

Kingston William Henry Giles

Antony Waymouth: or, The Gentlemen Adventurers



William Kingston

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W.H.G. Kingston

Antony Waymouth Or The Gentlemen Adventurers

Chapter One

“What! Ned Raymond ahoy! Heave to, lad. What! dost seek to give a wide berth to an old friend? That once was not your wont. Ned Raymond ahoy, I say!”

The slight dark moustache on the lip of the person addressed showed that he had just reached the age of manhood. His raven hair hung in ringlets from his head. A black velvet cloak thrown over one shoulder, and a tightly-fitting dress of the same material and hue, set off his well-made, active figure. His plumed cap and the sword by his side showed that he claimed to belong to the upper rank of society. Indeed, no one looking at the refined expression of his features and his intelligent countenance could doubt that such was his right. He was walking somewhat rapidly through the narrow and irregularly-built streets of the seaport town of Plymouth, at that time one of the chief ports of departure for the numerous naval expeditions which went forth to the West and to the East in search of new lands, and of regions of gold and diamonds and other precious stones.

It is worthy of remark that the people of Devonshire and Cornwall have from the earliest days shown a strong propensity for naval adventure. This arises not alone from their geographical position, but has descended to them from their progenitors, who were, there can be but little doubt, Phoenicians, – or their descendants the Carthaginians, perhaps, – sailors, merchants, and others attracted from the northern shores of Africa for the sake of the tin found in those counties. Even at the present day many of their customs and the nautical terms they employed are retained. The clotted cream of Devonshire and on the coast of Barbary is the same, as is the mode in which the people manage their farms. Caboose was the name of the temple carried by the fire-worshipping Phoenicians on the decks of their vessels; the cook’s house on board ship is now so called. Davit in Arabic is a crooked piece of wood; the same term we apply to the timbers by which boats are hoisted up to the sides of ships. However, we are now talking of more modern days, and must proceed.

Good Queen Bess sat on the throne of England, and ruled the realm as few sovereigns have done before or since, greatly to the furtherance of Britain’s glory and wealth, and to the firm establishment of religion and true liberty, for which let all honest Englishmen be grateful, and talk not of her womanly weaknesses and failings.

The young gentleman, hearing his name called, stopped and looked earnestly at the person who had addressed him, and who was following rapidly in his footsteps. The costume of his pursuer was far more gay and dashing than was his, being composed of bright-coloured velvet and silks, with a golden chain round his neck, a plumed hat set jauntily on his head, and a jewel-hilted sword by his side. He had a laughing blue eye and light curling locks, and though his countenance was well bronzed, and his voice strong and manly, his features still bore the impress of early youth. Indeed, his hairless lip and beardless chin showed that he had scarcely emerged from boyhood. He ran up to the person of whom he was in pursuit, and frankly held out his hand.

“Really, sir, you have the advantage of me,” said the elder gallant, gravely drawing himself up.

On this the younger gave way to a merry peal of laughter, exclaiming, “If I am changed, surely you are not, good coz. I see that. What! Ned – Ned, most oblivious of mortals, don’t you remember little Tony Waymouth, whom you pulled out of the water just in time to prevent him from becoming food for the fishes, at the risk of your far more valuable life, and to whom you ever gave the best

of advice, and set the best of examples, neither of which, graceless vagabond that he was, is, and I fear ever will be, he took or followed?"

There was no longer any hesitation on the part of the elder in seizing the proffered hand, but he found his fingers wrung in so hearty a way, and with so vice-like a grasp, that he could scarcely refrain from crying out with pain.

The lad saw by the expression of his friend's countenance that in the warmth of his affection he had really hurt him.

"Marry, pardon me, dear Ned, that my fingers have been thus heedless. They have been so accustomed to haul at ropes, tug at the oar, and dabble in the tar-bucket, that they have, like their owner, lost, I fear me, all civilised habits and customs," he exclaimed, exhibiting his horny-palmed, thoroughly-bronzed hand.

"Say not a word, Tony," answered Raymond. "Far rather would I feel the grasp of thy honest fist than the gingerly touch of the soft-palmed courtier. But tell me, lad, where hast thou been these long years since we parted at school, where I fear me, Tony, there was not much knowledge packed away in that then small head of thine? I have heard rumours of your existence, and that is all."

"Wandering over the ocean, and battling with the elements and strong-armed men," answered young Waymouth. "But the spectacle of two such gay gallants as we are in this quiet street has already attracted attention. I see down there the Sign of the White Swan, a good hostelrie, I know. Let us step in there; it is about the hour of dinner, and I know full well that we shall find a cup of good sack to wash down the viands. While discussing it I will tell you briefly of my doings and listen gladly to yours. I long to hear of your past life and future prospects."

"Agreed," said Raymond; "but before we enter let me advise you, Tony, to take but one cup; the second is apt to do harm."

"An' it be a jolly big one, then," answered Waymouth, as they entered the inn. "We rovers of the sea get so much salt water down our throats that we require a fair portion of good liquor to correct its ill effects."

"The same as of old," observed Raymond, as they took their seats in the public room and waited till dinner was placed before them, preceded by the promised sack. "And now, Tony, that your throat is washed, tell me all that time will allow of yourself," he added, after Waymouth had tasted and expressed his approbation of the sack.

"With all my heart, then, that I may the sooner come at yours, Ned, I'll begin," said Waymouth, in his light, cheery tone. "You know that I always had a fancy for a life at sea; not that I knew any thing about it, but I thought I did, which comes to the same thing. Many of my relatives followed the sea, both on my father's and mother's side, and among them was as brave a gentleman as ever stepped – my worthy cousin, Captain John Foster, of the good ship *Primrose*, belonging to the port of London. I had frequently seen him and won his regards, and so at last I told him my hopes and wishes. He promised to intercede for me, and kept his word. My father gave his consent, and the next time he put to sea he took me with him as cabin-boy. The *Primrose* was bound for Bilboa, on the north coast of Spain, with bale goods. We had a quick run across the Bay of Biscay, were politely received by the Spaniards, and soon made arrangements to dispose of our cargo. To show his regard, the chief magistrate of the district, the *corregidor*, sent word that he would pay us a visit. He came off in a large boat, with a dozen or more dons, highly respectable merchants, he told us, who wished to make our acquaintance. The captain introduced me to the *corregidor* as a young relative who had come to sea for the first time to try how he liked a life on the ocean. The magistrate made a great deal of me, and patted me on the head, and said all sorts of complimentary things which I didn't understand; but there was a language in his eye which I did understand, though, and I saw glances exchanged between him and the dark eyes of his companions which still further aroused my suspicions. I slipped out of the cabin and told the captain. 'Good boy!' he remarked; 'I'm on the watch.'

“Dinner was brought in, and wine in abundance. The corregidor, after sparingly partaking of some food and wine, departed with some of his followers, leaving, however, live in the cabin, who at once made themselves at home, laughing, and singing, and talking at their ease, trying to make the captain and officers drink with them. I observed that they did not swallow nearly as much as they pretended to take, and that the flasks but slowly became empty. They kept on their cloaks, and I caught sight of the scabbards of their swords and of a long dagger in the belt of one of them. Still we mustered twenty-seven men, stout and true, on board, so that we had nothing to fear from these five Spaniards. As to purchasing the cargo, the object for which they said that they had come, they were, it seemed, too much overcome with wine to talk about the matter.

“Leaving them in the cabin, I went on deck, where I found that the captain had served out arms to all the men, and loaded the guns ready for action. Some of our people were sent below, others lounged about the deck with their weapons concealed under their clothes. He had good reason for this precaution, for as I looked over the side I saw two boats pulling off towards us, one containing twenty or thirty men, the other near a hundred, it seemed.

“The corregidor, in the smaller boat, was the first to come alongside and to step on board with all imaginable frankness and cordiality. He had brought with him some dozen or more Biscayan merchants, who were desirous of trading with their friends the English.

“‘If these are Biscayan merchants, they have a very martial look about them,’ observed the captain to one of our officers. ‘Now, Senhor Corregidor,’ he continued, ‘you’ll understand that no more of those gentry come up the side; they crowd our decks and incommode the men in their duties.’

“The corregidor with many a grin agreed to this, but still the boats remained alongside. Our captain on this was about to order them off, when Senhor Corregidor whips out a white wand of office, and cries out in a loud voice, ‘Yield, for you are our prisoners,’ while the seeming merchants draw their daggers and swords and present them at the captain’s breast.

“‘We are betrayed, lads!’ he shouts, knocking up the weapons with a handspike.

“At the same moment a drum beats in the big boat, and the Spaniards, soldiers in disguise, begin to climb up the sides. I run aft and clap the hatch over the cabin, so as to keep the five gentlemen there quiet, while our men, drawing out their weapons, begin to lay about them with a will which astonishes the dons. Some run to the guns and point them down at the boats; others, with axes, force back the men who are climbing the sides. Our decks are slippery with blood. Several of our men are wounded. A shot strikes a shipmate standing in front of me, and, falling dead, he knocks me over. It saves my life, for a Spaniard is making a cut at me, which misses, and our captain cuts him down. Still we fight on against fearful odds. Our enemies gain the deck, but it is only to add to the heap of the slain. At last the corregidor cries out, and begs our captain to order his men to cease fighting.

“‘Marry, very likely!’ says the captain, in the sort of Spanish lingo he spoke. ‘Why, my fellows are such fire-eating dogs that they would kill me if I was to make such a proposal. Is it the Inquisition, with a turn at the thumb-screws, the rack, and the stake, or liberty and Old England, you look for, my brave lads?’ continues the captain, turning to the men.

“‘Liberty and Old England!’ shout all our company.

“‘Then let us trundle these treacherous scoundrels overboard, cut our cable, and make sail,’ he exclaims in return.

“Scarce a minute passed and it was done; some were thrown into the hold, and the rest overboard, and a strong breeze coming off the land, the cable was cut, the sails filled, and away we glided out ahead of a dozen boats which came off in pursuit. We plied them well with our ordnance, till, like baffled hounds, they turned tail and went back to their kennel.

“Clear of the land, we turned to examine our prisoners. The five caged in the cabin had whole skins, the rest were wounded. Among them was the smooth-spoken corregidor, now woefully crestfallen. We dressed his and the other people’s hurts as well as we could, seeing that we had no leech aboard, and with a fair wind stood across the Bay of Biscay. The captain, whose kindness

seemed to touch the feelings of the don, at last asked him what made him act so treacherous a part. On this out of his pocket he pulls a paper, which was just an order from King Philip to seize every ship of Holland, Zealand, Easterland, and England, in his ports, letting none escape, that he might increase his own fleet, by which he proposed to strike a blow to overwhelm Old England and all Protestant countries together.

“Ah! is that so, Senhor Don? Then our gracious sovereign lady shall know all about it, an’ my name be John Foster,” exclaimed the captain; and you may be sure that, favoured by fine weather, we carried all sail night and day until we arrived safely in the Thames.

“The captain, taking me with him, hurried up to London with our prisoners, strongly guarded. We got audience of the queen and of the great Lord Burleigh; and the captain, albeit not much of a courtier, did his devoir right courteously to her majesty, who took the paper with her own gracious hand, and ordered a gentleman standing by to read it to her. When she heard its contents her whole countenance changed.

“We’ll be on the watch for you, cousin Philip,” she exclaimed; but I heard no more, for her majesty turned to my Lord Burleigh and other noblemen and gentlemen to hold secret converse with them.

“But the captain was not the man to go away without fulfilling all his intentions. He took me by the hand, and, presenting me to the queen, told her that I had given him the first hint of the intentions of the Spaniards, and confirmed the opinion he had formed, and he hoped that her majesty would graciously keep me in mind.

“Ah, ah! the little varlet, we’ll not forget him,” was her majesty’s reply; nor, by my troth, did she. There’s not an expedition of note, nor an adventure which has promised honour or wealth, since undertaken, in which I have not been engaged. I sailed with Admiral Sir Francis Drake to the West Indies in the Sea Dragon, commanded by honest Harry White. We did the Spaniards no small damage, burning their towns and sinking their ships without number, and came back with our pockets lined with doubloons, and six hundred thousand golden pounds, and brass cannon, and jewels, and ornaments of all sorts on board. I served aboard the Mary Rose, under the brave Captain Fenton, when the Spaniards’ Grand Armada entered the Channel; and, following them up, we at length broke through their line, led by the admiral himself. Then we engaged broadside to broadside a huge Spanish galleon, which we compelled to strike, and carried into port. But I weary you, good coz, with my adventures; I might go on talking till midnight, and yet not tell thee half the things I have done and seen. I may well say, that, since the time I made my first voyage in the Primrose, for not one single month at a time has my foot rested on *terra firma*.”

“Weary me, Tony!” exclaimed Raymond, who had been listening with the deepest attention, and an expression of wonder in his countenance, to every word his young companion had uttered. “Indeed you do not. If I did not know you to have been as a boy the soul of honour, and incapable of falsehood, I should only have been inclined to doubt that you had gone through all the adventures you describe.”

“Ah, that is because all these years you have been living quietly on shore, as I suspect, where weeks and months pass by you scarcely know how,” answered Waymouth, in a tone of compassion. “But now that I have told you somewhat about my worthless self, let me ask you how you have passed the last few years of your mortal existence?”

“Briefly I will reply,” said Raymond. “At school and college. The learned University of Oxford is my *alma mater*, and even now I am debating to what profession to devote my energies – the law, the Church, or physic. Sometimes I fancy public life, or to seek my fortune at court, where I have kindred who might aid me; but yet, in truth, I am undecided.”

“Ah, that’s good,” exclaimed Waymouth with animation. “The law – to persuade your hearers that black is white, and to set men by the ears – let that alone an’ you value your soul.”

It is not surprising that the young seaman should give expression to a vulgar and ignorant prejudice against one of the most necessary of professions.

“Physic! ‘Throw physic to the dogs, I’ll none on’t,’ as Will Shakespeare has it,” continued Waymouth. “No, no, Ned, learn not to murder thy friends and those that trust thee. As to the Church, I’ll say nothing against that if thou hast a calling to the ministry. To care for the soul’s welfare is a noble office, but if sought for the sake of filthy lucre it’s a mean, despicable trade, so we hold who follow the sea. And then thou talkest of seeking thy fortune at court. As well seek it on the slippery ice. No, no; listen to me, Ned. Seek it with us. It’s a secret as yet, and I cannot tell thee particulars; but this much I may say. There is as bold an adventure even now preparing as ever set forth from these shores. Hark, Ned: I know that thou art trustworthy. It is for the far-off lands of India, Cathay, the Spice Islands, and maybe the wide Pacific, where many a richly laden galleon or Portugal ship may be fallen in with. Become an adventurer with us. Our lists are not filled up. Think that in two or three short years, at most, thou wilt become for certain a man of wealth, fit to wed the proudest lady in the land. Then the wonders of those distant lands! They make no more count of gold and silver, of diamonds and other precious stones, than we do of tin and iron, and of pebbles from the seaside. Come, come, Ned; say yes to my proposal.”

But Raymond did not say yes, and Waymouth continued in the same strain for some considerable time longer. At length Raymond answered, while the colour mantled on his cheeks —

“I would fain go with thee, good coz, but the truth is, there is one I love here in England from whom I could not bear to be parted. We trust to wed some day, and all my hopes of happiness on earth are bound up in her.”

“Ha! ha! I might have thought so,” said Waymouth. “That comes of living on shore. Now at sea we have no time for thinking of such matters. I doubt not, however, that the fair one, whoever she may be, is worthy of your love. Tell me, do I know her?”

“It is no secret – she is the Lady Beatrice Willoughby. Her grandfather was that noble captain who perished in the attempt to discover a passage to Cathay by the north-west. You have doubtless heard the tale – how he and all his men were found frozen to death in the icy sea, the admiral seated in his cabin, his pen in his hand, his journal before him.”

“Ay, that have I, and reverence his name,” said Waymouth with feeling. “But what fortune hast thou, coz, to support a wife? They say these ladies of fashion are not content unless they have their coach, their running footmen, and their waiting-women, and I know not what else beside.”

Raymond sighed. “My fortune is to be made – I live on hope,” he answered.

“Such often maketh the heart sick and the body lean,” replied the young sailor. “Follow my advice. Go tell the Lady Beatrice the truth. Vow eternal constancy, and comfort her with all the soothing speeches thou canst make, and I’ll warrant that, in three short years at furthest, thou wilt return with wealth sufficient to support a wife as becomes your family and hers.”

There can be no doubt that Antony Waymouth spoke what he believed to be the truth, and gave, as he fancied, excellent advice. It may appear surprising, however, that Raymond, a scholar and a man of good parts and judgment, should have been so strongly influenced as he was by the arguments of a mere youth; but, as far as acquaintance with the world was concerned, Waymouth was the oldest of the two. He had been left since a child almost to work his own way in the world, helped onward by the queen, and had mixed with every variety of men. This gave him a confidence in himself and an independence of manner which Raymond had had no opportunity of gaining.

While the young men were still eagerly talking, a clock from a neighbouring tower struck the hour of one past noon. Waymouth started up with an exclamation of astonishment, saying —

“The hours have sped faster than I thought. I should have been aboard by this time to see how the artificers get on with their fittings. But come, coz, you shall be my excuse, and I’ll show thee as stout ships as ever sailed the salt ocean.”

“Agreed,” was the answer, and the two friends set off. All the way Antony plied his companion with the most glowing descriptions of the wealth and fortune to be obtained in the distant East, not to speak of the honour, and glory, and renown. Portugal ships and Spaniards without number were sure to be taken, even should the land fail to, yield what might be expected. And then the wonders to be seen – the curious people – the palaces of silver and precious stones – the Great Mogul on his throne of gold, and the Emperor of Cathay, with his robes of rubies and diamonds – not to speak of the possibility of falling in with Prester John, whose dominions were undoubtedly on that side of Africa; and then the Spice Islands, which might be discerned by their fragrance even when miles away!

Enlarging, as Waymouth did, with an eloquence which perfect confidence in the truth of what he was saying gave him, and a strong desire to gain over his friend, it is not surprising that Raymond yielded to such seductive arguments, and began to grow eager to join the expedition as an adventurer. Aboard the ships which were fitting in the harbour, Waymouth introduced him to several other adventurers, who naturally wished to obtain a gentleman of such good parts and family as a brother in their company. Raymond had, he fancied, a small patrimony at his command. Could he do better than risk it in so promising an adventure, and in three short years come back and marry his beloved Beatrice? Still he would do nothing rashly; he would make no engagement till he had talked the matter over with her. Accordingly, leaving Waymouth on board to attend to his nautical duties, early next morning he took horse and set off for Exeter, in the neighbourhood of which city the Lady Willoughby, with her daughter and the rest of her family, resided.

Raymond was welcomed as he always was, but he could not bring himself at first to announce the object of his visit. He spoke, however, of his meeting with Waymouth, and of his descriptions of the wonders of the East, and the wealth to be speedily obtained in those distant seas. His auditors were even more interested than he expected. It was but natural that young Hugh Willoughby should be so, but so likewise was Hugh’s uncle, Sir John Jourdan, a brother of Lady Willoughby’s, and guardian to her children.

The early dinner over, Raymond and Beatrice wandered forth into the grounds, for they were acknowledged lovers, and enjoyed a liberty which would otherwise have been denied them. Raymond saw at once that Beatrice was sad at heart. He felt tongue-tied. She spoke first.

“I know what has been passing in your mind, dear Edward. You long to join these adventurers, and I know why – for the sake of the wealth you hope to obtain.”

She gazed tenderly at him, her blue eyes suffused with tears. Beatrice was fair and graceful. Raymond thought her beauty faultless: so did many others. How could he withstand such an appeal? He acknowledged that she was right in her conjectures, but expressed himself ready to be guided by her decision.

“Stay, then,” she whispered. “Wealth I do not value. I would be content to be your wife however humble your lot, but I have that confidence in your steadiness, and perseverance, and love for me, that, with the many honourable careers open to you at home, I feel sure that you will ere long secure a sufficient competency to support me in that station of life in which we have been born.”

Raymond thanked her over and over again for this kind and encouraging speech. In a moment all his dreams of adventure and the wealth he was suddenly to acquire vanished into thin air. He promised to be worthy of the high opinion she had formed of him, and to labour on bravely in England, having the enjoyment and support of her society. They wandered on through the grounds, beneath the shade of stately elms and sturdy oaks, in the delightful feeling that they were not to be parted, and regardless of all sublunary affairs but their own. Little, therefore, were they prepared for the blow which was to fall on their heads on their return to the hall in the evening.

It appeared as if both Sir John and Hugh had divined Raymond’s thoughts when he had arrived in the morning at the hall, for they immediately commenced the subject of an adventure to Cathay, and inquired if he had formed any plans for making one. Raymond did not like the tone in which he was addressed, and replied simply that, had such an intention crossed his mind, he had abandoned

it. On this the knight looked glum, and Hugh showed an inclination to fume; but no further words then passed.

It was not till the ladies had retired to their chambers that Sir John again opened on the subject. He spoke very explicitly. He was the guardian of his niece Beatrice, and as such had the undoubted disposal of her hand. Love and poverty might do in theory, but were objectionable in practice. He had a great respect for Master Raymond, as he had for Sir Thomas his father, and for all his family, but the interests of his ward must be his first consideration. Now he had discovered, *imprimis*, that Master Raymond had much less fortune than he had supposed; and, secondly, that his prospects of making a fortune, or of pushing his way in the world, were much smaller than desirable, and that, therefore, he was in duty bound to withhold the consent previously given to his marriage to Beatrice till such times as he could show that he possessed the means in fact, and not only in prospect, of maintaining her as a gentlewoman.

Poor Raymond felt his heart sinking lower and lower while listening to these remarks, till it seemed to have gone out of his bosom altogether. What could he say? He stammered out, at length, that his love would give him strength and courage to achieve any thing mortal man could do, and that he was sure of success. But what sounded a very plausible argument to his ears was so much prunella to those of the old knight.

“I’ll tell thee what, lad: from thine own showing this morning, there is a course open to thee by which thou mayst gain speedily both wealth and honour, and all a gentleman of spirit can desire, and that I take thee to be. Go, think about it on thy couch, and to-morrow I’ll warrant that thou wilt agree that I have given thee sound counsel and advice.”

Edward went to his couch, but not a wink did he sleep. His heart was torn with a variety of conflicting emotions. He could not help owning that there was truth in what Sir John had said, and yet he felt that he had the power to win his way to fortune by honest labour with such a being as Beatrice Willoughby at his side. Hot and feverish, he rose early to take a turn in the park. He had not gone far when he heard footsteps behind him. He turned, and saw Hugh Willoughby following him at a rapid pace. There was a frown on the young man’s brow, and his lips were compressed in a way which showed that he was in no good humour.

“Well met, this fine morning,” he exclaimed in an angry tone. “I must have a word or two with you, Master Edward Raymond. It seems, sir, that you have been deceiving us – leading us to suppose that your fortune is far greater than it turns out to be. I’ll tell you, sir, that my sister shall never wed a beggar while I have a sword with which to run that beggar through the body who dares to wish it.” Edward gasped for breath – such bitter, taunting, cruel words, how could he abide them? He had a sword by his side, but nothing should make him draw it on the brother of his Beatrice. He took two or three turns up and down on the greensward.

“Hugh,” he exclaimed, “you wrong me cruelly. Your uncle knows more of the state of my affairs than I do myself. My earnest desire has been to obtain a fortune to support your sister as becomes her. But two days ago the offer was made me to undertake such an expedition as that proposed by your uncle. Not your taunts, not your threats, not your anger, shall compel me to go; but I believe that I shall be doing right in going. On one condition I will consent – that no force or restraint be put on your sister’s inclinations. If she cares no longer for me, let her marry whom she will; but if she remains faithful to me – as I know right well she will, and as I shall to her – then I have your word, that, on my return with the wealth I may have won, I may claim her as my bride.”

“Fairly and right nobly spoken,” exclaimed Hugh, who, though hot-tempered, was of a generous disposition, and had been worked up to act as he had done by his uncle. “Agreed – agreed; I’ll tell Beatrice what you have said, and, no doubt, she will see its wisdom.”

In more friendly intercourse than from their first meeting might have been expected, the two young men continued their walk, and returned to such a breakfast as is seldom, in these degenerate days, seen on the table.

Sorely against her judgment and inclination, Beatrice yielded to her uncle's demands. Deep was her sorrow at parting from Edward, and reiterated were their mutual vows of constancy; not that either had the slightest doubt of each other's devoted love. It was more for the sake of influencing others than themselves that vows were exchanged – that they might say, “We have vowed; we cannot break our vows.”

Edward had to return home to make his preparations. The old knight, his father, heard of this his sudden resolve with a sorrowing heart. His own health had given way sadly of late. He knew that the change which no mortal can avoid must soon come upon him, and should his well-loved son go away, even for a few years, he could scarcely hope that his eyes would rest on him again on this side the grave. He was fully aware, too, of the perils, great and innumerable, to which he must inevitably be exposed. Still, though gentle and loving, he was stout of heart; peril had never daunted him. If his son desired to go on this adventure, he would not withhold his consent. Lady Raymond was no more; but there was another member of his family, to part from whom cost Edward a severe pang – his lovely sister Constance. She was not only lovely, graceful, and good, but full of animation and spirit, combined with a calm courage and determination which, when difficulties came in her way, made her take pleasure in overcoming them. Few who observed her gentle and quiet demeanour would have supposed her likely to perform the deeds of devotion and courage of which she was capable.

“I wish that I were a man, that I, too, might take part in so gallant an enterprise, and win for myself such a bride as is your Beatrice,” she exclaimed when her brother told her of his purpose; but she added, “and yet, dear Edward, it grieves me sorely to part with you. I would go myself, and yet I would not have you go; and yet, again, I cannot say you nay. Go, go! It must be so, I see, and I will join my prayers with those I know your sweet Beatrice will offer up night and day for your safe return.”

“The die is cast,” said Edward with a sigh, and he wrote to Waymouth to say he would join him. In the course of four days he set forth from Exeter, with a couple of packhorses to carry his worldly goods, and a serving-man, equipped for his projected voyage to the far East.

Chapter Two

A goodly fleet of stout ships, with bulging sails, and gayly-coloured banners and streamers flying, sailed down Plymouth Sound before a favouring breeze, which promised to waft them along steadily towards the sunny latitudes of the tropics. There sailed the Red Dragon, of full three hundred tons and forty pieces of ordnance – the admiral’s ship; and there was the Serpent, of not less than two hundred and fifty tons – the vice-admiral’s ship; and the Lion, of not much less tonnage and armament than the Serpent; there was the Lion’s Whelp, a tall ship, and two pinnaces, the Sunshine and Moonshine, the larger ships carrying each from one hundred to one hundred and thirty men, and the pinnaces thirty men each; and as for arms, besides great guns, they were amply provided with culverins, sakers, falconets, and murtherers, the latter unpleasantly-named pieces being similar to blunderbusses on swivels, and loaded with small shot, and scraps of iron, lead, or stones. No little squadron in those days could have been more amply equipped, provisioned, and found in every way, or better manned or commanded.

It must be remarked that the pictorial representations of ships of those days give us a very erroneous notion of what ships really were. Ships capable of performing long voyages in tempestuous seas, and ships on tapestry – worked by fair fingers, which, however ably they might have plied their needles, were scarcely capable of delineating accurately those wonderful constructions on which the eyes of the workers had probably never rested – are very different from each other. The ships now described sailing down Plymouth Sound were strongly-built craft, with bows not over-bluff and sides not over-high. They had erections on deck, both at the bows and stern, rising some five feet above it, or a little more, perhaps, on the top of which men could stand for fighting or working some of the sheets and braces of the lighter sails, while the halyards and other chief ropes lead to the main deck. In these said erections, or castles, as they were called, still to be seen in most foreign and many English merchantmen, somewhat modified and in more pacific guise, there were port-holes, with guns projecting from them both at the sides and outer ends, and also along the deck. Thus an enemy having gained the deck would be exposed to a hot fire from the defenders under shelter of the wooden walls of the two castles. On the fore and main mast the sails were square, and there were also staysails fore and aft. On the mizzen-mast there was a large lateen yard and sail, such as is still seen in the Mediterranean. It was a useful and powerful sail for plying to windward, gaff-sails not having then been invented. The tops were circular, and heavier than would now be approved of, but certainly not the heavy constructions they are represented in pictures. The holds of those vessels were very capacious, and the cabins were fitted not without regard to comfort and luxury, and were often richly ornamented.

Such was the squadron to which the Lion belonged, and on board the Lion sailed Antony Waymouth as master’s mate or chief officer under the captain, and his friend Edward Raymond, to whom was awarded the office of cosmographer, he being at the same time an adventurer of some three hundred pounds. Of the Lion an honourable gentleman, John Wood, was captain, and Master James Walker, a truly worthy man, and pious withal, the minister. Captain Lancaster, a man of renown and valour, was the admiral and general; and Nicholas Parker, captain of the Serpent, the vice-admiral. Of the rest of the officers and gentlemen adventurers it is not necessary here to speak. That they were not a godless or a lawless company, intent only on plunder, may be proved by the following rules and articles set down for their guidance:

“The usual service appointed by the Church of England to be said twice a day. Due reverence to be given to the ministers. Not to suffer swearing, dicing, card-playing, or other vain talk. Conspiring against the life of the general or any other in authority to be punished by death. To follow the admiral day and night and no man to be so bold as to go before him. To speak with him every morning and night. Not to be more than an English mile from him. Signals: Not to give chase without the

admiral's orders. Watchwords: 'if God be with us;' answer, 'Who shall be against us?' If an enemy be encountered, rather to be on the defensive than the offensive."

Waymouth showed these articles to Raymond, observing – "You see, Ned, we seamen are not, the godless reprobates some who grow rich upon our toil and danger would wish to make it appear. Where would you find a more humble Christian man than good Master Walker, our minister? and surely the example he and the other chaplains of the fleet set is not without its due influence among the crews."

Waymouth spoke the truth. It was not till many years after this that the character of the British seaman changed very much for the worse. No chaplains were then sent to sea; religion was ignored, and, as a consequence, the mass of seamen became godless, swearing, vicious reprobates, little better than heathens in their religion or morality. On board Captain Lancaster's fleet, however, order was well maintained, and the ministers setting a good example, religion flourished more than among most communities on shore.

All honour be to our sea-going ancestors! They were brave, sincere, zealous, and energetic men; black was black with them, and white white. They had, it must be owned, some queer notions as to right and wrong, and honest traders on the north of the line seemed to consider themselves justified in acting the part of pirates to the south of it. Like the Arabs of the desert, their hand was against every man, and every man's hand against them. In the East, Spaniards, Portugals, Hollanders, and English were at ceaseless war with each other; or when the Hollanders pretended to side with the latter, it was simply for the purpose of betraying them and injuring their commerce in those parts.

As Raymond stood on the aftercastle of the Lion, watching the fast-receding shores of Old England, his spirit sank within him. He was thinking – and shame, to him if he was not – of Beatrice. Not for a moment did he doubt her love and constancy; but he thought of the dangers to which she might be exposed should troublous times again arise – of her grief should he not be destined to return. He had others, also, whom he loved at home; his widowed mother, his brothers, and, above all, his sister Constance, the dear friend of his Beatrice, unlike her in appearance, for Constance was a dark-eyed, dark-haired beauty, full of life and animation, but like her in goodness and sense, and the sweetness of her disposition. Hugh Willoughby affected her, but it was evidently with a mere boyish admiration, and she regarded him in no other light than as her friend's brother.

Edward's reveries were broken in on by Waymouth, who sprang up on the deck of the aftercastle and clapped him, as was his wont, on the shoulder, exclaiming —

"What! disconsolate, Ned? Turn thee about, lad; the old country will not move till we come back, depend on that. Look ahead! that's the way we seamen set our eyes. Even now the admiral has made a signal that several sail are in sight under all canvas, steering for the south. Spaniards or Portugals I hope they may prove, and if so, and we come up with them, thou'lt have the satisfaction of enjoying a sea fight before we've been forty-eight hours on the salt ocean."

Edward's attention was instantly aroused. Nothing in the then state of his feelings he would so much enjoy as a battle. Not that he had seen one, nor had he pictured its horrors very clearly to himself. Had he, possibly he would not have been so anxious for it. The hope of booty animated the ship's company generally, though some declared that it was the desire to destroy Papists, the born enemies of England, at which their minister, Master Walker, severely rebuked them, telling them that it was filthy lucre, and that alone, they desired, and that the sword was not the weapon to win men over to the truth, or to use against men who held not the truth.

"The sword repelleth friends," he continued. "Kind words and gentle usage attract those who have been our foes. Such are the weapons Protestants should use against their Papist adversaries."

Master Walker's plain speaking and honest dealing with those over whose spiritual welfare he had the charge made him generally beloved, though a few bad tempers disliked him. To Waymouth and Raymond he was a sincere and warm friend, as he was in truth, as far as they would let him, to all who sailed on board the fleet. The chase continued; but the strangers, whatever their nation, were fleet

craft. So far they had been gained on as to be seen from the tops of the Lion. Though outnumbering the English, they continued their flight; southward they sailed, and southward after them sailed their pursuers. The Spaniards had received so many severe lessons of late that they had learned to consider discretion the best part of valour. Henceforth their history was to show a retrogressive movement. Their black injustice and horrible cruelties to the natives of Mexico and Peru were to meet with just retribution. The cries of thousands ascending from their inquisitorial prisons were not unheard. National sins were to meet with national punishment. They had been tried in the balance, and found wanting. So it has gone on. The land of Spain, bountifully blessed by Nature, still holds a people grovelling in the dust of ignorance and superstition. At that time it is difficult to overstate, though not to believe, the utter detestation in which the Spaniards were held by all true-hearted Englishmen, and in which the Portugals over whom they held sway had to share. The chase continued till night hid the strangers from the sharp eyes of the men on the lookout at the mast-heads. In vain were they looked for the next morning.

“Never mind,” said Waymouth as he walked the deck; “the world is round: Sir Francis Drake has proved it so. We’ll come up with them in the course of the circle.”

The belief that the enemy were ahead urged the bold mariners to carry sail night and day, so that their run to the south was unusually rapid. Raymond devoted himself to the study of navigation and to practising the use of such nautical instruments as were then invented; nor did he neglect to gain a knowledge of the object of the ropes and sails, and the mode of dealing with a ship under various circumstances, so that Waymouth soon pronounced him an accomplished seaman. There occurred but one event worth narrating for some time. Sixteen sail were seen approaching, and the fleet got ready for action. The strangers, however, turned out to be Hamburg hulks from Lisbon; but the obstinate Hollanders refused to strike to the English flag – a piece of folly not to be borne – so they were fired into and compelled to heave to. Boats were then sent on board, and such articles as were likely to prove useful were taken out of them, it being evident that they were loaded with Spanish property. They were then charitably allowed to proceed on their voyage. We will not describe the mummeries and other ceremonies which took place on crossing the line, introduced by some Genoese seamen on board, such as they said their countrymen were wont to indulge in formerly on passing through the “Gut of Gibbelterra,” and now of late in these same latitudes. It was not much to good Master Walker’s taste, seeing that numerous profane gods and goddesses of the sea were introduced – Hercules and Orion, and Venus and Neptune, and others, Tritons and odd fish of all sorts. Without misadventure the squadron reached Sierra Leone, where the blacks were friendly, and, taking in water and fresh provisions, stood across to the coast of Brazil. Here a brighter lookout than ever was kept, and not without avail, for when about eight leagues from the shore they descried a small Portugal ship, which they chased and took, of about fifty tons’ burden, bound up the River Plate. She had forty-two negroes on board for Peru, and two Portugal women and a child passengers, with some sugar, rice, and sweetmeats. The next day another Portugal ship was captured. Waymouth in his journal remarked, “that the only riches in her besides slaves and friars were beads, pictures, and other spiritual trinkets – furniture designed for the use of a new monastery.”

The pilot of this ship turned out to be an Englishman – one Dick Carter, from Limehouse – who had been so long away from home that he had almost lost all use of his native tongue.

“Why, lad, we have a man aboard – Tom Carter – from the same place,” observed Waymouth, as the man tried in broken accents to narrate his history.

Tom was sent for, and, sure enough, the two proved to be brothers. Dick gladly consented to serve on board the Lion, and informed Waymouth, in gratitude for his kind treatment, that a Spanish squadron of considerable force was daily expected in the Plate. The admiral, however, instead of trying to avoid them, resolved to await their coming, and, entering the river, cast anchor.

“Now, Ned, we shall have our hearts’ desire,” exclaimed Waymouth, as he stopped for a minute near his friend while going round the decks to see that the ship was ready for a fight.

The day was passing away, when, about four o'clock in the afternoon, five sail of large ships and several smaller ones were seen rounding a point in the river. The English, therefore, in warlike manner set their watch, the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, and the admiral opened fire on the approaching enemy, who, however, anchored out of shot, the better to prepare for the expected fight. They were some little time in doing this, and then once more they advanced, it being now nightfall. The wind had dropped, so the Spaniards' boats towed on their big ships with the intent of boarding the English. Both sides were, meantime, plying their guns and small arms with vigour; the English with the greater success, as their men were more at liberty. The Spanish vice-admiral was seen with two smaller ships bearing down on the Lion; Captain Wood was, therefore, compelled to slip his cable, to prevent them driving athwart his hawse. A breeze springing up, he was able to make sail and lay the galleon alongside, caring little for the smaller ships. Now began a most desperate fight, the bright flashes of the guns making night appear like day; the rattle of the small arms, the roar of the heavy ordnance, the sounding of the trumpets and drums, the shouts and shrieks of combatants, creating a turmoil terrible to novices – and confusing to the senses.

The Lion enjoyed a large share of the fight, everybody being actively engaged, the captain himself firing a musket like the rest. One of the Spanish frigates, coming too near her, received so heavy a storm of shot, that, one penetrating her magazine, with a loud roar she blew up, when her companion sheered off, not wishing to share the same fate. The Lion now turned her whole fury on the galleon, which she kept at a respectful distance. Suddenly the galleon's fire ceased. The darkness was great; she could nowhere be seen. Captain Wood now stood away to support the admiral and the other ships; they were hard pressed, though fighting valiantly. The Lion soon had an enemy worthy to contend with in a Portugal galleon which had come in with the Spaniards, and now hoped, by attacking a ship partly disabled by a long combat, to come off the conqueror. The English captain, as did his young lieutenant, called on their men to exert themselves to the utmost to fight for the honour of Old England. Raymond supported them bravely, and, though at length wounded in the arm, he refused to leave the deck. Thus the fight continued, Captain Wood making several attempts to board his opponent, which the latter nimbly avoided. The admiral and vice-admiral were all the time hotly engaged. The former was seen to run a large Spaniard aboard, when, after a hot discharge of great guns, flames were observed to burst forth from one ship or the other, and thus they drove by till no longer to be distinguished. The last seen of the Serpent was in chase of some Spaniard, as her tall masts, like some huge monster of the deep, glided by past the Lion. Towards morning the moon disappeared, clouds overspread the sky, the Portugal thought it wise to sheer off, and the brave ship's company of the Lion waited anxiously for daylight to ascertain the fate of their friends and foes. For fear of the ship being drifted on shore, Captain Wood again anchored.

As soon as the fight was over, Waymouth hastened to look for his friend. He found him below in the hands of the surgeon. Raymond bore the pain bravely. Waymouth congratulated him.

"You've had a taste of what a sea fight is like, Ned," he observed. "Maybe before we get back to Old England we may have to count scores such, for, no doubt, the Portugals and Spaniards, and even the Hollanders, will give us plenty of occasions to prove our valour."

Raymond replied that he was ready for another fight, and should be willing to meet the foes of England wherever they were to be found.

It appeared probable that he would at once have another opportunity, for, as daylight broke, a large ship was discerned bearing down on them under all sail. She was the Portugal. The Lion's crew flew to their guns, and as she came near plied her so well with their shot that she was fain to sheer off, and to stand down towards the river's mouth. As she stood away, an officer of rank – so he seemed by his fine garments and feather in his cap – sprang on the aftercastle, and, shaking his fist, cried out through his trumpet —

"We shall meet you again ere long, you hated English, and then we shall have our revenge."

“Let the dog bark who runs away. Though he shows his teeth he dare not use them,” exclaimed Waymouth with a scornful laugh.

The increasing light had shown some way astern the topmasts of a ship out of the water, crowded with people. Was the foundered ship a friend or foe? As soon as they were clear of the Portugal ship two boats were lowered, and made towards the spot where the masts appeared. At the same time several boats were seen putting off from the shore, clearly belonging to Spaniards. When they, on their part, beheld the English approaching, fearing their prowess, from which they had suffered so much, they put back, leaving their countrymen to their fate.

The poor people on the masts, who had been clinging there for the greater part of the night, held out their hands, imploring succour. This English sailors have ever been ready to give to those in distress, whether friends or foes. The boats, therefore, approached to take off the nearly-exhausted people. Waymouth, who was in the first boat, perceived, as he fancied, the flutter of a female’s dress. On the cross-trees, just above the water, lay a young lady, her head resting on the arm of an old and dignified-looking man, while the two were further supported by four or five faithful seamen who clung near them. The seamen waved their hands to attract the notice of the English.

“Take this lady off first,” they cried out. “Save her and her father; mind not us.”

Waymouth required no further inducement to exertion than the sight that feminine gear had excited. The Spanish seamen refrained from leaping into the boat as she came up to the mast, allowing Waymouth to climb up and release the lady from her painful and perilous position. Carefully he lifted her into the boat, and placed her in the after-part.

“Oh, meu pai! meu pai!” she cried out in the tongue of the Portugals – “Oh, my father! my father!”

“Have no fear, fair lady,” cried Waymouth, who understood it slightly; “he is safe.” And, springing back, he assisted the old gentleman into the boat. The latter, as far as his exhausted state would allow, expressed his thanks.

Not till now did the Spanish seamen descend into the boat. As soon as he had received as many as she could carry, Waymouth returned with them to the Lion. The care of the surgeon and good Master Walker soon restored the young lady – for young she was and beautiful – to a state of consciousness and quietude. Her nerves had been sorely shaken by the combat, the sinking of the ship, and terrible danger to which she had been exposed. Her father, the old gentleman, was, it appeared, Don Joao Pinto d’Almeida, the governor of a Portugal settlement in the East; she was the Donna Isabel d’Almeida, his only child. Though Portugals, they had taken passage aboard this Spanish ship, intending to proceed on their farther voyage in the one which had escaped and left them to their fate. The Portugal ship was the Santa Barba, and her captain Don Pedro de Lima. Don Joao seemed glad to hear that the Santa Barba had escaped capture, and supposed that in the darkness Don Pedro had not seen the wreck. Meantime most of the people from the masts had been rescued and brought on board the Lion.

While the boats were thus engaged, firing was heard, and several ships were seen approaching, hotly engaged, down the mighty Plate stream, compared to which the rivers of Europe seem but purling brooks. It was a sad fate for the poor wretches on the masts to be thus left to starve or fall off and be drowned, but there was no time for delay. The Lion lifted her anchor, and made sail to join in the combat. Her rigging had been repaired as far as practicable, so that she was fresh for the fight. The rest of the English squadron and four Spaniards or Portugals were observed fiercely exchanging shots with each other. The enemy, probably, had already enjoyed a sufficient taste of the quality of the English to be tired of the fight, for no sooner was the Lion observed drawing near with drums beating, trumpets braying forth defiance, and ordnance speaking a still more decided language, than they steered for the shore on either side, and ran hard and fast aground. Some of the people in the enemy’s ships took to their boats, others leaped overboard and swam to the shore, and several were seen running backwards and forwards at their wits’ end, the English cannon thundering furiously at

them; while a few bold spirits stood at their quarters, and returned the fire from their own pieces. However, they could not long maintain the unequal fight; flames burst forth from the ports of the ships, and one after the other, before any booty could be obtained from them, they blew up, till not a Spaniard remained to dispute the passage of the river. Now the English admiral thought fit to anchor his fleet opposite a pleasant spot near the mouth of the river, and, the larger number of the company landing, a fort was erected to guard against surprise, and the repairing of the ships commenced.

As yet they had gained much of what men call glory and renown, concerning the value of which there may be some dispute; but they had obtained no booty, about the desirableness of which there cannot be two opinions. So thought the adventurers. They were all eager, therefore, to proceed to the East, where they expected to find it in abundance, and accordingly hurried on the refitting of the ships. It was well that they did so, for scarcely was the squadron once more clear of the land than a large fleet was seen approaching the mouth of the river. The English ships stood on their course, for the strangers, undoubtedly Spaniards and Portugals, were too numerous to be trifled with. The enemy were soon seen to make sail in chase. The English set all their canvas, not to avoid the fight, but to separate the ships of the enemy, so as to deal first with the faster sailers. The plan answered; but the leading Spanish ships soon got such a taste of the guns of the Dragon, the Serpent, and the Lion, that they dropped astern, the rest not deeming it prudent to take their places, content with boasting that they had put an English squadron to flight.

Thus triumphantly the English ships sailed on their way across the Atlantic till they neared the Cape Bona Spei, or Bona Speranza, as in those days the Cape of Good Hope was frequently called. Once more they dropped anchor in Saldanha Bay, a place at which most vessels sailing to Cathay were wont to touch. The common people among the prisoners had been left on shore in America; but the officers and the Portugal governor and his daughter, and some attendants, had been carried on, the admiral deeming that they might be useful to exchange with any English persons of quality who might have been captured by the Portugals; or, if not, that a good ransom might be obtained for them. Don Joao and Donna Isabel remained accordingly on board the Lion, where Captain Wood, as did his young lieutenant, paid them all the attention in their power.

Waymouth admired the fair captive. He could speak her language better than most on board, and many an hour, not unnaturally, he passed in her company. It is possible that his feelings might have run away with him altogether had he not had so grave a monitor as Edward Raymond by his side, who was ever whispering that Donna Isabel was of a country at enmity with his, of a faith differing greatly from his, and that, though her attractions were great, there were many fair ladies in England possessed of still greater, and more suited to be his bride. These remarks did not exactly go in at one ear and out the other; but no sooner did Donna Isabel appear on deck than they were forgotten for the time. That Donna Isabel had, however, any other feeling than that of gratitude for Antony Waymouth, no one on board could say, for she was equally courteous to Raymond and to all the other officers.

Don Joao meantime was very anxious to be liberated, as he wanted to get to his government, and he was continually urging his captors to allow him to depart on board the first Portugal ship they might meet, he undertaking to pay a large ransom for himself and daughter. Captain Wood was a jovial-hearted and mannered man. He laughed loudly at the proposal.

“Thine own ransom, worthy senhor, we shall fix at not less than five hundred golden pieces; and for thy daughter, we must allow Antony Waymouth to arrange that.”

The captain spoke in jest, but to Waymouth the proposal caused sore perplexity. He was grieved to have to part with her, in the first place. In the second, if he named a ransom at what he considered her value, it would be high indeed; if he mentioned a small sum, it would appear as if he held her in low esteem. He was very much inclined to quarrel with his captain on the matter; but the more perplexed he appeared the more determined Captain Wood became to fix him to the point. He walked the deck in a state of great agitation. All sorts of mad schemes occurred to him.

He had paced up and down for some time when he was joined by Raymond, who had heard of his perplexity.

“Let me judge if I may help to get thee free of thy difficulty,” said Raymond, who, having an older head on his shoulders, was not so troubled as his younger friend about the matter. “You have to name the value of this fair Portugal donna; you esteem her very highly too.”

“Yes, indeed I do. She is the most charming, sweet, enchanting creature my eyes have ever beheld or expect to behold,” exclaimed Waymouth, uttering many other rhapsodical expressions, which his friend did not interrupt. When he ceased, the latter quietly remarked —

“Well, repeat all you have said to our captain, and then declare that, as she is above all price, so no price would pay her ransom, and that, therefore, she is entitled to go free.”

Waymouth struck his forehead, surprised that so bright a thought had never occurred to him, and, thanking Edward, hastened to the captain to give his reply.

It was taken in good part; no one was inclined to gainsay it; and Don Joao undertook to pay the required sum, how, when, and where it might be demanded.

“At your own castle, when we can get there, and to whomsoever we may depute,” was the reply.

Perfect confidence was placed in Don Joao that he would pay the money. At that time the Portugals and the Spaniards were held in respect for their rigid adherence to the code of honour which they had laid down for themselves.

The difficulty was to find a ship by which to send them, as the admiral was unwilling to go out of his course to land them. Hitherto the squadron had avoided all disaster, though not successful in making prizes. They were now in a part of the ocean where fearful hurricanes were at times to be expected, and in a latitude full of little-known islands and rocks; at the same time, they might hope to meet with numerous ships of the enemy.

Waymouth, as he thought on having to part with Donna Isabel so soon, became more and more downcast, though Edward and good Master Walker, the minister, and the other officers, did their utmost to keep up his spirits; some, like Raymond and Master Walker, by entering into his feelings; others, like Captain Wood, by bantering and quizzing.

“A sail! a sail!” was shouted from the mast-head, whence a bright lookout was constantly kept. Chase was made – the stranger was overtaken. She proved to be a Portugal, a straggler from a large squadron supposed to be far ahead.

Not a moment was to be lost. Every article of value was taken from her except the fittings of her chief cabin, some guns for signals, and provisions sufficient to last her till she could reach the Malabar coast. The admiral then ordered the prisoners to be placed in her. Waymouth had the duty of conveying them.

Donna Isabel spoke but little, keeping her head muffled in her hood. The English lieutenant tried to talk, but never had he felt so tongue-tied. This was not surprising. He could say nothing definite about the future, and he had little to say about the past. He carefully helped her up the side, and placed her on a seat on the deck of the Tiger. Don Joao was profuse in his expressions of gratitude for the treatment he and his daughter had received, and over and over again declared that it would afford him intense satisfaction to pay his ransom whenever demanded. Waymouth, like a true sailor, had hurried below to see what arrangements could be made for the comfort and convenience of Donna Isabel, and, having pointed out to the officers of the ship what was to be done, had returned on deck resolved to pour out all his feelings into her ear, when a gun from the admiral, repeated by the Lion, warned him that he must not delay another moment. All he could do was to bow low as he passed the lady and her father, utter a low farewell, and, leaping into his boat, pull back to the Lion as fast as his men could bend to their oars. The squadron instantly made all sail in chase of the enemy supposed to be ahead. For some time Waymouth had too much to do to look towards the ship on board which he had left the Portugal governor and his daughter, and when he did look she appeared but a speck on the horizon. He stood gazing, lost in a reverie. He was aroused by a slap on the shoulder.

“Look ahead! that’s the way we seamen set our faces,” said a voice near him, “quoting your own words, coz. We have changed places, methinks.”

Waymouth, looking round, saw Raymond and several other officers standing behind him. He heaved a sigh, and then joined in the laugh in which the rest were indulging. He had been too long at sea not to know the folly of growing angry under such circumstances. Besides, as he confessed to Raymond, he could not help feeling relieved at having no longer so important a charge. A brighter lookout than ever was kept on board the squadron, that they might not pass the enemy. Just before noon on the third day some strange sail were descried ahead. They increased in numbers: they were tall ships. There could be no doubt that they were those of the Portugal fleet they were in chase of, but far more numerous than they had been led to expect. Still undaunted, the brave admiral and his officers resolved to attack them. The Portugals saw the English approaching, and no longer, like caitiffs, flying before the foe, hauled their wind, and, forming a semicircle, prepared to receive them. In spite of the mighty superiority of the Portugals, the English sailed on in compact order, the men at their guns, their matches in their hands ready to open fire, every one in the fleet prepared for death or victory.

Chapter Three

The Portugal fleet, which the little English squadron was now rapidly approaching, looked formidable indeed, numbering as it did four times as many tall ships as the latter, but not a heart among the stout men who formed the crew of the Red Dragon, the Serpent, or the Lion, the Sunshine or Moonshine, quailed with the thoughts of combating against odds so great.

Good Master Walker, the minister of the Lion, went round among the crew as they stood at their quarters, reminding them that they were about to fight for their sovereign, their country, their honour, and their religion.

“And, dear lads,” he added, “now is not the time to preach to you; but I have taught you all faithfully the truth, and would beseech all who have listened to remember and adhere by it.”

The admiral had formed his line of battle, and, passing by each ship on his way to form the van, hailed through his speaking-trumpet, encouraging the crews to fight bravely for St. George and merry England, and promising them, if they gained the victory, the rich freights of all the ships they could capture. It was a bold feat of the gallant admiral thus to sail into the very midst of his foes, who he knew must surround him.

The Portugals were formed, as has been said, in a semicircle, with the concave side of their line turned toward the English, so that they might quickly overlap them – in a land fight an important point to gain, but at sea of slight advantage. The English were formed as a wedge; the Red Dragon led, the Serpent following, then came the two pinnaces, the Lion and Lion’s Whelp bringing up the rear.

As the hostile fleets drew near, drums began to beat and trumpets to bray forth their discordant sounds, when, with a loud crashing roar, the artillery on both sides opened. The great guns sent forth their round shots, and the culverins, sakers, falconets, and murderers their death-dealing showers of iron and lead, causing havoc and destruction wherever they fell. Ill pleased were the Portugals with this proceeding. Numbers were falling on board every ship. In vain they called on their saints to improve their aim and strengthen their powder – the shot seemed to have no effect on the heretical Englishmen – the saints paid them no attention. They had found a Tartar, and surrounded him, but were as disagreeably placed as if they had been dancing round an exploding magazine. Bravely plied the gallant English their guns. As long as any one of them had legs to stand on or arms to work with he refused to desert his quarters. If one stopped for a moment from working his gun, it was to help a messmate bind a handkerchief round a wounded limb, or to tie one round his own leg or side. Officers and men vied with each other as to who should perform deeds most worthy of fame. The Portugals, on the contrary, though their trumpets brayed forth far louder than those of their foes, forgetful of their ancient renown, hastened below the instant they were wounded, however slight their hurts, crying out for the medico to come and help them; and some, when the English shots rattled on board, were seen to run away from their guns, even though unwounded. Still, numbers in so close a fight gave a great advantage to the Portugals.

The admiral’s ship, the Red Dragon, especially was hard pressed, the enemy seeming resolved to destroy her first, hoping thus to gain an easy victory over the rest. But the brave Lancaster was not a man to be daunted. As fresh foes pressed around him he kept shouting to his crew —

“The more the merrier, lads! the more the merrier! We’ve pills enough on board to dose them all till they’ll wish they’d come to some other doctor for their physic.”

Captain Wood, too, was scarcely less hard pressed. He had sent the Lion’s Whelp ahead to the support of the Sunshine and Moonshine, which seemed in danger of being altogether overwhelmed by the huge ships of the enemy which clustered around them, and thus the stout Lion had to encounter a whole host of foes by herself.

“Come one, come all!” shouted Captain Wood. “Brave lads, we are ready for them!”

“Ay, ay! one and all!” echoed Antony Waymouth. “Hurrah for merry England! Give it them, lads! A few more doses like that and they’ll cry peccavi and strike their flags.”

“Peccavimus you should have said,” remarked Raymond, whom Waymouth was passing as he hurried from gun to gun to assure himself that all were being fought to the best advantage.

“Ay, marry, not one, but fifty, will sing that song to-day, coz,” said Antony, laughing.

In truth, even in the heat of battle both officers and men indulged themselves in cutting jokes whenever an occasion occurred. Not, however, that the fight was any joking matter, for never in those seas had a more desperate one taken place. The brave men on board the *Lion* were falling thickly, some to rise no more, others to be carried below and placed in the hands of the surgeon, and to these Master Walker was rendering all the assistance in his power, and affording spiritual counsel and consolation at the same time. It was a dark, close place down in the depths of the ship, dimly lighted by two lanterns overhead, with a table in the centre and hammocks slung on either side, already occupied by wounded men. Others lay on the deck, beneath, and one poor fellow was on the table, the surgeon and his assistants standing over him examining a dreadfully shattered limb. Master Walker was holding his hand and giving him some wine, of which, with vinegar and burnt feathers, the place was redolent, although they could not overcome that indescribable odour, dreadful and sickening, found wherever wounded men are collected together.

“It must be done, lad,” said Master Walker kindly. “There’s no help for it; the leg must come off to save thy life.”

“What! lose my leg! never again to dance a hornpipe on Deerbrook Green among the lassies of our village? No more to come the double-shuffle and hear the merry clapping of the old people’s hands? I’d as lief lose my life! But let the surgeon do his worst,” murmured the lad, who was one of Waymouth’s followers; “I’ll bear it.”

“Like a lion, I hope, lad,” said the minister; “and pray to Heaven for strength – that’s where you’ll get the most.”

“Seldom I’ve ever gone there for any thing,” answered the lad with a sigh, and then, following the good minister, he endeavoured to utter a prayer. It soon broke into groans, for the surgeons were operating on his limb, and these, in spite of his resolution, were succeeded by shrieks and cries, echoed by many of his poor shipmates who lay around him in the same sad plight. Not even the roar of the cannon overhead and the crashing of timbers, the shouts of the combatants and the rattle of the small arms, and the braying of the trumpets and other instruments, could altogether overpower those sad cries. Yet the sounds on deck grew louder and louder.

“There must be terrible work, I fear me, going on, Ap Reece,” observed Master Walker to the Welsh surgeon, who had come round to feel the patient’s wrist; “we’ve had no one brought down for the last five minutes.”

The surgeon made no answer, but signed to the minister to pour some cordial down the young seaman’s throat. “More – more! or he’ll slip through our fingers,” he whispered. The minister obeyed. The lad opened his eyes, and turning them towards him with an expression of gratitude, gasped out —

“Tell mother I’ve not forgotten the — ”

A convulsive shudder passed over his frame, the blood started from beyond the tourniquet, and before the assistants could replace it the youth was a corpse.

“Peace be with him,” said the minister solemnly, as the body was quickly removed to give place to another yet breathing victim of battle. Such is one of the many dark sides to the pictures of warfare. If this alone were to be seen, few would be eager for the combat.

“No more coming,” once more observed the minister. “Either we must be hard pressed indeed, or have put the Portugals to flight.”

“I fear me much the former,” said Ap Reece. “I’d lief take a sword and go help our brave fellows. If the foe gain the day, they’ll not leave one of us alive to tell the tale. What say you, Master Walker? will you come?”

“Nay, Ap Reece, abide where you are. Every man at his proper work – you tending the hurt, I speaking the truth to the salvation of their souls. Thus should we be found even were the end of the world approaching.”

The high-spirited Welshman returned to his post, and though he had no more legs and arms to cut off, there was ample work for his skill. The dreadful uproar continued. It was evident that some of the enemy’s ships had got alongside, and that the Lion’s crew were engaged in repelling the Portugals who were attempting to board. Who was gaining the day it was impossible to say. It was a time truly of anxious suspense. Ap Reece could at length endure it no longer.

“If you go not on deck to learn how it fares with our men, Master Walker, I must go myself,” he exclaimed; and, seeing that the minister did not move, he seized a sword which had been brought below by a wounded man, and sprang up the ladder. The chaplain looked hesitatingly in the same direction.

“No, no; my duty is with the suffering and dying, though I’d lief strike a blow as in days of yore for our reformed faith and merry England,” said he to himself, and again turned to attend to a sorely wounded man by whose side he had been sitting.

Ap Reece soon gained the deck; he had been in many a fight, but never in a more desperate one. The Lion was closely surrounded by a forest of masts, with shattered spars, and burning sails, and severed ropes and blocks swinging to and fro, and splinters rattling from aloft, while round shots and bullets were flying thickly about, and from every side the loud clashing of steel showed that the combatants were striving hand to hand. The Portugals were attempting to board on every side of the Lion, but no sooner did they reach her deck than they were driven back with loss, and often followed on board their own ships. A new combatant had just come up on the Lion’s quarter, and was pouring his crew on board. Waymouth caught sight of what was occurring, and with a handful of men sprang to repel the boarders. Hard pressed by the leader of the Portugals, he was well-nigh being driven back at the moment Ap Reece reached the deck. The surgeon saw at a glance where his services would be of most use, and shouting at the top of his voice a Welsh war-cry, he rushed to the lieutenant’s assistance. Down before his sturdy blade went foe after foe till he reached Waymouth’s side.

“A rescue! a rescue!” he shouted, and cleaving to the chin the head of one of the lieutenant’s many assailants, the rest sprang hastily back, some into their own vessel, and some, missing their footing, overboard. “On, on!” shouted Waymouth. “On, on, and the enemy’s ours!” cried Ap Reece; and following the retreating boarders they drove them across the deck of their ship, cutting down many, till the remainder cried out for quarter, when their flag was hauled down and the capture was complete.

“We have more prizes to make before the day is over, lads,” cried Waymouth, and at that instant another large Portugal ship driving against the prize, he, with the brave Ap Reece and a number of followers, threw himself on her deck. So fierce was this onslaught that the enemy did not stand a moment, but tumbling below one over the other, or in their fright jumping overboard, or casting down their weapons, they allowed speedy possession to be taken of their ship. Waymouth and his companions then lashed the two prizes together, and not without difficulty regained the Lion, on the other side of which more of the enemy were congregated. Of one Captain Wood had taken possession. Waymouth and Ap Reece now sprang on board another about midships, when, dividing their forces, one swept forward and the other aft, driving their loudly vociferating foes before them till the Portugal’s flag was hauled down.

“Hurrah! hurrah! my brave boys,” shouted Waymouth. “Four prizes in the Lion’s maw – the fattest in all the fleet, too, I have a notion – one more – yonder she comes. Strike fast, and strike home.”

Thus shouting, he seized the helm of the prize, and steered her so as to fall foul of yet another big Portugal ship.

“Shall we once more tempt fortune?” cried Waymouth to the fighting surgeon. “What say you, Ap Reece? There must be ducats not a few aboard our tall friend here.”

“But one answer to that question. On, on!” exclaimed the Welshman.

And no sooner did the sides of the two ships grind together than Waymouth lashed them by the shrouds, and then sprang on board the new-comer. She was full of men who showed every intention to defend her; but undaunted by numbers, the Englishmen threw themselves among them, with their sharp swords flashing rapidly, and soon hewed a lane for themselves from one side to the other. They had begun to cut a second when the Portugals, dreading the result, hauled down their own flag, and yielded. By this time such of the Portugal ships as were in a condition to escape were making the best of their way under all sail to the northward, leaving the rest in the hands of the English, who were in no condition to follow. The victors had indeed suffered severely, though it was some time before Waymouth, and those with him, could ascertain the true state of affairs. At length he brought his last-captured prize up to the Lion, where the rest were collected, and having secured his prisoners, and left a few men on board to watch them, he returned to his own ship. The Lion with her torn sails, shattered spars, and ropes hanging in disordered festoons, looked any thing but like a victor, yet she was in a better plight than her consorts. Far ahead lay the admiral with three of the enemy’s ships he had captured, but his masts were tottering, and it was evident that he had suffered severely in the fight. The Serpent, though she had taken a couple of prizes, was even in a worse condition, while of the three smaller ships the poor little Moonshine had disappeared altogether, the Lion’s Whelp lay a dimasted hulk on the waters, and the Sunshine appeared in a sinking condition. Three prizes, proofs of their prowess, lay near them, and it was to be hoped that some of the crew of the Moonshine had found safety on board them.

And now the surgeon, Ap Reece, his fiery blood beginning to cool, bethought him that he ought to go and look after his patients below, while Waymouth began to make inquiries as to who had been killed and who wounded among his shipmates. His grief was sincere when he heard of his young follower’s death. He looked round, also, anxiously for Raymond. He was nowhere to be seen. Was he on board any of the prizes? No; such and such officers had charge of them. He sprang below. Master Walker could give him no tidings of his friend. He inquired eagerly of all the surviving officers. It was remembered that he had headed a party who had repulsed the boarders from a large Portugal ship, which had afterwards sheered off. Several men were missing who could not be accounted for, and it was supposed possible that he, with them, had gone on board the enemy, and that they had been carried off as prisoners. Waymouth hoped such might be the case, as it was the only chance of again seeing his friend, but, attached though he was to him, he had no time just then to mourn his loss.

Fearful had been the slaughter on board the Lion and the injuries she had received, while so many of her people had been taken off to man the prizes that not enough remained to repair the damages which she had received. The energies of every one on board unwounded were taxed to the utmost, nor could assistance be expected from the other ships, which had enough to do to look after their own prizes. The ships now closed up with each other, and the Lion was able to hail the admiral’s ship.

“Sad news – sad news,” was the answer. “Captain Lancaster was slain at the beginning of the fight, and though we have gained the victory we have bought it with the loss of half our men.”

The loss on board the Serpent was also very great, though she had suffered less than the admiral’s ship; but the Lion’s Whelp and the Sunshine had lost, in proportion to their crews, as many men as the latter; while of the unfortunate Moonshine scarcely a third had escaped on board the prizes: all her wounded had gone down in her. The captain of the Serpent was also desperately wounded, and Captain Wood sent Waymouth on board to see him and receive his orders, as he was now chief in command. Waymouth, finding his way among the dying and wounded, reached the cockpit where Captain Nicholas Parker lay. He was groaning with anguish, which the surgeon, who stood by his

side, was endeavouring to alleviate with a cordial. In vain. The groans continued, but grew fainter. The surgeon felt the captain's pulse. Waymouth stepped up.

"I have come to receive orders from the admiral, for such he now is, since Captain Lancaster has been killed," he said.

"Our brave captain will never give orders more," answered the surgeon with much feeling. "Your captain, Master Waymouth, will be admiral ere many minutes are over. We've gained victory at heavy cost."

Before Waymouth left the ship Captain Parker had breathed his last, and he pulled hastily back to announce the sad event to Captain Wood, who had now become commander-in-chief, but seemed but little elated with the circumstance. Master Walker was pacing the deck to recover from the effects of the close atmosphere he had endured below, and the harrowing scenes he had witnessed.

"This is what men call glory, and what young men sigh after and long to engage in," he observed, while Waymouth stood quiet for a few seconds discussing some food which had been brought to him, for he had no time to go below. "Look there; see what man's avarice and rage and folly have brought about in a few short hours."

He pointed with a melancholy glance at a number of slain arranged around the mainmast, and to several wounded who had been mercifully brought on deck to breathe a purer atmosphere than that to be found below; then to the Lion's shattered masts and bulwarks; and, lastly, moving his hand round to their almost dismantled, and yet more shattered, consorts and prizes, from one of which, taken by the Serpent, at that instant flames were seen to burst forth. The Lion had but one boat which could float, and into her an officer and crew jumped and pulled away to the assistance of the burning vessel, the men being urged to speed, not impossibly, in the hope of obtaining some of the plunder on board.

The Serpent had sent off two of her boats, and the Red Dragon another, but the Portugals either would not go to the assistance of their countrymen or their boats were knocked to pieces, or the officers in charge of the prizes would not let them go, for no assistance was sent, though several were near the burning vessel. The boats pulled rapidly through the water; and good cause they had so to do, for the flames rose higher and higher, bursting out from all the ports from stem to stern till there appeared not a spot on which a human being could stand unscorched by the fire. Busily as all on board the Lion were employed, they stopped to gaze on the scene. Even amid the flames they could see the unhappy men rushing here and there, seeking in vain for safety: some were casting themselves into the sea; others, unable probably to swim, waited anxiously for the boats. In vain! in vain! Ere the boats reached them the burning masts and spars rose gradually up from the hull – up, up, they shot into the air; the deck followed, the flames increasing with tenfold fury, a loud report announcing that the magazine had exploded, and that the rich argosy, with all still living on board, had been hurried to destruction. Those in the boats pulled back, endeavouring to avoid the burning fragments of spars and wreck which came hissing in a thick shower around them. Then recollecting that some might yet be floating near where the wreck had been, like true British tars they again dashed on, in the hope of rescuing them. So rapidly had the catastrophe occurred after the first outbreak of the fire, that Waymouth had not moved from the minister's side.

"There, there – !" continued the latter, "surely such work as that is the invention of Satan – that roaring lion who is ever going about seeking whom he may devour. What mad folly in men thus to yield to him, and to destroy each other at his will and beck!"

"What you say, Master Walker, may be true – all very true; but we are in for it, and must carry through our enterprise, or perish," exclaimed Waymouth, with rather more impatience than he was wont to address the minister. "We have taken prizes enough to make every man of us wealthy for the rest of our lives; but our loss of brave fellows has been heavy, I grant you, and I'd give up every ducat that falls to my share for the sake of knowing what has become of Edward Raymond, and all the gold I may ever possess to get him back safe aboard here."

“He was a worthy gentleman, and I pray that he may still be reckoned among the living,” said the chaplain, and he was about to commence an exhortation to his young friend when Waymouth was called away to attend to one of the numberless duties which, in consequence of the loss of many of his messmates, now fell to his lot.

As soon as shot-holes had been plugged, the wounded masts and spars strengthened, the shrouds set up, and damaged rigging repaired, an examination of the prizes commenced. The wealth they contained surpassed even the expectation of the adventurers. Besides gold and silver in bars, there were cases of diamonds and pearls and other precious stones, and casks and cases of rich spices, and strange and rich silks, and a variety of other articles from India. In truth, there appeared to be more than enough to enrich even the commonest seaman of the squadron, although by far the largest share would go to the officers.

Fortunately, the weather remained calm, or more of the ships would have gone to the bottom. Every one exerted himself to the utmost, and good reason he had so to do, for a storm might arise, or the enemy return with greater force, and all the treasure gained by so much toil and bloodshed might be lost.

Before the day was over, the signal was made from the *Serpent* that Captain Parker had ceased to breathe. Captain Wood therefore assumed the chief command, and ordered the *Red Dragon* to come near that he might go on board her, leaving Waymouth in command of the *Lion*.

A consultation of all the chief officers was now held, and it was determined to abandon and destroy the *Sunshine* and *Lion’s Whelp*, to shift their crews on board the two largest and least injured of the Portugal ships, to select a third on board which to put all the prisoners, and to burn the remainder. The plan was at once put into execution, and the wealth of all her prizes was carried on board the *Lion*. Not, however, till two days had passed were the prizes sufficiently gutted of their stores and provisions to be abandoned. A short time before nightfall they were set on fire; and it was a sad though a fine sight to see eight tall ships burning away together. Master Walker again had reason to shake his head.

“Another example of man’s folly,” he exclaimed. “See yon beautiful fabrics, on which so much thought, time, and labour was expended, being destroyed in a few short minutes!”

“But you would not have us tow the useless hulls round the world, Master Walker, would you?” asked Waymouth, with some little hastiness not to be wondered at.

“No, Captain Waymouth, but I would that the hulls were not useless, and still freighted with honest merchandise, that we and the Portugals were at peace, as Christian men should be, and each pursuing our own course as gentlemen adventurers for our own profit and advantage and that of our respective countries. When I joined the expedition I understood such was to be the case. We were to be armed to resist attack, as is lawful – not to attack others, which is wrong. But all these doings of blood and destruction have opened my eyes, and made me wish that I had remained quiet at home, even though my stipend was small and precarious. I love you right well, as you of a surety do know, Captain Waymouth, and I tell you that no good can come of these doings.”

“I see not the strength of your reasoning, Master Walker,” said Waymouth. “We all knew when we left Old England that we were embarking in an adventure in which we should meet with hard blows as well as rich prizes. We are in no wise worse than Drake, and see what honours have been heaped on him.”

“I say nothing against the powers that be; and her gracious majesty may have had her reasons for honouring Sir Francis; but there are persons who consider his expedition round the world as worthy only of a sea-rover of old or of a downright pirate,” observed the minister.

“Let be, let be, Master Walker,” exclaimed Waymouth petulantly; “I can brook more from you than from any man alive, but I have heard enough.”

The minister was too wise to proceed, but he shook his head mournfully.

The prisoners were now all collected on board one ship. Among the wild spirits found among the English crews some were not wanting who suggested that they should be sent adrift without compass, guns, or provisions; some even hinted that to bore holes in the ship's bottom would be the surest way of disposing of them; others considered that it would be wise to keep them as prisoners, and to insure their keeping with the fleet they should only be furnished day by day with the necessary provisions, and that two ships should be appointed especially to watch them. More generous counsels, however, prevailed.

“No, no, by my halidom!” exclaimed Captain Wood; “Portugals though they are, they have fought bravely, and like honest gentlemen shall be treated. We’ll give them arms to defend their lives, and provisions to fill their insides, and a compass to find their way to some one of their own ports or factories on the coast of the Indies, and all we’ll demand of them is that if they find any Englishmen in the same plight as they are themselves that they treat them in the same way as they are treated by us.”

Waymouth warmly seconded the admiral’s proposal; so did several of the superior officers, though others grumbled at letting the prisoners off without a ransom, or trusting to their honour to return the favour they were to receive.

Away sailed the Portugal ship with all the prisoners on board; not, however, without Waymouth having extracted a promise from all the officers to make inquiries for his friend Raymond, and to let him know, if alive, where he was to be found. Waymouth hoped that among them some at least would do their utmost to redeem their promise.

Once more the English fleet was sailing proudly over the seas, but sadly diminished in the number of their men. The wealth collected seemed prodigious in the eyes of the crews, and little short of that obtained by Drake of the Spaniards. Still their success only made them greedy for more, and the seamen especially expressed their aversion to the trading part of the enterprise, and loudly proclaimed their desire to cruise against any enemy to be found – Dutch, if Portugals could not be found, or Spaniards if they could be fallen in with. Waymouth, especially, found that he had a very mutinously inclined crew to deal with. Who was the chief instigator he determined to discover, in the hope that by punishing him he might bring the rest under better discipline.

The officer next in command to him was Miles Carlingford, an honest, straight-forward seaman, on whom he knew that he could depend as well as he could on Master Walker and the surgeon Ap Reece as to faithfulness; but Master Walker was a non-combatant, and would be averse to any stringent measures; and Ap Reece, from his hot-headed impetuosity, would be likely to betray any counsel with which he was intrusted.

Captain Wood had brought two cabin-boys with him – or, as they would now be called, midshipmen – and these he had left under Waymouth’s especial care. Poor fellows! early indeed were they to be initiated into the stern realities of life. It would have been difficult to find a stronger contrast than between the two lads, and yet they were great friends. The eldest, Alfred Stanhope, was of high birth, of which he was fully conscious. He was refined in appearance and manners, and was light-hearted and gay in the extreme. He was never out of spirits or out of humour, and was utterly indifferent to danger. His talents, however, were not great, and the knowledge he did possess was very superficial. His father was a spendthrift and a ruined man, and had allowed him to come to sea in the hope of his being provided for in one way or another.

His companion, Oliver Marston, was the son of a stout English yeoman to whom Captain Wood’s family was under some obligations, and, as a way of repaying him, he had offered to take Oliver, one of ten sons, on an adventure through which he would be certain to secure his fortune. The lad, though he had never seen a ship except worked on tapestry, had no objection to go to sea. He was a short, stout, strongly-built little fellow, able to hold his own with all competitors. While poor Alfred Stanhope had been nurtured in the lap of luxury, Oliver had been brought up in the roughest style, and was therefore much better able than his companion to buffet with the storms of life they were doomed to encounter. He had much more sense and shrewdness in his round little head than

might have been supposed, while all about him was sterling stuff of the toughest nature, except his heart, in one respect, and that was as soft and gentle as that of a true sailor is said to be. Oliver was a favourite with Waymouth, who, though he did not spoil him, encouraged him to speak more openly to him than he allowed any one else to do except Master Walker.

It was night. Waymouth was seated in his cabin. A lamp hung from the beam above, the light of which fell on a chart he was anxiously scanning. Unwonted cares oppressed even his buoyant spirit. His ship had suffered much; he had a large amount of wealth on board; his crew was much weakened, some were disaffected, and he was about to enter seas difficult of navigation, and where typhoons might be expected. He mourned, too, his friend Raymond's loss, though he did not believe that he was dead, but that he had been carried off a prisoner by the enemy. Still, how could he hear of him, and how rescue him if he was a prisoner? He fell into a reverie. He was aroused by the sentry at the announcement that an officer wished to see him.

“Let him come,” was the answer; and Oliver Marston stood before him.

“What now, Oliver?” asked the captain.

“You know, Captain Waymouth, that I am not a tale-bearer; but I've just heard some matters which I bethought me I ought to convey to you without delay,” answered Marston. “There's mutiny in the ship, sir, or what may come to worse.”

“Ah! how come you to know that, boy?” asked the captain anxiously, for the announcement somewhat confirmed his own suspicions.

The youngster answered promptly – “It is my first watch, sir, and as I had no fancy for turning in for a short time, I lay down for a snooze on a chest outside the boatswain's cabin. I was afraid of oversleeping myself, so quickly awoke, and was about to jump up, when I heard voices near me. The words were spoken in an undertone, as if the speakers desired not to be overheard. Who the speakers were, I am not certain; they talked of the wealth that was on board, and how you and the other captains would get the lion's share, but that if they acted with spirit and stuck together they might have the whole of it.”

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