flew in his shirt the affrighted supercargo. "My God! my God! am I to be murdered?—eaten alive?" cried he, running forward, and attempting to climb the fore-rigging.

Mynheer Kloots followed the motions of Mynheer Von Stroom with surprise, and when he found him attempting to mount the rigging, he turned aft and walked into the cabin, when he found to his surprise that Johannes was indeed doing mischief.

The panelling of the state cabin of the supercargo had been beaten down, the wig boxes lay in fragments on the floor, the two spare wigs were lying by them, and upon them were strewed fragments of broken pots and masses of honey, which Johannes was licking up with peculiar gusto.

The fact was, that when the ship anchored at Table Bay, Mynheer Von Stroom, who was very partial to honey, had

obtained some from the Hottentots. The honey his careful servant had stowed away in jars, which he had placed at the bottom of the two long boxes, ready for his master's use during the remainder of the voyage. That morning, the servant fancying that the wig of the previous night had suffered when his master tumbled over the bear, opened one of the boxes to take out another. Johannes happened to come near the door, and scented the honey. Now, partial as Mynheer Von Stroom was to honey, all bears are still more so, and will venture everything to obtain it. Johannes had yielded to the impulse of his species, and, following the scent, had come into the cabin, and was about to enter the sleeping-berth of Mynheer Stroom, when the servant slammed the door in his face; whereupon Johannes beat in the panels, and found an entrance. He then attacked the wig-boxes, and, by showing a most formidable set of teeth, proved to the servant, who attempted to drive him off, that he would not be trifled with. In the meanwhile, Mynheer Von Stroom was in the utmost terror: not aware of the purport of the bear's visit, he imagined that the animal's object was to attack him. His servant took to his heels after a vain effort to save the last box, and Mynheer Von Stroom, then finding himself alone, at length sprang out of his bed-place, and escaped as we have mentioned to the forecastle, leaving Johannes master of the field, and luxuriating upon the *spolia opima*. Mynheer Kloots immediately perceived how the case stood. He went up to the bear and spoke to him, then kicked him, but the bear would not leave the honey, and

growled furiously at the interruption. "This is a bad job for you, Johannes," observed Mynheer Kloots; "now you will leave the ship, for the supercargo has just grounds of complaint. Oh, well! you must eat the honey, because you will." So saying, Mynheer Kloots left the cabin, and went to look after the supercargo, who remained on the forecastle, with his bald head and meagre body, haranguing the men in his shirt, which fluttered in the breeze.

"I am very sorry, Mynheer Von Stroom," said Kloots, "but the bear shall be sent out of the vessel."

"Yes, yes, Mynheer Kloots, but this is an affair for the most puissant Company—the lives of their servants are not to be sacrificed to the folly of a sea-captain. I have nearly been torn to pieces."

"The animal did not want you; all he wanted was the honey," replied Kloots. "He has got it, and I myself cannot take it from him. There is no altering the nature of an animal. Will you be pleased to walk down into my cabin until the beast can be secured? He shall not go loose again."

Mynheer Von Stroom, who considered his dignity at variance with his appearance, and who perhaps was aware that majesty deprived of its externals was only a jest, thought it advisable to accept the offer. After some trouble, with the assistance of the seamen, the bear was secured and dragged away from the cabin, much against his will, for he had still some honey to lick off the curls of the full-bottomed wigs. He was put into durance vile, having been caught in the flagrant act of burglary on the high

seas. This new adventure was the topic of the day, for it was again a dead calm, and the ship lay motionless on the glassy wave.

"The sun looks red as he sinks," observed Hillebrant to the captain, who with Philip was standing on the poop; "we shall have wind before to-morrow, if I mistake not."

"I am of your opinion," replied Mynheer Kloots. "It is strange that we do not fall in with any of the vessels of the fleet. They must all have been driven down here."

"Perhaps they have kept a wider offing."

"It had been as well if we had done the same," said Kloots. "That was a narrow escape last night. There is such a thing as having too little as well as having too much wind."

A confused noise was heard among the seamen who were collected together, and looking in the direction of the vessel's quarter, "A ship! No—Yes, it is!" was repeated more than once.

"They think they see a ship," said Schriften, coming on the poop. "He! he!"

"Where?"

"There in the gloom!" said the pilot, pointing to the darkest quarter in the horizon, for the sun had set.

The captain, Hillebrant, and Philip directed their eyes to the quarter pointed out, and thought they could perceive something like a vessel. Gradually the gloom seemed to clear away, and a lambent pale blaze to light up that part of the horizon. Not a breath of wind was on the water—the sea was like a mirror—more and more distinct did the vessel appear, till her hull, masts

and yards were clearly visible. They looked and rubbed their eyes to help their vision, for scarcely could they believe that which they did see. In the centre of the pale light, which extended about fifteen degrees above the horizon, there was indeed a large ship about three miles distant; but, although it was a perfect calm, she was to all appearance buffeting in a violent gale, plunging and lifting over a surface that was smooth as glass, now careening to her bearing, then recovering herself. Her topsails and mainsail were furled, and the yards pointed to the wind; she had no sail set, but a close-reefed fore-sail, a storm stay-sail, and trysail abaft. She made little way through the water, but apparently neared them fast, driven down by the force of the gale. Each minute she was plainer to the view. At last, she was seen to wear, and in so doing, before she was brought to the wind on the other tack, she was so close to them that they could distinguish the men on board: they could see the foaming water as it was hurled from her bows; hear the shrill whistle of the boatswain's pipes, the creaking of the ship's timbers, and the complaining of her masts; and then the gloom gradually rose, and in a few seconds she had totally disappeared.

"God in heaven!" exclaimed Mynheer Kloots.

Philip felt a hand upon his shoulder, and the cold darted through his whole frame. He turned round and met the one eye of Schriften, who screamed in his ear—"PHILIP VANDERDECKEN—That's the *Flying Dutchman!*"

Chapter X

The sudden gloom which had succeeded to the pale light had the effect of rendering every object still more indistinct to the astonished crew of the *Ter Schilling*. For a moment or more not a word was uttered by a soul on board. Some remained with their eyes still strained towards the point where the apparition had been seen, others turned away full of gloomy and foreboding thoughts. Hillebrant was the first who spoke: turning round to the eastern quarter, and observing a light on the horizon, he started, and seizing Philip by the arm, cried out, "What's that?"

"That is only the moon rising from the bank of clouds," replied Philip, mournfully.

"Well!" observed Mynheer Kloots, wiping his forehead, which was damp with perspiration, "I *have* been told of this before, but I have mocked at the narration."

Philip made no reply. Aware of the reality of the vision, and how deeply it interested him, he felt as if he were a guilty person.

The moon had now risen above the clouds, and was pouring her mild pale light over the slumbering ocean. With a simultaneous impulse, everyone directed his eyes to the spot where the strange vision had last been seen; and all was a dead, dead calm.

Since the apparition, the pilot, Schriften, had remained on the poop; he now gradually approached Mynheer Kloots, and

looking round, said—

"Mynheer Kloots, as pilot of this vessel, I tell you that you must prepare for very bad weather."

"Bad weather!" said Kloots, rousing himself from a deep reverie.

"Yes, bad weather, Mynheer Kloots. There never was a vessel which fell in with—what we have just seen, but met with disaster soon afterwards. The very name of Vanderdecken is unlucky—He! he!"

Philip would have replied to the sarcasm, but he could not, his tongue was tied.

"What has the name of Vanderdecken to do with it?" observed Kloots.

"Have you not heard, then? The captain of that vessel we have just seen is a Mynheer Vanderdecken—he is the Flying Dutchman!"

"How know you that, pilot?" inquired Hillebrant.

"I know that, and much more, if I chose to tell," replied Schriften; "but never mind, I have warned you of bad weather, as is my duty;" and, with these words, Schriften went down the poop-ladder.

"God in heaven! I never was so puzzled and so frightened in my life," observed Kloots. "I don't know what to think or say.—What think you, Philip? was it not supernatural?"

"Yes," replied Philip, mournfully. "I have no doubt of it."

"I thought the days of miracles had passed," said the captain,

"and that we were now left to our own exertions, and had no other warnings but those the appearance of the heavens gave us."

"And they warn us now," observed Hillebrant. "See how that bank of clouds has risen within these five minutes—the moon has escaped from it, but it will soon catch her again—and see, there is a flash of lightning in the north-west."

"Well, my sons, I can brave the elements as well as any man, and do my best. I have cared little for gales or stress of weather; but I like not such a warning as we have had to-night. My heart's as heavy as lead, and that's the truth. Philip, send down for the bottle of schnapps, if it is only to clear my brain a little."

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