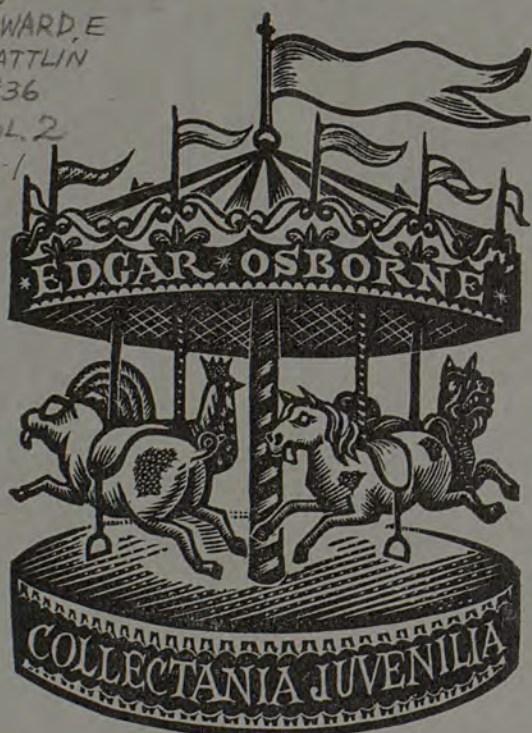






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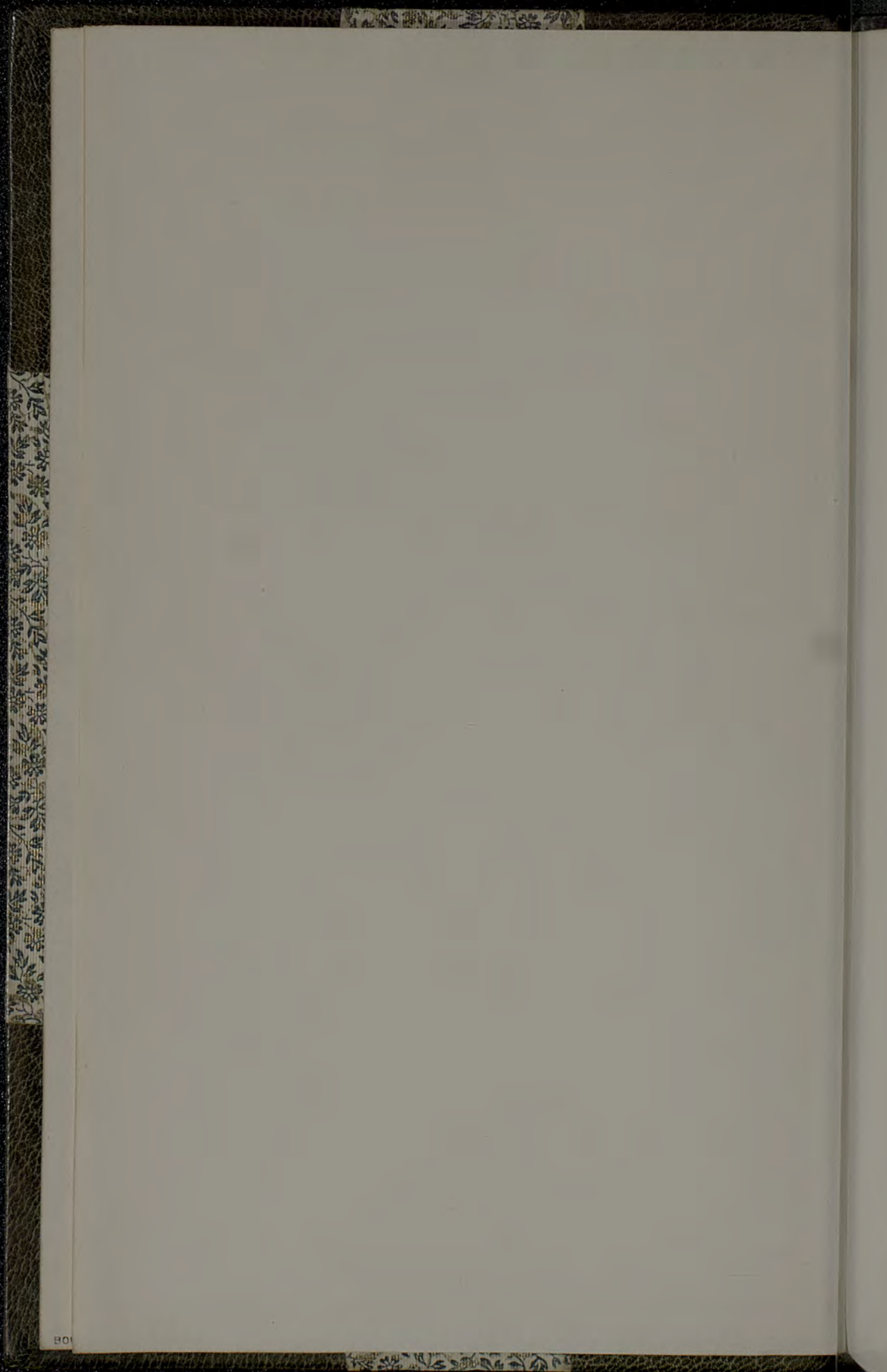


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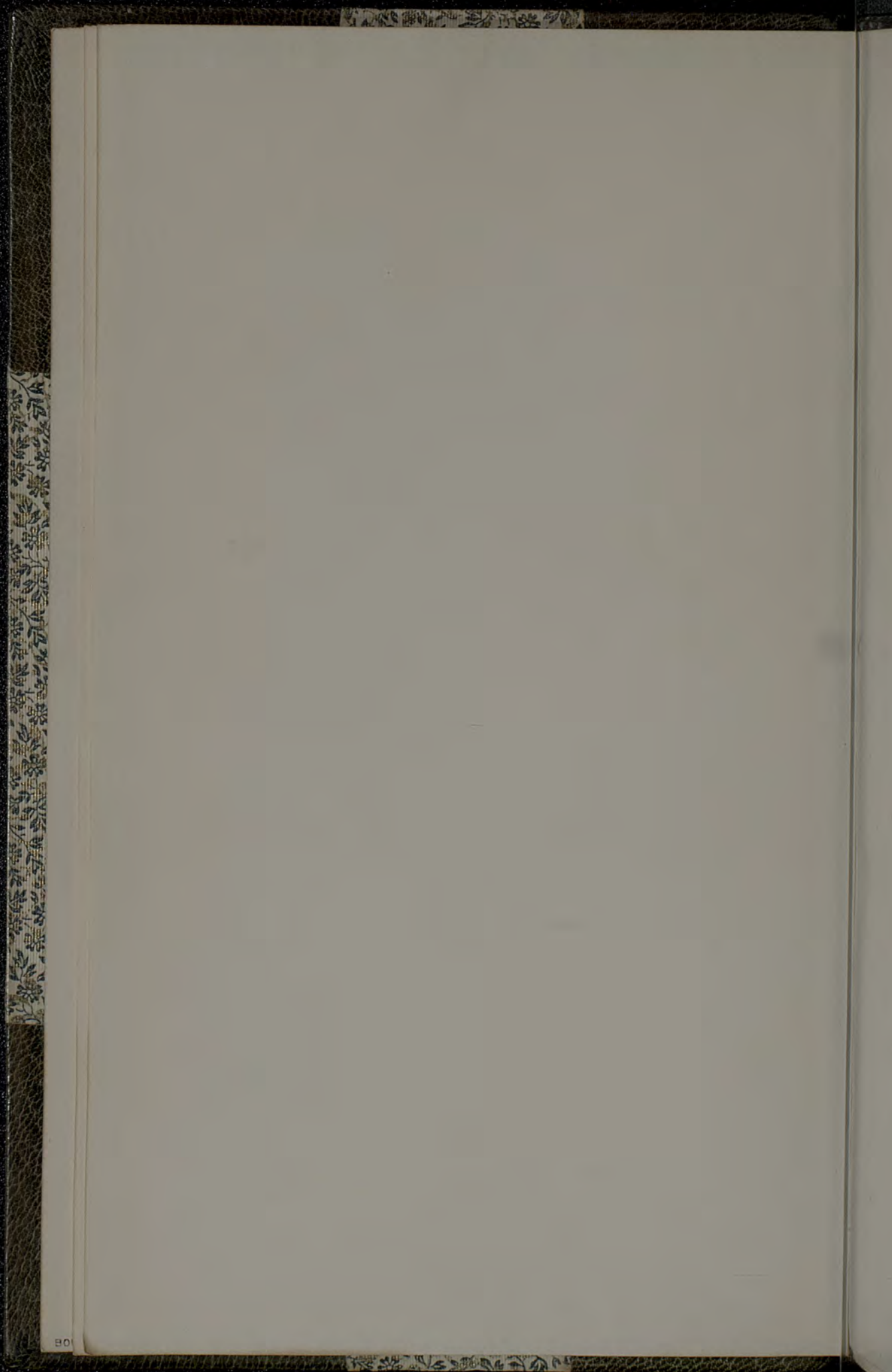
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Drawn and etched by A. Hervey.

THE INVARIANT.

RICE

RATTLIN,
THE REEFER.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "PETER SIMPLE."

"All hands REEF topsails—Away, aloft!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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RATTLIN, THE REEFER.

CHAPTER I.

Ralph's heart still at home—His coffee-room friend all abroad—Gets his I O U cashed, and sees the giver exalted to every body's satisfaction but his own.

BEFORE I plunge into all the strange adventures, and unlooked-for vicissitudes, of my naval life, I must be indulged with a few prefatory remarks. The royal navy, as a service, is not vilified, nor the gallant members who compose it insulted, by pointing out the idiosyncrasies, the absurdities, and even the vices and crimes of some of its members. Human nature

is human nature still, whether it fawn in the court, or philander in the grove. The man carries with him on the seas the same predilections, the same passions, and the same dispositions, both for good and for evil, as he possessed on shore. The ocean breeze does not convert the coward into the hero, the passionate man into the philosopher, or the mean one into a pattern of liberality. It is true, that a coward in the service seldom dares show his cowardice; that, in the inferior grades, passion is controlled by discipline, and in all, meanness is shamed by intimate, and social communion, into the semblance of much better feelings. Still, with all this, the blue coat, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins, and the blue water is, as yet, inefficacious to wash them all out.

We have said here briefly what the service will not do. It will not change the nature of man, but it will modify it into much that is exalted, that is noble, and that is good. It almost universally raises individual character; but it can never debase it. The world are too

apt to generalize—and this generalization has done much disservice to the British navy. It forms a notion, creates a beau ideal—a very absurd one truly—and then tries every character by it. Even the officers of this beautiful service have tacitly given in to the delusion; and, by attempting to frown down all *exposés* of the errors of individuals, vainly endeavour to exalt that which requires no such factitious exaltation.

If I am compelled to say that this captain was a fool and a tyrant, fools indeed must those officers be who draw the inference that I mean the impression to be general, that all captains are either fools or tyrants. Let the cavillers understand, that the tyranny and the folly are innate in the man, but, that the service abhors and represses the one, and despises and often reforms the other. The service never made a good man bad, or a bad one worse: on the contrary, it has always improved the one, and reformed the other. It is, however, no libel to say, that more than a quarter of a century ago (of course, now, it is all perfection) it contained

some bad men among its multitude of good. Such as it then was I will faithfully record.

Oh! I left myself in bed. My reflections affording me so little consolation, when they were located in the vicinity of Chatham, I ordered my obedient mind to travel back to Stickenham, whilst I felt more than half inclined to make my body take the same course the next morning. Not that my courage had failed me; but I actually felt a disgust at all that I had heard and seen. How different are the sharp, abrading corners that meet us at every turn in our passage through real life to the sunny dreams of our imagination! Already my dirk had ceased to give me satisfaction in looking upon it, and my uniform, that two days before I thought so bewitching, I had a few hours since, been informed was to be soiled by a foul anchor. How gladly that night my mind revelled among the woods and fields and waters of the romantic village that I had just left! Then its friendly inhabitants came thronging upon the beautiful scene; and pre-eminent among them stood my good schoolmistress,

and my loving godmother. Of all the imaginary group, she alone did not smile. It was then, and not till then, that I felt the bitterness of the word "farewell." My conscience smote me that I had behaved unkindly towards her. I now remembered a thousand little contrivances, all of which, in my exalted spirits, I had pertinaciously eluded, that she had put in practice in order to be for a few minutes alone with me. I now bitterly reproached myself for my perversity. What secrets might I not have heard! And then my heart told me in a voice I could not doubt, that it was she who had hovered round my bed the whole night previous to my departure. My schoolfellows had all slept soundly, yet I, though wakeful, had the folly to appear to sleep also. Of one thing I felt convinced, that I could never again act unkindly, without myself suffering much more than my victim. I then remembered it distinctly, though I noticed it but little at the time, when she uttered her tremulous "Good-bye—God bless you!" that her sickly smile was accompanied by certain very pathetic twitch-

ings in the face, which added but little to her personal beauty. All these things I now called to mind with a most tantalizing exactitude ! and when I compared them to my new captain's hard, heartless, and sneering expression, "Piously brought up," I felt far from comfortable. Whilst I was considering how people could be so unkind, sleep came kindly to me, and I awoke next morning in good spirits, and laughed at my dejection of the preceding evening.

Whilst I was at breakfast in the coffee-room, I was a little surprised and a good deal flattered by the appearance of Lieutenant Farmer. He accosted me kindly, told me not again to attempt to offer first to shake hands with my captain, for it was against the rules of the service ; and then he sat down beside me, and commenced very patiently *à me tirer les vers du nez*. He was a fine, gallant fellow, passionately desirous of promotion, which was not surprising, for he had served long and with considerable distinction, and was still a lieutenant, whilst he was more than fourteen years above

his captain, both in length of service and in age. Was I related to my Lord A——? Did I know any thing of Mr. Rose? Had I any connexions that knew Mr. Perceval, &c.? I frankly told him that I knew no one of any note, and that it had been directly enjoined upon me, by the one or two friends that I possessed, never to converse about my private affairs with any one.

Mr. Farmer felt himself rebuked, but not offended; he was a generous, noble fellow, though a little passionate, and too taut a disciplinarian. He told me that he had no doubt we should be good friends, that I had better go to the dock-yard, and inquire for the landing-place, and for the Eos' cutter, which was waiting there for stores. That I was to make myself known to the officer of the boat, who would give me two or three hands to convey my luggage down to it, and that I had better ship myself as soon as I could. He told me, also, that he would probably be on board before me, but, at all events, if he were not, that I was to

give to the commanding officer the letter, with which he had furnished me on the night before.

He left me with a more favourable impression on my mind than I had before entertained. I paid my bill, and found my way to Chatham Dock-yard. I was struck with the magnitude of the works, at the order, cleanliness, and regularity that every where appeared, and at the gigantic structures of the vessels on the stocks.

I had just gained the landing-place, to which I had been directed by a gentleman, who wore some order of merit upon his ancles, and who kindly offered me a box of dominoes for sale, when I saw a twelve-oared barge pull in among the other boats that were waiting there. The stern sheets were full of officers, distinguishable among whom was one with a red round face, sharp twinkling eyes, and an honest corpulency of body truly comfortable. He wore his laced cocked hat, with the rosetted corners, resting each on one of his heavily epauletted shoulders. His face looked so fierce and rubescent under his vast hat, that he put me in mind of a large

coal, the lower half of which was in a state of combustion. He landed with the other officers, and I then perceived that he was gouty and lame, and walked with a stick, that had affixed to it a transverse ivory head, something like a diminutive ram's horn. Amidst this group of officers, I observed my coffee-room friend, the major-general of the horse marines, who seemed excessively shy, and at that moment absorbed in geological studies, for he could not take his eyes from off the earth. However, pushing hastily by the port-admiral, for such was the ancient podagre, "Ah! major-general," said I to the abashed master's mate, "I am very glad to meet with you. Have you been to the bank this morning to cash your fifty pound-bill?"

"Don't know ye," said my friend, giving me more than the cut direct, for, if he could have used his eyes as a sword, I should have had the cut decisive.

"Not know me! well—but you are only joking, General Cheeks!"

The surrounding officers began to be very

much amused, and the port-admiral became extremely eager in his attention.

"Tell ye, don't know ye, younker," said my gentleman, folding his arms, and attempting to look magnificent and strange.

"Well, this is cool. So, sir, you mean to deny that you drank two bottles of my port wine yesterday evening, and that you did not give me your I O U for the twenty shillings you borrowed of me? I'll trouble you, if you please, for the money," for I was getting angry; "as I am quite a stranger to the head swab-washer, and should not like to trouble the gentleman either for cash or slops, without a formal introduction."

At this juncture, the fiery face of the port-admiral became more fiery, his fierce small eye more flashing, and his ivory-handled stick was lifted up tremblingly, not with fear, but rage. "Pray, sir," said he to me, "who is he?" pointing to my friend; "and who are you?"

"This gentleman, sir, I take to be, either a swindler or Josiah Cheeks, Major-General of

the Horse Marines, of his Majesty's ship, the Merry Dun of Dover," handing to the admiral the acknowledgment; "and I am, sir, Ralph Rattlin, just come down to join his Majesty's ship the Eos."

"I'll answer for the truth of the latter part of this young gentleman's assertion," said Captain Reud, now coming forward with Lieutenant Farmer.

"Is this your writing, sir?" said the admiral, to the discomfited master's mate, in a voice worse than thunder; for it was almost as loud, and infinitely more disagreeable. "I see by your d——d skulking look, that you have been making a scoundrel of yourself, and a fool of this poor innocent boy."

"I hope, sir, you do not think me a fool for believing an English officer incapable of a lie?"

"Well said, boy, well said—I see—this scamp has turned out to be both the scoundrel and the fool."

"I only meant it for a joke, sir," said the *soi-disant* Mr. Cheeks, taking off his hat, and holding it humbly in his hand.

"Take up your note directly, or I shall expel you the service for forgery."

The delinquent fumbled for some time in his pocket, and at length could produce only three-pence farthing, a tobacco-stopper, and an unpaid tavern bill. He was forced to confess he had not the money about him.

"Your fifty pound bill," said I. "The bank must be open."

The major-general looked at me.

It was a good thing for the giver of I O U's, that the mirth the whole transaction created, did not permit the old admiral to be so severe with his "whys," as he would have been. He, however, told the culprit's captain, whom he had just brought on shore in the barge, to give me the twenty shillings, and to charge it against him, and then to give him an airing at the mast-head till sunset; telling him, at the same time, he might feel himself very happy at not being disgraced and turned before the mast.

I was departing, very well satisfied with this summary method of administering justice, when I found that I was not altogether to escape, for

the old gentleman commenced opening a broadside upon me, for not wearing the Admiralty uniform. Lieutenant Farmer, however, came very kindly to my rescue, and offered the admiral a sufficient explanation.

I was then directed to the Eos' boat, the coxswain and a couple of men went with me for my luggage, and, in less than half an hour, I was being rowed down the Medway towards the ship. As we passed by what I looked upon as an immense and terrifically lofty seventy-four, I looked up, and descried Major-General Cheeks slowly climbing up the newly-tarred main topmast rigging, "like a snail unwillingly," to the topmast cross-trees. It was a bitterly cold day, at the end of November, and there is no doubt but that his reflections were as bitter as the weather. Practical jokes have sometimes very bad practical consequences.

CHAPTER II.

Ralph is shipped, hulked and overcome—A dark hall and an ebony servitor—A tailor's politeness, and a master's mate, who sighs to be mated, yet does not see that he is outmatched.

I FOUND the Eos all rigged and strong in the breeze, with the not very agreeable aroma of dock-yard paint. The ship's company was not, however, on board of her. They were hulked on board of the Pegasus. A very brief introduction to the officers of the watch, and I was shown down, with my sea-chest, my shore-going trunk, and quadrant, cocked hat, &c. to the midshipmen's berth in the hulk. One of the after-guard performed for me the office of gen-

tleman usher. It was a gloomy, foggy, chilly day, and the damp of the atmosphere was mingled with the reeking, dank, animal effluvia that came up, thick and almost tangible, from the filthy receptacle of crowded hundreds.

As I descended into darkness, and nearly felt overpowered by the compound of villanous smells, I was something more than sick at heart. My pioneer, at length, lifted up the corner of a piece of dirty canvas, that screened off a space of about six feet square from the rest of the ship's company. This I was given to understand was the *young gentlemen's* quarters, their dining-room and their drawing-room combined. Even I, who had not yet attained my full growth, could not stand erect in this saloon of elegance. I am stating nothing but literal facts. On an oaken table, still more greasy than the greasy decks over which I had slipped in my passage to this den, stood a flickering, spluttering, intensely yellow candle, of very slender dimensions, inserted in a black quart bottle. Beside it was placed a battered bread-basket, containing some broken biscuit; and a

piece of villanously-scented cheese, distinguished by the name of purser's, lay near it, in company with an old, blood-stained, worn-out tooth-brush, and a shallow pewter wash-hand basin, filled with horridly dirty water. For seats round this table there were no other substitutes than various chests of various dimensions.

Of such sordid penury as I then witnessed I had read, but never supposed I should be compelled to witness, much less to share. Notwithstanding the closeness of this hole it was excessively cold. There was not a soul there to welcome me, the petty officers being all away on dock-yard duty. It might have been ten o'clock when I was first ushered into this region of darkness, of chill and evil odours. I remained with my surtout coat on, sitting on my chest, with my hands clasped before me, stiff with cold, and melancholy almost to tears. How much then I panted for the breeze that blew over the heathy common where I had lately wantoned, leaped and laughed !

As I there sat, I fell into a deep and dream-like reverie. I could not, after a pause, con-

vince myself that all I saw around me was real. The light that the single unsnuffed candle gave, became more dim and smoky. I began to think that my spirit had most surely stepped into the vestibule of the abode of shadows; and I wished to convince myself that my body was far, far away sleeping in a pure atmosphere, and under a friendly roof. Minute after minute dropped its weight heavily, like so many pellets of lead upon my disordered brain. I became confused—perhaps I was nearly upon the point of syncope from the sudden change to bad air. I felt that all I saw about me, if not real, would prove that I was mad; and I feared that I should become so, if the scene turned out to be no illusion. At last I jumped up, as I felt my stupor and my sickness increasing, exclaiming—“This is hell—and there’s the devil!” as I observed a hideous, shining black face peering at me over the top of the screen, grinning in such a manner, with a row of white teeth, that reminded me of so many miniature tombstones stretching right across a dark churchyard.

“No debbel, sar—my name, sar, Lillydew—vat you please vant, sar?—steward to young gentlemen, sar. Will young massa have a lilly white bit soft tommy, sar,—broil him a sodger, sar—bumboat along side, get a fresh herring for relish, sar.”

“Get me a little fresh air—take me up stairs.”

“O Gemminnie! hi! hi! hi!—young gentleman, Massa Johnny Newcome. This way, sar.”

Conducted by this angel of darkness, I regained the deck and daylight, and the nausea soon left my chest, and the pain my head. I then made this reflection, that whatever glory a naval officer may attain, if he went through the ordeal I was about essaying, he richly deserved it. The captain and some of the other officers now came on board. I was introduced to most of them, and the skipper made himself very merry with an account of my recent adventure with the master's mate, who was still at the mast-head, as a convincing proof of the accuracy

of the story, and was plainly distinguishable some half mile higher up the Medway.

I soon entered into conversation with one of the young gentlemen who was destined to be, for so long, my messmate. I told him that the air below would kill me. He acknowledged that it was bad enough to kill a dog, but that a reefer could stand it. He also advised me not to have my uniforms altered by the ship's tailors, as it would be done in a bungling manner; but to get leave to go on shore, and that he would introduce me to a very honest tradesman who would do me justice. I expressed my hopes to him, in a dry manner, that he did not belong to the regiment of horse marines. He understood me, and said, upon his honour, no; that it was all fair and above board; and as a recommendation, which he thought would be irresistible, he added that this tailor had a very pretty daughter, with the very pretty name of Jemima.

As the latter information was very satisfactory evidence as to the skill and honesty of the tradesman, I could not be guilty of such

a *non sequitur* as not to promise to employ him. I then told him to make haste and come on shore with me. I now was made painfully sensible that before I could enjoy my wishes a little ceremony was needful. In fact, that my powers of locomotion were no longer under my own control, excepting for about one hundred and twenty feet, in one direction, and about thirty-five in another. As I was passing over the star-board of the quarter-deck to ask leave to go on shore, the captain accosted me, and did me the honour to request my company to dinner at his table. Finding him in so bland a humour, I preferred my request to live on shore till the ship sailed. He smiled at the enormity of my demand, and asked what induced it. I frankly told him the filth and bad smell of my accommodations; and also my wish not to be seen on board until my uniforms were complete.

“He’s an original,” said the captain to the first lieutenant, “but there is some sense in his request. I suppose *you* have no objection, Mr. Farmer. Young gentleman,” he continued,

turning to me, "you must always ask the first lieutenant, in future, for leave. Mind, don't be later than four o'clock."

My messmate, with all manner of humility, now made his request, which being granted, we went down together to my chest, and making a bundle of all the clothes that required alteration, we placed that and ourselves in a shore boat, and made our way to the tailor's. I was there introduced to the lovely Jemima. She looked like a very pretty doll, modelled with crumbs of white bread; she was so soft, so fair, and so unmeaning. After the order was given, my maker of the outward man hazarded a few inquiries, in a manner so kind and so obliging, that quite made me lose sight of their impertinence. When he found that I had leave to remain on shore, and that my pocket-book was far from being ill-furnished, he expatiated very feelingly upon the exactions of living at inns, offered me a bed for nothing, provided only that I would pay for my breakfast, and appoint him my tailor in ordinary; and declared that he would leave no point unturned, to make me

comfortable and happy. As this conversation took place in the little parlour at the back of the shop, Jemima—Miss Jemima—was present, and, as I seemed to hesitate, the innocent looking dear, slyly came up beside me, and taking my hand pressed it amorously, stealing at me a look with eyes swimming with a strange expression. This by-play decided the business. The agreement was made, the terms being left entirely to Mr. Tapes. Covering my inappropriate dress with my blue surtout, I was about leaving with my messmate, when the young lady said to her father, "Perhaps Mr. Rattlin would like to see his room before he goes out?"

"Not particularly."

"Oh, but you must. You may come in, and I and the servant may be out—this way—you must not come up, Mr. Pridhomme, *your* boots are so abominably dirty. There, isn't it a nice room?—you pretty, pretty, boy," said she, jumping up, and giving me a long kiss, that almost took my breath away. "Don't tell old leather-chops, will you, and I *shall* love you so."

"Who is old leather-chops—your father?"

"Dear me, no never mind him. I mean your messmate, Mr. Pridhomme."

"I'm stepping into life," thought I, as I went down stairs, "and with no measured strides either."

"What do you think of Jemima?" said Mr. Pridhomme, as we walked arm-in-arm towards the ramparts.

"Pretty."

"Pretty—why she's an angel! If there was ever an angel on earth it is Jemima Tapes. But what is mere beauty? Nothing compared to sincerity and innocence—she is all innocence and sincerity."

"I am glad that you believe so."

"Believe so—why look at her! She is all innocence. She won't let her father kiss her."

"Why?"

"She says it is so indelicate."

"How does she know what is, or what is not, indelicate?"

"D--n it, younker, you'd provoke a saint."

She assures me, when she is forced to shake hands with a grown-up man, that it actually gives her a cold shudder all over. I don't think that she ever kissed any body but her mother, and that was years ago."

"Perhaps she does not know how."

"I'm sure she don't. If I had a fortune, I'd marry her to-morrow, only I'm afraid she's too modest."

"Your fear is very commendable. Are the ladies at Chatham so remarkable for modesty?"

"No—and that's what makes Jemima so singular."

I like to make people happy if they are not so, and if they are, even though that happiness may be the creation of a delusion, I like to leave them so. I, therefore, encouraged Mr. Pridhomme to pour all his raptures into, what he thought, an approving ear, and Jemima was the theme, until he left me at the door of the hotel at which I was to dine with Captain Reud. Whatever the reader may think of Jemima, I was, at this period, perfectly inno-

cent myself, though not wholly ignorant. I should have deemed Miss Jemima's osculatory art as the mere effect of high spirits and hoydenly playfulness, had it not been for the hypocrisy that she was displaying towards my messmate. I had translated Gil Blas at school, and I therefore set her down for an intrepid coquette, if not *une franche avanturière*. However, though I pitied my messmate, that was no reason why I should not enjoy my dinner.

That day, I liked my little saffron-coloured captain much better. He played the host very agreeably. He made as many inquiries as he dared, without too much displaying his own ignorance, as to the extent of my acquirements, and, when he found them so far beyond his expectations, he seemed to be struck with a sudden respect for me. The tone of his conversation was more decorous than that of the preceding evening; he gave me a great deal of nautical advice, recommended me to the protection particularly of the first and second lieutenants, who were also his guests, approved

of my plan of sleeping at the tailor's, and dismissed me very early, no doubt with a feeling of pleasure at having removed a restraint, for, as I left the room, I just caught the words—
“ Make a d—d sea lawyer by-and-by.”

CHAPTER III.

Jealousy cooled by a watering—Ralph exhorteth, and right wisely.—The boatswain sees many things in a new light—and, though he causeth crabs to be caught, he bringeth them to a wrong market.

PRIDHOMME had been lying in wait for me, and picked me up as I left the hotel. We went to the theatre, a wretched affair certainly, the absurdities of which I should have much enjoyed, had I not been bored to death by the eternal Jemima. That lady was like Jemima, and that was not. Was the person in the blue silk dress as tall as Jemima; or the other in the white muslin quite as stout? Jemima was all he could talk about, till at

length, I was so horribly Jemimaed that I almost audibly wished Jemima jammed down his throat; but, as every thing must have an end, even when a midshipman talks about Jemima, we, at length, got to the tailor's door, which was opened by the lovely Jemima in *propriâ personâ*. Not a step beyond the step of the door was the lover admitted, whilst the poor wretch was fain to feast on the ecstasies of remembering that he was permitted to grasp the tip of her fore-finger whilst he sighed forth his fond good night.

In a few days the Eos being perfectly equipped, dropped down to Sheerness, and I, for the first time, slept under the roof provided for me by his Britannic Majesty. That is to say, I was confined and shrouded in a longitudinal canvas bag, hung up to the orlop deck by two cleets, one at each end, in a very graceful curve, very useful in forming that elegant bend in the back so much coveted by the exhibitors in Regent Street.

I had taken a rather sentimental leave of Jemima, who had somehow or another per-

suaded me to exchange love tokens with her. That which I gave her was a tolerably handsome writing-desk, which I could not help buying for her, as she had taken a great fancy to it; indeed, she told me it had annoyed her for some months, because it stood so provokingly tempting in the shop-window just over the way; and besides, "She should be so—so happy to write me such pretty letters from it." The last argument was convincing, and the desk was bought; in return for which she presented me with a very old silver pencil-case—its age, indeed, she gave me to understand, ought to be its greatest value in my eyes—she had had it so long; it was given to her by her defunct mother. So I promised to keep it as long as I lived. Really there was no chance of my ever wearing it out by use, for it was certainly quite useless; but love dignifies things so much! After having split it up by shoving a piece of black-led pencil into it, I put it into my waistcoat pocket, saying to the heiress of the Chatham tailor—

"*Rich* gifts prove poor when givers prove unkind."

"Ah, Edward!" said the giver of rich gifts, "*I shall never prove unkind.*" So we parted, and, as I walked down the street, she waved her hand, which would have been really white, had she not scored her forefinger in a most villanous manner by her awkward method of using her needle, when her father was short of hands.

When I afterwards heard of Chatham as being the universal dépôt of "ladies who love wisely and not too well," rogues, and Jews, I could not help thinking of my writing-desk, and adding to the list, Jewesses also.

About a week after, as we were still lying at Sheerness, and I had totally forgotten the innocent-looking Jemima, Mr. Pridhomme was smoking in a lover-like and melancholy fashion, against orders, a short pipe in the midshipmen's berth. As the ashes accumulated, he became at a loss for a tobacco-stopper, and I very good-naturedly handed him over the broken, broad-topped, vulgar-looking pencil-case, the gift of the adorable Jemima. His

apathy, at the sight of this relic of love, dispersed like the smoke of his pipe.

"Where did you get this, younker?" he cried, swelling with passion in the true turkey-cock style.

"It was given me as a keepsake by Miss Jemima," said I very quietly.

"It's a lie—you stole it."

"You old scoundrel!"

"You young villain!"

"Take that!" roared my opponent, and the bread-basket, with its fragmental cargo of biscuits, came full in my face, very considerably putting bread into my mouth for his supposed injury.

"Take that!" said I, seizing the rum bottle.

"No, he sha'n't," said Pigtop, the master's mate, laying hold of the much-prized treasure, "let him take any thing but that."

So I flung the water-jug at his head.

We were just proceeding to handcuffs, when the master-at-arms, hearing the riot, opened the door. We then cooled upon it, and a truce

ensued. Explanations followed the truce, and an apology, on his part, the explanation; for which apology I very gladly gave him the pencil-case, that I had promised to keep as long as I lived, and a heartache at the same time.

The poor fellow had given the faithful Jemima this mutable love-gift three days before it came into my possession, on which occasion they had broken a crooked sixpence together. I moralized upon this, and came to the conclusion, that, whatever a tailor might be, a sailor is no match for a tailor's daughter, born and bred up at Chatham.

Now, I have nothing wherewith to amuse the reader about the mischievous tricks that were played upon me in my entrance into naval life. The clues of my hammock were not reefed. I was not lowered down by the head into a bucket of cold water, nor sent anywhere with a foolish message by a greater fool than myself. The exemptions from these usual persecutions I attribute to my robust and well-grown frame; my disposition so easily evinced

to do battle on the first occasion that offered itself ; and, lastly, my well-stocked purse, and the evident consideration shown to me by the captain and the first lieutenant.

As I write as much for the instruction of my readers, as for their amusement, I wish to impress upon them, if they are themselves, or if they know any that are, going to enter into the navy, the necessity, in the first instance, of showing or recommending a proper spirit. Never let the debutant regard how young or how feeble he may be—he must make head against the first insult—he must avenge the first hoax. No doubt he will be worsted, and get a good beating ; but that one will save him from many hundreds hereafter, and, perhaps, the necessity of fighting a mortal duel. Your certain defeat will be forgotten in the admiration of the spirit that provoked the contest. And remember, that the person who hoaxes you is always in the wrong, and it depends only upon yourself to heap that ridicule upon him, that was intended for your own head ; to say nothing of the odium that

must attach to him for the cruelty, the cowardice, and the meanness, of fighting with a lad weaker than himself. This I will enforce by a plain fact that happened to myself. A tall, consequential, thirty-years-old master's mate, threatened to beat me, after the manner that oldsters are accustomed to beat youngsters. I told him, that if he struck me, I would strike again as long as I had strength to stand, or power to lift my hand. He laughed and struck me. I retaliated: it is true that I got a sound thrashing; but it was my first and last, and my tyrant got both his eyes well blackened, his cheek swollen—and was altogether so much defaced, that he was forced to hide himself in the sick-list for a fortnight. The story could not be told well for him, but it told for me gloriously; indeed, he felt so much annoyed by the whole affair, that he went and asked leave to go and mess with the gunner, fairly stating to the captain that he could not run the risk of keeping order—for he was our caterer—if he had to fight a battle every time he had to enforce it.

But I cannot too much caution youngsters against having recourse, in their self-defence, to deadly weapons. I am sorry to say, it was too common when I was in the navy. It is un-English and assassin-like. It rarely keeps off the tyrant; the knife, the dirk, or whatever else be the instrument, is almost invariably forced from the young bravo's hand, and the thrashing that he afterwards gets is pitiless, and the would-be stabber finds no voice lifted in his favour. He also gains the stigma of cowardice, and the bad reputation of being malignant and revengeful. Indeed, so utterly futile is the drawing of murderous instruments in little affrays of this sort, that, though I have known them displayed hundreds of times, yet I never knew a single wound to have been inflicted—though many a heavy beating has followed the atrocious display. By all means, let my young friends avoid it. Now this preaching is finished, I will on with my adventures.

On the day before we sailed from Sheerness, the captain had an order conveyed to the first

lieutenant to send me away on duty immediately, for two or three hours. I was bundled into the pinnace with old canvas, old ropes, and old blocks, condemned stores to the dockyard, and, as I approached the landing-place appropriated for the use of admirals *in posse*, I saw embark from the stairs, exclusively set apart for admirals and post captains *in esse*, my captain and the port-admiral in the admiral's barge, and, seated between these two awful personages, there sat a civilian, smiling in all the rotundity and fat of a very pleasant countenance, and very plain clothes, and forming a striking contrast to the grim complacency, and the iron-bound civility, of the two men in uniform.

The boat's crew were so much struck with this apparent anomaly, for to them, any thing in the civilian's garb to come near an officer, and that officer a naval one, was hardly less than portentous, and argued the said civilian to be something belonging to the *genus homo* extraordinary—and the fat specimen in the boat with the port-admiral, they thought, was one

of the Lords of the Admiralty, or even Mr. Croker himself—the notion of whose dimly-understood attributes was, with them, of a truly magnificent nature. Whoever this person was, he was carefully assisted up the side of our ship, and remained on board for about an hour, whilst we were burning with curiosity and eagerness to be on board to satisfy it, and forced to do our best to allay this tantalizing passion, by hauling along tallied bights of rope, and rousing old hawsers out, and new hawsers into the boat—a more pleasant employment may be easily imagined for a raw, cold, misty day in winter.

I regarded all these operations very sapiently, knowing as yet nothing of the uses, or even of the names, of the different stores that I was delivering and receiving. The boatswain was with me of course: but notwithstanding that I had positive orders not to let the men stray away from the duty they were performing—as this official told me, after we had done almost every thing that we had come on shore to perform, that he must borrow two of the men to

go up with him to the storekeeper's private house, to look out for some strong fine white line with which to bouse up the best bower anchor to the spanker-boom-end, when the ship should happen to be too much down by the stern, I could not refuse to disobey my orders upon a contingency so urgent. And there he left me, for about two hours, shivering in the boat; and, at length, he and the men came down, with very little white line in exchange for his not very white lie; and truly, they had been bousing up something; for Mr. Lushby, the respectable boatswain, told me, with great condescension, that he was a real officer, whilst I was nothing but a living walking-stick, for the captain to swear at when he was in a bad humour; and that he had no doubt but that I should get mast-headed when I got on board, for allowing those two men, who were catching crabs, to get so drunk.

Similar tricks to this, every young gentleman entering the service must expect—tricks that partake as much of the nature of malice as of fun. Now, in the few days that I had been in

the service, I very well understood that the care of the men, as respected their behaviour and sobriety, devolved on me, the delivering of old, and the drawing of new stores, on the boatswain; yet, for the conduct of those men that he took from under my eye, I felt that, in justice, he was answerable. I therefore made no reply to the vauntings and railings of Mr. Lushby, but had determined how to act. The boat came alongside. There was nobody on board but the officer of the watch, and Mr. Lushby tumbled up the side and down the waist in double-quick time, sending the chief boatswain's mate and the yeoman of the stores to act as his deputy. He certainly did his duty in that respect, as two sober deputies are worth more than is a drunken principal.

However, I walked into the gun-room to report myself and boat to the first lieutenant. The officers were at their wine. I was flattered and surprised at the frank politeness of my reception, and the welcome looks that I received from all. I was invited to sit, and a glass placed for me. When I found myself tolerably

comfortable, and had answered some questions put to me by Mr. Farmer, our first lieutenant, the drift of which I did not then comprehend, and putting a little wilful simplicity in my manner, I asked with a great deal of apparent innocence, if all the sailors caught crabs when they were drunk.

"Catch crabs, Mr. Rattlin!" said Mr. Farmer, smiling. "Not always; but they are sure to catch something worse—the cat."

"With white line—how strange!" said I, purposely misunderstanding the gallant officer. "Now I know why Mr. Lushby took up the two men—and why all three came down in a state to catch crabs. I thought that white line had something to do with it."

"Yes, Mr. Rattlin, white line has." Mr. Farmer then motioned me to stay where I was, took up his hat, and went on deck. I need not tell my naval readers that the boatswain was sent for, and the two men placed aft. It was certainly a very cruel proceeding towards the purveyor of white line, who had

just turned his cabin into a snugger, and had taken another round turn, with a belay over all, in the shape of two more glasses of half-and-half. When he found himself on the quarter-deck, though the shades of evening were stealing over the waters, (I like a poetical phrase now and then,) he saw more than in broad daylight—that is to say, he saw many first lieutenants, who seemed, with many wrathful countenances, with many loud words, to order many men to see him down many ladders, safely to his cabin.

The next morning this “real officer” found himself in a very uncomfortable plight; for, with an aching head, he was but too happy to escape with a most stinging reprimand: and he had the consolation then to learn, that, had he not endeavoured to play upon the *simplicity* of Mr. Rattlin, he would most surely have escaped the fright and the exposure.

The simplicity!

Now, I have mentioned this trifling incident, merely to show how easy it is for a youth just

entered, by a little manœuvring, to make it a very dangerous thing to play tricks upon him, avoiding on the one hand, the odium of tale-bearer, and, on the other, that *ultima ratio*, of kings as well as midshipmen, war, in the repelling of insult.

CHAPTER IV.

Another mystery—all overjoyed because the Eos is under weigh; she works well—through the water—her officers through their wine—Ralph refraineth, and self glorifieth—a long shore man makes a short stay on board—because he won't go on the wrong tack.

BUT I must now explain why I had become so suddenly a favourite in the ward-room. The very stout gentleman, who came off with the admiral and captain, undertook the aquatic excursion on my account. He made every inquiry as to my equipment, my messmates, and my chance of comfort. Yet I, the person most concerned, was sent out of the way, lest by accident I should meet with him. I never

knew who he was, nor do I think the captain did. My shipmates had their conjectures, and I had mine. They took him to be what is usually called, not a person, but a personage. I believe that he was nothing more than a personage's fat steward, or some other menial obesity—for it was very plain that he was ashamed to look me in the face! and I understand he gave himself many second-hand airs. If now living, I hope this may meet his eye.

And now we are off in earnest. The Nore-light is passed; the pilot is on the hammock nettings. The breeze takes the sails, the noble frigate bends to it, as a gallant cavalier gently stoops to receive the kiss of beauty—the blocks rattle as the ropes fly through them—the sails court the wind to their embrace, now on one side, now on the other. I stand on the quarter-deck, in silent admiration at the astonishing effects of this wonderful seeming confusion. I am pushed here, and ordered there—I now jump to avoid the eddy of the uncurling ropes as they fly upwards, but my activity is vain, a brace now drags across my shins, and now

the bight of a lee-spanker-brail salutes me, not lovingly, across the face. The captain and officers are viewing the gallant vessel with intense anxiety, and scrutinizing every evolution that she is making. How does she answer her helm? Beautifully. What lee-way does she make? Scarce perceptible. The log is hove repeatedly—seven, seven and a half, close hauled. Stand by, the captain is going to work her himself. She advances head to the wind bravely, like a British soldier to the breach—she is about! she has stayed within her own length—she has not lost her way! “Noble! excellent!” is the scarcely suppressed cry; and then arose in the minds of that gallant band of officers visions of an enemy worthy to cope with; of the successful manœuvre, the repeated broadsides, the struggle and the victory; their lives, their honour, and the fame of their country they now willingly repose upon her—she is at once their home, their field of battle, and their arena of glory. See how well she behaves against that head sea! There is not a man in that noble fabric who has not adopted

her—who has not a love for her—they refer all their feelings to her, they rest all their hopes upon her. The Venetian Doge may wed the sea in his gilded gondola, ermined nobles may stand near, and jewelled beauty around him—religion too may lend her overpowering solemnities;—but all this display could never equal the enthusiasm of that morning, when above three hundred true hearts wedded themselves to that beauty of the sea, the Eos, as she worked round the North Foreland into the Downs.

The frigate behaved so admirably in all her evolutions, that, when we dropped anchor in the roadstead, the captain, to certify his admiration and pleasure, invited all the ward-room officers to dine with him, as well as three or four midshipmen, myself among the rest.

It was an animated scene, that dinner party. The war was then raging. Several French frigates of our own size and class, and many much larger, were wandering on the seas. The republican spirit was blazing forth in their crews—and ardently we longed to get among them. As yet, no one knew our destination.

We had every stimulant to honourable excitement, and mystery threw over the whole that absorbing charm, that impels us to love and to woo the unknown.

But this meeting, at first so rational, and then so convivial, at length permitted its conviviality to destroy its rationality. Men who spoke and thought like heroes one hour, the next spoke what they did not think, and made me think what I did not speak. No one got drunk except the purser, who is always a privileged person ; yet they were not the same men as when they began their carouse, nor I the same boy when they had finished it. On that evening I made a resolution never to touch ardent spirits, and, whilst I was in the navy, that resolution I adhered to. It is a fact—I am known to too many, to make, on this subject, a solemn assertion falsely. I did not lay the same restriction on wine—yet, even that I always avoided, when I could do so without the appearance of affectation. My reason, such as it was, never in the slightest degree tottered on

her throne, either with a weakness or a strength not her own. The wine-cup never gladdened or sorrowed me. Even when the tepid, fœtid, and animalized water, was served out to us in quantities so minute, that our throats could count it by drops, I never sought to qualify its nauseous taste, or increase its quantity, by the addition of spirits, when spirits were more plentiful than the much-courted water. This trait proves, if it proves nothing else, that I had a good deal of that inflexibility of character, which we call in others obstinacy, when we don't like it, firmness when we do—in ourselves, always, decision.

And all my messmates,—where are they? I shall not quote the trite phrase and say, “Echo answers, ‘where,’ ” which by-the-by, must have been an Irish sort of echo; but my echo shall, as echoes usually do, repeat the last two syllables, and by a question, answer, “Are they?” It is a melancholy question—and I must answer, “Alas! I know not.” Indeed, after the lapse of five-and-twenty years, we can

put the question to ourselves only with heaviness upon our hearts. Yet some there are, but how many more that are not !

Tempus edax rerum. I deny the assertion. The old mumblar is continually defrauded. How few are there of those gallant fellows who will fall ripe into his gumless jaws ! Food for Time ! Alas ! they have been food for almost everything else. "Food for powder, food for powder," according to honest Jack, as many of them have been ! some have been food for another Jack, whose prefix is yellow. More than one have been food for sharks. Yes, Time has been defrauded of them, and they of time. How many have been buried in the sea !

When at the last trumpet they shall arise from the vast and blue depths, and they shake from them the salt wave, may it wash away with it one half of their sins—and in the beneficence of the Creator they may fearlessly trust for the remission of the other ; for who among them, through a wild life, has not suffered in the performance of a hard, and died in the ex-

ecution of a sacred, duty? For this numberless, this unuttered dead, there have been but few tears, and there is no trophy. No trophy! yes, there is one, the best, the most imperishable. The past and the present glory of that country, for which they have died. This can be never taken from them. Even should England bend to the general law that destroys men and ruins empires, or fall to pieces by internal faction, still the glory of the past is theirs irrevocably. May England ever foster and honour the race, and while she does, though her prosperity may fluctuate, independence and superiority will never leave her ship-defended shores.

I give the incident that I am about to relate, to show in what way, five-and-twenty years ago, a man-of-war was made the alternative of a jail; and to prove, generally speaking, of what little use this kind of recruiting was to the service; and, as it made a great impression on me at the time, though a little episodic, I shall not hesitate to place it before my readers.

After remaining at anchor in the Downs during the night, we sailed next morning down the channel without stopping at Spithead, our ulti-

mate destination being still a profound secret. As we proceeded, when we were off a part of the coast, the name of which I do not remember, about noonday it fell calm, and the tide being against us, we neared the shore a little, and came to an anchor. We had not remained long in our berth before we descried a shore boat pulling off to us, which shortly came alongside, with a very singular cargo of animals, belonging to the genus *homo*. In the stern sheets sate a magistrate's clerk, swelling with importance. On the after thwart, and facing the Jack in office, were placed two constables, built upon the regular Devonshire, chaw-bacon model, holding upright between their legs each an immense staff, headed by the gilded initials of our sovereign lord the King.

Seated between these imposing pillars of the state, sate in tribulation dire, a tall, awkward young man, in an elaborately-worked white smockfrock, stained with blood in front and upon the shoulders. He was the personification of rural distress. He blubbered *à pleine voix*, and lifted up and lowered his hand-cuffed wrists

with a seesaw motion really quite pathological. Though the wind had fallen, yet the tide was running strongly, and there was a good deal of sea, quite enough to make the motion in the boat very unpleasant. As they held on alongside by the rope, the parties in the stern sheets began bobbing at each other, the staves lost and resumed, and then lost again, their perpendicular—so much indeed, as to threaten the head of the clerk, whose countenance “began to pale its effectual fire.” The captain and many of the officers looking over the gangway, the following dialogue ensued, commenced by the officer of the watch. “Shore-boat, ho-hoy!”

“In the name of the king,” replied the clerk, between many minacious hiccoughs, and producing a piece of paper, “I have brought you a *volunteer*, to serve in his majesty’s fleet;” pointing to the blubberer in the smockfrock.

“Well,” said the captain, “knock off his irons, and hand him up.”

“Dare not, sir—as much as my life is worth. The most ferocious poacher in the country. Has nearly beaten in the scull of the squire’s head gamekeeper.”

“Just the sort of man we want,” said the captain. “But you see he can’t get up the side with his hands fast; and I presume you cannot be in much danger from the volunteer, whilst you have two such staves held by two such constables.”

“Yes,” said the now seriously affected clerk; “I do not think that I incur much danger from the malefactor, since I am under the protection of the guns of the frigate.” So, somewhat re-assured by this reflection, the brigand of the preserves was unmanacled, and the whole party, clerk, constables, and prisoner, came up the side, and made their appearance on the break of the quarter-deck.

But this was not effected without much difficulty, and some loss, a loss that one of the parties must have bewailed to his dying day, if it did not actually hasten that awful period. One of the constables in ascending the side, let fall his staff, his much-loved staff, dear to him by many a fond recollection of riot repressed, and evil doer apprehended, and away it went, floating with the tide, far, far astern. His unmiti-

gated horror at this event was comic in the extreme, and the keeper of the king's peace could not have evinced more unsophisticated sorrow than did the late keeper of his conscience at the loss of the seals, the more especially as the magistrate's clerk refused to permit the boat to go in pursuit of it, not wishing the only connecting link between him and the shore to be so far removed from his control.

CHAPTER V.

The volunteer and his fate, showing how a great rogue, notwithstanding that he may appear to be born to be hung, will sometimes happen to drown.

THE group on the quarter-deck was singular and ludicrous. Reuben Gubbins, for such was the name of the offender, was the only son of a small farmer, who, it appeared, had even gone the length of felony, by firing upon and wounding the gamekeeper of the lord of the manor. He was quite six feet high, very awkwardly built, and wore under his frock a long-tailed blue coat, dingy buckskin nether garments, and top boots, with the tops tanned brown by service. His countenance betrayed a mixture of

simplicity, ignorance, and strong animal instinct. He was the least suited being that could be possibly conceived of whom to make a sailor. His limbs had been long stiffened by rustic employments, and he had a dread of the sea, and of a man-of-war, horrifying to his imagination. In this dread it was very evident that his companions largely participated, not excepting the pragmatical clerk. The constable with the staff, and the constable without, ranged themselves on either side of the still sobbing Arcadian. Indeed, the staffless man seemed to be but little less overcome than the prisoner. He felt as if all strength, value, and virtue, had gone out of him; and ever and anon he glared upon the baton of his brother officer with looks felonious and intent on rapine.

The business was soon concluded. Reuben, rather than see himself tried for his life, determined to make trial of the sea, and thus became, perhaps, the most unwilling volunteer upon record.

Poor fellow! his sufferings must have been great! The wild animal of the forest, when

pinning, for the first time, in a cage, or the weary land-bird, blown off, far away upon the restless sea, could not have been more out of their elements than tall and ungainly Reuben Gubbins on the deck of his Majesty's ship Eos. I do not know how it was, for I am sure that I ought to have despised him for his unmanly and incessant weeping, I knew that he had offended the laws of his country, yet, when the great lout went forward disconsolately, and sat himself down, amidst the derision of the seamen, upon a gun-carriage on the forecastle, I could not help going and dispersing the scoffers, and felt annoyingly inclined to take his toil-embrowned hand, sit down beside, and cry with him. However, I did not so far commit myself. But a few hours afterwards I was totally overcome.

Strict orders were given not to allow Gubbins to communicate with any one from the shore. A little before dusk, there was a boat ordered by the sentinels to keep off, that contained, besides the sculler, a respectable looking old man, and a tall, stout, and rather handsome, young woman. Directly they caught

the eye of Reuben, he exclaimed, "Woundikins! if there bean't feyther and our sister Moll." And running aft, and putting his hat between his knees, he thus addressed the officer of the watch, "Please Mr. Officer, zur, there's feyther and our Moll."

"Well!"

"Zur, mayn't I go and have my cry out with 'em, for certain I ha' behaved mortal bad?"

"Against orders."

"But, sure-ly, you'll let him come up to comfort loike his undutiful son."

"No, no, impossible."

"Whoy, lookee there, zur—that's feyther with the white hair, and that's sister crying like mad. Ye can no' ha' the hard heart."

"Silence! and go forward."

I looked over the side, and there I saw the old man standing up reverently, with his hat in one hand, and a bag, apparently full of money, in the other. Undoubtedly, the simple yeoman had supposed that money could either corrupt the captain, or buy off the servitude of his guilty son. It was a fine old countenance,

down the sides of which that silver hair hung so patriarchally and gracefully; and there that poor old man stood, bowing in his wretchedness and his bereavement, with his money extended, to every officer that he could catch a glimpse of, as his hat or head appeared above the hammock nettings or the bulwarks. The grief of his sister was common-place and violent; but there was a depth and a dignity in that of the old man that went to my very heart. I could not help going up to the lieutenant and entreating him to grant the interview.

“It won’t do, Mr. Rattlin, Don’t you know that the fellow was put on board with C. P. before his name? I anticipate what you are going to say, but humanity is a more abstract thing than you are aware of, and orders must be obeyed.”

“But, zur,” said Gubbins, who had again approached, “I can see that feyther has forgien me, and he’s the mon I ha’ most wronged arter all. Besides sistur wull break her heart if she doan’t say ‘Good bye, Reuben’—if feyther has made it up, sure other folk mought be koind.

Oh, ay—but I've been a sad fellow!" And then he began to blubber with fresh violence.

The officer was a little moved—he went to the gangway, hailed the boat, and when she came near enough, he told the old farmer kindly, that his orders to prevent personal communication were strict; that any parcel or letter should be handed up, but that he would do well not to let his reprobate son have any money. During this short conference, Reuben had placed himself within sight of his relatives, and the sacred words of "My father," "My son," were, in spite of all orders, exchanged between them. By this time the tide had turned, the wind had risen, and precisely from the right quarter, so the hands were turned up, "up anchor." The orders for the boat to keep off were now reiterated in a manner more imperative; but it still hung about the ship, and after we were making way, as long as the feeble attempts of the boatman could keep his little craft near us, the poor old man and his daughter, with a constancy of love that deserved a better object, hung upon our wake, he standing up with

his white hair blown about by the wind, to catch a last glimpse of a son whom he was destined to see no more, and who would without doubt, as the scripture beautifully and tenderly expresses it, "bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Long, long after the stolid and sullen son had ceased, apparently, to interest himself about the two that were struggling after us, in their really frail boat, I watched, from the taffrail, the vain and loving pursuit; indeed, until the darkness and the rapidly-increasing distance shrouded it from my view, I did not leave my post of observation, and the last that I could discern of the mourners, still showed me the old man standing up, in the fixed attitude of grief, and the daughter with her face bent down upon her knees. To the last, the boat's head was still towards the ship—a touching emblem of unswerving fatherly love.

I could not away with the old man's look, it was so wretched, so helpless, yet so fond—and was typed to my fancy so strongly by his little boat pursuing with a hopeless constancy

over waves too rough for it, the huge and disregarding ship; so, with my breast full, even to suffocation with mingled emotions, I went down to my berth, and, laying my head upon the table, and covering my face with my hands, I pretended to sleep. The cruel torture of that half hour! I almost thought the poacher, with all his misery, still blessed in having a father's love—'twas then that I felt intensely the agony of the desertion of my own parent—the love that had been denied to me to give to my own father, I lavished upon the white-headed old man. In imagination, I returned with him to his desolate home; I supported his tottering steps over the threshold, no longer musical with an only son. I could fancy myself placing him tenderly and with reverence in his accustomed chair, and speaking the words of comfort to him in a low voice, and looking round for his family bible—and the sister, doubtless she had many sources of consolation; youth was with her—life all before her—she had companions, friends, perhaps a lover; but,—for the poor old man! At that moment, I

would have given up all my anticipations of the splendid career that I fancied I was to run, in order to have gone and have been unto the bereaved sire as a son, and to have found in him a father.

But nobody could make a sailor of Reuben Gubbins, and Reuben had no idea of making a sailor of himself. It was in vain that the boatswain's-mate docked the long tails of his blue coat, (such things were done in the navy at that time,) razèed his top-boots into seaman's shoes, and that he had his smock-frock reduced into a seaman's shirt. The soil hung upon him, he slouched over the deck, as if he were walking over the furrows of ploughed land, and looked up into the rigging as if he saw a cock-pheasant at roost upon the rattlins. Moreover, he could talk of nothing else excepting "feyther," and "our Moll," and he really ate his bread (*sub intellige* biscuit) moistened with his tears, (if tears can moisten such flinty preparations,) for he was always whimpering. For the sake of the fit of romance that I had felt for his father, I took some kind notice of

this yokel afloat. I believe, as much as it lay in his nature, he was grateful for it, for to every one else on board he was the constant butt.

Mr. Farmer, our first lieutenant, was a smart and a somewhat exacting officer. He used to rig the smoke-sail some twelve feet high across the mizen mast, and make the young gentleman just caught, and the boys of the ship, lay out upon it, in order that they might practise furling after a safe method. At first, nothing could persuade Reuben to go a single step up the rigging—not even the rope's end of the boatswain's-mate. Now this delicacy was quite at variance with Mr. Farmer's ideas; so, in order to overcome it by the gentlest means in the world, Reuben had the option given him of being flogged, or of laying out on the smoke-sail yard, just to begin with, and to get into the way of it. It was a laughable thing to see this huge clown hanging with us boys upon the thin yard, and hugging it as closely as if he loved it. He had a perfect horror of getting to the end of it. At a distance, when

our smoke-sail yard was *manned*, we looked like a parcel of larks spitted, with one great goose in the midst of us. "Doey get beyond me, zur; doey, Mr. Rattlin," he would say. "Ah! zur, I'd climb with any bragger in this ship for a rook's nest, where I ha' got a safe bough to stand upon; but to dance upon this here seesawing line, and to call it a horse too, ben't christian loike."

But his troubles were soon to cease. He was made a waister, and, at furling sails, stationed on the main yard. I will anticipate a little that we may have done with him. The winter had set in severely, with strong gales, and much frost and snow. We were not yet clear of the chops of the channel, and the weather became so bad, that it was found necessary to lie to under try sails, and close-reefed main-top-sail. About two bells in the first dog watch the first lieutenant decided upon furling the main sail. Up on the main yard Reuben was forced to go; he went to leeward, and the seamen, full of mischief, kept urging him farther and farther away from the bunt. I was

with one of the oldsters in the maintop; the maintop-sail had just been close reefed. I had a full view of the lads on the main yard, and the terror displayed in Reuben's countenance was at once ludicrous and horrible. It was bitterly cold, the rigging was stiffened by frost, and the cutting north-east wind came down upon the men on the lee yardarm out of the belly of the topsail with tremendous force, added to which, the ship, notwithstanding the pressure of the last-mentioned sail, surged violently, for there was a heavy though a short sea. The farmer's son seemed to be gradually petrifying with fear: he held on upon a fold of the sail instinctively, without at all assisting to bundle it up. He had rallied all his energies into his cramped and clutching fingers. As I looked down upon him, I saw that he was doomed. I would have cried out for assistance, but I knew that my cry would have been useless, even if I had been able, through the roar of the winds and the waters, to have made it heard.

But this trying situation could not last long.

The part of the sail on which Reuben had hung, with what might be truly termed his death-clutch, was wanted to be rolled in with the furl, and, by the tenacity of his grasp, he impeded the operation.

"Rouse up, my lads, bodily, to windward," roared the master's-mate, stationed at the bunt of the sail.

"Let go, you lubber," said the sailor next to windward of Reuben, on the yard.

Reuben was now so lost, that he did not reply to the man even by a look. "Now, my lads, now. One, two, three, and a——." Obedient to the call of the officer, with a simultaneous jerk at the sail, the holdfast of the stupefied peasant was plucked from his cracking fingers; he fell back with a loud shriek from the yard, struck midway on the main rigging, and thence bounding far to leeward in the sea, disappeared, and for ever, amid the white froth of the curling wave that lapped him up greedily. He never rose again. Perhaps, in her leeway, the frigate drifted over him—and thus the violated laws of his country were

avenged. I must confess, that I felt a good deal shocked at the little sensation this (to me) tragical event occasioned. But we get used to these things, in this best of all possible worlds; and if the poacher died unwept, unprayed, unknelled for, all that can be said of the matter is—that many a better man has met with a worse fate.

CHAPTER VI.

Symptoms of sickness, not of the sea, but of the land beyond it—Our M.D. wishes to write D. I. O., and prepares accordingly.—Ralph is about to reap his first marine laurels on the rocks of Cove.

I do not get on with this life at all. The vast Atlantic, with its tranquil and tempestuous wonders, the new world, venerable in its natural antiquities, and the Mediterranean, in all the extent of its classic shores, are before me; and I have not yet reached the cove of Cork. Clap on more sail. It is bitterly cold, however, and here we are now safely moored in one of the petals of the "first flower of the sea."

In making this short passage Captain Reud was very affable and communicative. He could

talk of nothing but the beautiful coast of Leghorn, the superb Bay of Naples ; pleasant trips to Rome, visits to Tripoli, and other interesting spots on the African coast ; and, on the voluptuous city of Palermo, with its amiable ladies and incessant festivities, he was quite as eloquent as could reasonably be expected from a smart post-captain of four-and-twenty.

We were all in a fool's paradise. For myself, I was enraptured. I was continually making extracts from Horace, Virgil, and other school-books, that I still carried with me, which referred, in the least, to those places that we were at all likely to see. But visions of this land of promise, of this sea flowing with gentle waves and rich prizes, were soon dispersed before a sad reality, that, without the aid of the biting weather, now made most of the officers and men look blue, as soon as our anchors had nipped the ground of the Green Island. We found ourselves in the middle of a convoy of more than two hundred vessels of all descriptions, that the experienced immediately knew to be West Indiamen.

The sarcastic glee with which Captain Reud rubbed his skinny, yellow hands, when he ordered additional sentries, and a boat to row guard round the ship from sunset to sunrise, weather permitting, to prevent desertion, gave me a strong impression of the malignity of his disposition. Certainly, the officers, from the first lieutenant downwards, looked, when under the influence of the first surprise, about as sage as we may conceive did those seven wise men of Gotham, who put to sea in a bowl. Some of them had even exchanged into the ship, for certain unlawful considerations, because she was so fine a frigate, and the captain possessed so much interest, being a very near and dear relation of the then treasurer of the navy. With this interest they thought, of course, that he would have the selection of his own station. And so he had. They either did not know, or had forgotten, that Captain Reud was a West Indian creole, and that he had large patrimonial estates in Antigua.

“Not loud but deep” were the curses in the gun-room, but both “loud and deep” were

those in the midshipmen's berth, for the denizens thereof were never proverbial for the niceties of their expressions, when the appalling certainty broke on the comminators, of three years' roasting in the West Indies, with accompaniments of misgivings about Yellow Jack, and the palisades, merely because the captain wished to go and see why the niggers did not make quite so much sugar and rum as they used to do. But, after all, we had a sage ship's company, officers included, for there was scarcely a man in the ship, who, after our destination was ascertained, did not say, "Well, I thought as much;" and they derived much consolation from the consciousness of their foresight.

The knowledge of our station had a most decided effect upon two of our officers, the master and surgeon; the former of whom, a weather-beaten, old north-countryman, who had been all his life knocking about the north sea, and our channels at home, immediately gave himself up for lost. He made his will, took a decidedly serious turn, and came into

the midshipmen's berth with a case bottle of rum under one arm, and a Bible under the other, in order to see if he could not establish a sort of periodical prayer-meeting. He was made heartily welcome ; but, as we occupied so much time in properly discussing the preliminaries, we did not even open the principal subject, which he perceiving, came next day with the Bible only ; and then, never was there a set of young gentlemen more assiduous in their duties. Those whose watch it was on deck, though we were safely moored, could not think of being off their posts, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather ; and those who had the middle and first watches, were anxious to turn in, that they might relieve punctually, and in an officer-like manner, when it should be their turn to be on deck. One very devout young gentleman told Mr. Shields, for that was the master's name, that he thought it very impious for any one to read the Bible, excepting either in church or on Sundays, without such reader were a parson.

This second attempt of the good man closed

the subject. Whether his fit of devotion wore off, or his attachment to the bottle increased, I cannot say; but it is certain, that his nose grew daily more red, and we heard nothing more of prayer-meetings, after Mr. Shields had got over the first quizzing upon the matter. I must do him also the justice to state, that, the very evening after his devotional failure, when his piety was, by the marine officer, very illiberally ascribed to his fears, Mr. Shields, over his fourth glass of half-and-half, asserted, with an imprecation that might well have split a deal board, that he was moved to his sanctionious undertaking, solely by his care for the welfare of the puir souls of the benighted and scripture-denying young ne'er-do-wells, and swearing blackguards; meaning, of course, my very respectable self, and my much-to-be-respected messmates. Now, I would not have it thought that there was any thing approaching to pusillanimity in the conduct and deportment of this hard-a-weather sailor, for a braver man never carried a ship into action; but he had a great predilection for Northumbrian

worms ; and, as he believed all his ancestors had been, from time immemorial, decorously devoured by them, he thought it something indecent, shocking, and profane, that he, the last of the Shields, should be macerated by the unholy-looking mandibles of land-crabs, a species of animal that he could nowhere find mentioned in the Bible. Moreover, he knew that all flesh was grass ; and, as he had been credibly informed, that persons dying in the West Indies were always buried in the sands, he thought it, in some way, flying in the face of Providence ; for he asserted that, however fructifying his body might be, there, at least, it would never again turn to grass. He had no great objection to dying, in a general way, for he had a vile shrew of a wife, who, it was plain, had no intention of dying herself ; but he objected strongly, for the above-mentioned reasons, to dying at Port Royal, and at having his obsequies performed within the palisades.

But there was another person, who viewed the West India station not religiously like our

master, or joyously like our captain, or grumblingly like the marine officer, or spitefully like all the lieutenants, or detestably like my messmates, or indifferently like myself. He took the matter into consideration discreetly, and so, in order to enjoy a long life, he incontinently fell sick unto death. Of course he knew, more than any man on board, how ill he was, for he was the doctor himself. He was not merely a naval surgeon, but a regular M. D., and with an English diploma. He could appreciate, as much as any man, the value of life, and hard indeed did he struggle to preserve the means of prolonging it. He was a short, round, and very corpulent person, with a monstrously large and pleasantly-looking face, with a very high colour—a colour, not the flush of intemperance, but the glow of genuine health. This vast physiognomy was dug all over with holes; not merely pock-marks, but pock-pits. Indeed, his countenance put you in mind of a vast tract of gravelly soil on a sunny day, dug over with holes; it was so red, so cavernous, and withal, so bright. I need not mention that

he was a *bon vivant*, a most joyous, yet a most discreet one. Even on board of ship he contrived to make his breakfasts dinners, his dinners feasts, and his suppers, though light, delicacies. He was no mean proficient in the culinary art, and as refined a gourmand as the dear departed Dr. Kitchener—a man, to whose honour I have a great mind to devote an episode, and would do so, were not my poor shipmate, Dr. Thompson, just now waiting for me to relieve him from his illness.

No sooner did our clever medical attendant understand his destination, than he sent away his plate untouched at dinner—refused his wine—talked movingly of broken constitutions, a predisposition to anasarca, and the deceitful and dangerous appearances of florid health. At supper, he pronounced himself a lost man, held out his brawny fist to whomsoever would choose to feel his pulse, and sent for the first assistant surgeon to make him up a tremendous quantity of prescriptions, to be exhibited the ensuing night—to whatever fish might be so unfortunate as to be swimming alongside.

After this display, and whilst he was languidly sipping a tumbler of barley-water, the Hon. Mr. B., our junior luff, was loud in his complaints of being, what he called, fairly entrapped, when Dr. Thompson, in a feeble and tremulous voice, read him a long lecture on patriotism, obedience to the dictates of duty, and self-devotion, finishing thus:—"By heaven, show me the man that flinches from his duty, and I'll show you, whatever may be his outward bearing, a craven at heart! I am very ill—I feel that I am fast sinking into a premature grave—but what of that? I should be but too happy if I could make my dying struggles subservient to my country. My body, Mr. Farmer—Mr. Wade, this poor temple of mine contains an insidious enemy—a strange, a dreadful, and a wasting disease. It is necessary for the sake of medical science, for my country's good, for the health of the world at large, that my death, which will speedily happen, should take place in England, in order that after dissolution I may be dissected by the first operators, viewed by the most intelligent of the

faculty, and thus another light be placed on the present dark paths of curative knowledge. My symptoms are momentarily growing worse. Gentlemen, messmates, friends, I must leave you for the night, and too soon, I fear, for ever; but never shirk your duty. If they be the last words that I shall utter to you—humble though I be—I may venture to hold myself up to you as a pattern of self-devotion. God bless you all—good night—and never shirk your duty.”

Of course, the company to whom this was addressed, were infinitely amused at this display, and the third lieutenant observed mournfully, “Now there’s no chance for me. The fat rogue is going to invalide himself. I suppose that I need not trouble my liver to be diseased just now, for the hypocrite won’t allow another man in the ship to be sick but himself.”

The gentleman guessed rightly. All the next day Dr. Thompson kept his cot, and was duly reported to the captain as dangerously ill.

Now, our first lieutenant was a noble, frank, yet sensible and shrewd fellow, and the captain was as mischief-loving, wicked little devil, as ever grinned over a spiteful frolic. They held a consultation upon the case, and soon came to a more decided opinion on it, than the gentlemen of the faculty generally do on such occasions. Now, whilst the doctor is plotting to prove himself desperately and almost hopelessly sick, and the captain and Mr. Farmer, to make him suddenly well, in spite of himself, I shall take the opportunity of displaying my own heroic deeds, when placed in the first independent command ever conferred upon me. Jason, with his Argonauts, went to bear away the Golden Fleece; Columbus, and his heroes, to give a world to the sovereign of Spain; and I, with two little boys, pushed out of the cove, perilously to procure some sand in the dingy. Nothing elevates a biography like appropriate comparisons. But I doubt whether either Jason or Columbus felt a more enthusiastic glow pervade their frames when each saw him-

self fairly under sail for unknown seas, than did I, when I seized the tiller of the dingy, which was, by-the-bye, a stick not at all bigger than that which I had, not many months before, used in trundling my hoop.

CHAPTER VII.

A little boat with a large cargo—Worse than the drift of a dull argument, Ralph finds drifting across the Atlantic—He meets with land at length, and a real Irish welcome—Potatoes and poteen, and much more fur than furniture.

BUT this little boat, as it so often bore Cæsar and his fortunes, and our surgeon and his fat, deserves and shall have a more than passing notice. It was perhaps one of the smallest craft that ever braved the seas. Such a floating miniature you may have conceived Gulliver to be placed in, when he was sighed across the tub of water by his Brobdignag princess. Wofully and timorously, many's the time and

oft, did the obese doctor eye it from the gangway ; when, asking for a boat, the first lieutenant, smiling benignantlly, would reply, "Doctor, take the dingy." It was all that the dingy could do, to take the doctor. Then the care with which he gently deposited himself, precisely in the centre of the very small stern sheets, would have afforded a fine moral lesson to those who pretend to watch over the safety of states. As the little craft, laden with this immense pharmacopœian depositary, hobbled over the seas, it seemed almost to progress upright, and "walked the waters like a thing of life;" for it had a shrewd likeness to a young monkey learning to go upright, with its two long arms steadying its uncertain gait, the oars making all this resemblance. Indeed, it was so diminutive, that it often kept the two boys that belonged to it from the fresh as well as the salt water, they clapping it over their heads, by way of an umbrella, whenever the clouds poured down a libation too liberal. To those curious in philology, I convey the information, that in the word *dingy*, the *g* was pro-

nounced hard. This explanation is also necessary to do justice to the pigmy floater, as it was always painted in the gayest colours possible. It was quite a pet of the first lieutenant's. Indeed, he loved it so much, that he took care never to oppress it with his own weight.

The Cove of Cork is a fine harbour, entered by the means of a somewhat narrow strait. I have forgotten the names of all the headlands and points, and I am so sick of Irish affairs, that I do not choose to go into the next room and get the map to refer to, for on it there is scarcely a spot that could meet my eye, that would not give rise to disagreeable associations. So I prefer writing from memory, magic memory, that gives me now the picture of five-and-twenty years ago, all green, and fresh, and beautiful.

On entering the Cove, there were, on the left hand of the strait, fortifications and military barracks. Beyond these, to the seaward, and just on the elbow of the land, that formed the entrance to the strait, our first lieutenant discovered from the taffrail of the frigate, a

white patch of sand. The rest of the shore was rocky, iron-bound, and unapproachable from the sea. Mr. Farmer took me aft, pointed out to me the just visible spot, told me to fetch off as much sand as the dingy could bear, and return with all expedition. Proud of the commission, about four P. M., the tide running out furiously, I ordered the *dingees* to be piped away, and walking down the side with due dignity, with a bucket and a couple of spades, we pushed off, and soon reached the spot. The boat was loaded, but in the mean time the tide had left, and, light and small, as she was, three little boys could not launch her till almost all the sand had been returned to its native soil. All this occupied much time. It was nearly dusk when we got her afloat, and the wind had got up strongly from off the land. It came on to rain, and we had not got far from the shore, before the tide swept us clean out into the Atlantic. We were shortly in a situation sufficiently perilous for the heroic. There we were, three lads, whose united years would not have made up those of a middle-aged man,

in a very little boat, in a very high sea, with a strong gale that would have been very favourable for us, if we had wished to steer for New York. As we could not make head at all against the combined strength of an adverse wind, tide, and sea, we left off pulling, and threw all the sand out of the boat. We knew the tide would turn, we hoped that the sea might go down, and trusted that the wind would change. Before it was quite dark, we had lost sight of the land, and I began to feel a little uncomfortable, as my boat's crew from stem to stern, (no great distance,) assured me that we should certainly be swamped. In this miserable position of our affairs, and when we should have found ourselves very cold, if we had not been so hungry, and very hungry if we had not been so cold, an Hibernian mercantile vessel passed us, laden with timber and fruit, viz. potatoes and birch-brooms, and they very kindly and opportunely threw us a tow-rope. This drogher, that was a large, half-decked, cutter-rigged vessel, made great way through the water, and, as we were dragged

after her, we were nearly drowned by the sea splashing over us, and, had it not been for our sand-buckets, it is probable that we should have filled. In the state of the sea, to get on board the drogher from the dingy, was an operation too dangerous to be attempted.

But, before this assistance came, what were my feelings? No situation could be more disconsolate, and, apparently, more hopeless. Does not the reader suppose that there was a continual rushing through my bosom of agonized feelings? Can he not understand that visions of my lately-forsaken green play-ground came over the black and massive waves, and seemed to settle on them, as in mockery? But were I to dilate upon these horrors, would he not weary of them? Had I been the son of a king thus situated, or even the acknowledged offspring of a duke, there might have been sympathy. But the newly emancipated school-boy, drowned with two lads just drafted from the Marine Society, in a small boat off the Irish coast, may be thought a melancholy occurrence, but involving nothing of particular

interest. I see my error: if I wish to create an effect, I must first prove that I am the son of a duke or a king. I have begun at the wrong end.

However, let the reader sneer as he will at my predicament, there was something sublime in the scene around me. The smallness of the craft magnified the greatness of the waves. I literally enjoyed the interesting situation which naval writers, who are not nautical, of "seas running mountains high," so rejoice to describe. One wave on either hand bounded my horizon. They were absolutely mountain waves to me; and when our little walnut-shell got on the top of one, it is no great stretch of metaphor to say, that we appeared ascending to the clouds. We could not look down upon one wave, until we were fairly on the back of another. Now, in a vessel of tolerable size, let the sea rage at its worst, from the ship's decks you always look down upon it, excepting now and then, when some short-lived giant will poke up its overgrown head. But I must remember that I am in tow of the potato craft.

Though she lay well up for the harbour's mouth, she could not fetch it, so she tacked and tacked again, until nearly ten o'clock, at which time, we, in the dingy, were half frozen, and almost wholly drowned. The moon was now up, though partially obscured by flying rack, and in making a land board, the honest Pat, in the command of the sloop, shortened the tow-rope, and hailed us, telling us when we were well abreast of a little sandy bight, to cast off, pull in, and haul up our boat above high-water mark. We took his advice, and, without much difficulty, found ourselves, once more, on terra firma.

I cannot help, in this place, making the reflection, of the singular events that the erratic life of a sailor produces. Here were evidently three lives saved, among which was that of the future paragon of reefers, and neither the saved nor the saviours knew even the names, or saw distinctly the faces of each other. How many good and brave actions we sailors do, and the careless world knows nothing about them. The sailor's life is a series of common-place heroisms.

Well, here we were, landed on the coast of Ireland, but in what part we knew not, and with every prospect of passing the night under the grandest, but, in winter, the most uncomfortable roof in the world. The two lads begged for leave to go up and look for a house, but, as I had made up my mind that, if a loss took place, we should be all lost together, I would not run the risk of *losing* my boat's crew, and *finding* myself—alone. I refused my consent, telling them that it was my duty to stay by my boat, and theirs to stay by me. Now this was tolerably firm, considering the ducking that I had enjoyed, and the hunger, cold, and weariness that I was then enjoying—enjoying? yes, enjoying. Surely I have as much right to enjoy them, if I like, as the ladies and gentlemen of this metropolis have to enjoy bad health.

But this epicene state of enjoyment was not long to last. A fresh-coloured native, with a prodigious breadth of face, only to be surpassed by his prodigious breadth of shoulders, approached, and addressed us in a brogue so

strong, that it would, like the boatswain's grog, have floated a marling-spike, and in a stuttering so thick, that a horn spoon would have stood upright in it. The consequence was, that though fellow subjects, we could not understand each other. So he went, and brought down with him a brawny brother, who spoke "Inglis iligantly any how." Well, the proverbial hospitality of the Irish suffered no injury in the persons of my Irish friends. A pressing invitation to their dwelling and to their hospitality, was urged upon us in terms, and with looks, that I felt were the genuine offspring of kindness and generosity of soul. But I still demurred to leave my boat. When they understood the full force of my objection, my frieze-coated friend, who spoke the "iligant Inglis," explained.

"O, by Jasus, and aint she welcome intirely? Come along, ye little undersized spalpeen, with your officer, won't you?"

And, before I could well understand what they were about, the two "jontlemen" had taken up his majesty's vessel under my com-

mand, had turned it bottom up, with several shakes, to clear it of the water and sand, and with as little difficulty as a farmer's boy would have turned upside down a thrush's cage, in order to cleanse it. After this operation had been performed, they righted it, and one laying hold of the bow, and the other the stern, they swung it between them, as two washerwomen might a basket of dirty clothes. I must confess, that I was a great deal mortified at seeing my command treated thus slightly, which mortification was not a little increased by an overture that they kindly made to me, saying, that if I were at all tired, they would, with all the pleasure in the world, carry me in it. I preferred walking.

Officer, boat's crew, guides, boat and oars, proceeded in this manner for more than half a mile up into the country. At length, by the moonlight, I discovered a row of earthy mounds, that I positively, at first, thought was a parcel of heaps, such as I had seen in England, under which potatoes are buried for the winter.

I was undeceived, by being welcomed to the town of some place, dreadful in "as," and "ghas," and with a name so difficult to utter, that I could not pronounce it when I attempted, and which, if I had ever been so fortunate as to retain, I should, for my own comfort, have made haste to forget.

I hope that the "finest pisintry in the world," are better located now than they were a quarter of a century ago, for they are, or were, a fine peasantry, as far as physical organization can make them, and deserve at least to be housed like human beings; but what I saw, when on that night I entered the mud edifice of my conductors, made me start with astonishment. In the first place, the walls were mud all through, and as rough on the inside as the out. There was actually no furniture in it of any description; and the only implement I saw, was a large globular iron pot, that stood upon spikes, like a carpenter's pitch kettle, which pot, at the moment of my entrance, was full of hot, recently boiled, unskinned, fine mealy praties. Round this there might have been

sitting some twelve or fourteen persons of both sexes, and various ages, none above five-and-twenty. But it must be remembered, that the pot was upon the earth, and the earth was the floor, and the circle was squatted round it. At the fire-place, each on a three-legged stool, sate an elderly man and woman. These stools the fastidious may call furniture if they please; but were any of my readers placed upon one of them, so rough and dirty were they, that he or she must have been very naughty, did not the stool of repentance prove a more pleasant resting-place.

Among the squatted circle there were a bandy-legged drummer, and a blotched-faced fifer, from the adjacent barracks, both in their regimentals. They rose, and capped to my uniform. We were welcomed with shouts of congratulations. My boat was brought in and placed bottom up along one side of the hovel, and immediately the keel was occupied by a legion of poultry, and half a score pigs little and big, were, at the same time, to be seen dubbing their snouts under the gunnel, on voyages

of alimentary discovery. I was immediately pulled down between two really handsome lasses in the circle, and, with something like savage hospitality, had my cheeks stuffed with the burning potatoes.

Never was there a more hilarious meeting. I, and my Tom Thumb of a boat, and my minikin crew, I could well understand, though my hosts spoke in their mother tongue, were the subjects of their incessant and uncontrollable bursts of laughter. But with all this, they were by no means rude, and showed me that sort of respect that servants do to the petted child of their master; that is to say, they were inclined to be very patronizing, and very careful of me, in spite of myself, and to humour me greatly. My two boys, whom I have so often dignified with the imposing title of my boat's crew, though treated with less, or with no respect at all, were welcomed in a manner equally kind.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ralph figureth at a ball, excelleth, and afterwards sleepeth—He returneth on board, and hath both his toils and his sand undervalued, and thus discovereth the gratitude of first lieutenants.

Not yet having sufficiently Hibernized my taste to luxuriate on Raleigh's root, plain, with salt, I begged them to procure me something more placable to an English appetite. I gave money to my hosts, and they procured me eggs and bacon. I might also have had a fowl, but I did not wish to devour guests, to whom on my boat's keel I had given such recent hospitality. They returned me my full change, and, though there was more than enough of what

they cooked for me to satisfy myself and boys, they would not partake of the remains until I assured them, that if they did not I would throw them away. At this intimation they disappeared in a twinkling.

Then came the whiskey—the real dew. I never touched it. I have before stated, that for three years, I abstained from all spirituous liquors. My lads had made no such resolution. The big iron pot was now, like an honest old sailor, that had done his duty, kicked aside in the corner; the drummer and fifer seating themselves on the keel of the inverted dingy, struck up a lilt, and

“Off they went so gaily O.”

More lads and lasses came in, and jigs and reels succeeded each other with such rapidity, that, notwithstanding the copious supplies of whiskey, the drummer's arms failed him, and the fifer had almost blowed himself into an atrophy. Did I dance? To be sure I did, and right merrily too. I had such pleasant, fair-haired, rosy, Hebe-like instructresses, ready to tear each other's eyes out to get me for a part-

ner. Then, they talked Irish so musically, and put the king's English to death so charmingly, that, notwithstanding the heat and smoke of the cabin was upon them, and the whiskey did more than heighten the colour on their lips, they were really enchanting, though stockingless creatures. It has been truly said, that in the social circle, the extremes, as to manners, almost meet. These ladies, I suppose, had gone so far beyond vulgarity, that they were now converging to the superior tone and frank *dégagement* of the upper classes. Positively, it never struck me, that I was in vulgar company. I then, of course, could have been but an indifferent judge. But I have thought of it often since, and must say, that, in the degrading sense of the word, my company of that night was not vulgar. It was pastoral, and perhaps barbarous, but every thing was natural, and every thing free from pretension. I did not often again, though I have danced with spirits as unwearied, dance with a heart so light. During this festive evening I saw no indications of that pugnacity so inseparable with Irish

hilarity, though there were assembled a dozen of as pretty "broths of boys," as ever practised scull salutation at Donnybrook fair.

At length, about one in the morning, the whiskey had overpowered my boat's crew, and the whisking myself. They made up a lair for me with abundant great coats in the corner of the room, and my eyes gradually closed in sleep, catching, till they were finally sealed up, every now and then, twinklings of bare legs and well-turned ancles, mingling with the clatter of heavy brogues, and the drone of a bagpipe, that had now superseded the squeak of the fife, and the rattle of the drum.

I certainly did dream, I suppose about an hour after I had fallen asleep, of the clattering of sticks, the squalling of women, and the cursing of men; and I felt an indistinct sensation, as if people were practising leaping over my body, and finally, as if some soft-rounded figure had caught me in her arms. I was so terribly oppressed with fatigue, that I could not awake; and, as the last part of my dream gave me so sweet an idea of happiness and security, if I

may use the expression, I shall say, as every novelist has a right to do once in his three volumes—"I was lapped in Elysium."

Every thing was oblivion until I was awakened by one of my lads, at eight in the morning, and I arose refreshed, though a little stiff. The hardened clay, which composed the floor, was neatly swept up, the pigs and the poultry were driven out, and a good fire was blazing under the chimney. Of all the party of the night before, there remained only the two fine young men who brought me and my boat up; the elderly couple, and two blooming girls, with the youngest of whom I had danced almost the whole of the previous evening. I observed on one of the young men a tremendous black eye, that certainly was not there the day before, and the other had his temples carefully bandaged, and both my boat-boys complained of being kicked and trampled on during the night, yet, I am not so ungrateful, upon such slender evidence, as to assert that the dance had ended in a skrimmage, or so presumptuous as to say in what manner I thought that I had

been protected during the row, if there had been one.

My hosts had nothing to offer me for breakfast but a thin, and by no means tempting pot of hot meal and water. I certainly did taste a little, that I might not seem to disrespect the pretty Norah, who had prepared it for me, and strove to make it palatable by a lump of butter, a delicacy that was offered to no one else. As I was impatient to be off, I kissed the girls heartily, yes, heartily, shook hands with the sons, and prepared for my departure, after having, with considerable difficulty, forced a half guinea upon my hosts. I begged to know the names of those to whose hospitality I was so much indebted, and, as well as memory will serve me at this distance of time, I think they were specimens of what excellent O'Tooles potatoes are capable of producing. We then resumed our procession down to the beach, I walking first, bearing the boat-hook pikeways, followed by the boat itself, borne between the two athletic Toolles, and the procession was closed by the boat's crew, each with his oar upon his shoulder. We were soon

launched, and instructed as to the course we were to take. The wind and sea had gone down, and the tide was favourable. We had to pull about five miles to get round the bluff, when we arrived at the sandy little nook, from which we had made our involuntary excursion to sea the night before. The spirit of obedience to orders was strong upon me, and in spite of the remonstrance of the boys, I went in, and loaded the dingy nearly down to the gunnel with the sand, for which we had been so much perilled. After all my dangers, I got safely on board before noon, much to the surprise of all on board, who had given us up as lost, and there had already been a coolness between the captain and the first lieutenant on my account. This coolness promised a warm reception for myself, and I got it.

So occupied had Mr. Farmer been all the day before in taking in Irish beef and pork, for the West Indian storehouses, and extra water to supply any of the convoy that might fall short of that necessary article, that he had totally forgotten the sand expedition, and it was eight in the evening, just at the time that I was, in

the words of the song, "far, far at sea," that he was reminded of it. Mr. Silva, the second lieutenant, begged, as a favour, that a boat might be lent him, just to put him alongside the Roebuck, one of the two eighteen-gun brigs that was to accompany us as whippers-in to the convoy. As the captain was not expected on board till late, Mr. Farmer had not much hesitation in granting the request, with his usual "Take the dingy, Mr. Silva." But just then the Atlantic had been beforehand with him. The dingy had not returned. She had been last seen at the sandy nook to which she had been sent. The barge and cutter were immediately manned and sent to look for me. They easily got to the place where I was seen loading, and found the sand disturbed, but nothing else. They returned with some difficulty against the head-wind, and, of course, made a most disheartening report. When the captain returned he was dreadfully angry

Well, as I crept up the side sneakingly, not very well knowing whether I were to enact the hero or the culprit, I concocted a speech that

was doomed to share the fate of "the lost inventions." I saw the captain and Mr. Farmer pacing the deck, but both decidedly with their duty faces on. Touching my hat very submissively, I said, sheepishly, "I've come on board, sir, and——"

"You young blackguard! I've a great mind——"

"To do what, Mr. Farmer?" said Captain Reud, interposing.

Now, I can assure the reader, twenty-five years ago, when we had nearly cleared the seas of every enemy, and the British pennant was really a whip, which had flogged every opponent of the ocean, the "young gentlemen" were sometimes flogged too, and more often called young blackguards, than by any other title of honour. All this is altered for the better now. We don't abuse each other, or flog among ourselves so much—and, the next war, I make no doubt, what we have spared to ourselves, we shall bestow upon our enemies. I mention this, that the reader may not suppose that I am coarse in depicting the occasional senescence of the naval manners of the times.

"To punish him for staying out all night without leave."

"That's a great fault, certainly," said the captain, sily. "Pray Mr. Rattlin, what *induced* you to commit it?"

"Please, sir, I wasn't induced at all. I was regularly blown out, and now I am as regularly b——"

"Come, sir, I'll be your friend, and not permit you to finish your sentence. If it's a fair question, Mr. Rattlin, may I presume to ask where you slept last night?"

"With the two Misses O'Tooles," said I; for really the young ladies were uppermost in my thoughts.

"You young reprobate! What, with both?" said the captain, grinning.

"Yes, sir," for I now began to feel myself safe; "and Mr. and Mrs. O'Toole, and Mr. Cornelius O'Toole, who has red hair, and Mr. Phelim O'Toole, who has a black eye,—and the poultry, and the pigs, and the boat's crew."

"And where was the boat all this time?"

"Sleeping with us too, sir."

I then shortly detailed what had happened to me, which amused the captain much. "And so," he continued, "after all, you have brought off the sand. I really commend your perseverance."

A bucket of sand was handed up, and Mr. Farmer contemptuously filtered it through his fingers; then turning to me wrathfully, exclaimed, "How dare you bring off for sand, such shelly, pebbly, gritty stuff as this, sir?"

"If you please, sir, I had no hand in putting it where I found it, and I only obeyed orders in bringing it off." For I really felt it to be very unjust to be blamed for the act of nature, and especially as three lives had been endangered to procure a few buckets of worthless earth.

The captain thought so too; for he said to Mr. Farmer, very coldly, "I think you should have ascertained the quality of the sand before you sent for it; and I don't think that you should have sent for it at all towards nightfall, and at the beginning of ebb tide. Youngster, you shall dine with me to day, and give me a history of the O'Tooles."

CHAPTER IX.

An invaliding suit—The cards well played, and by a trump; the odd trick, however, in much danger—The doctor finesses with a good heart, but diamonds are cutting articles.

Two days had elapsed after my incursions upon the "wild Irishers," during which our surgeon had kept himself closely to his cabin, when he wrote a letter on service to the captain, requesting a survey upon his self-libelled rotundity of body. The captain, according to the laws of the service, "in that case made and provided," forwarded the letter to the port-admiral, who appointed the following day for the awful inspection. As I said before, the

skipper and his first lieutenant had laid down a scheme of a counterplot, and they now began to put it into execution. Immediately that Dr. Thompson had received his answer, he began to dose himself immoderately with tartarised antimony, and other drugs, to give his round and hitherto ruddy countenance the pallor of disease. He commenced getting up his invaliding suit.

It had been a great puzzle to his brother officers, to understand what two weasan-faced, mechanical-looking men, from the shore, had been doing in his cabin the greater part of the night. They did not believe, as the doctor intimated, that they were functionaries of the law, taking instructions for his last will and testament; though the astute surgeon had sent a note to Mr. Farmer, the first lieutenant, with what he thought infinite cunning, to know, in case of any thing fatal happening immediately to the writer, whether his friend would prefer to have bequeathed to him the testator's double-barrelled fowling-piece, or his superb Manton's duelling pistols. Mr. Farmer replied, "that

he would very willingly take his chance of both."

At twelve o'clock, every thing was ready. The survey was to take place in the captain's cabin. Dr. Thompson sends for his two assistants, and then, for the first time for three days, he emerges, leaning heavily upon both his supporters.

Can this be the jovial and rubicund doctor? Whose deadly white face is that, that peers out from under the shadow of an immense green shade? The lips are livid—the corners of the mouth drawn down—and yet there is a triumphant sneer in their very depression. The officers gather round him, he lifts up his head slowly, and then looks round and shakes it despondingly. His eyes are dreadfully bloodshot. His messmates, the young ones especially, begin to think that his illness is real. There is the real sympathy of condolence in the greetings, of all but the hard-a-weather master, the witty purser and the obdurate first. The invalid was apparelled in an ancient roast-beef uniform coat, bottle-green from age; the waist-

coat had flaps indicative of fifty-years' antiquity, and the breeches were indescribable. He wore large blue-worsted stockings folded up outside above the knee, but carefully wrinkled and disordered over the calf of the leg, in order to conceal its healthy mass of muscle. Big as was the doctor, his clothes were all, as Shakspeare has it, "A world too big," though we cannot finish the quotation, by adding, "for his shrunk shank." Instead of two lawyer's-clerks, the sly rogue had had two industrious snips closeted with him, for the purpose of enlarging this particular suit of clothes to the utmost.

"In the name of ten thousand decencies, doctor," exclaimed Mr. Farmer, "who made you that figure?"

"Disease," was the palsied and sepulchral reply.

"But the clothes—the clothes—these incomprehensible clothes!"

"Are good enough to die in."

"But I doubt," said the purser, "whether either they or their wearer are good enough to die."

There was a laugh, but it was not infectious as respected the occasion of it. He shook his head mournfully, and said, "The flippancy of rude health—the inconsiderate laugh of strong youth!"

With much difficulty he permitted himself to be partly carried up the ladder, and seated in all the dignity of suffering in a chair in the fore cabin, the two assistants standing, one on each side of him, in mute observance.

It is twelve o'clock—half-past twelve—one—two. The captain is coming on board—tell the officers—the side is manned—the boatswain pipes—and the little great man arrives, and, attended by Mr. Farmer, enters the cabin. Prepared as he was for a deception, even he starts back with surprise at the figure before him.

With one hand upon a shoulder of each of his assistants, the doctor, with an asthmatical effort, rises.

"Well, doctor, how are you?"

The doctor shook his head.

"Matters have gone a great length, I see."

Another shake eloquent with suffering and despondency.

"I understand from my friend here," (Mr. Farmer and he *were* friends sometimes for half an hour together,) "that, with christian providence you have been making your will. Now, my dear doctor, it is true, that we have hardly been three months associated; but that time, short as it is, has given me the highest opinion of your convivial qualities, your professional skill, and the great *depth* of your understanding. Deep—very deep! You must not class me among the mean herd of legacy-hunters; but I would willingly have some token by which to remember so excellent a man, and an officer so able, and so *unshrinking* in the performance of his duties."

"There is my tobacco-box," said the doctor with a feeble malice; "for though chewing the weed cannot cure, it can conceal, a bad breath."

The captain winced. It was a thrust with a double-edged sword. He was what we now call, an exquisite, in person, and one to whom

the idea of chewing tobacco was abhorrent, whilst he was actually and distressingly troubled with the infirmity hinted at. For a moment, the suavity of his manner was destroyed, and he forgot the respect due to the dying.

“D—n the tobacco-box—and d—n that—never mind—no, no, doctor, you had better order the box to be buried with you, for no body *could* use it after you; but if I might presume so far—might use the very great liberty to make a selection, I would request, entreat, nay, implore you to leave me the whole *suit of clothes* in which you are now standing; and if you would be so considerate, so kind, so generous, by G—d I’ll have them stuffed and preserved as a curiosity.”

“Captain Reud, you are too good. Mr. Staples,” turning helplessly to his assistant, “get me immediately an effervescing draught. Excuse my sitting—I am very faint—you are so kind—you quite *overcome* me.”

“No, not yet,” said the captain in a dry tone, but full of meaning. “I may perhaps by-and-by, when you know more of me; but

now—O no! However, I'll do my best to make you grateful. And I'm sorry to acquaint you, that the admiral has put off the survey till twelve o'clock to-morrow, when I trust that you will be as well *prepared* as you are now. Don't be dejected, doctor, you have the consolation of knowing that, if you die in the meantime, all the annoyance of the examination will be saved you. In the interim, don't forget the old clothes—the invaliding suit. My clerk shall step down with you into the cabin and tack a memorandum on, by way of codicil, to your will: don't omit those high-quartered, square-toed shoes, with the brass buckles."

"If you would promise to wear them out yourself."

"No, no; but I promise to put them on when I am going to invalid; or to lend them to Mr. Farmer, or any other friend, on a similar occasion."

"I hope," said Mr. Farmer, "that I shall never stand in the doctor's shoes."

"I hope you never will—nor in Captain Reud's either."

The gallant commander turned from yellow to black at this inuendo, which was, for many reasons, particularly disagreeable. Seeing that he was bagging to leeward, like a west-country barge laden with a haystack, in this sailing-match of wits, he broke up the conference by observing, "You had better, doctor, in consideration of your weakness, retire to your cabin. I certainly cannot, seeing my near prospect of your invaluable legacy, in any honesty wish you better."

With all due precautions, hesitations, and restings, Dr. Thompson reached his cabin, and I doubt not as he descended, enervated as he was, but that he placed, like O'Connell, a vow in heaven, that if ever Captain Reud fell under his surgical claws, the active operations of Dr. Sangrado should be in their celerity even as the progress of the sloth, compared with the despatch and energy with which he would proceed on the coveted opportunity.

When he was alone he was overheard to murmur, "Stand in my shoes—the ignorant puppies! I shall see one of them, if not both,

in their shrouds yet. Stand in my shoes ! it is true, the buckles are but brass, but they are shoes whose latches they are not worthy to unloose."

There was then another day for the poor doctor, of fasting, tartarised antimony, and irritating eye-salve. And the captain, no doubt in secret understanding with the admiral, played off the same trick. The survey was deferred from day to day, for six days, and until the very one before the ship weighed anchor. It must have been a period of intense vexation and bodily suffering to the manœuvring doctor.

Each day, as he made his appearance at noon in the captain's cabin, he had to wait in miserable state his hour and-a-half, or two hours, and then to meet the gibing salutation of the captain, of, "Not dead yet, doctor?" with his jokes upon the invaliding suit. The misery of the deception, and the sufferings that he was forced to self-impose to keep it up, as he afterwards confessed, had nearly conquered him on the third day—that he was a man of

the most enduring courage to brave a whole week of such martyrdom, must be conceded to him. Had the farce continued a day or two longer, he would have had the disagreeable option forced upon him, either of being seriously ill, or of returning *instantly* to excellent health.

CHAPTER X.

Valid reasons for invaliding—The patient cured in spite of himself—And a lecture on disease in general, with a particular case of instruments as expositors.

At length, the important day arrived on which the survey did assemble. The large table in the cabin was duly littered over with paper and medical books, and supplied with pens and ink. Three post captains, in gallant array, with swords by their sides, our own captain being one, and three surgeons, with lancets in their pockets, congregated with grave politeness, and taking their chairs according to precedence of rank, formed the Hygeian court.

A fitting preparation was necessary, so the captains began to debate upon the various pretensions of the beautiful Phrynes of Cork—the three medical men, whether the plague was contagious or infectious, or both—or neither. At the precise moment when Captain Reud was maintaining the superiority of the attractions of a blonde Daphne against the assertions of a champion of a dark Phyllis, and the eldest surgeon had been, by the heat of the argument, carried so far as to maintain, in asserting the non-infectious and non-contagious nature of the plague, that you could not give it a man by inoculating him with its virus, the patient, on whose case they had met to decide, appeared.

In addition to the green shade, our doctor had enwrapped his throat with an immense scarlet comforter, so that the reflection of the green above, and the contrast with the colour below, made the pallor of his face still more lividly pale. He was well got up. Captain Reud nodded to the surgeons to go on, and he proceeded with his own argument.

Thus there were two debates at this time proceeding with much heat, and with just so much acrimony as to make them highly interesting. With the noble posts it was one to two, that is, our captain, the Daphneite, had drawn upon him the other two captains, both of whom were Phyllisites. When a man has to argue against two, and is not quite certain of being in the right either, he has nothing for it but to be very loud. Now men, divine as they are, have some things in common with the canine species. Go into a village, and you will observe that when one cur begins to yelp, every dog's ear catches the sound, bristles up, and every throat is opened in clamorous emulation. Captain Reud talked fast as well as loud, so he was nearly upon a par with his opponents, who only talked loud.

At the other end of the table the odds were two to one, which is not always the same as one to two. That is, the two older surgeons were opposed to the youngest. These three were just as loud within one note—the note under being the tribute they unconsciously

paid to naval discipline—as the three captains. Both parties were descanting upon plagues.

“I say, sir,” said the little surgeon, who was the eldest, “it is *not* infectious. But here comes Dr. Thompson.”

Now the erudite doctor, from the first, had no great chance. Captain Reud had determined he should not be invalided. The two other captains cared nothing at all about the matter, but, of course, would not be so impolitic as to differ from their superior officer; an officer, too, of large interest, and the Amphyrion of the day; for, when they had performed those duties for which they were so well fitted, their medical ones, they were to dine on the scene of their arduous labours. The eldest surgeon had rather a bias against the doctor, as he could not legally put M.D. against his own name. The next in seniority was entirely adverse to the invaliding, as, without he could invalid too, he would have to go to the West Indies in the place of our surgeon. The youngest was indifferent just then to any

thing but to confute the other two, and prove the plague infectious.

"But here comes Dr. Thompson—I'll appeal to him," said non-infection; but the appeal was unfortunate, both for the appealer and the doctor. The latter was an infectionist, so there was no longer any odds, but two against two, and away they went. Our friend in the wide coat forgot he was sick, and his adversaries that they had to verify it. They sought to verify nothing but their dogmas. They waxed loud, then cuttingly polite, then slaughteringly sarcastic, and, at last, exceeding wroth.

"I tell you, sir, that I have written a volume on the subject."

"Had you no friend near you," said Dr. Thompson, "at that most unfortunate time?"

"I tell you, sir, I will never argue with any one on the subject, unless he have read my Latin treatise '*De Natura Pestium et Pestilentiarum*.'"

"Then you'll never argue but with yourself," said the stout young surgeon.

Then arose the voices of the men militant over those of the men curative.

"The finest eye," vociferated our skipper, "Captain Templar, that ever beamed from mortal. Its lovely blue, contrasted with her white skin, is just like—"

"A washer-woman's stone-blue bag among her soapsuds—stony enough."

Here the medical voices preponderated, and expressions such as these became distinct—

"Do you accuse me of ignorance, sir-r-r?"

"No, sir-r-r. I merely assert that you know nothing at all of the matter."

In the midst of this uproar I was walking the quarter-deck with the purser.

"What a terrible noise they are making in the cabin," I observed. "What can they be doing?"

"Invaliding the surgeon," said the marine officer, who had just joined us, looking wise.

"Doubted," said the purser.

"What a dreadful operation it must be," said a young Irish young-gentleman, (all young gentlemen in the navy are not *young*,) "but,

for the honour of the service, he might take it aisy any how, for the life of him."

"The very thing he is trying to do," was the purser's reply.

But let us return to the cabin and collect what we can hear, and record the sentences as they obtain the mastery, at either end of the table.

"Look at her step," said a captain speaking of his lady.—"Tottering, feeble, zig-zag," said a surgeon, speaking of one stricken with the plague—"Her fine open ivory brow."—"Is marked all over with disgusting pustules."—"Her breath is—oh! her delicious breath."—"Noisome, poisonous, corruption."—"In fact, her whole lovely body is a region of . . ."—"Pestilent discolorations, and foul sores."—"And," roared out Captain Templar, "if you would but pass a single hour in her company . . ."—"You would assuredly repent of your temerity," said the obstinate contagionist.

This confusion lasted about a quarter of an hour, a time sufficient, in all conscience, to invalide a West Indian regiment.

"Well, gentlemen," said Captain Reud, rising, a little chafed, "have you come to a conclusion upon this very plain case? I see the doctor looks better already, his face is no longer pale."

"I tell you what," said the senior surgeon, rising abruptly with the others, "since you will neither listen to me, to reason, nor to my book, though I will not answer for the sanity of your mind, I will for that of your body. My duty, sir, my duty, will not permit me to invalidate you."

"Never saw a healthier man in my life," said the second surgeon.

"Never mind, doctor," said the third, "we have fairly beaten them in the argument."

The gallant captains burst out into obstreperous laughter, and so the survey was broken up, and the principal surgeons declared that our poor doctor was in sound health, because they found him unsound in his opinions.

The three surgeons took their departure, the eldest saying, with a grim smile to Thompson, "It may correct some errors, and prepare you

for next invaliding day. Shall I send you my book, 'De Natura Pestium et Pestilentiarum?' "

The jolly doctor, with a smile equally grim, thanked him, and formally declined the gift, assuring him "that, at the present time, the ship was well stocked with emetics."

Now the good doctor was a wag, and the captain, for fun, a very monkey. The aspirant for invaliding sate himself down again at the one end of the table, as the captains did at the other. Wines, anchovies, sandwiches, oysters, and other light and stimulating viands were produced to make a relishing lunch. Captain Reud threw a triumphant and right merry glance across the table on the silent and discomfited doctor. The servant had placed before him a cover and glasses unbidden.

"Bring the doctor's plate," said the captain. The doctor was passive—the plate was brought, filled with luxuries, and placed directly under his nose. The temptation was terrible. He had been fasting and macerating himself, for eight or nine days. He glared upon it with a

gloomy longing. He then looked up wistfully, and a droll smile mantled across his vast face, and eddied in the holes of his deep pock-marks.

"A glass of wine, doctor?" The decanter was pushed before him, and his glass filled by the servant. The doctor shook his head and said, "I dare not, but will put it to my lips in courtesy."

He did so, and when the glass reached the table it was empty. He then began gradually to unwind his huge woollen comforter, and when he thought himself unobserved, he stole the encumbrance into his ample coat-pocket. He next proceeded to toss about, with a careless abstraction, the large masses of cold fowl and ham in his plate, and, by some unimaginable process, without the use of his knife, he contrived to separate them into edible pieces. They disappeared rapidly, and the plate was almost as soon empty as the wine glass. The green shade, by some unaccountable accident, now fell from his eyes, and, instead of again fixing it on, it found its way to the pocket, to

keep company with the comforter. Near him stood a dish of delicious oysters, the which he silently coaxed towards his empty plate, and sent the contents furtively down his much wronged throat.

The other gentlemen watched these operations with mute delight, and, after a space, Captain Templar challenged him to a bumper, which was taken and swallowed without much squeamishness. The doctor found that he had still a difficult task to play; he knew that his artifice was discovered, and that the best way to repair the error was to boldly throw off the transparent disguise. The presence of the two stranger captains was still a restraint upon him. At length, he cast his eyes upon Captain Reud, and putting into his countenance the drollest look of deprecation mingled with fun, said plaintively, "Are we friends, Captain Reud?"

"The best in the world, doctor," was the quick reply, and he rose and extended his open hand. Doctor Thompson rose also and advanced to the head of the table, and they shook hands most heartily. The two other captains

begged to do the same, and to congratulate him on his rapid convalescence.

"To prove to you, doctor, the estimation in which I hold you, you shall dine with us, and we'll have a night of it," said the skipper.

"Oh! Captain Reud, Captain Reud, consider—really I cannot get well so fast as that would indicate."

"You must, you must. Gentlemen, no man makes better punch. Consider the punch, doctor."

"Truly, that alters the case. As these dolts of surgeons could not fully understand the diagnostics of my disease, I suppose I must do my duty for the *leetle* while longer that I have to live. I *will* do my duty, and attend you punctually at five o'clock, in order to see that there be no deleterious ingredients mingled in the punch." Saying which he bowed and left the cabin, without leaning on the shoulder of either of his assistants.

But he had yet the worst ordeal to undergo—to brave the attack of his messmates—and he did it nobly. They were all assembled in the

ward-room, for those that saw him descend, if not there before, went immediately and joined him. He waddled to the head of the table, and when seated, exclaimed in a stentorian voice, "Steward, a glass of half-and-half. Gentlemen, I presume you do not understand a medical case. Steward, bring my case of pistols and the cold meat. I say, you do not understand a medical case."

"But we do yours," interrupted two or three voices at once.

"No, you don't; you may understand that case better," shoving his long-barrelled Manton duellers on to the middle of the table. "Now, gentlemen—I do not mean to bully—I am only, God help me, a weak civil arm of the service,"—and whining a little—"still very far from well. Now, I'll state my case to you, for your satisfaction, and to prevent any little mistakes. I was lately afflicted with a sort of nondescript atrophy, a stagnation of the fluids, a congestion on the small blood-vessels, and a spasmodic contraction of the finitessimal nerves, that threatened very serious consequences. At the survey,

two of the surgeons, ignorant quacks that they are, broached a most ridiculous opinion—a heterodox doctrine—a damnable heresy. On hearing it, my indignation was so much roused, that a reaction took place in my system, as instantaneous as the effects of a galvanic battery. My vital energies rallied, the stagnation of my fluids ceased, the small blood-vessels that had mutinied returned to their duty; and I am happy to say, that though now far from enjoying good health, I am rapidly approaching it. That is my case. Now for yours. As, gentlemen, we are to be cooped up in this wooden inclosure, for months, perhaps years, it is a duty that we owe to ourselves to promote the happiness of each other by good temper, politeness, mutual forbearance, and kindness. In none of these shall you find me wanting, and, to prove it, I will say this much—singular cases will call forth singular remarks; you must be aware that if such be dwelt on *too* long, they will become offensive to me, and disturb that union which I am so anxious to promote. So let us have done with the subject at once—

make all your remarks now—joke, quiz, jeer, and flaunt, just for one half hour”—taking out his watch, and laying it gently on the table—“by that time I shall have finished my lunch which, by-the-bye, I began in the cabin; there will be sufficient time for you to say all your smart things on the occasion; but if after that I hear any more on the subject, by heavens that man who shall dare to twit me with it, shall go with me immediately to the nearest shore if in harbour—or shoot me, or I him, across the table, if at sea. Now, gentlemen, begin if you please.”

“The devil a word will I ever utter on the matter,” said Farmer, “and there’s my hand upon it.”

“Nor I.”

“Nor I.”

And every messmate shook him heartily by the hand, and by them the subject was dropped, and for ever. That evening Dr. Thompson made the captain’s punch, having carefully locked up, in his largest sea-chest, his invaliding suit.

Whatever impression this anecdote may make on the reader, if it be one injurious to the doctor, we beg to tell him, that he proved a very blessing to the ship—the kind friend as well as the skilful and tender physician, the promoter of every social enjoyment, the soother of conflicting passions, the interceder for the offending, and the peacemaker for all.

CHAPTER XI.

Paving-stones sometimes prove stumbling-blocks—A disquisition on the figurative, ends by Ralph figuring at the mast head, thus extending his views upon the subject.

THE next morning, at daylight, we weighed, and by the aid of much firing of guns, and the display of unmeasured bunting, we got the whole of the convoy out of the cove by noon, with two men-of-war brigs bringing up the rear. Shortly after losing sight of land, bad weather came on, in which poor Gubbins was drowned, as I have before narrated.

By the time that we had reached Madeira, the ship's company had settled into good order,

and formed that concentrated principle which enabled them to act as one man. It was a young and fine crew, made up of drafts of twenties and thirties, from different vessels, thanks to the nepotism of the treasurer of the navy.

We also began to understand each other's characters, and to study the captain's. Mischief was his besetting sin. Naturally malignant he was not, but inconsiderate to a degree that would make you think that his heart was really bad. One of his greatest pleasures was that of placing people in awkward and ludicrous situations. He very soon discovered the fattest men, among the masters of the merchant vessels; and, when we had run far enough to the southward to make sitting in an open boat very unpleasant, he would, in light winds, make a signal for one of his jolly friends to come on board, the more especially if he happened to be far astern. Then began Captain Reud's enjoyment. After two hours hard pulling, the master would be seen coming up astern, wiping his brows, and, when within hail, Reud would shout to him to

give away—and, just as he reached the stern ladder, the main-top-sail of the frigate would be shivered, and the boat again be left half a mile astern. Another attempt, and another failure, the captain meanwhile gloating over the poor man's misery with the suppressed chuckle of delight, in which you would fancy a monkey to indulge after he had perpetrated some irreparable mischief.

However, he would generally tease his victim no longer than dinner-time. The ship would then be effectually hove to, the half-melted skipper would get on board, and the captain receive him with studied politeness. Much would I admire the gravity with which he would deplore the impossibility of stopping his Majesty's ship *Eos*, by any thing short of an anchor and good holding ground. No, she would not be hove to—go a-head, or go astern she must—but stand still she could not. During this harangue, the mystified mariner would look at his commodore, much wondering which of the two was the fool.

“But, Mister Stubbs,” the tormentor, would

continue, "it is now nearly six bells—you have not dined, I presume; how long have you been making this little distance, Mister Stubbs?" with a slow accent on the word Mister. "Six hours!—bless me—I would certainly ropes-end those lubbers in your boat. You *must* be hungry—so must they, poor fellows! Here, Mr. Rattlin, call them up, put a boat-keeper in the boat, and let her drop astern—tell my steward to give them a good tuck out and a glass of grog. Mister Stubbs, you'll dine with me." And the affair would end by the gratified hoaxed one being sent on board his own vessel about the end of twilight, seeing more stars in the heavens than astronomers have yet discovered.

But these skippers were, though very plump, but very humble game for our yellow-skinned tormentor. He nearly drove the third lieutenant mad, and that by a series of such delicate persecutions, annoyances so artfully veiled, and administered in a manner so gentlemanly, that complaint on the part of the persecuted, instead of exciting commiseration, covered him with

ridicule. This officer was a Portuguese nobleman, of the name of Silva—the Don we could never bring our English mouths to use—who had entered our service at a very early age, and consequently spoke our language as naturally as ourselves. He was surnamed “the Paviour,” and, when off duty, generally so addressed. It must not be supposed that he acquired this sobriquet on account of the gentlemen in corduroys laying by their rammers when he walked the street, bidding God bless him, for he was a light and elegant figure, and singularly handsome. At this time, I was the youngster of his watch, and a great favourite with him. The misfortune of his life was, that he had written a book—only one single sin—but it never left him—it haunted him through half the ships in the service, and finally drove him out of it. He had written this book, and caused it to be printed—and he *published* it also—for nobody else could. His bookseller had tried, and failed lamentably. Now Don Silva was always publishing, and never selling. His cabin was piled up with several ill-conditioned cases of great

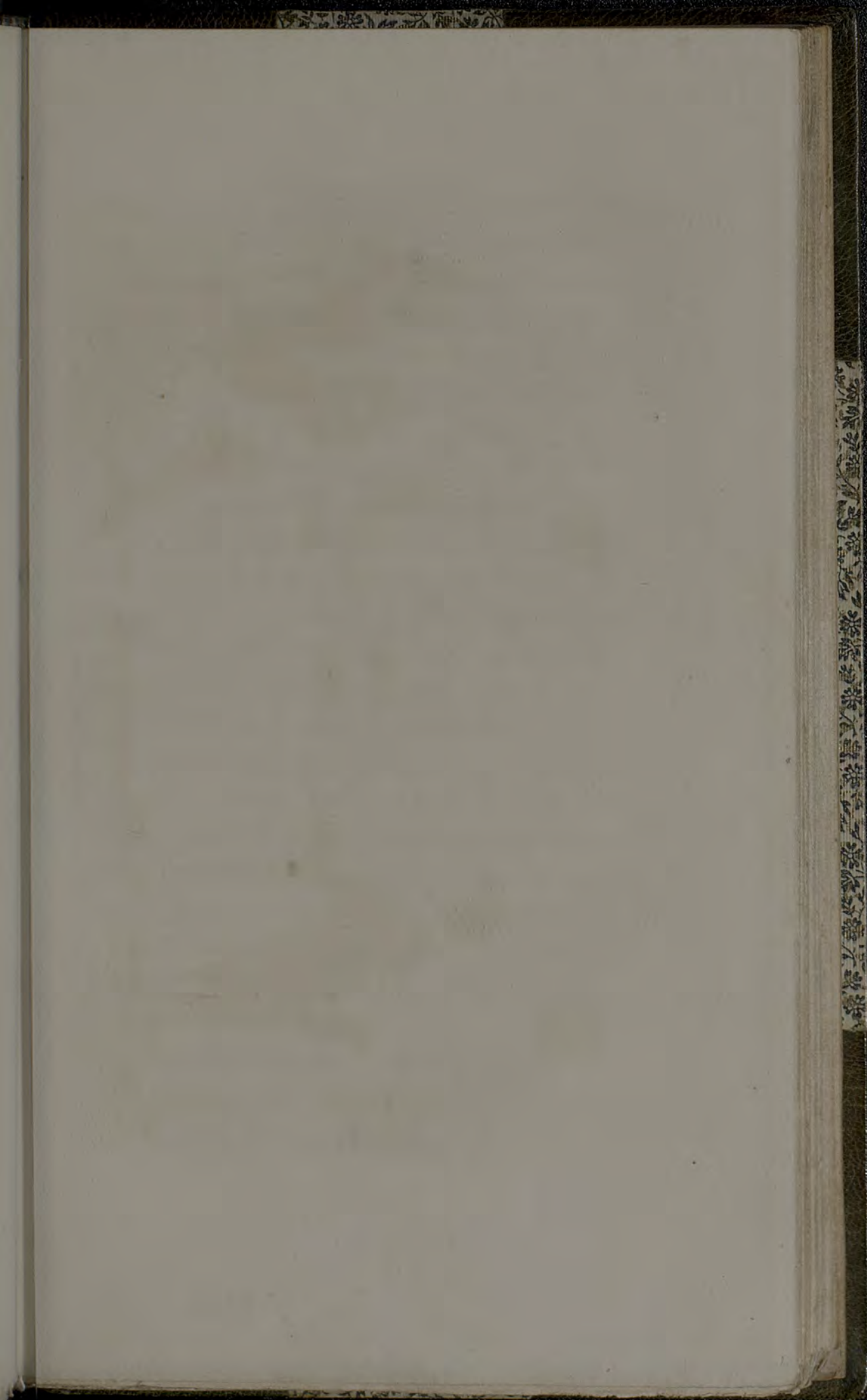
weight, which cases laboured under the abominable suspicion of containing the unsold copies.

As much as ever I could learn of the matter, no one ever got farther than the middle of the second page of this volume, excepting the printer's devils, the corrector of the press, and the author. The book was lent to me, but, great reader as I am, I broke down in attempting to pass the impassable passage. The book might have been a good book, for aught I, or the world, knew to the contrary: but there was a fatality attending this particular part, that was really enough to make one superstitious—nobody could break the charm, and get over it. I wish that the thought had occurred to me at that time, of beginning it at the end, and reading it backwards; surely, in that manner, the book might have been got through. It was of a winning exterior, and a tolerable thickness. Never did an unsound nut look more tempting to be cracked, than this volume to be opened and read. It had for its title the imposing sentence of, "A Naval and Military

Tour up and down the Rio de la Plate, by Don Alphonso Ribidiero da Silva."

I have before stated that my shipmates were all strangers to each other. We had hardly got things to rights after leaving Cork, when Mr. Silva began, "as was his custom in the afternoon," to *publish* his book. He begged leave to read it to his messmates after dinner, and leave was granted. With bland frankness, he insisted upon the opinions of the company as he proceeded. He began—but the wily purser at once started an objection to the first sentence—yea, even to the title. He begged to be enlightened as to what sort of *tour* that was that merely went *up* and *down*. However, the doctor came at this crisis to the assistance of the Don, and suggested that the river might have *turns* in it. The reader sees how critical we are in a man-of-war.

However, in the middle of the second page appeared the fatal passage, "After having *paved* our way up the *river*." Upon which, issue was immediately joined, and hot argument ensued. The objector, of course, was the





Drawn and Etched by A. Keble.

purser, and, on this point, the doctor went over to the enemy. All the lieutenants followed, the master stood neuter, and the marine officer fell asleep—thus poor Silva stood alone in his glory, to fight the unequal battle; and, in doing so, after the manner of authors, lost his temper.

Five, six, seven times was the book begun, but, like the hackney coaches, the audience could not get off the stones. The book and the discussion were always closed together in anger, just as the author was *paving his way*. As he adopted the phrase with a parental fondness, the father was called the “*paviour*.”

All this duly reached the ears of the captain. He immediately wrote to Don Silva, requesting his company to dinner, particularly soliciting him to bring his excellent work. Of course, the little man took care to have the doctor and purser. The claret is on the table, the Amphytrion settles himself into a right critical attitude, but with a most suspicious leer in the corner of his eye. Our friend begins to read his book exultingly, but, at the memorable passage, as

was previously concerted, the hue and cry is raised.

During the jangling of argument, Reud seems undecided, and observes that he can only judge the matter from well understanding the previous style and the context, and so, every now and then, requests him, with a most persuasive politeness, to begin again from the beginning. Of course, he gets no farther than the paving. After the baited author had re-read his page and-a-half about six or seven times, the captain smiles upon him lovingly, and says, in his most insinuating tones, "Just read it over again once more, and we shall never trouble you after—we shall know it by heart."

As it was well understood that the author was never to get beyond that passage until he had acknowledged it absurd and egregiously foolish, any body who knows any thing about the *genus irritabile*, will be certain, that if he lived till "the crack of doom," Don Silva would never have passed the Rubicon. It was thus that the poor fellow was tormented: and every time that he was asked to dine in the cabin, he

was requested to bring his Tour, in order that the *whole* of it might be read.

The best and most imposing manner of writing, is to lay down some wise dogma, and afterwards prove it by example. I shall follow this august method.—It is unwise for a midshipman to argue with the lieutenant of the watch, whilst there are three lofty mastheads unoccupied. Q. E. D.

One morning, after a literary skirmish in the captain's cabin the overnight, Mr. Silva smiled me over to him on his side of the quarter-deck, just as day was breaking. The weather was beautiful, and we had got well into the trade winds.

“Mr. Rattlin,” said he, “you have not yet read my book. You are very young, but you have had a liberal education.”

I bowed with flattered humility.

“I will lend it to you—you shall read it: and, as a youthful, yet a clever scholar, give me your opinion of it—be candid. I suppose you have heard the trivial, foolish, spiteful objection started against a passage I have em-

ployed in the second page," and he takes a copy out of his pocket, and begins to read it to me until he comes to, "After having *paved* our way up the *river*;" he then enters into a long justificatory argument, the gravamen of which was to prove, that in figurative phrases a great latitude of expression was not only admissible, but often elegant.

I begged leave, in assenting to his doctrine, to differ from his application of it, as we ought not to risk, by using a figurative expression, the exciting of any absurd images, or catachrestical ideas. The author began to warm, and terminated my gentle representation by ordering me over to leeward, with this pompous speech, "I tell you what, sir, your friends have spent their money, and your tutors their time, upon you to little purpose; for know, sir, that when progress is to be made anywhere, in any shape, or in any manner, a more appropriate phrase than paving your way cannot be used—send the top-men aloft to loose the top-gallant sails."

Checked, though not humbled, I repeat the necessary orders, and no sooner do I see the

men on the rattlings, than I squeak out at the top of my voice, "*Pave your way* up the rigging - *pave your way*, you lubbers." The men stop for a moment, grin at me with astonishment, and then scamper up like so many party-coloured devils.

"Mr. Rattlin, pave your way up to the mast-head, and stay there till I call you down," said the angry lieutenant; and thus, through my love for the figurative, for the first time I tasted the delights of a mast-heading.

CHAPTER XII.

Ralph regenerateth himself, and becometh good, for halfan hour—Singeth one verse of a hymn, escheweth telling one lie, and getteth his reward in being asked to breakfast.

WHAT a nice, varied, sentimental, joyous, lachrymose, objurgatory, laudatory, reflective volume might be made, entitled, “Meditations at the Mast-head !

When I found myself comfortably established in my aëry domicile, I first looked down upon the vessel below with a feeling nearly akin to pity, then around me with a positive feeling of rapture, and, at length, above me with a heart-warming glow of adoration.

Perched up at a height so great, the decks of the frigate looked extremely long and narrow, and the foreshortened view one has of those upon it, makes them look but little bigger, or more important, than so many puppets. Beneath me I saw the discontented author of my elevation, and of "A Tour up and down the Rio de la Plate," skipping actively here and there, to avoid the splashing necessary in washing the decks. I could not help comparing the annoyance of this involuntary dance, with the afterguard, this *croissex* with clattering buckets, and *dos à dos* with wet swabs, with my comfortable and commanding recumbency upon the cross-trees. I looked down upon Lieutenant Silva and pitied him. I looked around me, and my heart was exceeding glad. The upper rim of the sun was dallying with a crimson cloud, whilst the greater part of his disk was still below the well-defined, deep blue horizon. All above him, to the zenith, was chequered with small vapours, layer over layer, like the scales of a breastplate of burnished gold. The little waves were mantling, dim-

pling, and seemed playfully striving to emulate the intenser glories of the heavens above. They now flashed into living light, now assumed the blushing hue of a rose-bud, and here and there wreathed up into a diminutive foam, mocking the smile of youth when she shows her white teeth between her beauty-breathing lips. As I swung aloft, with a motion gentle as that of the cradled infant, and looked out upon the splendours beneath and around me, my bosom swelled with the most rapturous emotions. Everywhere, as far as my eye could reach, the transparent and beryl-dyed waters were speckled with white sails, actually "blushing rosy-red" with the morning beams. Far, far astern, hull down, were the huge dull sailers, spreading all their studding sails to the winds, reminding me of frightened swans with expanded wings. Conspicuous among these were the two men-of-war brigs, obliquely sailing, now here, and then there, and ever and anon firing a gun, whose mimic thunder, came with melodious resonance over the waters, whilst the many-coloured signals were continually fly-

ing and shifting. They were the hawks among the covey of the larger white-plumed birds.

At this moment our gallant frigate, like a youthful and a regal giant, more majestic from the lightness of her dress, walked in conscious superiority in the midst of all. She had, as I before mentioned, just set her topgallant sails, in order to take her proud station in the van. We now passed vessel after vessel, each with a different quantity of canvas set, according to her powers of sailing. It was altogether a glorious sight, and, to my feelings, excelled in quiet and cheerful sublimity any review, however splendid might be the troops, or imposing their numbers. Then the breeze came so freshly and kissingly on my cheek, whispering such pleasant things to my excited fancy, and invigorating so joyously the fibres of my heart—I looked around me, and was glad.

When the soul is big with all good and pure feelings, gratitude will be there, and at her smiling invitation piety will come cheerfully and clasp her hand. Surely not that sectarian piety, which metes out wrath instead of mercy

to an erring world ; not that piety, dealing "damnation round the land," daily making the pale, within which the only few to be saved are folded, more and more circumscribed ; nor even that bigoted, sensuous piety, which floats on the frankincense that eddies round the marble altar, and which, if unassisted by the vista of the dark aisle, the dimly-seen procession, the choral hymn, the banner, and the relic, faints and sees no God : no, none of these will be the piety of a heart exulting in the beneficence of the All-Good. Then and there, why should I have wished to have crept and grovelled under piled and sordid stone ? Since first the aspiring architect spanned the arch at Thebes, which is *not* everlasting, and lifted the column at Rome, which is *not* immortal, was there ever dome like that which glowed over my head, imagined by the brain of man ? "Fretted with golden fires," and studded with such glorious clouds, that it were almost sinful not to believe that each veiled an angel ; the vast concave, based all around upon the sapphire horizon, sprang upwards, terminating

above me in that deep, deep, immeasurable blue, the best type of eternity ;—was not this a fitting temple for worship? What frankincense was ever equal to that which nature then spread over the wave and through the air? All this I saw—all this I felt. I looked upwards, and I was at once enraptured and humbled. Perhaps then, for the first time since I had left my schoolboy's haunts, I bethought me that there was a God. Too, too often I had heard his awful presence wantonly invoked, his sacred name taken in vain. Lately, I had not shuddered at this habitual profanation. The work of demoralization had commenced. I knew it then, and, with this knowledge, the first pang of guilty shame entered my bosom. I stood up with reverence upon the cross-trees. I took off my hat, and though I did not even whisper the prayers we had used at school, mentally I went through the whole of them. When I said to myself, "I have done those things that I ought not to have done, and have *left undone* those things that I *ought* to have done," I was startled at the measure of sin

that I had confessed. I think that I was contrite. I resolved to amend. I gradually flung off the hardness that my late life of recklessness had been encrusting upon my heart. I softened towards all who had ever shown me kindness; and, in my mind, I faithfully retraced the last time that I had ever walked to church with her whom I had been fond to deem my mother. These silent devotions, and these home-harmonized thoughts first chastened, and then made me very, very happy. At last, I felt the spirit of blissful serenity so strong upon me, that, forgetting for a moment to what ridicule I might subject myself, I began to sing aloud that morning hymn that I had never omitted, for so many years, until I had joined the service,

“Awake, my soul, and with the sun.”

And I confess that I sang the whole of the first verse.

I am sure that no one will sneer at all this. The good will not—the wicked dare not. The worst of us, even if his sin have put on the

armour of infidelity, must remember the time when he believed in a God of love, and loved to believe it. For the sake of that period of happiness, he will not, cannot condemn the expression of feelings, and the manifestation of a bliss that he has himself voluntarily, and if he would ask his own heart, and record the answer, miserably, cast away.

However, it will be long before I again trouble the reader with any thing so *outré* as that which I have just written. Many were the days of error, and the nights of sin, that passed before I again even looked into my own heart. The feelings with which I made my mast-head orisons are gone, and for ever. How often, and with what bitterness of spirit have I said, "would that I had then died!" If there is mercy in heaven—I say it with reverence—I feel assured that then to have passed away would have been but the closing of the eyes on earth to awaken immediately in the lap of a blissful immortality. Since then the world's foot has been upon my breast, and I have writhed under the opprobrious weight,

and, with sinful pride and self-trust have, though grovelling in the dust, returned scorn for scorn, and injury for injury—even wrong for wrong.

I have been a sad dog, and that's the truth ; but ——

I have been forced to hunt, and to house, and to howl with dogs much worse than myself, and that's equally true.

“ Maintopmast head there,” squeaked out the very disagreeable treble of Captain Reud, who had then come on deck, as I was troling, “ Shake off dull sloth, and early rise.” “ Mr. Rattlin, what do you say ?”

“ Aye, aye, sir.”

“ Aye, aye, sir ! what were you saying ? how many sails are there in sight ?”

“ I can't make out, sir.”

“ Why not ? have you counted them ?”

Now, as I before stated, I had taken off my hat, and was standing up in a fit of natural devotion ; and the captain, no doubt, thought that I was bareheaded, and shading my eyes, the better to reckon the convoy. To lie would

have been so easy, and I was tempted to reply to the question, that I had. But my better feelings predominated, so at the risk of a reprimand I answered, "Not yet, sir."

At this moment Mr. Silva, the lieutenant of the watch, placed the mast-head look-outs, and sent the signalman up to assist me in counting the convoy; and, at the same time, the latter bore me a quiet message, that when the number was ascertained I might come down.

I came on deck and gave the report.

"I am very glad, Mr. Rattlin," said the captain, approvingly, "to see you so attentive to your duty. No doubt you went up of your own accord to count the convoy?"

"Indeed, sir," said I, with a great deal of humility, "I did not."

"What—how? I thought when I came on deck I heard you singing out."

"I was mast-headed, sir."

"Mast-headed! how—for what?"

At this question revenge, with her insidious breath, came whispering her venom into my ear; but a voice, to the warnings of which I have too

seldom attended, seemed to reverberate in the recesses of my heart, and say, "be generous." If I had told the truth maliciously, I should have assuredly drawn ridicule and perhaps anger on the head of the lieutenant, and approbation to myself. I therefore briefly replied, "For impertinence to Mr. Silva, sir."

And I was amply repaid by the eloquent look that, with eyes actually moistened, my late persecutor cast upon me. I read the look aright, and knew, from that moment, that he was deserving of better things than a continued persecution, for having unfortunately misapplied an expression. I immediately made a vow that I would read the "Tour up and down the Rio de la Plate" with exemplary assiduity.

"I am glad," said the captain, "that you candidly acknowledge your offence, instead of disrespectfully endeavouring to justify it. I hope, Mr. Silva, that it is not of that extent to preclude me from asking him to breakfast with us this morning?"

"By no means," said Silva, his features sparkling with delight; "he is a good lad. I have reasons to say, a very good lad."

I understood him, and though no explanations ever took place between us, we were, till he was driven from the ship, the most perfect friends.

"Well," said the captain, as he turned to go down the quarter-deck ladder, "you will, at the usual time, both of you, *pave your way into the cabin*. I am sure, Mr. Silva, you won't object to that, though I have not yet made up my mind as to the propriety of the expression, so we'll have the purser, and talk it over in a friendly, good-humoured way." And saying this he disappeared, with a look of merry malignancy that no features but his own could so adequately express.

The scene at the breakfast-table was of the usual description. Authority, masking ill-nature under the guise of quizzing, on the one hand, and literary obstinacy fast resolving itself into deep personal hostility on the other.

CHAPTER XIII.

How to make a day's work easy—Ralph avoideth trouble by anticipating land, but is anticipated by the enemy—A chapter altogether of chasing, which it is hoped will pleasantly chase away the reader's ennui.

WE now had the usual indications of approaching the land. In fact, I had made it, by my reckoning, a fortnight before. The non-nautical reader must understand, that the young gentlemen are required to send into the captain daily, a day's work, that is, an abstract of the course of the ship for the last twenty-four hours, the distance run, and her whereabouts exactly.

Now, with that failing that never left me

through life, of feeling no interest where there was no difficulty to overcome, after I had fully conquered all the various methods of making this calculation, to make it at all became a great bore. So I clapped on more steam, and giving the ship more way, and allowing every day for forty or fifty miles of westerly currents, I, by my account, ran the Eos high and dry upon the Island of Barbadoes, three good weeks before we made the land. Thus, I had the satisfaction of looking on with placid indolence, whilst my messmates were furiously handling their Gunter's scales, and straining their eyes over the small printed figures in the distance and departure columns of John Hamilton Moore, of blessed (cursed ?) memory, in a cabin over 90 degrees Fahrenheit, that was melting at the same time the youthful navigator, and the one miserable purser's dip that tormented rather than enlightened him with its flickering yellow flame.

As we neared the island, greater precautions were taken to preserve the convoy. We sailed in more compact order, and scarcely progressed

at all during the night. The whippers-in were on the alert, for it was well known that this part of the Atlantic was infested with numerous small French men-of-war, and some privateer schooners.

That morning at length arrived, when it was debated strongly whether the faint discolouration that broke the line of the western horizon, as seen from the mast-head, were land or not. As daylight became more decided, so did the state of our convoy. The wolves were hovering round the sheep. Well down to the southward there was a large square-rigged, three-masted vessel, fraternizing with one of our finest West Indiamen. The stranger looked tall, grim, and dark, with his courses up, but his top-gallant sails and royals set. The white sails of the merchant vessel, and she was under a press of sail, were flying in all directions; she was hove to, with her studding-sails set, and many of her tacks and sheets were flapping to the wind. Both vessels were hull down from the deck, and we well understood what was going forward. Right astern, and directly in the wind's eye of

us, was a flat, broad schooner, running before the wind, with nothing set but her fore stay-sail. As she lifted to the sea, at the edge of the horizon, her breadth of beam was so great, and her bulwarks so little above the water, that she seemed to make way broadside on, rather than to sail in the usual position. There was no vessel particularly near her. Those of the mercantile navy that most enjoyed her propinquity, did not seem, by the press of sail that they were carrying, to think the situation very enviable. However, the *Falcon*, one of our men-of-war brigs, was between this schooner and all the convoy, with the signal flying, "May I chase?"

But this was not all; as a whitish haze cleared up to the northward there was a spanking felucca, with her long lateen sails brailed up, and sweeping about in the very centre of a knot of dull sailing merchant vessels, four of which, by their altered courses, had evidently been taken possession of. Reversing the good old adage, first come first served, we turned our attention to the last appearance. We made the signal to

the other man-of-war brig, the Curlew, to chase and capture the felucca, she not being more than two miles distant from her.

No sooner did the convoy generally begin to find out how matters stood, than like a parcel of fussey and frightened old women, they began to pop, pop, pop, firing away their one and two pounders in all directions, and those farthest from the scene of action serving their guns the quickest, and firing the oftenest. It seemed to them of but little consequence, so long as the guns were fired, where the shot fell. Now this was a great nuisance, as it prevented, by the smoke it raised, our signals from being distinguished, even if these belligerents in a small way, had not been so occupied by these demonstrations of their valour from attending to them. Indeed, the volumes of smoke the popping created, became very considerable. I do not now know if there be any convoy signal in the merchant code, equivalent to "cease firing." If there were at that time, I am sure it was displayed, but displayed or not, the hubbub was on the increase. We were at last compelled to

fire shot over these pugnacious tubs to quiet them, and there was thus acted the singular spectacle of three vessels capturing the convoy, whilst the artillery of its principal protector appeared to be incessantly playing upon it.

Having our attention so much divided, there was a great deal of activity and bustle, though no confusion on our decks. We were hoisting out the boats to make the re-captures, and dividing the marines into parties to go in each. In the midst of all this hurry, when Mr. Farmer, our gallant first lieutenant, was much heated, a droll circumstance occurred, the consequence of the indiscriminate firing of the convoy. A boat pulled alongside, and a little swab man, with his face all fire, and in an awfully sinful passion, jumped on the quarter-deck, with something rolled up in a silk handkerchief. He was so irritated, that whilst he followed the first lieutenant about for two or three minutes, he could not articulate.

"Out of my way, man. Mr. Burn, see that all the small arms are ready, and handed down into the boat in good order. Out of my way,

man—what the devil do you want? Muster the pinnace's crew on the starboard gangway—move all these lubberly marines. Mr. Silva, if that stupid fool don't cease firing send a shot right into him. Man, man, what do you want—why don't you speak?"

"There sir," at last stammered out the little angry master of a brig, unfolding his handkerchief, and exhibiting a two pound shot in a most filthy condition, "What—what do you think of that, sir? Slap on board of me, from the Lady Jane, sir—through, clean through my bulwarks into the cook's slush tub. There's murder and piracy for you on the high seas—my slush tub, sir—my bulwark, sir."

"D—n you and your slush tub too—out of my way. Sail trimmers, aloft, and get ready the topmast and top-gallant studding sails."

"Am I to have no redress, sir? Is a British subject to have his slush tub cannonaded on the high seas, and no redress, sir? Sir, sir, I tell you, sir, if you don't do me justice, I'll go on board and open my fire upon that scoundrelly Lady Jane."

Now this was something like a gasconade, as our irritated friend happened to have but three quakers (wooden guns) on each side, that certainly were not equal to the merits of that apocryphal good dog, that could bark, though not bite—however, they looked as if they could.

“You had better,” said Captain Reud, “go on board the Lady Jane, and, if you are man enough, give the master a hiding.”

“If I’m man enough!” said he, jumping with his shot into his boat, with ireful alacrity. Shortly after, taking my glass, I looked at the Lady Jane, and sure enough there was a pugilistic encounter proceeding on her quarter-deck, with all that peculiar *goût* that characterizes Englishmen when engaged in that amusement.

In answer to the signal of the Falcon, which was astern of all the convoy, and between it and the gigantic schooner, “Shall I chase?” we replied, “No.” By this time we had thrashed our convoy into something like silence and good order. We then signalled to them to close round the Falcon, and heave to. To the Falcon “to protect convoy.”

We had now been some time 'at quarters, and every thing was ready for chasing and fighting. But the fun had already begun to the northward. Our second man-of-war brig, the *Curlew*, had closed considerably upon the felucca, which was evidently endeavouring to make the chase a windward one. The brig closed more upon her than she ought. It certainly enabled her to fire broadside after broadside upon her, but, as far as we could perceive, with little or no effect. In a short time the privateer contrived to get in the wind's eye of the man-of-war, and away they went. After the four ships that had been taken possession of, and which were each making a different course, we sent three of the boats—the barge, yawl and pinnace—under the command of Mr. Silva, in order to recapture them, of which there was every prospect, as the breeze was light, and would not probably freshen before ten o'clock; for however the captured vessels might steer, their courses must be weather ones, as if they had attempted to run to leeward, they must have crossed the body of the convoy.

Having now made our arrangements, we turned all our attention to leeward upon the large dark three-masted vessel, that still remained hove to, seeming to honour us with but little notice. She had taken possession of the finest and largest ship of the convoy.

Long as I have been narrating all these facts, I assure the reader they did not occupy ten minutes in action, including the episodic monomachia on board of the *Lady Jane*. Just as we had got the ship's head towards the stranger, with every stitch of canvas crowded upon her, and the eight-oared cutter, manned, armed, and manned, towing astern, they had got the captured West Indiaman before the wind, with every thing set. The stranger was not long following this example, but steered about a S. W. and by W. course, whilst his prize ran down nearly due south.

I have always found in the beginning, that the size of the chase is magnified, either by the expectations or the fears of the pursuers. At first, we had no doubt but that the flying vessel was a French frigate, as large, or nearly as

large, as ourselves. We knew from good authority, that a couple of large frigate-built ships had, evading our blockading cruisers, escaped from Brest, and were playing fine pranks among the West India islands. Every body immediately concluded the vessel in view to be one of them. If this conjecture should turn out true, there would be no easy task before us, seeing how much we had crippled ourselves, by sending away, in the boats, so many officers and men.

It now became a matter of earnest deliberation, to which of the two ships we should first turn our attention, as the probabilities were great against our capturing both. The Prince William, the captured West Indiaman, I have before said, was the largest and finest ship of the convoy. Indeed, she was nearly as large as ourselves, mounted sixteen guns, and we had made her a repeating ship, and employed her continually in whipping in the bad sailors.

The chase after her promised to be as long as would have been the chase after the Frenchman.

Mr. Farmer, who was all for fighting, and

getting his next step of promotion, was for nearing the West Indiaman a little more, sending the cutter to take possession, and then do our best to capture the frigate. Now, the cutter pulled eight oars, there were two good looking jollies with their muskets between their knees stuck up in the bows, six in the stern sheets, Mr. Pridhomme, the enamoured master's mate, and the Irish young gentleman, who had seen as much service and as many years as myself, with the coxswain, who was steering. Mr. Farmer, of course, measured every body's courage by his own; but I think it was taxing British intrepidity a little too much, to expect that nineteen persons, in broad daylight, should chase in an open boat, and which must necessarily pull up a long stern pull of perhaps two or three hours, exposed to the fire of those on board, and then afterwards, supposing that nobody had been either killed or wounded by the ball practice that would have been certainly lavished on the attacking party, to get alongside, and climb up the lofty side of a vessel, as

high out of the water as a fifty gun ship. We say nothing of the guns that might have been loaded by the captors with grape, and the number of men that would infallibly be placed to defend and to navigate so noble a vessel.

Captain Reud weighed all this, and decided upon making, with the frigate, the re-capture first, and then trusting to Providence for the other, for which decision, which I thought most sound, he got black looks from the first lieutenant and some of the officers, and certain hints were whispered of *dark* birds sometimes showing white feathers.

The sequel proved that the captain acted with the greatest judgment. To our utter astonishment, we came up hand over hand with a vessel, which we before had shrewd suspicions, could, going free, sail very nearly as well as ourselves. Of course, we were now fast leaving the convoy; we found that the felucca had worked herself dead to windward, and was, by this time, nearly out of gun-shot of the Curlew, and, that the *faineant* strange

schooner had now made sail, and on such a course as approximated her fast to the other privateer.

The large vessel, perceiving our attention solely directed to the capture, shortened sail and made demonstrations of rescue. At this, Mr. Farmer grinned savage approbation, and, not yet having had a good view of her hull, we all thought, from her conduct, that she was conscious of force. We were, therefore, doubly on the alert in seeing every thing in the very best order for fighting. The bulkheads of the captain's cabin were knocked down, and the sheep, pigs, and poultry, gingerly ushered into the hold, preparatory to the demolition of their several pens, styes, and coops, on the main deck. All this I found very amusing, but I must confess to a little anxiety, and younker as I was, I knew, if we came to action, that the eighty or ninety men, away in the boats, would be very severely felt. I was also sorry for the absence of Mr. Silva, as I had a great, yet puerile curiosity to see how a man that had written a book would fight.

The run of an hour and a half brought us nearly alongside the Prince William, when we expected, at the least, a ten hours' chase. It was well we came up so soon; the Frenchman had clapped forty as ill-looking, savage vagabonds on board of her, as ever made a poor fellow walk the plank. They had fully prepared themselves for sinking the cutter, as soon as she should come alongside, and her means for doing so were most ample.

As our prisoners came up the sides, we soon discovered by the shabby, faded, and rent uniforms of the two officers among them, that they belonged to the French imperial service. They bore their reverse of fortune, notwithstanding they belonged to a philosophical nation, with a very despicable philosophy. They stamped with rage, and ground their *sacres* unceasingly between their teeth. They could not comprehend how so fine a looking vessel should sail so much like a haystack. The mystery was, however, soon solved. The third mate, with about half a dozen men, had been left on board of her, and the provident and

gallant young fellow had, whilst the Frenchmen were so pre-occupied in preparing to resist the threatened attack of the boat, contrived to pass, unobserved, overboard from the bows, a spare sail, loaded with shot, that effectually had checked the ship's way. Had the Frenchmen turned their attention to that part of the vessel, without they had examined narrowly, they would have perceived nothing more than a rope towing overboard. He certainly ought to have shared with us prize-money for the recapture; but, after all, he sustained no great loss by not having his name down on the prize-list, as nobody but the captain ever got any thing for what we did that day. He, lucky dog, got his share in advance, many said much more, for appointing the Messrs. Isaiah sons and Co. as our agents. They got the money, and then, as the possession of much cash (of other people's) is very impoverishing, they became bankrupts, paid nothing-farthing in the pound, were very much commiserated, and the last that we heard of them was, that they were living like

princes in America, upon the miserable wreck of their (own?) property.

We made, of course, most anxious and most minute inquiries of Messieurs les François, as to the class of vessel to which they belonged, and which we were, in turn, preparing to pursue. As might be expected, we got from them nothing but contradictory reports, but they all agreed in giving us the most conscientious and disinterested advice, not to think of irritating her, as we should most certainly be blown out of the water. We read this backwards. If she were strong enough to take us, it was their interest that we should engage her, and thus their liberation would be effected.

As it was, notwithstanding these many occurrences, only eight A. M., when we made the recapture, and as the convoy were all still in sight, we only put six men in the Prince William, which, in addition to the English still on board, were sufficient to take her to the Curlew, near which vessel the merchantmen

had all nestled, and orders were transmitted to her commanding officer to see that men enough were put on board the recapture to insure her safety.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ralph maketh acquaintance with bloody instruments, and boweth to the iron messengers of death; and is taught to stand fire, by being nearly knocked down.

WE now pressed the ship with every stitch of canvas that we could set. We had already learned the name of our friend in the distance; it was the Jean Bart. Indeed, at this time, almost every fourth French vessel in those seas, if its occupation was the cutting of throats, was a "Jean Bart." However, Jean Bart, long before we had done with the Prince William, had spread a cloud of canvas, a dark one it is true, and had considerably increased his dis-

tance from us. It was a chase dead before the wind. By nine o'clock the breeze had freshened. I don't know how it could be otherwise, considering the abundance of wishing and votive whistling. At ten, we got a good sight of Johnny Crapaud's hull from the maintop, and found out that she was no frigate. I was not at all nervous before, but I must confess, at this certainty, my courage rose considerably. I narrowly inspected the condition of the four after-quarter-deck guns, my charge, and was very impressive on the powder-boys as to the necessity of activity, coolness, and presence of mind.

Dr. Thompson now came on deck, very much lamenting the disordered rites of his breakfast. The jocular fellow invited me down into the cockpit to see his preparations, in order, as he said, to keep up my spirits, by showing me what excellent arrangements he had made for trepanning my skull, or lopping my leg, should any accident happen to me. I attended him. What with the fearnought* screens, and other precautions against fire, it was certainly the

* An amazingly thick cloth, of a woollen texture.

hottest place in which I had yet ever been. The dim, yellow, yet sufficient light from the lanterns, gave a lurid horror to the various ghastly and blood-greedy instruments that were ostentatiously displayed upon the platform. Crooked knives, that the eye alone assured you were sharp, seemed to be twisting with a living anxiety to embrace and separate your flesh; and saws appeared to grin at me, which to look upon, knowing their horrid office, actually turned my teeth on edge. There were the three assistant surgeons, stripped to their shirts, with their sleeves tucked up ready, looking anxious, keen, and something terrified. As to the burly doctor, with his huge, round, red face, and his coarse jokes, he abstracted something from the romantic terrors of the place; but added considerably to the disgust it excited, as he strongly reminded me of a carcase butcher in full practice.

No doubt, his amiable purpose, in bringing me to his den, was to frighten me, and enjoy my fright. Be that as it may, I took the matter as coolly as the heat of the place would

permit me. The first lesson in bravery is to assume the appearance of it; the second to sustain the appearance, and the third will find you with all that courage "that doth become a man."

By noon we had a staggering breeze. We could now perceive that we were chasing a large corvette, though from the end-on view we had of her, we could not count her ports. The *Eos* seemed to fly through the water. She bowed not to the waves before her, but dashed them indignantly aside. She appeared, in her majestic spirit, to say to the winds, "I obey not your impulse. I await not your assistance. I lead you. Follow." To the sea, "Level before me your puny waves. Let them rush after in my path—let them bow down as I pass on." To the clouds, "Come, we will run a race—we will strive together in the pride of our speed. The far-off isles of the south shall be our goal, and the rainbow the coronet of triumph." Well she bore herself and right gallantly on that day.

At one o'clock the spars began to complain—

preventer braces were rove, but no one thought of shortening sail. Away ! away ! Is not this hunting of a flying foe glorious ? Achilles, throbbed not with irrepressible exultation thine iron-bound breast as thou chasedst the flying Hector round the walls of his deserted Troy ? But canst thou, heaven-descended warrior that thou art, compare thy car to ours ? The winged winds are our coursers—the ocean waves our chariot wheels—and unbounded space our unlimited course. Away ! away !

At two o'clock we had risen the Jean Bart, so as to clear her broadside from the water's edge, as seen from our decks. The appetites of the doctor and purser had risen in proportion. They made a joint and disconsolate visit to the galley. All the fires were put out. The hens were cackling and the pigs grunting in dark security among the water-casks. Miserable men ! there was no prospect of a dinner. They were obliged to do detestable penance upon cold fowl and ham, liquefied with nothing better than claret, burgundy, and the small solace derivable from the best brandy, mixed

with filtrated water in most praiseworthy moderation.

At three o'clock we had the Jean Bart perfectly in sight, and we could, from the foreyard, observe well the motions of those on deck. The master was broiling his very red nose over his sextant in the forestay-sail netting, when it was reported that the Frenchman was getting aft his two long brass bow chasers; and, in half an hour after, we had the report from the said brass bellows themselves, followed by the whistling of the shot, one wide of the ship, but the other smack through our foresail, and which must first have passed very near the nose of our respectable master.

Most of the officers, myself with the rest, were standing on the forecastle. Though not the first shot that I had seen fired in anger, it certainly was the first that had ever hissed by me. This first salute is always a memorable epoch in the life of a soldier or sailor. By the rent the shot made in the foresail, it could not have passed more than two yards

directly over my head. I was taken by surprise. Every body knows that the rushing that the shot makes is excessively loud. As the illustrious stranger came on board with so much pomp and ceremony, I, from the impulse of pure courtesy, could not do otherwise than bow to it; for which act of politeness the first lieutenant gave me a very considerably tingling box of the ear.

My angry looks, my clenched fists, and my threatening attitude, told him plainly that it was no want of spirit that made me duck to the shot. Just as I was passionately exclaiming, "Sir—I—I—I—" Captain Reud put his hand gently on my shoulder, and said, "Mr. Rattlin, what are you about? Mr. Farmer, that blow was not deserved. I, sir," said he, drawing himself up proudly, "ducked to the first shot. Many a fine fellow that has bobbed to the first has stood out gallantly to the last. What could you expect, Mr. Farmer, from such a mere boy? And to strike him! Fie upon it! That blow, if the lad had weak

nerves, though his spirit were as brave as Nelson's, and as noble as your namesake's, that foul blow might have cowed him for ever."

"They are getting ready to fire again," was now reported from the foreyard.

"Here, Rattlin," continued the captain, "take my glass, seat yourself upon the hammock-cloths, and tell me if you can make out what they are about."

Two flashes, smoke, and then the rushing of the shot, followed by the loud and ringing report of the brass guns, and of the reverberation of metal, was heard immediately beneath me. One of the shot had struck the fluke of the anchor in the forechains.

"There, Mr. Farmer," said the captain exultingly, "did you mark that? I knew it—I knew it, sir. He neither moved nor flinched—even the long tube that he held to his eye never quivered for an instant. Oh! Mr. Farmer, if you have the generous heart I give you credit for, never, never again strike a youngster for bobbing at the first, or even the fifth shot."

"I was wrong, sir," was the humble reply, "I am sorry that I should have given you occasion to make this *public* reprimand."

"No, Farmer," said the little creole very kindly. "I did not mean to reprimand, only to remonstrate. The severest reprimand was given you by Mr. Rattlin himself."

I could, at that moment, have hugged the little yellow-skinned captain, wicked as I knew him to be, and stood unmoved the fire of the grape of a twenty-gun battery.

But was I not really frightened at the whistling of the shot?

Yes; a little.

CHAPTER XV.

It's well to have a long spoon when one sips soups with the devil—The captain's shot seldom misses—It is not always pleasant to have a clean shirt to one's back, very amply proved—And the best method of viewing an affair is to see it to your own advantage.

It is always a greater proof of courage to stand fire coolly than to fire. Captain Reud, I must suppose, wished to try the degree of intrepidity of his officers, by permitting the chase to give us several weighty objections against any more advance of familiarity on our parts. A quarter of a century ago there were some very strange notions prevalent in the navy, among which none was more common, than that the firing

of the bow guns *materially* checked the speed of the vessel. The captain and the first lieutenant both held this opinion. Thus we continued to gain upon the corvette, and she, being emboldened by the impunity with which she cannonaded us, fired the more rapidly and with greater precision, as our rent sails and ravelled running rigging began to testify.

I was rather impatient at this apparent apathy on our parts. Mr. Burn, the gunner, seemed to more than participate in my feelings. Our two bow guns were very imposing-looking magnates. They would deliver a message at three miles distance, though it were no less than a missive of eighteen pounds avoirdupois; and we were now barely within half that distance. Mr. Burn was particularly excellent at two things, a long shot and the long bow. In all the ships that I have sailed, I never yet met with his equal at a cool, embellished, intrepid lie, or at the accuracy of his ball practice. Baron Munchausen would have found no mean rival in him at the former; and were duels fought with eighteen pounders, Lord

Camelford would have been remarkably polite in the company of our master of projectiles.

I was upon the point of writing that Mr. Burn was *burning* with ardour. I see it written—it is something worse than a pun—therefore, *per omnes modos et casus*—heretical and damnable—consequently, I beg the reader to consign it to the oblivion with which we cover our bad actions, and read thus. The gunner was burning with impatience to show the captain what a valuable officer he commanded. The two guns had long been ready, and with the lanyard of the lock in his right hand, and the rim of his glazed hat in his left, he was continually saying, “Shall I give her a shot now, Captain Reud?”

The answer was as provokingly tautologous as a member of parliament’s speech, who is, in aid of the whipper-in, speaking against time. “Wait a little, Mr. Burn.”

“Well, Mr. Rattlin,” said the fat doctor, blowing himself up to me, “so you have been knighted—on the deck of battle too—knight banneret of the order of the light bobs.”

I was standing with the captain's glass to my eye, looking over the hammocks. In order to get near me he had been obliged to cling hold of the hammock-rails with both hands, so that his huge, round, red face, just peeped above the tarpaulin hammock-cloths, his chin resting upon them, no bad type of an angry sun showing his face above the rim of a black cloud, through a London November fog.

"Take care, doctor," I sang out, for I had seen the flashings of the enemy's guns.

"Light bobs," said the jeering doctor; when away flew the upper part of his hat, and down he dropped on the deck, on that part which nature seems to have purposely padded in order to make the fall of man easy.

"No light bob, however," said I.

The doctor arose, rubbing with an assiduity that strongly reminded me of my old school-master, Mr. Root.

"To your station, doctor," said the captain harshly.

"Spoilt a good hat in trying to make a bad joke;" and he shuffled himself below.

"Your gig, Captain Reud, cut all to shivers," said a petty officer.

This was the unkindest cut of all. As we were approaching Barbadoes, the captain had caused his very handsome gig to be hoisted in from over the stern, placed on the thwarts of the launch, and it had been in that position, only the day before, very elaborately painted. The irritated commander seized hold of the lanyard of one of the eighteen-pounders, exclaiming at the same time, "Mr. Burn, when you have got your sight, fire!"

The two pieces of artillery simultaneously roared out their thunders, the smoke was driven aft immediately, and down toppled the three topmasts of the corvette. The falling of those masts was a beautiful sight. They did not rush down impetuously, but stooped themselves gradually and gracefully, with all their clouds of canvas. A swan in mid air, with her drooping wings broken by a shot, slowly descending, might give you some idea of the view. But after the descent of the multitudinous sails, the beauty was wholly des-

troyed. Where before there careered gallantly and triumphantly before the gale a noble ship, now nothing but a wreck appeared painfully to trail along laboriously its tattered and degraded ruins.

"What do you think of that shot, Mr. Farmer?" said the little captain, all exultation. "Pray, Mr. Rattlin, where did Mr. Burn's shot fall?"

"*One* of the shot struck the water about half a mile to port, sir," said I, for I was still at my post watching the proceedings.

"O Mr. Burn! Mr. Burn! what could you be about? It is really shameful to throw away his Majesty's shot in that manner. O Mr. Burn!" said the captain, more in pity than in anger.

Mr. Burn looked ridiculously foolish.

"O Mr. Burn," said I, "is this all you can show to justify your bragging?"

"If ever I fire a shot with the captain again," said the mortified gunner, "may I be rammed, crammed, and jammed in a mortar, and blown to atoms."

In the space of a quarter of an hour we were alongside of the *Jean Bart*. She mounted twenty-two guns, was crowded with a dirty crew, and after taking out most of them, and sending plenty of hands on board, in two hours more we had got up her spare topmasts.

Before dark, every thing appeared to be as if nothing had occurred, with the exception of the captain's gig and the doctor's hat ; and hauling our wind, in company with our prize, we made sail towards that quarter in which we had left our convoy.

I am going to mention a very trivial anecdote ; but, as it is one of those curious coincidences, upon which are grounded so much superstition, I may be pardoned for narrating it. After the topmasts of the prize had fallen, every body had run below in the *Jean Bart*, with the exception of the captain, and two or three of the officers. The captain had taken the wheel, and still kept his vessel before the wind. When we were close upon her, we had hailed him several times to broach to, but either not hearing, or

not understanding, there was no attention paid to our commands. The consequence was, a half dozen marines were ordered to fire into her. This had the desired effect. Of the four or five persons still on her decks, the captain was the only one struck. The ball passed through his right arm. He then let go the wheel immediately, and the ship came, with her yards all square, and the wreck hanging about her, right into the wind.

When the French commander was having his wound dressed in the gun-room, he continued sacré-ing between his teeth, *cette maudite chemise*. The ball had passed clean through his arm, and not half an inch from the spot there were two scars, the marks that showed the passage of another ball, and on the shirt that he had on were the corresponding orifices.

This is the story of the shirt, which we had from his own mouth, and which he told the officers without much appearance of shame. The few French vessels then upon the seas were hunted about without intermission. They

could rarely make any of the few friendly ports that were open to them; and, in the West Indies, every harbour was in the hands of their enemies. Consequently, linen of any sort was a great luxury. About two years before, the French captain had boarded and taken possession of an English merchant vessel, on board of which there was a body of a young gentleman, who had, the day before, died of a consumption. He was attended by an old black woman, indeed, her age was almost as much beyond belief as were her activity and strength. She had nursed this young gentleman's father, and his father, and felt a sort of canine devotion for every one bearing the family name. She had dressed out the body in the best linen shirt that she could find.

As the French captain had no idea of running into Antigua in order that the rites of sepulture should be paid to the departed plantation proprietor, he ordered the corpse, amidst the imprecations of the old negress, to have a shot attached to it, and to be thrown overboard. Not wishing to lose a good shirt, when shirts

were so very scarce, he had it removed from the body, as he thought any old canvass was good enough to sink a corpse in. The horror of the negress at this profanation was intense, and she cursed him with all the bitterness of hate and revenge. Among other things, she wished that every time he put it on, it might bring disgrace and ruin upon his head, wither the strength of his right arm, and be stained with his best blood. Protected as this shirt was by the maledictions of the venerable of years, he had put it on but twice, at the interval of a year. Each time he had been wounded in the right arm, each time been ruined, and each time lost his ship.

Three times is generally considered fatal in similar affairs; but whether he experienced this fatality, I know not. I can only vouch for as much as I have related. Methinks a very pretty nautical drama might be made out of this anecdote, entitled "The Fatal Shirt," or "The Curse of the Oboe Woman." If any manager is inclined to be liberal, my tale and my talents are entirely at his service.

At daylight, next morning, we found our-

selves again with our convoy. Mr. Silva had recaptured the four vessels taken by the felucca. The Falcon hove in sight about mid-day. She had chased the felucca well to windward, when the immense large schooner had intruded herself as a third in the party, and she and the felucca, as well as I could understand, had united and gave the man-of-war brig a pretty considerable tarnation licking, as brother Jonathan hath it.

She certainly made a very shattered appearance, and had lost several men. However, in the official letter of the commander to Captain Reud, all this was satisfactorily explained. He had beaten them both, and they had struck; but owing to night coming on before he could take possession of them, they had most infamously escaped in the darkness. However, it did not much signify, as they were now, having struck, lawful prizes to any English vessel that could lay hold of them. I thought at the time that there was no doubt of *that*.

The next day we made the land. The low

island of Barbadoes had the appearance of a highly-cultivated garden, and the green look so refreshing in a hot country, and so dear to me, as it reminded me of England.

CHAPTER XVI.

A naval dinner with its consequences—A naval argument with its consequences also—The way down the river paved at last, and the progress and the person of the unfortunate paviour finally arrested.

I HAVE no intention of repeating the oft-repeated description of the West India islands. What is personal to me I shall relate: of course, incidentally I may be drawn in to describe what has struck me as peculiar to these very favoured regions. We made but a short stay at "little England," as the Barbadians fondly call their verdant plat, and then ran down through all the Virgin islands, leaving parts of our convoy at their various destinations. Our re-

captured vessels, with a midshipman in each, also went to the ports to which they were bound. When we were abreast of the island of St. Domingo, our large convoy was reduced to about forty, all of which were consigned to the different ports of Jamaica. Our prize corvette was still in company, as we intended to take her to Port Royal.

We were all in excellent humour: luxuriating in the anticipation of our prize-money, and somewhat glorious in making our appearance in a manner so creditable to ourselves and profitable to the admiral on the station. All this occupied our minds so much, that we had hardly opportunity to think of persecution. But some characters can always find time for mischief, especially when mischief is but another name for pleasure. The activity which Mr. Silva had displayed in making the recaptures had gained him much respect with his messmates, and seemed to *pave the way* for a mutual good understanding.

What I am now going to relate could not, by any possibility, happen in the naval service of

the present day. Let no one, therefore, suppose that in recording things that actually occurred, I am disseminating a libel against the profession, amongst the members of which I passed the happiest days of my life, in whom I have ever found the most chivalrous honour, the most unbounded generosity, and feelings the most remote from that all-pervading selfishness, which is the bane of the social circle, and the besetting sin of the times, at least in England. The little that is good, the very little upon which I pride myself, that my character gathered up, was gained amidst the toils, the dangers, and the constantly occurring privations of my ocean life: had the profession, however, been then improved, in many particulars, to what it now is, I make no doubt that it would have had a beneficial effect upon me. But no profession, drill the body and awe the mind as it may, can destroy identity of character. Discipline and coercion will, and always do, modify it; but the more the submission of the lower grades of any social pact is complete, the controlling power must necessarily be the more haughty, the more

wilful, and, too often, becomes the more insolent.

To show the navy as it was, and to point out some of its insolences of office, instead of being a libel, is a compliment to the navy that now is. The affair that drove poor Silva out of the service can never recur; but it may not be amiss to relate it, as it is, in some measure, a justification for that curtailment of the mere wantonness of power in the commanding officer, that now, much to the annoyance of many worthy old tars, exists. It will also show to those who delight in tracing the philosophy of the mind, the rampant course of the passions, when an individual supposes himself above the consideration of the feelings of others, and released from every responsibility, even that of opinion; for opinion dared not make itself heard on board of a man of war then, and even now, and properly too, is wholesomely checked by the contemplation of danger.

The second lieutenant was invited to dinner with his two constant quizzers, the fat doctor and the acute purser, just as we had made the

east end of Jamaica. I, it having been my forenoon watch, was consequently invited with the officer of it. We had lately been too much occupied to think of annoying each other; but those who unfortunately think that they have a prescriptive right to be disagreeable, and have a single talent that way, (the most common of talents,) seldom violate the advice of the Scripture, that warns us, not to hide that one talent in a napkin.

We found our sarcastic little skipper in the blandest and most urbane humour. He received me with a courtesy that almost made me feel affection for him. We found Mr. Farmer, the first lieutenant, with him, and had it not been for a sly twinkling of the eye of the captain, and very significant looks that now and then stole from Mr. Farmer, as he caught the expression of his commander's countenance, I should have thought that that day there was no "minching malicho," or any thing like mischief meant. There were but five of us sat down to table, yet the dinner was superb. We had, or rather the captain, supplied himself

now with all the luxuries of a tropical climate, and those of the temperate were, though he could boast of little temperance, far from exhausted. We had turtle dressed different ways, though our flat friend made his first appearance in the guise of an appetising soup. We had stewed guanna, a large sort of delicious lizard, that most amply repairs the offence done to the eye by his unsightly appearance, in conciliating in a wonderful manner all those minute yet important nerves that Providence has so bountifully and so numerously spread over the palate, the tongue, and the uvula. The very contemplation of this beneficent arrangement is enough to make a swearing boatswain pious.

We lacked neither fish, beef, nor mutton; though it is true, that the carcasses of the sheep, after having been dressed by the butcher and hung up under the half deck, gave us the consolation of knowing, that while there was a single one on board, we should never be in want of a poop lantern, so delicately thin and transparent were the teguments that united the ribs. Indeed, when properly stretched, the

body would have supplied the place of a drum, and but little paring away of flesh would have fitted the legs and shoulders for drumsticks. Of fowls we had every variety, and the curries were excellent. Reud kept two experienced cooks; one was an Indian, well versed in all the mysteries of spices and provocatives, the other a Frenchman, who might have taken a high degree in Baron Rothschild's kitchen, which Hebrew kitchen is, we understand, the best appointed in the Christian world. The rivals sometimes knocked a pot or so over, with its luscious contents, in their contests for precedence, for cooks and kings have their failings in common; but, I must confess, that their Creole master always administered even-handed justice, by very scrupulously flogging them both.

Well, we will suppose the dinner done, and the West Indian dessert on the table, and that, during the repast, the suavity of our host had been exemplary. He found some means of putting each of us on good terms with himself.

At how little expense we can make each other happy !

The refreshing champagne had circulated two or three times, and the pine-apples had been scientifically cut by the sovereign hand of the skipper, who now, in his native regions, seemed to have taken to himself an increased portion of life. All this time, nothing personal or in the least offensive had been uttered. The claret, that had been cooling all day, by the means of evaporation in one of the quarter galleries, was produced, and the captain ordered a couple of bottles to be placed to each person with the exception of myself. Having thrown his legs upon another chair than that on which he was sitting, he commenced, " Now, gentlemen, let us enjoy ourselves. We have the means before us, and we should be very silly not to employ them. In a hot country, I don't like the trouble of passing the bottle."

" It is a great trouble to me, when it is a full one," said Dr. Thompson.

" Besides, the bustle and the exertion de

stroys the continuity of high-toned and intellectual conversation," said Captain Reud, with amiable gravity.

"It is coming now," thought I. Lieutenant Silva looked at first embarrassed, and then a little stern; it was evident, that that which the captain was pleased to designate as highly-toned intellectual conversation was, despite his literary attainments, and the *pas* of superiority the publishing a book had given him, no longer to the author's taste.

"I have been thinking," said Captain Reud, placing the fore finger of his left hand, with an air of great profundity, on the left side of his nose, "I have been thinking of the very curious fatality that has attached itself to Mr. Silva's excellent work."

"Under correction, Captain Reud," said Silva, "if you would permit this unfortunate work to sink into the oblivion that perhaps it too much merits, you would confer upon me, its undeserving author, an essential favour."

"By no means. I see no reason why I may not be proud of the book, and proud of the

author (Mr. Silva starts;) providing the book be a good book; indeed, it is a great thing for me to say, that I have the honour to command an officer who has printed a book; the mere act evinces great *nerve*." (Mr. Silva winces.)

"And," said the wicked purser, "Captain Reud, you must be every way the gainer by this. The worse the book, the greater the courage. If Mr. Silva's wit——"

"You may test my wit by my book, Mr. ——, if you choose to read it," and the author looked scornfully, "and my courage, when we reach Port Royal," and the officer looked magnificently.

"No more of this," said the captain. "I was going to observe, that perhaps I am the only officer on the station, or even in the fleet, that has under my command a live author, with the real book that he has published. Now, Mr. Silva, we are all comfortable here—no offence is meant to you—only compliment and honour; will you permit us to have it read to us at the present meeting? we will be all attention. We

will not deprive you of your wine—give the book to the youngker.”

“If you will be so kind, Captain Reud, to promise for yourself and the other gentlemen, to raise no discussion upon any particular phrase that may arise.”

The captain did promise. We shall presently see how that promise was kept. The book was sent for, and placed in my hands. Now, I fully opined, that, at least we should get past the second page. I was curiously mistaken.

“Here, steward,” said the skipper, “place half-a-bottle of claret near Mr. Rattlin. When your throat is dry, youngker, you can whet your whistle; and when you come to any particularly fine paragraph, you may wash it down with a glass of wine.”

“If that’s the case, sir, I think, with submission, I ought to have my two bottles before me also; but, if I follow your directions implicitly, Captain Reud, I may get drunk in the first chapter.”

Mr. Silva thanked even a midshipman, with a look of real gratitude, for this diversion in

his favour. I had begun to like the man, and there might have been a secret sympathy between us, as one day it was to be my fate to write myself, author.

Having adjusted ourselves into the most comfortable attitudes that we could assume, I began, as Lord Ogleby hath it, with good emphasis and good discretion," to read the "Tour up and down the Rio de la Plate." Before I began, the Captain had sent for the master, and the honourable Mr. B——, so I had a very respectable audience.

I had no sooner finished the passage, "After we had paved our way down the river," than with one accord, and evidently by preconcert, every one, stretching forth his right hand, as do the witches in Macbeth, roared out, "stop!" It was too ludicrous. My eyes ran with tears, as I lay down the book, with outrageous laughter. Mr. Silva started to his feet, and was leaving the cabin, when he was *ordered* back by Captain Reud. An appearance of amicability was assumed, and to the old argument they went, baiting the poor author like a bear

tied to a stake. Debating is a thirsty affair; the two bottles to each, and two more, quickly disappeared; the wine began to operate, and with the combatants, discretion was no longer the better part of valour.

Whilst words fell fast and furious, I observed something about eight feet long and one high, on the deck of the cabin, covered with the ensign. It looked much like a decorated seat. Mr. Silva would not admit the phrase to be improper, and consequently his associates would not permit the reading to proceed. During most of this time the captain was convulsed with laughter, and, whenever he saw the commotion at all lulling, he immediately, by some ill-timed remark, renewed it to its accustomed fury. At length, as the seamen say, they all had got a cloth in the wind—the captain two or three, and it was approaching the time for beating to quarters. The finale, therefore, as previously arranged, was acted. Captain Reud rose, and steadying himself on his legs, by placing one hand on the back of his chair, and the other on the shoulder of the gentleman that sat next to

him, spoke thus :—"Gentlemen—I'm no scholar—that is—you comprehend fully—on deck, there—don't keep that d——d trampling—and put me me out—where was I?"

"Please sir," said I, "you were saying you were no scholar."

"I wasn't—couldn't have said so. I had the best of educations—but all my masters were dull—d——d dull—so they couldn't teach a quick lad, like me, too quick for them—couldn't overtake me with their d——d learning. I'm a straightforward man. I've common sense—com——common sense. Let us take a common sense view of this excruciation—ex—ex—I mean exquisite argument. Gentlemen, come here," and the captain between two supporters, and the rest of the company, with Mr. Silva, approached the mysterious-looking, elongated affair, that lay, like the corpse, covered with the Union Jack, of some lanky giant, who had run himself up into a consumption by a growth too rapid. The doctor and purser, who were doubtlessly in the secret, wore each a look of the most perplexing gravity, the captain one

of triumphant mischief; the rest of us one of the most unfeigned wonder.

"If," spluttered out Captain Reud, see-sawing over the yet concealed thing. "If, Mr Paviour, you can pave your way down a river——"

"My name, sir, is Don Alphonso Ribidiero da Silva," said the annoyed lieutenant, with a dignified bow.

"Well, then, Don Alphonso Ribs-are-dear-o damned Silva, if you can pave your way down a river, let us see how you can pave it in a small way down this *hog-trough* full of water," plucking away, with the assistance of his confederates, the ensign that covered it.

"With fools' heads," roared out the exasperated, and I fear, not very sober, Portuguese.

Though I was close by, I could not fully comprehend the whole manœuvre. The captain was head and shoulders immersed in the filthy trough, which uncleaned was taken from the manger, that part of the main deck directly under the forecastle, and filled with salt water. The doctor and purser had taken a greater

lurch, and fallen over it, sousing their white waistcoats, and well-arranged shirt frills, in the dirty mixture. The rest of us contrived to keep our legs. The ship was running before the wind, and rolling considerably, and the motion aided by the wine, and the act of plucking aside the flag *might* have precipitated the captain into his unenviable situation—he thought otherwise. No sooner was he placed upon his feet, and his mouth sufficiently clear from the salt water decoction of hog-wash—than he collared the poor victim of persecution, and spluttered out, “Mutiny—mu—mu—mutiny—sentry. Gentlemen, I call you all to witness, that Mr. Silva has laid violent hands upon me.”

The “paviour of ways” was immediately put under arrest, and a marine, with a drawn bayonet, placed at his cabin door, and the captain had to repair damages, vowing the most implacable vengeance for having been shoved into his own hog-trough. *Did ever any body know any good come of hoaxing?*

CHAPTER XVII.

The palisade banquet, and Major Flushfire's anthem to Yellow Jack—Who's afraid?—The sands of life's hour-glass will run out rapidly, unless well soaked with wine.

WE will despatch the object of persecution in a few words. Lieutenant Silva was given the option of a court-martial, or of exchanging into a sloop of war. He chose the latter. The captain and his messmates saw him over the side, two days after we had anchored in Port Royal. The spiteful commander purposely contrived, when his effects were whipped into the boat, that one of the heavy, suspicious-looking cases should be swung against the gun

and smashed. The result was exactly what we all expected. The water was strewn with copies, in boards, of the "Tour up and down the Rio de la Plate." They must certainly have been light reading, as they floated about triumphantly. "I wonder whether they will pave their way up to Kingston," said the captain, with a sneer.

As the author would not suffer them to be picked up, they sank, one by one, and disappeared, like the remembrance of their creator in the minds of his companions. We heard, a few weeks after, that he had died of the yellow fever, and thus he, with his books, was consigned to oblivion, or is only rescued from it, if haply this work do not share his fate, by this short memento of him.

Yellow fever! malignant consumer of the brave! how shall I adequately apostrophise thee? I have looked in thy jaundiced face, whilst thy maw seemed insatiate. But once didst thou lay thy scorched hand upon my frame, but the sweet voice of woman startled thee from thy prey, and the flame of love was

stronger than even thy desolating fire. But now is not the time to tell of this, but rather of the eagerness with which most of my companions sought to avoid thee.

Captain Reud had got, apparently, into his natural, as well as native, climate. The hotter it was, like a cricket, he chirped the louder, and enjoyed it the more. Young and restless, he was the personification of mischievous humour and sly annoyance. The tales he told of the fever were ominous, appalling, fatal. None could live who had not been seasoned, and none could outlive the seasoning. For myself, I might have been frightened, had I not been so constantly occupied in discussing pine-apples. But the climax was yet to be given to the fears of the fearful.

All the officers that could be spared from the ship were invited to dine with the mess of the 60th regiment, then doing duty at Kingston and Port Royal. That day, Captain Reud having been invited to dine with the admiral at the Penn, we were consequently deprived of his facetiousness. All the lieutenants and the ward-

room officers, with most of the midshipmen, were of the party. The master took charge of the frigate. Suppose us all seated at the long table, chequered red and blue, with Major Flushfire, the officer in command of the garrison, at the top of the table, all scarlet and gold, and our own dear Doctor Thompson, all scarlet and blue, at the bottom. These two gentlemen were wonderfully alike. The major's scarlet was not confined to his regimentals: it covered his face. There was not a cool spot in that flame-coloured region; the yellow of his eyes was blood-shot, and his nose was richly Bardolphian. The expression of his features was thirst; but it was a jovial thirst withal—a thirst that burned to be supplied, encouraged, pampered. The very idea of water was repugnant to it. Hydrophobia was written upon the major's brow.

We have described our rubicund doctor before. He always looked warm, but since his entrance into the tropics, he had been more than hot, he had been always steaming. There was almost a perceptible mist about him. His

visage possessed not the adust scorch of the major's; his was a moist heat; his cheeks were constantly parboiling in their own perspiration. He was a meet *croupier* for our host.

Ranged on each side of this noble pair were the long lines of very pale and anxious faces, (I really must except my own, for my face never looked anxious till I thought of marrying, or pale till I took to scribbling,) the possessors of which were experiencing a little the torment of Tantalus. The palisades, those graves of sand, turned into a rich compost by the ever-recurring burial, were directly under the windows, and the land-breeze came over them, chill and dank, in palpable currents, through the jalousies into the heated room; and, had one thrust his head into the moonlight and looked beneath, he would have seen hundreds of the shell-clad vampires, upon their long and contorted legs, moving hideously round, and scrambling horribly over newly-made mounds, each of which contained the still fresh corpse of a warrior, or of the land, or of the ocean. In a small way, your land-crab is a most indefatigable resurrectionist.

But there is retribution for their villany. They get eaten in their turn. Delicate feeding they are doubtlessly ; and there can be no manner of question, but that, at that memorable dinner a double banquet was going on, upon a most excellent principle of reciprocity. The epicure crab was feeding upon the dish, man, below, whilst epicure man was feeding upon the dished-up crab above. True, the guests knew it not ; I mean those who did not wear testaceous armour : the gentlemen in the coats of mail knew very well what they were about. It was, at the time of which I am speaking, a standing joke to make Johnny Newcome eat land-crab disguised in some savory dish. Thank God, that was more than a quarter of a century ago. We trust that the social qualities and the culinary refinements of the West Indians do not now march *à l'ecrivisse* and progress *à reculons*.

There we all sate, prudence coqueting with appetite, and the finest yellow curries contending with the direst thoughts of yellow fever. Ever and anon some amiable youth would dash off a bumper of claret with an air of desperate

bravery, and then turn pale at the idea of his own temerity. The most cautious were Scotch assistant-surgeons, and pale young ensigns who played the flute. The midshipmen feasted and feared. The major and the doctor kept on the "even tenor of their way," that is, they ate and drank *à l'envie*.

We will now suppose the king's health drank, with the hearty and loyal, God bless him! from every lip—the navy drank, and thanks returned by the doctor, with his mouth full of vegetable marrow—the army drank, and thanks returned by the major, after clearing his throat with a bumper of brandy—and after "Rule Britannia" had ceased echoing along the now silent esplanade, that had been thundered forth with such energy by the black band, an awful pause ensues. Our first lieutenant of marines rises, and, like conscience, "with a still small voice," thus delivers himself of the anxiety with which his breast was labouring.

"Major Flushfire, may I claim the privilege of the similar colour of our cloth to entreat the favour of your attention? Ah! heh!—but this

land-breeze—laden, perhaps, with the germs of the yellow—fever—mephitic—and all that—you understand me, Dr. Thompson?

“As much as you do yourself.”

“Thank you—men of superior education—sympathy—and all that—you understand me fully, major. Now this night-breeze coming through that half-open jalousie—miasmata—and all that. Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Thompson—medical pill—“pillars of the state”—you’ll pardon the classical allusion——”

“I won’t,” growled out the doctor.

“Ah—so like you—so modest—but don’t you think the draught is a little dangerous?”

“Do you mean the doctor’s, or this?” said the inattentive and thirsty major, fetching a deep breath, as he put down the huge glass tumbler of sangaree.

“O dear no!—I mean the night draught *through* the window.”

“The best way to dispose of it,” said the purser, nodding at the melting Galen.

“No,” replied Major Flushfire courteously, “there’s no danger in it at all—I like it.”

"Bless me, major," said the marine, "why it comes all in *gusts*."

"Like it all the better," rejoined the major, with his head again half buried in the sangaree glass.

"*De gustibus, non est disputandum*," observed Thompson.

"Very true," said the marine officer, looking sapiently. "That remark of yours about the *winds* is apposite. We ought to *dispute* their entrance, as you said in Latin. But is it quite fair, my dear doctor, for you and me to converse in Latin? We may be taking an undue advantage of the rest of the company."

"Greek! Greek!" said the purser.

"Aye, certainly—it was Greek to Mr. Smallcoates," muttered Thompson.

"To be sure it was," said the innocent marine. "Major Flushfire," continued he, once more on his legs, "may I again entreat the honour of your attention. Dr. Thompson has just proved, by a quotation from a Greek author, Virgil or Paracelsus, I am not certain which, that the entrance of the night air into a

hot room is highly injurious, and in—in—and all that. You understand me perfectly—would it be asking too much to have all the windows closed?”

“Ovens and furnaces!” cried out the chairman, starting up. “Look at me and worthy Doctor Thompson. Are we persons to enjoy a repetition of the Blackhole of Calcutta? The sangaree, Quasha — suffocation! The thought chokes me!” and he recommenced his devotions to the sangaree.

“It melts me,” responded the doctor, swabbing his face with the napkin.

“Are you afraid of taking cold?” said the purser to Mr. Smallcoates.

“Taking cold—let the gentleman take his wine,” said the major.

“I must confess I am not so much afraid of cold as of fever. I believe, major, you have been three years in this very singularly hot and cold climate. Now, my dear sir, may I tax your experience to tell us which is the better method of living? Some say temperance, carried out even to abstemiousness, is the safer

others, that the fever is best repelled by devil's punch, burnt brandy, and high living. Indeed, I may say that I speak at the request of my messmates. Do, major, give us your opinion."

"I think," said the man of thirst, "the medical gentlemen should be applied to in preference to an old soldier like myself. They have great practice in disposing of fever cases."

"But if we must die either of diet or the doctor, I am for knowing," said the purser, "not what doctor but what sort of diet is most dilatory in its despatch."

"Well, I will not answer the question, but state the facts. My messmates can vouch for the truth of them. Five years ago, and not three, I came out with a battalion of this regiment. We mustered twenty-five officers in all. We asked ourselves the very same question you have just asked of me. We split into two parties nearly even in number. Twelve of us took to water, temperance, and all manner of preservatives; the other thirteen of us led a harum-scarum life, ate whenever we were hun-

gry, and when we were not hungry, drank whenever we were thirsty, and when we were not thirsty, and, to create a thirst, we qualified our claret with brandy; and generally forgot the water, or substituted madeira for it, in making our punch. This portion of our body, like Jack Falstaff, was given to sleeping on bulkheads on moonlight nights, shooting in the midday sun, riding races, and sometimes, hem ! assisting—a—a—at drinking matches.”

Here the worthy soldier made a pause, appeared more thirsty than ever, scolded Quasha for not brandying his sangaree, and swigging it with the air of Alexander, when he proceeded to drain the cup that was fatal, he looked round with conscious superiority. The pale ensign looked more pale—the sentimental lieutenants more sentimental—many thrust their wine and their punch from before them, and there was a sudden competition for the water-jug. The marine carried a stronger expression than anxiety upon his features—it was consternation—and thus hesitatingly delivered himself:

“ And—so—so—sir—the bon vivants—de-

luded—poor deluded gentlemen! all perished—but—pardon me—delicate dilemma—but *yourself*, my good major.”

“Exactly, Mr. Smallcoates; and within the eighteen months.”

There was a perceptible shudder through the company, military as well as naval. The pure element became in more demand than ever, and those who did not actually push away their claret, watered it. The imperturbable major brandied his sangaree more potently.

“But,” said Mr. Smallcoates, brightening up, “the temperate gentlemen all escaped the contagion—*undoubtedly!*”

“I beg your pardon—*they all died within the year*. I alone remain of all the officers to tell the tale. The year eight was dreadful. Poor fellows!” The good major’s voice faltered, and he bent over his sangaree much longer than was necessary to enjoy the draught.

Blank horror passed her fearful glance from guest to guest. Even the rubicund doctor’s mouth was twitched awry. I did not quite like it myself.

"But I'm alive," said the major, rallying up from his bitter recollections, "and the brandy is just as invigorating, and the wine just as refreshing, as ever."

"The major *is* alive," said the marine officer, very sapiently. "Is that brandy before you, Mr. Farmer? I'll trouble you for it—I really feel this claret very cold upon my stomach. "Yes," he repeated, after taking down a tumbler full of half spirits, half wine, "the major *is* alive—and—so am I."

"The major is alive," went round the table; "let us drink his health in bumpers."

The major returned thanks, and volunteered a song. I begged it, and the reader may sing it as he pleases, though I shall please myself by recording how the major was pleased to have it sung.

"Gentlemen," said he, "you will do me the favour to fill a bumper of lemonade, and when I cry chorus, chorus me standing, with the glasses in your hands; and at the end of each chorus you will be pleased to remember, that the glass is to be drained. No heel-taps

after, and no daylight before. Now for it, my lads," and with a voice that must have startled the land crabs from their avocations, he roared out—

"Yellow Jack! Yellow Jack! hie thee back! hie thee back!

To thy damp, drear abode in the jungle;

I'll be sober and staid,

And drink LEMONADE,

Try and catch me—you'll make a sad bungle,

Yellow Jack!

"But he came, the queer thief, and he seiz'd my right hand,

And I writh'd and I struggled, yet could not withstand

His hot griping grasp, though I drank lemonade,—

He grinn'd and he clutch'd me, though sober and staid.

CHORUS, (*with increasing loudness.*)

"Yellow Jack! Yellow Jack! hie thee back! hie thee back!

To thy damp, drear abode in the jungle;

We'll be sober and staid,

And we'll drink lemonade,

Try and catch us—you'll make a sad bungle,

Yellow Jack! (*tremendously.*)

“ Bumpers of sangaree,” roared the major, and sang,

“ Yellow Jack ! Yellow Jack ! hie thee back ! hie thee back !

To thy pestilent swamp quickly hie thee,

For I ’ll drink SANGAREE,

Whilst my heart ’s full of glee,

In thy death-doing might I ’ll defy thee,

Yellow Jack !

“ But the fiend persever’d and got hold of my side,
How I burn’d, and I froze, and all vainly I tried
To get rid of his grasp—though I drank sangaree,
No longer my bosom exulted with glee.

CHORUS, (*still more loudly.*)

“ Yellow Jack ! Yellow Jack ! hie thee back ! hie thee back !

To thy pestilent swamp quickly hie thee,

For we ’ll drink sangaree,

Whilst our hearts throb with glee,

In thy death-doing might we defy thee,

Yellow Jack !”

After the sangaree, strong and highly spiced, had been quaffed, the excitement grew wilder, and the leader of our revels exclaimed at the top of his voice, “ Wine, gentlemen, wine—brimmers,” and thus continued—

“ Yellow Jack ! Yellow Jack ! hie thee back ! hie thee back !

Begone to thy father, old Sootie,

Pure WINE now I'll drink,

So Jack, I should think,

Of me thou wilt never make booty,

Yellow Jack !

“ But a third time he came, and seized hold of my head,

'Twas in vain that the doctor both blister'd and bled,

My hand, and my side, and my heart too, I think,

Would soon have been lost, though pure wine I might drink.

CHORUS.

“ Yellow Jack ! Yellow Jack ! hie thee back ! hie thee back !

Begone to thy father, old Sootie,

Pure wine now we'll drink,

So Jack, we should think,

Of us thou wilt never make booty,

Yellow Jack !

“ Brandy,” shouted the major. “ Brandy—he's a craven who shirks the call.” There was no one there craven but myself. My youth excused my apostasy from the night's orgies. The major resumed, his red face intensely hot and arid.

“ Yellow Jack ! Yellow Jack ! hie thee back ! hie thee
back !

To the helldam, Corruption, thy mother,

For with BRANDY I ’ll save

My heart, and thus brave

Thee, and fell Death, thine own brother,

Yellow Jack !

“ To brandy I took, and then Jack took his leave,

Brandy-punch and neat brandy drink morn, noon, and
eve,

At night drink, then sleep, and be sure, my brave
boys,

Nought will quell Yellow Jack, but neat brandy and
noise.

THE CHORUS, (*most uproariously.*)

“ Yellow Jack ! Yellow Jack ! hie thee back ! hie thee
back !

To the helldam, Corruption, thy mother,

For with brandy we ’ll save

Our hearts, and thus brave

Thee, and fell Death, thine own brother,

Yellow Jack !”

At last “ Yellow Jack” was thundered out
loud enough to awake his victims from the
palisades. The company were just then fit
for any thing, but certainly most fit for mis-

chief. Our first lieutenant intimated to me that the jolly-boat was waiting, to take the junior officers on board—considerate man—so I took the hint, marvelling much upon the scene that I had just witnessed.

Whether or not there was any mystic virtue in the exorcisory cantation of the previous night, I cannot determine; but it is certain, that next morning, though headaches abounded among our officers, indications of the yellow fever there were none.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Insubordination followed by elevation—A midshipman triced up in mid-air, and affording a practical lesson on oscillation—All truck and no barter.

BUT as it is not my intention to write a diary of my life, which was like all other midshipmen's lives in the West Indies, I shall pass over some months, during which we remained tolerably healthy, took many prizes, cut out some privateers, and spent money so rapidly gained, in a manner still more rapid.

Of my own messmates I remember but little. They were generally shockingly ignorant young men, who had left school too early, to whom

books were an aversion, and all knowledge, save that merely nautical, a derision. I had to go more often to fisty-cuffs with these youths, in defending my three-deckers—words of Latin or Greek derivation—than on any other occasion. I remember well that the word “idiosyncrasy” got me two black eyes, and my opponent as “pretty a luxation” of the shoulder by being tumbled down the main hatchway at the close of the combat, as any man of moderate expectations might desire. I was really obliged to mind my parts of speech. I know, that instead of using the obnoxious word, idiosyncrasy, I should have said, that Mr. So-and-so had “a list to port in his ideas.” I confess my error—my sin against elegance was great; but it must be said in extenuation, that then I was young and foolish.

However, I really liked my mode of life. Notwithstanding my occasional squabbles with my messmates upon my inadvertently launching a first-rate, I can safely say, I was beloved by every body—nor is the term too strong.

The captain liked me because I was always well dressed, of an engaging appearance, and a very handsome appendage to his gig, and aide-de-camp in his visits on shore; perhaps from some better motives—though certainly, amidst all his kindness to me, he once treated me most tyrannously.

The doctor and the purser liked me, because I could converse with them rationally upon matters not altogether nautical. The master almost adored me, because having a good natural talent for drawing, I made him plans of the hold, and the stowage of his tiers of water-casks, and sketches of headlands in his private log-book, to all which he was condescending enough to put his own name. The other superior officers thought me a very good sort of fellow, and my messmates liked me, because I was always happy and cheerful—and lent them money.

The crew, to a man, would have done any thing for me, because—(it was very foolish certainly)—I used, for some months, to cry

heartily when any of them were tied up. And afterwards, when I got rid of this weakness, I always begged as many of them off from the infliction of the lash, of Mr. Farmer, the first lieutenant, as I could. With him I could take the liberty, if I found him in a good humour; though I dared not with the captain; for, though the latter had some attachment for me, it was a dreadfully wayward and capricious feeling.

The longer I sailed with him the more occasion I had to dread, if not hate him. The poor man had no resources—it is not therefore surprising, that he began to have recourse to habitual ebriety. Then, under the influence of his wine, he would be gay, mischievous, tyrannical, and even cruel, according to the mood of the moment. Yet, at the worst, though his feet faltered, when in his cups, his tongue never did. He even grew eloquent under the vinous influence. It sharpened his cunning, and wonderfully increased his aptitude for mischief. It was a grievous calamity to all on board the

ship, that we could not give his mind healthful occupation. I said that he was fond of me, but I began to dread his affection, and to feel myself as being compelled to submit to the playful caresses of a tiger. As yet, not only had we not had the slightest difference, but he had often humoured me to the detriment of the service, and in defiance of the just discipline Mr. Farmer wished to maintain. If I presumed upon this, who shall blame such conduct in a mere boy? And then, Captain Reud was necessary to me. I found that I could not avail myself of my too ample allowance until he had endorsed my bills of exchange.

However, the concealed fang of the paw that had so often played with and patted me into vanity, was to wound me at length. It came upon me terribly, and entered deeply into my bosom.

I was learning to play chess of the purser—the game had already become a passion with me. It was also my turn to dine in the ward-room, and, consequently, I was invited. The

anticipated game at chess enhanced the value of the invitation. That same forenoon, the captain and I had been very sociable. He gracious, and I facetious—as I could. I had been giving him a history of my various ushers, and he had been pleased to be wonderfully amused. I was down in the midshipmen's berth: a full hour after I had received the ward-room invitation, the captain's steward shoved his unlucky head within the door, and croaked out, "Captain Reud's compliments to Mr. Rattlin, and desires his company to dinner to-day."

I answered carelessly, rather flippantly, perhaps, "Tell the captain I'm going to dine in the ward-room." I meant no disrespect, for I felt none. Perhaps the fellow who took back my answer worded it maliciously. I had totally forgotten, as soon as I had uttered my excusal, whether I had or had not used the word "compliments," or "respects,"—perhaps, thoughtlessly, neither one nor the other.

I dined in the ward-room, enjoyed my chess, and, good easy youth, with all my blushing honours thick upon me, of having given mate with only trifling odds in my favour, the drum beat to evening quarters. I was stationed to the four aftermost carronades on the quarter-deck. I had run up in a hurry, and at that period, straps to keep down the trowsers not having been invented, my white jeans were riddled a good deal up my leg. I passed the captain, touched my hat, and began to muster my men. Unconscious of any offence, I stole a look or two at my commander, but met with no good-humoured glance in return. He had screwed up his little yellow physiognomy into the shape of an ill-conditioned and battered face on a brass knocker. He had his usual afternoon wine-flush upon him; but a feeling of vindictiveness had placed his feelings of incipient intoxication under complete mastery.

“So you dined in the ward-room, Mr. Rattlin?”

"Yes, sir," my hat reverently touched, not liking the looks of my interrogator.

"And you did not even condescend to return the compliments I sent you, with my misplaced invitation to dinner."

"Don't recollect, sir."

"Mr. Rattlin, in consideration of your ignorance, I can forgive a personal affront—damme—but by the living G—d, I cannot overlook disrespect to the service. You young misbegotten scoundrel, what do you mean by coming to quarters undressed? Look at your trousers, sir."

"The captain is in a passion, certainly," thought I, as I quietly stooped to pull the offending garment down to my shoes.

"Mr. Farmer, Mr. Farmer, do you see the young blackguard?" said the commander. "Confound me, he is making a dressing-room of my quarter-deck—and at quarters too—which is the same as parade. Hither, sirrah; ho—ho—my young gentleman. Young gentleman, truly—a conceited little bastard!"

The word burnt deeply into my young heart, and caused a shock upon my brain, as if an explosion of gunpowder had taken place within my skull, but it passed instantaneously, and left behind it an unnatural calm.

"Pray, sir," said I, walking up to him deliberately and resolutely, "how do *you* know that I am a bastard?"

"Do you hear the impudent scoundrel? Pray, sir, who is your father?"

"O that I knew!" said I, bursting into tears. "I bless God that it is not you."

"To the mast-head, to the mast-head! Where's the boatswain? start him up, start him up."

The boatswain could not make his way aft till I was some rattlings up the main rigging, and thus his intentional and kind dilatoriness saved me from the indignity of a blow. Twice I gazed upon the clear blue, and transparent water, and temptation was strong upon me, for it seemed to woo me to rest; but when I looked in-board, and contemplated the diminutive,

shrivelled, jaundiced figure beneath me, I said to myself, "Not for such a thing as that."

Before I had got to the main-top, I thought, "This morning he loved 'me!—poor human nature!"—and when I had got to the topmast-cross-trees, I had actually forgiven him. It has been my failing through life, as Shakspeare expresses it, "to have always lacked gall." God knows how much I have forgiven, merely because I have found it impossible to hate.

But I was to be tried still more. I had settled myself comfortably on the cross-trees, making excuses for the captain, and condemning my own want of caution, and anticipating a reconciliatory breakfast with my persecutor, when his shrill voice came discordantly upon my ears.

"Mast-head there!"

"Sir."

"Up higher, sir—up higher."

I hesitated—the order was repeated with horrid threats and imprecations. There were no rattlings to the top-gallant rigging. It had been tremendously hot all day, and the tar had

sweated from the shrouds ; and I was very loath to spoil my beautiful white jean trowsers by swarming up them. However, as I perceived that he had worked himself into a perfect fury up I went, and to the top-gallant mast-head, embracing the royal pole with one arm, and standing on the bights of the rigging. My nether apparel, in performing this feat, appeared as if it had been employed in wiping up a bucket of spilled tar.

But I was not long to remain unmolested in my stance on the high and giddy mast. My astonishment and dismay were unbounded at hearing Captain Reud still vociferate, "Up higher, sir."

The royal pole stood naked, with nothing attached to it but the royal and the signal-halyards, the latter running through the truck. My lady readers must understand that the truck is that round thing at the top of all the masts, that looks so like a button. I could not have got up the well greased pole-if I had attempted it. A practised seaman could, cer-

tainly, and, indeed one of those worthies who climb for legs of mutton at a fair, might have succeeded to mount a few inches.

“What!” said I, half aloud, “does the tyrant mean? He knows that this thing I cannot do: and he also knows that if I attempt it, it is probable I shall lose my hold of this slippery stick, and be rolled off into the sea. If he wishes to murder me, he shall do so more directly. Forgive him—never. I’ll brave him first, and revenge myself after.”

Again that deadly calm came over me, which makes soft dispositions so desperate, and to which light-haired persons are so peculiarly subject. In these temperaments, when the paleness becomes fixed and unnatural, beware of them in their moods. They concentrate the vindictiveness of a life in a few moments, and, though the paroxysm is usually short, it is too often fatal to themselves and to their victims. I coolly commenced descending the rigging, whilst the blackest thoughts crowded in distinct and blood-stained array upon my brain. I

bethought me from whence I could the most readily pluck a weapon, but the idea was but instantaneous, and I dismissed it with a mighty effort. At length, I reached the deck, whilst the infuriated captain stood mute with surprise at my outrageously insubordinate conduct. The men were still at their quarters and partook of their commander's astonishment, but, I am convinced, of no other feeling.

When I found myself on the deck I walked up to captain Reud, and between my clenched teeth I said to him slowly and deliberately, "Tyrant, I scorn you. I come premeditatedly to commit an act of mutiny : I give myself up as a prisoner : I desire to be tried by a court-martial. I will undergo anything to escape from you ; and I don't think that, with all your malice, you will be able to hang me. I consider myself under an arrest." Then turning upon my heel I prepared to go down the quarter-deck hatchway.

Captain Reud heard me to the end in silence ; he even permitted me to go down half the

ladder unmolested, when rousing himself from his utter astonishment, he jumped forward and spurning me with his foot violently on my back, dashed me on the main deck. I was considerably bruised, and, before I got to the midshipman's berth, two marines seized me and dragged me again to the quarter-deck. Once more I stood before my angry persecutor, looking hate and defiance.

"To the mast-head, sir, immediately."

"I will not. I consider myself a prisoner."

"You refuse to go?"

"I do."

"Quarter masters, the signal halyards. Sling Mr. Rattlin." Mr. Rattlin was slung. "Now run the mutinous rascal up to the truck."

In a moment I was attached to a thin white line, waving to and fro in mid air, and soon triced up to the very top of the royal pole, and jammed hard to the truck. Is this believed? Perhaps not; yet no statement was ever more true. At the time when this atrocity was

perpetrating not an officer interfered. My sufferings were intense. The sun was still hot, my hat had fallen off in my involuntary ascent, and, as the ship was running before the wind under her topsails, the motion at that high point of elevation was tremendous. I felt horribly seasick. The ligature across my chest became every moment more oppressive to my lungs, and more excruciating in torture: my breathing at each respiration more difficult, and, before I had suffered ten minutes, I had fainted. So soon as the captain had seen me run up he went below, leaving strict orders that I should not be lowered down.

Directly that the captain was in his cabin, the first lieutenant, the doctor, purser, and the officers of the watch, held a hurried consultation on my situation. But the good-natured doctor did not stop for the result, but immediately went below, and told Reud if I remained where I was I should die. Those who knew the navy at that time will anticipate the answer—no others can—"Let him die and be damned!"

The good doctor came on deck desponding. Mr. Farmer then hailed me once, and again, and again. Of course he received no answer—I heard him, but, at that moment, my senses were fast leaving me. The sea with its vast horizon, appearing so illimitable from the great height where I was swaying, rocked, to my failing sight, awfully to and fro: the heavens partook of the dizzying motion. I only, of all the creation, seemed standing still: I was sick unto death; and as far as sensation was concerned, then and there I died.

Upon receiving no reply, Mr. Farmer sent one of the top-men up to look at me. No sooner had he reached the topgallant rigging than he reported me dead. A cry of horror escaped from all on deck. The captain rushed up: he needed no report. He was frantic with grief: he wept like a child, and assisted with his own hands to lower me down; they were his arms that received, himself that bore me to his cabin. Like a wilful boy who had slain his pet lamb, or a passionate girl her dove, he

mourned over me. It was a long time before my respiratory organs could be brought into play. My recovery was slow, and it was some time before I could arrange my ideas. A cot was slung for me in the cabin, and bewildered and exhausted I fell into a deep sleep.

I awoke a little after midnight perfectly composed, and suffering only from the wale that the cord had made across my chest. Before a table, and his countenance lighted by a single lantern, sate the captain. His features expressed a depth of grief and a remorse that were genuine. He sate motionless, with his eyes fixed upon my cot; my face he could not see, owing to the depth of the shadow in which I lay. I moved:—he advanced to my cot with the gentleness of a woman, and softly uttered,

“Ralph, my dear boy, do you sleep?”

The tones of his voice fell soothingly upon my ear like the music of a mother’s prayer.

“No, Captain Reud, but I am very thirsty.”

In an instant he was at my side with some

weak wine and water. I took it from the hand of him whom, but a few hours before, in my animosity I could have slain.

"Ralph," said he, as he received back the tumbler, "Ralph, are we friends?"

"Oh! Captain Reud, how could you treat a poor lad thus, who respected, who loved you so much?"

"I was mad—do you forgive me, Ralph?" and he took my not unwilling hand.

"To be sure, to be sure—but do me one little favour in return."

"Any thing, any thing, Ralph—I'll never mast-head you again."

"Oh, I was not thinking of that; I ought not to have put you in a passion. Punish me—mast-head me—do any thing, Captain Reud, but call me not bastard."

He made no reply; he pressed my hand fervently: he put it to his lips and kissed it—on my soul he did—then after a pause, gently murmured "good night," and, as he passed into the after-cabin to his bed, I distinctly

heard him exclaim, "God forgive me—how I have wronged that boy!"

The next day we were better friends than ever, and for the three years that we remained together, not a reproachful word or an angry look ever passed between us.

I must be permitted to make three observations upon this, to me, memorable transaction. The first is, that at that time, I had not the power of retention of those natural feelings of anger which all should carry with them as a preservation against, or a punishment for, injury and insult. I know that most of my male and many of my female readers will think my conduct throughout pusillanimous or abject. My mother's milk, as it were, still flowed in my veins, and, with that, no ill blood could amalgamate. All I can say is, that now, I am either so much better or so much worse,—that I should have adopted towards Captain Reud a much more decided course of proceedings.

My second remark is, that this captain had

really a good heart, but was one of the most striking instances that I ever knew of the demoralizing effect of a misdirected education, and the danger of granting great powers to early years and great ignorance. With good innate feelings, no man ever possessed moral perceptions more clouded.

And lastly, that this statement is not to be construed into a libel on the naval service, or looked upon, in the least, as an exaggerated account. As to libel, the gentlemanly deportment, the parental care of their crews, and the strict justice of thousands of captains, cannot in the least be deteriorated by a single act of tyranny by a solitary member of their gallant body; and, as to exaggeration, let it be remembered that in the very same year, and on the very same station that my tricing up to the truck occurred, another post-captain tarred and feathered one of his young gentlemen, and kept him in that state, a plumed biped, for more than six weeks in his hen-coop. This last fact obtained much notoriety from the

aggrieved party leaving the service and recovering heavy damages from his torturer in a court of civil law. My treatment never was known beyond our own frigate.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ralph entereth into the regions of romance and privateering — Carried thither by a French pilot, *malgré lui*—An inopportune visit.

SHORTLY after the illegal suspension of the Habeas Corpus, that I recorded in the last chapter, the portion of the navy stationed in the West Indies became actively employed in the conquest of those islands still in the possession of the French. Some fell almost without a struggle, others, at much expense of life both of the military and naval forces. As every one who could find a publisher, has written a book on all these events, from the capture of

the little spot Deseada to the subduing the magnificent Island of Gaudaloupe, and the glorious old stone-built city of Domingo, I may well be excused detailing the operations.

Among other bellicose incidents that varied the dull monotony of my life, was the beating off a frigate equal in force to our own ; though I believe that we were a little obliged to her for taking leave of us in a manner so abrupt, though we could not certainly complain of the want, on her part, of any attention for the short and busy hour that she stayed with us, for she assisted us to shift all our topmasts, and, as before she met us, we had nothing but old sails to display, she considerably decorated us with a profusion of ribands gaily fluttering about our lower masts and the topmasts that were still standing gracefully hanging over our sides.

We were too polite and well bred not to make some return for all these *petits soins*. As, between the tropics, the weather is generally very warm, we evinced a most laudable anxiety that she should be properly ventilated, so we

assiduously began drilling holes through and through her hull; and, I assure the reader, that we did it in a surpassingly workman-like manner. But, in the midst of this spirited exchange of courtesies, our Gallic friend remembered that he had, or might have, another *engagement*, so he took his leave; and, as he had given us so many reasons to prevent our insisting to attend upon him, we parted, *en pleine mer*, leaving us excessively annoyed that we were prevented from accompanying him any farther.

In Captain Reud's despatches he stated, and stated truly, that we beat him off. Why he went, I could not understand; for, excepting in the shattered state of his hull, and more particularly in a sad confusion of his quarter gallery, with his two aftermost main-deck ports, he sailed off with his colours flying, and every sail drawing, even to his royals. But the French used to have their own method of managing these little matters.

But let us rapidly pass over these follies,

and hasten to something more exquisitely foolish. And yet I cannot. I have to clear away many dull weeds, and tread down many noxious nettles, before I can reach the one fresh and thornless rose, that bloomed for a short space upon my heart, and the fragrance of which so intoxicated my senses, that, for a time, I was under the blessed delusion of believing myself happy.

I had now been two years and a half in the West Indies, and I was fast approaching my nineteenth year. At this period, we had taken several English West Indiamen. There was a fearful, a soul-harrowing, yet a tender tale, connected with one of these recaptures. It should be told, for the honour of that sex, whom to honour is man's greatest glory; but not now—nor in this life. Yet it ought to be narrated; and I here record my vow, that if I live, and I have the heart to go through it, and my dear —— will resolve me that one incubus of a doubt that has hung heavily on my heart for these five-and-twenty years, that

that tale shall be told, that man may admire, and wonder, and weep.

In one of these retaken merchant vessels there was found, as the French prize-master, and now of course our prisoner, a mercurial little fellow of the name of Messurier. He was very proud of the glory of his nation, and still prouder of his own. As France possessed many historians, and Monsieur Adolphe Sigismund Messurier but one, and that one himself, of course, he had the duty of, at least, three hundred scavans thrown upon his own shoulders: he performed it nobly, and with an infinite relish. Now, when a person who is given to much talking is also given to much drinking, it generally happens, injurious as is the vice of the grog bottle, that the vice of the voluble tongue is still worse. When in his cups, he told us of the scores that he had slain, counting them off by threes and fives upon his fingers, his thumbs indicating captains, his forefingers first lieutenants, and so on with the various grades in our service, until the

aspirants, or middies, were merely honoured by his little finger as their representative, we only laughed; and asked him, if he had been so destructive to the officers, how many men had fallen by the puissance of his arm. It seemed that these latter were too numerous and too ignoble to be counted; for that question was always answered with a *bah!* and a rapidly passing over the extended palm of his left hand with his open right one.

But when, one evening, he mentioned that he could pilot a frigate into the inland waters from whence swarmed the crowd of schooner-privateers that infested the islands, and by their swift sailing to windward, eluded our fastest ships, we laughed still, and I did something more; I reported this boast to Captain Reud.

“Then,” exclaimed my valorous little creole, “by all the virtues of a long eighteen, he shall take in his Majesty’s frigate, Eos.”

Whenever he protested by a long eighteen, in the efficacy of whose powers he had the most implicit reliance, we might look upon the matter as performed.

The next morning, whilst Monsieur Messurier was solacing his aching head with his hands, oblivious of the events of the preceding evening, he was feelingly reminded of his consummate skill in pilotage. He then became most unnaturally modest, and denied all pretensions to the honour. Now Captain Reud had no idea that even an enemy should wrap up his talent in a napkin, so he merely said to him, "You must take my ship in." When the captain had made up his mind, the deed generally trod upon the heels of the resolve. Poor man ! he was always in want of something to do, and thus he was too happy to do anything that offered excitement. Monsieur Messurier was in despair ; he prayed and swore alternately, talked about sacrificing his life for the good of his country, and told us, in a manner that convinced us that he wished us to believe the absurdity, that honour was the breath of his nostrils. However, the captain was fully intent upon giving him the glorious opportunity of exclaiming with effect, *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*

Not knowing the strength of the stronghold that it was our intention to surprise, Captain Reud cruised about for a few days, until he had collected another frigate, a sloop of war, and two eighteen gun-brigs, the commanders of all being, of course, his juniors. Having made all necessary arrangements, one beautiful morning we found ourselves close off the iron-bound and rocky shores of the east end of St. Domingo. We ran along shore for a couple of hours, when we perceived an opening in the lofty piles of granite, that frowned over the blue ocean. This was the entrance into the harbour where lay our destined prizes.

Captain Reud, taking the responsibility into his own hands, had determined to lead in. The charts were minutely examined, but they gave us no hope. The soundings laid down were so shallow, and the path so intricate, that, by them, we wondered much, how even a privateer-schooner could make the passage in safety. To a frigate drawing three-and-twenty

feet of water, the attempt seemed only a precursor to destruction.

We hove-to ; the captains of the other vessels were signalled on board, and, with them and our first lieutenant and master, a sort of council of war was held ; and, as every one present gave his voice against the attempt, our skipper's mind was made up directly. He resolved to go in, trusting to the chapter of accidents, to a gracious Providence, and Monsieur Messurier upon the fore-yard, with a seaman with a pistol at each ear, to scatter his brains the moment the ship struck. The weather was brilliant, the wind moderate and fair, when we bore up for the mouth of the passage. It was something at once ludicrous and painful to witness the agony of our pilot in spite of himself. Between oaths, protestations, and tremors, the perspiration of terror flowing down his face, mingled with his tears, he conned the ship with a precision that proved, at least in that matter, that he was no vain boaster.

But we had scarcely advanced a few hundred

yards within the gorge, than I had eyes only for the sublimity of the scenery that opened itself in succession as we passed. The water was as smooth as the cheek, as bright as the smile, and as blue as the eye of our first love. Indeed, it was "*deeply*, beautifully blue," as Lord Byron saith—to that *deeply* we owed every thing. The channel was so narrow, that, in many places, there was not sufficient room to tack the ship, even if she could have turned within her own length, and, in two remarkable points, we had not sufficient width to have carried our studding-sails. At one singularly romantic spot of this pass, the rocks far above our mast-heads leant over towards each other, and the ancient forest trees that crowned the heights, mingled their feathery branches, and permitted us to get a sight of the vaulted blue above us only at intervals, between the interstices of the dark-green foliage.

The seamen regarded their situation with wonder, not unmixed with awe. But the view was not the unvaried one of two gigantic walls

festooned with flowers and crowned with trees. At intervals, we found the channel open into wide lagunes, with shelving and verdant shores, studded with white stone buildings, and well-cultivated plantations, and then the passage would narrow again suddenly, and the masses of rock rose so high on each side of us, as almost to exclude the light of the day. The way was tortuous, but not abruptly so; and, as we wound through it, ever and anon we came to some picturesque inlet, some cool grotto, so beautiful that its very beauty must have peopled it with nymphs, for none could look upon them, without feeling, for a time, like poets. At the entrance, the heaving water rose and fell with a heavy moaning against the eternal bases of the rocks, though the surface in mid channel was perfectly smooth; but, as we advanced, this dull undulation gradually subsided, and its measured splash no longer echoed among the cliffs. The silence, as we proceeded, grew strange to us. An awe crept over us, like that which is felt upon the first entrance

into a vast cathedral: and the gentle wind came to us noiselessly, and, dying away at intervals, left the ship silently stealing on, impelled for a space, by no visible means.

The hush throughout the ship was tomb like, and the few words of command, that from time to time, broke upon the ear, sounded hollow and unearthly from the reverberations of the overhanging precipices.

But quickly the scene would change; the jutting promontories and overtopping walls would recede, and a fairy spot encircled by forest-land would open upon us, studded with green islands, glorious in all the beauties of an eternal spring, and crowded and crowned with flowers of every hue, and of a brilliancy the most intense. We proceeded in this delightful manner for more than twelve miles, yet no one had appeared, in the least, to notice our approach. Had the most trivial attempt at defence been made, we could not have proceeded a quarter of the distance; for I verily believe that we passed by points so overhanging, that a couple

of pounds of gunpowder, properly applied and fired at the right moment, would have tumbled fragments of solid rock upon us, that would have crushed us to the bottom in an instant, to mention nothing of the several protruding corners of this singular pass, on which two or three guns could have raked an approaching vessel for half an hour with impunity: as I have before stated that it would be impossible in those straitened passages to have turned a broadside to bear on any impediment. On we came, and at last a noble bay, or rather salt-water lake opened upon us, with two wide rivers delivering their waters into the bottom of it. On our right lay the town of Aniana, with a fort upon a green mount overlooking the houses, and rising much higher than our floating pennant.

Our unexpected *entrée*, like all other mistimed visits, caused the visited a terrible degree of confusion. Twelve or thirteen beautiful schooners had their sweeps out and all their sails set immediately. We having anchored

opposite the town about noon, the breeze fell away into almost a perfect calm, and off they went, making the best of their way up the rivers. There were several other craft lying off the town, into which the inhabitants were crowding, with all their effects of any value, no doubt intending to go a little way up into the country also, to avoid the inconvenience of inopportune calls. The signal was made for our little squadron to get out their boats, chase, and capture.

CHAPTER XX.

Treats of kind intentions frustrated—A visiting party prevented by one ball too many having been given—And ready-made domestic happiness for strangers.

WE first of all brought out the heavily-laden craft that were still near the town, and anchored them under our guns. To the privateers that showed their heels, the larger boats gave chase, and coming up with them, one after another, they were finally all captured. Had they but acted in combination, I think they might have resisted the boats with success ;

but their commanders seemed to have lost all presence of mind, in the confusion and astonishment into which our sudden appearance had thrown them.

Now, all this was very pleasant to us, *Messieurs les concernés*. We calculated upon having the whole wealth of the French town, and the little French fleet, converted into lawful prize-money. The deeply-laden poop-encumbered brigs and schooners, so ungracefully down by the stern, we imagined to be full of treasure. Visions of gold glittered before our mind's eye. We were about to recover the plunder of ages, for it must be confessed, that this same Aniana was no better than a haven for pirates. One of us was cruelly undeceived in one respect. As yet, we had met with no manner of resistance whatever—it was ten o'clock in the evening, the full-moon giving us a very excellent imitation of daylight, when all the commanders who had dined with our yellow skipper came on deck, in the highest possible glee, delightedly rubbing their hands,

and calculating each his share of the prize-money. All this hilarity was increased, every now and then, by some boats coming on board, and reporting to us, as commodore, another privateer or some fugitive merchantman taken, and then immediately shoving off in chase of others.

“Well, gentlemen,” said our skipper, “I’ll tell you what we’ll do. We’ll send the marines on shore to-morrow, and take possession of the town. However, we will be very civil to the ladies;—we will, by Venus! As commanding officer, I’ll permit of no rudeness.”

“None whatever: who could think of frightening them? I suppose, Captain Reud, there could be no harm in going ashore now and paying them a visit, just to alleviate their fears,” was the reply of one of the commanders.

“Not to-night, not to-night. Depend upon it, all the best of the beauty, and the best of the wealth is safely stowed in this numerous fleet, quietly anchored about us: we have them all safe. There might be some villains lurking

about the town with their cane knives in their belts: let us have all clear, and daylight before us. Not that I think there is any pluck among them—they have not spirit enough to throw a stone at a dog.”

Hardly had these taunting words escaped his lips, than “bang, crash,” and a four-and-twenty pound shot came reeking through the waist-hammocks, for they had not yet been piped down, and covered us over with horse-hair, and an abominable composition called flock. The ball took a slanting direction through the main and orlop decks, and came out just below the water-line, making instantly a leak that we could not affect to despise.

“Droll,” said Reud, shaking the dust from his person.

“Very,” said his well-dined echoes around him.

If this be jesting, thought I, the cream of the joke is to come yet.

“Beat to quarters, Mr. Rattlin.” The lieu-

tenants and more than half of the crew were away in the boats. The men were soon at their guns, and, as they had been only slightly secured, they were ready to return the fire almost immediately. Upon looking up at the source of our annoyance, we found that it was a hopeless case. The height was so great, and so immediately above us, that, without heeling the frigate over, not a gun could be brought to bear. Another shot from the battery served to quicken our deliberations. There was no time to be lost.

Captain Reud sent the various commanders on board their respective vessels, with orders, as fast as any of their boats came in, to send them to us immediately, with their marines. For ourselves, all our boats were away, except the gig. Into that I jumped, followed by the captain and six marines. Every man, except a quarter-master and a couple of look-outs, was piped down below, with strict orders that they were to stay there and not expose themselves, and the ship

was left in charge of the gunner, whilst the carpenter and his crew were actively employed in the wings, in plugging the shot-holes; for every ball that was fired came in somewhere upon the decks, and made its way through the ship's sides, low under the water.

However, annoying as this was, there were but two guns playing upon us which, though served with admirable precision, fired but slowly. We had not lain on our oars a quarter of an hour between the ship and the shore, a space of not more than forty yards, when we were joined by seven boats of various dimensions, crammed as full of jollies as they could possibly hold. We were on shore in a moment, and, without much care as to forming, we all scrambled up the hill as fast as we could. It was very steep indeed, but we were not fired upon by any small arms whatever, and the guns could not be sufficiently depressed from the embrasures to be made to bear upon us. They certainly must have perceived us, for the moon

was shining with singular splendour ; but they seemed to take no notice of our advance, but fired twice upon the frigate as we were climbing or rather scrambling up.

This assault was an affair got up with so little premeditation, that Captain Reud had no other arms than his regulation sword ; and his aide-de-camp, my redoubtable self, no other weapon of offence than a little crooked dirk, so considerably curved, that it would not answer the purpose of a dagger to stab with, and so blunt, that I am sure, though it might separate, it could not *cut* through a plum-pudding. Though I was approaching *pari passu* with my commander to a parapet, where there was *no* "imminent deadly breach," I was so much ashamed of my side-arms, that I would not expose them to the night air.

Up we tumbled close under the low, turf-constructed battlement, and, as we were in the act of scrambling over it, we received a straggling and ill-directed fire of musketry.

One hurrah from our party, and we were

into the fort in a moment, and that on the two flanks as well as the front. For all the service that I could render, I might as well have charged, as a midshipman usually walks the deck, with my hands in my pockets. However, there we were face to face with our opponents, on the planked floor of the fort, just as they were making up their minds to run away. But they did not go quite so soon as they ought. In jumping over the turfy mound, it must be supposed, as was really the case, that it took us an instant or two to recover our equilibrium and ascertain the surety of our footing, but that instant was a very annoying one, for the Frenchman directly opposed to Captain Reud deliberately put his musket against the said captain's face, and though I, unarmed as I was, actually did strike up this musket as much as I was able, it had only the effect of making the bayonet at the end of it score a deep wound from the bridge of his nose to the top of his forehead, when the trigger was pulled, and the whole crown of Captain Reud's

skull completely blown away. The shot turned him round like a weathercock ; I naturally half turned also, giving the enemy the advantage of studying my profile, whilst I endeavoured to support my captain in my arms, and then the same man, being bent on mischief, thrust his bayonet right through the back of my neck, grazing the vertebra, and entering on the right and coming out on the left side. Having in this manner a sheath for his weapon, the blackguard left it there, and thus having trussed me as with a skewer, showed me his back and fled. The butt-end of the musket falling to the ground, gave me a terrible wrench of the head, but relieved me at the same time of my incumbrance.

That was the first time I ever *bled* for my country. Indeed, I bled much more than my poor captain. However, the gentlemen of the fort rushed out as we rushed in, and rolled head over heels down the other side of the hill. Three or four were killed on the platform, among which, at the time, I devoutly wished

was the inflicter of my wound ; some were shot as they ran down the inland side of the hill, and the fort was ours, with the loss of one man killed and, I think, six wounded. My hurt was very trifling : a piece of adhesive plaister on the two orifices was all the surgical assistance that I either had or required. But the case with poor Reud was very different. I detest giving a revolting description of wounds ; I shall only say, that this was a most dreadful one. He lay for a month almost in a state of insensibility ; and though he lived for more than half a year with his head plated with silver, I know that he was never afterwards perfectly sane.

Walking about for a couple of days with a stiff neck, which was all the inconvenience I experienced, I assumed no little upon my firmness in storming, and on my honourable scars. The next morning all the prizes were secured, the town formally taken possession of, and, whilst Captain Reud lay in the torpor of what was all but death, it was deli-

berated what we should do with our conquest. It was a matter of some difficulty to decide upon. At this period, the two factions of the blacks, Petion's and Christophe's, held the western parts of the fine island of St. Domingo. The Spaniards had large possessions in the centre of the island, and the French still held a sway over the city of St. Domingo, and had a precarious footing in the eastern division, where we now were.

The place was too insignificant to garrison for a permanent conquest for the English. Many of our officers, and all the men, wished very naturally to plunder it; but the captain of the other frigate, now the commander, would not listen to the proposal for a moment. However, we totally destroyed their small dockyard, burned three fine schooners on the stocks, demolished the fort that had been so pernicious to Captain Reud, and which commanded the town; and then, the officers, and small parties of the ship's company were permitted to go on shore, and to live at free quarters upon the

inhabitants. Strict orders were given to respect life and limb, and the honour of the ladies; and these orders were generally well enforced. It was certainly a pleasant thing to go on shore and walk into any house that pleased you, call for what you wanted, be very protecting, and, after having eaten and drunk to satiety, to depart without having to cast up the items of a bill.

These brigands were treated much too leniently, for I verily believe, that, for a vast number of years, all the male population were born, bred, lived, and had died pirates. They were of all nations of the earth; and, I must say, that this blending of the various races, had produced a very handsome set of men, and very beautiful women. There were many English females among them, who had been captured in our merchant vessels, and had been forced into marriages with their lawless captors. They were, for the most part, like the Sabine women, reconciled to their lot, and loath to leave their lords, their mansions, and their children.

The governor of the place, a French colonel, was captured as he endeavoured to make his escape in one of the schooner privateers. We had him on board of our ship for some time, and he confessed that the place flourished only by means of what he was pleased to designate as free trading.

The prizes, deeply laden, left the port one after the other, and then the men-of-war brigs, afterwards the sloop of war, and, at length, our consort, the frigate. We now lay alone in these quiet waters, and there we remained for nearly three months. All this time our captain could hardly be said to be living. No one was allowed to come aft beyond the mizen-mast. We always spoke with hushed voices, and walked about stealthily upon tip-toe. The bells ceased to be struck, and every precaution was taken to preserve the most profound silence. But our amusements on shore were more than commensurate for our restraints on board. Most of the officers and men took unto themselves wives, *pro hac vice* — chalked, or

rather painted their names upon the doors of their mansions, and made themselves completely at home.

CHAPTER XXI.

Liaisons dangereuses—Ralph diveth into the dilemma of love, and admireth the fatherly conduct of the parent of his Dulcinea—Yet rageth and weepeth that she is a slave who hath enslaved him.

AT this time, I had begun to look fierce if any one did not accede to me the rights and privileges of a man ; and especially since I had received my bayonet wound : my vanity upon this score became insupportable. “Younker,” was now a term of bitterness to me—on the word “lad” I looked with sovereign contempt—“boy,” I had long done with. Heartily I prayed for a beard, but it came not, so, in

order to supply the deficiency, I used to practise looking stern before my dressing-glass. But all my efforts at an outward semblance of manliness were vain, my face was much too fair and feminine, though my stature, and the firmness of my frame, were just what I wished. I was not on board the vessel after the first week that she lay in the port of Aniana, nor did I rejoin her until she was in the very act of sailing out of it.

How am I to approach this subject, so romantic, so delicious, and so delicate! How can I record events, that, in proving to me that I had a heart, first destroyed its strength by the sweet delirium of ecstasy, and thus, having enfeebled, almost broke it! Before, the poetic ardour had often been upon me; but the fire was lighted up at the shrine of vanity, and I sang for applause; it was to be rekindled by love; but to burn with a concealed fury, to be whispered only to my own soul—a feeling too great for utterance—too intense for song, was to devour me. I experienced ecstasies that were

not happiness; I learnt the bitter truth, that rapture is not bliss.

About a week after we had obtained a quiet settlement in the town, and very many of us a quiet settlement in the hearts, as well as in the houses of the beautiful Creoles, and half castes, I also went on shore, with Modesty walking steadily on my right hand, whilst Madam Temptation was wickedly ogling me on the left. I looked in on the establishments of several of my brother officers, and certainly admired the rapidity with which they had surrounded themselves with all manner of domestic comforts, including wives, and, in some instances, large families of children. There was much more than ready made love in these arrangements; any one may buy that for ready money; but a ready-made progeny, a ready-made household, and a ready-made wife, without one stiver of ready money, was the astonishment,—but English sailors can do any thing.

Well, at No. 14, Rue Coquine, I accepted the purser's invitation to dinner at four, *en famille*. It seemed quite natural.

"My dove," said he, "you'll get us a bit of fish. Mr. Rattlin loves fish."

"Certainly, my love," said Mrs. Purser *pro tempore*, looking a battery of amiabilities.

"Allow me to introduce you to my sister-in-law, Ma'amselle D'Avalonge," said the purser, presenting a very well dressed young lady to me, with all the ease of a family-man.

The introduction took place immediately, and the lady and I found each other charming; indeed we said so. After a few more compliments, and a very pretty song, accompanied by the guitar, from mademoiselle, I took my leave, promising to be punctual to my appointment. I was not punctual—I never saw their dear faces again.

I left the town, and strolled up into the interior, keeping, however, our small fleet in sight, and walking seaward. I found the environs well cultivated, and the houses in the various plantations solidly built, and of stone. From every habitation that I passed I had pressing invitations to enter and refresh myself. These I declined. At length I arrived at a

beautiful wood, evidently under the care of man; for the different trees were so arranged, as to produce a romantic effect. The shade that the lofty mahogany trees afforded was very grateful, for it was now a little after noon; and in this grove I paced slowly up and down, nursing my pride with all manner of conceits. Now wishing for some adventure, now fancying myself some king, now turning with pitying thoughts upon poor Reud, and then seeing the misery that we, in our honourable vocation, were daily causing, and the vice that we were daily acting, asking myself if there were any thing in life worth living for.

I well remember the crowding, the overbearing thoughts of that solitary and melancholy hour. It seemed to me as if I were compelled into a summing up of all my reflections, before I plunged into some unknown sea of mysterious events. After my mind had exhausted every object of contemplation that the scene around me had suggested, my thoughts travelled home—home! had I a home—had I any thing that

loved me—any thing that, in the deep and soul-absorbing sense of the term, any thing that I loved? Should I ever obtain that object in existence, some one on whom to repose in affliction, rejoice with in happiness—a pillow for my head, and a resting-place for my heart? I felt that, whilst I hated none—and there were many to whom I was attached—my heart panted for some one on whom to expend its energies. I panted for an object which I could worship, and by whom I should be worshipped. I may almost say, that I prayed for it—it was granted, and immediately.

In the distance, and much below where I stood, I heard voices in violent altercation; among which the “vast heavings,” “blow me tights,” “a stopper over all,” with other such nautical expletives, were predominant. I broke from my cover, and found myself immediately on a slope, before a very respectable habitation, nearly surrounded by boiling houses, and other outbuildings necessary to a sugar and coffee plantation. The group before me consisted of

a small, energetic, old, and white haired Frenchman, neatly dressed in a complete suit of nankeen, with his broad-brimmed straw hat submissively in his hand, speaking all manner of fair and unintelligible French words to two Jacks, not of my ship, between which two, now pulled this way, now plucked that, was a timid and beautiful girl, of about fifteen years of age. There were several negroes, grinning and passive spectators of this scene. I understood it in a moment. So did my gentlemen in the tarpaulin hats. They were off to me in a less time than a topgallant breeze takes to travel aft from the flying jib-boom, supposing the ship to be at single anchor.

I took out my pocket-book, wrote down their names, (most likely purser's ones,) and ordered them on board their vessel directly. They obeyed, or at least appeared to do so, and departed, casting many "a lingering, longing look behind," leaving me the triumphant master of the field—the paladin, who had rescued the fair, for which I received much clap-

ping of hands from the dark visages, and an intense look of gratitude from the fair, pale creature, whom I had released from the very equivocal rudeness of her admirers. The thanks from Monsieur Manuel, the father, were neither silent nor few, and, when he found that I could converse in French, he exhausted the vocabulary of that copious language of all its expressions of gratitude. I hardly could perceive that I had rendered any service at all; I had struck no blows, and had run no risk; I had merely spoken, and obedience followed. However, as I could not stem the torrent of his gratitude, I determined to divert its course, by yielding to his urgent entreaties to accompany him to his house, and recruit myself, after my perilous and heroic deed.

We were soon seated in the coolest room in his mansion, and every West Indian luxury was quickly produced to tempt my palate. In fifteen minutes he had acquainted me with his parentage, his possessions, and his history. He assured me, with gesticulations, and a few

oaths, that he was not at all connected with the brigands that inhabited the town below—that he despised them, knew them all to be pirates, or abettors of pirates, revolutionists, and republicans—that he was at heart, yea in heart and soul, a royalist, and devotedly attached to the *vieux régime*; that the estate he now cultivated he had inherited from his father, who had been one of the few spared in the revolt of the blacks; that he had been educated at Paris, but, for the last five-and-thirty years, had hardly been off his own grounds—that he had no wife, and, indeed, never married, had no family at all, excepting Josephine, who sate beside him, who was his very dear and only child.

He did not add “a slave, and the daughter of a slave.”

I now looked upon her stedfastly for the first time, and with the most intense emotion; but it was pity. I had been sufficiently long in the West Indies to know exactly the relation in which she stood to her father. However, he

went on to relate how she had been born to him by a beautiful mulatto, for whom he had given a great sum, yet, at this she startled not, moved not, blushed not. But her's was not the calmness of obduracy, but of innocence.

Strongly did I commiserate her, and gently strove to draw her into discourse. I found her ignorant, oh! how profoundly ignorant! She had no ideas beyond the estate in which she lived, and those that she had gathered from the gang of negroes that worked it. Her father had taught her nothing but to play a few tunes by ear upon the guitar, and sing some old French songs. Yet she had been accustomed to all the observances of a lady—had slaves to wait upon her, and was always elaborately, sometimes richly, dressed. Isolated as she had been, I soon discovered that she was a compound of enthusiasm, talent, and melancholy. She was little more than fifteen years old, yet that age, in those tropical climates, answers fully to an European one-and-twenty. In form, she was a perfect woman, light, rounded,

and extremely active; all her motions were as graceful, and as undulating, as the gently-swelling billow. If she moved quickly, she bounded, if slowly, she appeared to glide on effortless through space. She had taken her lessons of grace in the woods, and her gymnasium had been among the sportive billows of the ocean. It is but of little use my describing her face, for every one supposes, that in these affairs, the author draws at once, as largely as he can, upon his own imagination, and as he dares, upon the credulity of his readers. Though a slave, she had but little of the black blood in her—in her complexion none. She was not fair, but her skin was very transparent, very pure, and of a dazzling and creamy sort of whiteness. I have seen something like it on the delicate Chinese paintings of the secluded ladies of that very secluded empire, and should imagine it just such a permanent tint as the Roman Empress strove to procure by bathing every day in milk. Colour she had none, and thrilling must have been the emotions that could call it into her placid and pensive

cheeks. Her features were not *chiselled*, and had any sculptor striven to imitate them on the purest marble, he would have discovered that chiselling would not do. They were at once formed and informed by the Deity. It is of no use talking about her luxurious and night-emulating hair, her lips, and those eyes, that seemed to contain, in their small compass, a whole sea of melancholy, in which love was struggling to support a half-drowned joy.

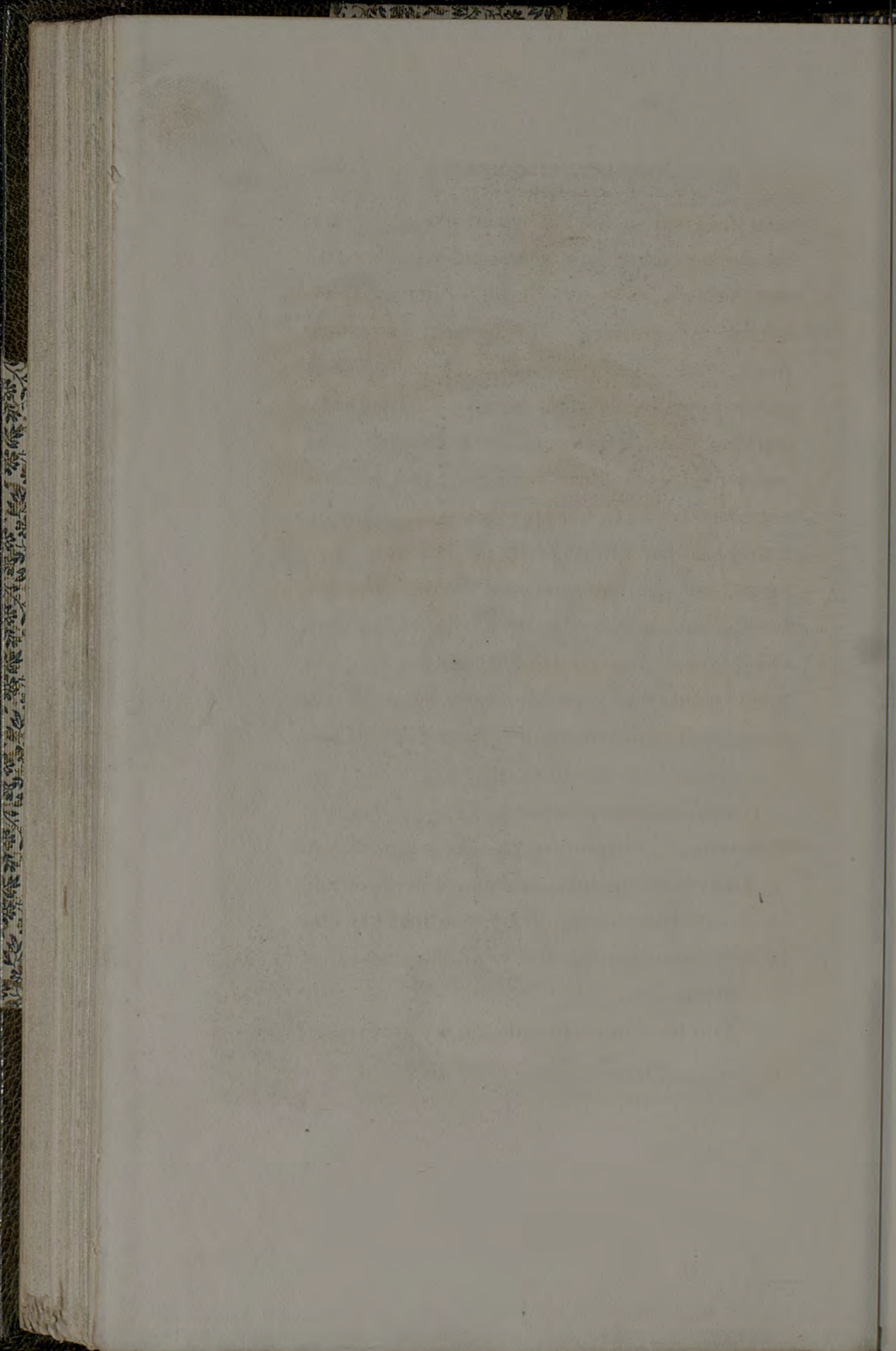
As I turned to converse with her she looked up to me confidingly. She appeared, as it were, incessantly to draw me to her with her large black eyes: they seemed to say to me, "Come nearer to me, that I may understand thee. Art thou not something distinct from the beings that I see around me—something that can teach me what I am, and will also give me something to venerate, to idolize, and to love?" As I continued to speak to her, her attention grew into a quiet rapture, yet still a sublime melancholy seemed to hold her feelings in a solemn thralldom.

My name, my rank, and my situation were



Drawn and Etched by A. Kervier.

A VISIT TO A WEST INDIA ISLAND.



soon disclosed to the father and daughter; and the former seeing how entranced we were with each other's company, like a prudent parent, left us to ourselves. My French was much purer, and more grammatical than hers, hers much more fluent than mine. Yet, notwithstanding this deficiency on both sides, we understood each other perfectly, and we had not been above two hours together alone, before I told her that I loved her for her very ignorance, and she had confessed to me that she loved me, because—because—the reader will never guess why—because I was so like the good spirit that walked gently through the forest, and gathered up the fever-mists before they reached the dwellings of man.

I very naturally asked her if she had seen this being. She said no, but knew him as well as if she had; for old Jumbila, a negress, had so often talked to her about him, that her idea of him was as familiar to her as the presence of her father.

“You have much to unlearn, my sweet one,”

thought I, "and I shall be but too happy in being your preceptor."

At sunset, Monsieur Manuel returned, led us into another apartment, where a not inelegant dinner was served up to us. Knowing the habits of my countrymen, we sate over some very superior claret, after Josephine had retired. I took this opportunity to reproach him in the gentlest terms that I could use, with the dreadful ignorance in which he had suffered a creature so lovely and so superior to remain.

His reply was a grimace, a hoisting of his shoulders above his head, an opening of his hands and fingers to their utmost extent, and a most pathetic "*Que voulez-vous?*"

"I will tell you, friend Manuel," I answered, for his wine had warmed me much, his daughter more; "I would have had her taught, at least, to read and write, that she had an immortal soul, a soul as precious to its Maker as it was to herself. I would have had her taught to despise such superstitious nonsense as obeo-

ism, mist-spirits, and all the pernicious jargon of spells and fetishes. I would, my dear Manuel, have made her a fit companion for myself; for with such beauty and such a soul, I am convinced that she would realize female perfection as nearly as poor humanity is permitted to do."

"*Que voulez-vous?*" again met my ears; but it was attended by some attempt at justification of his very culpable remissness. He assured me, that, according to the laws, social as well as judicial, a person of her class, were she possessed of all the attributes of an angel, could never be received into white society nor wed with any but a person of colour. The light of education, he asserted, would only the more show her her own degradation: he said he felt for her, deeply felt for her, and that he shuddered at the idea of his own death, for in that event he felt assured that she would be sold with the rest of the negroes on the estate, and be treated in all respects as a slave—and she had been so delicately nurtured. She had indeed:—her

long white fingers and velvety hand bore sufficient testimony to this.

“But can you not manumit her?” said I.

“Impossible. When the island was more settled and better governed than now, the legal obstructions thrown in the way of the act were almost insuperable: at present it is impossible. I have no doubt that our blood-thirsty enemies, the Spaniards, who are our nearest neighbours, immediately you English leave the town, as you have dismantled our forts, and carried away almost all the male population captive, will come and take possession of this place—not that I care a sou for the brigands whom you have just routed out. I shall have to submit to the Spanish authority, and their slave laws are still more imperative than ours, though they invariably treat their slaves better than any other nation. No, there is no hope for poor Josephine.”

“Could you not send her to France?”

“*Sacre Dieu!* they guillotined all my relations, all my friends—all, all—and, my friend, I

never made gold by taking a share in those long low schooners that you have kindly taken under your care. I have some boxes of doubloons stowed away, it is true. But, after all, I am attached to this place; I could not sell the estate for want of a purchaser; and I am surrounded by such an infernal set of rascals, that I never could embark myself with my hard cash without being murdered. No, we must do at Rome as the Romans do."

"A sweet specimen of a Roman you are," thought I, and I fell into a short reverie; but it was broken up most agreeably by seeing Josephine trip before the open jalousies with a basket of flowers in her hand. She paused for a moment before us, and looked kindly at her father and smilingly at me. It was the first joyous, really joyous smile that I had seen in her expressive countenance. It went right to my heart, and brought with it a train of the most rapturous feelings.

"God bless her heart; I do love her dearly!" said the old man, "I'll give you a

convincing proof of it, my young friend, Rattlin. Ah! bah—but you other English have spoiled all—you have taken him with you.”

“Who?”

“Why, Captain Durand. That large low black schooner was his. Yes, he would have treated her well, (said Monsieur le Père, musing,) and he offered to sign an agreement never to put her to field work or to have her flogged.”

“Put whom to field work?—flog whom?” said I, all amazement.

“Josephine, to be sure: had you not taken him prisoner, I was going, next month, to sell her to him for two hundred doubloons.”

“Now, may God confound you for an unholy, unnatural villain!” said I, springing up, and overturning the table and wine into the fatherly lap of Monsieur Manuel. “If you did not stand there, my host, I would, with my hand on your throat, force you on your knees to swear that—that—that you’ll never sell poor, poor Josephine for a slave. Flog her!”

said I, shuddering and the tears starting into my eyes—"I should as soon have thought of flogging an empress's eldest daughter."

"Be pacified, my son," said the old slave dealer, deliberately clearing himself of the debris of the dessert—"be pacified, my son."

The words, "my son," went with a strange and cheering sound into my very heart's core. The associations that they brought with it were blissful—I listened to him with calmness.

"Be pacified, my son," he continued, "and I will prove to you that I am doing every thing for the best. The old colonel, our late governor, would have given three times the money for her. I could not do better than make her over to a kind-hearted man, who would use her well, and who, I think, is fond of her. Not to part with her for a heavy sum would be fixing a stigma upon her;" and wretched as all this reasoning appeared to be, I was convinced that the man had really meant to have acted kindly by selling his own daughter. What a pernicious, d—ble, atrocious social system that

must have been where such a state of things existed! Reader, this same feature of slavery still exists,—and in free and enlightened America.

END OF VOL. II.

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