ФРЕДЕРИК МАРРИЕТ

PETER SIMPLE

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Peter Simple

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Peter Simple:

Содержание

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Peter Simple

Chapter One
The great advantage of being the fool of the family—My destiny is decided, and I am consigned to a stockbroker as part of his Majesty's sea-stock—Unfortunately for me Mr Handycock is a bear, and I get very little dinner

If I cannot narrate a life of adventurous and daring exploits, fortunately I have no heavy crimes to confess: and, if I do not rise in the estimation of the reader for acts of gallantry and devotion in my country's cause, at least I may claim the merit of zealous and persevering continuance in my vocation. We are all of us variously gifted from Above, and he who is content to walk, instead of to run, on his allotted path through life, although he may not so rapidly attain the goal, has the advantage of not being out of breath upon his arrival.

As well as I can recollect and analyse my early propensities,

I think that, had I been permitted to select my own profession, I should in all probability have bound myself apprentice to a tailor; for I always envied the comfortable seat which they appeared to enjoy upon the shopboard, and their elevated position, which enabled them to look down upon the constant succession of the idle or the busy, who passed in review before them in the main street of the country town, near to which I passed the first fourteen years of my existence.

But my father, who was a clergyman of the Church of England, and the youngest brother of a noble family, had a lucrative living, and a "soul above buttons," if his son had not. It has been from time immemorial the heathenish custom to sacrifice the greatest fool of the family to the prosperity and naval superiority of the country, and, at the age of fourteen, I was selected as the victim. If the custom be judicious, I had no reason to complain. There was not one dissentient voice, when it was proposed before all the varieties of my aunts and cousins, invited to partake of our new-year's festival. I was selected by general acclamation. Flattered by such an unanimous acknowledgment of my qualification, I felt a slight degree of military ardour, and a sort of vision of future grandeur passed before me, in the distant vista of which I perceived a coach with four horses, and a service of plate. But as my story is not a very short one, I must not dwell too long on its commencement. I shall therefore inform the reader, that my father, who lived in the north of England, did not think it right to fit me out at the country town, near to

which we resided; but about a fortnight after the decision which I have referred to, he forwarded me to London, on the outside of the coach, with my best suit of bottle-green and six shirts. To prevent mistakes, I was booked in the way-bill, "To be delivered to Mr Thomas Handycock, Number 14, Saint Clement's Lane—carriage paid." My parting with the family was very affecting; my mother cried bitterly, for, like all mothers, she liked the greatest fool which she had presented to my father, better than all the rest; my sisters cried because my mother cried; Tom roared for a short time more loudly than all the rest, having been chastised by my father for breaking his fourth window in that week.

At last I tore myself away. I had blubbered till my eyes were so red and swollen, that the pupils were scarcely to be distinguished, and tears and dirt had veined my cheeks like the marble of the chimney-piece. My handkerchief was soaked through with wiping my eyes and blowing my nose, before the scene was over. My brother Tom, with a kindness which did honour to his heart, exchanged his for mine, saying, with fraternal regard, "Here, Peter, take mine, it's as dry as a bone." But my father would not wait for a second handkerchief to perform its duty. He led me away through the hall, when, having shaken hands with all the men, and kissed all the maids, who stood in a row with their aprons to their eyes, I quitted the paternal roof.

The coachman accompanied me to the stage. Having seen me securely wedged between two fat old women, and having put my parcel inside, he took his leave, and in a few minutes I was on

my road to London.

I was too much depressed to take notice of any thing during my journey. When we arrived in London, they drove to the Blue Boar (in a street, the name of which I have forgotten). I had never seen or heard of such an animal, and certainly it did appear very formidable; its mouth was open and teeth very large.

The coachman threw his whip to the ostler, and the reins upon the horses' back; he then dismounted, and calling to me, "Now, young gentleman, I'se waiting," he put a ladder up for me to get down by; then turning to a porter, he said to him, "Bill, you must take this here young gem'man and that ere parcel to this here direction.—Please to remember the coachman, sir." I replied that I certainly would, if he wished it, and walked off with the porter; the coachman observing as I went away, "Well, he is a fool—that's sartain." I arrived quite safe at St. Clement's Lane, when the porter received a shilling for his trouble from the maid who let me in, and I was shown up into a parlour, where I found myself in company with Mrs Handycock.

Mrs Handycock was a little meagre woman, who did not speak very good English, and who appeared to me to employ the major part of her time in bawling out from the top of the stairs to the servants below. I never saw her either read a book or occupy herself with needlework, during the whole time I was in the house. She had a large grey parrot and I really cannot tell which screamed the worst of the two—but she was very civil and kind to me. Before I had been there ten minutes, she told me that she

“hadored sailors—they were the defendiours and preserviours of their kings and countries,” and that Mr Handycock would be home by four o’clock, and then we should go to dinner.

As I was very anxious to see Mr Handycock, and very anxious to have my dinner, I was not sorry to hear the clock on the stairs strike four; when Mrs Handycock jumped up, and put her head over the banisters. “Jemima, Jemima, it’s four o’clock!”

“I hear it, marm,” replied the cook; and she gave the frying-pan a twist, which made the hissing and the smell come flying up into the parlour, and made me more hungry than ever.

Rap, tap, tap! “There’s your master, Jemima,” screamed the lady. “I hear him, marm,” replied the cook. “Run down, my dear, and let Mr Handycock in,” said his wife. “He’ll be so surprised at seeing you open the door.”

I ran down as Mrs Handycock desired me, and opened the street-door. “Who the devil are you?” in a gruff voice, cried Mr Handycock; a man about six feet high, dressed in blue cotton-net pantaloons and Hessian boots, with a black coat and waistcoat. I was a little rebuffed, I must own, but I replied that I was Mr Simple. “And pray, Mr Simple, what would your grandfather say if he saw you now?”

“Law, Mr Handycock,” said his wife, from the top of the stairs, “how can you be so cross? I told him to open the door to surprise you.”

“And you have surprised me,” replied he, “with your cursed folly.”

While Mr Handycock was rubbing his boots on the mat, I went upstairs, rather mortified, I must own, as my father had told me that Mr Handycock was his stock-broker, and would do all he could to make me comfortable. When I returned to the parlour, Mrs Handycock whispered to me, "Never mind, my dear, it's only because there's something wrong on 'Change. Mr Handycock is a *bear* just now." I thought so too, but made no answer, for Mr Handycock came upstairs.

"Are you ready for your dinner, my dear?" said the lady, almost trembling.

"If the dinner is ready for me. I believe we usually dine at four," answered her husband gruffly.

"Jemima, Jemima, dish up! do you hear, Jemima?"

"Yes, marm," replied the cook, "directly I've thickened the butter;" and Mrs Handycock resumed her seat, with:

"Well, Mr Simple, and how is your grandfather, Lord Privilege?"

"He is quite well, ma'am," answered I, for the fifteenth time at least. But dinner put an end to the silence which followed this remark. Mr Handycock walked downstairs, leaving his wife and me to follow at our leisure.

"Pray, ma'am," inquired I, as soon as he was out of hearing, "what is the matter with Mr Handycock, that he is so cross to you?"

"Vy, my dear, it is one of the misfortunes of matermony, that ven the husband's put out, the vife is sure to have her share of it."

"Are you people coming down to dinner?" roared Mr Handycock from below. "Yes, my dear," replied the lady; "I thought that you were washing your hands." We descended into the dining-room, where we found that Mr Handycock had already devoured two of the whitings, leaving only one on the dish for his wife and me. "Vould you like a little bit of viting, my dear?" said the lady to me. "It's not worth halving," observed the gentleman, in a surly tone, taking up the fish with his own knife and fork, and putting it on his plate.

"Well, I'm so glad you like them, my dear," replied the lady meekly; then turning to me, "there's some nice roast *weal* coming, my dear."

The veal made its appearance, and fortunately for us Mr Handycock could not devour it all. He took the lion's share, nevertheless, cutting off all the brown, and then shoving the dish over to his wife to help herself and me.

After dinner, Mr Handycock went down to the cellar for a bottle of wine. "O deary me!" exclaimed his wife, "he must have lost a mint of money—we had better go upstairs and leave him alone; he'll be better after a bottle of port, perhaps." I was very glad to go away, and being very tired, I went to bed without any tea, for Mrs Handycock dared not venture to make it before her husband came upstairs.

Chapter Two
Fitting out on the shortest notice —Fortunately for me this day Mr Handycock is not a bear, and I fare very well—I set off for Portsmouth —Behind the coach I meet a man before the mast—He is disguised with liquor, but is not the only disguise I fall in with in my journey

The next morning Mr Handycock appeared to be in somewhat better humour. One of the linendrapers who fitted out cadets, etcetera, "on the shortest notice," was sent for, and orders given for my equipment, which Mr Handycock insisted should be ready on the day afterwards, or the articles would be left on his hands; adding, that my place was already taken in the Portsmouth coach.

The man made his promise, took my measure, and departed; and soon afterwards Mr Handycock also quitted the house.

At four o'clock Mr Handycock rapped at the door, and was let in—but not by me. He ascended the stairs with three bounds, and coming into the parlour, cried, "Well, Nancy, my love, how

are you?" Then stooping over her, "Give me a kiss, old girl. I'm as hungry as a hunter. Mr Simple, how do you do? I hope you have passed the morning agreeably. I must wash my hands and change my boots, my love; I am not fit to sit down to table with you in this pickle. Well, Polly, how are you?"

"I'm glad you're hungry, my dear, I've such a nice dinner for you," replied the wife, all smiles. "Jemima, be quick, and dish up —Mr Handycock is so hungry."

"Yes, marm," replied the cook; and Mrs Handycock followed her husband into his bedroom on the same floor, to assist him at his toilet.

"By Jove, Nancy, the bulls have been nicely taken in," said Mr Handycock, as we sat down to dinner.

"O I am so glad!" replied his wife, giggling; and so I believe she was, but why I did not understand.

We both had our share to-day, and I never saw a man more polite than Mr Handycock. He joked with his wife, asked me to drink wine with him two or three times, talked about my grandfather; and, in short, we had a very pleasant evening.

The next morning all my clothes came home, but Mr Handycock, who still continued in good humour, said that he would not allow me to travel by night, that I should sleep there and set off the next morning; which I did at six o'clock, and before eight I had arrived at the Elephant and Castle, where we stopped for a quarter of an hour. I observed a crowd assembled at the corner; and asking a gentleman who sat by me in a plaid cloak,

whether there was not something very uncommon to attract so many people, he replied, "Not very, for it is only a drunken sailor."

I rose from my seat, which was on the hinder part of the coach, that I might see him, for it was a new sight to me, and excited my curiosity; when, to my astonishment, he staggered from the crowd, and swore that he'd go to Portsmouth. He climbed up by the wheel of the coach and sat down by me. I believe that I stared at him very much, for he said to me, "What are you gaping at, you young sculping? Do you want to catch flies? or did you never see a chap half seas over before?"

I replied, that "I had never been at sea in my life, but that I was going."

"Well then, you're like a young bear, all your sorrows to come —that's all, my hearty," replied he. "When you get on board, you'll find monkey's allowance—more kicks than half-pence. I say, you pewter-carrier, bring us another pint of ale."

The waiter of the inn, who was attending the coach, brought out the ale, half of which the sailor drank, and the other half threw into the waiter's face, telling him, "that was his allowance; and now," said he, "what's to pay?" The waiter, who looked very angry, but appeared too much afraid of the sailor to say anything, answered fourpence; and the sailor pulled out a handful of bank-notes, mixed up with gold, silver, and coppers, and was picking out the money to pay for his beer, when the coachman, who was impatient, drove off.

"There's cut and run," cried the sailor, thrusting all the money into his breeches pocket. "That's what you'll learn to do, my joker, before you have been two cruises to sea."

In the meantime the gentleman in the plaid cloak, who was seated by me, smoked his cigar without saying a word. I commenced a conversation with him relative to my profession, and asked him whether it was not very difficult to learn. "Larn," cried the sailor, interrupting us, no, it may be difficult for such chaps as me before the mast to larn, but you, I presume, is a reefer, and they an't got much to larn, "cause why, they pipe-clays their weekly accounts, and walks up and down with their hands in their pockets. You must larn to chaw baccy, drink grog, and call the cat a beggar, and then you knows all a midshipman's expected to know now-a-days. Arn't I right, sir?" said the sailor, appealing to the gentleman in a plaid cloak. "I axes you, because I see you're a sailor by the cut of your jib. Beg pardon, sir," continued he, touching his hat, "hope no offence."

"I am afraid that you have nearly hit the mark, my good fellow," replied the gentleman.

Whenever the coach stopped, the sailor called for more ale, and always threw the remainder which he could not drink into the face of the man who brought it out for him, just as the coach was starting off, and then tossed the pewter pot on the ground for him to pick up. He became more tipsy every stage, and the last from Portsmouth, when he pulled out his money he could find no silver, so he handed down a note, and desired the waiter to

change it. The waiter crumpled it up and put it into his pocket, and then returned the sailor the change for a one-pound note: but the gentleman in the plaid had observed that it was a five-pound note which the sailor had given, and insisted upon the waiter producing it, and giving the proper change. The sailor took his money, which the waiter handed to him, begging pardon for the mistake, although he coloured up very much at being detected. "I really beg your pardon," said he again, "it was quite a mistake:" whereupon the sailor threw the pewter pot at the waiter, saying "I really beg your pardon too,"—and with such force, that it flattened upon the man's head, who fell senseless on the road. The coachman drove off, and I never heard whether the man was killed or not.

I inquired of the gentleman how soon we should be at Portsmouth; he answered that we were passing the lines; but I saw no lines, and I was ashamed to show my ignorance. He asked me what ship I was going to join. I could not recollect her name, but I told him it was painted on the outside of my chest, which was coming down by the waggon: all that I could recollect was that it was a French name.

"Have you no letter of introduction to the captain?" said he.

"Yes, I have," replied I; and I pulled out my pocketbook in which the letter was. "Captain Savage, H.M.S. *Diomede*," continued I, reading to him.

To my surprise he very coolly proceeded to open the letter, which, when I perceived what he was doing, occasioned me

immediately to snatch the letter from him, stating my opinion at the same time that it was a breach of honour, and that in my opinion he was no gentleman.

"Just as you please, youngster," replied he. "Recollect, you have told me I am no gentleman."

He wrapped his plaid around him, and said no more; and I was not a little pleased at having silenced him by my resolute behaviour.

Chapter Three
I am made to look very blue at the Blue Posts—Find wild spirits around, and, soon after, hot spirits within me; at length my spirits overcome me—Call to pay my respects to the Captain, and find that I had had the pleasure of meeting him before—No sooner out of one scrape than into another

When we stopped, I enquired of the coachman which was the best inn. He answered that "it was the Blue Postesses, where the midshipmen leave their chestesses, call for tea and toastesses, and sometimes forget to pay for their breakfastesses." He laughed when he said it, and I thought that he was joking with me; but he pointed out two, large blue posts at the door next the coach-office, and told me that all the midshipmen resorted to that hotel. The coffee-room was full of midshipmen, and, as I was anxious about my chest, I enquired of one of them if he knew when the waggon would come in.

"Do you expect your mother by it?" replied he.

"O no! but I expect my uniforms—I only wear these bottle-greens until they come."

"And pray what ship are you going to join?"

"The *Die-a-maid*—Captain Thomas Kirkwall Savage."

"The *Diomede*—I say, Robinson, a'n't that the frigate in which the midshipmen had four dozen apiece for not having pipe-clayed their weekly accounts on the Saturday?"

"To be sure it is," replied the other; "why the captain gave a youngster five dozen the other day for wearing a scarlet watch-riband."

"'Pon my soul I pity you: you'll be fagged to death; for there's only three midshipmen in the ship now—all the rest ran away. Didn't they, Robinson?"

"There's only two left now:– for poor Matthews died of fatigue. He was worked all day, and kept watch all night for six weeks, and one morning he was found dead upon his chest."

"God bless my soul!" cried I, "and yet, on shore, they say he is such a kind man to his midshipmen."

"Yes," replied Robinson, "he spreads that report everywhere. Come, sit down with us and take a glass of grog; it will keep your spirits up."

I am sorry to state that the midshipmen made me very tipsy that evening. I don't recollect being put to bed, but I found myself there the next morning with a dreadful head-ache, and a very confused recollection of what had passed. I was very much shocked at my having so soon forgotten the injunctions of

my parents, and was making vows never to be so foolish again, when in came the midshipman who had been so kind to me the night before. "Come, Mr Bottlegreen," he bawled out, alluding, I suppose, to the colour of my clothes, "rouse and bitt. There's the captain's coxswain waiting for you below. By the powers, you're in a pretty scrape for what you did last night!"

"Did last night!" replied I, astonished. "Why, does the captain know that I was tipsy?"

"I think you took devilish good care to let him know it when you were at the theatre."

"At the theatre! was I at the theatre?"

"To be sure you were. You would go, do all we could to prevent you, though you were as drunk as David's sow. Your captain was there with the admiral's daughters. You called him a tyrant, and snapped your fingers at him. Why, don't you recollect? You told him that you did not care a fig for him."

"O dear! O dear! what shall I do? what shall I do?" cried I.

"Upon my honour, I'm sorry—very sorry indeed," replied the midshipman;—and he quitted the room, looking as grave as if the misfortune had happened to himself. I got up with a heavy head, and heavier heart, and as soon as I was dressed, I asked the way to the George Inn. I took my letter of introduction with me, although I was afraid it would be of little service. When I arrived, I asked, with a trembling voice, whether Captain Thomas Kirkwall Savage, of H.M.S. *Diomede*, was staying there. The waiter replied, that he was at breakfast with Captain Courtney,

but that he would take up my name. I give it him, and in a minute the waiter returned and desired that I would walk up. O how my heart beat—I never was so frightened—I thought I should have dropped on the stairs. Twice I attempted to walk into the room, and each time my legs failed me; at last I wiped the perspiration from my forehead, and with a desperate effort I went into the room.

"Mr Simple, I am glad to see you," said a voice. I had held my head down, for I was afraid to look at him, but the voice was so kind that I mustered up courage; and, when I did look up, there sat with his uniform and epaulets, and his sword by his side, the passenger in the plaid cloak, who wanted to open my letter, and whom I had told to his face, that he was no *gentleman*.

I thought I should have died, as the other midshipman did upon his chest. I was just sinking down upon my knees to beg for mercy, when the captain, perceiving my confusion, burst out into a laugh, and said, "So you know me again, Mr Simple? Well, don't be alarmed; you did your duty in not permitting me to open the letter. I give you credit for your conduct. Now sit down and take some breakfast."

"Captain Courtney," said he to the other captain, who was at the table, "this is one of my youngsters, just entering the service. We were passengers yesterday by the same coach." He then told him the circumstance which occurred, at which they laughed heartily.

I now recovered my spirits a little—but still there was the

affair at the theatre, and I thought that perhaps he did not recognise me. I was, however, soon relieved from my anxiety by the other captain inquiring, "were you at the theatre last night, Savage?"

"No; I dined at the admiral's; there's no getting away from those girls, they are so pleasant."

"I rather think you are a little—*taken* in that quarter."

"No, on my word! I might be, if I had time to discover which I liked best; but my ship is at present my wife, and the only wife I intend to have until I am laid on the shelf."

Well, thought I, if he was not at the theatre, it could not have been him that I insulted.

"Pray, Mr Simple, how are your father and mother?" said the captain.

"Very well, I thank you, sir, and desire me to present their compliments."

"I am obliged to them. Now I have a little advice to offer you. In the first place, obey your superior officers without hesitation; it is for me, not you, to decide whether an order is unjust or not. In the next place, never swear or drink spirits. The first is immoral and ungentleman-like, the second is a vile habit which will grow upon you. I never touch spirit myself, and I expect that my young gentlemen will refrain from it also. Now you may go, and as soon as your uniforms arrive, you will repair on board. Good morning."

I quitted the room with a low bow, glad to have surmounted

so easily what appeared to be a chaos of difficulty; but my mind was confused with the testimony of the midshipman, so much at variance with the language and behaviour of the captain. When I arrived at the Blue Posts, I found all the midshipmen in the coffee-room, and I repeated to them all that had passed. When I had finished, they burst out laughing, and said that they had only been joking with me. "Well," said I to the one who had called me up in the morning, "you may call it joking, but I call it lying."

"Pray, Mr Bottlegreen, do you refer to me?"

"Yes, I do," replied I.

"Then, sir, as a gentleman I demand satisfaction. Slugs in a saw-pit. Death before dishonour, damn me!"

"Could not the affair be arranged otherwise?" interrupted another. "Will not Mr Bottlegreen retract?"

"My name is Simple, sir, and not Bottlegreen," replied I; "and as he did tell a falsehood, I will not retract?"

"Then the affair must go on," said the midshipman. "Robinson, will you oblige me by acting as my second?"

"It's an unpleasant business," replied the other, "you are so good a shot; but as you request it, I shall not refuse. Mr Simple is not, I believe, provided with a friend."

"Yes, he is," replied another of the midshipmen. "He is a spunky fellow, and I'll be his second."

It was then arranged that we should meet the next morning with pistols. I considered that, as an officer and a gentleman, I could not well refuse, but I was very unhappy. I went up into my

room and wrote a long letter to my mother, enclosing a lock of my hair, and having shed a few tears at the idea of how sorry she would be if I were killed, I borrowed a Bible from the waiter, and read it during the remainder of the day.

Chapter Four
I am taught on a cold morning, before breakfast, how to stand fire, and thus prove my courage—After breakfast I also prove my gallantry—My proof meets reproof—Women at the bottom of all mischief—By one I lose my liberty, and, by another, my money

When I began to wake the next morning, I could not think what it was that felt like a weight upon my chest, but as I roused and recalled my scattered thoughts, I remembered that in an hour or two it would be decided whether I were to exist another day. Before I was dressed, the midshipman who had volunteered to be my second came into my room, and informed me that the affair was to be decided in the garden behind the inn, and that my adversary was a very good shot.

I dressed myself and followed my second into the garden, where I found all the midshipmen and some of the waiters of the inn. They all seemed very merry, as if the life of a fellow-creature was of no consequence. The seconds talked apart for

a little while, and then measured the ground, which was twelve paces; we then took our stations. I believe that I turned pale, for my second came to my side and whispered that I must not be frightened. I replied that I was not frightened, but that I considered that it was an awful moment. The second to my adversary then came up and asked me whether I would make an apology, which I refused to do as before; they handed a pistol to each of us, and my second showed me how I was to pull the trigger. It was arranged that at the word given, we were to fire at the same time. I made sure that I should be wounded, if not killed, and I shut my eyes as I fired my pistol in the air. I felt my head swim, and thought I was hurt, but fortunately I was not. The pistols were loaded again, and we fired a second time. The seconds then interfered, and it was proposed that we should shake hands, which I was very glad to do, for I considered my life to have been saved by a miracle.

The next day my chest arrived by the waggon, and I threw off my "bottle-greens" and put on my uniform. I had no cocked-hat, or dirk, as the warehouse people employed by Mr Handycock did not supply those articles, and it was arranged that I should procure them at Portsmouth. When I inquired the price, I found that they cost more money than I had in my pocket, so I tore up the letter I had written to my mother before the duel, and wrote another asking for a remittance to purchase my dirk and cocked-hat. I then walked out in my uniform, not a little proud, I must confess.

I had arrived opposite a place called Sally Port, when a young lady very nicely dressed, looked at me very hard and said, "Well, Reefer, how are you off for soap?" I was astonished at the question, and more so at the interest which she seemed to take in my affairs. I answered, "Thank you, I am very well off; I have four cakes of Windsor, and two bars of yellow for washing." She laughed at my reply, and asked me whether I would walk home and take a bit of dinner with her. I was astonished at this polite offer, and I said that I should be most happy. I thought I might venture to offer my arm, which she accepted, and we proceeded up High Street on our way to her home.

Just as we passed the admiral's house, I perceived my captain walking with two of the admiral's daughters. I was not a little proud to let him see that I had female acquaintances as well as he had, and, as I passed him with the young lady under my protection, I took off my hat, and made him a low bow. To my surprise, not only did he not return the salute, but he looked at me with a very stern countenance. I concluded that he was a very proud man, and did not wish the admiral's daughters to suppose that he knew midshipmen by sight; but I had not exactly made up my mind on the subject, when the captain, having seen the ladies into the admiral's house, sent one of the messengers after me to desire that I would immediately come to him at the George Inn, which was nearly opposite.

I apologised to the young lady, and promised to return immediately if she would wait for me; but she replied, if that

was my captain, it was her idea that I should have a confounded wigging and be sent on board. So, wishing me good-bye, she left me and continued her way home. I could as little comprehend all this as why the captain looked so black when I passed him; but it was soon explained when I went up to him in the parlour at the George Inn. "I am sorry, Mr Simple," said the captain, when I entered, "that a lad like you should show such early symptoms of depravity; still more so, that he should not have the grace which even the most hardened are not wholly destitute of—I mean to practise immorality in secret, and not degrade themselves and insult their captain by unblushingly avowing (I may say glorying in) their iniquity, by exposing it in broad day, and in the most frequented street of the town."

"Sir!" replied I, with astonishment, "O dear! what have I done?"

The captain fixed his keen eyes upon me, so that they appeared to pierce me through, and nail me to the wall. "Do you pretend to say, sir, that you were not aware of the character of the person with whom you were walking just now?"

"No, sir," replied I, "except that she was very kind and good-natured;" and then I told him how she had addressed me, and what subsequently took place.

"And is it possible, Mr Simple, that you are so great a fool?" I replied that I certainly was considered the greatest fool of our family. "I should think you were," replied he, dryly. He then explained to me who the person was with whom I was in

company, and how any association with her would inevitably lead to my ruin and disgrace.

I cried very much, for I was shocked at the narrow escape which I had had, and mortified at having fallen in his good opinion. He asked me how I had employed my time since I had been at Portsmouth, and I made an acknowledgment of having been made tipsy, related all that the midshipmen had told me, and how I had that morning fought a duel.

When I had finished, he said, "Mr Simple, I can no longer trust you on shore until you are more experienced in the world. I shall desire my coxswain not to lose sight of you until you are safe on board of the frigate."

Altogether I did not feel sorry when it was over. I saw that the captain believed what I had stated, and that he was disposed to be kind to me, although he thought me very silly. The coxswain, in obedience to his orders, accompanied me to the Blue Post. I packed up my clothes, paid my bill, and the porter wheeled my chest down to the Sally Port, where the boat was waiting.

"Come, heave a-head, my lads, be smart. The captain says we are to take the young gentleman on board directly. His liberty's stopped for getting drunk and running after the Dolly Mops!"

"I should thank you to be more respectful in your remarks, Mr Coxswain," said I with displeasure.

"Mister Coxswain! thanky, sir, for giving me a handle to my name," replied he. "Come, be smart with your oars, my lads!"

"La, Bill Freeman," said a young woman on the beach, "what

a nice young gentleman you have there. He looks like a sucking Nelson. I say, my pretty young officer, could you lend me a shilling?"

I was so pleased at the woman calling me young Nelson, that I immediately complied with her request. "I have not a shilling in my pocket," said I, "but here is half-a-crown, and you can change it, and bring me back the eighteen-pence."

"Well you are a nice young man," replied she, taking the half-crown; "I'll be back directly, my dear."

The men in the boat laughed, and the coxswain desired them to shove off.

"No," observed I, "you must wait for my eighteen-pence."

"We shall wait a devilish long while, then, I suspect. I know that girl, and she has a very bad memory."

"She cannot be so dishonest or ungrateful," replied I. "Coxswain, I order you to stay—I am an officer."

"I know you are, sir, about six hours old; well then, I must go up and tell the captain that you have another girl in tow, and that you won't go on board."

"O no, Mr Coxswain, pray don't; shove off as soon as you please, and never mind the eighteen-pence."

The boat then shoved off, and pulled towards the ship, which lay at Spithead.

Chapter Five
I am introduced to the quarter-deck, and first lieutenant, who pronounces me very clever—Trotted below to Mrs Trotter—Connubial bliss in a cock-pit—Mrs Trotter takes me in, as a messmate

On our arrival on board, the coxswain gave a note from the captain to the first lieutenant, who happened to be on deck. He read the note, looked at me earnestly, and then I overheard him say to another lieutenant, "The service is going to the devil. Here's another of the fools of a family made a present of to the country—another cub for me to lick into shape. Well, I never saw the one yet I did not make something of. Where's Mr Simple?"

"I am Mr Simple, sir," replied I, very much frightened at what I had overheard.

"Now, Mr Simple," said the first lieutenant, "observe and pay particular attention to what I say. The captain tells me in this note that you have been shamming stupid. Now, sir, I am not to be taken in that way. I have looked attentively at your face and I see at once that you are *very clever*, and if you do not prove so in

a very short time, why—you had better jump overboard, that's all. Perfectly understand me. I know that you are a very clever fellow, and having told you so, don't you pretend to impose upon me, for it won't do."

I was very much terrified at this speech, but at the same time I was pleased to hear that he thought me clever, and I determined to do all in my power to keep up such an unexpected reputation.

"Quarter-master," said the first lieutenant, "tell Mr Trotter to come on deck."

The quarter-master brought up Mr Trotter, who apologised for being so dirty, as he was breaking casks out of the hold. He was a short, thickset man, about thirty years of age, with a nose which had a red club to it, very dirty teeth, and large black whiskers.

"Mr Trotter," said the first lieutenant, "here is a young gentleman who has joined the ship. Introduce him into the berth, and see his hammock slung. You must look after him a little."

"I really have very little time to look after any of them, sir," replied Mr Trotter, "but I will do what I can. Follow me, youngster." Accordingly, I descended the ladder after him; then I went down another, and then to my surprise I was desired by him to go down a third, which, when I had done, he informed me that I was in the cock-pit.

"Now, youngster," said Mr Trotter, seating himself upon a large chest, "you may do as you please. The midshipmen's mess is on the deck above this, and if you like to join, why you can;

but this I will tell you as a friend, that you will be thrashed all day long, and fare very badly; the weakest always goes to the wall there, but perhaps you do not mind that. Now that we are in harbour, I mess here, because Mrs Trotter is on board. She is a very charming woman, I can assure you, and will be here directly; she has just gone up into the galley to look after a net of potatoes in the copper. If you like it better, I will ask her permission for you to mess with us." I had scarcely time to reply, when I perceived a pair of legs, cased in black cotton stockings, on the ladder above us, and it proved that they belonged to Mrs Trotter, who came down the ladder with a net full of smoking potatoes.

"Upon my word, Mrs Trotter, you must be conscious of having a very pretty ankle, or you would not venture to display it, as you have to Mr Simple, a young gentleman whom I beg to introduce to you, and who, with your permission, will join our mess."

"My dear Trotter, how cruel of you not to give me warning; I thought that nobody was below. I declare I'm so ashamed," continued the lady simpering, and covering her face with the hand which was unemployed.

"It can't be helped now, my love, neither was there any thing to be ashamed of. I trust Mr Simple and you will be very good friends. I believe I mentioned his desire to join our mess."

"I am sure I shall be very happy in his company. This is a strange place for me to live in, Mr Simple, after the society to which I have been accustomed; but affection can make any

sacrifice; and rather than lose the company of my Trotter, who has been unfortunate in pecuniary matters—"

"But, my dear," interrupted Mr Trotter, "is it not time to look after our dinner?"

"Yes; I am going forward for it now. We have skewer pieces today Mr Simple, will you excuse me?"—and then, with a great deal of flirtation and laughing about her ankles, and requesting me, as a favour, to turn my face away, Mrs Trotter ascended the ladder.

As the reader may wish to know what sort of looking personage she was, I will take this opportunity to describe her. Her figure was very good, and at one period of her life I thought her face must have been very handsome; at the time I was introduced to her, it showed the ravages of time or hardship very distinctly; in short, she might be termed a faded beauty, flaunting in her dress, and not very clean in her person.

"Charming woman, Mrs Trotter, is she not, Mr Simple?" said the master's mate; to which of course I immediately acquiesced. "Now, Mr Simple," continued he, "there are a few arrangements which I had better mention while Mrs Trotter is away, for she would be shocked at our talking about such things. Of course, the style of living which we indulge in is rather expensive. Mrs Trotter cannot dispense with her tea and her other little comforts; at the same time I must put you to no extra expense—I had rather be out of pocket myself. I propose that during the time you mess with us, you shall only pay one guinea per week; and, as for

entrance money, why I think I must not charge you more than a couple of guineas. Have you any money?"

"Yes," I replied, "I have three guineas and a half left."

"Well, then, give me the three guineas, and the half guinea you can reserve for pocket-money. You must write to your friends immediately for a further supply."

I handed him the money, which he put in his pocket. "Your chest," continued he, "you shall bring down here, for Mrs Trotter will, I am sure, if I request it, not only keep it in order for you, but see that your clothes are properly mended. She is a charming woman, Mrs Trotter, and very fond of young gentlemen. How old are you?"

I replied that I was fifteen.

"No more! well, I am glad of that, for Mrs Trotter is very particular after a certain age. I should recommend you on no account to associate with the other midshipmen. They are very angry with me, because I would not permit Mrs Trotter to join their mess, and they are sad storytellers."

"That they certainly are," replied I; but here we were interrupted by Mrs Trotter coming down with a piece of stick in her hand, upon which were skewered about a dozen small pieces of beef and pork, which she first laid on a plate, and then began to lay the cloth, and prepare for dinner.

"We have but a poor dinner to-day," said Mrs Trotter, "for the bum-boat woman disappointed me. I particularly requested her to bring me off a leg of lamb, but she says that there was none in

the market. It is rather early for it, that's true, but Trotter is very nice in his eating. Now let us sit down to dinner."

I felt very sick, indeed, and could eat nothing. Our dinner consisted of the pieces of beef and pork, the potatoes, and a baked pudding in a tin dish. Mr Trotter went up to serve the spirits out to the ship's company, and returned with a bottle of rum.

"Have you got Mr Simple's allowance, my love?" inquired Mrs Trotter.

"Yes, he is victualled to-day, as he came on board before twelve o'clock. Do you drink spirits, Mr Simple?"

"No, I thank you," replied I, for I remembered the captain's injunction.

"Taking, as I do, such an interest in your welfare, I must earnestly recommend you to abstain from them," said Mr Trotter. "It is a very bad habit, and once acquired, not easy to be left off. I am obliged to drink them that I may not check the perspiration after working in the hold: I have, nevertheless, a natural abhorrence of them; but my champagne and claret days are gone by, and I must submit to circumstances."

"My poor Trotter!" said the lady.

"Well," continued he, "it's a poor heart that never rejoiceth." He then poured out half a tumbler of rum, and filled the glass up with water.

"My love, will you taste it?"

"Now, Trotter, you know that I never touch it, except when

the water is so bad that I must have the taste taken away. How is the water to-day?"

"As usual, my dear, not drinkable." After much persuasion, Mrs Trotter agreed to sip a little out of his glass. I thought that she took it pretty often, considering that she did not like it, but I felt so unwell that I was obliged to go on the main-deck.

I went to bed very tired; Mr Trotter had my hammock hung up in the cock-pit, separated by a canvas screen from the cot in which he slept with his wife. I thought this very odd, but they told me it was the general custom on board ship, although Mrs Trotter's delicacy was very much shocked by it. I was very sick, but Mrs Trotter was very kind. When I was in bed she kissed me, and wished me good night, and very soon afterwards I fell fast asleep.

Chapter Six
Puzzled with very common words —Mrs Trotter takes care of my wardrobe—A matrimonial duet, ending "con strepito."

I awoke the next morning at daylight with a noise over my head which sounded like thunder; I found it proceeded from holy-stoning and washing down the main-deck. I was very much refreshed nevertheless, and did not feel the least sick or giddy. Mr Trotter, who had been up at four o'clock, came down and directed one of the marines to fetch me some water. I washed myself on my chest, and then went on the main-deck, which they were swabbing dry. Standing by the sentry at the cabin door, I met one of the midshipmen with whom I had been in company at the Blue Posts.

"So, Master Simple, old Trotter and his faggot of a wife have got hold of you—have they?" said he. I replied, that I did not know the meaning of faggot, but that I considered Mrs Trotter a very charming woman. At which he burst into a loud laugh. "Well," said he, "I'll just give you a caution. Take care, or they'll make a clean sweep. Has Mrs Trotter shown you her ankle yet?"

"Yes," I replied, "and a very pretty one it is."

"Ah, she's at her old tricks. You had much better have joined our mess at once. You're not the first greenhorn that they have plucked. Well," said he, as he walked away, "keep the key of your own chest—that's all."

When he left me I went on the quarter-deck. All the sailors were busy at work, and the first lieutenant cried out to the gunner, "Now, Mr Dispart, if you're ready, we'll breech these guns."

"Now, my lads," said the first lieutenant, "we must slue (the part the breeches cover) more forward." As I never heard of a gun having breeches, I was very anxious to see what was going on, and went up close to the first lieutenant, who said to me. "Youngster, hand me that *monkey's tail*." I saw nothing like a *monkey's tail*; but I was so frightened that I snatched up the first thing that I saw, which was a short bar of iron, and it so happened that it was the very article which he wanted. When I gave it to him, the first lieutenant looked at me, and said, "So you know what a monkey's tail is already, do you? Now don't you ever sham stupid after that."

Thought I to myself, I'm very lucky, but if that's a monkey's tail it's a very stiff one!

I resolved to learn the names of every thing as fast as I could, that I might be prepared, so I listened attentively to what was said; but I soon became quite confused, and despaired of remembering anything.

"Mr Chucks," said the first lieutenant to the boatswain, "what blocks have we below—not on charge?"

"Let me see, sir, I've one *sister*, t'other we split in half the other day, and I think I have a couple of *monkeys* down in the store-room.—I say, you Smith, pass that brace through the *bull's eye*, and take the *sheepshank* out before you come down."

"And, Mr Chucks, recollect this afternoon that you *bleed* all the *buoys*."

Bleed the boys! thought I, what can that be for? at all events, the surgeon appears to be the proper person to perform that operation.

This last incomprehensible remark drove me off the deck, and I retreated to the cock-pit, where I found Mrs Trotter. "O my dear!" said she, "I am glad you are come, as I wish to put your clothes in order. Have you a list of them—where is your key?" I replied that I had not a list, and I handed her the key, although I did not forget the caution of the midshipman; yet I considered that there could be no harm in her looking over my clothes when I was present. She unlocked my chest, and pulled every thing out, and then commenced telling me what were likely to be useful, and what were not.

"Now, these worsted stockings," she said, "will be very comfortable in cold weather, and in the summer time these brown cotton socks will be delightfully cool, and you have enough of each to last you till you outgrow them; but as for these fine cotton stockings, they are of no use—only catch the dirt when the decks are swept, and always look untidy. I wonder how they could be so foolish as to send them; nobody wears them on board ship now-

a-days. They are only fit for women—I wonder if they would fit me." She turned her chair away, and put on one of my stockings, laughing the whole of the time. Then she turned round to me and showed me how nicely they fitted her. "Bless you, Mr Simple, it's well that Trotter is in the hold, he'd be so jealous—do you know what these stockings cost? They are of no use to you, and they fit me. I will speak to Trotter, and take them off your hands." I replied, that I could not think of selling them, and as they were of no use to me and fitted her, I begged that she would accept of the dozen pairs.

We had beef-steaks and onions for dinner that day, but I could not bear the smell of the onions. Mr Trotter came down very cross, because the first lieutenant had found fault with him. He swore that he would cut the service. He drank glass of grog after glass of grog, and at each glass became more violent; and Mrs Trotter drank also, I observed, a great deal more than I thought she ought to have done; but she whispered to me, that she drank it that Trotter might not, as he would certainly be tipsy. I thought this very devoted on her part; but they sat so late that I went to bed and left them—he still drinking and vowing vengeance against the first lieutenant. I had not been asleep above two or three hours, when I was awakened by a great noise and quarrelling, and I discovered that Mr Trotter was drunk and beating his wife. Very much shocked that such a charming woman should be beaten and ill-used, I scrambled out of my hammock to see if I could be of any assistance, but it was dark, although they scuffled as much

as before. I asked the marine, who was sentry at the gun-room door above, to bring his lantern, and was very much shocked at his replying that I had better go to bed and let them fight it out.

Shortly afterwards, Mrs Trotter staggered to my hammock, and, after several attempts, succeeded in getting into it. I cannot say that I much liked that, but what could I do? So I finished dressing myself, and went up on the quarter-deck.

The midshipman who had the watch was the one who had cautioned me against the Trotters; he was very friendly to me. "Well, Simple," said he, "what brings you on deck?" I told him how ill Mr Trotter had behaved to his wife, and how she had turned into my hammock.

"The cursed drunken old catamaran," cried he; "I'll go and cut her down by the head:" but I requested he would not, as she was a lady.

"A lady!" replied he; "yes, there's plenty of ladies of her description;" and then he informed me that she had many years ago been the mistress of a man of fortune who kept a carriage for her; but that he grew tired of her, and had given Trotter 200 pounds to marry her, and that now they did nothing but get drunk together and fight with each other.

He went to my hammock and lowered it down at one end, so that Mrs Trotter lay with her head on the deck in a very uncomfortable position. To my astonishment, she swore at him in a dreadful manner, but refused to turn out. He was abusing her and shaking her in the hammock, when Mr Trotter, who had

been aroused at the noise, rushed from behind the screen. "You villain! what are you doing with my wife?" cried he, pummelling at him as well as he could, for he was so tipsy that he could hardly stand.

Mr Trotter was soon knocked down, when all of a sudden Mrs Trotter jumped up from the hammock, and caught the midshipman by the hair, and pulled at him. Then the sentry thought right to interfere; he called out for the master-at-arms, and went down himself to help the midshipman, who was faring badly between the two. But Mrs Trotter snatched the lantern out of his hand and smashed it all to pieces, and then we were all left in darkness, and I could not see what took place, although the scuffling continued. Such was the posture of affairs when the master-at-arms came up with his light. The midshipman and sentry went up the ladder, and Mr and Mrs Trotter continued beating each other. To this, none of them paid any attention, saying, as the sentry had said before, "Let them fight it out."

After they had fought some time, they retired behind the screen, and I followed the advice of the midshipman, and got into my hammock, which the master-at-arms hung up again for me. I heard Mr and Mrs Trotter both crying and kissing each other. "Cruel, cruel Mr Trotter!" said she blubbering.

"My life, my love, I was so jealous!" replied he.

"Damn and blast your jealousy," replied the lady; "I've two nice black eyes for the galley to-morrow." After about an hour of kissing and scolding, they both fell asleep again.

The next morning before breakfast, the midshipman reported to the first lieutenant the conduct of Mr Trotter and his wife. I was sent for, and obliged to acknowledge that it was all true. He sent for Mr Trotter, who replied that he was not well, and could not come on deck. Upon which the first lieutenant ordered the sergeant of marines to bring him up directly. Mr Trotter made his appearance, with one eye closed, and his face very much scratched.

"Did not I desire you, sir," said the first lieutenant, "to introduce this young gentleman into the midshipmen's berth? instead of which you have introduced him to that disgraceful wife of yours, and have swindled him out of his property. I order you immediately to return the three guineas which you received as mess-money, and also that your wife give back the stockings which she cajoled him out of."

But then I interposed, and told the first lieutenant that the stockings had been a free gift on my part; and that although I had been very foolish, yet that I considered that I could not in honour demand them back again.

"Well, youngster," replied the first lieutenant, "perhaps your ideas are correct, and if you wish it, I will not enforce that part of my order; but," continued he to Mr Trotter, "I desire, sir, that your wife leave the ship immediately and I trust that when I have reported your conduct to the captain, he will serve you in the same manner. In the meantime, you will consider yourself under an arrest for drunkenness."

Chapter Seven
‘Scandalum magnatum’ clearly proved—I prove to the captain that I consider him a gentleman, although I had told him the contrary, and I prove to the midshipmen that I am a gentleman myself—they prove their gratitude by practising upon me, because practice makes perfect

The captain came on board about twelve o’clock, and ordered the discharge of Mr Trotter to be made out, as soon as the first lieutenant had reported what had occurred. He then sent for all the midshipmen on the quarter-deck.

“Gentlemen,” said the captain to them, with a stern countenance, “I feel very much indebted to some of you for the character which you have been pleased to give of me to Mr Simple. I must now request that you will answer a few questions which I am about to put in his presence. Did I ever flog the whole starboard watch, because the ship would only sail nine knots on a bowline!”

"No, sir, no!" replied they all, very much frightened.

"Did I ever give a midshipman four dozen for not having his weekly accounts pipe-clayed; or another five dozen for wearing a scarlet watch riband?"

"No, sir," replied they all together.

"Did any midshipman ever die on his chest from fatigue?"

They again replied in the negative.

"Then, gentlemen, you will oblige me by stating which of you thought proper to assert these falsehoods in a public coffee-room; and further, which of you obliged this youngster to risk his life in a duel?"

They were all silent.

"Will you answer me, gentlemen?"

"With respect to the duel, sir," replied the midshipman who had fought me, "I *heard* say, that the pistols were only charged with powder. It was a joke."

"Well, sir, we'll allow that the duel was only a joke (and I hope and trust that your report is correct); is the reputation of your captain only a joke, allow me to ask? I request to know who of you dared to propagate such injurious slander?" (Here there was a dead pause.) "Well, then, gentlemen, since you will not confess yourselves, I must refer to my authority. Mr Simple, have the goodness to point out the person on persons who gave you the information."

But I thought this would not be fair; and as they had all treated me very kindly after the duel, I resolved not to tell; so I

answered, “If you please, sir, I consider that I told you all that in confidence.”

“Confidence, sir!” replied the captain; “who ever heard of confidence between a post-captain and a midshipman?”

“No, sir,” replied I, “not between a post-captain and a midshipman but between two gentlemen.”

The captain bit his lip, and then turning to the midshipmen, said, “You may thank Mr Simple, gentlemen, that I do not press this matter further. I do believe that you were not serious when you calumniated me; but recollect that what is said in joke is too often repeated in earnest. I trust that Mr Simple’s conduct will have its effect, and that you will leave off practising upon him, who has saved you from a very severe punishment.”

When the midshipmen went down below they all shook hands with me, and said, that I was a good fellow for not peaching: but, as for the advice of the captain, that they should not practise upon me, as he termed it, they forgot that, for they commenced again immediately, and never left off until they found that I was not to be deceived any longer.

The postman came on board with the letters, and put his head into the midshipmen’s berth. I was very anxious to have one from home, but I was disappointed. Some had letters and some had not. Those who had not, declared that their parents were very undutiful, and that they would cut them off with a shilling; and those who had letters, after they had read them, offered them for sale to the others, usually at half price. I could not imagine why

they sold, or why the others bought them; but they did do so; and one that was full of good advice was sold three times, from which circumstance I was inclined to form a better opinion of the morals of my companions.

I mentioned the reason why I was so anxious for a letter, viz., because I wanted to buy my dirk and cocked-hat; upon which they told me that there was no occasion for my spending my money, as by the regulations of the service, the purser's steward served them out to all the officers who applied for them. As I knew where the purser's steward's room was, having seen it when down in the cock-pit with the Trotters, I went down immediately. "Mr Purser's Steward," said I, "let me have a cocked-hat and a dirk immediately."

"Very good, sir," replied he, and he wrote an order upon a slip of paper, which he handed to me. "There is the order for it, sir; but the cocked-hats are kept in the chest up in the main-top, and as for the dirk, you must apply to the butcher, who has them under his charge."

I went up with the order, and thought I would first apply for the dirk; so I inquired for the butcher, whom I found sitting in the sheep-pen with the sheep, mending his trowsers. In reply to my demand, he told me that he had not the key of the store-room, which was under the charge of one of the corporals of marines.

I inquired who, and he said, "Cheeks, the marine." (This celebrated personage is the prototype of Mr Nobody on board of a man-of-war.)

I went everywhere about the ship, inquiring for Cheeks the marine, but could not find him. Some said that they believed he was in the foretop, standing sentry over the wind, that it might not change; others, that he was in the galley, to prevent the midshipmen from soaking their biscuit in the captain's dripping-pan.

As I could not find the marine, I thought I might as well go for my cocked-hat, and get my dirk afterwards. I did not much like going up the rigging, because I was afraid of turning giddy, and if I fell overboard I could not swim; but one of the midshipmen offered to accompany me, stating that I need not be afraid, if I fell overboard, of sinking to the bottom, as, if I was giddy, my head at all events *would swim*; so I determined to venture. I climbed up very near to the main-top, but not without missing the little ropes very often, and grazing the skin of my shins. Then I came to large ropes stretched out from the mast so that you must climb them with your head backwards. The midshipman told me these were called the cat-harpings, because they were so difficult to climb, that a cat would expostulate if ordered to go out by them. I was afraid to venture, and then he proposed that I should go through lubber's hole, which he said had been made for people like me. I agreed to attempt it, as it appeared more easy, and at last arrived, quite out of breath, and very happy to find myself in the main-top.

The captain of the main-top was there with two other sailors. The midshipman introduced me very politely:– "Mr Jenkins—

Mr Simple, midshipman,—Mr Simple, Mr Jenkins, captain of the main-top. Mr Jenkins, Mr Simple has come up with an order for a cocked-hat." The captain of the top replied that he was very sorry that he had not one in store, but the last had been served out to the captain's monkey. This was very provoking. The captain of the top then asked me if I was ready with my *footing*.

I replied, "Not very, for I had lost it two or three times when coming up." He laughed and replied, that I should lose it altogether before I went down; and that I must *hand* it out. "*Hand out my footing*!" said I, puzzled, and appealing to the midshipman; "what does he mean?"

"He means that you must fork out a seven-shilling bit."

I was just as wise as ever, and stared very much; when Mr Jenkins desired the other men to get half-a-dozen *foxes* and make *a spread eagle* of me, unless he had his parkisite. I never should have found out what it all meant, had not the midshipman, who laughed till he cried, at last informed me that it was the custom to give the men something to drink the first time that I came aloft, and that if I did not, they would tie me up to the rigging.

Having no money in my pocket, I promised to pay them as soon as I went below; but Mr Jenkins would not trust me. "Why, sir," said I, "do you know who you are speaking to? I am an officer and a gentleman. Do you know who my grandfather is?"

"O yes," replied he, "very well."

"Then, who is he, sir?" replied I, very angrily.

"Who is he! why he's the *Lord knows who*."

"No," replied I, "that's not his name; he is Lord Privilege." (I was very much surprised that he knew that my grandfather was a lord.) "And do you suppose," continued I, "that I would forfeit the honour of my family for a paltry seven shillings?"

This observation of mine, and a promise on the part of the midshipman, who said he would be bail for me, satisfied Mr Jenkins, and he allowed me to go down the rigging. I went to my chest, and paid the seven shillings to one of the topmen who followed me, and then went up on the main-deck to learn as much as I could of my profession.

Chapter Eight
My messmates show me the folly of running in debt— the episode of Sholto McFoy

Now that I have been on board about a month, I find that my life is not disagreeable. I don't smell the pitch and tar, and I can get into my hammock without tumbling out on the other side. My messmates are good-tempered, although they laugh at me very much: but I must say that they are not very nice in their ideas of honour. A few days after I came onboard, I purchased some tarts of the bumboat woman, as she is called; I wished to pay for them, but she had no change, and very civilly told me she would trust me. She produced a narrow book, and said that she would open an account with me, and I could pay her when I thought proper. To this arrangement I had no objection, and I sent up for different things until I thought that my account must have amounted to eleven or twelve shillings. As I promised my father that I never would run in debt, I considered that it was then time that it should be settled. When I asked for it, what was my surprise to find that it amounted to 2 pounds 14 shillings, 6 pence. I declared that it was impossible, and requested that she would allow me to look at the items, when I found that I was booked for at least three or

four dozen tarts every day, ordered by the young gentlemen "to be put down to Mr Simple's account." I was very much shocked, not only at the sum of money which I had to pay, but also at the want of honesty on the part of my messmates; but when I complained of it in the berth, they all laughed at me.

At last one of them said, "Peter, tell the truth; did not your father caution you not to run in debt?"

"Yes, he did," replied I.

"I know that very well," replied he: "all fathers do the same when their sons leave them; it's a matter of course. Now observe, Peter; it is out of regard to you, that your messmates have been eating tarts at your expense. You disobeyed your father's injunctions before you had been a month from home; and it is to give you a lesson that may be useful in after-life, that they have considered it their duty to order the tarts. I trust that it will not be thrown away upon you. Go to the woman, pay your bill, and never run up another."

"That I certainly shall not," replied I; but as I could not prove who ordered the tarts, and did not think it fair that the woman should lose her money, I went up and paid the bill, with a determination never to open an account with anybody again.

But this left my pockets quite empty, so I wrote to my father, stating the whole transaction, and the consequent state of my finances. My father, in his answer, observed that whatever might have been their motives, my messmates had done me a friendly act; and that as I had lost my money by my own carelessness, I

must not expect that he would allow me any more pocket-money. But my mother, who added a postscript to his letter, slipped in a five-pound note, and I do believe that it was with my father's sanction, although he pretended to be very angry at my forgetting his injunctions.

A few days before this, Mr Falcon, the first lieutenant, ordered me to put on my side-arms to go away on duty. I replied that I had neither dirk nor cocked hat, although I had applied for them. He laughed at my story, and sent me on shore with the master, who bought them, and the first lieutenant sent up the bill to my father, who paid it, and wrote to thank him for his trouble. That morning, the first lieutenant said to me, "Now, Mr Simple, we'll take the shine off that cocked hat and dirk of yours. You will go in the boat with Mr O'Brien, and take care that none of the men slip away from it and get drunk at the tap."

This was the first time that I had ever been sent away on duty, and I was very proud of being an officer in charge. I put on my full uniform, and was ready at the gangway a quarter of an hour before the men were piped away. We were ordered to the dockyard to draw sea-stores. When we arrived there, I was quite astonished at the piles of timber, the ranges of storehouses, and the immense anchors which lay on the wharf. There was such a bustle, everybody appeared to be so busy, that I wanted to look every way at once. Close to where the boat landed, they were hauling a large frigate out of what they called the basin; and I was so interested with the sight, that I am sorry to say, I quite forgot

all about the boat's crew, and my orders to look after them. Two of the men: belonging to the boat slipped away, and on my return they were not to be seen, I was very much frightened, for I knew that I had neglected my duty, and that on the first occasion on which I had been entrusted with responsible service. What to do I did not know. I ran up and down every part of the dock-yard until I was quite out of breath, asking every body I met whether they had seen my two men. Many of them said that they had seen plenty of men, but did not exactly know mine; some laughed, and called me a greenhorn. At last I met a midshipman, who told me that he had seen two men answering to my description on the roof of the coach starting for London, and that I must be quick if I wished to catch them; but he would not stop to answer any more questions.

I was proceeding on very disconsolately, when, as I turned a corner, to my great delight, I met my two men, who touched their hats and said that they had been looking for me. I did not believe that they told the truth, but I was so glad to recover them, that I did not scold, but went with them down to the boat, which had been waiting some time for us. O'Brien, the master's mate, called me a young sculping, a word I had never heard before. When we arrived on board, the first lieutenant asked O'Brien why he had remained so long. He answered that two of the men had left the boat, but that I had found them. The first lieutenant appeared to be pleased with me, observing, as he had said before, that I was no fool, and I went down below overjoyed at my good fortune,

and very much obliged to O'Brien for not telling the whole truth.

A day or two afterwards, we had a new messmate of the name of McFoy. I was on the quarter-deck when he came on board and presented a letter to the captain, inquiring first if his name was "Captain Sauvage." He was a florid young man, nearly six feet high, with sandy hair, yet very good-looking. As his career in the service was very short, I will tell at once, what I did not find out till some time afterwards. The captain had agreed to receive him to oblige a brother officer, who had retired from the service, and lived in the Highlands of Scotland. The first notice which the captain had of the arrival of Mr McFoy, was from a letter written to him by the young man's uncle. This amused him so much that he gave it to the first lieutenant to read: it ran as follows:—

> "***Glasgow***, April 25th, 1—.
>
> "Sir,—Our much esteemed and mutual friend, Captain McAlpine, having communicated by letter, dated the 14th inst., your kind intentions relative to my nephew, Sholto McFoy (for which you will be pleased to accept my best thanks), I write to acquaint you that he is now on his way to join your ship, the *Diomede*, and will arrive, God willing, twenty-six hours after the receipt of this letter.
>
> "As I have been given to understand by those who have some acquaintance with the service of the King, that his equipment as an officer will be somewhat expensive, I have considered it but fair to ease your mind as to any responsibility on that score, and have therefore enclosed the half of a Bank of England note for ten pounds

sterling, Number 3742, the other half of which will be duly forwarded in a frank promised to me the day after to-morrow. I beg you will make the necessary purchases, and apply the balance, should there be any, to his mess account, or any other expenses which you may consider warrantable or justifiable.

"It is at the same time proper to inform you that Sholto had ten shillings in his pocket at the time of his leaving Glasgow; the satisfactory expenditure of which I have no doubt you will inquire into, as it is a large sum to be placed at the discretion of a youth only fourteen years and five months old. I mention his age, as Sholto is so tall that you might be deceived by his appearance, and be induced to trust to his prudence in affairs of this serious nature. Should he at any time require further assistance beyond his pay, which I am told is extremely handsome to all King's officers, I beg you to consider that any draft of yours, at ten days' sight, to the amount of five pounds sterling English, will be duly honoured by the firm of Monteith, McKillop, and Company, of Glasgow. Sir, with many thanks for your kindness and consideration,

"I remain, your most obedient,

"***Walter Monteith***."

The letter brought on board by McFoy was to prove his identity. While the captain read it, McFoy stared about him like a wild stag. The captain welcomed him to the ship, asked him one or two questions, introduced him to the first lieutenant, and then went on shore. The first lieutenant had asked me to dine in

the gun-room; I supposed that he was pleased with me because I had found the men; and when the captain pulled on shore, he also invited Mr McFoy, when the following conversation took place.

"Well, Mr McFoy, you have had a long journey; I presume it is the first that you have ever made."

"Indeed it is, sir," replied McFoy; "and sorely I've been pestered. Had I minded all they whispered in my lug as I came along, I had need been made of money—sax-pence here, sax-pence there, sax-pence everywhere. Sich extortion I ne'er dreamt of."

"How did you come from Glasgow?"

"By the wheel-boat, or steam-boat, as they ca'd it, to Lunnon: where they charged me sax-pence for taking my baggage on shore—a wee boxy nae bigger than yon cocked-up hat. I would fain carry it mysel', but they wudna let me."

"How much of your ten-shillings have you left?" inquired the first lieutenant, smiling.

"Hoot; sir lieutenant, how came you for to ken that? Eh; it's my uncle Monteith at Glasgow. Why, as I sit here, I've but three shillings and a penny of it left. But there's a smell here that's no canny; so I'll just go up again into the fresh air."

When Mr McFoy quitted the gun-room they all laughed very much. After he had been a short time on deck he went down into the midshipman's berth: but he made himself very unpleasant, quarrelling and wrangling with everybody. It did not, however, last very long: for he would not obey any orders that were given

him. On the third day, he quitted the ship without asking the permission of the first lieutenant; when he returned on board the following day, the first lieutenant put him under an arrest, and in charge of the sentry at the cabin door. During the afternoon I was under the half-deck, and perceived that he was sharpening a long clasp-knife upon the after-truck of the gun. I went up to him and asked him why he was doing so, and he replied, as his eyes flashed fire, that it was to avenge the insult offered to the bluid of McFoy. His look told me that he was in earnest.

I was very much alarmed, and thought it my duty to state his murderous intentions, or worse might happen; so I walked up on deck and told the first lieutenant what McFoy was intending to do. Mr Falcon laughed, and shortly afterwards went down on the main-deck. McFoy's eyes glistened, and he walked forward to where the first lieutenant was standing: but the sentry, who had been cautioned by me, kept him back with his bayonet. The first lieutenant turned round, and perceiving what was going on, desired the sentry to see if Mr McFoy had a knife in his hands; and he had it sure enough, open and held behind his back. He was disarmed, and the first lieutenant, perceiving that the lad meant mischief, reported his conduct to the captain, on his arrival on board. The captain sent for McFoy, who was very obstinate, and when taxed with his intentions would not deny it, or even say that he would not again attempt it; so he was sent on shore immediately, and returned to his friends in the Highlands. We never saw any more of him; but I heard that he obtained a

commission in the army, and three months after he had joined his regiment was killed in a duel, resenting some fancied affront offered to the bluid of McFoy.

Chapter Nine
We post up to Portsdown Fair—Consequence of disturbing a lady at supper—Spontaneous combustion at Ranelagh Gardens—Pastry versus piety—Many are bid to the feast; but not the halt, the lame, or the blind

A few days after McFoy quitted the ship, we all had leave from the first lieutenant to go to Portsdown fair, but he would only allow the oldsters to sleep on shore. We anticipated so much pleasure from our excursion that some of us were up early enough to go away in the boat sent for fresh beef. We had our breakfast, and went up George Street, where we found all sorts of vehicles ready to take us to the fair. We got into one which they called a dilly. I asked the man who drove it why it was so called, and he replied, because he only charged a shilling.

O'Brien, who had joined us after breakfasting on board, said, that this answer reminded him of one given to him by a man who attended the hackney-coach stands in London.

"Pray," said he, "why are you called Waterman?"

"Waterman," replied the man, "vy, sir, 'cause we opens the

hackney-coach doors."

At last, with plenty of whipping, and plenty of swearing, and a great deal of laughing, the old horse, whose back curved upwards like a bow, from the difficulty of dragging so many, arrived at the bottom of Portsdown Hill, where we got out, and walked up to the fair. There was Richardson, with a clown and harlequin, and such beautiful women, dressed in clothes all over gold spangles, dancing reels and waltzes, and looking so happy! There was Flint and Gyngell, with fellows tumbling over head and heels, playing such tricks—eating fire, and drawing yards of tape out of their mouths. Then there was the Royal Circus, all the horses standing in a line, with men and women standing on their backs, waving flags, while the trumpeters blew their trumpets. We walked about for an hour or two seeing the outside of everything: we determined to go and see the inside. First we went into Richardson's, where we saw a bloody tragedy, with a ghost and thunder, and afterwards a pantomime, full of tricks, and tumbling over one another. Then we saw one or two other things, I forget what, but this I know, that, generally speaking, the outside was better than the inside. After this, feeling very hungry, we agreed to go into a booth and have something to eat. The tables were ranged all round, and in the centre there was a boarded platform for dancing. The ladies were there all ready dressed for partners: and the music was so lively, that I felt very much inclined to dance, but we had agreed to go and see the wild beasts fed at Mr Polito's menagerie, and as it was now almost

eight o'clock, we paid our bill and set off. It was a very curious sight, and better worth seeing than anything in the fair; I never had an idea that there were so many strange animals in existence. There was the tapir, a great pig with a long nose, a variety of the hippopotamus, which the keeper said was an amphibilious animal, as couldn't live on land, and *dies* in the water—however, it seemed to live very well in a cage. Then there was the kangaroo with its young ones peeping out of it—a most astonishing animal. The keeper said that it brought forth two young ones at a birth, and then took them into its stomach again, until they arrived at years of discretion. Then there was the pelican of the wilderness, with a large bag under his throat, which the man put on his head as a night-cap, this bird feeds its young with its own blood—when fish are scarce. There were a young elephant and three lions, and several other animals which I forget now, so I shall go on to describe the tragical scene which occurred. The keeper had poked up all the animals, and had commenced feeding them. The great lion was growling and snarling over the shin-bone of an ox, cracking it like a nut, when, by some mismanagement, one end of the pole upon which the chandelier was suspended fell down, striking the door of the cage in which the lioness was at supper, and bursting it open. It was all done in a second; the chandelier fell, the cage opened, and the lioness sprang out. I remember to this moment seeing the body of the lioness in the air, and then all was dark as pitch. What a change! not a moment before all of us staring with delight and curiosity, and then to be left in darkness,

horror, and dismay! There was such screaming and shrieking, such crying and fighting, and pushing, and fainting—nobody knew where to go, or how to find their way out. The people crowded first on one side, and then on the other, as their fears instigated them. I was very soon jammed up with my back against the bars of one of the cages, and feeling some beast lay hold of me behind, made a desperate effort, and succeeded in climbing up to the cage above, not, however, without losing the seat of my trowsers, which the laughing hyaena would not let go. I hardly knew where I was when I climbed up. I was surmising what danger I should next encounter, when to my joy I discovered that I had gained the open door from which the lioness had escaped. I crawled in, and pulled the door to after me, thinking myself very fortunate: and there I sat very quietly in a corner during the remainder of the noise and confusion. I had been there but a few minutes, when the beef-eaters, as they were called, who played the music outside, came in with torches and loaded muskets. No one was seriously hurt. As for the lioness, she was not to be found and as soon as it was ascertained that she had escaped, there was as much terror and scampering away outside, as there had been in the menagerie. It appeared afterwards, that the animal had been as much frightened as we had been, and had secreted herself under one of the waggons. It was some time before she could be found. At last O'Brien, who was a very brave fellow, went a-head of the beef-eaters, and saw her eyes glaring. They borrowed a net or two from the carts which had brought calves to

the fair, and threw them over her. When she was fairly entangled, they dragged her by the tail into the menagerie. All this while I had remained very quietly in the den, but when I perceived that its lawful owner had come back to retake possession, I thought it was time to come out; so I called to my messmates, who, with O'Brien, were assisting the beef-eaters. They had not discovered me, and laughed very much when they saw where I was. One of the midshipmen shot the bolt of the door, so that I could not jump out, and then stirred me up with a long pole. At last I contrived to unbolt it again, and got out, when they laughed still more, at the seat of my trowsers being torn off. It was not exactly a laughing matter to me, although I had to congratulate myself upon a very lucky escape; and so did my messmates think, when I narrated my adventures. O'Brien lent me a dark silk handkerchief, which I tied round my waist, and let drop behind, so that my misfortunes might not attract any notice.

We then went to what they called the Ranelagh Gardens to see the fireworks, which were to be let off at ten o'clock. It was exactly ten when we paid for our admission, and we waited very patiently for a quarter of an hour, but there were no signs of the fireworks being displayed. The fact was, that the man to whom the gardens belonged waited until more company should arrive, although the place was already very full of people. Now the first lieutenant had ordered the boat to wait for us until twelve o'clock, and then return on board; and as we were seven miles from Portsmouth, we had not much time to spare. We waited another

quarter of an hour, and then it was agreed that as the fireworks were stated in the handbill to commence precisely at ten o'clock, we were fully justified in letting them off ourselves. O'Brien went out, and returned with a dozen penny rattans, which he notched in the end. The fireworks were on the posts and stages, all ready, and it was agreed that we should light them all at once, and then mix with the crowd. The oldsters lighted cigars, and fixing them in the notched end of the canes, continued to puff them until they were all well lighted. They handed one to each of us, and at a signal we all applied them to the match papers, and as soon as the fire communicated, we threw down our canes and ran in among the crowd. In about half a minute, off they all went in the most beautiful confusion; there were silver stars and golden stars, blue lights and Catherine-wheels, mines and bombs, Grecian-fires and Roman-candles, Chinese trees, rockets, and illuminated mottoes, all firing away, cracking, popping, and fizzing, at the same time. We all escaped very cleverly, and taking another dilly, arrived at Portsmouth, and were down to the boat in good time.

Sunday being a fine day, we all went on shore to church with Mr Falcon, the first lieutenant. We liked going to church very much; not, I am sorry to say, from religious feelings, but for the following reason:– the first lieutenant sat in a pew below, and we were placed in the gallery above, where he could not see us, nor indeed could we see him. We all remained very quiet, and I may say very devout, during the time of the service; but the clergyman who delivered the sermon was so tedious, and had such a bad

voice, that we generally slipped out as soon as he went up into the pulpit, and adjourned to a pastrycook's opposite, to eat cakes and tarts and drink cherry-brandy, which we infinitely preferred to hearing a sermon. Somehow or other, the first lieutenant had scented our proceedings: we believed that the marine officer informed against us, and this Sunday he served us a pretty trick. We had been at the pastry-cook's as usual, and as soon as we perceived the people coming out of church, we put all our tarts and sweetmeats into our hats, which we then slipped on our heads, and took our station at the church door, as if we had just come down from the gallery, and had been waiting for him. Instead, however, of appearing at the church door, he walked up the street, and desired us to follow him to the boat. The fact was, he had been in the back room at the pastry-cook's watching our motions through the green blinds. We had no suspicion, but thought that he had come out of church a little sooner than usual. When we arrived on board and followed him up the side, he said to us as we came on deck,—"Walk aft, young gentlemen." We did; and he desired us to "toe a line," which means to stand in a row. "Now, Mr Dixon," said he, "what was the text today?" As he very often asked us that question, we always left one in the church until the text was given out, who brought it to us in the pastrycook's shop, when we all marked it in our Bibles to be ready if he asked us. Dixon immediately pulled out his Bible where he had marked down the leaf and read it. "O! that was it," said Mr Falcon; "you must have remarkably good ears, Mr Dixon,

to have heard the clergyman from the pastry-cook's shop. Now, gentlemen, hats off, if you please." We all slided off our hats, which, as he expected, were full of pastry. "Really, gentlemen," said he, feeling the different papers of pastry and sweetmeats, "I am quite delighted to perceive that you have not been to church for nothing. Few come away with so many good things pressed upon their seat of memory. Master-at-arms, send all the ship's boys aft."

The boys all came tumbling up the ladders, and the first lieutenant desired each of them to take a seat upon the carronade slides. When they were all stationed, he ordered us to go round with our hats and request of each his acceptance of a tart, which we were obliged to do, handing first to one and then to another, until the hats were all empty. What annoyed me more than all, was the grinning of the boys at their being served by us like footmen, as well as the ridicule and laughter of the whole ship's company, who had assembled at the gangways.

When all the pastry was devoured, the first lieutenant said, "There, gentlemen, now that you have had your lesson for the day, you may go below." We could not help laughing ourselves when we went down into the berth.

Chapter Ten
A press-gang beaten off by one woman—Dangers at “Spithead” and “Point”—A treat for both parties, of “pulled chicken,” at my expense —Also gin for twenty—I am made a prisoner: escape and rejoin my ship

I must now relate what occurred to me a few days before the ship sailed. We were reported ready for sea, and the Admiralty was anxious that we should proceed. The only obstacle to our sailing was, that we had not yet completed our complement of men. The captain applied to the port-admiral, and obtained permission to send parties on shore to impress seamen. The second and third lieutenants, and the oldest midshipmen, were despatched on shore every night, with some of the most trustworthy men, and generally brought on board in the morning about half-a-dozen men, whom they had picked up in the different alehouses or grog-shops, as the sailors call them. I had a great wish to be one of the party before the ship sailed, and asked O’Brien, who was very kind to me in general, and allowed nobody to thrash me but himself, if he would take me with him,

which he did on the night after I had made the request. I put on my dirk, that they might know I was an officer, as well as for my protection. About dusk we rowed on shore, and landed on the Gosport side: the men were all armed with cutlasses, and wore pea-jackets, which are very short great-coats made of what they call flushing. We did not stop to look at any of the grog-shops in the town, as it was too early; but walked out about three miles in the suburbs, and went to a house, the door of which was locked, but we forced it open in a minute, and hastened to enter the passage, where we found the landlady standing to defend the entrance. The passage was long and narrow, and she was a very tall, corpulent woman, so that her body nearly filled it up, and in her hands she held a long spit pointed at us, with which she kept us at bay. The officers, who were the foremost, did not like to attack a woman, and she made such drives at them with her spit, that had they not retreated, some of them would soon have been ready for roasting. The sailors laughed and stood outside, leaving the officers to settle the business how they could. At last, the landlady called out to her husband, "Be they all out, Jem?"

"Yes," replied the husband, "they be all safe gone."

"Well, then," replied she, "I'll soon have all these gone too;" and with these words she made such rush forward upon us with her spit, that had we not fallen back, and tumbled one over another, she certainly would have run it through the second lieutenant, who commanded the party. The passage was cleared in an instant, and as soon as we were all in the street she bolted us

out; so there we were, three officers and fifteen armed men, fairly beat off by a fat old woman; the sailors who had been drinking in the house having made their escape to some other place.

We then called at other houses, where we picked up one or two men, but most of them escaped by getting out at the windows or the back doors, as we entered the front. Now there was a grog-shop which was a very favourite rendezvous of the seamen belonging to the merchant vessels, and to which they were accustomed to retreat when they heard that the press-gangs were out. Our officers were aware of this, and were therefore indifferent as to the escape of the men, as they knew that they would all go to that place, and confide in their numbers for beating us off. As it was then one o'clock, they thought it time to go there; we proceeded without any noise, but they had people on the look-out, and as soon as we turned the corner of the lane the alarm was given. I was afraid that they would all run away, and we should lose them; but, on the contrary, they mustered very strong on that night, and had resolved to "give fight." The men remained in the house, but an advanced guard of about thirty of their wives, saluted us with a shower of stones and mud. Some of our sailors were hurt, but they did not appear to mind what the women did. They rushed on, and then they were attacked by the women with their fists and nails. Notwithstanding this, the sailors only laughed, pushing the women on one side, and saying, "Be quiet, Poll;"—"Don't be foolish, Molly;"—"Out of the way, Sukey: we a'n't come to take away your fancy man;"

with expressions of that sort, although the blood trickled down many of their faces, from the way in which they had been clawed. We at length got into the house. The seamen of the merchant ships had armed themselves with bludgeons and other weapons, and had taken a position on the tables. They were more than two to one against us, and there was a dreadful fight, as their resistance was very desperate. Our sailors were obliged to use their cutlasses, and for a few minutes I was quite bewildered with the shouting and swearing, pushing and scuffling, collaring and fighting, together with the dust raised up, which not only blinded, but nearly choked me. By the time that my breath was nearly squeezed out of my body, our sailors got the best of it, which the landlady and women of the house perceiving, they put out all the lights, so that I could not tell where I was; but our sailors had every one seized his man, and contrived to haul him out of the street door, where they were collected together, and secured.

Now again I was in great difficulty; I had been knocked down and trod upon, and when I did contrive to get up again, I did not know the direction in which the door lay. I felt about by the wall, and at last came to a door, for the room at that time was nearly empty, the women having followed the men out of the house. I opened it, and found that it was not the right one, but led into a little side parlour, where there was a fire, but no lights. I had just discovered my mistake, and was about to retreat, when I was shoved in from behind, and the key turned upon me; there I was, all alone, and, I must acknowledge, very much frightened, as I

thought that the vengeance of the women would be wreaked upon me. I peeped through the key-hole, and perceived that the candles were re-lighted, and that there were only women in the room, who were talking all at once, and not thinking about me. But in a minute or two, a women came in from the street, with her long black hair hanging about her shoulders, and her cap in her hand. "Well," cried she, "they've nabbed my husband; but I'll be dished if I hav'n't boxed up the midship-mite in that parlour, and he shall take his place." I thought I should have died when I looked at the woman, and perceived her coming up to the door, followed by some others, to unlock it. As the door opened, I drew my dirk, resolving to die like an officer, and as they advanced, I retreated to a corner, brandishing my dirk, without saying a word. "Vell," cried the woman who had made me a prisoner, "I do declare I likes to see a puddle in a storm—only look at the little biscuit-nibbler showing fight! Come, my lovey, you belongs to me."

"Never!" exclaimed I with indignation. "Keep off, or I shall do you mischief" (and I raised my dirk in advance); "I am an officer and a gentleman."

"Sall," cried the odious woman, "fetch a mop and a pail of dirty water, and I'll trundle that dirk out of his fist."

"No, no," replied another rather good-looking young woman, "leave him to me—don't hurt him—he really is a very nice little man. What's your name, my dear?"

"Peter Simple is my name," replied I; "and I am a King's officer, so he careful what you are about."

"Don't be afraid, Peter, nobody shall hurt you; but you must not draw your dirk before ladies, that's not like an officer and a gentleman—so put up your dirk, that's a good boy."

"I will not," replied I, "unless you promise me that I shall go away unmolested."

"I do promise you that you shall, upon my word, but recollect, Peter, that you are an officer and a gentleman—you surely would not be so shabby as to go away without treating us. What money have you got in your pocket?" and, without giving me time to answer, she felt in my pocket, and pulled out my purse, which she opened. "Why, Peter, you are as rich as a Jew," said she, as they counted thirty shillings on the table. "Now what shall we have?"

"Anything you please," said I, "provided that you will let me go."

"Well, then, it shall be a gallon of gin. Sall, call Mrs Flanagan. Mrs Flanagan, we want a gallon of gin, and clean glasses."

Mrs Flanagan received the major part of my money, and in a minute returned with the gin and wine glasses.

"Now, Peter, my cove, let's all draw round the table, and make ourselves cosy."

"O no," replied I, "take my money, drink the gin, but pray let me go!" but they wouldn't listen to me. Then I was obliged to sit down with them, the gin was poured out, and they made me drink a glass, which nearly choked me. It had, however, one good effect, it gave me courage, and in a minute or two, I felt as if I could fight them all. The door of the room was on the same

side as the fire-place, and I perceived that the poker was between the bars, and red-hot. I complained that it was cold, although I was in a burning fever; and they allowed me to get up to warm my hands. As soon as I reached the fire-place, I snatched out the red-hot poker; and brandishing it over my head, made for the door. They all jumped up to detain me, but I made a poke at the foremost, which made her run back with a shriek. (I do believe that I burnt her nose.) I seized my opportunity, and escaped into the street, whirling the poker round my head, while all the women followed, hooting and shouting after me. I never stopped running and whirling my poker until I was reeking with perspiration, and the poker was quite cold. Then I looked back, and found that I was alone. It was very dark; every house was shut up, and not a light to be seen anywhere. I stopped at the corner, not knowing where I was, or what I was to do. I felt very miserable indeed, and was reflecting on my wisest plan, when who should turn the corner, but one of the quarter-masters, who had been left on shore by accident. I knew him by his pea-jacket and straw hat to be one of our men, and I was delighted to see him. I told him what had happened, and he replied that he was going to a house where the people knew him, and would let him in. When we arrived there, the people of the house were very civil; the landlady made us some purl, which the quartermaster ordered, and which I thought very good indeed. After we had finished the jug, we both fell asleep in our chairs. I did not awaken until I was roused by the quarter-master, at past seven o'clock, when we

took a wherry, and went off to the ship.

Chapter Eleven
O'Brien takes me under his protection —The ship's company are paid, so are the bumboat-women, the Jews, and the emancipationist after a fashion—We go to sea—"Doctor" O'Brien's cure for sea-sickness—One pill of the doctor's more than a dose

When we arrived, I reported myself to the first lieutenant, and told him the whole story of the manner in which I had been treated, showing him the poker which I brought on board with me. He heard me very patiently, and then said, "Mr Simple, you maybe the greatest fool of your family for all I know to the contrary, but never pretend to be a fool with me. That poker proves the contrary; and if your wit can serve you upon your own emergency, I expect that it will be employed for the benefit of the service." He then sent for O'Brien, and gave him a lecture for allowing me to go with the press-gang, pointing out, what was very true, that I could have been of no service, and might have met with a serious accident.

At last the frigate was full manned; and, as we had received drafts of men from other ships, we were ordered to be paid previously to our going to sea. The people on shore always find out when a ship is to be paid, and very early in the morning we were surrounded with wherries, laden with Jews and other people, some requesting admittance to sell their goods, others to get paid for what they had allowed the sailors to take up upon credit. But the first lieutenant would not allow any of them to come on board until after the ship was paid; although they were so urgent, that he was forced to place sentries in the chains with cold shot, to stave the boats if they came alongside. About eleven o'clock the dock-yard boat, with all the pay clerks and the cashier, with his chest of money, came on board, and was shown into the fore-cabin, where the captain attended the pay-table. The men were called in, one by one, and as the amount and wages due had been previously calculated, they were paid very fast. The money was always received in their hats, after it had been counted out in the presence of the officers and captain. Outside the cabin door, there stood a tall man in black, with hair straight combed, who had obtained an order from the port-admiral to be permitted to come on board. He attacked every sailor as he came out, with his money in his hat, for a subscription to emancipate the slaves in the West Indies; but the sailors would not give him anything, swearing that the niggers were better off than they were; for they did not work harder by day, and had no watch and watch to keep during the night. "Sarvitude is sarvitude all over the world, my

old psalm-singer," replied one. "They sarve their masters, as in duty bound; we sarve the King, 'cause he can't do without us—and he never axes our leave, but helps himself."

Then the purser's steward came out; he was what they call a bit of a lawyer, that is, had received more education than the seamen in general.

"I trust, sir," said the man in black, "that you will contribute something."

"Not I, my hearty; I owe every farthing of my money, and more too, I'm afraid."

"Still, sir, a small trifle."

"Why, what an infernal rascal you must be, to ask a man to give away what is not his own property! Did I not tell you that I owed it all? There's an old proverb—Be just before you're generous. Now, it's my opinion, that you are a methodistical, good-for-nothing blackguard; and if any one is such a fool as to give you money, you will keep it for yourself."

When the man found that he could obtain nothing at the door, he went down on the lower deck, and commenced distributing prints of a black man kneeling in chains and saying, "Am not I your brother?" Some of the men laughed, and swore that they would paste their brother up in the mess to say prayers for the ship's company; but others were very angry, and abused him. At last, one man, who was tipsy, came up to him. "Do you pretend for to insinivate that this crying black thief is my brother?"

"To be sure I do," replied the methodist.

"Then take that for your infernal lie," said the sailor, hitting him in the face right and left, and knocking the man down into the cable tier, from whence he climbed up, and made his escape out of the frigate as soon as he was able.

The ship was now in a state of confusion and uproar; there were Jews trying to sell clothes, or to obtain money for clothes which they had sold; bumboat men and bumboat women showing their long bills, and demanding or coaxing for payment; other people from the shore, with hundreds of small debts; and the sailors' wives, sticking close to them, and disputing every bill presented, as an extortion or a robbery. There were such bawling and threatening, laughing and crying—for the women were all to quit the ship before sunset—at one moment a Jew was upset, and all his hamper of clothes tossed into the hold; at another, a sailor was seen hunting everywhere for a Jew who had cheated him —all squabbling or skylarking, and many of them very drunk. It appeared to me that the sailors had rather a difficult point to settle. They had three claimants upon them, the *Jew* for clothes, the bumboat men for their mess in harbour, and their wives for their support during their absence; and the money which they received was, generally speaking, not more than sufficient to meet one of the demands. As it may be supposed, the women had the best of it; the others were paid a trifle, and promised the remainder when they came back from their cruise. About five o'clock, the orders were given for the ship to be cleared. All disputed points were settled by the sergeant of marines with a

party, who divided their antagonists from the Jews; and every description of persons not belonging to the ship, whether male or female, was dismissed over the side. The hammocks were piped down, those who were intoxicated were put to bed, and the ship was once more quiet.

The next day everything was prepared for sea, and no leave was permitted to the officers. Stock of every kind was brought on board, and the large boats hoisted and secured. On the morning after, at day-light, a signal from the flag-ship in harbour was made for us to unmoor; our orders had come down to cruise in the Bay of Biscay. The captain came on board, the anchor weighed, and we ran through the Needles with a fine NE breeze. What occurred for the next six days I cannot tell. I thought that I should die every moment, and lay in my hammock or on the chests for the whole of that time, incapable of eating, drinking, or walking about. O'Brien came to me on the seventh morning, and said, that if I did not exert myself I never should get well, that he was very fond of me, and had taken me under his protection, and to prove his regard, he would do for me what he would not take the trouble to do for any other youngster in the ship, which was, to give me a good basting, which was a sovereign remedy for sea-sickness. He suited the action to the word, and drubbed me on the ribs without mercy, until I thought the breath was out of my body, and then he took out a rope's end and thrashed me until I obeyed his orders to go on deck immediately. Before he came to me, I could never have believed it possible that I could have obeyed

him; but somehow or another I did contrive to crawl up the ladder to the main-deck, where I sat down on the shot-racks and cried bitterly. But, by degrees, I recovered myself, and certainly felt a great deal better, and that night I slept very soundly. The next morning O'Brien came to me again. "It's a nasty slow fever, that sea-sickness, my Peter, and we must drive it out of you;" and then he commenced a repetition of yesterday's remedy until I was almost a jelly. Whether the fear of being thrashed drove away my sea-sickness, or whatever might be the real cause of it, I do not know, but this is certain, that I felt no more of it after the second beating, and the next morning, when I awoke, I was very hungry. I hastened to dress myself before O'Brien came to me, and did not see him until we met at breakfast.

"Pater," said he, "let me feel your pulse."

"O no!" replied I, "indeed I'm quite well."

"Quite well! Can you eat biscuit and salt butter?"

"Yes, I can."

"And a piece of fat pork?"

"Yes, that I can."

"It's thanks to me then, Pater," replied he, "so you'll have no more of my medicine until you fall sick again."

"I hope not," replied I, "for it was not very pleasant."

"Pleasant! you simple Simon, when did you ever hear of physic being pleasant, unless a man prescribe for himself? I suppose you'd be after lollipops for the yellow fever. Live and larn, boy, and thank Heaven that you've found somebody who

loves you well enough to baste you when it's good for your health."

I held my tongue and ate a very hearty breakfast. From that day I returned to my duty, and was put into the same watch with O'Brien, who spoke to the first lieutenant, and told him that he had taken me under his charge.

Chapter Twelve
New theory of Mr Muddle remarkable for having no end to it—Novel practice of Mr Chucks—O'Brien commences his history—I bring up the master's night-glass

As I have already mentioned sufficient of the captain and the first lieutenant to enable the reader to gain an insight into their characters, I shall now mention two very odd personages who were my shipmates, the carpenter and the boatswain. The carpenter, whose name was Muddle, used to go by the appellation of Philosopher Chips; not that he followed any particular school, but had formed a theory of his own, from which he was not to be dissuaded. This was, that the universe had its cycle of events which turned round, so that in a certain period of time everything was to happen over again. I never could make him explain upon what data his calculations were founded; he said, that if he explained it, I was too young to comprehend it; but the fact was this, that "in 27,672 years everything that was going on now would be going on again, with the same people as were existing at this present time." He very seldom ventured to

make the remark to Captain Savage, but to the first lieutenant he did very often. "I've been as close to it as possible, sir, I do assure you, although you find fault; but 27,672 years ago you were first lieutenant of this ship, and I was carpenter, although we recollect nothing about it; and 27,672 years hence we shall both be standing by this boat, talking about the repairs, as we are now."

"I do not doubt it, Mr Muddle," replied the first lieutenant; "I dare say that it is all very true, but the repairs must be finished this night, and 27,672 years hence you will have the order just as positive as you have it now, so let it be done."

But the boatswain was a more amusing personage. He was considered to be the *taughtest* (that is, the most active and severe) boatswain in the service. He went by the name of "Gentleman Chucks"—the latter was his surname. He appeared to have received half an education; sometimes his language was for a few sentences remarkably well chosen, but, all of a sudden, he would break down at a hard word; but I shall be able to let the reader into more of his history as I go on with my adventures. He had a very handsome person, inclined to be stout, keen eyes, and hair curling in ringlets. He held his head up, and strutted as he walked. He declared that "an officer should look like an officer, and *comport* himself accordingly." In his person he was very clean, wore rings on his great fingers, and a large frill to his bosom, which stuck out like the back fin of a perch, and the collar of his shirt was always pulled up to a level with his cheek bones.

He never appeared on deck without his "persuader," which was three rattans twisted into one, like a cable; sometimes he called it his Order of the Bath, or his Tri*o* junct*o* in uno; and this persuader was seldom idle. He attempted to be very polite, even when addressing the common seamen, and, certainly, he always commenced his observations to them in a very gracious manner, but, as he continued, he became less choice in his phraseology. As a specimen of them, he would say to the man on the forecastle, "Allow me to observe, my dear man, in the most delicate way in the world, that you are spilling that tar upon the deck—a deck, sir, if I may venture to make the observation, I had the duty of seeing holystoned this morning. You understand me, sir, you have defiled His Majesty's forecastle. I must do my duty, sir, if you neglect yours; so take that—and that—and that,"—(thrashing the man with his rattan)—"you damned haymaking son of a seacook. Do it again, damn your eyes, and I'll cut your liver out."

The master was the officer who had charge of the watch to which I was stationed; he was a very rough sailor, who had been brought up in the merchant service, not much of a gentleman in his appearance, very good-tempered, and very fond of grog. He always quarrelled with the boatswain, and declared that the service was going to the devil, now that warrant officers put on white shirts, and wore frills to them. But the boatswain did not care for him; he knew his duty, he did his duty, and if the captain was satisfied, he said that the whole ship's company

might grumble. The master was very kind to me, and used to send me down to my hammock before my watch was half over. Until that time, I walked the deck with O'Brien, who was a very pleasant companion, and taught me everything that he could, connected with my profession. One night, when he had the middle watch, I told him I should like very much if he would give me the history of his life. "That I will, my honey," replied he, "all that I can remember of it, though I have no doubt but that I've forgotten the best part of it. It's now within five minutes of two bells, so we'll heave the log and mark the board, and then I'll spin you a yarn, which will keep us both from going to sleep." O'Brien reported the rate of sailing to the master, marked it down on the log-board, and then returned.

"So now, my boy, I'll come to an anchor on the top-sail halyard rack, and you may squeeze your thread-paper little carcass under my lee, and then I'll tell you all about it. First and foremost, you must know that I am descended from the great O'Brien Borru, who was a king in his time, but that time's past. I suppose, as the world turns round, my children's children's posterity may be kings again, although there seems but little chance of it just now; but there's ups and downs on a grand scale, as well as in a man's own history, and the wheel of fortune keeps turning for the comfort of those who are at the lowest spoke, as I may be just now. To cut the story a little shorter, I skip down to my great-grandfather, who lived like a real gentleman, as he was, upon his ten thousand a year. At last he died, and eight thousand

of the ten was buried with him. My grandfather followed his father all in good course of time, and only left my father about one hundred acres of bog to keep up the dignity of the family. I am the youngest of ten, and devil a copper have I but my pay, or am I likely to have. You may talk about *descent*, but a more *descending* family than mine was never in existence, for here am I with twenty-five pounds a-year, and a half-pay of 'nothing a-day, and find myself,' when my great ancestor did just what he pleased with all Ireland, and everybody in it. Father McGrath, the priest, who lived with my father, taught me the elements, as they call them. I thought I had enough of the elements then, but I've seen a deal more of them since. 'Terence,' says my father to me one day, 'what do you mane to do?' 'To get my dinner, sure,' replied I, for I was not a little hungry. 'And so you shall to-day, my vourneen,' replied my father, 'but in future you must do something to get your own dinner; there's not praties enow for the whole of ye. Will you go to the *say*?' 'I'll just step down and look at it,' says I, for we lived but sixteen Irish miles from the coast; so when I had finished my meal, which did not take long, for want of ammunition, I trotted down to the Cove to see what a ship might be like, and I happened upon a large one sure enough, for there lay a three-decker with an admiral's flag at the fore. 'Maybe you'll be so civil as to tell me what ship that is,' said I to a sailor on the pier. 'It's the *Queen Charlotte*,' replied he, 'of one hundred and twenty guns.' Now when I looked at her size, and compared her with all the little smacks and hoys lying about her, I very

naturally asked how old she was; he replied, that she was no more than three years old. 'But three years old,' thought I to myself; 'it's a fine vessel you'll be when you'll come of age, if you grow at that rate: you'll be as tall as the top of Bencrow,' (that's a mountain we have in our parts). I went back to my father, and told him all I had seen, and he replied, that if I liked it, I might be a midshipman on board of her, with nine hundred men under my command. He forgot to say how many I should have over me, but I found that out afterwards. I agreed, and my father ordered his pony and went to the lord lieutenant, for he had interest enough for that. The lord lieutenant spoke to the admiral, who was staying at the palace, and I was ordered on board as midshipman. My father fitted me out pretty handsomely, telling all the tradesmen that their bills should be paid with my first prize-money, and thus, by promises and blarney, he got credit for all I wanted. At last all was ready: Father McGrath gave me his blessing, and told me that if I died like an O'Brien, he would say a power of masses for the good of my soul. So, after a deal of bother, I was fairly on board, and I parted company with my chest, for I stayed on deck, and that went down below. I stared about with all my eyes for some time, when who should be coming off but the captain, and the officers were ordered on deck to receive him. I wanted to have a quiet survey of him, so I took up my station on one of the guns, that I might examine him at my leisure. The boatswain whistled, the marines presented arms, and the officers all took off their hats as the captain came on the deck, and then the guard was dismissed,

and they all walked about the deck as before; but I found it very pleasant to be astride on the gun, so I remained where I was. 'What do you mane by that, you big young scoundrel?' says he, when he saw me. 'It's nothing at all I mane,' replied I; 'but what do you mane by calling an O'Brien a scoundrel?' 'Who is he?' said the captain to the first lieutenant. 'Mr O'Brien, who joined the ship about an hour since.' 'Don't you know better than to sit upon a gun?' said the captain. 'To be sure I do,' replied I, 'when there's anything better to sit upon.' 'He knows no better, sir,' observed the first lieutenant. 'Then he must be taught,' replied the captain. 'Mr O'Brien, since you have perched yourself on that gun to please yourself, you will now continue there for two hours to please me. Do you understand, sir? you'll ride on that gun for two hours.' 'I understand, sir,' replied I; 'but I am afraid that he won't move without spurs, although there's plenty of *metal* in him.' The captain turned away and laughed as he went into his cabin, and all the officers laughed, and I laughed too, for I perceived no great hardship in sitting down an hour or two, any more than I do now. Well, I soon found that, like a young bear, all my troubles were to come.

"I got into a scrape just before we left harbour. It was my watch when they piped to dinner, and I took the liberty to run below, as my messmates had a knack of forgetting absent friends. Well, the captain came on board, and there were no side boys, no side ropes, and no officers to receive him, he came on deck foaming with rage, for his dignity was hurt, and he inquired who

was the midshipman of the watch. 'Mr O'Brien,' said they all. 'Devil a bit,' replied I, 'it was my forenoon watch.' 'Who relieved you, sir?' said the first lieutenant. 'Devil a soul, sir,' replied I; 'for they were all too busy with their pork and beef.' 'Then why did you leave the deck without relief?' 'Because, sir, my stomach would have had but little relief if I had remained.' The captain, who stood by, said, 'Do you see those cross-trees, sir?' 'Is it those little bits of wood that you mane, on the top there, captain?' 'Yes, sir; now just go up there and stay until I call you down: You must be brought up to your senses, young man, or you'll have but little prospect in the service.' 'I've an idea that I'll have plenty of prospect when I get up there,' replied I, 'but it's all to please you.' So up I went, as I have many a time since, and as you often will, Peter, just to enjoy the fresh air and your own pleasant thoughts, all at one and the same time.

"The first time that I put my foot on shore was at Minorca. Several of us went on shore, and having dined upon a roast turkey, stuffed with plum-pudding, and having drunk as much wine as would float a jolly-boat, we ordered donkeys, to take a little equestrian exercise. Some went off tail on end, some with their hind-quarters uppermost, and then the riders went off instead of the donkeys; some wouldn't go off at all; as for mine he would go—and where the devil do you think he went? Why, into the church, where all the people were at mass; the poor brute was dying with thirst, and smelt water. As soon as he was in, notwithstanding all my tugging and hauling, he ran his nose into

the holy-water font, and drank it all up. They rose up from their knees and seized me, calling upon all the saints in the calendar. Although I knew what they meant, not a word of their lingo could I speak, to plead for my life, and I was almost torn to pieces before the priest came up. Perceiving the danger I was in, I wiped my finger across the wet nose of the donkey, crossed myself, and then went down on my knees to the priests, crying out *Culpa mea*, as all good Catholics do—though 'twas no fault of mine, as I said before, for I tried all I could, and tugged at the brute till my strength was gone. The priests perceived by the manner in which I crossed myself that I was a good Catholic, and guessed that it was all a mistake of the donkey's. They ordered the crowd to be quiet, and sent for an interpreter, when I explained the whole story. They gave me absolution for what the donkey had done, and after that, as it was very rare to meet an English officer who was a good Christian, I was in great favour during my stay at Minorca, and was living in plenty, paying for nothing, and as happy as a cricket. So the jackass proved a very good friend, and, to reward him, I hired him every day, and galloped him all over the island. But, at last, it occurred to me that I had broken my leave, for I was so happy on shore that I quite forgot that I had only permission for twenty-four hours, and I should not have remembered it so soon, had it not been for a party of marines, headed by a sergeant, who took me by the collar, and dragged me off my donkey. I was taken on board, and put under an arrest for my misconduct."

"Sail on the starboard-bow!" cried the look-out man.

"Very well," replied the master; "Mr O'Brien,—where's Mr O'Brien?"

"Is it me you mane, sir?" said O'Brien, walking up to the master, for he had sat down so long in the topsail-halyard rack, that he was wedged in, and could not get out immediately.

"Yes, sir; go forward, and see what that vessel is."

"Ay, ay, sir," said O'Brien. "And, Mr Simple," continued the master, "go down and bring me up my night-glass."

"Yes, sir," replied I. I had no idea of a night-glass; and as I observed that about this time his servant brought him up a glass of grog, I thought it very lucky that I knew what he meant.

"Take care that you don't break it, Mr Simple."

"O then, I'm all right," thought I; "he means the tumbler:" so down I went, called up the gunroom steward, and desired him to give me a glass of grog for Mr Doball. The steward tumbled out in his shirt, mixed the grog, and gave it to me, and I carried it up very carefully to the quarter-deck.

During my absence, the master had called the captain, and in pursuance of his orders, O'Brien had called the first lieutenant, and when I came up the ladder, they were both on deck. As I was ascending I heard the master say, "I have sent young Simple down for my night-glass, but he is so long, that I suppose he has made some mistake. He's but half a fool."

"That I deny," replied Mr Falcon, the first lieutenant, just as I put my foot on the quarter-deck; "he's no fool."

"Perhaps not," replied the master. "O, here he is. What made you so long, Mr Simple—where is my night-glass?"

"Here it is, sir," replied I, handing him the tumbler of grog; "I told the steward to make it stiff." The captain and the first lieutenant burst out into a laugh—for Mr Doball was known to be very fond of grog; the former walked aft to conceal his mirth; but the latter remained. Mr Doball was in a great rage. "Did I not say that the boy was half a fool?" cried he to the first lieutenant. "At all events, I'll not allow that he has proved himself so in this instance," replied Mr Falcon, "for he has hit the right nail on the head." Then the first lieutenant joined the captain, and they both went off laughing. "Put it on the capstan, sir," said Mr Doball to me, in an angry voice. "I'll punish you by-and-by." I was very much astonished; I hardly knew whether I had done right or wrong; at all events, thought I to myself, I did for the best; so I put it on the capstan, and walked to my own side of the deck. The captain and first lieutenant then went below, and O'Brien came aft.

I told him what had occurred, and how the master was angry with me. O'Brien laughed very heartily, and told me never to mind, but to keep in the lee-scuppers and watch him. "A glass of grog is a bait that he'll play round till he gorges. When you see it to his lips, go up to him boldly, and ask his pardon, if you have offended him, and then, if he's a good Christian, as I believe him to be, he'll not refuse it."

I thought this was very good advice, and I waited under the

bulwark on the lee-side. I observed that the master made shorter and shorter turns every time, till at last he stopped at the capstan and looked at the grog. He waited about half a minute, and then he took up the tumbler, and drank about half of it. It was very strong, and he stopped to take breath. I thought that this was the right time, and I went up to him. The tumbler was again to his lips, and before he saw me, I said, "I hope sir, you'll forgive me; I never heard of a night telescope, and knowing that you had walked so long, I thought you were tired, and wanted something to drink to refresh you."

"Well, Mr Simple," said he, after he had finished the glass, with a deep sigh of pleasure, "as you meant kindly, I shall let you off this time; but recollect, that whenever you bring me a glass of grog again, it must not be in the presence of the captain or first lieutenant."

At last our watch was over, and about two bells I was relieved by the midshipman of the next watch. It is very unfair not to relieve in time, but if I said a word, I was certain to be thrashed the next day upon some pretence or another. On the other hand, the midshipman whom I relieved was also much bigger than I was, and if I was not up before one bell, I was cut down and thrashed by him: so that between the two I kept much more than my share of the watch, except when the master sent me to bed before it was over.

Chapter Thirteen
The first lieutenant prescribes for one of his patients, his prescriptions consisting of "draughts" only—O'Brien finishes the history of his life, in which the proverb of "the more the merrier" is sadly disproved—"Shipping" a new pair of boots causes the "unshipping" of their owner—Walking home after a ball; O'Brien meets with an accident

The next morning I was on deck at seven bells, to see the hammocks stowed, when I was witness to Mr Falcon, the first lieutenant, having recourse to one of his remedies to cure a mizen-top-boy of smoking, a practice to which he had a great aversion. He never interfered with the men smoking in the galley, or chewing tobacco; but he prevented the boys, that is, lads under twenty or thereabouts, from indulging in the habit too early. The first lieutenant smelt the tobacco as the boy passed him on the

quarter-deck. “Why, Neill, you have been smoking,” said the first lieutenant. “I thought you were aware that I did not permit such lads as you to use tobacco.”

“If you please, sir,” replied the mizen-top-boy, touching his hat, “I’se got worms, and they say that smoking be good for them.”

“Good for them!” said the first lieutenant; “yes, very good for them but very bad for you. Why, my good fellow, they’ll thrive upon tobacco until they grow as large as conger eels. Heat is what the worms are fond of; but cold—cold will kill them. Now I’ll cure you. Quarter-master, come here. Walk this boy up and down the weather gangway, and every time you get forward abreast of the main-tack block, put his mouth to windward, squeeze him sharp by the nape of the neck until he opens his mouth wide, and there keep him and let the cold air blow down his throat, while you count ten; then walk him aft, and when you are forward again proceed as before.—Cold kills worms, my poor boy, not tobacco —I wonder that you are not dead by this time.”

A few nights afterwards, when we had the middle watch, O’Brien proceeded with his story.

“Where was it that I left off?”

“You left off at the time that you were taken out of confinement.”

“So I did, sure enough; and it was with no goodwill that I went to my duty. However, as there was no help for it, I walked up and down the deck as before, with my hands in my pockets, thinking

of old Ireland, and my great ancestor, Brien Borru. And so I went on behaving myself like a real gentleman, and getting into no more scrapes, until the fleet put into the Cove of Cork, and I found myself within a few miles of my father's house. You may suppose that the anchor had hardly kissed the mud before I went to the first lieutenant and asked leave to go on shore. Now the first lieutenant was not in the sweetest of tempers, seeing as how the captain had been hauling him over the coals for not carrying on the duty according to his satisfaction. So he answered me very gruffly, that I should not leave the ship. 'O bother!' said I to myself, 'this will never do.' So up I walked to the captain, and touching my hat, reminded him that 'I had a father and mother, and a pretty sprinkling of brothers and sisters, who were dying to see me, and that I hoped that he would give me leave.' 'Ax the first lieutenant,' said he turning away. 'I have, sir,' replied I, 'and he says that the devil a bit shall I put my foot on shore.' 'Have you any fault to find with Mr O'Brien?' said the captain to the first lieutenant, as he came aft. 'No more than I have with midshipmen in general; but I believe it is not the custom for officers to ask leave to go on shore before the sails are furled and the yards squared.' 'Very true,' replied the captain; 'therefore, Mr O'Brien, you must wait until the watch is called, and then, if you ask the first lieutenant, I have no doubt but you will have leave granted to you to go and see your friends.'

"I thought myself very clever in this business, but I was never a greater fool in my life; for there was no such hurry to have gone

on shore, and the first lieutenant never forgave me for appealing to the captain—but of that by-and-bye, and all in good time. At last I obtained a grumbling assent to my going on shore, and off I went like a sky rocket. Being in a desperate hurry, I hired a jaunting car to take me to my father's house. 'Is it the O'Brien of Ballyhinch that you mane?' inquired the spalpeen who drove the horse. 'Sure it is,' replied I; 'and how is he, and all the noble family of the O'Briens?' 'All well enough, bating the boy Tim, who caught a bit of confusion in his head the other night at the fair, and now lies at home in bed quite insensible to mate or drink; but the doctors give hopes of his recovery, as all the O'Briens are known to have such thick heads.' 'What do mane by that, bad manners to you?' said I; 'but poor Tim—how did it happen—was there a fight?' 'Not much of a fight—only a bit of a skrummage —three crowner's inquests, no more.' 'But you are not going the straight road, you thief,' said I, seeing that he had turned off to the left. 'Is your honour in a hurry to get home? Then I'll be thinking they'll not be in such a hurry to see you.' 'And who told you that my name was O'Brien, you baste?—and do you dare to say that my friends won't be glad to see me?' 'Plase your honour, it's all an idea of mine—so say no more about it. Only this I know; Father McGrath, who gives me absolution, tould me the other day that I ought to pay him and not run in debt, and then run away, like Terence O'Brien, who went to say without paying for his shirts, and his shoes, and his stockings, nor anything else, and who would live to be hanged, as sure as St. Patrick swam over

the Liffey with his head under his arm.' 'Bad luck to that Father McGrath,' cried I; 'devil burn me, but I'll be revenged upon him!'

"By that time we had arrived at the door of my father's house. I paid the rapparee, and in I popped. There was my father and mother, and all my brothers and sisters (bating Tim, who was in bed sure enough, and died next day), and that baste, Father McGrath, to boot. When my mother saw me she ran to me and hugged me as she wept on my neck, and then she wiped her eyes and sat down again; but nobody else said, 'How d'ye do?' or opened their mouths to me. I said to myself, 'Sure there's some trifling mistake here,' but I held my tongue. At last they all opened their mouths with a vengeance. My father commenced—'Ar'n't you ashamed on yourself, Terence O'Brien?'—'Ar'n't you ashamed on yourself, Terence O'Brien?' cried Father McGrath. 'Ar'n't you ashamed on yourself?' cried out all my brothers and sisters in full chorus, whilst my poor mother put her apron to her eyes and said nothing. 'The devil a bit for myself, but very much ashamed for you all,' replied I, 'to treat me in this manner. What's the meaning of all this?' 'Haven't they seized my two cows to pay for your toggery, you spalpeen?' cried my father. 'Haven't they taken the hay to pay for your shoes and stockings?' cried Father McGrath. 'Haven't they taken the pig to pay for that ugly hat of yours?' cried my eldest sister. 'And haven't they taken my hens to pay for that dirk of yours?' cried another. 'And all our best furniture to pay for your white shirts and black cravats?' cried Murdock, my brother. 'And haven't we

been starved to death ever since?' cried they all. 'Och hone!' said my mother. 'The devil they have!' said I, when they'd all done. 'Sure I'm sorry enough, but it's no fault of mine. Father, didn't you send me to say?' 'Yes, you rapparee; but didn't you promise —or didn't I promise for you, which is all one and the same thing —that you'd pay it all back with your prize-money—and where is it? answer that, Terence O'Brien.' 'Where is it, father? I'll tell you—it's where next Christmas is—coming, but not come yet.'

"'Terence O'Brien,' said Father McGrath, 'its absolution that you'll be wanting to-morrow, after all your sins and enormities; and the devil a bit shall you have—take that now.'

"'Father McGrath,' replied I very angrily, 'it's no absolution that I'll want from you, any how—take that now.'

"'Then you have had your share of heaven; for I'll keep you out of it, you wicked monster!' said Father McGrath—'take that now.'

"'If it's no better than a midshipman's berth,' replied I, 'I'd just as soon stay out; but I'll creep in in spite of you—take that now, Father McGrath.'

"'And who is to save your soul, and send you to heaven, if I don't, you wicked wretch? but I'll see you damned first—so take that now, Terence O'Brien.'

"'Then I'll turn Protestant and damn the Pope—take that now, Father McGrath.'

"At this last broadside of mine, my father and all my brothers and sisters raised a cry of horror, and my mother burst into tears.

Father McGrath seized hold of the pot of holy water, and dipping in the little whisk, began to sprinkle the room, saying a Latin prayer, while they all went on squalling at me. At last, my father seized the stool, which he had been seated upon, and threw it at my head. I dodged, and it knocked down Father McGrath, who had just walked behind me in full song. I knew that it was all over after that, so I sprang over his carcase and gained the door. 'Good morning to ye all, and better manners to you next time we meet,' cried I, and off I set as fast as I could for the ship.

"I was very sorry for what I had said to the priest, for my conscience thumped me very hard at having even pretended that I'd turn Protestant, which I never intended to do, nor never will, but live and die a good Catholic, as all my posterity have done before me, and, as I trust, all my ancestors will for generations to come. Well, I arrived on board, and the first lieutenant was very savage. I hoped he would get over it, but he never did; and he continued to treat me so ill, that I determined to quit the ship, which I did as soon as we arrived in Cawsand Bay. The captain allowed me to go, for I told him the whole truth of the matter, and he saw that it was true; so he recommended me to the captain of a jackass frigate, who was in want of midshipmen."

"What do you mean by a jackass frigate?" inquired I.

"I mean one of your twenty-eight-gun ships, so called, because there is as much difference between them and a real frigate, like the one we are sailing in, as there is between a donkey and a race-horse. Well, the ship was no sooner brought down to the

dock-yard to have her ballast taken in, than our captain came down to her—a little, thin, spare man, but a man of weight nevertheless, for he brought a great pair of scales with him, and weighed everything that was put on board. I forget his real name, but the sailors christened him Captain Avoirdupois. He had a large book, and in it he inserted the weight of the ballast, and of the shot, water, provisions, coals, standing and running rigging, cables, and everything else. But I didn't remain long; for one day I brought on board a pair of new boots, which I forgot to report, that they might be put into the scales, which swung on the gangway; and whether the captain thought that they would sink his ship, or for what I cannot tell, but he ordered me to quit her immediately—so there I was adrift again.

"One day I was in the dock-yard, looking at a two-decker in the basin, just brought forward for service, and I inquired who was to be the captain. They told me that his name was O'Connor. Then he's a countryman of mine, thought I, and I'll try my luck. So I called at Goud's Hotel, where he was lodging, and requested to speak with him. I was admitted, and told him, with my best bow, that I had come as a volunteer for his ship, and that my name was O'Brien. As it happened, he had some vacancies, and liking my brogue, he asked me in what ships I had served. I told him, and also my reason for quitting my last—which was, because I was turned out of it. I explained the story of the boots, and he made inquiries, and found that it was all true: and then he gave me a vacancy as master's mate. We were ordered to

South America; and the trade winds took us there in a jiffy. I liked my captain and officers very much, and what was better, we took some good prizes. But somehow or other, I never had the luck to remain long in one ship, and that by no fault of mine; at least not in this instance. All went on as smooth as possible, until one day, the captain took us on shore to a ball, at one of the peaceable districts. We had a very merry night of it; but as luck would have it, I had the morning watch to keep, and see the decks cleaned, and, as I never neglected my duty, I set off about three o'clock in the morning, just at break of day, to go on board of the ship. I was walking along the sands, thinking of the pretty girl I'd been dancing with, and had got about half-way to the ship, when three rapparees of Spanish soldiers come from behind a rock, and attacked me with their swords and bayonets. I had only my dirk, but I was not to be run through for nothing, so I fought them as long as I could, I finished one fellow, but at last they finished me; for a bayonet passed through my body, and I forgot all about it. Well, it appears—for I can only say to the best of my knowledge and belief—that after they had killed me, they stripped me naked and buried me in the sand, carrying away with them the body of their comrade. So there I was—dead and buried."

"But, O'Brien—" said I.

"Whist—hold your tongue—you've not heard the end of it. Well, I had been buried about an hour—but not very deep it appears, for they were in too great a hurry—when a fisherman

and his daughter came along the beach, on their way to the boat; and the daughter, God bless her! did me the favour to tread on my nose. It was clear that she had never trod upon an Irishman's nose before, for it surprised her, and she looked down to see what was there, and not seeing anything, she tried it again with her foot, and then she scraped off the sand, and discovered my pretty face. I was quite warm and still breathing, for the sand had stopped the blood, and prevented my bleeding to death. The fisherman pulled me out and took me on his back to the house where the captain and officers were still dancing. When he brought me in, there was a great cry from the ladies, not because I was murdered, for they are used to it in those countries, but because I was naked, which they considered a much more serious affair. I was put to bed, and a boat despatched on board for our doctor; and in a few hours I was able to speak, and tell them how it happened. But I was too ill to move when the ship sailed, which she was obliged to do in a day or two afterwards, so the captain made out my discharge, and left me there. The family were French, and I remained with them for six months before I could obtain a passage home, during which I learnt their language, and a very fair allowance of Spanish to boot. When I arrived in England, I found that the prizes had been sold, and that the money was ready for distribution. I produced my certificate, and received 167 pounds for my share. So it's come at last, thought I.

"I had never had such a handful of money in my life. I thought of my mother, and of the cows, and the pig, and the furniture, all

gone; and of my brothers and sisters wanting praties, and I made a vow that I'd send every farthing of it to them, after which Father McGrath would no longer think of not giving me absolution. So I sent them every doit, only reserving for myself the pay which I had received, amounting to about 30 pounds: and I never felt more happy in my life than when it was safe in the post-office, and fairly out of my hands. I wrote a bit of a letter to my father at the time, which was to this purpose:—

"'***Honoured Father***,—Since our last pleasant meeting, at which you threw the stool at my head, missing the pigeon and hitting the crow, I have been dead and buried, but am now quite well, thank God, and want no absolution from Father McGrath, bad luck to him. And what's more to the point, I have just received a batch of prize-money, the first I have handled since I have served His Majesty, and every farthing of which I now send to you, that you may get back your old cows, and the pig, and all the rest of the articles seized to pay for my fitting-out; I'm a true O'Brien, tell my mother, and don't mane to turn Protestant, but uphold the religion of my country; although the devil may take Father McGrath and his holy water to boot. I sha'n't come and see you, as perhaps you may have another stool ready for my head, and may take better aim next time. So no more at present from your affectionate son,

"'Terence O'Brien.'

"About three weeks afterwards I received a letter from my father, telling me that I was a real O'Brien, and that if any one

dared hint to the contrary, he would break every bone in his body: that they had received the money, and thanked me for a real gentleman as I was; that I should have the best stool in the house next time I came, not for my head, but for my tail; that Father McGrath sent me his blessing, and had given me absolution for all I had done, or should do for the next ten years to come; that my mother had cried with joy at my dutiful behaviour: and that all my brothers and sisters (bating Tim, who had died the day after I left them) wished me good luck, and plenty more prize-money to send home to them.

"This was all very pleasant; and I had nothing left on my mind but to get another ship; so I went to the port-admiral, and told him how it was that I left my last; and he said, that being dead and buried was quite sufficient reason for any one leaving his ship, and that he would procure me another, now that I had come to life again. I was sent on board of the guardship, where I remained about ten days, and then was sent round to join this frigate—and so my story's ended; and there's eight bells striking—so the watch is ended too."

Chapter Fourteen
The first lieutenant has more patients —Mr Chucks the boatswain lets me into the secret of his gentility

Before I proceed with my narrative, I wish to explain to the reader that my history was not written in after-life, when I had obtained a greater knowledge of the world. When I first went to sea, I promised my mother that I would keep a journal of what passed, with my reflections upon it. To this promise I rigidly adhered, and since I have been my own master, these journals have remained in my possession. In writing, therefore, the early part of my adventures, everything is stated as it was impressed on my mind at the time.

We had now been cruising for six weeks, and I found that my profession was much more agreeable than I had anticipated. My desire to please was taken for the deed; and, although I occasionally made a blunder, yet the captain and first lieutenant seemed to think that I was attentive to my duty to the best of my ability, and only smiled at my mistakes.

The first lieutenant was one of the most amusing men I ever knew, yet he never relaxed from the discipline of the service, or took the least liberty with either his superiors or inferiors.

His humour was principally shown in his various modes of punishment; and, however severe the punishment was to the party, the manner of inflicting it was invariably a source of amusement to the remainder of the ship's company. I often thought, that although no individual liked being punished, yet, that all the ship's company were quite pleased when a punishment took place. He was very particular about his decks; they were always as white as snow, and nothing displeased him so much as their being soiled. It was for that reason that he had such an objection to the use of tobacco. There were spitting-pans placed in different parts of the decks for the use of the men, that they might not dirty the planks with the tobacco juice. Sometimes a man in a hurry forgot to use these pans; but as the mess to which the stain might be opposite had their grog stopped if the party were not found out, they took good care not only to keep a look-out, but to inform against the offender. Now the punishment for the offence was as follows—the man's hands were tied behind his back, and a large tin spitting-box fixed to his chest by a strap over the shoulders. All the other boxes on the lower deck were taken away, and he was obliged to walk there, ready to attend the summons of any man who might wish to empty his mouth of the tobacco-juice. The other men were so pleased at the fancy, that they spat twice as much as before, for the pleasure of making him run about.

I was much amused one morning watch that I kept. We were stowing the hammocks in the quarter-deck nettings, when one of

the boys came up with his hammock on his shoulder, and as he passed the first lieutenant, the latter perceived that he had a quid of tobacco in his cheek.

"What have you got there, my good lad—a gum-boil?—your cheek is very much swelled."

"No, sir," replied the boy, "there's nothing at all the matter."

"Oh, there must be; it is a bad tooth, then. Open your mouth, and let me see."

Very reluctantly the boy opened his mouth, and discovered a large roll of tobacco-leaf.

"I see, I see," said the first lieutenant, "your mouth wants overhauling, and your teeth cleaning. I wish we had a dentist on board; but as we have not, I will operate as well as I can. Send the armourer up here with his tongs."

When the armourer made his appearance, the boy was made to open his mouth, while the chaw of tobacco was extracted with his rough instrument.

"There now," said the first lieutenant, "I am sure that you must feel better already; you never could have had any appetite. Now, captain of the afterguard, bring a piece of old canvas and some sand here, and clean his teeth nicely."

The captain of the afterguard came forward, and putting the boy's head between his knees, scrubbed his teeth well with the sand and canvas for two or three minutes.

"There, that will do," said the first lieutenant. "Now, my little fellow, your mouth is nice and clean, and you'll enjoy your

breakfast. It was impossible for you to have eaten anything with your mouth in such a nasty state. When it's dirty again, come to me and I'll be your dentist."

One day I was on the forecastle with Mr Chucks, the boatswain, who was very kind to me. He had been showing me how to make the various knots and bends of rope which are used in our service. I am afraid that I was very stupid, but he showed me over and over again, until I learnt how to make them. Amongst others, he taught me a fisherman's bend, which he pronounced to be the *king* of all knots; "and, Mr Simple," continued he, "there's a moral in that knot. You observe, that when the parts are drawn the right way, and together, the more you pull, the faster they hold, and the more impossible to untie them; but see, by hauling them apart, how a little difference, a pull the other way, immediately disunites them, and then how easy they cast off in a moment. That points out the necessity of pulling together in this world, Mr Simple, when we wish to hold on, and that's a piece of philosophy worth all the twenty-six thousand and odd years of my friend the carpenter, which leads to nothing but a brown study, when he ought to be attending to his duty."

"Very true, Mr Chucks, you are the better philosopher of the two."

"I am the better educated, Mr Simple, and, I trust, more of a gentleman. I consider a gentleman to be, to a certain degree, a philosopher; for very often he is obliged, to support his character

as such, to put up with what another person may very properly fly in a passion about. I think coolness is the great characterstick of a gentleman. In the service, Mr Simple, one is obliged to appear angry without indulging the sentiment. I can assure you, that I never lose my temper, even when I use my rattan."

"Why, then, Mr Chucks, do you swear so much at the men? surely that is not gentlemanly?"

"Most certainly not, sir. But I must defend myself by observing the very artificial state in which we live on board of a man-of-war. Nothing would afford me more pleasure than to be able to carry on the duty as a gentleman, but that's impossible."

"I really cannot see why."

"Perhaps, then, Mr Simple, you will explain to me why the captain and first lieutenant swear."

"That I do not pretend to answer, but they only do so upon an emergency."

"Exactly so; but, sir, their 'mergency is my daily and hourly duty. In the continual working of the ship I am answerable for all that goes amiss. The life of a boatswain is a life of 'mergency, and therefore I swear."

"I still cannot allow it to be requisite, and certainly it is sinful."

"Excuse me, my dear sir; it is absolutely requisite, and not at all sinful. There is one language for the pulpit, and another for on board ship, and, in either situation, a man must make use of those terms most likely to produce the necessary effect upon his listeners. Certain it is that common parlancy won't do with

a common seaman. It is not here as in the Scriptures, 'Do this, and he doeth it,' (by-the-by, that chap must have had his soldiers in tight order); but it is 'Do this, damn your eyes,' and then it is done directly. The order to *do* just carries the weight of a cannon shot, but it wants the perpelling power—the damn is the gunpowder which sets it flying in the execution of its duty. Do you comprehend me, Mr Simple?"

"I perfectly understand you, Mr Chucks, and I cannot help remarking, and that without flattery, that you are very different from the rest of the warrant officers. Where did you receive your education?"

"Mr Simple, I am here a boatswain with a clean shirt, and, I say it myself, and no one dare gainsay it, also with a thorough knowledge of my duty. But although I do not say that I ever was better off, I can say this, that I've been in the best society, in the company of lords and ladies. I once dined with your grandfather."

"That's more than ever I did, for he never asked me, nor took the least notice of me," replied I.

"What I state is true. I did not know that he was your grandfather until yesterday, when I was talking with Mr O'Brien; but I perfectly recollect him, although I was very young at that time. Now, Mr Simple, if you will promise me as a gentleman (and I know you are one), that you will not repeat what I tell you, then I'll let you into the history of my life."

"Mr Chucks, as I am a gentleman I never will divulge it until you are dead and buried, and not then if you do not wish it."

Mr Chucks then sat down upon the fore-end of the booms by the funnel, and I took my place by his side, when he commenced as follows:—

"My father was a boatswain before me—one of the old school, rough as a bear, and drunken as a Gosport fiddler. My mother was—my mother, and I shall say no more. My father was invalided for harbour duty after a life of intoxication, and died shortly afterwards. In the meantime I had been, by the kindness of the port-admiral's wife, educated at a foundation school. I was thirteen when my father died, and my mother, not knowing what to do with me, wished to bind me apprentice to a merchant vessel; but this I refused, and, after six months' quarrelling on the subject, I decided the point by volunteering in the *Narcissus* frigate. I believe that my gentlemanly ideas were innate, Mr Simple; I never, as a child, could bear the idea of the merchant service. After I had been a week on board, I was appointed servant to the purser, where I gave such satisfaction by my alertness and dexterity, that the first lieutenant took me away from the purser to attend upon himself. It so happened, that after I had served the first lieutenant for about a year, a young lord (I must not mention his name, Mr Simple) was sent to sea by his friends, or by his own choice, I don't know which, but I was told that his uncle, who was 'zeckative, and had an interest in his death, persuaded him to go. A lord at that period, some twenty-five years ago, was a rarity in the service, and they used to salute him when he came on board. The consequence was,

that the young lord must have a servant to himself, although all the rest of the midshipmen had but one servant between them. The captain inquired who was the best boy in the ship, and the purser, to whom he appealed, recommended me. Accordingly, I was immediately surrendered to his lordship. I had a very easy, comfortable life of it—I did little or nothing. We went to the Mediterranean (because his lordship's mamma wished it), and we had been there about a year, when his lordship ate so many grapes that he was seized with a dysentery. He was ill for three weeks, and then he requested to be sent to Malta in a transport going to Gibraltar, or rather to the Barbary coast for bullocks. He became worse every day, and made his will leaving me all his effects on board, which I certainly deserved for the kindness with which I had nursed him. Off Malta we fell in with a xebeque, bound to Civita Vecchia, and the captain of the transport, anxious to proceed, advised our going on board of her, as the wind was light and contrary, and these Mediterranean vessels sailed better on a wind than the transport. My master, who was now sinking fast, consented, and we changed our ships. The next day he died, and a gale of wind came on, which prevented us from gaining the port for several days, and the body of his lordship not only became so offensive, but affected the superstition of the Catholic sailors so much, that it was hove overboard. The wind was still against us, when a merchant vessel ran down to us, that had left Civita Vecchia for Gibraltar. I desired the captain of the xebeque to make a signal of distress, or rather I did myself, and the vessel,

which proved to be English, bore down to us.

"I manned the boat to go on board, and the idea came into my head, that although they might refuse to take me, that they would not refuse a lord. I put on the midshipman's uniform belonging to his lordship (but then certainly belonging to me), and went alongside of the merchant vessel; I told them that I had left my ship for the benefit of my health, and wanted a passage to Gibraltar, on my way home. My title, and immediate acceptance of the terms demanded for my passage, was sufficient. My property was brought from the xebeque; and, of course, as they could not speak English, they could not contradict, even if they suspected. During my passage to Gibraltar, I had plenty of time for arranging my plans. I hardly need say that my lord's *kit* was valuable; and what was better, they exactly fitted me. I also had his watches and trinkets, and many other things, besides a bag of dollars. However, they were honestly mine; the only thing that I took was his name, which he had no further occasion for, poor fellow! But it's no use defending what was wrong—it was dishonest, and there's an end of it.

"Now observe, Mr Simple, how one thing leads to another. I declare to you, that my first idea of making use of his lordship's name was to procure a passage to Gibraltar. I then was undecided how to act; but, as I had charge of his papers and letters to his mother and guardian, I think, indeed I am almost sure—that I should have laid aside my dignity and midshipman's dress, and applied for a passage home to the commissioner of the yard.

But it was fated to be otherwise; for the master of the transport went on shore to report and obtain pratique, and he told them everywhere that the young Lord A— was a passenger with him, going to England for the benefit of his health. In less than half-an-hour, off came the commissioner's boat, and another boat from the governor, requesting the honour of my company, and that I would take a bed at their houses during my stay. What could I do? I began to be frightened; but I was more afraid to confess that I was an impostor, for I am sure the master of the transport alone would have kicked me overboard, if I had let him know that he had been so confounded polite to a ship's boy. So I blushed half from modesty and half from guilt, and accepted the invitation of the governor; sending a polite verbal refusal to the commissioner, upon the plea of there being no paper or pens on board.

"Well, Mr Simple, I dressed myself very carefully, put on my chains and rings, and a little perfume on my handkerchief, and accompanied the aide-de-camp to the governor's, where I was asked after my mother, Lady —, and my uncle, my guardian, and a hundred other questions. At first I was much confused, which was attributed to bashfulness; and so it was, but not of the right sort. But before the day was over, I had been so accustomed to be called 'my lord,' and to my situation, that I was quite at my ease, and began to watch the motions and behaviour of the company, that I might regulate my comportment by that of good society. I remained at Gibraltar for a fortnight, and then was offered a

passage in a transport ordered to Portsmouth. Being on officer, of course it was free to a certain extent. On my passage to England, I again made up my mind that I would put off my dress and title as soon as I could escape from observation; but I was prevented as before. The port-admiral sent off to request the pleasure of my company to dinner. I dared not refuse; and there I was, my lord as before, courted and feasted by everybody. My bill at the hotel was very extravagant, and more than I could pay: but the master said it was not of the least consequence: that of course his lordship had not provided himself with cash, just coming from foreign parts, and offered to supply me with money if I required it. This, I will say, I was honest enough to refuse. I left my cards, PPC, as they do, Mr Simple, in all well regulated society, and set off in the mail for London, where I fully resolved to drop my title, and to proceed to Scotland to his lordship's mother, with the mournful intelligence of his death—for you see, Mr Simple, no one knew that his lordship was dead. When I arrived in London (I still wore my midshipman's uniform), I went to an hotel recommended to me, as I afterwards found out, the most fashionable in town, my title still following me. I now determined to put off my uniform and dress in plain clothes—my farce was over. I went to bed that night, and the next morning made my appearance in a suit of mufti, making inquiry of the waiter which was the best conveyance to Scotland.

"'Post chay and four, my lord. At what time shall I order it?'

"'Oh,' replied I, 'I am not sure that I shall go to-morrow.'

"Just at this moment in came the master of the hotel, with the *Morning Post* in his hand, making me a low bow, and pointing to the insertion of my arrival at his hotel among the fashionables. This annoyed me; and now that I found how difficult it was to get rid of my title, I became particularly anxious to be William Chucks, as before. Before twelve o'clock, three or four gentlemen were ushered into my sitting-room, who observing my arrival in that damn'd *Morning Post*, came to pay their respects; and before the day was over, I was invited and re-invited by a dozen people.

"At last the play was over. I had been enticed by some young men into a gambling-house, where they intended to fleece me; but, for the first night, they allowed me to win, I think, about 300 pounds. I was quite delighted with my success, and had agreed to meet them the next evening; but when I was at breakfast, with my legs crossed, reading the *Morning Post*, who should come to see me but my guardian uncle. He knew his nephew's features too well to be deceived, and my not recognising him proved at once that I was an impostor. You must allow me to hasten over the scene which took place,—the wrath of the uncle, the confusion in the hotel, the abuse of the waiters, the police-officer, and being dragged into a hackney-coach to Bow-street. There I was examined, and confessed all. The uncle was so glad to find that his nephew was really dead, that he felt no resentment towards me; and as, after all, I had only assumed a name, but had cheated nobody, except the landlord at Portsmouth, I was sent on board the tender off the Tower to be drafted into a man-of-war. As for

my 300 pounds, my clothes, etc, I never heard any more of them; they were seized, I presume, by the landlord of the hotel for my bill, and very handsomely he must have paid himself.

"You found some difference, I should think, in your situation?"

"Yes I did, Mr Simple: but I was much happier. I could not forget the ladies, and the dinners, and the opera, and all the delights of London, beside the respect paid to my title, and I often sighed for them; but the police-officer and Bow-street also came to my recollection, and I shuddered at the remembrance. It had, however, one good effect; I determined to be an officer if I could, and learnt my duty, and worked my way up to quarter-master, and thence to boatswain—and I know my duty, Mr Simple. But I've been punished for my folly ever since. I formed ideas above my station in life, and cannot help longing to be a gentleman. It's a bad thing for a man to have ideas above his station."

"You certainly must find some difference between the company in London and that of the warrant officers."

"It's many years back now, sir; but I can't get over the feeling. I can't 'sociate with them at all."

Chapter Fifteen
I go on service, and am made prisoner by an old lady, who, not able to obtain my hand, takes part of my finger as a token—O'Brien rescues me —A lee shore and narrow escape

Two or three days after this conversation with Mr Chucks, the captain ran the frigate in shore; and when within five miles, we discovered two vessels under the land. We made all sail in chase, and cut them off from escaping round a sandy point, which they attempted to weather. Finding that they could not effect their purpose, they ran on shore under a small battery of two guns, which commenced firing upon us. The first shot, which whizzed between the masts, had to me a most terrific sound; but the officers and men laughed at it, so of course I pretended to do the same, but in reality I could see nothing to laugh at. The captain ordered the starboard watch to be piped to quarters, and the boats to be cleared, ready for hoisting out; we then anchored within a mile of the battery, and returned the fire. In the meantime, the remainder of the ship's company hoisted out and lowered down four boats, which were manned and armed to storm the

battery. I was very anxious to go on service, and O'Brien, who had command of the first cutter, allowed me to go with him, on condition that I stowed myself away under the fore-sheets, that the captain might not see me before the boats had shoved off. This I did, and was not discovered. We pulled in abreast towards the battery, and in less than ten minutes the boats were run on the beach, and we jumped out. The Frenchmen fired a gun at us as we pulled close to the shore, and then ran away. There were a few fishermen's huts close to the battery; and while two of the boats went on board of the vessels, to see if they could be got off, and others were spiking the guns and destroying the carriages, I went with O'Brien to examine them: they were deserted by the people, as might have been supposed, but there was a great quantity of fish in them, apparently caught that morning. O'Brien pointed to a very large skate—"Murder in Irish!" cried he, "it's the very ghost of of my grandmother: we'll have her if it's only for the family likeness. Peter, put your finger into the gills, and drag her down to the boat." I could not force my finger into the gills; and as the animal appeared quite dead, I hooked my finger into his mouth; but I made a sad mistake, for the animal was alive, and immediately closed its jaws, nipping my finger to the bone, and holding it so tight that I could not withdraw it, and the pain was too great to allow me to pull it away by main force, and tear my finger, which it held so fast. There I was, caught in a trap, and made a prisoner by a flatfish. Fortunately, I hallooed loud enough to make O'Brien, who was close down to the boats, with a large

cod-fish under each arm, turn round and come to my assistance. At first he could not help me, from laughing so much; but at last he forced open the jaw of the fish with his cutlass, and I got my finger out, but very badly torn indeed. I then took off my garter, tied it round the tail of the skate, and dragged it to the boat, which was all ready to shove off. My finger was very bad for three weeks, and the officers laughed at me very much, saying that I narrowly escaped being made a prisoner of by an "old maid."

We continued our cruise along the coast, until we had run down into the Bay of Arcason, where we captured two or three vessels, and obliged many more to run on shore. We had chased a convoy of vessels to the bottom of the bay: the wind was very fresh when we hauled off, after running them on shore; and the surf on the beach even at that time was so great, that they were certain to go to pieces before they could be got afloat again. We were obliged to double-reef the topsails as soon as we hauled to the wind, and the weather looked very threatening. In an hour afterwards, the whole sky was covered with one black cloud, which sank so low as nearly to touch our mast-heads, and a tremendous sea, which appeared to have risen up almost by magic, rolled in upon us, setting the vessel on a dead lee shore. As the night closed in, it blew a dreadful gale, and the ship was nearly buried with the press of canvas which she was obliged to carry: for had we sea-room, we should have been lying-to under storm staysails; but we were forced to carry on at all risks, that

we might claw off shore. The sea broke over as we lay in the trough, deluging us with water from the forecastle, aft, to the binnacles and very often, as the ship descended with a plunge, it was with such force that I really thought she would divide in half with the violence of the shock. Double breechings were rove on the guns, and they were further secured with tackles; and strong cleats nailed behind the trunnions; for we heeled over so much when we lurched, that the guns were wholly supported by the breechings and tackles, and had one of them broken loose, it must have burst right through the lee side of the ship, and she must have foundered. The captain, first lieutenant, and most of the officers, remained on deck during the whole of the night. What made it more appalling was, that we were on a lee shore, and the consultations of the captain and officers, and the eagerness with which they looked out for daylight, told us that we had other dangers to encounter besides the storm. At last the morning broke, and the look-out man upon the gangway called out, "Land on the lee beam!" I perceived the master dash his feet against the hammock rails, as if with vexation, and walk away without saying a word, and looking very grave.

"Up, there, Mr Wilson," said the captain to the second lieutenant, "and see how far the land trends forward, and whether you can distinguish the point." The second lieutenant went up the main-rigging, and pointed with his hand to about two points before the beam.

"Do you see two hillocks inland?"

"Yes, sir," replied the second lieutenant.

"Then it is so," observed the captain to the master, "and if we weather it we shall have more sea-room. Keep her full, and let her go through the water; do you hear, quarter-master?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Thus, and no nearer, my man. Ease her with a spoke or two when she sends; but be careful, or she'll take the wheel out of your hands."

It really was a very awful sight. When the ship was in the trough of the sea, you could distinguish nothing but a waste of tumultuous water; but when she was borne up on the summit of the enormous waves, you then looked down, as it were, upon a low, sandy coast, close to you, and covered with foam and breakers. "She behaves nobly," observed the captain, stepping aft to the binnacle, and looking at the compass; "if the wind does not baffle us, we shall weather." The captain had scarcely time to make the observation, when the sails shivered and flapped like thunder. "Up with the helm; what are you about, quarter-master?"

"The wind has headed us, sir," replied the quarter-master, coolly.

The captain and master remained at the binnacle watching the compass; and when the sails were again full, she had broken off two points and the point of land was only a little on the lee bow.

"We must wear her round, Mr Falcon. Hands, wear ship—ready, oh, ready."

"She has come up again," cried the master, who was at the binnacle.

"Hold fast there a minute. How's her head now?"

"N.N.E., as she was before she broke off, sir?"

"Pipe belay," said the captain. "Falcon," continued he, "if she breaks off again we may have no room to wear; indeed there is so little room now, that I must run the risk. Which cable was ranged last night—the best bower?"

"Yes, sir."

"Jump down, then, and see it double-bitted and stoppered at thirty fathoms. See it well done—our lives may depend upon it."

The ship continued to hold her course good; and we were within half a mile of the point, and fully expected to weather it, when again the wet and heavy sails flapped in the wind, and the ship broke off two points as before. The officers and seamen were aghast, for the ship's head was right on to the breakers. "Luff now, all you can, quarter-master," cried the captain. "Send the men aft directly. My lads, there is no time for words—I am going to *club-haul* the ship, for there is no room to wear. The only chance you have of safety is to be cool, watch my eye, and execute my orders with precision. Away to your stations for tacking ship. Hands by the best bower anchor. Mr Wilson, attend below with the carpenter and his mates, ready to cut away the cable at the moment that I give the order. Silence, there, fore and aft. Quarter-master, keep her full again for stays. Mind you ease the helm down when I tell you." About a minute

passed before the captain gave any further orders. The ship had closed to within a quarter of a mile of the beach, and the waves curled and topped around us, bearing us down upon the shore, which presented one continued surface of foam, extending to within half a cable's length of our position, at which distance the enormous waves culminated and fell with the report of thunder. The captain waved his hand in silence to the quarter-master at the wheel, and the helm was put down. The ship turned slowly to the wind, pitching and chopping as the sails were spinning. She had lost her way, the captain gave the order, "Let go the anchor. We will haul all at once, Mr Falcon," said the captain. Not a word was spoken; the men went to the fore brace, which had not been manned; most of them knew, although I did not, that if the ship's head did not go round the other way, we should be on shore, and among the breakers, in half a minute. At last the ship was head to wind, and the captain gave the signal. The yards flew round with such a creaking noise, that I thought the masts had gone over the side, and the next moment the wind had caught the sails; and the ship, which for a moment or two had been on an even keel, careened over to her gunnel with its force. The captain, who stood upon the weather hammock-rails, holding by the main rigging, ordered the helm amidships, looked full at the sails, and then at the cable, which grew broad upon the weather bow, and held the ship from nearing the shore. At last he cried, "Cut away the cable!" A few strokes of the axes were heard, and then the cable flew out of the hawse hole in a blaze

of fire, from the violence of the friction, and disappeared under a huge wave, which struck us on the chess-tree, and deluged us with water fore and aft. But we were now on the other tack, and the ship regained her way, and we had evidently increased our distance from the land.

"My lads," said the captain to the ship's company, "you have behaved well, and I thank you; but I must tell you honestly, that we have more difficulties to get through. We have to weather a point of the bay on this tack. Mr Falcon, splice the main-brace, and call the watch. How's her head, quarter-master?"

"S.W. by S. Southerly, sir."

"Very well; let her go through the water;" and the captain, beckoning to the master to follow him, went down into the cabin. As our immediate danger was over, I went down into the berth to see if I could get anything for breakfast, where I found O'Brien and two or three more.

"By the powers, it was as nate a thing as ever I saw done," observed O'Brien; "the slightest mistake as to time or management, and at this moment the flatfish would have been dubbing at our ugly carcasses. Peter, you're not fond of flatfish, are you, my boy? We may thank Heaven and the captain, I can tell you that, my lads; but now, where's the chart, Robinson? Hand me down the parallel rules and compasses, Peter; they are in the corner of the shelf. Here we are now, a devilish sight too near this infernal point. Who knows how her head is?"

"I do, O'Brien: I heard the quarter-master tell the captain S.W.

by S. Southerly."

"Let me see," continued O'Brien, "variation two and a quarter —lee way—rather too large an allowance of that, I'm afraid; but, however, we'll give her two and a half points; the *Diomede* would blush to make any more, under any circumstances. Here—the compass—now we'll see;" and O'Brien advanced the parallel rule from the compass to the spot where the ship was placed on the chart. "Bother! you see it's as much as she'll do to weather the other point now, on this tack, and that's what the captain meant when he told us we had more difficulty. I could have taken my Bible oath that we were clear of everything, if the wind held."

"See what the distance is, O'Brien," said Robinson. It was measured, and proved to be thirteen miles. "Only thirteen miles; and if we do weather, we shall do very well, for the bay is deep beyond. It's a rocky point, you see, just by way of variety. Well, my lads, I've a piece of comfort for you, anyhow. It's not long that you'll be kept in suspense, for by one o'clock this day, you'll either be congratulating each other upon your good luck, or you'll be past praying for. Come, put up the chart, for I hate to look at melancholy prospects: and, steward, see what you can find in the way of comfort." Some bread and cheese, with the remains of yesterday's boiled pork, were put on the table, with a bottle of rum, procured at the time they "spliced the main-brace;" but we were all too anxious to eat much, and one by one returned on deck, to see how the weather was, and if the wind at all favoured us. On deck the superior officers were in conversation with the

captain, who had expressed the same fear that O'Brien had in our berth. The men, who knew what they had to expect—for this sort of intelligence is soon communicated through a ship—were assembled in knots, looking very grave, but at the same time not wanting in confidence. They knew that they could trust to the captain, as far as skill or courage could avail them; and sailors are too sanguine to despair, even at the last moment.

Before twelve o'clock the rocky point which we so much dreaded was in sight broad on the lee bow; and if the low sandy coast appeared terrible, how much more did this, even at a distance! the black masses of rock covered with foam, which each minute dashed up in the air higher than our lower mast-heads. The captain eyed it for some minutes in silence, as if in calculation.

"Mr Falcon," said he at last, "we must put the mainsail on her."

"She never can bear it, sir."

"She *must* bear it," was the reply. "Send the men aft to the mainsheet. See that careful men attend the buntlines."

The mainsail was set, and the effect of it upon the ship was tremendous. She careened over so that her lee channels were under the water; and when pressed by a sea, the lee side of the quarter-deck and gangway were afloat. She now reminded me of a goaded and fiery horse, mad with the stimulus applied; not rising as before, but forcing herself through whole seas, and dividing the waves, which poured in one continual torrent from the forecastle down upon the decks below. Four men

were secured to the wheel—the sailors were obliged to cling, to prevent being washed away—the ropes were thrown in confusion to leeward—the shot rolled out of the lockers, and every eye was fixed aloft, watching the masts, which were expected every moment to go over the side. A heavy sea struck us on the broadside, and it was some moments before the ship appeared to recover herself; she reeled, trembled, and stopped her way, as if it had stupefied her. The first lieutenant looked at the captain as if to say, "This will not do."

"It is our only chance," answered the captain to the appeal. That the ship went faster through the water, and held a better wind, was certain; but just before we arrived at the point, the gale increased in force.

"If any thing starts, we are lost, sir," observed the first lieutenant again.

"I am perfectly aware of it," replied the captain, in a calm tone; "but, as I said before, and you must now be aware, it is our only chance. The consequence of any carelessness or neglect in the fitting and securing of the rigging, will be felt now; and this danger, if we escape it, ought to remind us how much we have to answer for if we neglect our duty. The lives of a whole ship's company may be sacrificed by the neglect or incompetence of an officer when in harbour."

The ship was now within two cables' lengths of the rocky point; some few of the men I observed to clasp their hands, but most of them were silently taking off their jackets, and kicking

off their shoes, that they might not lose a chance of escape provided the ship struck.

"'Twill be touch and go indeed, Falcon," observed the captain (for I had clung to the belaying pins, close to them for the last half-hour that the mainsail had been set). "Come aft, you and I must take the helm. We shall want *nerve* there, and only there, now."

The captain and first lieutenant went aft, and took the forespokes of the wheel, and O'Brien, at a sign made by the captain, laid hold of the spokes behind him. An old quartermaster kept his station at the fourth. The roaring of the sea on the rocks, with the howling of the wind, were dreadful; but the sight was more dreadful than the noise. For a few moments I shut my eyes, but anxiety forced me to open them again. As near as I could judge, we were not twenty yards from the rocks, at the time that the ship passed abreast of them. We were in the midst of the foam, which boiled around us; and as the ship was driven nearer to them, and careened with the wave, I thought that our main yard-arm would have touched the rock; and at this moment a gust of wind came on which laid the ship on her beam-ends, and checked her progress through the water, while the accumulated noise was deafening. A few moments more the ship dragged on, another wave dashed over her and spent itself upon the rocks, while the spray was dashed back from them, and returned upon the decks. The main rock was within ten yards of her counter, when another gust of wind laid us on our beam-

ends; the foresail and mainsail split, and were blown clean out of the bolt-ropes—the ship righted, trembling fore and aft. I looked astern:– the rocks were to windward on our quarter, and we were safe. I thought at the time, that the ship, relieved of her courses, and again lifting over the waves, was not a bad similitude of the relief felt by us all at that moment; and, like her, we trembled as we panted with the sudden reaction, and felt the removal of the intense anxiety which oppressed our breasts.

The captain resigned the helm, and walked aft to look at the point, which was now broad on the weather quarter. In a minute or two, he desired Mr Falcon to get new sails up and bend them, and then went below to his cabin. I am sure it was to thank God for our deliverance: I did most fervently, not only then, but when I went to my hammock at night. We were now comparatively safe —in a few hours completely so: for, strange to say, immediately after we had weathered the rocks, the gale abated, and before morning we had a reef out of the topsails.

Chapter Sixteen
News from home—A "fatigue" party employed at Gibraltar—more particulars in the life of Mr Chucks —A brush with the enemy—a court-martial and a lasting impression

A few days afterwards, a cutter joined us from Plymouth with orders for the frigate to proceed forthwith to Gibraltar, where we should learn our destination. We were all very glad of this: for we had had quite enough of cruising in the Bay of Biscay; and, as we understood that we were to be stationed in the Mediterranean, we hoped to exchange gales of wind and severe weather for fine breezes and a bright sky. The cutter brought out our letters and newspapers. I never felt more happy than I did when I found one put into my hands. It is necessary to be far from home and friends, to feel the real delight of receiving a letter. I went down into the most solitary place in the steerage, that I might enjoy it without interruption. I cried with pleasure before I opened it; but I cried a great deal more with grief, after I had read the contents —for my eldest brother Tom was dead of a typhus fever. Poor Tom. When I called to mind what tricks he used to play me—

how he used to borrow my money and never pay me—and how he used to thrash me and make me obey him, because he was my elder brother—I shed a torrent of tears at his loss; and then I reflected how miserable my poor mother must be, and I cried still more.

I was very melancholy for a few days; but it was so delightful running down the Portuguese and Spanish coasts, the weather was so warm, and the sea so smooth, that I am afraid I forgot my brother's death sooner than I ought to have done; but my spirits were cheered up, and the novelty of the scene prevented me from thinking. Every one, too, was so gay and happy, that I could not well be otherwise. In a fortnight, we anchored in Gibraltar Bay, and the ship was stripped to refit. There was so much duty to be done, that I did not like to go on shore. Indeed, Mr Falcon had refused some of my messmates, and I thought it better not to ask, although I was very anxious to see a place which was considered so extraordinary. One afternoon, I was looking over the gangway as the people were at supper, and Mr Falcon came up to me and said, "Well, Mr Simple, what are you thinking of?" I replied, touching my hat, that I was wondering how they had cut out the solid rocks into galleries, and that they must be very curious.

"That is to say, that you are very curious to see them. Well, then, since you have been very attentive to your duty, and have not asked to go on shore, I will give you leave to go to-morrow morning and stay till gun-fire."

I was very much pleased at this, as the officers had a general

invitation to dine with the mess, and all who could obtain leave being requested to come, I was enabled to join the party. The first lieutenant had excused himself on the plea of there being so much to attend to on board; but most of the gun-room officers and some of the midshipmen obtained leave. We walked about the town and fortifications until dinner-time, and then we proceeded to the barracks. The dinner was very good, and we were all very merry; but after the dessert had been brought in, I slipped away with a young ensign, who took me all over the galleries and explained everything to me, which was a much better way of employing my time than doing as the others did, which the reader will acknowledge. I was at the sally-port before gun-fire—the boat was there, but no officers made their appearance. The gun fired, the drawbridge was hauled up, and I was afraid that I should be blamed; but the boat was not ordered to shove off, as it was waiting for commissioned officers. About an hour afterwards, when it was quite dark, the sentry pointed his arms and challenged a person advancing with, "Who comes there?"—"Naval officer, drunk on a wheelbarrow," was the reply, in a loud singing voice. Upon which, the sentry recovered his arms, singing in return, "Pass, naval officer, drunk on a wheelbarrow—and all's well!" and then appeared a soldier in his fatigue dress, wheeling down the third lieutenant in a wheelbarrow so tipsy that he could not stand or speak. Then the sentry challenged again, and the answer was, "Another naval officer, drunk on a wheelbarrow:" upon which the sentry replied

as before, “Pass, another naval officer, drunk on a wheelbarrow —and all’s well.” This was my friend O’Brien, almost as bad as the third lieutenant; and so they continued for ten minutes, challenging and passing, until they wheeled down the remainder of the party, with the exception of the second lieutenant, who walked arm-in-arm with the officer who brought down the order for lowering the drawbridge. They were all safely put into the boat, and I am glad to say the first lieutenant was in bed and did not see them.

The ship remained at Gibraltar Bay about three weeks, during which time we had refitted the rigging fore and aft, restowed and cleaned the hold, and painted the outside. She never looked more beautiful than she did when, in obedience to our orders, we made sail to join the admiral. We had very light winds, and a day or two afterwards we were off Valencia, nearly becalmed. I was on the gangway, looking through a telescope at the houses and gardens round the city, when Mr Chucks, the boatswain, came up to me. “Mr Simple, oblige me with that glass a moment; I wish to see if a building remains there, which I have some reason to remember.”

“What, were you ever on shore there?”

“Yes, I was, Mr Simple, and nearly *stranded*, but I got off again without much damage.”

“How do you mean—were you wrecked then?”

“Not my ship, Mr Simple, but my peace of mind was for some time; but it’s many years ago, when I was first made boatswain of a corvette” (during this conversation he was looking through the

telescope); “yes, there it is,” said he; “I have it in the field. Look, Mr Simple, do you see a small church, with a spire of glazed tiles, shining like a needle?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Well, then, just above it, a little to the right, there is a long white house, with four small windows—below the grove of orange-trees.”

“I see it,” replied I; “but what about that house, Mr Chucks?”

“Why, thereby hangs a tale,” replied he, giving a sigh, which raised and then lowered the frill of his shirt at least six inches.

“Why, what is the mystery, Mr Chucks?”

“I’ll tell you, Mr Simple. With one who lived in that house, I was for the first, and for the last time, in love.”

“Indeed! I should like very much to hear the story.”

“So you shall, Mr Simple. One evening, I was walking in the Plaza, when I saw a female a-head, who appeared to be the prettiest-moulded little vessel that I ever cast my eyes on. I followed in her wake, and examined her; such a clean run I never beheld—so neat, too, in all her rigging—everything so nicely stowed under hatches. And then, she sailed along in such a style, at one moment lifting so lightly, just like a frigate, with her topsails on the caps, that can’t help going along. At another time, as she turned a corner sharp up in the wind—wake as straight as an arrow—no leeway—I made all sail to sheer alongside of her, and, when under quarter, examined her close. Never saw such a fine swell in the counter, and all so trim—no ropes towing

overboard. Well, Mr Simple, I said to myself, 'Damnt it, if her figure-head and bows be finished off by the same builder, she's perfect.' So I shot ahead, and yawed a little—caught a peep at her through her veil, and saw two black eyes—as bright as beads, and as large as damsons. I saw quite enough, and not wishing to frighten her, I dropped astern. Shortly afterwards she altered her course, steering for that white house. Just as she was abreast of it, and I playing about the weather quarter, the priests came by in procession, taking the *host* to somebody who was dying. My little frigate lowered her top-gallant sails out of respect, as other nations used to do, and ought now, and be damned to them, whenever they pass the flag of old England—"

"How do you mean?" inquired I.

"I mean that she spread her white handkerchief, which fluttered in her hand as she went along, and knelt down upon it on one knee. I did the same, because I was obliged to heave-to to keep my station, and I thought, that if she saw me, it would please her. When she got up, I was on my legs also; but in my hurry, I had not chosen a very clean place, and I found out, when I got up again, that my white jean trowsers were in a shocking mess. The young lady turned round, and seeing my misfortune, laughed, and then went into the white house, while I stood there like a fool, first looking at the door of the house, and then at my trowsers. However, I thought that I might make it the means of being acquainted with her, so I went to the door and knocked. An old gentleman in a large cloak, who was her father, came out;

I pointed to my trowsers, and requested him in Spanish to allow me a little water to clean them. The daughter then came from within, and told her father how the accident had happened. The old gentleman was surprised that an English officer was so good a Christian, and appeared to be pleased. He asked me very politely to come in, and sent an old woman for some water. I observed that he was smoking a bit of paper, and having very fortunately about a couple of dozen of real Havannahs in my pocket (for I never smoke anything else, Mr Simple, it being my opinion that no gentleman can), I took them out, and begged his acceptance of them. His eyes glistened at the sight of them, but he refused to take more than one however, I insisted upon his taking the whole bundle, telling him that I had plenty more on board, reserving one for myself, that I might smoke it with him. He then requested me to sit down, and the old woman brought some sour wine, which I declared was very good, although it made me quite ill afterwards. He inquired of me whether I was a good Christian. I replied that I was. I knew that he meant a Catholic, for they call us heretics, Mr Simple. The daughter then came in without her veil, and she was perfection: but I did not look at her, or pay her any attention after the first salutation, I was so afraid of making the old gentleman suspicious. He then asked what I was—what sort of officer—was I captain? I replied that I was not. Was I 'tenente? which means lieutenant; I answered that I was not, again, but with an air of contempt, as if I was something better. What was I then? I did not know the Spanish for boatswain, and, to tell

the truth, I was ashamed of my condition. I knew that there was an officer in Spain called corregidor, which means a corrector in English, or one who punishes. Now I thought that quite near enough for my purpose, and I replied that I was the corregidor. Now, Mr Simple, a corregidor in Spain is a person of rank and consequence, so they imagined that I must be the same, and they appeared to be pleased. The young lady then inquired if I was of good family—whether I was a gentleman or not. I replied that I hoped so. I remained with them for half-an-hour more, when my cigar was finished; I then rose, and thanking the old gentleman for his civility, begged that I might be allowed to bring him a few more cigars, and took my leave. The daughter opened the street-door, and I could not refrain from taking her hand and kissing it—"

"Where's Mr Chucks? call the boatswain there forward," hallooed out the lieutenant.

"Here I am, sir," replied Mr Chucks, hastening aft, and leaving me and his story.

"The captain of the maintop reports the breast backstay much chafed in the serving. Go up and examine it," said the first lieutenant.

"Yes, sir," replied the boatswain, who immediately went up the rigging.

"And, Mr Simple, attend to the men scraping the spots off the quarterdeck."

"Yes, sir," replied I; and thus our conversation was broken up.

The weather changed that night, and we had a succession of rain and baffling winds for six or seven days, during which I had no opportunity of hearing the remainder of the boatswain's history. We joined the fleet off Toulon, closed the admiral's ship, and the captain went on board to pay his respects. When he returned, we found out, through the first lieutenant, that we were to remain with the fleet until the arrival of another frigate, expected in about a fortnight, and then the admiral had promised that we should have a cruise. The second day after we had joined, we were ordered to form part of the in-shore squadron, consisting of two line-of-battle ships and four frigates. The French fleet used to come out and manoeuvre within range of their batteries; or, if they proceeded further from the shore, they took good care that they had a leading wind to return again into port. We had been in-shore about a week, every day running close in, and counting the French fleet in the harbour, to see that they were all safe, and reporting it to the admiral by signal, when one fine morning, the whole of the French vessels were perceived to hoist their topsails, and in less than an hour they were under weigh, and came out of the harbour. We were always prepared for action, night and day, and, indeed, often exchanged a shot or two with the batteries when we reconnoitred; the in-shore squadron could not, of course, cope with the whole French fleet, and our own was about twelve miles in the offing, but the captain of the line-of-battle ship, who commanded us, hove-to as if in defiance, hoping to entice them further out. Four of the French

frigates made sail towards us, and hove-to, when within four miles, three or four line-of-battle ships followed them, as if to support them. Our captain made signal for permission to close the enemy, which was granted, with our pennants, and those of another frigate. We immediately made all sail, beat to quarters, put out the fires, and opened the magazines. The French line-of-battle ships perceiving that only two of our frigates were sent against their four, hove-to at about the same distance from their frigates, as our line-of-battle ships and other frigates were from us. In the meantime our main fleet continued to work in shore under a press of sail, and the French main fleet also gradually approached the detached ships. In about an hour we closed so near, that the French frigates made sail and commenced firing. We reserved our fire until within a quarter of a mile, when we poured our broadside into the headmost frigate, exchanging with her on opposite tacks. The *Sea-horse*, who followed, also gave her a broadside. In this way we exchanged broadsides with the whole four, and we had the best of it, they could not load so fast as we could. We were both ready again for the frigates as they passed us, but they were not ready with their broadside, for the *Sea-horse*, who followed us very closely, so that they had two broadsides each, and we had only four in the *Diomede*, the *Sea-horse* not having one. Our rigging was cut up a great deal, and we had six or seven men wounded, but none killed. The French frigates suffered more, and their admiral perceiving that they were cut up a good deal, made a signal of recall. In the meantime

we had both tacked, and were ranging up on the weather quarter of the sternmost frigate: the line-of-battle ships perceiving this, ran down with the wind, two points free, to support their frigates, and our in-shore squadron made all sail to support us, nearly laying up for where we were. But the wind was what is called at sea a soldier's wind, that is, blowing so that the ships could lie either way, so as to run out or into the harbour, and the French frigates, in obedience to their orders, made sail for their fleet in-shore, the line-of-battle ships coming out to support them. But our captain would not give it up, although we all continued to near the French line-of-battle ships every minute—we ran in with the frigates, exchanging broadsides with them as fast as we could. One of them lost her fore-topmast, and dropped astern, and we hoped to cut her off, but the others shortened sail to support her. This continued for about twenty minutes, when the French line-of-battle ships were not more than a mile from us, and our own commodore had made the signal of our recall, for he thought that we should be overpowered and taken. But the *Sea-horse*, who saw the recall up, did not repeat it, and our captain was determined not to see it, and ordered the signal-man not to look that way. The action continued; two of the French frigates were cut to pieces, and complete wrecks, when the French line-of-battle ships commenced firing. It was then high time to be off. We each of us poured in another broadside, and then wore round for our own squadron, which were about four miles off, and rather to leeward, standing in to our assistance. As we wore

round, our main-topmast, which had been badly wounded, fell over the side, and the French perceiving this, made all sail, with the hope of capturing us; but the *Sea-horse* remained with us, and we threw up in the wind, and raked them until they were within two cables' length of us. Then we stood on for our own ships.

At last one of the line-of-battle ships, which sailed as well as the frigates, came abreast of us, and poured in a broadside, which brought every thing about our ears, and I thought we must be taken; but on the contrary, although we lost several men, the captain said to the first lieutenant, "Now, if they only wait a little longer, they are nabbed, as sure as fate." Just at this moment, our own line-of-battle ships opened their fire, and then the tables were turned. The French tacked, and stood in as fast as they could, followed by the in-shore squadron, with the exception of our ship, which was too much crippled to chase them. One of their frigates had taken in tow the other, who had lost her topmast, and our squadron came up with her very fast. The English fleet were also within three miles, standing in, and the French fleet standing out, to the assistance of the other ships which had been engaged. I thought, and so did everybody, that there would be a general action, but we were disappointed; the frigate which towed the other, finding that she could not escape, cast her off, and left her to her fate, which was to haul down her colours to the commodore of the in-shore squadron. The chase was continued until the whole of the French vessels were close under their batteries, and then our fleet returned to its station

with the prize, which proved to be the *Narcisse*, of thirty-six guns, Captain Le Pelleteon. Our captain obtained a great deal of credit for his gallant behaviour. We had three men killed, and Robinson, the midshipman, and ten men wounded, some of them severely. About the time she was expected, the frigate joined, and we had permission to part company. But before I proceed with the history of our cruise, I shall mention the circumstances attending a court-martial, which took place during the time that we were with the fleet, our captain having been recalled from the in-shore squadron to sit as one of the members. I was the midshipman appointed to the captain's gig, and remained on board of the admiral's ship during the whole of the time that the court was sitting. Two seamen, one an Englishman and the other a Frenchman, were tried for desertion from one of our frigates. They had left their ship about three months, when the frigate captured a French privateer, and found them on board as part of her crew. For the Englishman, of course, there was no defence; he merited the punishment of death, to which he was immediately sentenced. There may be some excuse for desertion, when we consider that the seamen are taken into the service by force, but there could be none for fighting against his country. But the case of the Frenchman was different. He was born and bred in France, had been one of the crew of the French gun-boats, at Cadiz, where he had been made a prisoner by the Spaniards, and expecting his throat to be cut every day, had contrived to escape on board of the frigate lying in the harbour,

and entered into our service, I really believe to save his life. He was nearly two years in the frigate before he could find an opportunity of deserting from her, and returning to France, when he joined the French privateer. During the time that he was in the frigate, he bore an excellent character. The greatest point against him was, that on his arrival at Gibraltar, he had been offered and had received the bounty. When the Englishman was asked what he had to say in his defence, he replied that he had been pressed out of an American ship, that he was American born, and that he had never taken the bounty. But this was not true. Both the men were condemned to death, and the day after the morrow was fixed for their execution.

I was ordered to attend the punishment on the day appointed. The sun shone so brightly, and the sky was so clear, and the wind so gentle and mild, that it appeared hardly possible that it was to be a day of such awe and misery to the two poor men, or of such melancholy to the fleet in general. I pulled up my boat with the others belonging to the ships of the fleet, in obedience to the orders of the officer superintending, close to the fore-chains of the ship. In about half-an-hour afterwards the prisoners made their appearance on the scaffold, the caps were pulled over their eyes, and the gun fired underneath them. When the smoke rolled away, the Englishman was swinging at the yard-arm, but the Frenchman was not; he had made a spring when the gun fired, hoping to break his neck at once, and put an end to his misery; but he fell on the edge of the scaffold, where he lay. We thought

that his rope had given way, and it appeared that he did the same, for he made an inquiry, but they returned him no answer. He was kept on the scaffold during the whole hour that the Englishman remained suspended; his cap had been removed, and he looked occasionally at his fellow sufferer. When the body was lowered down, he considered that his time was come, and attempted to leap overboard. He was restrained and led aft, where his reprieve was read to him, and his arms were unbound. But the effect of the shock was too much for his mind; he fell down in a swoon, and when he recovered, his senses had left him, and I heard that he never recovered them, but was sent home to be confined as a maniac. I thought, and the result proved, that it was carried too far. It is not the custom, when a man is reprieved, to tell him so, until after he is on the scaffold, with the intention that his awful situation at the time may make a lasting impression upon him during the remainder of his life; but, as a foreigner, he was not aware of our customs, and the hour of intense feeling which he underwent was too much for his reason. I must say, that this circumstance was always a source of deep regret in the whole fleet, and that his being a Frenchman, instead of an Englishman, increased the feeling of commiseration.

Chapter Seventeen
Mr Chucks' opinion of proper names—He finishes his Spanish talk—March of intellect among the warrant officers

We were all delighted when our signal was hoisted to "part company," as we anticipated plenty of prize-money under such an enterprising captain. We steered for the French coast, near to its junction with Spain, the captain having orders to intercept any convoys sent to supply the French army with stores and provisions.

The day after we parted company with the fleet, Mr Chucks finished his story.

"Where was I, Mr Simple, when I left off?" said he, as we took a seat upon the long eighteen.

"You had just left the house after having told them that you were a corregidor, and had kissed the lady's hand."

"Very true. Well, Mr Simple, I did not call there for two or three days afterwards; I did not like to go too soon, especially as I saw the young lady every day in the Plaza. She would not speak to me, but, to make use of their expression, 'she gave me her eyes,' and sometimes a sweet smile. I recollect I was so busy

looking at her one day, that I tripped over my sword, and nearly fell on my nose, at which she burst out a-laughing."

"Your sword, Mr Chucks? I thought boatswains never wore swords."

"Mr Simple, a boatswain is an officer, and is entitled to a sword as well as the captain, although we have been laughed out of it by a set of midshipman monkeys. I always wore my sword at that time; but now-a-days, a boatswain is counted as nobody, unless there is hard work to do, and then it's Mr Chucks this, and Mr Chucks that. But I'll explain to you how it is, Mr Simple, that we boatswains have lost so much of consequence and dignity. The first lieutenants are made to do the boatswains' duty now-a-days, and if they could only wind the call, they might scratch the boatswain's name off half the ships' books in His Majesty's service. But to go on with my yarn. On the fourth day, I called with my handkerchief full of cigars for the father, but he was at siesta, as they called it. The old serving-woman would not let me in at first: but I shoved a dollar between her skinny old fingers, and that altered her note. She put her old head out, and looked round to see if there was anybody in the street to watch us, and then she let me in and shut the door. I walked into the room, and found myself alone with Seraphina."

"Seraphina!—what a fine name!"

"No name can be too fine for a pretty girl or a good frigate, Mr Simple. I was three hours with Seraphina before her father came home, and during that time I never was quietly at an anchor for

above a minute. I was on my knees, vowing and swearing, kissing her feet, and kissing her hand, till at last I got to her lips, working my way up as regularly as one who gets in at the hawsehole and crawls aft to the cabin windows. She was very kind, and she smiled, and sighed, and pushed me off, and squeezed my hand, and was angry—frowning till I was in despair, and then making me happy again with her melting dark eyes beaming kindly, till at last she said that she would try to love me, and asked me whether I would marry her and live in Spain. I replied that I would; and, indeed, I felt as if I could, only at the time the thought occurred to me where the rhino was to come from, for I could not live, as her father did, upon a paper cigar and a piece of melon per day. At all events, as far as words went, it was a settled thing. When her father came home, the old servant told him that I had just at that moment arrived, and that his daughter was in her own room; so she was, for she ran away as soon as she heard her father knock. I made my bow to the old gentleman, and gave him the cigars. He was serious at first, but the sight of them put him into good humour, and in a few minutes Donna Seraphina (they call a lady a Donna in Spain) came in, saluting me ceremoniously, as if we had not been kissing for the hour together. I did not remain long, as it was getting late, so I took a glass of the old gentleman's sour wine, and walked off with a request from him to call again.

"Well, Mr Simple, I met her again and again, until I was madly in love, and the father appeared to be aware of what was going on, and to have no objection. However, he sent for a priest to talk

with me, and I again said that I was a good Catholic.

"The priest asked me whether I had confessed lately. I knew what he meant, and answered that I had not. He motioned me down on my knees; but as I could not speak Spanish enough for that, I mumble-jumbled something or another, half Spanish and half English, and ended with putting four dollars in his hand for *carita*, which means charity. He was satisfied at the end of my confession, whatever he might have been at the beginning, and gave me absolution. And now, sir, comes the winding-up of this business. Seraphina told me that she was going to the opera with some of her relations, and asked me if I would be there; that the captain of the frigate, and all the other officers were going, and that she wished me to go with her. You see, Mr Simple, although Seraphina's father was so poor, that a mouse would have starved in his house, still he was of good family, and connected with those who were much better off. He was a Don himself, and had fourteen or fifteen long names, which I forget now. I refused to go with her, as I knew that the service would not permit a boatswain to sit in an opera-box, when the captain and first lieutenant were there. I told her that I had promised to go on board to hook after the men while the captain went on shore; thus, as you'll see, Mr Simple, making myself a man of consequence, only to be mortified in the end. After she had gone to the opera, I was very uncomfortable: I was afraid that the captain would see her, and take a fancy to her. I walked up and down, outside, until I was so full of love and jealousy, that I determined to go into

the pit, and see what she was about. I soon discovered her in a box, with some other ladies, and with them were my captain and first lieutenant. The captain, who spoke the language well, was leaning over her, talking and laughing, and she was smiling at what he said. I resolved to leave immediately, lest she should see me, and discover that I had told her a falsehood; but they appeared so intimate that I became so jealous I could not quit the theatre. At last she perceived me, and beckoned her hand; I looked very angry, and left the theatre cursing like a madman. It appeared that she pointed me out to the captain, and asked him who I was; he told her my real situation on board, and spoke of me with contempt. She asked whether I was not a man of family; at this the captain and first lieutenant both burst out laughing, and said that I was a common sailor who had been promoted to a higher rank for good behaviour—not exactly an officer, and anything but a gentleman. In short, Mr Simple, I was *blown upon*; and although the captain said more than was correct, as I learnt afterwards through the officers, still I deserved it. Determined to know the worst, I remained outside till the opera was over, when I saw her come out, the captain and first lieutenant walking with the party—so that I could not speak with her I walked to a posada (that's an inn), and drank seven bottles of rosolio to keep myself quiet; then I went on board, and the second lieutenant, who was commanding officer, put me under arrest for being intoxicated. It was a week before I was released; and you can't imagine what I suffered, Mr Simple. At last I obtained leave to go on shore, and

I went to the house to decide my fate. The old woman opened the door, and then, calling me a thief, slammed it in my face; as I retreated, Donna Seraphina came to the window, and, waving her hand with a contemptuous look, said, 'Go, and God be with you, Mr Gentleman.' I returned on board in such a rage; and if I could have persuaded the gunner to have given me a ball cartridge I should have shot myself through the head. What made the matter worse, I was laughed at by everybody in the ship, for the captain and first lieutenant had made the story public."

"Well, Mr Chucks," replied I, "I cannot help being sorry for you, although you certainly deserved to be punished for your dishonesty. Was that the end of the affair."

"As far as I was concerned, it was, Mr Simple; but not as respected others. The captain took my place, but without the knowledge of the father. After all, they neither had great reason to rejoice at the exchange."

"How so, Mr Chucks—what do you mean?"

"Why, Mr Simple, the captain did not make an honest woman of her, as I would have done; and the father discovered what was going on, and one night the captain was brought on board run through the body. We sailed immediately for Gibraltar, and it was a long while before he got round again."

"Did you ever hear any more of the young lady?"

"Yes; about a year afterwards, I returned there in another ship. She had been shut up in a convent, and forced to take the veil. Oh, Mr Simple! if you knew how I loved that girl! I have never

been more than polite to a woman since, and shall die a bachelor. You can't think how I was capsized the other day, when I looked at the house: I have hardly touched beef or pork since, and am in debt two quarts of rum more than my allowance."

We gained our station off the coast of Perpignan; and as soon as we made the land, we were most provokingly driven off by a severe gale. I am not about to make any remarks about the gale, for one storm is so like another; but I mention it to account for a conversation which took place, and with which I was very much amused. I was near to the captain when he sent for Mr Muddle, the carpenter, who had been up to examine the main-topsail yard, which had been reported as sprung.

"Well, Mr Muddle," said the captain.

"Sprung, sir, most decidedly; but I think we'll be able to *mitigate* it."

"Will you be able to secure it for the present, Mr Muddle?" replied the captain rather sharply.

"We'll *mitigate* it, sir, in half-an-hour."

"I wish that you would use common phrases, when you speak to me, Mr Muddle. I presume, by mitigate, you mean to say that you can secure it. Do you mean so, sir, or do you not?"

"Yes, sir, that is what I mean, most decidedly. I hope no offence; Captain Savage; but I did not intend to displease you by my language."

"Very good, Mr Muddle," replied the captain; "it's the first time that I have spoken to you on the subject, recollect that it

will be the last."

"The first time!" replied the carpenter, who could not forget his philosophy; "I beg your pardon, Captain Savage—you found just the same fault with me on this quarter-deck 27,672 years ago, and—"

"If I did, Mr Muddle," interrupted the captain, very angrily, "depend upon it that at the same time I ordered you to go aloft, and attend to your duty, instead of talking nonsense on the quarter-deck; and although, as you say, you and I cannot recollect it, if you did not obey that order instantaneously, I also put you in confinement, and obliged you to leave the ship as soon as she returned to port. Do you understand me, sir?"

"I rather think, sir," replied the carpenter, humbly touching his hat, and walking to the main rigging, "that no such thing took place, for I went up immediately, as I do now; and," continued the carpenter, who was incurable, as he ascended the rigging, "as I shall again in another 27,672 years."

"That man is incorrigible with his confounded nonsense," observed the captain to the first lieutenant. "Every mast in the ship would go over the side, provided he could get any one to listen to his ridiculous theory."

"He is not a bad carpenter, sir," replied the first lieutenant.

"He is not," rejoined the captain; "but there is a time for all things."

"Mr Simple, what are you about, sir?"

"I was listening to what you said," replied I, touching my hat.

“I admire your candour, sir,” replied he, “but advise you to discontinue the practice. Walk over to leeward, sir, and attend to your duty.”

When I was on the other side of the deck, I looked round, and saw the captain and first lieutenant both laughing.

Chapter Eighteen
I go away on service, am wounded and taken prisoner with O'Brien —Diamond cut diamond between the O'Briens—Get into comfortable quarters— My first interview with Celeste

And now I have to relate an event, which, young as I was at the time, will be found to have seriously affected me in after-life. How little do we know what to-morrow may bring forth! We had regained our station, and for some days had been standing off and on the coast, when one morning at daybreak, we found ourselves about four miles from the town of Cette, and a large convoy of vessels coming round a point. We made all sail in chase, and they anchored close in shore, under a battery, which we did not discover until it opened fire upon us. The shot struck the frigate two or three times, for the water was smooth, and the battery nearly level with it. The captain tacked the ship, and stood out again, until the boats were hoisted out, and all ready to pull on shore and storm the battery. O'Brien, who was the officer commanding the first cutter on service, was in his boat, and I

again obtained permission from him to smuggle myself into it.

We ran on shore, amidst the fire of the gun-boats which protected the convoy, by which we lost three men, and made for the battery, which we took without opposition, the French artillerymen running out as we ran in. The first lieutenant, who commanded, desired O'Brien to remain with the first cutter, and after the armourer had spiked the guns, as officer of the boat he was to shove off immediately. O'Brien and I remained in the battery with the armourer, the boat's crew being ordered down to the boat, to keep her afloat, and ready to shove off at a moment's warning. We had spiked all the guns but one, when all of a sudden a volley of musketry was poured upon us, which killed the armourer and wounded me in the leg, above the knee. I fell down by O'Brien, who cried out, "By the powers! here they are, and one gun not spiked." He jumped down, wrenched the hammer from the armourer's hand, and seizing a nail from the bag, in a few moments he had spiked the gun. At this time I heard the tramping of the French soldiers advancing, when O'Brien threw away the hammer, and lifting me upon his shoulders, cried, "Come along, Peter, my boy," and made for the boat as fast as he could; but he was too late; he had not got half-way to the boat, before he was collared by two French soldiers, and dragged back into the battery. The French troops then advanced, and kept up a smart fire; our cutter escaped, and joined the other boat, who had captured the gun-boats and convoy with little opposition. Our large boats had carronades mounted in their bows, and soon

returned the fire with round and grape, which drove the French troops back into the battery, where they remained, popping at our men under cover, until most of the vessels were taken out: those which they could not man were burnt. In the meantime, O'Brien had been taken into the battery, with me on his back: but as soon as he was there, he laid me gently down, saying, "Peter, my boy, as long as you were under my charge, I'd carry you through thick and thin; but now that you are under the charge of these French beggars, why, let them carry you. Every man his own bundle, Peter, that's fair play; so if they think you're worth the carrying, let them bear the weight of ye."

As soon as our boats were clear of their musketry, the commanding officer of the French troops examined the guns in the battery, with the hope of reaching them, and was very much annoyed to find that every one of them was spiked. "He'll look sharper than a magpie before he finds a clear touch-hole, I expect," said O'Brien, as he watched the officer. And here I must observe, that O'Brien showed great presence of mind in spiking the last gun; for had they had one gun to fire at our boats towing out the prizes, they must have done a great deal of mischief to them, and we should have lost a great many men; but in so doing, and in the attempt to save me, he sacrificed himself, and was taken prisoner. When the troops ceased firing, the commanding officer came up to O'Brien, and looking at him, said, "Officer?" to which O'Brien nodded his head. He then pointed to me—"Officer?" O'Brien nodded his head again, at

which the French troops laughed, as O'Brien told me afterwards, because I was what they called an *enfant*, which means an infant. I was very stiff and faint, and could not walk. The officer who commanded the troops left a detachment in the battery, and prepared to return to Cette, from whence they came. O'Brien walked, and I was carried on three muskets by six of the French soldiers,—not a very pleasant conveyance at any time, but in my state excessively painful. However, I must say, that they were very kind to me, and put a great coat or something under my wounded leg, for I was in an agony, and fainted several times. At last they brought me some water to drink. O how delicious it was! In about an hour and a half, which appeared to me to be five days at the least, we arrived at the town of Cette, and I was taken up to the house of the officer who commanded the troops, and who had often looked at me as I was carried there from the battery, saying, "*Pauvre enfant*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.