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Title: Tough yarns : A series of naval tales and sketches to please all hands, from the swabs on the shoulders down to the swabs in the head

Creator: The Old Sailor

Release date: January 1, 1 [eBook #72996]
Most recently updated: March 19, 2024

Language: English

***** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TOUGH YARNS
: A SERIES OF NAVAL TALES AND SKETCHES TO PLEASE ALL
HANDS, FROM THE SWABS ON THE SHOULDERS DOWN TO THE
SWABS IN THE HEAD *****

TOUGH YARNS;

A SERIES

OF

NAVAL TALES AND SKETCHES

TO PLEASE ALL HANDS,

From the Swabs on the Shoulders down to the Swabs in the Head.

BY THE OLD SAILOR,

AUTHOR OF "GREENWICH HOSPITAL," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



PHILADELPHIA:
E. L. CAREY & A. HART.

BALTIMORE:
CAREY, HART & Co.

BOSTON:
WILLIAM D. TICKNOR.
1835.

E. G. DORSEY, PRINTER,
12 Library Street.

TO

CAPTAIN MARRYATT, R. N.

AUTHOR OF

*'The King's Own,' 'Newton Foster,' 'Peter Simple,'
etc., etc.*

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

BY

THE OLD SAILOR.

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PREFACE.

Once more I present myself before the Public in a Book; and whatever all hands may think of it, I can assure them it is no joke to keep one's brains like a winch, continually spinning yarns. However, as my "GREENWICH HOSPITAL" met with a favourable reception, I have been induced to try another launch—and—here I am at the service of my readers.

THE OLD SAILOR.

TOUGH YARNS.



GREENWICH HOSPITAL,

The grand depository of human fragments,—the snug harbour for *docked* remnants,—Greenwich Hospital! Who is there that has stood upon that fine terrace, when the calm of evening has shed its influence on the spirit, and nature's pencil intermingling light and shade has graced the landscape with its various tints, without feeling delighted at the spectacle? No sound is heard to break the stillness of the hour, save when the sea-boy trills his plaintive ditty, studious to grace the turnings of his song, for it was his mother taught it him, and her he strives to imitate. To him the tide rolls on unheeded; he sees not the tall mast, the drooping sail; ah, no! his heart is in the cottage where he knew his first affection, when with a smile of infantile delight he drew his nourishment from that fond bosom lately bedewed with tears at parting.

Who is there that has not exulted in the scene, when the proud ship has spread her canvass to the breeze to carry forth the produce of our country to distant lands? or when returning to her own home-shores, laden with the luxuries of foreign climes, the gallant tars have

“Hailed each well-known object with delight!”

Ay, there they stand! the veterans of the ocean, bidding defiance to care and sorrow, full of mirth and jollity although they are moored in *tiers*. They are critics too, *deep* critics; but they cannot fancy the steam vessel with a chimney for a mast, and fifty yards of smoke for a pendant. These are the men that Smollett pictured,—the Jack Rattlins and the Tom Pipes of former years. Ay, those were *rattling* days and *piping* times! There is no place upon earth, except Greenwich, in which we can now meet with them, or find the weather-roll or lee-lurch to perfection. They are all thorough-bred, and a thorough-bred seaman is one of the drollest compounds in existence; a mixture of all that is ludicrous and grave,—of undaunted courage and silly fear. I do not mean the every-day sailor, but the bold, daring, intrepid man-of-war's man; he who in the heat of action primed his wit and his gun together, without a fear of either missing fire.

The real tar has a language peculiarly his own, and his figures of speech are perfect *stopper*-knots to the understanding of a landsman. If he speaks of his ship, his eloquence surpasses the orations of a Demosthenes, and he revels in the luxuriance of metaphor. The same powers of elocution, with precisely the same terms, are applied to his wife, and it is a matter of doubt as to which engrosses the greatest portion of his affection,—to him they are both *lady-ships*. Hear him expatiate on his *little barkey*, as he calls his wooden island, though she may carry a hundred-and-fifty guns and a crew of a thousand men. “Oh! she’s the *fleetest* of the *fleet*; sits on the water like a duck; stands under her canvass as stiff as a crutch; and turns to windward like a witch!” Of his wife he observes, “What a clean run from stem to stern! She carries her t’gall’nt sails through every breeze, and in working hank for hank never misses stays!” He will point to the bows of his ship, and swear she is as sharp as a wedge, never stops at a sea, but goes smack through all. He looks at his wife, admires her head-gear, and out-riggers, her braces and bow-lines; compares her eyes to dolphin-strikers, boasts of her fancy and fashion-pieces, and declares that she darts along with all the grace of a *bonnetta*. When he parts with his wife to go on a cruise, no tear moistens his cheek, no tremulous agitation does discredit to his manhood: there is the honest pressure of the hand, the fervent kiss, and then he claps on the topsail-halliards, or walks round at the capstan to the lively sounds of music. But when he quits his ship, the being he has rigged with his own fingers, that has stood under him in many a dark and trying hour, whilst the wild waves have dashed over them with relentless fury, then—then—the scuppers of his heart are unplugged and overflow with the soft droppings of sensibility. How often has he stood upon that deck and eyed the swelling sails, lest the breezes of heaven should

“Visit their face too roughly!”

How many hours has he stood at that helm and watched her coming up and falling off! and when the roaring billows have threatened to engulf her in the bubbling foam of the dark waters, he has eased her to the sea with all the tender anxiety that a mother feels for her first-born child. With what pride has he beheld her top the mountain wave and climb the rolling swell, while every groan of labour that she gave carried a taut strain upon his own heart-strings!

Place confidence in what he says, and he will use no deception; doubt his word, and he will indulge you with some of the purest rhodomontade that ingenious fancy can invent. He will swear that he had a messmate who knew the man in the moon, and on one occasion went hand-over-hand up a rainbow to pay him a visit. He himself was once powder-monkey in the Volcano bomb, and he will tell you a story of his falling asleep in the mortar at the bombardment of Toulon, and his *body* being discharged from its mouth instead of a *carcass*. With all the precision of an engineer, he will describe his evolutions in the air when they fired him off, and the manner in which he was saved from being dashed to pieces in his fall. All this he repeats without a smile upon his countenance, and he expects you to believe it: but you may soon balance the account, for tell him what absurdity you will, he receives it with the utmost credulity and is convinced of its truth. His courage is undoubted, for he will stand on the deck undismayed amidst the blood and slaughter of battle; yet on shore, he is seized with indescribable apprehensions at the sight of a coffin. The wailings of distress find a ready passport to his heart; but to disguise the real motives which prompt immediate aid, he swears that the object of his charity does not deserve a copper, yet gives a pound with only this provision,—that the individual relieved does not bother him about gratitude. You may know him from a thousand; for though in his dress conspicuously neat, and his standing and running rigging in exact order, yet they are arranged with a certain careless ease, as if he had but just come down from reefing topsails. The truck at the mast-head does not sit better than his tarpaulin hat, neither does the shoe upon the pea of the anchor fit tighter than his long quartered pumps. Grog is his ambrosia, his *nectar*; and he takes it cold, without sugar, that he may have the full smack of the rum.

And these are the characters at Greenwich Hospital, who after fighting the battles of their country are honoured with a palace. Oh, it was a proud display of national gratitude to such brave defenders! England has been compared to a huge marine animal, whose ports were its mouths, and whose navy formed its claws. What then is Greenwich but a receptacle for superannuated claws? I dearly love to get amongst them,—nearly two thousand shattered emblems of Britain's triumphs,—the returned stores of our naval glory. Ay, there they are with their snug little cabins, like turtles under their shells. But let us enter the

Painted Wall,

formerly the refectory for the pensioners, but now devoted to the commemoration of their gallant achievements. There are the portraits of the heroes of the olden time, whose memorials cannot perish; and there too is old Van Tromp, the Dutchman, who is honoured with a distinguished place amongst the brave of England's pride.

Here the old *blades* are a *cut* above the common; the small iron-bound officers who attend on visitors and point out the well-remembered features of commanders long since numbered with the dead.

"That 'ere, sir, on your right, is the battle of Trafflygar," said a short thickset man, apparently between sixty and seventy years of age. His countenance was one of mild benevolence, and yet there was a daring in his look that told at once a tale of unsubdued and noble intrepidity; whilst the deep bronze upon his skin was finely contrasted with the silky white locks that hung straggling on his brow.—"That 'ere, sir, is the battle of Trafflygar, in which I had the honour to be one."

"Were you with Nelson?" inquired I.

"I was, your honour," he replied, "and those were the proudest days of my life. I was with him when he bore up out of the line off Cape St. Vincent, and saved old Jarvis from disgrace. I was one of the boarders, too, when we took the Saint Joseph,—there's the picture, there in the middle of the hall;—and I was with him in that ship there,—the Victory,—though it arn't a bit like her,—and stationed on the quarter-deck at Trafflygar."

This was spoken with such an air of triumph, that the old man's features were lighted up with animation; it called to his remembrance scenes in which he had shared the glory of the day and saved his country. His eye sparkled with delight, as if he again saw the British ensign floating in the breeze as the proud signal for conquest; or was labouring at the oar with his darling chief, like a tutelar deity of old, guiding the boat through the yielding element, and leading on to some daring and desperate enterprise.

"I don't like the picture," said I; "the perspective is bad, and the ship is too long and flat; besides the colour is unnatural."

"Why, as for the matter of the *prospective*, sir," replied the veteran, "that's just what his present Majesty, God bless him! observed when he came to look at it; and for the colour, says the king, says he, 'why the painter must have thought he'd been cooking, for he's shoved the Victory

into the hottest of the fire and done her brown;' it was too bad, your honour, to singe her in that 'ere fashion, like a *goose*. Mayhap, your honour arn't seen them there paintings of the battle at a place they call Exeter Hall, in the Strand. Now they are some-ut ship-shape, and the *heat* of the engagement *warms* a fellow's heart to look at. An ould tar of the name of Huggins painted 'em, and I'm sure it's right enough, for he's made the Victory *hugging* the enemy just as a bear would a baby. I could stand and look at them pictures for hours, till I fancied myself once more in the midst of it, measuring out fathoms of smoke and giving 'em full weight of metal. The Victory has just fell aboard the French Redhotable and the Golision, as they calls it, gives each of 'em a *lust* different ways that looked so natural-like, that I felt myself getting a heel to port in the ould Victory as I looked at her. Then there's the gale o'wind arter the battle; why, blow my ould wig, but you may feel the breeze and shake yourself from the spray. God bless his Majesty!—for they are the king's, your honour;—long may he live to view 'em, and long may Huggins *hug* to windward under royal favour! I went to see him,—not the king, your honour, but Muster Huggins, and when he found I was 'the Old Sailor,' what gave some account of the life of a man-of-war's man in 'Greenwich Hospital,' he whips out his old quid, flings it into the fire, and we sported a fresh bit o'bacca on the strength of it.—That was a welcome worthy a great man, and he could'nt ha' done more for the king, though I arn't quite sure that his Majesty does chaw his pig-tail."

There certainly was ample scope for the remarks of my old friend, and I could not but consider the picture a complete failure. "And so you were at Trafalgar," said I.

"Ay, and a glorious day it was, too, for Old England," replied the tar. "Never shall I forget the enthusiasm which animated every breast, as we bore down to engage; it was indeed a noble sight, and so your honour would have said, if you had but have seen the winged giants of the deep as they marched majestically before the breeze, all ready to hurl their thunders at the foe. But the best scenes were at the quarters, where the bold captains of each gun stood cool and undaunted, waiting for the word: but for the matter o' that, every soul, fore and aft, seemed to be actuated by one and the same spirit. 'Look there, Ben,' said Sam Windsail, pointing out of the port-hole at the Royal Sovereign, just entering into action, 'look there, my Briton; see how she moves along, like a Phœnix in the midst of fire,—there's a sight would do any body's heart good. I'd bet my grog, (and that's the *lick-sir* of

life) I say I'd bet my grog agen a marine's button, that old Colly's having a desperate bowse at his breeches; he's clapping on a taut hand, I'll be bound for him.' Just then the Sovereign hauled up a little, and opened her fire. 'Didn't I say so,' continued Sam; 'look at that! my eyes but he makes 'em sheer agen! Well behaved my sons of thunder! The old gemman knows the French are fond of dancing, so he's giving them a few *balls* and *routs*! Ay, ay, we shall be at it presently, never fear; our old chap arn't the boy to be long idle, but then, d'ye mind, he never does things by *halves*; so he loves close *quarters*, and as he is rather *near* with his cartridges, why he doesn't like to throw a shot away. Howsomever, he'll go it directly, like a doctor's written orders,—this powder and these pills to be taken immediately,—eh, Ben? Next comes funny-section, or flay-bottomy, as the surgeons call it:—my eyes, there goes old Colly's breeches agen, he'll make a breach in the enemy's line directly; ay, he's a right arnest sallymander.' By this time, your honour, we'd got within gun-shot, and the enemy opened a tremendous fire upon the leading ships of our division, which played up old Scratch upon the fokstle, poop, and main-deck; for as we bore down nearly stem on, and there was but a light breeze, they raked us fore and aft.

“But I should have told you, sir, that just before going into action, the admiral walked round the quarters attended by the captain and, I thinks, Mr. Quillem, the first leftenant, but I won't be sure. The gunner, Mr. Rivers, was along with 'em, I know, and a worthy old gemman he was; his son, a midshipman, was stationed on the same deck with us,—a fine spirited youth, with his light hair flowing about his ears and his little laughing eyes,—up to all manner of mischief. Well, round they came, and the hero seemed proud of his men; he stopped occasionally to speak to one and to another, and his keen eye saw in a moment if any thing wasn't ship-shape. His countenance was rather stern, but there was a look of confidence that told us at once the day was our own;—nay, for the matter o' that, Sam Windsail began to reckon what he should buy for Poll with his prize-money.

“When they reached the quarters where young Rivers was stationed, Nelson looked at the son and then at the father, as much as to say, 'he's a fine youth, you ought to be proud of him,' as no doubt the old gemman was, for he knew his gallant boy would do his duty. But still the tender solicitude of a parent's heart is not to be repressed, however it may be concealed; and as he followed the admiral, his head was frequently turned back to take another look at his child, and perhaps he thought 'mayhap it may be the

last.’ Well, as I was saying before, the enemy’s balls began to rattle into us like hail-stones through a gooseberry bush, and many a poor fellow was laid low. ‘Arrah, bad manners to ’em, what do they mane by that?’ cried Tim Doyle, as a whole shoal of shot travelled in one another’s wake, and swept the entire range of the deck. ‘Come, don’t be skulking down there, Jack Noggin,’ continued Tim, ‘but lay houl’t of the tackle-fall.’ Jack never moved. ‘Och bother, don’t you mane to get up?’ But poor Jack’s glass was run, his cable was parted; so we launched his hull out at the port, stock and fluke.

“Mayhap you never saw a battle, sir. It is no child’s play, take my word for it. But the worst time is just before engaging, when silence reigns fore and aft, and a poor fellow douses his jacket without knowing whether he shall ever clap his rigging on agen. Then it is that home with all its sweet remembrances clings round the heart. Parents, or wife, or children, become doubly dear, and the fond ties of kindred are linked by stronger bonds. Howsomever, as soon as the first shot is fired, and we get within a sort of shake-hands distance of the enemy, every other thought gives way to a steady discharge of duty.

“Well, d’ye see, close upon our quarter came the Trimmer-rare, 98, and as we hauled up a little, we brought our larboard broadside to bear upon the great Spanish four-decker;—there, that’s she in the picture showing her galleries, just by the Victory’s stern:—so we brought our broadside to bear, and oh, if you had but have seen the eager looks of the men as they pointed their guns, determined to make every shot tell,—and a famous mark she was, too, looming out of the water like Beachy-head in a fog. ‘Stand by,’ says Sam Windsail, looking along the sight with the match in his hand; ‘stand by, my boy; so, so,—elevate her breech a bit,—that will do. Now, then, for the Santizzy-mama-Trinny-daddy, and I lay my life I knock daylight through his ribs. Fire!’ and the barking irons gave mouth with all their thunder. A few minutes afterward, and slap we poured another raking broadside into the Spaniard, and then fell aboard a French seventy-four.

“Well, there, d’ye see, we lay, rubbing together with the muzzles of the lower deckers touching one another. When our guns were run in for loading, the ports were instantly occupied by the small-arm men, and several attempts were made to board the enemy. At this time one of the Frenchmen kept thrusting at us with a boarding-pike, and pricked Tim Doyle in the face. ‘Och, the divil’s cure to you,’ bawled Tim; ‘what do you

mane by poking at me in that way. A joke's a joke, but poking a stick in a fellow's eye is no joke, any how; be aisey then, darlint, and mind your civility.' As soon as we had fired, in came the pike agen, and Tim got another taste of it. 'Och bother,' said Tim, 'if that's your tratement of a neighbour, the divil wouldn't live next door to yes! But faith, I'll make you come out o' that, and may be you'll be after just paying me a visit.' So he catches hold of a boat-hook that was triced up in a-midships, and watching his opportunity, he hooked Johnny Crapeau by the collar and lugged him out of one port-hole in at the other, without allowing him time to bid his shipmates good-by. 'Is it me you'd be poking at, ye blackguard?' said Tim, giving him a thump with his fist. 'Is it Tim ye wanted to spit like a cock-sparrow or a tom-tit? Arrah, swate bad luck to yes,—sit down and make yer life aisey; by the powers there'll be a pair o' ye presently.' But Tim was disappointed, for they let down the lower deck ports for fear we should board them through the port-holes.

"Soon after, both ships dropped aboard the Trimmer-rare; and then we ploughed up the Frenchman's decks with our shot, whilst she lay grinding and groaning in betwixt us. It was just now that young Rivers was struck, and his leg knocked away; but his spirit remained unsubdued, and as they took him down to the cock-pit, he cheered with all his might, and shortly after the hero himself was conveyed below. At first, the news of his being wounded seemed to stagnate all hands, and each stood looking at the other in fearful anxiety; but in a few minutes, resolution again returned, the shots were rammed home with redoubled strength, though at times the men would struggle with their feelings, and give vent to their grief and indignation. At every opportunity inquiries were made, and when the news of his death reached our quarters,—'He's gone!' said Sam, 'his anchor's a-weigh, and the blessed spirits are towing him to immortality.'

"But who is there, your honour, that remembers Nelson now? Even the car that carried his body to its last moorings has been broken up as useless lumber, though I did hear that a gemman offered two thousand guineas for it. Some parts are down in the store-rooms, and some has been burnt for fire-wood. There's his picture and his statue to be sure, but I think they should have spared the car. Nelson was strict to his duty, and made all hands perform theirs; and when he punished one man, it was that he might not have to punish twenty, and every soul fore and aft knew what they had to do. The brave, the generous, the humane Collingwood too,—there's his

picture, your honour, he is almost forgotten. Collingwood detested flogging; and when any captain came to him with a complaint of being short-handed through desertion, he would stand and hitch up his breeches, saying, 'Use your men better, sir; use your men better, and then they wouldn't leave you. My men, sir, never run; because they know they cannot get better treatment elsewhere.' He was also an avowed enemy to impressment, being well convinced that the British navy might be manned with volunteers, if Jack's peculiarities were only managed with kindness. But they are gone, sir, they are gone, and their authority is over; yet there are a few rough knots who can remember them,—ay, and cherish the remembrance in their hearts.

"Mr. Rivers is still living,—and there he is, your honour," said the veteran, pointing to an active man in lieutenant's uniform, who flourished his wooden pin as he descended the stone steps; "there he is, for he's now lieutenant of the college, and has a fine family just over the way there in the square. They ought to have made him a commander, at any rate, for I've seen him unbuckle his wooden leg and go aloft as quick as any topman in the ship; and there was but few could beat him at dancing, for it was quite delightful to see how he handled his timber support, and how the ladies and gemmen sheered out of his way for fear of their toes. Ah, there he goes agen, all life and spirit,—spinning his tough yarns and cracking his jokes, as full of fun as ever;—he's much prized by the governors, because he takes all the trouble off their hands."

"Is the portrait of Nelson considered a good likeness?" I inquired.

"My sight gets rather dim, sir," replied the veteran; "but before they put it up, when I could see it closer, I did not think it very like. Lord Collingwood's is by far the best."

At this moment I felt somewhat of a mischievous inclination to try the old man's temper, and therefore remarked, "Ay, he looks stern and scowling. Nelson was a brave man, no doubt, but then he was tyrannical and cruel."

The hoary tar turned round and stared me full in the face: a storm was gathering in his heart, or rather, like a vessel taken aback in a sudden squall, he stood perplexed as to which tack he should stand on. But it was only for a moment, and as his features relaxed their sternness he replied, "No matter, your honour,—no matter. You have been generous and kind, and I'm no dog to bite the hand that deals out bounty."

This seemed to be uttered with the mingling emotions of defiance and melancholy, and to urge him further, I continued,—“But, my friend, what can you say of the treatment poor Caraccioli experienced? You remember that, I suppose?”

“I do, indeed,” he replied. “Poor old man! how earnestly he pleaded for the few short days which nature at the utmost would have allowed him! But, sir,” added he, grasping my arm, “do you know what it is to have a fiend at the helm, who when Humanity cries ‘port!’ will clap it hard a-starboard in spite of you?—one who in loveliness and fascination is like an angel of light, but whose heart resembles an infernal machine, ready to explode whenever passion touches the secret spring of vengeance?”

I had merely put the question to him by way of joke, little expecting the result; but I had to listen to a tale of horror. “You give a pretty picture, truly, old friend,” said I; “and pray who may this fiend be?”

“A woman, your honour,—one full of smiles and sweetness; but she could gaze with indifference on a deed of blood, and exult over the victim her perfidy betrayed. It is a long story, sir, but I must tell it you that you may not think Nelson was cruel or unjust. His generous heart was deceived, and brought a stain upon the British flag, which he afterwards washed out with his blood. Obedience is the test of a seaman’s duty—to reverence his king, and to fight for his country. This I have done, and therefore speak without fear, though I know nothing of parliaments and politics.

“Well, your honour, it was at the time when there was a mutiny among the people at Naples, and Prince Caraccioli was compelled to join one of the parties against the court; but afterwards a sort of amnesty, or *damnification* I think they call it, was passed by way of pardon to the rebels, many of whom surrendered, but they were all made prisoners and numbers of them were executed.

“Well, one day I was standing at the gangway getting the barge’s sails ready, when a shore-boat came alongside full of people, who were making a terrible noise. At last they brought a venerable old man up the side; he was dressed as a peasant, and his arms were pinioned so tight behind that he seemed to be suffering considerable pain. As soon as they had all reached the deck, the rabble gathered round him, some cursing, others buffeting, and one wretch, unmindful of his gray hairs, spat upon him. This was too much to see and not to speak about; the man was their prisoner and they had him secure,—the very nature of his situation should have been sufficient

protection; so I gave the unmannerly fellow a tap with this little fist,” holding up a hand like a sledge-hammer, “and sent him flying into the boat again without the aid of a rope. ‘Well done, Ben!’ exclaimed a young midshipman, who is now a post-captain; ‘Well done, my boy, I owe you a glass of grog for that; it was the best summerset I ever saw in my life.’ ‘Thank you for your *glass o’grog*, sir,’ said I, ‘you see I’ve made a *tumbler* already;’ and indeed, your honour, he spun head over heels astonishingly clever. I was brought up to the quarter-deck for it, to be sure, because they said I had used the *why-hit-armis*; but I soon convinced them I had only used my fist, and the young officer who saw the transaction stood my friend, and so I got off.

“Well, there stood the old man as firm as the rock of Gibraltar; not a single feature betraying the anguish he must have felt. His face was turned away from the quarter-deck, and his head was uncovered in the presence of his enemies. The Neapolitans still kept up an incessant din, which brought the first-lieutenant to the gang-way; he advanced behind the prisoner, and pushing aside the abusive rabble, swore at them pretty fiercely for their inhumanity, although at the same time seizing the old man roughly, he brought him in his front. ‘What traitor have we here?’ exclaimed the lieutenant; but checking himself on viewing the mild countenance of the prisoner, he gazed more intently upon him. ‘Eh, no!—it surely cannot be:—and yet it is!’—his hat was instantly removed with every token of respect, as he continued—‘it is the prince!’

“The old man with calm dignity bowed his hoary head to the salute, and at this moment Nelson himself, who had been disturbed by the shouting of the captors, came from his cabin to the quarter-deck, and advancing quickly to the scene, he called out in his hasty way when vexed, ‘Am I to be eternally annoyed by the confusion these fellows create! What is the matter here?’ But when his eye had caught the time-and-toil worn features of the prisoner, he sprang forward, and with his own hands commenced unbinding the cords. ‘Monsters,’ said he, ‘is it thus that age should be treated?—Cowards, do you fear a weak and unarmed old man?—Honoured prince, I grieve to see you degraded and injured by such baseness,—and now,’ he added, as the last turn released his arms, ‘dear Caraccioli, you are free!’ I thought a tear rolled down Nelson’s cheek as he cast loose the lashings, which having finished, he took the prince’s hand and they both walked aft together.

“They say the devil knows precisely the *nick* of time when the most mischief is to be done, and so it happened now; for a certain lady followed Nelson from the cabin, and approached him with her usual bewitching smile. But oh! your honour, how was that smile changed to the black scowl of a demon when she pierced the disguise of the peasant, and recognised the prince, who on some particular occasion had thwarted her views and treated her with indignity. It had never been forgiven, and now—he was in her power. Forcibly she grasped Nelson by the arm and led him from the deck.

“‘His doom is sealed,’ said one of the lieutenants, conversing in an undertone with a brother officer, ‘no power on earth can save him.’ ‘On earth,’ rejoined the other, ‘no, nor in the air, nor in the ocean; for I suspect he will meet his death in the one, and find his grave in the other.’ ‘Yet surely,’ said the surgeon, who came up, ‘the admiral will remember his former friendship for the prince, who once served under him. Every sympathetic feeling which is dear to a noble mind must operate to avert his death.’ ‘All the virtues in your medicine-chest, doctor,’ rejoined the first, ‘would not preserve him many hours from destruction, unless you could pour an opiate on the deadly malignity of ——,’ here he put his finger upon his lip, and walked away.

“Well, your honour, the old man was given up to his bitter foes, who went through the mockery of a court-martial,—for they condemned him first and tried him afterwards. In vain he implored for mercy; in vain he pleaded the proclamation, and pointed to his hoary head; in vain he solicited the mediation of Nelson, for a revengeful fury had possession of his better purposes, and damned the rising tide of generosity in the hero’s soul; in vain he implored the pardon and intercession of ——; but here I follow the example of my officer, and lay my finger on my lip.

“The president of the court-martial was Caraccioli’s personal enemy, and the poor old man was not allowed time to make a defence; he was sentenced to be hung, and his body to be thrown into the sea. I was near him, your honour, when he entreated Mr. Parkinson, one of the lieutenants, to go to Nelson and implore that he might be shot. Oh, if you had but have seen him grasp the officer’s hand as he said, ‘I am an old man, sir, and I have no family to leave behind to lament my death. Indeed I am not anxious to prolong my life, for at the utmost my days would be but few; but the disgrace of hanging,—to be exposed to the gaze of my enemies,—is really dreadful to me!’

“But every attempt to obtain a mitigation or a change of the sentence was unavailing, and at five o’clock that afternoon the brave old man, the veteran prince, in his eightieth year, hung suspended from the fore-yard-arm of a Neapolitan frigate he had once commanded,—for he was an admiral, your honour. Never shall I forget the burst of indignation with which the signal-gun was heard by our crew, and a simultaneous execration was uttered fore and aft.

“Nelson walked the deck with unusual quickness; nay, he almost ran, and every limb seemed violently agitated. He heard the half-suppressed murmurs of the men, and a conviction of dishonour seemed to be awakening in his mind. But oh, sir, where was pity, where was feminine delicacy and feeling? The lady approached him in the most seducing manner and attracted his attention: he stopped short, looked at her for a moment with stern severity, and again walked on. ‘What ails you, Bronté?’ said she; ‘you appear to be ill,’ and the witchery of her commanding look subdued the sternness of his features;—he gazed upon her and was tranquil. ‘See!’ said she, pointing out at the port to where the body of Caraccioli was still writhing in convulsive agony, ‘see! his mortal struggles will soon be over. Poor prince! I grieve we could not save him. But come, Bronté, man the barge, and let us go and take a parting look at our old friend.’ I shuddered, your honour, and actually looked down at her feet to see if I could make out any thing like a cloven hoof. ‘The devil!’ exclaimed a voice in a half-whisper behind me that made me start, for I thought the speaker had certainly made the discovery; but it was only one of the officers giving vent to his pious indignation.

“Well, the barge was manned, and away we pulled with Nelson and the lady round the ship where the unfortunate prince was hanging. He had no cap upon his head, nor was his face covered; but his white hair streamed in the breeze above the livid contortions which the last death-pang had left upon his features. The Neapolitans were shouting and insulting his memory; but they were rank cowards, for the truly brave will never wreak their vengeance on a dead enemy.

“Nelson and the lady conversed in whispers; but it was plain to be seen his spirit was agonized, and his fair but frail companion was employing every art to soothe him. She affected to weep, but there was a glistening pleasure in her eyes as she looked at the corpse, which had well nigh made the boat’s crew set all duty at defiance. Nelson,—and no man was better

acquainted with the characteristics of a sailor,—saw this, and ordered to be pulled on board. She upbraided him for what she called his weakness, but his soul was stirred beyond the power of her influence to control his actions.

“The body of the prince was taken out to a considerable distance in the bay, where it was thrown overboard with three heavy double-headed shot lashed between the legs; and, as the lieutenant said, ‘he met his death in the air, and had his grave in the ocean.’

“About a fortnight after this, a pleasure party was made up by the royal family and nobility for an excursion on the water, and the barge, with Nelson and the lady, took the lead. It was a beautiful sight to see the gilded galleys with their silken canopies and bright pennons flashing in the sun, and reflecting their glittering beauties on the smooth surface of the clear blue waters, whilst the measured sweep of the oars kept time with the sweet sounds of music. Not a cloud veiled the sky, scarcely a breath curled the transparent crest of the gentle billow; all was gayety, and mirth, and laughter.

“After pulling for several miles about the bay, we were returning towards the shore, when a curious-looking dark object,—something like a ship’s buoy, appeared floating a-head of the barge. The bowmen were ordered to lay-in their oars, and see what it was; so the oars were laid in, and they stood ready with their boat-hooks, the coxswain steering direct on to it. As soon as the barge was near enough, the bowmen grappled it with their boat-hooks, but in an instant their hold was loosened again, and ‘A dead body! a dead body!’ was uttered in a suppressed tone by both. The boat held on her way, and as the corpse passed astern, the face turned towards the lady and showed the well-remembered countenance of poor Caraccioli. Yes, as the officer had said, ‘the ocean had been his grave;’ but that grave had given up its dead, and the lady seldom smiled afterwards.

“Nelson hailed one of the cutters that were in attendance, and directed that the body should be taken on board and receive the funeral ceremonies suitable to the rank which the unfortunate prince had held whilst living. The music ceased its joyous sounds for notes of melancholy wailing, and the voice of mirth was changed to lamentation and sadness.

“Years passed away, and Nelson fell in the hour of victory; but the lady, ah! her end was terrible. The murdered prince was ever present to her mind; and as she lay upon her death-bed, like a stranded wreck that would never

more spread canvass to the breeze, her groans, her shrieks were still on Caraccioli. 'I see him!' she would cry, 'there, there!—look at his white locks and his straining eye-balls! England,—England is ungrateful, or this would have been prevented! But I follow—I follow!'—and then she would shriek with dismay and hide herself from sight. But she is gone, your honour, to give in her dead-reckoning to the Judge of all. She died in a foreign land, without one real friend to close her eyes; and she was buried in a stranger's grave, without one mourner to weep upon the turf which covered her remains."

Here the veteran ceased, and folding his arms, he held down his head as if communing with his own heart and struggling to dispel the visions which his narration had conjured up. I cautiously refrained from disturbing him, till by a sudden gulp or sea-sigh, like the expiring gale when at its last gasp, he gave indications of having becalmed his feelings, and we moved onwards up the steps into the body of the Hall, till we stood before the fine painting of the Battle of the Nile, by G. Arnald.

"There, your honour," exclaimed the veteran, whilst his eye sparkled with glowing recollections, "look there, your honour; isn't that a sight to awaken old remembrances! It's worth a hundred of that yonder, which is neither ship-shape nor Bristol fashion, as I take it, for an officer in boarding to be rigged out as if he was going to a ball. Mayhap, howsomever, it may be all well enough for landsmen and marines to look at, because it's pretty; but the eye of a seaman only glances at it with contempt." The subject of his last observations, was a painting of Nelson boarding the San Josef of 112 guns in the battle off St. Vincent. "I told you before I was with him in both *doos*; but, Lord love your heart, it was another sort of a concern than that 'ere; for there warn't no fighting on the quarter-deck of the three-decker,—all the fighting were in the San Nickylas as we boarded first. But here's a pretty picture, your honour," pointing to a small but beautiful painting of the re-capture of the Hermione frigate by Sir Edward Hamilton, "and it tells a tale too! Well, thank God, I never sailed with a tyrannical captain! and there was one,—a lord,—who used to boast he had flogged every man in his ship."

"I never knew that Sir Edward Hamilton was severe," said I, "for I had always been given to understand that he was a smart but humane officer."

"I didn't mean him, sir," replied the veteran, "it was another sort of person; but he was murdered, and in cold blood too. I have heard the tale

often, for old Hughes, who died boatswain of the Laurel frigate, was an old shipmate of mine, and he was in the Hermione at the time of the mutiny. 'Twas a shocking affair," added the old man, shaking his head, "and who could think that whilst the beautiful moon was shedding her pale light,—not but I'm thinking the moon has no business in that 'ere picture, any more than it had to be up such a night as that at all; but the painters can stick a moon just where they like, though it destroys the tale they have to tell. Besides, captain Hamilton wouldn't be likely to want even so much as the blink of a purser's lantern to show the Spaniards he was coming."

I assented to the argument, and was struck with the truth it conveyed; the moon certainly gave a charming light to the picture, but the eye of practical experience detected the incongruity, though perhaps not till that very moment when the heart was more immediately interested in the subject. The circumstances connected with the re-capture of the Hermione, and her having previously fallen into the enemy's hands, were revived in my memory; but I felt a strong desire to hear the story from my aged *chaperon*, and after a few observations he indulged me.

"Them as wishes to know what a seaman can do, sir," said the old man, "should study a little of their cha-rackter. Thank God, the day's gone by when the cat was considered the best means of freshening a poor devil's way, or keeping a good man to his duty. I can remember when I was a young top-man, and the hands were turned up, there was always a boatswain's mate stationed at each hatchway to start the last man on the ladder, and sometimes half a dozen of the hindmost would get well started before they set foot on deck; it was harassing work and produced great discontent, because, d'ye mind, as there must always be somebody last, it stands to reason there was no escaping. Well, as I said, this, with many other grievances, occasioned the men to be dissatisfied, and brought about that toast which I am sorry to say was but too common between decks, though certainly there was a goodish scope of provocation when all the bearings of the thing is correctly worked;—I mean the toast, 'A dark night, a sharp knife, and a bloody blanket!' Now, your honour, 'tis impossible to tell which man saves his strength, when a gang is tailing-on to a taut rope; but a lubber who skulks in the lee-rigging when he ought to be shinning away aloft to take in a reef or toss up a sail is soon found out, and mayhap a cuff or two would make him quicker in turning to windward; but when the end of a rope flies about indiscriminately and every body is in constant

dread of the gangway, it becomes *grating* to the feelings. Not, sir, that I hold with the attempts to make Jack Nasty-face a gentleman; for if so be as they goes to destroy the peculiarities which mark a regular man-o'-war's-man, they'll have to make a few curious entries in the log-book before they've done."

"But about the *Hermione*," said I; "she has a beautiful appearance in the picture; her yards are nicely squared, and she looks all ready for sea. But, come, let's hear how the Spaniards captured her."

"Captured her!" exclaimed the veteran; "no, no, they didn't capture her; she was run away with by her own crew, and a horrible deed of blood they made of it. It was in the month of September, —97; the frigate was cruising off the west-end of Porto Rico, just jogging off and on, and now and then taking a peep into Port-au-Prince, and that way, to look arter the enemy. She was commanded by Captain P——, whose very natur was that of a tyrant, and a cruel one too; for by all accounts, he scored the smallest offence upon the bare back of the offender, and very often punished, because the whim took him in the head, for no offence at all. The ship's company were none of the best, to be sure; there was a sprinkling of all nations, and not a few with C. P. alongside o'their names."

"C. P." said I; "what does C. P. mean."

"Why, your honour, it just means this here," replied the old man. "You must understand that when some know-nothing rascal had been caught in a crowd, and suspected of dipping his grappling hooks—" here the veteran crook'd his fingers,— "into a neighbour's pocket, if so be they couldn't bring it slap home to him, the magistrates sent him on board a man-o'-war to teach him honesty, and thus a pretty set of the scum and scrapings of villany,—a sort of devil's own,—contaminated the sarvice; and the C. P. was a kind of curse o' Cromwell upon 'em—a mark of Cain, denoting they were shipped by the CIVIL POWER, and the master-at-arms had 'special orders to watch their motions."

"And did this really take place?" inquired I; "was the navy made a condemned service for convicts?"

"It was, indeed," replied the old pensioner, "till it got to be a kind of Solomon's proverb, that 'a king's ship and the gallows refused nobody,' and the tars that had always done their duty in battle and in storm, felt it a great degradation to be mustered with felons and jail-birds, and rely upon it, your honour, it prevented many a brave lad from volunteering; for who would go

for to enter the sarvice, when almost every ship had a black list as long as the main-top bowline. Besides, there was another concern that bred evils as fast as barnacles grows on the bottom of a dull sailer. D'ye mind, the fellows didn't love work, and when there was a fresh breeze, they either skulked down below, or got kicked about upon deck like a Muscovy duck in the lee scuppers, and a captain was often obliged to flog even against his own inclination. In course of time, the lubberly sons of —— chafed his temper till the strands parted, and then he became severe, and from severity proceeded to cruelty, till discrimination was foundered, and the cat's tails were felt by the good man as well as the bad. Now this was very likely the case with Captain P——, and I'm the more strengthened in the likelihoods of it by what followed; for though in the heat of passion reason is shrivelled and scorched up like the fag-end of an exploded cartridge, and a man may be driven to dye his hands in the blood of a countryman, yet when passion has grown cool and the beatings of the heart have become steady and true, like the droppings of the sand in the half-hour glass, none but a murderer,—a detestable, cowardly, craven-breasted murderer,—would bury his knife in the body of youth. Shame! shame!” exclaimed the veteran, as he shook his hoary head, and his cheeks assumed a flush of abhorrent indignation; “shame! shame!—but I forget all this time I arn't telling you the story. Captain P——, sir, always came out of his cabin arter dinner,—you mind me, sir, *arter dinner*,—and had the hands turned up to reef top-sails; and if they were more than two minutes and a half about it, he flogged the last man who came off each yard. Well, on the day before the mutiny,—I think I told you there was a mutiny, but if not I tell you so now,—on the day before the mutiny, the hands were turned up as usual and the mizen-topmen were rather slack in stays; so he, that's the captain, your honour,—swore he would flog the last man off the mizen-top-sail yard. Now you must understand, the smartest seamen are always at the yard-arms to haul out the earings, and consequently, unless they can spring over the heads of the other topmen, they must be the last to lie-in. Well, so it happened this evening, and the two captains of the top, knowing that their commander would keep his word, made a spring for the top-mast rigging; in their haste and fear they missed their grasp, and fell on to the quarter-deck. They were both young, active men, and were much beloved by the ship's company; they had gone aloft full of spirit and vigour, desirous to obey orders; the last beams of the sun, as it just touched the verge of the horizon, shone upon

their light but manly frames stretching out to secure the leeches of the sail to the yard; and before the upper limb of the bright luminary had disappeared, they laid stretched on the deck, each a lifeless and mangled corpse! It's hard lines that, your honour;" and the veteran held down his head in mournful cogitation.

"Hard lines indeed, old friend," said I; "and really it seems surprising that men should so far forget the social ties, which in every station ought to bind together the brethren of the *dust*, as to commit deliberate acts of cruelty."

"Mayhap you're right, sir," answered the pensioner, "though I can't say exactly as I understands it all. As for being *dustmen*, we arn't got no such great matter of dust at sea, because of the soakings we get; and sailors are apt to moisten their *clay* a bit when they can lay hold of the stuff. But with regard to the cruelty! there unfortunately was too much of it. But to return to my story. The poor lads were carried below, and many a half stifled curse was muttered as their shipmates touched the shattered limbs, and stained their hands in the blood of innocence. A silent, but deep feeling of revenge passed from heart to heart; the face was calm and smooth, but there was a storm in the breast that raged with fury. Well, your honour, the surgeon reported to Mr. Spriggs, the first-lieutenant, that the lads were both dead; and he—that's the first-lieutenant,—told the captain, who immediately said, 'Throw the lubbers overboard.' And this was done,—for to have read any sarvice over them would have been insult and mockery; and thus were two human beings sent out of the world worse than dogs. Not that I think a cast of the parson's office is of any great consequence to a dead man; but nevertheless, the living like to see things o'that kind done somewhat ship-shape, and besides there's many a warm glow of friendship lighted up among messmates, when natur stirs within 'em over an ocean grave. The words 'We commit his body to the deep,' that deep whose surface is as familiar to a seaman, as the face of the mother is to the infant, and under 'the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection,'—oh, your honour, I can't explain what I mean, but take an old tar's word that there's none so sensible of the power of the Almighty as them who are constantly hearing his voice upon the waters, and who so often witness the opening of his hands to loose the tempest." The veteran paused for a moment or two, gazing intently upon the picture, as if the scene he had described was present to his view; he then continued, "The hands were called on deck and

very threatening language used to them, and some were particularly pointed out as the next to be seized up at the gangway. That night, when the watch below was turned in, there was a secret meeting of the petty officers, and a plan was arranged for taking possession of the ship; no one mentioned murder, but each one knew by the wolfish strugglings of vengeance in his breast, that blood must be shed before their purpose could be achieved. The ringleaders were French *refugers*, who were fighting against their own country and had no love for ours,—fellows that it was dangerous to trust; and yet what is very remarkable, the captain does not appear to have suspected evil designs, so confident was he of his own supposed superiority in preserving discipline. But there was one whose eyes looked on with anxious apprehensions,—for like the soundings to the pilot, those eyes had studied the various changes in the features of man to fathom out the depths of the heart,—it was woman, your honour. Fanny Martin was the boatswain's wife, and though without larning and that sort of eddyfication, she loved her husband and trembled for his safety; for he had had some words with one of the master's-mates of the name of Farmer, and she strongly suspected Farmer was bent upon mischief, particularly as she saw him during the next day holding mysterious communications with the people, and having the keys of the spirit-room to get up the grog, he had distributed extra allowance amongst the disaffected.

“Well, your honour, during the day she kept her secret, and watchfully observed what was going on. In the evening she sat upon the fokstle with her husband, who was a hasty, passionate man, and as they watched the declining sun bathing his golden beams in the blue waters, she gave such intimations as partially aroused the boatswain to something like a sense of the truth. She talked to him of the village which had been the home of their childhood, she recalled to his recollection their early love,—for women enter all these things in the log-book of memory, with a sort of natural instinct,—and when she had awakened a feeling of tenderness, she pointed out to him the horrible suspicions which tortured her. But though distrust was stirred up, yet the haughty and rough seaman disdained to acknowledge its effects, or take any steps to prevent the mischief that was brewing, like a white squall in a clear sky. And who that looked upon the beautiful creatur,—for she was a sweet ship, your honour,—I say, who could look upon the beautiful creatur as she lay gently rolling on the glassy surface of the light swell, like a handsome woman viewing her shapes in a clear mirror,—who

would have thought, in that still, calm evening hour, that the red eyes of murderous vengeance were glaring on the scene? But the sun set upon those who were never to see it rise again, and the mountain islands faded away in the gloom, never more to be gazed at by the doomed ones.

“Night came; the officer of the watch was walking the deck, and the look-outs were alone seen as they stood at their several posts. Suddenly there was a simultaneous shout came rolling up the fore-hatchway, arousing the sleepers and alarming those who were awake. The lieutenant of the watch, Mr. Douglass, ran forward on the main-deck, but was immediately driven back by the shot which the seamen were throwing about. The first-lieutenant hurried to the spot; but whilst descending the fore-ladder, he received a severe wound in the arm from the blow of a tomahawk, and seeing there was no use in going down in the dark amongst ’em, he made a grab at the man next him, and dragged the fellow on to the main-deck. But Farmer, the master’s-mate, rushed upon the lieutenant and rescued the prisoner, who joined his shipmates down below. Both lieutenants returned to the quarter-deck for arms, but the mutineers had taken care to remove the cutlasses and boarding pikes out of the way; the officers could find nothing but a handspike or two, and the first-lieutenant, with no other means of defence than his dirk, again went forward among the men.

“By this time, the marines had mustered aft on the quarter-deck, and the captain, hearing the noise, ran up the companion and found the utmost confusion prevailing; the marines’ muskets and side-arms had been seized, and the sodgers crowded together without knowing what to do, for their officer was hove down sick in his cot. Captain P—— called for the first-lieutenant, and being told that he had gone forward, he immediately followed; the shot, however, drove him back for the moment, but he again advanced along the main-deck with a pistol in each hand, and three or four marines with lights. But I must tell your honour the rest in Hughes’s own words, for he witnessed the whole, and I’m thinking the horrors of that night never left his mind. Whether he took part or not in the transactions was never known, but he afterwards gave evidence agin many of the mutineers, and was the chief cause of their being hung at the fore yard-arm of the old Gladiator, at Portsmouth. I sailed with him three years, and never saw him smile; sometimes he would rave when darkness shut out every object from the sight, and the mind had nothing to rest on but the gloomy imaginings of a tortured spirit. They said he had been well edecated, and I

know he was always reading at every moment he was off deck and could spare time from duty,—sometimes for hours together with the Bible in his hands, and at other times with a book he called Wolltear. He used to swear a good round stick, too, but he always spliced a bit of a prayer to the fag-end of his oaths; though occasionally he would turn 'em end-for-end, and begin with the prayer first, knotting it with a double-wall damme, which he afterwards crowned with an Amen.” He paused for a minute, and then he commenced with the following statement of

The Mutiny.

“I was standing 'tween the bits, (says Hughes,) when the first-lieutenant came forward the second time, and his bare dirk was in his hand. ‘Return to your duty, men, and don’t disgrace your country,’ said Mr. Spriggs; but they again shouted, and Bill Oates threw a billet of wood at the officer, which knocked his legs from under him. At that instant the captain’s coxswain rushed at the lieutenant, one of the fokstle men seized the dirk, and together they held him down.

“‘Villains!’ said the lieutenant, ‘mutinous dogs! will you murder me?’ and he made a desperate struggle to rise, whilst his voice seemed to be getting more husky and thick, as if they were strangling him. All at once he gave a shriek, and I thought the running bowline had slipped; then there was a low, moaning, gurgling sound, a convulsive throe of the body,—and he lay quite still. The coxswain and his companion came away just as the captain ran from aft with the lights. The marines raised the poor lieutenant up by the arms, but, oh God! the lights gleamed upon a stream of blood, and a deep gash in the throat opened its yawning mouth,—the head of the lieutenant fell backward between his shoulder blades, for it was nearly severed from the body. The captain gazed at the corpse for a moment, then raising his pistols, he snapped the triggers at Farmer, who laughed,—no, it warn’t a laugh, it was a yell of defiance,—the charges had been drawn.

“The men led by Farmer on the starboard side, and the coxswain on the larboard side, moved in two compact bodies aft, driving the captain, the two lieutenants, the boatswain, and the midshipmen of the watch afore 'em. By the main ladder the latter party faced about, and the captain, seeing the coxswain acting as a ringleader, upbraided him for his ingratitude, for he had always been a great favourite with Captain P——, and had followed

him from ship to ship, receiving many marks of kindness for upwards of five years. The coxswain cheered on the men, and darting at the captain, stabbed him severely with a bay'net: this was the signal for massacre. The captain retreated to his cabin, which was soon filled with the mutineers, and every one seemed anxious to have a cut at him. He staggered to his chair and sat down, whilst those who had been the victims of his cruelty and oppression, mangled him in the fleshy parts of his body, and every wound was accompanied by a bitter taunt, or a hellish imprecation. He implored for no mercy, for he saw it would be useless;—he did not deprecate their vengeance, for the hand he had prized most was the first to stab, and therefore it was in vain to hope for life. He continued sternly silent, till he fell from his chair through weakness, caused by the out-flowing of the tide of existence. A horrible shout shook the cabin when they saw him prostrate, and raising him in their arms, they sallied aft and launched the body out of the stern windows. I heard it splash as it fell upon the dark waters,—I heard his shout of 'murder' and 'revenge' repeatedly as he went astern, but the waves closed over him, and he was seen no more.

“A short but ineffectual struggle took place upon the quarter-deck, where the marines still adhered to the officers; but they were soon subdued, and after being horribly mutilated, were thrown overboard. As soon as the mutineers had obtained possession, Farmer took command, and it was intended to haul in for St. Domingo; but fearing that daylight would bring 'em in with some of the British cruisers, it was agreed upon to up-helm and run down to the Spanish main.

“The work of destruction was not, however, yet complete;—the boatswain had been discovered in his store-room, (where he had concealed himself at the earnest entreaties of his wife,) and dragged upon deck. Poor Fanny Martin implored Farmer to spare his life; but the boatswain set the mutineers at defiance, and swore they would one day or other be frying in hell for their wickedness.

“‘Fore yard-arm, there!’ cried out Farmer, ‘have you got a good seizing for that block?’

“The boatswain turned pale, for he well knew the hint this was meant to convey, though his wife did not; and grasping Farmer by the arm, he exclaimed ‘No, you never can mean that!—Bill, we've sailed together and fought together;—did you ever know me shrink from the gale, or tremble at

my gun? Here am I,—ready to live or die, just as your breath may turn the vane,—indeed I ax no mercy for myself,—’

“‘Is the yard-rope rove?’ inquired Farmer, trying to free himself from the other’s hold.

“‘Ay, ay,’ was the response from the fokstle.

“‘Then,’ continued Farmer, ‘Martin, say any prayers you know, for by every fiend in ——, you swing up there in ten minutes from this time.’

“‘Consider, Farmer,’ expostulated the boatswain, ‘we’ve been messmates and have shared each other’s dangers; you may take my life, but do not, do not disgrace me in my death;—nay, you cannot hang me like a dog!’

“Poor Fanny had remained silently clinging to her husband during this conversation, insensible to its true meaning; but when the last expression escaped the boatswain’s lips, the truth flashed upon her, and wildly shrieking, she fell at Farmer’s feet, embraced his knees, and in the most frantic and abject terms implored for her husband’s life.

“‘Force her away,’ commanded Farmer, in a voice of thunder to some of the seamen who had gathered round, ‘and, Martin, to your prayers; the sand is fast running through the glass,—to your prayers, man—to your prayers, I say,’ and the wretch laughed like a demon.

“‘Avast, avast, Bill,’ said the boatswain, ‘I am yet an officer, and don’t disgrace the cloth! Stand back, you lubberly son of a ——’ he exclaimed, throwing from him with herculean strength one of his own mates, who was attempting to put the noose over his head, and then addressing the people, he uttered in a clear voice, ‘Shipmates, I only ask to die like a man. If my death-warrant is sealed, what matters it to you whether I go out of the world by a musket-ball or in a sling.—Nay, shipmates, you cannot do it,—and in the presence of her, too,’—his voice faltered for a moment,—‘it would be a disgrace to a blue jacket for ever.—But,’ observing their unchanged countenances, ‘I see my appeal is vain, and I must bear it as a brave man ought. Farmer this will be a leak to sink your soul in that day when we come to pass our accounts. I know but little of prayers; I’ve served my country with faithfulness, and every action of my life is known to the Almighty. If I’ve done my duty to my king,—to my fellow creatures, and to she who now witnesses my murder, God already knows it, so it’s of no use overhauling them consarns now; and if I have not done it, then I take it five minutes will hardly mend the matter. Fanny,’ he continued, softening his

voice, 'you have been my friend, my companion, in fair weather and in foul; they will not, cannot injure you, girl; and when you go back to where I need not name, tell the old folks,'—here his voice again faltered and his lips quivered, which gave rise to an obscene jest from a bystander,—'Be decent, fellow,' he continued, 'a brave man never insults his prisoner. My conscience is clear from having ever wilfully done wrong;—will yours be so when the last death-grapple comes?'

“‘Cease this d—— folly!’ exclaimed Farmer; ‘your time is nearly up, and by heaven—’

“‘Swear not by heaven, Bill,’ said the boatswain solemnly, ‘you have done with it, and it has done with you. Come, Fanny, one clasp to my heart before we are separated,’ and he threw his arms round his sinking wife, who seemed scarce conscious of her existence.

“‘Waist there! is the yard-rope manned?’ exclaimed Farmer.

“‘Ay, ay, all ready,’ was the response.

“‘Will you not take her below?’ said the boatswain beseechingly.

“‘No, no,’ vociferated some of the topmen; ‘she has often seen us dance aloft, and now she shall see you.’

“‘Farmer, will you suffer this?’ said the boatswain.

“‘They will have it so,’ returned the master’s-mate, doggedly.

“‘Then, by that Heaven which you have abjured, they shall be disappointed. I will not perish like a dog.’

“He sprang forward, and with his heavy blows felled several to the deck. At first, old remembrances of his prowess made the mutineers give way before his impetuous attack, but it was only momentary; a dozen cutlasses gleamed in the air; there was a whizzing noise of flourishing tomahawks, and the boatswain fell dead beneath the blows, covered with wounds. Happily his wife had fainted; she had seen her husband struck, but she was spared the pang of witnessing his bloody corpse being thrown overboard, which was done immediately. ‘Oh, God! where is thine eye of retribution!—(Hughes would cry out)—lay bare thine arm! But thou hast poured out the phials of thy wrath, and justice has received her due!’

“Well, messmate, whilst this was passing at the starboard gangway, the coxswain and his gang were making quick work of the other officers. They had secured the two lieutenants, the purser, the doctor, the captain’s clerk, and a little lad—a midshipman, who with the gallantry of riper years stood undauntedly among the rest, and there were also four or five seamen who

had made themselves obnoxious to the mutineers; they were all butchered, mangled, cut to pieces, and committed to the deep. The little midshipman was stabbed through the heart,—I saw it myself; the boy fell shouting, and with that shout expired. But there was yet another victim. I told you the marine officer was sick in his hammock, and being weak from long illness could offer no resistance; indeed, he scarcely knew what was doing. Now, messmate, may perdition alight upon their bloody heads for that horrid cruelty! They brought the young officer on deck; his ghastly features, pale and wasted from disease, excited no pity, and with the balance trembling between life and death he was thrown over the taffrail, and left to struggle for a few useless moments, when he sunk beneath the waves, and his murder was added to the black catalogue of hellish guilt.

“Day dawned, and dawned in splendour. The sun upon the horizon shed his red light, rendering the gory deck more bloody in its aspect; and there stood the mutineers, contemplating the horrible deeds they had so lately perpetrated, and scanning each other with looks of silent mistrust, as if every man suspected that his shipmate would betray him. Farmer stood upon the after-gun on the starboard side, one elbow resting on the hammock-rail and his head reclined upon his hand; the flush of intemperance was on his cheeks, and his restless eye wandered hither and thither, as if tracking the crimson stains of carnage that his villany had caused. The horizon was now one flood of clear transparent light, the blue waters marking the line between the dark ocean and crystal sky. The gallant frigate danced merrily before the breeze, but excepting the squaring of the yards, no additional canvass had been spread to accelerate her way.

“Suddenly a man on the fokstle exclaimed ‘Sail, O!’ Farmer started from his reverie, and every limb of his body was for an instant palsied; whilst the seamen, as if struck by an enchanter’s wand, stood motionless and still. ‘Sail, O!’ repeated the man. It aroused them from their stupor; a thousand sickly apprehensions rushed upon their minds, and all was instantly bustle and alarm. Farmer walked forward, and then hailed one of the quarter-masters to bring him the glass out of the cabin. The glass was brought,—it was the captain’s; and as he took it in his hand, it was plainly seen by the quick changes of his countenance, that there was a tempest in his soul.

“The sail was now distinctly visible about two points on the larboard beam, her hull rising from the water, and her masts showing she was a ship,

whilst their position indicated she was crossing the frigate's track. Farmer raised the glass to his eye; there was a breathless silence fore-and-aft. His look was long and earnest; not a muscle of his features moved, his very pulsation seemed to be suspended: at last, he gave a shivering gasp, and drew his breath convulsively. The coxswain approached, and took his spell at the glass, but his glance was only momentary; he returned it to Farmer. They looked in each other's face, but neither spoke his thoughts.

“‘Bring Mr. Southcott on deck,’ exclaimed Farmer, ‘and see that he is well guarded.’

“‘In a few minutes Mr. Southcott, the master, was brought on to the fokstle, between two seamen with naked cutlasses and loaded pistols. The undaunted officer, expecting that the hour of his death had arrived, stood firm and erect in front of the mutineer, and his steady gaze fixed so intently upon him, that Farmer shrunk from before it. At length the latter said, ‘No harm is meant you, Mr. Southcott; but have the goodness to take the glass, and tell me what you make out yon ship to be,’ pointing towards it.

“‘Is there a sail?’ exclaimed the master. ‘Ay, I see it;—thank Heaven!’ and he took the glass.

“‘Her yards show square,’ said Farmer.

“‘They do,’ replied the master; ‘but the merchantmen now spread a broad cloth in these seas.’

“‘She has a middle and a royal stay-sail set,’ continued Farmer. The master assented.

“‘She is carrying every thing that can draw a cap-full of wind,’ said Farmer.

“‘She is so,’ replied the master; ‘but West-Indiamen have many flying kites nowadays.’

“‘Mr. Southcott,’ exclaimed Farmer in his harsh hoarse voice, ‘you know that yon hooker is no West-Indiaman. You would deceive me, sir—That new cloth in the main-top-sail, that milk-white flying jib, and the cloud of canvass that flutters from the main-yard tell me that it is the——’

“‘What?’ exclaimed the master, suddenly starting from the recumbent posture in which he had been looking at the ship, and again fixing his eyes upon his traitorous mate.

“‘Sail, O!’ shouted a man from the starboard cat-head; ‘a brig under the land, and a ship in-shore of her.’

“‘Yes, yes,’ said Farmer, ‘’tis the Favourite and the Drake; but their legs were never made to catch us. Come, Mr. Southcott, the name of the stranger yonder,’ pointing to the vessel first seen. ‘I wish the men to hear it from your lips, that they may think of running gantlines and hangman’s knots, and know their doom if they surrender.’ He again applied the glass to his eye; ‘she has bore up a couple of points, and is setting her studding-sails. Speak, sir! is it not the Mermaid?—You are silent, but it matters not. Take him below.’

“‘Yes, Farmer,’ said the master, ‘thank God, it is the Mermaid, and therefore you cannot hope to escape. Your captain and officers are murdered by your orders—’

“‘Nay, nay, not by my orders, Mr. Southcott,’ said Farmer. ‘We have all been tarred with the same brush; but what would you propose?’

“‘Resign the command you have assumed to me,’ replied the master; ‘and men!’ he shouted at the top of his voice, ‘mistaken men, return to your —’

“‘Silence, sir!’ thundered Farmer, clapping his hand to the master’s mouth; and then turning to the men who had crowded up from below and filled the fokstle and gangways, he said, ‘Shipmates, yon sail is our old consort, the Mermaid. Mr. Southcott proposes you should surrender, and of course all of us know our doom. But though, mayhap, some may be spared by royal mercy—such mercy as you have already had, which of you can point out the men? No, no, my lads, we’ve gone too far to retract; and for my part, I would rather flash a pistol in the magazine than again serve under British bunting, even if my life were sure. What do you say, men?’

“The seamen crowded together, irresolute; the petty officers gathered round Farmer, whilst those who had been least active in the mutiny seemed half inclined to follow the counsel of the master. ‘Shipmates!’ said Farmer, ‘I wish to try your mettle. Think of a public execution! The yard-rope rove, the signal gun, and a death of infamy! Most of you have had your noble bravery and gallant daring already rewarded with the cat; but what is a dozen or two at the gang-way, compared with flogging through the fleet! and with left-handed boatswains’ mates to cross the lashes! But our case is far from desperate; we have handled the gun-tackles before to-day, even if it should come to the worst.’

“‘You will not dare to fight,’ said the master; ‘or if you do, where are those intrepid men who directed all your movements? Farmer, I am told it

was your hand that struck-down my poor messmate, Douglas; it was a damnable deed, for you must have remembered that he saved your life last April, when cutting out at Jean Rabel—'

"'Take him below!' roared Farmer. 'This is no time to think or talk of the past; and d'ye mind me, Mr. Southcott, clap a stopper on your tongue, or else—; you understand me, sir.'

"'I do,' replied the master, 'and defy you. What! have I been playing at ducks and drakes with death so many years, and fear to meet him now? My king, my country demand my services, and when I disgrace my colours, then brand me traitor, and—'

"'Away with him!' again shouted Farmer, 'and if he offers to speak, gag him with a wet nipper. Away with him! I say,' and the master was dragged off the deck. Farmer then turned to the petty officers, 'Shipmates, we must speedily decide. What say you, Oates?'

"'She is yet four or five miles off; let us crack on studding-sails aloft and aloft, and my life for it we run her hull down by dark.'

"'The Mermaid has the heels of us, going free,' replied Farmer, 'and could spare us the t'galln't-sails. Should we make sail, 'twill only arouse suspicion. Your advice, Jennings.'

"'We could always fore-reach and weather upon the Mermaid on a bow-line,' answered the man addressed; 'so why not haul to the wind on the starboard tack, go between the islands, and make for the first port?'

"'Yes,' said Farmer with a sneer, 'and there are two cruisers now in sight in-shore of us; we know the Magician and the Zephyr are somewhere in the neighbourhood; it certainly would be wise to run into their jaws. Speak, shipmate,' turning to the coxswain, 'what's to be done?'

"'We might get close in-shore, abandon the frigate, and take to the boats,' replied the coxswain.

"'And going without compensation in our hands,' rejoined Farmer, 'be delivered up as mutineers, or confined in dungeons as prisoners of war! We have no further time for argument; men, will you obey my orders, or shall I here abandon you to your fate?'

"'Every man will obey,' was shouted by the crew, 'either to fight or fly!'

"'Tis well,' replied Farmer. 'Brace the yards up, and let her come to the wind on the larboard tack; afterguard, rig the whip and wash the decks down. Topmen, away aloft; keep snugly to leeward,—see that all your

studding-sail gear is properly rove, and have every thing ready for shaking out a reef and setting the royals. Boatswain's mates, send a gang below to bring the hammocks up; and, quarter-masters, to your stations in stowing them. Call the gunner's crew, and tell them to go round the quarters and see everything in its place. Signal-man! bend the colours at the peak, and have our number ready to show at the main. Main-top there!—stand by to hoist the pennant, and mind it blows out clear. Be smart, my lads: one lubberly act would make them suspect that Captain P—— was not on board, or that his cat had lost its tails.'

"In a few minutes every man was at his appointed station, and the duty was carrying on with as much alacrity and attention as if nothing had happened. The Mermaid, a two-and-thirty gun frigate, was nearing them fast, and the cruisers in-shore were stretching out from the land to join her.

"'The frigate is speaking to us with his bunting, sir,' exclaimed the signal-man; 'she is showing her distinguishing pennants.'

"Farmer clapped his hands in ecstasy. 'By Heaven! it never struck me Captain P—— was the senior captain. Hoist the ensign and pennant;—bear a hand with the number, and see that the flags blow clear!' He directed his glass to the Mermaid, and looked intently for a minute or two. 'She sees it:—haul down! And now, my lad, make the Mermaid's signal to make all sail in chase to the north-east: bend on the preparatory flag at the main and her pennants at the mizen, and have all ready abaft to telegraph;—it will amuse the fools and keep them from being too familiar. Is the signal hoisted?'

"'Ay, ay, sir,' replied the signal-man, 'there it flies in as many colours as a dying dolphin;—and there goes the answering pennant at the frigate's main; haul down, my boys.'

"The moody gloom left Farmer's brow, as he saw by the Mermaid's manœuvring that his signal had been obeyed. He then bore up again to the westward, telegraphed that he was going in chase, crowded his canvass on every spar that would spread a cloth, and soon had a clear horizon all around him.

"But though Farmer had determined to run for the Spanish main, yet he was not sufficiently acquainted with the coast to know the appearance of the land. Mr. Southcott, therefore, was brought on deck, and partly through compulsion and partly through a desire of getting clear of the mutineers, he carried the ship off La Guayra, where she was ultimately surrendered to the Spanish authorities, Farmer declaring that they had turned their officers

adrift in the jolly-boat, though the real fact was very soon afterwards explained to the Spaniards. The master, the gunner, the carpenter and two midshipmen of those saved were sent to prison; but the mutineers received twenty-five dollars a man, a great many of them became double traitors by entering for the frigate under the Spanish flag, and Farmer was appointed second captain. The first captain's name, I'm told, was Gallows,^[1] so that his junior must have been pretty often reminded of it.

“Admiral Harvey, on hearing of all the circumstances, sent a flag of truce to demand the frigate and the mutineers; but though the Spaniards were made acquainted with the horrible murders that had been committed when the ship was taken possession of, yet they not only refused to deliver her up, but actually put six more guns aboard of her, making altogether forty-four, and with a crew of nearly four hundred men, she was fitted out and made a voyage to San Domingo, very narrowly escaping the British cruisers who were all on the alert to pick her up.”

“And this, your honour,” said my chaperon, “is old Hughes's story, and that's the ship there it's all about.”

I had been deeply interested in his narrative, which he related with peculiar feeling, and some parts were almost dramatised by his singular gestures and manner. “And what became of the boatswain's wife?” I inquired.

“Fanny Martin, sir?” he replied; “why I think she left La Guayra in a neutral, and so got to Halifax, but I arn't quite sure.”

“And now, then,” said I, “for some account of her recapture. Can you tell me how it happened, and what the picture before us is actually designed to represent?”

“Why no, your honour, I can't do that exactly,” rejoined he, “seeing as I knows but little about it; but there's a messmate of mine yonder who was on that station at the time, and can give you the particulars; but he's a dry soul, your honour, and mayhap would like a taste of the spirit-room, if your honour has no objections; 'twill loose his tongue a bit, and give it freer play.”

“One word for my friend and two for myself,” thought I; but sensible that “freshening the nip” would prevent too much chafing, I readily consented, and the old blades *pip*ed to grog with a *gusto* that can only be acquired by long habit.

We were soon seated in a comfortable room overlooking the Thames. It was nearly high-water, and the middle of summer; a delightful breeze tempered the heat, the green fields looked beautifully below and opposite to us, whilst the vessels were rapidly passing and chequering the scene with their white sails. The steamers, too, were swiftly cutting through the yielding element, and the whole presented a spectacle of commercial wealth that can be witnessed on no other river in the world. I own I feel a very great pride in contemplating the glory and the gratitude of my country; and when I see her gallant tars who have braved the war of elements and battled the enemies of England, snugly enjoying their *old age* in their *berths*, chewing their *pigtail* with a knowing *quid pro quo*, and occasionally cheering the heart with the balsam that maketh it glad, I cannot help exclaiming, “nobly should a grateful country be served, and thus be rewarded her brave defenders!” Besides, within the small compass of this beautiful place, we can meet with practical information from every part of the globe. Talk of your geographies! here are the living *pages* that wait on Time,—men that have breakfasted on a whale with the Esquimaux, dined on an elephant with the Hottentots, and supped upon a snake sixty feet long with the Red Indians;—men who have bearded the lions, shook paws with the tiger, and rode races on alligators. They have seen the holy city, visited the ancient capitol of the world, and have passed over the identical spot where Jonah was swallowed by the whale. Greenwich Hospital is a very storehouse for knowledge,—a perfect College, in which the old tars take their *degrees* as natural as when running down a trade-wind,—have their *senior wranglers*, their M.A. for master-at-arms, their B.A. for boatswain’s-assistant, enjoy good fellowship over a glass of grog, and are staunch supporters of *cannon law*.

We found several of these well filled volumes—*damme-quart-hos*—already ranged in the room before our arrival, and, like our old friend Colburn, they were mighty busy in *puffing* off their works, as if trying to hide the authors under a cloud of smoke.

“Ay, ay,” exclaimed a crojack-eyed old blade, “them there pursers’ accounts of prize-money showed but a poor figure in the foremast-man’s log, whatever they did in the skipper’s journal. They used to sift it through a hatchway grating,—all that went down was for the officers, and all that stayed above came to the tarry jackets.”

“You’re right there, Jem,” said a veteran boatswain’s-mate, whose voice was not unlike a gale of wind sighing to a kitchen fire through the hollow of a chimney-pot, “perfectly right; and then they make out the prize-list much in the same way as the nigger accounted for his pig. D’ye see, his master gave him three dollars to go to market and buy a pig; but the black rascal came back drunk, without his money and without his cargo. ‘Holla!’ said his master, ‘how came you drunk, sir? and where’s the pig?’ ‘Ah, massa,’ says the nigger, ‘me nebber drunk, but giddy wid long chase.’ ‘Where’s the dollars I gave you?’ asked the master. ‘Me gie ’em to buy pig,’ said the black. ‘What, three dollars?’ cried the master. ‘Tan littly bit, massa, me telle you. First me gib dollar for pig’ ‘Well, that’s only one dollar,’ said the master. ‘Tan littly bit,’ puzzled the nigger; ‘den me hab pig for dollar,—dat two dollar, massa; den de pig run away, and gib dollar for catch a pig—dat tree dollar, massa. Den him dam pig run in a bush like a debbil, and nebber see him no more noder time.’ So it was with the prize-money; there was dollar for Jack, and Jack for dollar; and if Jack ran away, he lost all, and was made to look *dolor*-ous into the bargain, if ever they cocht him again. My best sarvice to your honour, and hope no offence.” He lifted his pewter to his lips, and took a most persevering draught to qualify the toast.

“Jack Maberly,” said my worthy conductor, addressing the last speaker, “the gentleman wants to hear a little about the recapture of the Harmoine, and Bill Jennings is just agoing to tell his honour the long and the short of it, if you’ll be good enough to keep silence fore-and-aft.”

“I wull, I wull, messmate,” replied the old boatswain’s-mate.

Bill Jennings, the very *beau ideal* of a main-topman in long togs, applied his muzzle to the grog, as he said, “to clear his throat of scupper-nails;” and having swallowed almost enough to float a jolly-boat, after sundry hems and divers sluings to make sure of his stowage, gave the following account of

The Recapture of the Hermione.

“As for them there cutting outs, (he began) why I’ve had a pretty good share on ’em in my time, seeing as how I’ve been with some of them there fire-eating chaps as would cut out the devil himself from under a heavy fire, if so be as his reverence warn’t moored with chains. To my thinking, there’s more to rouse the nat-ral spirit of man in boarding than in laying at long

shots and hitting each other spitefully; for if a fellow does work an eyelet hole in your canvass where it arn't wanted, you have the chance of damaging some of his spars in return, and that's what I calls fair play. Bekase, messmates, setting a case as this here—it's cut for cut, and damn all favours. Now at long shot you never can tell who hits you, and that's what I call a sort of incendiary act; but at close quarters you can always tell who lends you a rap, and you can pay him agin; and if he falls, then you can stand his friend and take care of him. But nevertheless, messmates,—as many on you knows,—that same cutting out is sharp work for the eyes, as the monkey said when he hugged the cat, particularly where the boarding-nettings are triced up and the enemy is prepared for you; but there warn't a ship on the West Ingee station but would have gladly undertaken the recapture of the Harmoine, bekase the whole affair had been a disgraceful consarn, and had placed the cha-rackter of a British tar like a yankee schooner jammed betwixt two winds,—nobody knew which way she'd tend. Well, messmates, the job fell to the Surprise, 28, an old French 24, called the Unity when she was taken by the Inconstant, in the beginning of the year 96. Howsomever, messmates, she kept up both names, as it were; for never was there a ship with more unity among the men, and she surprised the Spaniards by the daring impudence they displayed. The Harmoine had made a run or two from San Domingo, and in September, 99, our admiral, ould Sir Hyde Parker, received intelligence that she was going to make another trip to Havana, and the Surprise was sent to cruise off Cape Saint Romar to intercept her. The whole of the little frigate's complement was 197, men and boys, but there warn't so many as that on board, and with this force Captain Hamilton was to attack a ship carrying 44 guns, and having nearly 400 men;—but they didn't calculate odds in them days. Well, d'ye see, she got upon her station about the middle of October, and kept a sharp look-out, dodging off and on, but keeping at a fair distance, so that the prize might not be afraid of leaving port. Well, day after day they watched, but nothing hove in sight bigger than a land-crab; so what does the captain do, but being tired of waiting, he cuts out some vessels from under the island of Amber, to keep the men from getting idle, and then runs off of Porto Cabello, and there sure enough lay the Harmoine all ataunt-o, every stick on end, sails bent, t'-gallant yards crossed, and a whacking large Spanish ensign and pennant flying;—but mark me, messmates, she was moored head and starn betwixt two heavy batteries, the smallest of which

could have blowed the little frigate out of the water, and cut her up like junk.

“It was a beautiful evening, when the saucy Surprise stood close in to reckoniter;—there was a fine breeze and smooth water, and the craft worked like a top. They could see the sodgers at the batteries and the men on board the enemy all at their quarters, and the gun-boats were pulling out to take up convenient positions; though there warn’t a man among ’em believed the ship could be taken, yet they knew damned well the Englishmen would try.

“Well, next day Captain Hamilton hove-to, just without range of shot, and challenged the Harmoine to come out; but she took no notice of it, and so the Surprise made sail, stood into the mouth of the harbour, and fired at her. The batteries opened their palaver; but the little ship hauled off without a shot touching her, and the lazy lubberly Spaniards, more than two to one in men and metal, didn’t dare to show their yellow rag outside the port. So the ship’s company, fore-and-aft, wondered what the captain would be at, and they grinned like so many cat-heads to think they couldn’t get a fair slap at her. But the captain was up in the main-top with a round jacket on,—stretched out at full length with his glass resting on the top-brim, and most earnestly overhauling their consarns in-shore, so that an old woman couldn’t stir out of doors, nor a rat move on the Harmoine’s decks without his seeing it. The master was up in the fore-top upon the same lay, and they kept hailing each other about different consarns till they made every thing out as plain as the grog-blossoms on Darby’s nose there. [The individual alluded to gave a chuckle something between a grunt and a laugh, and applied his fingers to an enormous red proboscis, that certainly seemed the tell-tale of a besetting sin.] Well, d’ye mind, they kept at this all day long, dodging about and in-and-out, like a dog in a fair, till the men got quite tantalized and jaundiced at seeing so much of the yellow bunting,—for the enemy had hoisted it every where out of bravado.

“Now, messmates, when I was a youngster, I used to—could read a bit, and I remembers reading some’ut about the *conginuality* of minds;—that is, suppose setting a case, messmates, just this here. Darby there and I, without speaking to each other, both lifts the quart pots to drink his honour’s health for sarving out the stuff,—[he raised the quart pot, which by the by was empty, and looking into it, conveyed a hint that it required replenishing]—why then, messmates, (he continued) we should both have the same

thoughts arising from the same feelings. [Darby's mug was empty too, so I ordered them to be filled again.] So, d'ye see, messmates, the crews of the boats got busy about their gear and placed the oars and boat-hooks, the rudders and tillers all in their proper places, ready for a moment's sarvice. The captain twigged 'em at it, but he never said nothing till the next day but one, when he orders the hammocks to be opened to air and spread out over the boats, and he stands off-and-on till about noon, when he makes a long stretch out from the land, and the men thought he was going to give it up. So, d'ye see, they pipes to dinner, and after that they sarves the grog out, of course;—your honour's health; and, messmates, yours, all of you,—[he took a long draught];—but at two bells, instead of calling the watch, the hands were turned up and all ordered aft on to the quarter-deck, where the captain was standing as upright as a fathom of smoke in a calm, and the master was bent down like a yard of pump-water measured from the spout, and looking over a chart of the harbour, as busy as the devil in a gale of wind.

“Well, every soul fore-and-aft mustered in the twinkling of a hand-spike, and they all crowded together as if they'd been stowed with a jack-screw for a long voyage; and then the captain up and tells 'em that he meant to head the boats himself and cut the Harmoine out, if they would do their duty like men and back him. My eyes, if there warn't a cheer then, there never was one before nor since; and the lads, to seal the bargain, gived one another a grip of the fist that would have squeezed a lemon as dry as a biscuit.

“So, you see, the murder was out, and every man betwixt the cabin windows and the figure-head volunteered to the duty; but the captain said he wouldn't take more than one hundred, including officers and marines; he was sorry to leave any behind, as he believed them to be all brave fellows, but some must stay to work the ship, and, if necessary, bring her into action.

“Well, the men were picked out, the muskets, pistols, tommyhawks, and cutlashes got ready, and long hook-ropes coiled away in the starn-sheets of each boat, and clinched to the ring in the bottom; the oars and rullocks were muffled and well greased, so that not a sound might be heard louder than the sigh of a periwinkle.

“The sun set soon after six o'clock, and as soon as twilight came on,—which in them latitudes, when the sun is on the equator, and it was very near it then, comes on in a few minutes,—the ship was hove in stays and stood

in-shore, with a pleasant breeze and a stern-swell setting after her. About eight o'clock the wind died away, the yards were laid square, and the boats hoisted out, whilst those on the quarters were lowered, and all were soon manned for the expedition and shoved off. Whilst they're pulling in-shore, messmates, I'll just elucidate Captain Hamilton's plan of attack.

"Now, mind me, this here paper of 'bacca shall be one battery, and this here 'bacca-box shall be the other battery, and this here shut-knife shall be the Harmoine,—the laniard sarving for one cable out of the hawse-hole, and this piece of marline for the other cable out of the gun-room port;—[he arranged the articles on the table.] Now the boats were to pull in, and the boarding parties had each a different place to board at. As soon as they got upon deck, the boats with their respective crews were to cut the cables and then go a-head to tow; whilst four of the boarders were instantly to shin aloft to loose the fore-topsail and two to loose the mizen-topsail, which, if possible, were to be sheeted home to catch the breeze coming off the land. The Surprise was to come in close to the harbour's mouth to act as circumstances required.

"The boats kept close together, but didn't make any quick head-way, as the captain meant to get in about midnight, when he expected the Spaniards would have their eyes buttoned up, and their ears plugged with their nightcaps, like the hawse-holes in blue water.

"Well, d'ye see, it was just about eight bells when the mast-heads of the Harmoine showed above the dark mass of land, and the light rigging looked like a fine spider's web traced on the silvery sky; and there too fluttered the yellow rag, that was soon to be humbled under the saucy pennant of St. George. On pulled the boats, and except the ripple of the oars and the hissing of the foam in their wakes, silence slept deep and still, disturbed only by the moan of the sea as it broke upon the rocky shore.

"Suddenly there was a flash, and before the report could be heard, grape-shot were jumping about the boats and splashing up the water like a shoal of flying-fish at play. This firing was from a couple of guard-boats, each mounting a twelve-pounder; and if it did no other mischief, it aroused Jack Spaniard, who it appears was up and rigged like a sentry-box; and before a cat could lick her ear, flames of fire seemed to be bursting from the dark rocks, like lightning from a black thunder-cloud: it was the frigate, speaking with her main-deck and fokstle guns.

“Finding that the enemy were prepared, the captain had less delicacy in alarming them out of their sleep, and so the boats’ crews gave three tremendous cheers. Mayhap, your honour never heard the cheers on going into action, when the voice of man goes from heart to heart and stirs up all that is brave and noble in the human breast; it invigorates and strengthens every timber in a fellow’s frame, and is to the weak or mild, what mother’s milk is to the infant.

“Well, they gave three British cheers as would have stirred up the blood of an anchor-stock, if it had any, and on they dashed, stretching to their oars with a good-will and making the water brilliant with their track as they pulled for the devoted frigate, then about three-quarters of a mile distant, which kept sending forth the red flames from the muzzles of her guns as the boats gallantly approached.

“Captain Hamilton boarded on the starboard bow, and with the gunner and eight or ten men cleared the fokstle. The doctor boarded on the larboard bow, and with his party joined the captain; and the other boats having discharged their men, the whole of the boarders attacked the quarter-deck, where the Spanish officers had collected and fought with desperation. And now mind the downright impudence of the thing; for whilst they were fighting for possession on deck, the sails were loosed aloft, the cables were cut, and the boats were towing the ship out of the harbour; and the craft, as if she knew she warn’t honestly come by, was walking off from the land like seven bells half-struck;—if that warn’t going the rig, then blow me if I know what is.

“When the Spaniards saw that the ship was actually under way with sail on her, and the boarding parties cutting down all afore ’em, a great number jumped overboard and some ran below, whilst the killed and wounded lay in all directions. About this time Captain Hamilton received such a tremendous crack on the head from the butt end of a musket, as brought a general illumination into his eyes and stretched him senseless on the deck. A Spaniard, who had fallen near him, raised his dagger to stab him to the heart; but the tide of existence was ebbing like a torrent, his brain was giddy, his aim faltered, and the point descended in the captain’s right thigh. Dragging away the blade with the last convulsive energy of a death-struggle, he lacerated the wound. Again the reeking steel was upheld, and the Spaniard placed his left hand near the captain’s heart to mark his aim

more sure: again the dizziness of dissolution spread over his sight, down came the dagger into the captain's left thigh, and the Spaniard was a corpse.

“The upper deck was cleared, and the boarders rushed below on the main-deck to complete their conquest. Here the slaughter was dreadful, till the Spaniards called out for quarter and the carnage ceased; but no sooner was the firing on board at an end, when the sodgers at the batteries—who had been wondering at the frigate moving away as if by magic, and had been calling a whole reg'ment of saints to help 'em,—let fly from nearly two hundred pieces of cannon, as if they were saying their prayers and wanted the British tars to count the beads. Howsomever the wind was very light close in-shore, and the smoke mantled thick and heavy on the waters, so as to mask the ship from view; but a chance twenty-four-pounder hulled her below the water-mark, and they were obliged to rig the pumps. The main-mast, too, at one time was in danger from the stay and spring-stay being shot away, and the head swell tumbling in made the frigate roll heavily; but about two in the morning they got out of gun shot, the towing boats were called alongside, and every thing made snug. Thus in an hour and three-quarters the frigate was boarded, carried, and clear from the batteries; but, to be sure, considering the little wind there was, and the head swell setting in, she did stretch her legs as if glad to be out of bad company, and the quarantine flag;^[2]—for you know, Darby, none in our sarvice likes to be yellowed,—[Darby gave another chuckle, and then took a good pull at his mug to drown remembrances,]—it looks so like a land-crab.

“Well, messmates, sail was soon made on the Harmoine, the shot-hole was plugged up, and the party mustered; when there were found to be only twelve men wounded, amongst whom were the captain and the gunner, Mr. Maxwell. There was not one man killed on the British side, but the Spaniards had 119 killed and 97 wounded, most of them dangerously, and the decks were again stained with human blood, some of which was no doubt shed by those murderers and traitors who had mutinied.

“At day-light next morning the Spaniards were indulged with the sight of both ships standing off shore, and the Harmoine with a British ensign and pennant over the Spanish colours. The prisoners were put on board of a schooner, that was captured during the day, and sent ashore; and the Surprise, with her prize, stood for Jamaica, where she arrived seven days afterwards, and brought up at Port Royal.

“You may be sure, messmates, Captain Hamilton was well received; the Parliament-men at the island gave him a beautiful sword that cost three hundred guineas; he was made a knight on, and the Harmoine was called the Retaliation, and she was immediately put in commission as an English frigate; though in logging her name in the navy list, the Lords of the Admiralty changed it to the Retribution, and I had the honour to be drafted on board her as captain of the main-top.

“Captain Hamilton was invalided home on account of his wounds; but the packet was taken by a French privateer, and he went to see Boneypart, who treated him like a messmate for his bravery, and allowed him to be exchanged for six French middies; and now, my lads, I’ve told you all I know about the recapture of the Harmoine.”

Of course, I expressed my acknowledgments for the obligations I was under to him for his narrative, but this seemed to nettle the old tar very much. How far his account is correct I must leave others to determine, and only regret that I have not been able to do the worthy soul more justice, but it would be impossible for any written description to give an adequate idea of his mode of recital. Our glasses were replenished, for I saw that the old *blades*, like *cutters* on a wind, were determined to have a taut leech to their jibs by taking a long and strong pull at the purchase; and expecting to gather a fund of anecdote, I e’en made the most of it, and determined to gladden their hearts.

“Well, it’s of no manner of use to go to argify the matter,” said the old boatswain’s-mate, “and all I’ve got to say is this here. Bill has spun that yarn like a patent winch, and I’m sartin, sooner or later, murder will always meet with its punishment. Many of them mutineers were hung, and I’m thinking that there was one or two jewel-block’d that never set foot on the Harmoine’s deck in their born days; but their lives were sworn away, and arter that they went aloft without touching a rattlin. I knew one on ’em, but I’ll not rip up old grievances like a piece of tarred parcelling. I was at Port Royal when the ships came in, and well remember seeing ’em both. There’s one thing however, messmate, you forgot to tell us, and in the regard of a generous spirit, which I take to be consort with bravery, it ought not to go untold; and that is this here, that Sir Edward divided £500 of his own prize-money amongst the bold fellows who shared the victory with him.”

“That was nobly and generously done,” said I; “such a man deserves to be immortalized.”

“Well, your honour, he was mortalized,” replied the old man; “for on that station of musketoos and grog-blossoms, there warn’t a blue jacket nor yet a jolly but would have followed him into the devil’s kitchen at cooking time. And it’s a rum place that West Ingees, too. I remembers being ashore at one of the resurrections among the niggers, and the ship’s corporal stuck his spoon in the wall; because, I’m thinking, it warn’t very likely that a fellow would ever sup burgoo again, when his head and his body had parted company. Well, we buried him in a wild kind of a spot, where there was a few grave-stones with names chiselled on ’em, and some were cut with a knife, showing a fowl anchor or a rammer and sponge, and the trees grew all over the ground, and the rank grass and weeds run up the tombs; it was a wilderness sort of a place, and here it was that Corporal Jack was laid up in ordinary. The party to which I belonged was commanded by Mr. Quinton, a master’s mate, and our bounds lay within a short distance of this here burying-ground; and so, d’ye mind, the morning after they’d lowered the corporal down the hatchway of t’other world, I was posted at the point next the corporal’s berth, and a shipmate was with me by way of companion like,—not that I was afeard of any thing living or dead, but I had always a sort of nat’ral antipathy to being left alone on shore, particularly in the dark. There was also a nigger belonging to the plantation, who we allowed to join us just by way of being civil to him, as he was a kind of steward’s mate in the house, and used to splice the main brace for us occasionally. Well, messmates, we got knotting our yarns to keep us from getting drowsy; and to cheer our spirits, we overhauled a goodish deal about ghosts, and atomies, and hobblegoblins, and all such like justices of the peace, till the nigger—they called him Hannibal, arter the line-of-battle ship, I suppose;—I say, till the nigger declared that every hair on his head stood as stiff as a crow-bar.”

“Avast there!” exclaimed Bill Jennings, “tell that to the marines an you will; why the black fellow’s head was woolly and curled like a Flemish fake, and yet you say it was as stiff as a crow-bar.”

“And so it was,—the more the wonder, and be d—— to you;” growled the boatswain’s-mate. “Would you have his honour there think I keep a false reckoning? Well, as I was a saying, his head looked like a black porcupine with his quills up. All at once we heard a tremendous rattling amongst the dry leaves of a plantain-ground; but the trees were too thick to

see what it was even if there had been light enough, which there warn't, as the sun hadn't brought his hammock up, but was only just turning out.

“‘Dere him debbil come agin,’ cried the nigger; and away he started, as if a nor-wester had kicked him end-ways.

“‘What the black rascal arter,’ said my messmate.

“‘Nay,’ says I, ‘that’s more nor I can tell; but not being a Christian and only a poor ignoramus of a nigger, I suppose he’s afeard that the noise yonder is Davy Jones playing at single stick, and mayhap he may think the ould gemman is hauling his wind upon this tack, and may take his black muzzle for one of his imps. But that’s a pretty bobbery they’re kicking up, at all events, and now it’s going in the direction of the burying-ground.’

“‘I tell you what it is, Jack,’ says my messmate, who looked very cautiously round him, as if he was rowing guard in an enemy’s port, ‘I tell you what it is; I never thinks they give the devil his due, for between you and me I don’t know as he’s half so bad as many people makes him out. Our parson say he’s black, but the niggers paints him white; but for my part, I’m thinking that the colour of a ship’s paint goes for nothing. Then as for his horns, why they’re ugly looking to be sure;—[here the noise was right away in the burying-ground, and my messmate laid me fairly along side,]—but though they are ugly looking, I never heard of his doing any mischief by running stem on with them. And arter all, shipmate,’ he continued, ‘you must own there’s a great deal in fancy. Look at your Ingee grab-vessels, that run their noses out to the heel of the jib-boom, and carry all their bowsprit in-board! Now I call that sort o’rig neither ship-shape nor Bristol fashion, for a ship’s head is a ship’s head, and a ship’s bowsprit is a ship’s bowsprit; but if they go for to make a standing bowsprit of a ship’s head, then, I’m thinking, they are but lubberly rigged.’

“‘Now, messmates, you must own that his arguments was a bit of a poser; but I warn’t altogether satisfied with his backing and filling like a grenadier in a squall; and so, says I, ‘But what do you think of his tail, eh?’

“‘Why as for the matter of his tail,’ says he, ‘I’m thinking it’s a fundamental mistake altogether. The parsons say—and mayhap they’re right—that he cruises about privateering, because he’s got a roving commission, and every now and then he falls in with a heavenly convoy, and nips off with a prize, which he carries to his own dark place. Now as some of the craft are, no doubt, dull sailers, why, I suppose, he carries a hawser over his quarter to drag ’em out of the body of the fleet, and I’m

thinking that in some dismal hour he has been seen with the fag-end towing astarn, and the fear of the beholder has converted it into a tail.'

"Well, messmates, I own I was a bit staggered at the likelihoods of the thing, because, d'ye mind, I never could make out the use of the tail; but the tow-rope spoke for itself, so says I, 'I tell you what it is, shipmate, you've just hove my thoughts slap aback and got my ideas in irons—but holloa, there's a precious row.'

"'Precious row, indeed,' says my companion; 'why Jack—why I'm blessed—look there—if that arn't the skeleton of Corporal Jack walking off with his own head under his arm; then I'm ——, but here comes Mr. Quinton and the nigger.'

"I did look, messmates, towards the burying-ground, and there I saw a sort of long-legged skeleton straddling over the graves like an albatross topping a ground swell; and, sure enough, the corporal's head was under his long spider-like arms.

"'Dere, Massa Quinckem,' said the black fellow, 'now he see 'em for he-self.'

"'By Jove, and so it is, boy,' cried the officer.

"'Ay, ay sir,' says my messmate, 'it's the corporal—there's no mistaking his cutwater; but he must have fallen away mightily during the night, to be so scantily provided with flesh this morning; howsomever, mayhap the climate has melted him down.'

"'He no melt 'em,' cried the nigger, 'he eat 'em for true.'

"'What! eat his own head,' says I, 'he must be in dreadful want of a meal. Come, come, ould chap, that's too heavy to be hoisted in.'

"Well, all this while the skeleton was walking off with his head in his arms, just as a nurse would carry a baby; but the officer raises his rifle to his shoulder, and it made me laugh to think he was going to shoot a skeleton without a head, and that was as dead as Adam's grandmother.

"'For God's sake, sir,' says my messmate, 'don't go for to fire, for it would be downright blasphemy to kill a dead body; and what makes the fellow turn out of his hammock after being lashed up for a full due, I can't tell.'

"Bang went the rifle, and down dropped the corporal's atomy; but up it got again almost directly and made sail for the bush, leaving his head behind to lighten ship. Off starts the black fellow after him, and away went the officer close to his heels. 'My eyes, shipmate,' says I, 'there must be

some sport in chasing a skeleton; so e'en let's keep in their wakes and see it out.' So off we set, and presently bang went the rifle again, and away flew the corporal's splinters; so the skeleton gathers himself up, and then laid down on the ground, kicking and sprawling like a bull-whale in his flurry. Well, we ran up and there we found—now what do you think, messmates? Why, it was nothing more nor less than a large land-crab, that was walking away with the corporal's head as easy as I'd carry a cocoa-nut."

The old tar ceased, and I naturally expected that some part of his story would be contradicted; but no one seemed to raise a doubt as to the veracity of his statement, and of course politeness would not allow me to differ from the rest.

"Them land-crabs have a power of strength," said old Darby. "I recollects one night being beached high and dry in the small cutter, and I boat-keeper; so I catches one of these beasts, and claps him under the bows of the boat, whilst I made fast the painter to his hind leg, and then away he stretched out for the water, dragging the cutter with him as if it had been no more than a mouldy biscuit, and if I hadn't cut the painter pretty smartly, he'd have towed us out to sea in no time."

"The legs of these crabs must be very long," said I; "are their bodies in proportion?"

"Why no, your honour," replied the boatswain's-mate; "their bodies are but small, seeing that they are all ribs and trucks; but their claws are tremendous. What d'ye think of their reaching up to the top of a gibbet, and having unhooked a pirate that was hung in chains, walked off with him, hoops and all, so that he never was found again!"

"If it really happened," I replied, "it is truly astonishing."

"Really happened!" cried the veteran somewhat scornfully. "Ax them as was watching down at Cabrita-point that night, and see if they won't swear to it."

"Perhaps it was some of the friends of the pirate who removed the body," I ventured to suggest.

"Now that comes of your honour's not knowing nothing of the country," he rejoined; "for, d'ye mind, all the rogue's friends were thieves, and if it had been any of them, they'd not only have carried off the body, but would have stole the gibbet for fire-wood, which a land-crab has no manner of use for."

This certainly was unanswerable, and I forbore asking any more questions on that subject.

“I remember, when I was a boy,” said ——, “I sailed out of Dover in a by-boat under Captain Hammond over to Calais, and Bullun, and Ostend; and there was an ould woman who they used to call Mother Mount, lived at the back of the York Hotel, and she constantly placed herself on the steps of her door observationing the people that passed up and down the street. Captain Hammond never went past the house but he jeered her for a witch, and every body said she was one; till one day, just as we were going across with a good freight of passengers, the ould Jezabel spoke some hard words to the skipper, as he was coming down to the craft to sail out of the harbour. He made no more to do but to spit at her. ‘The curse of the defenceless and childless widow be upon you!’ she cried out. ‘You are bound across the channel, but there are those will be there before you. You will think yourself secure, but woe, and danger, and wreck, shall come at a time when you think not of it, for my curse is upon you!’ The captain came on board in no very gentle humour, and away we went with a flowing sheet for Calais. Our passage was short, but we struck very heavily in crossing the bar, though the water was as smooth as a mill-pond, and every timber in the craft sneered again. The mate, fearing she would gripe-to and run upon the pier-head, was going to ease the throat-halliards; but the captain hollaed out, ‘Hold on till all’s blue; it’s only Mother Mount at her tricks.’ Well, at last we got safe in and hauled alongside the key in the outer-harbour, where we made fast stem and starn and cleared decks.”

“Upon my word, that’s a tough yarn,” said I; “and so you really think it was Mother Mount that bumped you ashore in that fashion.”

“It isn’t for men without larning or edecation such as me to say their say positively,” answered the pensioner, “but—[giving his quid a severe turn]—if I am to speak my mind, I think it was. Well, sir, the captain went ashore to dine with a French gentleman, and when he came aboard again he was rather too much by the head on account of the wine he had hoisted in, and somehow or other it had got stowed away in his fore-peak; so he yawed about like a Dutch schuyt on the Dogger-bank, and almost his last words at turning-in were ‘D— Mother Mount!’ Well, we all went to our hammocks, and the mate left word for one of the hands to turn out and ’tend her at tide-time, as it looked breezy away to the sou-west. The vessel floated about two o’clock in the morning, and soon afterwards we heard the most tremendous

hallo-bulloo upon deck, and the captain swearing in a mixture of high Dutch, low Dutch, Jarman and French, with not a small sprinkling of English dammees. Up the ladder we ran, and there he was with a handspike in his hand thrashing about and stamping fore-and-aft, like a wild pig in a squall. We got him appeased at last, and then he pointed to the mooring ropes; and, sure enough, the head-fast was cast off and partly hauled in-board, and the starn-fast had only a single turn, just ready for letting go when she had winded; the foresail was partly up, and the jib hooked all ready for hauling out. We made all fast and snug again, but the skipper kept raving till daylight in his cabin about Mother Mount and her imps.”

“But what about the imps, my old boy,” exclaimed I; “you’ve said nothing yet about imps. Did they have tails too?”

“Indeed and by all accounts they had, sir,” replied the old man; “for though the skipper was a long time silent about it, yet it came out at last, and he solemnly attested it in his last moments on his death-bed to a clergyman. He declared that whilst he was sleeping something struck his temples so hard that it made the vessel shake again——.”

“Why, he was dreaming to be sure,” said I, “the thump was caused by the vessel just beginning to lift, and the swell rolling in made her strike against the piles. Pray, had the man who was ordered to ’tend her at tide-time got up upon the look-out when the master went on deck?”

“I carn’t say as he was, sir,” answered the veteran, “though I rather think not.”

“Well, go on, my old friend,” requested I, “let’s get to the imps.”

“After receiving one or two heavy blows,” continued the pensioner, “the skipper woke, and he thought he heard a shrill squeaking voice above say, ‘Bear a hand with that foresail and jib, and haul in the head-rope;’ and then there was a sort of a scrambling noise afore the windlass, and another chock aft by the starn lockers. So he slips on his pea-jacket and creeps up the companion, and there he saw five or six monstrous rats forward; two were hoisting the foresail, two were hooking on the jib, one was hauling in the head-rope, and another was shoving her bows off. Aft was a rat bigger than all the rest, standing at the tiller and giving orders, and another had got hold of the quarter-rope and was singling the turns. You may well guess the ould chap was in a terrible taking at first; his teeth chattered like the palls of a windlass when they shorten in a slack cable; his knees knocked together _____”

“Then he was knock-kneed,” said I, laughing heartily. “Really this is a clever tale: first, the old woman makes a threat, then she plays you a *mount-a-bank* trick, and lastly *rat* ifies her promise by——”

“I have not got to that yet, sir,” replied the old man, interrupting in his turn; “but you shall hear all about it, if you will only give me time.” He then continued, “Notwithstanding the tremblification the skipper was in at first, he wasn’t a man as was easily to be daunted in the long run; and seeing he was part owner of the craft as well as master, I’m thinking he was afraid they wouldn’t carry her out safely, and mayhap he thought they might turnout to be *pirats*——”

“That’s half a pun, old boy,” said I; “why your *pirats* would have made a splendid *rat-pie*, upon short allowance.”

“By all accounts one of ’em would have been meal for half a dozen messes,” replied the *matter-of-fact* old man. “But as I was a saying, sir, ould Hammond determined that at least he’d be master of his own cutter; for in those days the by-boats had running bowsprits, though they generally carried them over the stem to make most room; and also, that his own crew knew her trim and could work her best, he jumps up upon deck and catches hold of a——”

“A *rat* tan, or a piece of *rat* line stuff,” said I, interrupting him.

“No, sir,” answered the veteran rather testily; “he catches hold of a handspik, and began to hammer away like a fellow beating saltpetre bags in an Ingeeman’s hould at Diamond-harbour; and by the time we got upon deck, there wasn’t a rat to be seen nigh hand; though I must say I saw two or three dark objects in the distance running down towards the pier-head, and there was some thing like a man on his hands and knees slowly crawling after them. Howsomever, as I said before, the decks were cleared of the warmin, and we made all fast again.”

“And did you never hear any other explanation of the affair?” inquired I.

“Why,” replied the pensioner, “there was a report that some English and French smugglers broke out of prison that night, and they tried to make the skipper believe that he was deceived as to the rats; but the thing was impossible, for how could the smuggler get through the great gates and pass the sentries? Besides they wouldn’t have turned tail that fashion for one ould man.”

“But the alarm, old boy,” exclaimed I; “the skipper gave an alarm, and the *rats* were afraid of being *trapped* again.”

“Why, for the matter o’ that, sir,” assented the veteran, “he did kick up a bit of a bobbery, I own; and the do-oneers came running down from the watch-house, but nobody was taken.”

“That’s curious, too,” said I, “but had they no other means of escape?”

“Why, they did say,” replied the old tar, “that a fishing-boat was missing from somewhere about the mouth of the harbour; but the captain swore to the rats, and ever afterwards used to give the ould woman a trifle of money or so, and speak kindly to her. And d’ye see, sir, I’m thinking that Captain Hammond couldn’t be mistaken as to the rats, because why?—a rat hasn’t a head like a Christian; and then his tail,—no Christian has a tail like a spanker boom over his stern, and so I’ll stick to the rats, for I verily believe they were nothing else.”

“No doubt,” said I, addressing the boatswain’s-mate, “you have seen a great deal of hard service. Have you been in many battles?”

“Why yes, your honour,” he replied, “I’ve had my share of it; but notwithstanding the many chafes I got, if another war was to break out, and I was fifty years younger, provided I could get a good captain and a sweet ship, worthy messmates and a full allowance of grog, I’d sooner sarve in a man-of-war than in any other craft whatsoever. But mark my words, we shan’t never have another such a navy as the last. Arn’t they *arming* the ships on purpose for them to make use of their *legs*, and run away? What would ould Benbow or Duncan have said to this, with their round sterns and chase batteries? Arn’t the fleet got the *dry-rot* with fundungus, and don’t the new regulations bid fair to give the men the *dry-rot* too? Who the deuce could weather a storm or engage an enemy upon a pint of grog a-day? But as long as there’s a shot in the locker, it shall go hard but we’ll queer the purser somehow or other, after all.

“I remember Jack Traverse once, and a worthy soul Jack was too, going off at Spithead to join the old Gorgon. Well, d’ye see, as the wherry came from the starboard side to pull up to the larboard gangway, Jack, who had been bowsing his jib up, caught sight of the name painted in gold upon the stern, and so he endeavoured to see what he could make of it; but being cro-jack eyed, and his brains all becalmed, he began, like a dull skull-hard, to spell it backward. ‘N-o, no,’ says Jack, ‘that’s as plain as Beachy Head in a fog; so this arn’t the ship, d’ye mind! Howsomever, let us see what her

name is. N-o, no; that's right; g-r-o-g, grog. Yes, I'm blessed if it arn't, and both together makes NO GROG! About ship, waterman, she won't do for me; why, I should be waterlogged in a week, so bear up for the next ship, d'ye hear.'

"The navy, your honour, is the pillars of the state; but if the props are unsound, the whole heady-phiz must tumble to the dust; and oh, to see the flag under which I've fought and bled—that flag, whose influence caused such signal exertions in the fleet 'when Nelson gained the day,'—humbled before the white rag of a Frenchman, or pecked at by the double-headed eagle!—nay, what is worse, degraded in the sight of the stripes and stars! My fervent prayer is, that before the day arrives, these old bones may be hove-down for a full due, and buried in the hollow wave. 'Twould break my heart.

"Howsomever, all this comes of trying to make Jack a gentle-man, a title he once despised; but what with the quibble hums of lawyers, and the comflogistications of parsons, his head gets filled with proclamations, and his brains whirl round like the dog-vane in a calm. I beg your honour's pardon, though, for troubling you with so many of my remarks upon the subject; but it must be evident to every body that tars have arrived at a bad pitch, and though I'm no croaker, (I don't mean him as was at the Admiralty,) yet my spirit is stirred up and must have vent. I sees they have tried to put a stop to smuggling, by taking off the duties. That is as it should be; but there's another thing I wish, and that is, to get a petition to parleyment for all the old hard-a-weathers at Greenwich to have their 'bacca duty free. Why, sir, it would be an act of piety; and the worthy old quidnuncs when they take their chaw, or blow a cloud, would bless 'em for it.

"Talking about smuggling, reminds me of a circumstance that happened off Dungeness, when I was in that gallant ship, the Triumph, seventy-four. We were running up channel for the Downs with Dungeness light on our larboard beam, and it was about six bells in the middle watch, when the look-out on the fokstle reported, that there was a lugger close under our bows. 'Give him a gun,' cried the officer of the watch. The shot was fired and the lugger instantly let fly her fore-sheet, and rounded to. 'From whence came you?' hailed the lieutenant. 'Wha waw,' replied the lugger. 'What the devil place is that?' said the officer; and again raising the speaking trumpet,—'where are you bound to?'—'Wha waw,' was once more returned. 'The fellow's making game of us, sir,' said the officer to the

captain, who, hearing the report of the gun, had come out of his cabin. 'Shall I board him, sir?'—'Yes, Mr. ——, lower the quarter-boat down, and see what he is.'

"Well, away we went, and as we pulled towards him, the lieutenant would have it the lugger was a French privateer; but the coxswain, an old hand at the trade, replied, 'No, sir, she's no privateer, and I thinks I can *smell* a secret at this distance. There's no guns, sir, and but few hands. Eh, eh, we shall see presently.'—'What are you laden with?' inquired the officer as soon as we got alongside, and he had jumped upon the deck. 'What is your cargo?'—'Bacon and eggs,' replied a veteran, whose gray locks peeped from underneath a slouched hat, and partly concealed a weather-beaten countenance, where the breakers and time had made deep furrows; 'bacon and eggs, sir.'—'It's of no use axing that man, sir,' said the coxswain. 'I can tell him in a minute; he's brought his hogs to a fine market, and as for eggs,—why, he's chock full of tubs, your honour, (lifting up the grating.) Ay, there they are, indeed, like eggs in a gull's nest. There they are, sir; it makes a fellow's mouth water to look at them. Mayn't we have a toothful your honour? It's hard to starve in a land of plenty! I'd only knock one small hole in this head here,' giving it a thump with the tiller that was nearly accomplishing the purpose.

"'Avast, avast, sir!' cried the lieutenant: 'this is smuggled, and now we must seize it for his majesty.'—'For his Majesty! all that for his Majesty!' cries the coxswain. 'Why, God bless your honour, he'll never be able to get through the half of it, even though the Prince of Wales should lend him a hand, and I hear he's no flincher from the gravy. I'm sure, sir, none of the royal family would miss the want of as much as would comfort the heart of a tar in such a raw morning as this, especially as we would drink their healths in a bumper, and that would do 'em more good than swallowing all this here stuff!'—'Not another word,' said the officer. 'Jump into your boat, and (turning to the old man) do you follow him, for I must take you with me!' The poor fellow was obliged to comply, though he made a good many wry faces, and begged hard; but all to no purpose. So the cutter shoved off, sadly deploring that *all hands* were so nigh *hollands*, and yet without being able to moisten their clay with a sup before breakfast.

"'What is she?' inquired captain E—, as the lieutenant came up the side. 'A smuggler, sir,' was the answer. 'A smuggler, eh!' cried the captain, 'and so (addressing the old man) you are one of those lawless characters who run

all hazards to run your goods and beach your tubs, bidding defiance to danger and death? What have you to say for yourself?'—'Sir,' replied the hoary seaman uncovering his head, and displaying a face where cool determination was struggling with painful sensations, 'sir, whatever I can say will, perhaps, avail me nothing. The necessities of a large family and numerous distresses have driven me to my present state. All I possess in the world is now in your power, and you are able in one moment, not only to deprive me of liberty, but also to reduce me and mine to utter misery and beggary. For myself, I care but little; but for my fatherless grandchildren,'—he wrung a tear from his eye, and dashed it off in agony; but his countenance almost instantly resumed the stern serenity which appeared to mark his character. Captain E. and the lieutenant took a turn or two aft in deep conversation. At last, eight bells came and the morning watch was turned out. 'Send all hands on deck,' said the captain to the boatswain's-mate, 'and bear a hand about it.'

"Well, we all mustered aft on the quarter-deck; and the captain, standing on the gratings of the after-hatchway, exclaimed—'My lads, this old rascal's a smuggler, and there's his vessel, your prize. He says our detaining him will be the ruin of himself and family; and how much shall we obtain for plunging a fellow-creature and a countryman into hopeless misery? Why, our gin will be transmogrified into port for the agents and lawyers, and perhaps you would share about nine-pence a-man. Mine and the officers would amount to about twenty pounds, which we are ready to forego,—nay more, I am ready to give you that sum out of my own pocket. So what d'ye say, lads? shall we make him splice the main-brace, and let the old rogue go?' A simultaneous 'Ay, ay, sir,' resounded from all hands. 'Well, then, my men, we'll have six tubs out of him for that purpose; so jump into the boat again, and you old Blow-hard must swear through thick and thin that you have never set eyes upon us!' The old man turned round, fell upon his knees, and, laying his hand upon his heart, poured forth a volley of thanks; but just as he was going over the side,—'Avast,' cried the captain, 'you must swear upon the binnacle never to divulge what has taken place.' This was done, and the smuggler returned to the boat with a lighter heart than when he entered it at first.

"Away we pulled alongside the lugger; but, when their master told them they were clear, my eyes! the men were like wild fellows, and would have swamped us with tubs. 'Only six, Mr. E,' cried the captain from the

gangway: 'if you bring more, I shall send you back with them.' But we had plenty to drink, and then stood for our ship again.

"Well, d'ye see, the six tubs were placed under the poop-awning; and as soon as the captain had turned in, the lieutenant sent two of them to the captain's cabin, one to the ward-room, one to the midshipmen's berth, and another to the warrant-officers' mess, leaving only a solitary tub for the whole of the ship's company.

"Well, d'ye see, at day-light out came the captain again and looked for the stuff 'Why, Mr. ——, where—where—what have you done with the grog?' The officer told him how it had been disposed of. 'No, no,' says the skipper: 'fair play's a jewel, sir: have it all on deck directly, and let every man fore-and-aft share alike. I shall only take my allowance with the rest, that all hands may be tarred by the same brush.' So the stuff was started into the wash-deck-tub, and equally divided among officers and crew."

Here the boatswain's-mate ceased, and took a determined pull from his pewter, whilst the various groupes assembled (for our numbers had increased,) were all unanimous in voting Captain E—— to be "a generous soul, what 'ud always see a poor fellow righted in the long run," and each had some anecdote to relate respecting him; but as all were talking at the same moment, it was impossible to collect them.

"I was with him," exclaimed an old pensioner, "off Scamperdown, when Duncan fought the Dutch fleet, and we engaged and took the Worser-never; and after she struck, we stood on and attacked the Fry-hard, that carried ould Winter's flag,—blue at the main. It was just arter the mutiny too, and some of our hands went from the bilboes to their guns. But Captain E—— knew the stuff a blue jacket was made on, and was glad of the opportunity of rubbing off old scores with the gunner's sponge."

"Talking about smuggling," said Bill Jennings, "puts me in mind of the way we used to get dollars off at Boney's Airs,^[3] when I was in the Mutine sloop of war along with Captain Fabian, and we had three fine Deal-built boats that 'ud walk along like race-horses. Well, all the boats' crews had belts round their waists with pockets to 'em, each just big enough to hold a roll of fifty dollars; so that every man could carry three hundred,—and a tolerably good cargo, too, considering he had to walk as steady as a pump-bolt on shore for fear of the custom-house officers, and to stretch out pretty smartly at his oar when he got into the boat—supposing the wind warn't fair. Well, one day says the marchant to our coxswain, as we was standing

in his store,—says he, ‘My lad, do you see this here cask?’ which was rather a foolish question to be sure, seeing it was a half-hogshead, such as the small craft had their rum in, and he might have been sartin that Tom Crampton had twigged it. Howsomever, the marchant says to him, ‘My lad,’ says he, ‘do you see this here cask?’ Now it puzzled Tom to think what tack he was standing on, for the licker-bottles were all filled chock-a-block on the side-board, and ‘Mayhap,’ says Tom to himself whilst he scratched his head, ‘mayhap, his honour’s not never a going to gie me it all?’ Howsomever, says the marchant, says he, ‘My lad, do you see this here cask?’ Tom looked at the half-hogshead and then at the marchant, and then at the rum-bottle, as much as to say he was working a traverse to find the latitude and the longitude of the thing; and then he scratched his head, and took a severe turn with his quid, and ‘My lad, do you see this here cask?’ axed the marchant. ‘I do, your honour,’ says Tom; ‘and I’ll take my oath on it, if your honour wishes.’—‘No, no,’ says the marchant, ‘your word’s enough. So bring up your boat’s crew, and get ’em aboard as quick as you can.’

“Now Tom thought that the men were to come up for the stuff and then to go on board the sloop, so as to get there before dark as she lay in the outer roads, about seven miles from the town; so says Tom, says he, ‘God bless your honour! I’ll have ’em up in the wink of a blind eye, and I’m sure they’ll thank your honour for your goodness. Is it rum or brandy?’—‘What do you mean?’ axed the marchant. ‘The cask, your honour,’ says Tom, ‘is it Gemaker, or Coney-hack?’—‘Neither the one nor the other,’ says the marchant; ‘them there are all dollars.’—‘Whew!’ whistles Tom; ‘now I understands your honour, but couldn’t we contrive to get ’em down in the cask just as they are; so that instead of making four or five trips, we may carry off the whole in the turning of a log-glass?’—‘I fear that ’ud be too great a risk,’ says the marchant; ‘or else I wish it could be done.’ ‘Why for the matter o’ the risk,’ says Tom, ‘there’s only one ould chap as I cares about; but he’s always boxing the compass of every thing that he catches sight on, living or dead. But I think I could get to windward of him, arter all’s said and done, and there’s no risk with the men, you know.’ So Tom was allowed to make trial of his skill; and away he goes and gets a purser’s bread-bag, and then walks off to the market and buys a couple o’ sheep’s heads, which he stows away in the bag along with a little hundred of cabbages and inyuns, till it was chock-full. Well, the cask of dollars was got

into a cart, which drove off,—Tom keeping a good cable's length a-head with his bread-bag over his shoulder and a piece of wood shaped like a sugar-loaf done up in a blue paper under his arm; for I should tell you, messmates, that was the way they used to smuggle off the solid silver, and the old coast-guard had made a prize of a couple of these sugar-loaves only a day or two afore. Well, on goes Tom, bending beneath his bag like a crank craft under whole topsails, and now and then taking a heavy lurch to draw attention.

“The jetty runs a good two hundred yards into the river, and right in the teeth of the upper part on it stands the guard-house, where ould Jack Spaniard kept as sharp a look out as a Jew crimp upon pay-day, and presently he sees Tom rolling along and looking as wise as the cook's-mate in a sudden squall. So he mounts a cockt-hat as big as a Guinea-man's caboose with a feather in it as 'ud have sarved the whole Chatham division of jollies, and curling his mouthstarshers he marches up to Tom and bids him back his main-yard; but Tom took no notice for the moment, till the ould Signor cries out, ‘Blood and ounds,’ in Spanish, and then he pretends to cotch sight of him for the first time. Away starts Tom as if he was afraid of being boarded, and the Spaniard whips out his rapper, as they calls a sword in that country, and runs him right through the heart—”

“God bless me!” exclaimed I, interrupting old Jennings; “what! did the poor fellow get murdered for his frolic?”

“Murdered, your honour!” reiterated Bill Jennings; “Tom murdered! No, no, the shove gave him better headway—”

“Why did not you declare, but this minute,” said I, “that the Spaniard run him through the heart?”

“Through Tom's heart! Lord love you, no,” he replied; “it warn't Tom's heart, but through the heart of a cabbage, I was going to say, only your honour interrupted me,—a cabbage that was in the bag. Well, there was a pretty chase all along shore, till the Spaniard fires a pistol that hit him right in the head—”

“Well, then, he's dead enough now, I suppose,” exclaimed I, “if shooting through the head will kill a man.”

“It warn't Tom's head,” he replied, laughing, “it was the sheep's head; for Tom kept the ould chap dodging about till he saw the cask of dollars was in the boat, and she with her three lugs rap full standing off shore with a spanking breeze, and then he pretends to trip up over a piece of rock and

lays him all along, hove down on his beam ends. Up comes the Signor hand over hand; because why? Poor Tom had made every nail an anchor, and clung to the earth as if it had been his own nat'ral mother. So, up comes the Signor and grabs hold of the bag, which Tom held on, like grim death against the doctor; but after some tuzzling, Tom lets go the bag and runs for it, leaving Jack Spaniard with his prize. Well, Tom gets down to the captain's gig and shoves off to the Muskitoe schooner, what was lying in-shore, and the Signor hoists the bag on his shoulders, fully sartin from the weight that he'd made a rich seizure, and back he marches to the guard-house, where every soul had turned out to enjoy a sight of the chase, (so that the cart with the cask passed by without being examined,) and now remained grouped together to see what the Signor had got. There was Spanish sodgers in their cockt-hats, custom-house officers in their long punchos, and coast-o'guinea niggers, men and women, cracking their jokes at the expense of poor Tom, and highly delighted that his cargo was captured, nothing doubting but that it was dollars, or mayhap ounce-bits—that's doubleloons, messmates,—and all were eager to see it opened, little suspecting it was a mere bag o' moonshine. Well, the Signor comes right slap into the middle of 'em, puffing and blowing like a sparmacity, and throws down his treasure; one of the black fellows out's knife and cuts the seizing at the mouth of the bread-bag, and away rolls sheep's heads and cabbages with a good sprinkling of garlic; and, my eyes, the sodgers began to roar with laughing; the custom-house officers turned-to and swore at every Saint in the calendar, the niggers went dancing mad with delight at the fun, whilst the ould Signor twirled his mouthstarshers and cursed every thing an inch high. But the dollars were safe, and Tom got a handsome present for his trouble; whilst Jack Spaniard was in a precious stew of sheep's heads and impartinances to think he'd been done so completely."

"I dearly loves them there sort o'things," said a weather-beaten old blade; "there's a some-ut sentimental about 'em that excites simperthy, and brings to the memory many an ould scene of former times."

"You're right, boy Ben," rejoined my first conductor, who had told me of the Mutiny of the Hermione, "and so they do. Some people calls 'em *rum-on-tick*, but I can't for the life of me tell why, as they seldom gives us credit for much spirits; but if his honour there has no objection, I'll just give him a yarn that's twirling in my brain, and mayhap it may please him."

I readily assented to the proposal, and he accordingly began,—“I remember once, when under the command of the gallant Sir Sidney Smith, up the Mediterranean, we were scouring the coast, and brushing away the French troops; the captain ordered a party in the barge and launch to rig for going ashore, as he intended to pay a visit to a nobleman, who resided about two miles inland, on an elegant estate. Now, the old master was an immense stout man, as big as a grampus; he always gave the vessel a heel to the side he was walking; and as he hadn’t been on dry ground for many months, he was invited to join the captain and some of the other officers in their cruize. But, Lord love you! he thought the ship wouldn’t be safe without him; and, as for fighting like the sodgers, with their marching and their countermarching, why, he didn’t understand their heavylutions, and wasn’t going to be made a light-infantry of. However, they persuaded the old gemman at last; all hands got into the boats, and we shoved off. It was a lovely morning, and as we pulled along-shore, the scenery was beautiful; but more so when we landed and took our course to the nobleman’s house. A wild and romantic spot it was; rocks piled on rocks, yet crowned with verdure—the dark forest and the green fields; while the calm ocean reflected with dazzling brightness the golden beams of the sun.

“Well, d’ye see, the nobleman was glad to see us all, for the French had retreated three weeks before, and he said there wasn’t a trooper within a hundred miles. The wine was set abroach, and all hands began to make merry, particularly Sir Sidney and the officers.

“‘Well, master,’ said the captain, ‘how have you enjoyed your walk?’

“‘Very much, indeed, sir; but,’—looking to seaward,—‘I’m afraid they’re getting the ship too close in. How sweetly she sits, like a duck upon the water! Gad, I’m sorry I left her.’ And then he bellowed, ‘Why don’t you wear round upon t’other tack? But they can’t hear me, so I may just as well whistle jigs to a mermaid.’

“‘Never mind,’ returned the skipper, ‘they’ll keep her afloat; so drink your wine, and make yourself happy.’

“Happy, eh? what out of his ship? That was impossible; so the old man kept growling, like a distant thunder storm. The castle we were in was situated upon a rising ground, that commanded an extensive view of the country; but we were on that side which was next the sea, and after a good *blow* out,—that is, when we had re-*galed* ourselves, and the captain had gained what information he wanted, just as we were coming away, in

rushed a tall meagre-looking figure, with a face as long as a purser's account, and as pale as a corpse, while his teeth chattered like a watchman's rattle.

"What's the matter,—what's the matter?" inquired Sir Sidney; but the man was breathless with running, and couldn't answer. He wrung his hands, and pointed inland. The officers made the best of their way aloft to the top of the castle, and there, with their glasses, discovered a troop of French cavalry, about 200, carrying on under a heavy press.

"My eyes! there was a job. To defend the ship,—the castle, I mean,—was out of the question; for there warn't above twenty of us up from the boats; besides, it would have been the ruin of the nobleman, in case of defeat. So orders were given to make the best of our way down, and every man to look out for himself. But what was to become of the master? He could hardly walk; and for running, that was impossible, for his legs were so short, he could make no hand at it. The officers proposed to conceal him; but he swore he wouldn't be stowed away like a bale of damaged slops returned unserviceable, and perhaps be cotch'd and get fricasseed and carbonadoed, like a young frog. 'No,' said he; 'crack on, my boys; and the devil take the starnmost.'

"Off we set, but poor old Soundings couldn't hold it out; he puffed, and blowed, and waddled along, till he tripped over a mound of earth; and there he lay, like an island of flesh amidst an ocean of grass. Sir Sidney hove to, and laughed till his sides shook. However, he ordered a couple of hands to raise the old gemman on their shoulders, and run with all their might.

"By this time, the troops had advanced within musket shot, and they sent us a few peppercorns to freshen our way. The firing made the men in the boats alert, (for they were out of sight, the landing-place being just over the brow of a hill,) and so they prepared for our reception. The sodgers were coming up with us hand over hand, and their shots flew pretty thick. The old master, as soon as he recovered breath, did nothing but growl at being obliged to run away from the enemy, and kept his pistols ready to salute them in case of their coming alongside. There was now only a corn-field between us and the descent to the boats, when the men, finding themselves considerably in the rear, made a desperate push with their cargo and capsized altogether. Up they sprung again: it was, however, too late to mount the master afresh; besides, he had got a little rest in the carriage, so all hands took to their heels: but just as they arrived in the middle of the

corn, the French poured in a smart volley, and the old gemman fell. The rest of the party had reached the boats, and put off upon their oars, all ready to give the troopers a warm reception. The two guns in the launch and one in the barge were loaded with musket-balls, and every man had his musket or pistols ready cocked for the attack. The cavalry appeared on the brow of the hill, as fine a mark as you'd wish to shoot at. Whiz—whiz—we let fly; and they seemed to be struck comical. They thought to capture us at once without difficulty; but, at the second fire, our arms had done so much execution, that they turned tail and scampered off as hard as they could drive.

“The frigate had witnessed the transaction; and when they could bring the guns to bear without injuring our own people, a broadside of round and grape completed their confusion. As soon as the action was over, we found two or three of our men slightly wounded, while many of the enemy lay dead upon the hill; others we could perceive moving about, and some, who had been dismounted, were endeavouring to escape. In about half an hour's time we again pulled in, but not so cheerful as we did at first. The master had always been a great favourite with the captain, and, indeed, for the matter of that, every soul fore-and-aft looked upon him as a friend. He had come in at the hawse-holes, knew the duty of a tar, and was lenient to a seaman's failings. No man could ever complain that Mr. Soundings had laid a finger upon him, or been the means of bringing him to the gangway, and, above all, stopping his grog. He was strict with the purser's-steward, and kept the cook to his tethers. But now to be cut off, as it were, without being able to give the enemy battle, and to be hove down upon his beam-ends by the lubberly French sodgers,—it made all hands melancholy to think of it. If he had died upon the quarter-deck in the heat of an engagement, it would have been another guess-thing, because that would have been in the way of his profession, and he would have dropped his peak and wore round for t'other world with the same calmness and composure that he conned his ship into action, under a firm conviction of going aloft, because he had done his duty. But, to be popped at in a corn-field, like a cock-lark or a partridge,—oh, 'twas a most unnatural death!

“‘Whereabouts did you leave the master?’ said the captain to the man who was with him last.

“‘In the corn-field, sir,’ replied the man; ‘we carried him as long as we could stand under canvass; but both of us were so heavily laden, that I

expected to founder every minute, and having too much top-hamper, we did upset at last. But Mr. Soundings got up directly and run with us ever so far, till the crapeaus gave us another broadside, and down he dropped in an instant. I heard him give one loud holloa, and then all was silent; so concluding death had grappled with him, I made all sail for the boats.'

"'Did you see him,' inquired the captain, 'after he fell?'

"'No, sir; he was buried among the corn, for there was a deep hollow ridge run along the place, and I suppose he rolled into it.'

"'Poor fellow,' rejoined Sir Sidney, his eye moistening as he spoke; 'poor fellow, he's gone, no doubt. However he shall have a seaman's grave; so follow me ashore, Mr. E. (addressing the lieutenant) and take half the men with you. The rest, under Mr. L. must stay by the boats, and be prepared in case the troops should charge again.'

"The party drew up upon the beach, all eager to search for the body, and gratified to think that it would not be left as a prey for the gulls, but be hove overboard, sewed up in a hammock and all ship-shape. Sir Sidney Smith walked a-head in advance of the men, full of grief for the loss of his old shipmate; when all at once we heard a voice roaring most piteously, and the next moment a loud shout. We pushed forward, and in another minute a trio of Frenchmen showed themselves at the brow of the hill. Several muskets were presented at them; the sodgers dropped on their knees, when another figure, close behind them, was brought into view, holding a pistol in each hand. And who do you think it was? Why old Soundings himself, with a face full of choler like a heated furnace, his corporation heaving and setting like a mountain billow, and puffing and blowing like a grampus in a storm. Sir Sidney sprung forward and caught the master's hand, while the rest gathered round and gave three hearty cheers for joy.

"'Ay, ay,' said the old gemman, laughing, 'you're a pack of cowards, to leave a ship in distress. Safety lays in the length of the legs now-a-days. Run, eh! fine clean-going craft like you, run! and suffer a crazy, weather-beaten, old hulk to battle the watch with a whole fleet! But there, d'ye mind, I have taken three prisoners, and now lend me a hand down to the boat.'

"The fact was, the old boy had tumbled into a hollow, the troops had passed over him, and sometime after their retreat, finding all quiet, he crawled out; when meeting suddenly with three Frenchmen dismounted, he

presented his pistols and compelled them to go a-head just as we hove in sight.

“With light hearts the boats were once more shoved off from the beach; and, notwithstanding the old gemman boasted highly of his prowess, he swore it should be a long day before he’d trust his precious limbs out of the ship again, to go bush-fighting like a land privateer.”

“Arter all,” exclaimed the old boatswain’s-mate, “them there were spirit-stirring times; but the Neapolitans and Italians were scarcely worth fighting for. I was aboard the ould Culloden, 74, along with Troubridge up the Mediterranean; and one day a boat comes along-side and up mounts a Neapolitan officer, his rigging dressed out in gold lace and stars, so that he looked like a man-cake of gilt gingerbread. So he goes aft into the cabin, and tells the captain the Neapolitan troops were going to attack the French in a small fortified town on the coast, and Captain Troubridge being commodore, he had made bould to ax him for one of the sloop-of-war brigs to cannonade ’em by sea whilst the sodgers stormed ’em by land; and he talked so big of the bravery of his men, that it was enough to make a fellow believe that they cared no more for a bagonet than they did for a sail-needle, and no more for a two-and-thirty pound shot than they did for a ball of spun-yarn, and it puzzled me to think how the captain could hoist it all in; for he bowed very politely, and told the officer ‘he made no doubt that they would eat all they killed;’ and the officer bowed again almost to the deck, and he kept bending and bending like a ship heeling over to sudden gusts from the land. Howsomever, the skipper grants him the eighteen-gun brig, and then they began to overhaul a goodish deal about the plan of attack; and the Neapolitan observed, that if the captain would let ’em have a frigate instead of the brig, it would be much better and must ensure success. So the captain, very good-humouredly, countermands the order for the brig, and makes the signal for the captain of one of the frigates; and then they conversed together again, and the Count—they called him a Count, but Lord love you! he wouldn’t count for nothing among British sodgers:—I say, the Count danced about the cabin as if he was charging the French garrison, and cutting ’em up into four-pound pieces. Well, ashore he goes, and the frigate’s signal was made to unmoor and prepare for sea; when aboard comes the Count again to say the commander-in-chief requested a line-of-battle ship might be sent instead of the frigate, as it would place the victory beyond a doubt, and after some backing and filling about the matter,

Troubridge consented, and the brig was ordered to get under way and direct one of the seventy-fours outside to proceed to the place appointed. So away goes the Count, though it was plain to see the skipper warn't over and above pleased with the shuffling; but still he hoped the French would be beat, and ill as he could spare the seventy-four, the sloop was soon walking away under her canvass and had got to some distance; when alongside comes the Count again and goes into the cabin; but he hadn't been long there before out he comes again holus-bolus through the door-way, and the skipper in his wake with a face like scarlet, kicking the Count under his counter and starting him endways like seven bells half-struck. The Count scratched his indecencies and run along the quarter-deck, with old Troubridge belabouring him, and hollaing out, 'D— his eyes, first a brig, then a frigate, and next a line-of-battle ship; and now he won't fight arter all!' So the Count jumped into his boat, the brig was recalled, and the French kept possession till the army retreated, and then they capitulated."

"Ay, that was a sweet ship," said an aged pensioner, "that ould Culloden. Did you know Bill Buntline, as was captain of her fore-top?"

"Why, to be sure I do," replied the other; "we were messmates for three years, and a worthy soul Bill was, too. He could spin a yarn that would last the whole look-out; and then, like some of your magazines, he continued it in the next. He was brave, too; but I fear we shall never muster many such as he again."

"'Cause why?" said my old chaperon, "they don't steer the right course to gain the point: who'd live burning under the line with only half allowance of grog? or in regard of the matter o' that, what heart could go boldly into action that was swamped in tea-water? The parsons may say what they please, but they arn't more fond of the kettle nor other folks, unless they takes it warm with a couple o' lumps o' sugar. But most of our tars are now in foreign sarvices, and teaching their art to our enemies."

"Ay, it is so, ould shipmate," rejoined the pensioner; "I reads of 'em sometimes when they used to be with Cochrane in South America, and I glories in the whacking the Portuguese fleet have just napped from Napier. It makes my ould heart bound with joy when I thinks of it."

"But, mayhap," said the boatswain's-mate, "there'll be some whistling to get 'em back again, in case of another war; but I hardly think a British tar would battle the watch against his country."

“Tell that to the marines!” exclaimed the old man. “Why! warn’t the Yankee frigates principally manned with British tars,—many of ’em who had fought under Nelson, and hailed with three cheers his last memorable signal? Did not the United States have two of her guns, one named Nelson and the other Victory, worked solely by men who had fought at Trafalgar, and in most of the general actions? Nay, more: all of them had been bargemen to the undaunted hero, had shared his dangers, and revenged his death! Oh, what could have wrought such ruinous principles in their hearts, as to make them not only desert from, but strive to crush the proud flag for which they had shed their richest blood! And yet we are to be told, that this is not a fit subject for inquiry among the gemmen at the head of affairs; and that, in the event of another war, seaman are again to be dragged into the service, and compelled to toil under the dread of the cat. As for me, I always served my king and my country, (God bless ’em!) and mean to stick to my stuff as long as my timbers will hold together. But, nevertheless, I am a seaman, have a seaman’s feelings, and cannot bear to see a seaman injured: they are my messmates, my brothers; and I long to see them once more under the ‘union,’ gallantly asserting their country’s rights, and maintaining her naval glory.

“But to return to Bill; poor fellow, the last time I saw him he was on board an East Ingeeman, outward bound. The frost of years was on his head, and age had ploughed deep furrows on his brow; but his heart was as light as ever. I can remember him, the finest-looking fellow in the fleet, full of life and spirit; and, one day, when we were all, (that is the boarders,) exercising our cutlasses on the quarter-deck,—by the by, Mr. Kendall, who went out with Captain Franklin, was midshipman of our division, and a worthy little officer he was; his father was a captain in the navy, and both his grandfathers died admirals: I knew ’em well, and brave officers they were. Well, as I was a saying, there we stood, cutting and slashing right and left, while the officers watched our motions, and practised among themselves. ‘That’s a bonnie lad there,’ said the captain’s lady, leaning on the arm of the marine officer, and pointing to Bill; ‘a bonnie lad, in gude truth, Mr. M.’—‘Yes, ma’am,’ replied the officer, ‘a fine muddle for a Polly.’ But, Lord love you! as for being muddled, why he was as sober as a judge, and warn’t no more like a Polly than this pewter pot’s like a wooden platter.

“Well, d’ye see, there the boarders continued exercising; for we had a west-country sergeant who had received instruction in the horse-guards, but he turned foot-sodger and came to sea, and so he was appointed to teach the men upon a new system. A tyrannical upstart fellow he was, too; and nobody liked him. ‘Mind,’ says he, ‘when I say sooards, thee mustn’t draa, but only handle thee’s sooard for ready; but when I say draa sooards, thee must lug them out t’ scabbard:’ and so he kept on posing us, till we all wished him at ould Nick. At last we came to the cuts and guards: the first was all very well; but we could make nothing of the guards; for if a sailor, in boarding, stands like a doctor to pick and choose what limb to dissect, it would soon be all dickey with him. Straight forward work’s the best, and soonest over. ‘Now,’ says he, ‘if the enemy should cut at thee leg, thee must draa it back, and then thee wult be able to strike him down by the head, thus,’—showing the position. Howsomer, we could not scrape as he did; and so he got into a terrible passion. ‘Thee be a pack of fools,’ said he. ‘Now mind, as soon as I draa my leg back, I strike thus; and the enemy will fall!’ So saying, with the roll of the ship, he made a step back, when unfortunately—the scuttle was open behind him—down he went and disappeared in an instant. ‘And the enemy will fall!’ cried Bill, imitating him; while all hands, officers, ladies and all, burst into a roar of laughter. ‘Yo hoy, sergeant,’ bellowed Bill, down the scuttle, ‘where are you, my hearty? An’t you coming up again? Here we are all waiting to put the enemy to flight.’—But Mr. sergeant had had enough of it for that day, and slunk quietly to his berth.

“I remembers another time, in a six-and-thirty, when we engaged a Spanish frigate, and a heavy one she was too; they had men in their tops with rifles, who seemed only intent to pick out our officers. Well, d’ye see, the two ships swung alongside, and the main yards locked, with the Spaniard’s just abaft ours. Bill happened to be in the main-top with two others stoppering the shrouds, and every now and then he caught a glimpse of these fellows, laying down to load and firing over the top-brim.

“‘My eyes! shipmates, look there,’ says he; ‘the cowardly lubbers are bush-fighting. D—n the rigging; let’s go and clap a stopper over-all upon them:—but, avast, avast; do you two get upon their topsail-yard; and when you see me in the top, then come down hand over hand amongst us.’

“Away went Bill with his brace of pistols in his belt, and cartridge-box and cutlash by his side, along the main-yard, entirely concealed by the folds

of the enemy's main-sail, and got unobserved (except by those on deck) close in by the slings. The first man that rose,—pop he had him, to the great astonishment of the rest, who could not conceive where the shot came from; while those on deck were afraid of firing up, lest they should injure their own people, and the roar of the guns wouldn't allow of a hail being heard. Bill squatted down as unconcerned as possible, re-loaded his pistol, and presently down went another. By this time the other two had gained the enemy's mast-head; and finding they could douse a few of 'em without injuring Bill, they let fly, to the great terror of the Spaniards, who thinking themselves bewitched, bundled out of the top down the foot-hook shrouds, where they caught sight of Bill, when a desperate conflict ensued. He was, however, joined by his two shipmates; while others, from both ships, crowded up the riggings to the assistance of their several comrades. For a few minutes the fight seemed to be transferred aloft, when a shot from one of our main-deck guns brought down the enemy's main-mast; and away the combatants came flying down upon deck, where, though severely shaken and bruised in the fall, all that were able still continued the fight. The confusion occasioned by the falling mast was instantly taken advantage of by our captain, who, heading the boarders, dashed fearlessly on to the enemy's quarter-deck. Here he found Bill and his party at close quarters, hammering away like anchor-smiths; but the numbers were too many to cope with, and we were compelled to retreat. Just, however, as we had reached the sides of our own frigate,—'Where's the captain? where's the captain?' resounded on all sides. The Spaniards had grappled him, when Bill and his comrades again rushed back, and brought him off in safety.

"Well, d'ye see, at it we went again like sons of thunder; when shortly after, the ships parted and we played a game at long bowls. The enemy had all picked men, who fought with determined resolution; but the precision of our fire soon thinned their numbers, and orders were again given to prepare to board.

"'Come here, my man,' said the captain to Bill; 'you're a brave fellow, and deserve promotion: what shall I get for you?'

"'Only a glass of grog, your honour, just to drink your honour's health, and success to the day,' says Bill.

"'Well, well,' says the captain, 'I see your wishes are not unbounded; so go to my steward, and tell him to give you a bottle of rum.'

“‘Ey, ey, sir,’ answered Bill; ‘but if your honour would just let me speak a word,—may be your honour would not be angry if I axed for a toothful for all hands. The purser can afford it, your honour; and the people have had cobwebs in their throats these two hours. It would give ’em a little more spirit just before boarding.’

“‘I scarce know what to say to it, my man,’ replies the skipper; ‘however, send the purser’s steward here.’

“The steward came, and a tub of grog was soon mixed upon the main-deck, and equally as soon despatched. ‘All ready,’ was now heard fore-and-aft, when the helm was put up. ‘Stand by, my boys, as we pass under his stern,’ cried the captain: ‘point your guns well; pour it into him; and then follow me.’

“The Spaniards seemed to be aware of our intention; for they immediately hove all aback; but they could not accomplish their object, while we came easily round upon his quarter, and gave him a whole raking broadside double-shotted. All hands rushed from below; and, in less than two minutes, scoured the enemy’s decks; while Bill and a party broke in the cabin-windows, and dashed forward on the main-deck, bearing down all before them. The two captains met, and science was instantly called into play, while for a few minutes both parties seemed to pause, as if the victory depended on the conqueror; but a Spaniard, unnoticed, levelled his musket at our captain, and the ball lodged in his hand. The sword instantly dropped, but the gallant Spaniard scorned to take advantage; he lowered the point of his weapon, and flew to another part of the deck.

“Again the battle closed, and each fought with a determination to conquer or die. At last, three British cheers resounded from abaft; and there, upon the taffrail, stood Bill, hoisting the English colours over the Spanish at the peak. Several Spaniards flew to resent the insult, and the poor fellow would, no doubt, have fallen, had he not caught hold of a little French officer in the Spanish service, and held him up as a shield against their thrusts, till timely assistance rescued him. This affair, however, had divided the attention of the enemy, while it cheered up our men to fresh exertion. With one desperate rush they cut down all before them, and in a few minutes more, the frigate was our own. The slaughter ceased, and we were all good friends. The two captains dined together, and ever after lived like brothers; while the prisoners shared in our messes and partook of our grog.

“In overhauling our prize, we found she was from Buenos Ayres, with a freight of money. So away we went into port with gold candlesticks at each yard-arm, and at each mast-head; and as long as it lasted, fiddles, girls, coaches,—all were in motion; till by dint of hard labour we got rid of it, and then tossed up the anchor for more.”

I was highly entertained with these characteristic sketches of the man-of-war's man, and the old boys seemed delighted with the opportunity of relating their former achievements. I was also much pleased with the deference they seemed to pay to each other, and the attachment which appeared to exist amongst them. The grog, however, began to operate a little, and the question was put, “whether his honour would like to hear a song?” Of course I acceded to any thing that was calculated to increase their enjoyments, and one of the younger men of the party—a marine, but blind—gave us the following song, which my old chaperon whispered to me was one of his own making.

“NED SPLICE was a tar as devoid of all fear
As e'er swabb'd a deck from the spray of a sea;
He knew every rope, and could hand, reef, and steer,—
Book-larning, why, Lord! 'twas all dickey to he.
Our chaplain could spin out a very fine yarn,
And bother each man in his mess;
Says NED, 'My brave boys, if your duty you'd larn,
'Tis—succour a friend in distress.'

“‘Ne'er get drunk!’ says the priest, with a wave of his fist,
'Never swear;—never covet another man's prog;'
But see him next day, when he's cheating at *whist*—
My eyes! 'tis a storm in an ocean of grog.
Says NED, 'them 'ere maxims I don't understand,
We should practice the thing we profess;'
While the pray'r from his heart, and the gold from his hand,
He gives to a friend in distress.”

This song was sung with no small degree of feeling and taste. Other songs followed, with a few characteristic observations and sentimental touches between them, till the termination of one which had for its burthen.

“Thus smiling at peril, at sea or on shore,
We box the whole compass round cheerly;
Toss the can, boys, again;—drink the king! and what's more,
We'll drink to the girls we love dearly!”

“Sweet creatures!” exclaimed Bill Jennings “I loves 'em all a little, d'ye see; for what's a sailor without a sweetheart? Why, he's like a ship without a rib,—like a mast without stays,—like a lanniard without a dead-eye,—like a binnacle without a compass,—or a block without a sheave. Pretty dears! they're the very ach-me of a sailor's hopes,—the main-top of his heart. What, though the Turks think they've got no souls, you and I, your honour, both of us know, (and which of us doesn't?) that they have got souls and spirits too, bless 'em! for I take it that's much the same thing. I've seen 'em of all colours and shapes from the Hopping-tops at the Cape to the Axquemo near the North Pole; but there's none to beat our own

countrywomen. All the Wenuses of Italy,—all the beauties of Buss-aloney, —all the brilliant black eyes of Spanish America, can't box the compass with the dear little lasses of our native land.

“Ah, I can remember the first time I fell in love, by tumbling down the main-hatchway! 'Twas when I was with Cook, out at the Sandwich Islands, where King Tommy-rammer and his wife came from. D'ye see, we had been refitting the rigging, and one of the ladies of Owyhee would be my doll-sinner; so she lent me a hand to tar the parcelling and pass the ball; and we were as kind and as loving as two turtle-doves. Well, I was walking near the hatch-way, when, somehow or other, I capsized, and Lowtowchinchow, in trying to save me, gave me a shove: I cotched hold of her, and away we went, Lowtowchinchow and I, down into the main-hold, like a couple of cherry-bums from the clouds. The hatchway was full of logs, and there we lay, like the babes in the wood, as natural as life. Howsomever, there were no bones broke, so they hauled us up again, and how could I help falling in love with her after that? Oh, we used to talk together, she in her lingo and I in mine, like two cats in a gutter. But what was the use on't? the fore-topsail was sheeted home, and away we went; I promised to write to her by the first post, but she didn't understand me, and so I forgot all about it next day.

“In some parts of the world they have a way of marrying what they call Poll-Higgamy; but, Lord love you! it's all a cheat, d'ye mind; for instead of having one Poll, they marry twenty; and only to go for to think of a man having twenty wives! Howsomever, it's all a matter of fact; nay, some have more, and our parson used to read about Solomon having hundreds! How a solo-man like Solomon could manage to keep 'em all to their tethers in working ship, I can't think for the life o'me; but he was a wise man, and understood all manner of tongues, and so, mayhap, he had a way of his own. Pretty dears! one's enough in England. But I've seen 'em, in the hour of peril, in the day of battle and the storm, conquer all the weakness of their natur, and display such cool fortitude, such heroic devotion to their husbands, as would astonish you.

“There was poor Joe Kelson, in the old Sandwich, under Rodney, had his wife on board when they engaged the French fleet off Martinique. She was a timid, delicate little body, one who had been tenderly brought up; yet she left all the luxuries of the shore, a father's house and a mother's love, to brave the dangers of the ocean and share a piece of salt junk and a biscuit with the being she loved. Ah, I can remember her looks the morning of the

action, while we stood at breakfast! Her face was pale and her quivering lip and tearful eye told all the anguish of her soul. Joe tried to comfort her, but 'twas useless: he talked of honour and of glory; but what was honour and glory to a fainting spirit? Her heart was overwhelmed, and when she came afterward to his quarters on the lower deck, she could hardly support her trembling frame. It was just about noon, and she brought him a bit of dinner: they sat down upon the gun-trucks; but neither of 'em could eat, and it was a hard task upon poor Joe to preserve his firmness. All hands pitied them; and when they parted for the last time, there was scarce a dry eye at the gun.

“Well, d’ye see, about half an hour afterwards we began to engage; but there were cowards in the fleet, rank cowards, and the admiral wasn’t properly supported; so the old Sandwich bore the brunt of the battle, and hot enough it was, too; many a poor fellow dropt his peak and bore up, and as is customary, were directly launched out at the port. At last, poor Joe received a mortal wound that stretched him on the deck. We lifted him up in our arms to carry him to the surgeons in the cock-pit; but he opened his eyes, tried to speak, then gave one convulsive shudder as the last death-pang parted soul and body, and his mortal agonies were over. We stood for the port to give him a sailor’s grave; when, just at this moment, his wife appeared close to us. She had suffered all the tortures of suspense, till apprehension and anxiety for her husband’s safety overcame every fear, and she stood at our sides. The body was half out, and perhaps she would not have recognised it but for her own handkerchief, which she had tied round his neck. We all looked at each other, and then at her, undetermined what to do. She stopped for an instant, and gazed at the face of her husband, as if trying to trace the features; her eye caught the token on his breast; she sprung forward,—but 'twas too late—the body of poor Joe was already in the ocean-wave.

“A wild and piercing shriek followed. She ran to the spot, and would have shared his grave, but was forcibly withheld. She looked at the dark waters, and then tried to catch a view through the thick smoke at the enemy’s fleet. It cleared a little; she saw the French ships to leeward, and her spirit seemed to rise above the noise and din of battle. The roaring of the guns, the rattling of the tackles, and the flashes of the powder,—above all, a feeling of revenge, instead of crushing her delicate frame, appeared to change every operation of her heart. She watched us for some time, and no

entreaty could prevail on her to go below; till, at last, she inquired what was her husband's particular station; and having ascertained it, she instantly supplied his place, and, with undaunted determination, bravely continued to fight at the same gun during the remainder of the action. Nor was this all; for, with the tenderness of a female bosom, she sat up with the wounded, attended to their wants, soothed their complainings, and tried to forget her own sorrows by relieving theirs. The brave Rodney, you may depend upon it, didn't forget her; and I heard that he obtained a handsome pension to support her.

"There was Mrs. R—, the captain's wife of the L—— frigate; though for the matter o'that, *she* was captain, although only rated as mate. Ah, that was an Irish ship; captain Irish,—officers Irish,—men Irish; the ship's name ought to have been Pat. She dearly loved her lads,—her boys, as she called them,—particularly Mr. O'Shaughnessy, the first-lieutenant, though the midshipmen knew pretty well how to get the weather-gage of her, especially when their case was in a pitiable condition, 'showing a beggarly account of empty bottles.' She was a lady, every inch of her, and used to come round the mess-deck morning, noon, and night, to see that all hands were comfortable and happy. If any body wanted liberty, it was only spinning a yarn to the petticoat captain, and they had it directly. Well, d'ye see, we had orders to sail; and so, to the great grief of all hands, Mrs. R. was obliged to leave us, with a heavy heart and a sorrowful countenance. 'But never mind, boys,' says she; 'may be you'll come back some day; and then, oh!—good bye to you, my boys, and stand by your captain to the last, like Erin's own sons. Remember, Irishmen must never lose their laurel!' And so we gave her three cheers as she went over the side.

"Well, after several months' absence on a long cruise, we once more reached Spithead, and in a day or two a pretty little yacht came working in from St. Helen's to the anchorage. The officers got their glasses, and word was soon passed that our friend Mrs. R. was on board of her. All hands crowded on deck,—not an officer or man remained below. The captain took his station on the quarter-deck abaft, the officers, especially the midshipmen, were more in advance, while at the gangway stood the old master-at-arms, Michael Malone.

"Mich was a perfect original,—neither sailor nor sodger,—but a strict disciplinarian, as all the boys in the ship could testify. He was, in fact, the very squint-essence of an Irishman. On nine hairs of his head was stuck a

little trencher-like hat, with a roof not much bigger than half-a-crown. Behind projected a tail-piece that would have puzzled Hogarth. It was about nine inches long, and stretched out from the neck in a horrozontal direction, like a tiller shipped the wrong way. His jacket, was of a sandy-gray-russet, embellished with ornamental designs of all colours and shapes. Huge pockets, well filled with rolls of paper, were prominent features, his trousers, (barring the breaches) well patched with corderoy, and his legs were sometimes cased in leather, that had formerly been a pair of military boots; but now, by continual cobbling, had lost their prime-itive shape and looked like a couple of fire-buckets. His countenance was open; for he had a marvellous mouth, that stretched as wide as a turnpike-gate; and his nose hung dangling down, as if to see that nothing passed through without paying toll. But for his eyes, he had a pair of odd ones, that gave you the most agreeable squint in the world, and made him see two ways at once. Many a poor boy has got thrashed for quizzing him, thinking he was looking another way.

“Well there old Mich stood, adjusting his cravat with the utmost gravity, when Mrs. R—— came over the side. Of course every body expected she would have walked aft to the captain; but her delight was so great, that she no sooner got upon the deck than she caught old Mich (being nearest) round the neck, and began kissing him like fury. Mich, equally pleased, returned her embrace with interest, to the great amusement of every soul, fore-and-aft. ‘Oh, my boys,—my boys,’ says she, as soon as Mich let her get breath; ‘joy to the hour that I see you again! Arrah! R—— dear, sure, and I’m so happy!’—So catching the captain in her arms, she gave full evidence of the fact.

“The officers wiped their mouths and smacked their lips, expecting it would go round, and were anticipating the salute of her sweet kiss, for she was really a beautiful woman; but they were disappointed; for the first moment of exquisite feeling having subsided, she became sensible of what had passed. Howsomever, the captain laughed heartily, and old Mich looked as if he was ready for a second edition. Mrs. R—— called him and apologized for her conduct, blushing all the time most glowingly. ‘Och!’ says she, ‘my joy was so great that I couldn’t help it!’

“‘Be aisey, my lady, be aisey,’ says Mich: ‘I’d do the same for your ladyship any day, and every day. Sure didn’t I have the best of it, then?’

Faith, and I did, any how; for I gave you two for one. Oh, don't mention it, my lady.'

"Well, and all hands had an extra allowance of grog, and Mich declared that 'twas the happiest day of his life; for her ladyship's two-lips were like full-blown roses, moistened with dews; and but for his ugly nose, that came in the way, he would have had half a dozen more."

The afternoon having by this time drawn pretty well to a close, I rose; and having said a few words expressive of the pleasure I had experienced in their society, with a promise to pay them another visit before long, I took my departure amidst the hearty cheers of the old men; and if their blessings can have any influence in smoothing the path of life, mine would be smooth indeed.

Footnotes

[1] I have since ascertained that it was Don Raymond de Chalas.

[2] Ships and vessels coming from unclean ports, hoist a yellow flag; and the pensioners are punished for drunkenness by being compelled to wear a yellow coat with red sleeves.

[3] Buenos Ayres.

TOM BROOKES.

No cannon peal'd his knell,
No shout that gain'd the day,
Gave his frail spirit one farewell,
To waft it on its way.
He rush'd all life into the wave,
And found at once his death and grave!

'Twas in the days of my boyhood, and though since that time many years have rolled their burdens on my head,—years that, like billows on the sand, have smoothed the traces which memory once had made, yet I can remember the circumstances as if it was but yesterday and the tears still wet upon my cheek; for I had known Tom Brookes from my infancy, and he had often brought me home some curiosity from distant lands, where the cedar and the pine-tree grow in rich luxuriance. Indeed it was his tales of the ocean, when the spreading sail was filled to waft the gallant ship to foreign climes, that first excited my desires to become a sailor.

Poor Tom had been brought up in expectation of a genteel fortune, and had been educated most scrupulously to revere a rigid sense of virtue, and to maintain that independency of spirit, which can only be fully appreciated by a noble mind. But ah! how soon can adversity cloud the fairest prospects! And here it came, not like the rising gale that gives a timely warning of its approach; no, it resembled the wild tornado, bursting with sudden vengeance on its victim, without a moment's space to tell that death rides on the blast.

His father was ruined by an unforeseen reverse in trade; he could not stand against the shock, and he sank broken-hearted to the grave, leaving a widow and one child to mourn the unexpected change in their prosperity, but still more to grieve for him who could never return again.

Mrs. Brookes had a brother, who had been nearly all his life at sea; and to him poor Tom was consigned, to brave the perils of the briny deep. "Don't cry, mother," he exclaimed at the parting, "don't cry; I shall soon come back, and be enabled to provide for your support. Providence may smile upon us yet, and your last days be your best."—"Go, my child,"

replied the mother, whilst her heart swelled almost to bursting, “go, my child; I will resign you to the merciful care of that Being who is a father to the fatherless, and the widow’s God and Judge.”

After his departure, poor Tom received one letter from his mother before he sailed. It inculcated all the moral and religious duties; requested him to peruse his bible, and near the close were the following lines, which he committed to memory; and in after years, when an infant sitting on his knee, he repeated them to me so often, that they became deeply impressed upon my mind:—

TO MY SAILOR BOY.

“When sailing on the ocean,
In foreign climes you roam,
Oh, think with fond emotion,
upon your distant home;
And never strive to smother,
But treasure up with joy,
Remembrance of a mother,
Who loves her Sailor Boy.

When thunders loud are roaring,
And vivid lightning flies,
The rain in torrents pouring,
Sleep will depart my eyes;
Tears will bedew my pillow,
You all my thoughts employ,
Tossed on the angry billow
A little Sailor Boy.

Kind Providence protect you,
And bring you back again;
Your mother will expect you,
Safe from the troubled main.
No, Heaven will not distress me,
The widow’s hope destroy;
Return once more to bless me,
My little Sailor Boy.”

In the course of a few years, Tom became mate of a fine ship in the merchants' service, and his efforts seemed crowned with success. He enjoyed the sweet satisfaction of seeing his mother comfortably situated, and his heart whispered it was the reward of virtue.

But who can arraign the will of Heaven, or say to Omnipotence, "What doest thou?" War with all its attendant horrors broke out, and the cruel system of impressment was adopted for the purpose of manning our fleets.

At this critical juncture, Tom received information that his parent was rapidly hastening to the mansions of immortality,—“where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” He had recently arrived in England full of joyous anticipation; but he found the silver cord of existence was loosened, and the golden bowl dashed from his lips:—he reached his home just time enough to receive the last farewell benediction of his dying mother.

Before the earth had closed over the remains of his parent,—before she had become mingled with the clods of the valley, the press-gangs were actively on the alert, and poor Tom fell into their hands. No time was allowed to lay his mother in the silent grave;—he kissed the clay-cold bosom on which he had hung in infancy, and with stern serenity yielded himself a prisoner. He loved his country, and would not have shrunk from its service in the hour of battle; but at such a moment to be forced away!—it was draining the cup of anguish to the very dregs.

At this period I had commenced my career as a sailor, and was then lying in a ship of war at Plymouth under sailing-orders for a foreign station, but waiting for a full complement of hands;—indeed, men were so scarce, that some of the ablest felons had been selected from the jails to make up the crews.

I was walking the deck, when a party of these convicts came alongside with a draught of seamen from the flag-ship, and among the latter I recognised Tom Brookes; he was dressed in deep black, and his fine and manly countenance betrayed the indignation and agony that struggled in his heart. Surely it was impossible to mistake his character, for when called before the captain he behaved with a gentlemanly respect that commanded admiration. But Captain S——^[4] was one of those (happily there were but very few in the service) who were tyrannical and brutal by nature; and when

poor Tom approached, he exclaimed, “Well, fellow, whose pocket have you been picking?”

Surely this might have been spared; for Tom’s countenance was an index to an honest and an upright mind; his attire was most respectable, and every action bespoke the experienced seaman. Never shall I forget his look; it showed the conflicting struggles of a proud spirit; but it was only for a moment. He fixed his steady gaze upon the inquirer, who shrank before it. Captain S—— seemed to read his thoughts, and he was a man that never forgave.

A boatswain’s-mate was directed to cut off the tails of his coat,^[5] so as to render it more like a seaman’s jacket. The man approached, but this coat was the mourning he wore for his mother, and bitter recollections crossing his mind, he threw the boatswain’s-mate from him to the opposite side of the deck. This was considered an act of mutiny, and poor Tom was put in irons, with his legs stapled to the deck. Being, however, a good seaman, his services were required; so that he was shortly afterwards released, and sent to do his duty on the fore-castle.

We sailed in a few days, and after being some time at sea, the captain remembering what had taken place in harbour, ordered poor Tom, by way of punishment, to perform most of the menial offices of his station, and at length insisted on his executing the most degrading duty in a ship of war,—that of sweeping the decks. This he refused with a respectful firmness; and in that he certainly was wrong, for obedience is the first test of duty—no matter from what motive the order proceeds, and in refusing to obey, Tom acted improperly as a seaman; but who can condemn him, having the feelings of a man? His refusal, however, was of no avail; the broom was lashed by small cords to his hands, and a boatswain’s-mate stood ready with a rope’s end to enforce command. Tom obstinately declared that he would die rather than submit to unmerited oppression; the blows fell heavy on his back, but they could not change the purpose of the heart. In the moment of his anguish, whilst smarting from the stripes, but writhing still more with inward torture that bowed his spirit, he uttered some severe invectives upon the tyranny of his commander. The hands were immediately turned up, the gratings were seized to the gangway, and poor Tom was ordered to strip for flogging. Resistance was useless, his outspread arms and extended legs were lashed to the gratings, and after reading the Articles of War for

disobedience of orders, the captain directed the boatswain's-mate to give him two dozen.

This was not the first time I had witnessed punishment at the gangway, for scarcely a day had passed without it since my joining the ship. But poor Tom had been my early friend; I called to mind the happy hours we had passed together, and now to see him with his back lacerated and bleeding, the cat o' nine tails cutting deep into his flesh,—oh, it was too much for me to endure, and I fell at the captain's feet. He spurned me from him, and the first dozen having been given, a fresh boatswain's-mate was called to give the second.

Tom never flinched; he remained immovable as a rock, and the only indication of bodily pain, was occasionally a contraction of the muscles of his face,—a deeper, an all-absorbing agony seemed to have triumphed over mere corporeal suffering,—an agony arising from the desperate struggles of his soul. I looked at the countenances of the men, but the generality seemed to have sunk into a settled apathy, and only a few, who had recently joined us from the *Barfleur*, displayed the workings of determined minds. They gazed at each other and tried to catch the sentiments of the crew; and it was plain, that had a corresponding feeling animated the whole, consequences the most fatal and desperate must have ensued. But the ship's company had not been long together, and mutual distrust prevented an open declaration of discontent.

The flogging ceased, and poor Tom was consigned to the master-at-arms, and his legs once more fixed in the shackles. I tried to approach him, but was prevented by the marine who stood sentinel over him; my attempt was not however unnoticed, and the unfortunate victim gave me a look, and even a smile of grateful acknowledgment. Ah! then my heart sunk within me. I retired to the dark recess of the cable-tier,^[6] and gave vent to my tears,—for what could a child in his twelfth year do to save the sufferer from the strong arm of power? I consoled myself with the idea that Tom would soon be released, but in this too I was mistaken; for on the following morning he persisted in his refusal to sweep the decks, was again seized up to the gangway, and two dozen lashes more were inflicted upon his already scored and mangled back.

The torture was beyond human endurance, and though no shriek betrayed the anguish of the smart, yet a convulsive spasm too clearly indicated the rending of the wounds. Still his firmness did not forsake him,

and whilst the cat fell heavy on his shoulders, he remonstrated with his persecutor, and appealed to the officers whether he had not always performed his duty. No voice was raised in his behalf, though looks spoke, as forcibly as looks could speak, the detestation of every one for such merciless cruelty. At this moment, Will Scott stepped from among the assembled crew; he looked wildly upon his shipmates, particularly upon his old messmates, the Barfleurs; but all remained motionless as statues, and he resumed his station. Again the lash descended, and again the instrument of punishment was stained with the blood of the wretched man. Imprecations on the captain burst from his lips, and madness seemed to dictate his wild incoherent ravings; he was no longer passive, his mind gave way, and at the last stroke he hung senseless by the cords which bound his wrists to the gratings.

He was cast loose, and on his reviving, was again shackled in the irons, with the promise of a renewal of punishment on the morrow if he still disobeyed. In fact, the captain found his authority was at stake; he saw that he had excited disaffection; he knew that the principal portion of his crew (many of them desperate characters,) were not to be trusted, and the very men on whom he placed reliance—the Barfleurs—were disgusted with his treatment. To have receded, he considered, would have been an acknowledgment of error, and one triumph of the people would have been the prelude to more humiliating concessions. Thus he argued, and his very existence seemed to depend upon the issue.

It was one of those beautiful evenings in June, when the setting sun upon the verge of the horizon tinges the whole expanse of ocean with its golden brightness, that I stood upon the fore-castle contemplating the glories of creation, and presumptuously arraigning Divine Providence for what I foolishly deemed an unequal distribution of good and ill. The seamen were formed in groupes along the gangway and waist, and the officers were pacing the larboard side of the quarter-deck, leaving the starboard side to the captain, who walked sullenly and alone. The lieutenant of the watch stood on the gangway, and did not join him; and there he strode, pale

discontent upon his cheek and keen mistrust in the restless glancing of his eye.

The evening was indeed lovely, and calculated to calm the raging passions of the soul. The sea was beautifully smooth, the sails slept deep and still, and though scarcely a breath was felt, yet the breeze upon the quarter was carrying the vessel almost imperceptibly at the rate of five knots^[7] an hour. I was but a boy,—a mere child, and whilst looking at the mild blue sky I thought of my home and of my mother. Poor Tom, too, he whose arms had cradled me in infancy! but what could I do? Whilst my thoughts were thus occupied, a marine with his drawn bayonet appeared ascending the fore-ladder; close behind came poor Tom Brookes, and every tongue was hushed. The captain caught sight of him and stopped; the officers continued their walk, but their eager gaze alternately changed from the captain to the suffering victim of his austerity; but no voice gave utterance to thought.

Poor Tom, I think I see him now! Ah! well do I remember the ghastly dolor of his look as he approached me; his eyes cast down, and his whole thoughts apparently rivetted on one object alone,—but it is impossible to describe it. I touched his arm, for nature spoke within me, and I could not help it. He paused for one moment, and a roseate flush suffused his cheeks; he seized my hand, and I felt that his was burning. I looked in his face, it was lightened up by a smile—but such a smile! It struck me he was thinking of his mother.

“Henry,” he said, whilst grasping my hand, “Henry, your parents! Do me justice, I ask no more.” He drew his hand away, passed it over my face as he was wont to do when I was an infant, and as his features contracted with a long convulsive sob he added, “Henry, your mother! Be good, be kind, be dutiful!” and turning round, he walked forward to the bows.^[8]

I felt as if something was strangling me; my blood rushed to my head, and a dread of I knew not what sickened my very soul. A death-like stupor pervaded my faculties; but I was aroused from this state by the voice of the marine shouting “A man overboard! a man overboard!” The truth flashed upon my mind, and as the ship rounded-to (for the helm was instantly put down) I ran to the lee cat-head,^[9] and saw the dark body as it sank in the gurgling eddy which the plunge had made. Yes, it was Tom Brookes, and he never rose again. Some heavy shot were missing from the place where he had been confined, and these he had no doubt concealed about his person to

facilitate the work of destruction. Poor Tom, the waters closed above his head, and who can read his doom!

May my young readers learn, from his untimely end, to temper judgment with mercy; and if power should ever be placed in their hands, to receive it as a sacred deposit for which they must render an account. May they use, but not abuse it; for a day is coming when the oppressor and the oppressed will meet before the same tribunal; when the individuals of whom I have been writing will stand with them at the bar of Omnipotence, and hear the sentence of that Judge from whose tribunal there is no appeal!

Footnotes

[4] He was afterwards dismissed by the navy for cruelty.

[5] This was a common practice in the service when men were first impressed.

[6] The place where the cables are coiled away.

[7] Five miles.

[8] The head of a ship.

[9] A piece of timber projecting from the bows, by which the anchor is hoisted up for security.

DADDY DAVY, THE NEGRO.

“A negro has a soul, an please your honour, said the corporal, (*doubtingly.*)

I am not much versed, corporal, said my Uncle Toby, in things of that kind; but I suppose God would not leave him without one, any more than thee or me.”

STERNE.

“I have now no written memorandums of the storms, the battles, the scenes which I have witnessed; no description of the beautiful shores of the Mediterranean, the ice-bound rocks of Greenland, the burning regions of the torrid zone, or the mild and salubrious climate of the Rio de la Plata. In my youth I trusted to a retentive memory, little thinking that time and the cares of the world would obliterate the recollection of past events.”

Such was the apostrophe of my worthy grandfather, a veteran captain in his Majesty’s navy, one winter evening, when a little orphan in my seventh year I climbed upon his knee (which he always called one of his timbers) and begged very hard that he would tell me some pretty story. The candles were not yet lighted in the parlour; but the glowing fire sent forth its red blaze, and its cheering heat seemed ten times more grateful from a heavy fall of snow, which was rapidly collecting in piles of fleecy whiteness on the lawn.

My grandfather was a man of a kindly and compassionate heart; and though I used to play him many a sly trick and sometimes grieve his spirit, yet he was always lenient to my failings; and now that he lies in yonder village churchyard, this often causes me a pang of unfeigned contrition for the past. It was my chief delight to hear him tell of the roaring of the guns when ships met in deadly strife, or the howling of the winds when the bitter tempest and the raging sea threatened destruction to the mariner; and he would so mingle his stories with the generous sympathies of his nature, that many a night has sleep dried the tears from my eyes as I lay on my pillow after retiring to bed.

I had taken my favourite seat on the evening I have mentioned, just as a poor negro with scarcely any covering appeared at the window and

supplanted charity. His dark skin was deeply contrasted with the unblemished purity of the falling snow, whilst his trembling limbs seemed hardly able to support his shivering frame; and there he stood, the child of an injured race, perishing in the land of boasted hospitality and freedom!

With all the active benevolence which my grandfather possessed, he still retained the usual characteristics of the hardy seaman. He discouraged every thing that bore the smallest resemblance to indolence. The idle vagrant dared not approach his residence; but he prized the man of industrious habits, however lowly his station, and his influence was ever extended to aid the destitute and to right the injured. On his first going to sea, he had been cabin boy on board a Liverpool ship, which was engaged in that horrible traffic—the Slave-trade; and towards the poor anathematized descendants of Ham he had already imbibed erroneous prejudices, which after-years could not wholly eradicate though they were chiefly manifested in the unmeaning jokes so common among British sailors. He had also held an official appointment for several years in the island of Trinidad, where the negroes were more rigorously treated than in any other part of the West Indies, and where their debased condition rendered them more depraved in their habits and more treacherous in their actions. In England, however, the very colour of the skin is a passport to commiseration, and my grandfather no sooner saw the dark countenance of the perishing creature than he hastily rang the bell, and a footman entering, “Robert,” said he, “go and bring yon pale-face here directly.”

“Pale face, did you say, sir?” inquired the man.

“Yes, yes,” replied my grandfather, “yon black fellow; fetch him hither to me.”

The servant quitted the room, and it was not without some feelings of fear, as well as hopes of amusement, that a few minutes afterwards I saw the poor African stand bowing at the parlour door. The twilight had faded away, and except the reflection from the snow, night had thrown its sable shadows on the scene; but as the bright gleam of the fire shed its red hue upon the jetty features of the negro and flashed upon his rolling eyes, he presented rather a terrific appearance to my young mind.

“Come in!” exclaimed my grandfather in a shrill voice; but the poor fellow stood hesitatingly on the borders of the carpet till the command was repeated with more sternness than before, and then the trembling African advanced a few steps towards the easy chair in which the veteran was

sitting. Never shall I forget the abject figure which the poor black displayed. He was a tall large-boned man, but was evidently bent down under the pressure of sickness and of want rather than age. A pair of old canvass trousers hung loosely on his legs, but his feet were quite naked. On the upper part of his body was a striped flannel shirt, one of the sleeves of which was torn away; he had no covering for his head, and the snow which had fallen on it having melted in the warmth of the room, large transparent drops of clear water hung glistening on his thick woolly hair. His look was inclined downwards, as if fearful of meeting the stern gaze of my grandfather, who scanned him with the most minute attention not unmingled with agitation. Every joint of the poor fellow's limbs shook as if struck with ague, and the cold seemed to have contracted his sinews; for he crouched his body together, as if to shrink from the keen blast. Tears were trickling down his cheeks, and his spirit seemed bowed to the earth by distress.

“Don't stand showing your ivories^[10] there,” said my grandfather; “but tell me, sir, what brought you to England, and what you mean by strolling about the country here as a beggar? I have a great mind to order you to be put in the stocks.”

“Ah, massa!” replied the negro, “Buckra^[11] neber hab stocks for nigger-man in dis country; yet nigger-man die, if massa neber give him something for fill hungry belly.”

Whilst he was speaking, my grandfather was restless and impatient. He removed me from his knee and looked with more intense eagerness at the black, who never raised his head. “But we have beggars enough of our own nation,” said the veteran, “without having a swarm of black beetles to eat up the produce of our industry.”

“Massa speak for true,” replied the African meekly; “distress lib every where; come like race-horse, but go away softly, softly.”

Again my grandfather scanned the dark features of the negro, and showed signs of agitation in his own. “Softly! Softly!” said he, imitating the black; “that's just your negro cant! I know the whole gang of you; but you are not going to deceive me. Why, sirrah! I know you would sacrifice me and all I am worth for a bunch of plantains.”^[12]

“Massa hab eat de plantains den,” responded the black; “and yet massa tink hard of poor nigger who work for make 'em grow. Gor Amighty send rain,—Gor Amighty send sun: but Gor Amighty send poor nigger too.”

“Well, well,” said my grandfather, softening his voice to its accustomed tone of mildness; “the Omnipotent is no respecter of colours, and we must not let you be put in the stocks till the morning, daddy,^[13] so Robert, tell the cook to get some warm broth for this shivering piece of ebony; and bid her bear a hand about it.”

“Gor Amighty for eber bless massa!” exclaimed the negro; and his countenance underwent an instantaneous change, as he listened to the order, and keenly directed his eye towards the person who had issued it; but my grandfather had turned his head towards me, so that his face was concealed from the grateful black.

“So, I suppose you are some runaway slave,” said my grandfather harshly.

“No, massa,” rejoined the African, more assured; “no massa, me neber run away; I free man. Good buckra gib freedom; but den I lose kind massa, and—”

“Ay, ay,” replied my grandfather, interrupting him. “I think you said something about Plantation Josef, in Trinidad?”

“Ky!” responded the negro as his eyes were bent upon his interrogator, who again concealed his face; “de buckra sabby [knows] ebery ting; him like angel of light for know de secret of de heart.”

“Come nearer the fire, Daddy Davy,” said my grandfather, as he extended his hand to the poker and bent down his body to stir the burning coals.

Never shall I forget the look of the African; joy, wonder, and admiration were pictured on his countenance as he exclaimed, whilst advancing forward, “De buckra know my name too! How dis?”

My grandfather having rekindled a bright flame that illuminated the whole room, turned his face carelessly towards the black; but no sooner had the poor fellow caught sight of his features, than throwing himself at his feet, he clasped the old man’s knees, exclaiming, “My own massa! what for you give Davy him life? what for you give Davy him freedom? and now de poor nigger die for want! But no!” checking himself, “neber see de day for go dead, now me find my massa!”

“Confound the cold!” said my grandfather, thrusting his thumb and forefinger to his eyes, “how it makes one’s eyes run! William, my boy,” turning to me, “fetch that pocket handkerchief off the sofa.”

I immediately obeyed, and felt as if the cold had affected me too; for I employed my grandfather's handkerchief two or three times to wipe the trickling drops from my face, before I delivered it into his hands. At this moment the footman opened the door to say that the broth was ready, but stood transfixed with amazement at seeing the half-naked black at his master's feet.

"Go, Davy," said my grandfather, "go, and get some food; and Robert, tell the cook to have a warm bath ready, and the housemaid must run a pan of coals over the little bed in the blue room, and put some extra blankets on. You can sleep without a night-cap, I dare say, Davy; and, Robert, tell the butler to give you a bottle of Madeira; simmer half of it over the fire, and when heated beat up an egg in it,—it will be better than cold sangaree, Davy; and d'ye hear, Robert, grate a little nutmeg on the top, and carry it to the pale face as soon as he gets into bed. There, go along, Davy, go along!" and the gratified negro left the room with unfeigned ejaculations of "Gor Amighty for eber bless kind massa!"

As soon as the door was closed, and I was once more seated on my grandfather's knee, he commenced his usual practice of holding converse with himself. "What can have brought him here?" said he; "I gave him his freedom and a piece of land to cultivate. There was a pretty hut upon it, too, with a double row of cocoa-nut trees in front, and a garden of plantains behind, and a nice plot of guinea grass for a cow, and another of buckwheat:—what has become of it all, I wonder? Bless me, how time flies! It seems but the other day that I saved the fellow from a couple of bullets, and he repaid the debt by rescuing my Betsy—ah, poor dear! She was your mother, William, and he snatched her from a dreadful and terrific fate. How these things crowd upon my mind! The earthquake shook every building to its foundation, the ground yawned in horrible deformity, and your poor mother—we can see her grave-stone from the drawing-room window, you know, for she died since we have been here, and left her old father's heart a dreary blank. Yet not so, either, my child," pressing me to his breast and laying his hoary head on mine, "not so, either; for she bequeathed you to my guardian care, and you are now the solace of my gray hairs."

"But the earthquake, grandpapa," said I, "the earthquake."

"And your poor father," continued he, absorbed in his subject, "as brave a lad as ever broke a king's biscuit, to become a prey to the sharks, with the ocean for his grave!—but there, don't cry, my boy, don't cry; you shall

never be wrecked upon a lee shore whilst I can keep you afloat; and when this old hull is stowed away in the ground tier, I shall leave you to the protection of Him, who gives the fleecy coat to the tender lamb and feeds the young ravens when they cry. But it puzzles me a little to think how this black rogue got to England, and what he can have come for. He was a faithful servant, that Davy, and I picked him up in a strange way too,—a very strange way,—for in another half hour he would have been food for the fishes. It was in ninety-eight I commanded the Zephyr sloop of war. We were cruising off the river Plate, when a schooner hove in sight and showed American colours; so I bore up to speak to her, and just as we got within hail we heard the report of firearms, and saw a negro fall from the schooner's side into the water. At first I thought it was some poor wretch relieved from his earthly misery whom they were burying. As he sank in the ocean, the billow closed over his dark form, but the next instant he rose struggling on the surface of the wave, and the white foam around him assumed a red and gory tinge. Again he sank, and again the sea rolled smoothly on; but that poor murdered wretch arose no more. We were now close to the schooner, and I commanded her crew to heave-to for a boat, which after some hesitation they obeyed. Curiosity, and perhaps a little compassion, induced me to visit the schooner; but oh, what a scene of horror presented itself! I have witnessed in my youth enough to make my heart callous, if any thing could, but this exceeded all I had ever seen. The schooner had a cargo of slaves from the coast of Africa; but not men,—not women—no, no; there were ninety-seven little children, from four to twelve years of age, in the most horrid and emaciated condition. The space in which they were kept was so confined that they could scarcely sit upright; and having nothing but rough planks to lie on, the rolling of the vessel had chafed their joints into wounds; they looked as if perishing with hunger. You shudder, boy, and well you may. The helpless creatures were ranged upon the deck, and close by the gangway lay four young men, wounded and in fetters, but who did not seem otherwise much the worse for the voyage. Another was placed astride the gunwale, with his arms pinioned behind him. Seated on the companion abaft, appeared a stout tall man in a white shirt deeply stained with blood; his head was bandaged with new cotton, through which the blood was still oozing; his left arm was bound up, and he seemed to have suffered in some desperate conflict. This was the captain; and the crew, more or less hurt, showing visible marks of a recent fight,

stood near, and every one displayed strong indications of intemperance. On the hencoop, by the captain's side, lay a long-barrelled pistol; the fellow to it was grasped in his right hand, and with the rolling eye of intoxication he first glanced at the instrument of death, and then at the poor wretch who sat with an unmoved countenance on the gunwale. 'You are just come in time, sir,' said the captain, 'to witness an act of justice; for I guess, though you have got the British bunting^[14] at the peak, you come from the land of the stripes and stars.^[15] But you shall see, sir, how cleverly I'll put a brace of balls through that mutinous rascal.' He raised the pistol to a level with his eye; his fore-finger was on the trigger, when I hastily struck it up with my hand, and the bullets whistled over the negro's head without doing him any injury. But he had experienced only cruelty from white men; he had expected death, and could not suppose that one of the fair-skinned race would rescue him from the fate of his companion. As soon as he heard the report of the pistol, he fell forward on his face; but my boat's crew ran, and saved him from going overboard. 'What is the meaning of all this?' said I, 'thou disgrace to manhood. I am a British officer, and to me you shall be accountable for your demoniac conduct. What has that poor creature done? and these too on the deck? Release them my men,' and my boat's crew had soon broken off their fetters.

"The negro, whom I had saved from the murderous intention of the captain, could not exactly comprehend the scene; but when he found that he was safe and knew me for his deliverer, he clung round my knees—ay, just as the fellow did to-night, for it was no other than Davy himself. But I can't think what brings him here to England away from the pretty hut, and the cocoa-nut trees, and the guinea grass."

"But what became of the little black children, grandpapa?" inquired I, "and the other four men, and the wicked captain? and where did you take Davy to? and—"

"Stop, stop, child!" said my grandfather; "don't overhaul your questions so fast, and I'll tell you, for the sight of the dog is a memorandum one cannot meet with every day. The captain had freighted his schooner at Loando, in the Congo country, with one hundred and thirty male and female children, and six fine young men. Thirty-three of the children had died on the passage, and been thrown overboard. The crew of the schooner fearing nothing from the poor emaciated innocents and trusting to the half-starved weakness of the young men, indulged in drinking to excess. But to the

surprise of the captain, these latter began to recover their sleek and healthy appearance, and he was calculating upon getting a handsome price for them in the market; when the very night before I fell in with the schooner, the young men rose upon the crew, they attacked the captain in his bed, and inflicted several severe wounds on his body and head. But what could these poor creatures do against a superior force, who were well acquainted with the use of arms? The negroes were overpowered and put in irons; and the wretched man, whom we had seen shot before getting along-side, was the ringleader. But now, mark me, my boy; on inquiry, I discovered that the plan had been a long time in agitation, and these injured and devoted children had daily set apart a portion of their own very scanty food, to strengthen the men for the enterprise. Most of them knew of the attempt, yet none betrayed the secret. I bought Davy of the captain, and went up the Plate as far as I could, (for the schooner was bound to Monte Video,) and then was compelled to quit her, for she was under the flag of a neutral power: besides our own country was then engaged in the same traffic.”

“And what became of the children, grandpapa?”

“All sold into slavery, my dear.”

“And Davy, grandpapa?”

“I took him with me: but what he has done with the hut and the plantain ground, I can’t tell.”

“And the earthquake; grandpapa?” for I had not forgotten that.

“You want to know every thing, boy, and you forget that my memory fails me; however, I’ll try and recollect that too for some other night; but you must go to bed now, and to-morrow Davy will tell you all about it.”

I afterwards learned that Davy had rescued my poor dear mother from destruction at the risk of his own life during an earthquake in Trinidad, for which my grandfather had given him his freedom, together with the hut and land. But the free black had no protection in the west: the slaves plundered his property; sickness came, and no medical attendant would minister to his wants without his accustomed fee; he contracted debts, and his ground was sold to the estate on which it was situated to pay the lawyers. He quitted the island of Trinidad to go to Berbice; but being wrecked near Mahaica Creek, on the east coast of Demerara, he lost his free papers, was seized by the government, and sold as a slave to pay the expenses of advertising and his keep. He fortunately fell into the hands of a kind master, who at his death once more set him at liberty, and he had come to England in the hope of

bettering his condition. But here misfortune still pursued him; the gentleman whom he accompanied died on the passage; he could obtain no employment on his landing; he had been plundered of what little money he possessed, and had since wandered about the country, till the evening that he implored charity and found a home.

My worthy grandfather is now numbered with the dead; and I love to sit upon his grave-stone at the evening hour: it seems as if I were once more placed upon his knee and listening to his tales of by-gone years. But Daddy Davy is still in existence and living with me; indeed whilst I have been writing I have had occasion to put several questions to him on the subject, and he has been fidgetting about the room to try and ascertain what I was relating respecting him. "I am only giving a *sketch* of my grandfather, Davy," said I.

"*Catch*, massa! what he call *catch*?"

"About the schooner, and Trinidad, and the earthquake, Davy."

"And da old massa what sleep in da *Werk-en-rust*?"^[16]

"Yes, Davy, and the snow-storm."

"Ah, da buckra good man! Davy see him noder time up dere," pointing towards the sky; "Gor Amighty for eber bless kind massa!"

Footnotes

[10] Ivories is a common term among the negroes for teeth.

[11] White man.

[12] The plantain is a fruit which when ripe is very sweet; but roasted when green, it resembles a chesnut in taste. It is a general article of food instead of bread in the West Indies.

[13] Daddy is a familiar term of kindness used by the male negroes to each other, as "Aunty" is used by the females; and it is nothing uncommon to hear children, as soon as they can talk, calling one another, "daddy" and "aunty."

[14] Bunting is the stuff of which flags are made.

[15] The captain thought the vessel was in the service of the United States, their colours being striped red and white, except the upper quarter next the staff, which is blue, and bears as many stars as there are states in the Union.

[16] *Werk-en-rust*, literally work-and-rest, is the name given to the burying-ground at Demerara; but here it is meant to apply generally to all places of sepulture.

END OF VOL. I.

Transcriber's Note

- Punctuation and other obvious typographic inaccuracies were silently corrected.
- Archaic and variable spelling has been preserved.
- Variations in hyphenation and compound words have been preserved.
- Footnotes moved to the end of their respective chapters.

Correction

[Footnote 4](#) (originally on p. 149), “dismissed the navy” to “dismissed by the navy”

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TOUGH YARNS :
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HANDS, FROM THE SWABS ON THE SHOULDERS DOWN TO THE
SWABS IN THE HEAD ***

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