



Jack Tier

or, the Florida Reef



Part 2: Chapter 2

Shallow. Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

Evans. Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

Shallow. I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

Evans. Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts.

—Shakspeare.

As for Spike, he had no intention of going to the southward of the Florida Reef again until his business called him there. The lost bag of doubloons was still gleaming before his imagination, and no sooner did the Poughkeepsie bear up, than he shortened sail, standing back and forth in his narrow and crooked channel, rather losing ground than gaining, though he took great pains not to let his artifice be seen. When the Poughkeepsie was so far to the northward as to render it safe, he took in everything but one or two of his lowest sails, and followed easily in the same direction. As the sloop-of-war carried her light and loftier sails, she remained visible to the people of the *Swash* long after the *Swash* had ceased to be visible to her. Profiting by this circumstance, Spike entered the main channel again some time before it was dark, and selected a safe anchorage there that was well known to him; a spot where sufficient sand had collected on the coral to make good holding ground, and where a vessel would be nearly embayed, though always to windward of her channel going out, by the formation of the reef. Here he anchored, in order to wait until morning ere he ventured further north. During the whole of that dreadful day, Rose had remained in her cabin, disconsolate, nearly unable, as she was absolutely unwilling to converse. Now it was that she felt the total insufficiency of a mind feeble as that of her aunt's to administer consolation to misery like her own. Nevertheless, the affectionate solicitude of Mrs.



Budd, as well as that of the faithful creature, Bidly, brought some relief, and reason and resignation began slowly to resume their influence. Yet was the horrible picture of Harry, dying by inches, deserted in the midst of the waters on his solitary rock, ever present to her thoughts, until, once or twice, her feelings verged on madness. Prayer brought its customary relief, however; and we do not think that we much exaggerate the fact, when we say that Rose passed fully one-half of that terrible afternoon on her knees.

As for Jack Tier, he was received on board the brig much as if nothing had happened. Spike passed and repassed him fifty times, without even an angry look, or a word of abuse; and the deputy-steward dropped quietly into the duties of his office, without meeting with either reproach or hindrance. The only allusion, indeed, that was made to his recent adventures, took place in a conversation that was held on the subject in the galley, the interlocutors being Jack himself, Josh, the steward, and Simon, the cook.

“Where you been scullin’ to, ’bout on dat reef, Jack, wid dem’ ere women, I won’er now?” demanded Josh, after tasting the cabin soup, in order to ascertain how near it was to being done. “It’ink it no great fun to dodge ’bout among dem rock in a boat, for anudder hurricane might come when a body least expeck him.”

“Oh,” said Jack, cavalierly, “two hurricanes no more come in one month, than two shot in the same hole. We’ve been turtlin’, that’s all. I wish we had in your coppers, cook, some of the critturs that we fell in with in our cruise.”

“Wish’e had, master steward, wid all my heart,” answered the fat, glistening potentate of the galley. “But, hark’ee, Jack; what became of our young mate, can ’e tell? Some say he get kill at’e Dry Tortugas, and some say he war’ scullin’ round in dat boat you hab, wid’e young woman, eh?”

“Ah, boys,” answered Jack, mournfully, “sure enough, what has become of him?”

“You know, why can’t you tell? What good to hab secret among friend.”

“Are ye his friends, lads? Do you really feel as if you could give a poor soul in its agony a helpin’ hand?”

“Why not?” said Josh, in a reproachful way. “Misser Mulford’e bess mate dis brig ebber get; and I don’t see why Cap’in Spike-want to be rid of him.”

“Because he’s a willian!” returned Jack between his grated teeth. “D’ye know what that means in English, master Josh; and can you and cook here, both of whom have sailed with the man years in and years out, say whether my words be true or not?”

“Dat as a body understand ’em. Accordin’ to some rule, Stephen Spike not a werry honest man; but accordin’ to ’nudder some, he as good as any body else.”



“Yes, dat just be upshot of de matter,” put in Simon, approvingly. “De whole case lie in dat meanin’.”

“D’ye call it right to leave a human being to starve, or to suffer for water, on a naked rock, in the midst of the ocean?”

“Who do dat?”

“The willian who is captain of this brig; and all because he thinks young eyes and bloomin’ cheeks prefer young eyes and bloomin’ cheeks to his own grizzly beard and old look-outs.”

“Dat bad; dat werry bad,” said Josh, shaking his head, a way of denoting dissatisfaction, in which Simon joined him; for no crime appeared sufficiently grave in the eyes of these two sleek and well-fed officials to justify such a punishment. “Dat mons’ous bad, and cap’in ought to know better dan do dat. I nebber starves a mouse, if I catches him in de bread-locker. Now, dat a sort of reason’ble punishment, too; but I nebber does it. If mouse eat my bread, it do seem right to tell mouse dat he hab enough, and dat he must not eat any more for a week, or a mont’, but it too cruel for me, and I nebber does it; no, I t’rows de little debil overboard, and lets him drown like a gentle’em.”

“Y-e-s,” drawled out Simon, in a philanthropical tone of voice, “dat’e best way. What good it do to torment a fellow critter? If Misser Mulford run, why put him down run, and let him go, I say, on’y mulk his wages; but what good it do anybody to starve him? Now dis is my opinion, gentle’em, and dat is, dat starvation be wuss dan choleric. Choleric kill, I knows, and so does starvation kill; but of de two, gib me de choleric fuss; if I gets well of dat, den try starvation if you can.”

“I’m glad to hear you talk in this manner, my hearties,” put in Jack; “and I hope I may find you accommodatin’ in a plan I’ve got to help the maty out of this difficulty. As a friend of Stephen Spike’s I would do it; for it must be a terrible thing to die with such a murder on one’s soul. Here’s the boat that we pick’d up at the light-house, yonder, in tow of the brig at this minute; and there’s everything in her comfortable for a good long run, as I know from having sailed in her; and what I mean is this: as we left Mr. Mulford, I took the bearings and distance of the rock he was on, d’ye understand, and think I could find my way back to it. You see the brig is travelin’ slowly north ag’in, and afore long we shall be in the neighbourhood of that very rock. We, cook and stewards, will be called on to keep an anchor-watch, if the brig fetches up, as I heard the captain tell the Spanish gentleman he thought she would; and then we can take the boat that’s in the water and go and have a hunt for the maty.”



The two blacks looked at Tier earnestly; then they turned their heads to look at each other. The idea struck each as bold and novel, but each saw serious difficulties in it. At length Josh, as became his superior station, took on himself the office of expressing the objections that occurred to his mind.

“Dat nebber do!” exclaimed the steward. “We be’s quite willin’ to sarve’e mate, who’s a good gentle’em, and as nice a young man as ever sung out, ’hard a-lee,” but we must t’ink little bit of number one; or, for dat matter, of number two, as Simon would be implicated as well as myself. If Cap’in Spike once knew we’ve lent a hand in sich a job, he’d never overlook it. I knows him, well; and that is sayin’ as much as need be said of any man’s character. You nebber catch me runnin’ myself into his jaws; would rather fight a shark widout any knife. No, no—I knows him well. Den comes anudder werry unanswerable objecsh’un, and dat is, dat’e brig owe bot’ Simon and I money. Fifty dollars, each on us, if she owe one cent. Now, do you t’ink in cander, Jack, dat two colour’ gentle’em, like us, can t’row away our fortins like two sons of a York merchant dat has inherited a hundred t’ousand dollar tudder day?”

“There is no occasion for running at all, or for losing your wages.”

“How you get’e mate off, den? Can he walk away on de water? If so, let him go widout us. A werry good gentle’em is Misser Mulford, but not good enough to mulk Simon and me out of fifty dollar each.”

“You will not hear my project, Josh, and so will never know what I would be at.”

“Well, come, tell him jest as you surposes him. Now listen, Simon, so dat not a word be loss.”

“My plan is to take the boat, if we anchor, as anchor I know we shall, and go and find the rock and bring Mr. Mulford off; then we can come back to the brig, and get on board ourselves, and let the mate sail away in the boat by himself. On this plan nobody will run, and no wages be mulcted.”

“But dat take time and an anchor-watch last but two hour, surposin’ even dat’ey puts all t’ree of us in de same watch.”

“Spike usually does that, you know. ’Let the cook and the stewards keep the midnight watch,’ he commonly says, ’and that will give the foremost hands a better snooze.”

“Yes, he do say dat, Josh,” put in Simon, “most ebbery time we comes-to.”

“I know he does, and surposes he will say it to-night, if he comes-to to-night. But a two hour watch may not be long enough to do all you wants; and den, jest t’ink for a moment, should ’e cap’in come on deck and hail’e forecastle, and find us all gone, I



wouldn't be in your skin, Jack, for dis brig, in sich a kerlamity. I knows Cap'in Spike well; t'ree time I endebber to run myself, and each time he bring me up wid a round turn; so, now-a-days, I nebber t'inks of sich a projeck any longer."

"But I do not intend to leave the forecastle without some one on it to answer a hail. No, all I want is a companion; for I do not like to go out on the reef at midnight, all alone. If one of you will go with me, the other can stay and answer the captain's hail, should he really come on deck in our watch—a thing very little likely to happen. When once his head is on his pillow, a'ter a hard day's work, it's not very apt to be lifted ag'in without a call, or a squall. If you do know Stephen Spike well, Josh, I know him better."

"Well, Jack, dis here is a new idee, d'ye see, and a body must take time to consider on it. If Simon and I do ship for dis v'y'ge, 't will be for lub of Mr. Mulford, and not for his money or your'n" _.

This was all the encouragement of his project Jack Tier could obtain, on that occasion, from either his brother steward, or from the cook. These blacks were well enough disposed to rescue an innocent and unoffending man from the atrocious death to which Spike had condemned his mate, but neither lost sight of his own security and interest. They promised Tier not to betray him, however; and he had the fullest confidence in their pledges. They who live together in common, usually understand the feeling that prevails, on any given point, in their own set; and Jack felt pretty certain that Harry was a greater favourite in and about the camboose than the captain. On that feeling he relied, and he was fain to wait the course of events, ere he came to any absolute conclusion as to his own course.

The interview in the galley took place about half an hour before the brig anchored for the night. Tier, who often assisted on such occasions, went aloft to help secure the royal, one of the gaskets of which had got loose, and from the yard he had an excellent opportunity to take a look at the reef, the situation of the vessel, and the probable bearings of the rock on which poor Mulford had been devoted to a miserable death. This opportunity was much increased by Spike's hailing him, while on the yard, and ordering him to take a good look at the sloop-of-war, and at the same time to ascertain if any boats were "prowlin' about, in order to make a set upon us in the night." On receiving this welcome order, Jack answered with a cheerful "Ay, ay, sir," and standing up on the yard, he placed an arm around the mast, and remained for a long time making his observations. The command to look-out for boats would have been a sufficient excuse had he continued on the yard as long as it was light.



Jack had no difficulty in finding the Poughkeepsie, which was already through the passage, and no longer visible from the deck. She appeared to be standing to the northward and westward, under easy canvas, like a craft that was in no hurry. This fact was communicated to Spike in the usual way. The latter seemed pleased, and he answered in a hearty manner, just as if no difficulty had ever occurred between him and the steward's assistant.

“Very well, Jack! bravo, Jack!—now take a good look for boats; you'll have light enough for that this half hour,” cried the captain. “If any are out, you'll find them pulling down the channel, or maybe they'll try to shorten the cut, by attempting to pull athwart the reef. Take a good and steady look for them, my man.”

“Ay, ay, sir; I'll do all I can with naked eyes,” answered Jack, “but I could do better, sir, if they would only send me up a glass by these here signal-halyards. With a glass, a fellow might speak with some sartainty.”

Spike seemed struck with the truth of this suggestion; and he soon sent a glass aloft by the signal-halyards. Thus provided, Jack descended as low as the cross-trees, where he took his seat, and began a survey at his leisure. While thus employed, the brig was secured for the night, her decks were cleared, and the people were ordered to get their suppers, previously to setting an anchor-watch, and turning-in for the night. No one heeded the movements of Tier,—for Spike had gone into his own state-room,—with the exception of Josh and Simon. Those two worthies were still in the galley, conversing on the subject of Jack's recent communications; and ever and anon one of them would stick his head out of the door and look aloft, withdrawing it, and shaking it significantly, as soon as his observations were ended.

As for Tier, he was seated quite at his ease; and having slung his glass to one of the shrouds, in a way to admit of its being turned as on a pivot, he had every opportunity for observing accurately, and at his leisure. The first thing Jack did, was to examine the channel very closely, in order to make sure that no boats were in it, after which he turned the glass with great eagerness toward the reef, in the almost hopeless office of ascertaining something concerning Mulford. In point of fact, the brig had anchored quite three leagues from the solitary rock of the deserted mate, and, favoured as he was by his elevation, Jack could hardly expect to discern so small and low an object as that rock at so great a distance. Nevertheless, the glass was much better than common. It had been a present to Spike from one who was careful in his selections of such objects, and who had accidentally been under a serious obligation to the captain. Knowing the importance of a good look, as regards the boats, Spike had brought this particular



instrument, of which, in common, he was very chary, from his own state-room, and sent it aloft, in order that Jack might have every available opportunity of ascertaining his facts. It was this glass, then, which was the means of the important discoveries the little fellow, who was thus perched on the fore-topmast cross-trees of the *Swash*, did actually succeed in making.

Jack actually started, when he first ascertained how distinctly and near the glass he was using brought distant objects. The gulls that sailed across its disk, though a league off, appeared as if near enough to be touched by the hand, and even their feathers gave out not only their hues, but their forms. Thus, too, was it with the surface of the ocean, of which the little waves that agitated the water of the reef, might be seen tossing up and down, at more than twice the range of the Poughkeepsie's heaviest gun. Naked rocks, low and subdued as they were in colour, too, were to be noted, scattered up and down in the panorama. At length Tier fancied his glass covered a field that he recognized. It was distant, but might be seen from his present elevation. A second look satisfied him he was right; and he next clearly traced the last channel in which they had endeavoured to escape from Spike, or that in which the boat had been taken. Following it along, by slowly moving the glass, he actually hit the rock on which Mulford had been deserted. It was peculiar in shape, size, and elevation above the water, and connected with the circumstance of the channel, which was easily enough seen by the colour of the water, and more easily from his height than if he had been in it, he could not be mistaken. The little fellow's heart beat quick as he made the glass move slowly over its surface, anxiously searching for the form of the mate. It was not to be seen. A second, and a more careful sweep of the glass, made it certain that the rock was deserted.

Although a little reflection might have satisfied any one Mulford was not to be sought in that particular spot, so long after he had been left there, Jack Tier felt grievously disappointed when he was first made certain of the accuracy of his observations. A minute later he began to reason on the matter, and he felt more encouraged. The rock on which the mate had been abandoned was smooth, and could not hold any fresh water that might have been left by the late showers. Jack also remembered that it had neither sea-weed nor shell-fish. In short, the utmost malice of Spike could not have selected, for the immolation of his victim, a more suitable place. Now Tier had heard Harry's explanation to Rose, touching the manner in which he had waded and swum about the reef that very morning, and it at once occurred to him that the young man had too much energy and spirit to remain helpless and inactive to perish



on a naked rock, when there might be a possibility of at least prolonging existence, if not of saving it. This induced the steward to turn the glass slowly over the water, and along all the ranges of visible rock that he could find in that vicinity. For a long time the search was useless, the distance rendering such an examination not only difficult but painful. At length Jack, about to give up the matter in despair, took one sweep with the glass nearer to the brig, as much to obtain a general idea of the boat-channels of the reef, as in any hope of finding Mulford, when an object moving in the water came within the field of the glass. He saw it but for an instant, as the glass swept slowly past, but it struck him it was something that had life, and was in motion. Carefully going over the same ground again, after a long search, he again found what he so anxiously sought. A good look satisfied him that he was right. It was certainly a man wading along the shallow water of the reef, immersed to his waist—and it must be Mulford.

So excited was Jack Tier by this discovery that he trembled like a leaf. A minute or two elapsed before he could again use the glass; and when he did, a long and anxious search was necessary before so small an object could be once more found. Find it he did, however, and then he got its range by the vessel, in a way to make sure of it. Yes, it was a man, and it was Mulford.

Circumstances conspired to aid Jack in the investigation that succeeded. The sun was near setting, but a stream of golden light gleamed over the waters, particularly illuminating the portion which came within the field of the glass. It appeared then that Harry, in his efforts to escape from the rock, and to get nearer to the edge of the main channel, where his chances of being seen and rescued would be ten-fold what they were on his rock, had moved south, by following the naked reef and the shallow places, and was actually more than a league nearer to the brig than he would have been had he remained stationary. There had been hours in which to make this change, and the young man had probably improved them to the utmost.

Jack watched the form that was wading slowly along with an interest he had never before felt in the movements of any human being. Whether Mulford saw the brig or not, it was difficult to say. She was quite two leagues from him, and, now that her sails were furled, she offered but little for the eye to rest on at that distance. At first, Jack thought the young man was actually endeavouring to get nearer to her, though it must have been a forlorn hope that should again place him in the hands of Spike. It was, however, a more probable conjecture that the young man was endeavouring to reach the margin of the passage, where a good deal of rock was above water, and near to which he had already managed to reach. At one time Jack saw that the mate was obliged to



swim, and he actually lost sight of him for a time. His form, however, reappeared, and then it slowly emerged from the water, and stood erect on a bare rock of some extent. Jack breathed freer at this; for Mulford was now on the very margin of the channel, and might be easily reached by the boat, should he prevail on Josh, or Simon, to attempt the rescue.

At first, Jack Tier fancied that Mulford had knelt to return thanks on his arrival at a place of comparative safety; but a second look satisfied him that Harry was drinking from one of the little pools of fresh water left by the late shower. When he rose from drinking, the young man walked about the place, occasionally stooping, signs that he was picking up shell-fish for his supper. Suddenly, Mulford darted forward, and passed beyond the field of the glass. When Jack found him again, he was in the act of turning a small turtle, using his knife on the animal immediately after. Had Jack been in danger of starvation himself, and found a source of food as ample and as grateful as this, he could scarcely have been more delighted. The light now began to wane perceptibly, still Harry's movements could be discerned. The turtle was killed and dressed, sufficiently at least for the mate's purposes, and the latter was seen collecting sea-weed, and bits of plank, boards, and sticks of wood, of which more or less, in drifting past, had lodged upon the rocks. "Is it possible," thought Jack, "that he is so werry partic'lar he can't eat his turtle raw! Will he, indeed, venture to light a fire, or has he the means?" Mulford was so particular, however, he did venture to light a fire, and he had the means. This may be said to be the age of matches—not in a connubial, though in an inflammatory sense—and the mate had a small stock in a tight box that he habitually carried on his person. Tier saw him at work over a little pile he had made for a long time, the beams of day departing now so fast as to make him fearful he should soon lose his object in the increasing obscurity of twilight. Suddenly a light gleamed, and the pile sent forth a clear flame. Mulford went to and fro, collecting materials to feed his fire, and was soon busied in cooking his turtle. All this Tier saw and understood, the light of the flames coming in proper time to supply the vacuum left by the departure of that of day.

In a minute Tier had no difficulty in seeing the fire that Mulford had lighted on his low and insulated domains with the naked eye. It gleamed brightly in that solitary place; and the steward was much afraid it would be seen by some one on deck, get to be reported to Spike, and lead to Harry's destruction after all. The mate appeared to be insensible to his danger, however, occasionally casting piles of dry sea-weed on his fire, in a way to cause the flames to flash up, as if kindled anew by gunpowder. It now occurred to Tier that the young man had a double object in lighting this fire,



which would answer not only the purposes of his cookery, but as a signal of distress to anything passing near. The sloop-of-war, though more distant than the brig, was in his neighbourhood; and she might possibly yet send relief. Such was the state of things when Jack was startled by a sudden hail from below. It was Spike's voice, and came up to him short and quick.

"Fore-topmast cross-trees, there! What are ye about all this time, Master Jack Tier, in them fore-topmast cross-trees, I say?" demanded Spike.

"Keeping a look-out for boats from the sloop-of-war, as you bade me, sir," answered Jack, coolly.

"D'ye see any, my man? Is the water clear ahead of us, or not?"

"It's getting to be so dark, sir, I can see no longer. While there was day-light, no boat was to be seen."

"Come down, man—come down; I've business for you below. The sloop is far enough to the nor'ard, and we shall neither see nor hear from her to-night. Come down, I say, Jack—come down."

Jack obeyed, and securing the glass, he began to descend the rigging. He was soon as low as the top, when he paused a moment to take another look. The fire was still visible, shining like a torch on the surface of the water, casting its beams abroad like "a good deed in a naughty world." Jack was sorry to see it, though he once more took its bearing from the brig, in order that he might know where to find the spot, in the event of a search for it. When on the stretcher of the fore-rigging, Jack stopped and again looked for his beacon. It had disappeared, having sunk below the circular formation of the earth. By ascending two or three ratlins, it came into view, and by going down as low as the stretcher again, it disappeared. Trusting that no one, at that hour, would have occasion to go aloft, Jack now descended to the deck, and went aft with the spy-glass.

Spike and the Señor Montefalderon were under the coach-house, no one else appearing on any part of the quarter-deck. The people were eating their suppers, and Josh and Simon were busy in the galley. As for the females, they chose to remain in their own cabin, where Spike was well pleased to leave them.

"Come this way, Jack," said the captain, in his best-humoured tone of voice, "I've a word to say to you. Put the glass in at my state-room window, and come hither."

Tier did as ordered.

"So you can make out no boats to the nor'ard, ha, Jack! nothing to be seen thereaway?"

"Nothing in the way of a boat, sir."



“Ay, ay, I dare say there’s plenty of water, and some rock. The Florida Reef has no scarcity of either, to them that knows where to look for one, and to steer clear of the other. Hark’e, Jack; so you got the schooner under way from the Dry Tortugas, and undertook to beat her up to Key West, when she fancied herself a turtle, and over she went with you—is that it, my man?”

“The schooner turned turtle with us, sure enough, sir; and we all came near drowning on her bottom.”

“No sharks in that latitude and longitude, eh Jack?”

“Plenty on ’em, sir; and I thought they would have got us all, at one time. More than twenty set of fins were in sight at once, for several hours.”

“You could hardly have supplied the gentlemen with a leg, or an arm, each. But where was the boat all this time—you had the light-house boat in tow, I suppose?”

“She had been in tow, sir; but Madam Budd talked so much dictionary to the painter, that it got adrift.”

“Yet I found you all in it.”

“Very true, sir. Mr. Mulford swam quite a mile to reach the rocks, and found the boat aground on one on ’em. As soon as he got the boat, he made sail, and came and took us off. We had reason to thank God he could do so.”

Spike looked dark and thoughtful. He muttered the words “swam,” and “rocks,” but was too cautious to allow any expressions to escape him, that might betray to the Mexican officer that which was uppermost in his mind. He was silent, however, for quite a minute, and Jack saw that he had awakened a dangerous source of distrust in the captain’s breast.

“Well, Jack,” resumed Spike, after the pause, “can you tell us anything of the doubloons? I nat’rally expected to find them in the boat, but there were none to be seen. You scarcely pumped the schooner out, without overhauling her lockers, and falling in with them doubloons.”

“We found them, sure enough, and had them ashore with us, in the tent, down to the moment when we sailed.”

“When you took them off to the schooner, eh? My life for it, the gold was not forgotten.”

“It was not, sure enough, sir; but we took it off with us to the schooner, and it went down in her when she finally sunk.”

Another pause, during which Señor Montefalderon and Captain Spike looked significantly at each other.



“Do you think, Jack, you could find the spot where the schooner went down?”

“I could come pretty near it, sir, though not on the very spot itself. Water leaves no mark over the grave of a sunken ship.”

“If you can take us within a reasonable distance, we might find it by sweeping for it. Them doubloons are worth some trouble; and their recovery would be better than a long v’y’ge to us, any day.”

“They would, indeed, Don Esteban,” observed the Mexican; “and my poor country is not in a condition to bear heavy losses. If Señor Jack Tier can find the wreck, and we regain the money, ten of those doubloons shall be his reward, though I take them from my own share, much diminished as it will be.”

“You hear, Jack—here is a chance to make your fortune! You say you sailed with me in old times—and old times were good times with this brig, though times has changed; but if you sailed with me, in old times, you must remember that whatever the *Swash* touched she turned to gold.”

“I hope you don’t doubt, Captain Spike, my having sailed in the brig, not only in old times, but in her best times.”

Jack seemed hurt as he put this question, and Spike appeared in doubt. The latter gazed at the little, rotund, queer-looking figure before him, as if endeavouring to recognise him; and when he had done, he passed his hand over his brow, like one who endeavoured to recall past objects by excluding those that are present.

“You will then show us the spot where my unfortunate schooner did sink, Señor Jack Tier?” put in the Mexican.

“With all my heart, señor, if it is to be found. I think I could take you within a cable’s length of the place, though hunger, and thirst, and sharks, and the fear of drowning, will keep a fellow from having a very bright look-out for such a matter.”

“In what water do you suppose the craft to lie, Jack?” demanded the captain.

“You know as much of that as I do myself, sir. She went down about a cable’s length from the reef, toward which she was a settin’ at the time; and had she kept afloat an hour longer, she might have grounded on the rocks.”

“She’s better where she is, if we can only find her by sweeping. On the rocks we could do nothing with her but break her up, and ten to one the doubloons would be lost. By the way, Jack, do you happen to know where that scoundrel of a mate of mine stowed the money?”

“When we left the island, I carried it down to the boat myself—and a good lift I had of it. As sure as you are there, señor, I was obliged to take it on a shoulder. When



it came out of the boat, Mr. Mulford carried it below; and I heard him tell Miss Rose, a'terwards that he had thrown it into a bread-locker."

"Where we shall find it, Don Wan, notwithstanding all this veering and hauling. The old brig has luck when, doubloons are in question, and ever has had since I've commanded her. Jack, we shall have to call on the cook and stewards for an anchor-watch to-night. The people are a good deal fagged with boxing about this reef so much, and I shall want 'em all as fresh to-morrow as they can be got. You idlers had better take the middle watches, which will give the fore-castle chaps longer naps."

"Ay, ay, sir; we'll manage that for 'em. Josh and Simon can go on at twelve, and I will take the watch at two, which will give the men all the rest they want, as I can hold out for four hours full. I'm as good for an anchor-watch as any man in the brig, Captain Spike."

"That you are, Jack, and better than some on 'em. Take you all round, and round it is, you 're a rum 'un, my lad—the queerest little jigger that ever lay out on a royal-yard."

Jack might have been a little offended at Spike's compliments, but he was certainly not sorry to find him so good-natured, after all that had passed. He now left the captain, and his Mexican companion, seemingly in close conference together, while he went below himself, and dropped as naturally into the routine of his duty, as if he had never left the brig. In the cabin he found the females, of course. Rose scarce raising her face from the shawl which lay on the bed of her own berth. Jack busied himself in a locker near this berth, until an opportunity occurred to touch Rose, unseen by her aunt or Biddy. The poor heart-stricken girl raised her face, from which all the colour had departed, and looked almost vacantly at Jack, as if to ask an explanation. Hope is truly, by a most benevolent provision of Providence, one of the very last blessings to abandon us. It is probable that we are thus gifted, in order to encourage us to rely on the great atonement to the last moment, since, without this natural endowment to cling to hope, despair might well be the fate of millions, who, there is reason to think, reap the benefit of that act of divine mercy. It would hardly do to say that anything like hope was blended with the look Rose now cast on Jack, but it was anxious and inquiring.

The steward bent his head to the locker, bringing his face quite near to that of Rose, and whispered—"There is hope, Miss Rose—but do not betray me."

These were blessed words for our heroine to hear, and they produced an immediate and great revolution in her feelings. Commanding herself, however, she looked her questions, instead of trusting even to a whisper. Jack did not say any more, just then;



but, shortly after, he called Rose, whose eyes were now never off him, into the main cabin, which was empty. It was so much pleasanter to sleep in an airy state-room on deck, that Señor Montefalderon, indeed, had given up the use of this cabin, in a great measure, seldom appearing in it, except at meals, having taken possession of the deserted apartment of Mulford. Josh was in the galley, where he spent most of his time, and Rose and Jack had no one to disturb their conference.

“He is safe, Miss Rose—God be praised!” whispered Jack. “Safe for the present, at least; with food, and water, and fire to keep him warm at night.”

It was impossible for Rose not to understand to whom there was allusion, though her head became dizzy under the painful confusion that prevailed in it. She pressed her temples with both hands, and asked a thousand questions with her eyes. Jack considerately handed her a glass of water before he proceeded. As soon as he found her a little more composed, he related the facts connected with his discovery of Mulford, precisely as they had occurred.

“He is now on a large rock—a little island, indeed—where he is safe from the ocean unless it comes on to blow a hurricane,” concluded Jack, “has fresh water and fresh turtle in the bargain. A man might live a month on one such turtle as I saw Mr. Mulford cutting up this evening.”

“Is there no way of rescuing him from the situation you have mentioned, Jack? In a year or two I shall be my own mistress, and have money to do as I please with; put me only in the way of taking Mr. Mulford from that rock, and I will share all I am worth on earth with you, dear Jack.”

“Ay, so it is with the whole sex,” muttered Tier; “let them only once give up their affections to a man, and he becomes dearer to them than pearls and rubies! But you know me, Miss Rose, and know why and how well I would sarve you. My story and my feelin’s are as much your secret, as your story and your feelin’s is mine. We shall pull together, if we don’t pull so very strong. Now, hearken to me, Miss Rose, and I will let you into the secret of my plan to help Mr. Mulford make a launch.”

Jack then communicated to his companion his whole project for the night. Spike had, of his own accord, given to him and his two associates, Simon and Josh, the care of the brig between midnight and morning. If he could prevail on either of these men to accompany him, it was his intention to take the light-house boat, which was riding by its painter astern of the brig, and proceed as fast as they could to the spot whither Mulford had found his way. By his calculations, if the wind stood as it then was, little more than an hour would be necessary to reach the rock, and about as much more to



return. Should the breeze lull, of which there was no great danger, since the easterly trades were again blowing, Jack thought he and Josh might go over the distance with the oars in about double the time. Should both Josh and Simon refuse to accompany him, he thought he should attempt the rescue of the mate alone, did the wind stand, trusting to Mulford's assistance, should he need it, in getting back to the brig.

"You surely would not come back here with Harry, did you once get him safe from off that rock!" exclaimed Rose.

"Why, you know how it is with me, Miss Rose," answered Jack. "My- business is here, on board the *Swash*, and I must attend to it. Nothing shall tempt me to give up the brig so long as she floats, and sertain folk float in her, unless it might be some such matter as that which happened on the bit of an island at the Dry Tortugas. Ah! he's a willian! But if I do come back, it will be only to get into my own proper berth ag'in, and not to bring Mr. Mulford into the lion's jaws. He will only have to put me back on board the *Molly* here, when he can make the best of his own way to Key West. Half an hour would place him out of harm's way; especially as I happen to know the course Spike means to steer in the morning."

"I will go with you, Jack," said Rose, mildly, but with great firmness.

"You, Miss Rose! But why should I show surprise! It's like all the sex, when they have given away their affections. Yes, woman will be woman, put her on a naked rock, or put her in silks and satins in her parlour at home. How different is it with men! They dote for a little while, and turn to a new face. It must be said, men's willians!"

"Not Mulford, Jack—no, not Harry Mulford! A truer or a nobler heart never beat in a human breast; and you and I will drown together, rather than he should not be taken from that rock."

"It shall be as you say," answered Jack, a little thoughtfully. "Perhaps it would be best that you should quit the brig altogether. Spike is getting desperate, and you will be safer with the young mate than with so great an old willian. Yes, you shall go with me, Miss Rose; and if Josh and Simon both refuse, we will go alone."

"With you, Jack, but not with Mr. Mulford. I cannot desert my aunt, nor can I quit the *Swash* alone in company with her mate. As for Spike, I despise him too much to fear him. He must soon go into port somewhere, and at the first place where he touches we shall quit him. He dare not detain us—nay, he cannot—and I do not fear him. We will save Harry, but I shall remain with my aunt."

"We'll see, Miss Rose, we'll see," said Tier, smiling. "Perhaps a handsome young man, like Mr. Mulford, will have better luck in persuading you than an old fellow like me. If he should fail, 't will be his own fault."



So thought Jack Tier, judging of women as he had found them, but so did not think Rose Budd. The conversation ended here, however, each keeping in view its purport, and the serious business that was before them.

The duty of the vessel went on as usual. The night promised to be clouded, but not very dark, as there was a moon. When Spike ordered the anchor-watches, he had great care to spare his crew as much as possible, for the next day was likely to be one of great toil to them. He intended to get the schooner up again, if possible; and though he might not actually pump her out so as to cause her to float, enough water was to be removed to enable him to get at the doubloons. The situation of the bread-locker was known, and as soon as the cabin was sufficiently freed from water to enable one to move about in it, Spike did not doubt his being able to get at the gold. With his resources and ingenuity, the matter in his own mind was reduced to one of toil and time. Eight-and-forty hours, and some hard labour, he doubted not would effect all he cared for.

In setting the anchor-watches for the night, therefore, Stephen Spike bethought him as much of the morrow as of the present moment. Don Juan offered to remain on deck until midnight, and as he was as capable of giving an alarm as any one else, the offer was accepted. Josh and Simon were to succeed the Mexican, and to hold the lookout for two hours, when Jack was to relieve them, and to continue on deck until light returned, when he was to give the captain a call. This arrangement made, Tier turned in at once, desiring the cook to call him half an hour before the proper period of his watch commenced. That half hour Jack intended to employ in exercising his eloquence in endeavouring to persuade either Josh or Simon to be of his party. By eight o'clock the vessel lay in a profound quiet, Señor Montefalderon pacing the quarterdeck alone, while the deep breathing of Spike was to be heard issuing through the open window of his state-room; a window which it may be well to say to the uninitiated, opened in-board, or toward the deck, and not outboard, or toward the sea.

For four solitary hours did the Mexican pace the deck of the stranger, resting himself for a few minutes at a time only, when wearied with walking. Does the reader fancy that a man so situated had not plenty of occupation for his thoughts? Don Juan Montefalderon was a soldier and a gallant cavalier; and love of country had alone induced him to engage in his present duties. Not that patriotism which looks to political preferment through a popularity purchased by the vulgar acclamation which attends success in arms, even when undeserved, or that patriotism which induces men of fallen characters to endeavour to retrieve former offences by the shortest and most reckless



mode, or that patriotism which shouts “our country right or wrong,” regardless alike of God and his eternal laws, that are never to be forgotten with impunity; but the patriotism which would defend his home and fire-side, his altars and the graves of his fathers, from the ruthless steps of the invader. We shall not pretend to say how far this gentleman entered into the merits of the quarrel between the two republics, which no arts of European jealousy can ever conceal from the judgment of truth, for, with him, matters had gone beyond the point when men feel the necessity of reasoning, and when, perhaps, if such a condition of the mind is ever to be defended, he found his perfect justification in feeling. He had travelled, and knew life by observation, and not through traditions and books. He had never believed, therefore, that his countrymen could march to Washington, or even to the Sabine; but he had hoped for better things than had since occurred. The warlike qualities of the Americans of the North, as he was accustomed to call those who term themselves, *par excellence*, Americans, a name they are fated to retain, and to raise high on the scale of national power and national pre-eminence, unless they fall by their own hands, had taken him by surprise, as they have taken all but those who knew the country well, and who understood its people. Little had he imagined that the small, widely-spread body of regulars, that figured in the blue books, almanacs and army-registers of America, as some six or seven thousand men, scattered along frontiers of a thousand leagues in extent, could, at the beck of the government, swell into legions of invaders, men able to carry war to the capitals of his own states, thousands of miles from their doors, and formidable alike for their energy, their bravery, their readiness in the use of arms, and their numbers. He saw what is perhaps justly called the boasting of the American character, vindicated by their exploits; and marches, conquests and victories that, if sober truth were alone to cover the pages of history, would far outdo in real labour and danger the boasted passage of the Alps under Napoleon, and the exploits that succeeded it.

Don Juan Montefalderon was a grave and thoughtful man, of pure Iberian blood. He might have had about him a little of the exaltation of the Spanish character; the overflowings of a generous chivalry at the bottom; and, under its influence, he may have set too high an estimate on Mexico and her sons, but he was not one to shut his eyes to the truth. He saw plainly that the northern neighbours of his country were a race formidable and enterprising, and that of all the calumnies that had been heaped upon them by rivalries and European superciliousness, that of their not being military by temperament was, perhaps, the most absurd of all. On the contrary, he had himself, though anticipating evil, been astounded by the suddenness and magnitude of their



conquests, which in a few short months after the breaking out of hostilities, had overrun regions larger in extent than many ancient empires. All this had been done, too, not by disorderly and barbarous hordes, seeking in other lands the abundance that was wanting at home; but with system and regularity, by men who had turned the ploughshare into the sword for the occasion, quitting abundance to encounter fatigue, famine, and danger. In a word, the Señor Montefalderon saw all the evils that environed his own land, and foresaw others, of a still graver character that menaced the future. On matters such as these did he brood in his walk, and bitter did he find the minutes of that sad and lonely watch. Although a Mexican, he could feel; although an avowed foe of this good republic of ours, he had his principles, his affections, and his sense of right. Whatever may be the merits of the quarrel, and we are not disposed to deny that our provocation has been great, a sense of right should teach every man that what may be patriotic in an American, would not be exactly the same thing in a Mexican, and that we ought to respect in others sentiments that are so much vaunted among ourselves. Midnight at length arrived, and, calling the cook and steward, the unhappy gentleman was relieved, and went to his berth to dream, in sorrow, over the same pictures of national misfortunes, on which, while waking, he had brooded in such deep melancholy.

The watch of Josh and Simon was tranquil, meeting with no interruption until it was time to summon Jack. One thing these men had done, however, that was of some moment to Tier, under a pledge given by Josh, and which had been taken in return for a dollar in hand. They had managed to haul the light-house boat alongside, from its position astern, and this so noiselessly as not to give the alarm to any one. There it lay, when Jack appeared, ready at the main-rigging, to receive him at any moment he might choose to enter it.

A few minutes after Jack appeared on deck, Rose and Bidy came stealthily out of the cabin, the latter carrying a basket filled with bread and broken meat, and not wanting in sundry little delicacies, such as woman's hands prepare, and, in this instance, woman's tenderness had provided. The whole party met at the galley, a place so far removed from the state-rooms aft as to be out of ear-shot. Here Jack renewed his endeavours to persuade either Josh or Simon to go in the boat, but without success. The negroes had talked the matter over in their watch, and had come to the conclusion the enterprise was too hazardous.

"I tell you, Jack, you doesn't know Cap'in Spike as well as I does," Josh said, in continuance of the discourse. "No, you doesn't know him at all as well as I does. If he finds out that anybody has quit dis brig dis werry night, woful will come! It no good



to try to run; I run t'ree time, an' Simon here run twice. What good it all do? We got cotched, and here we is, just as fast as ever. I knows Cap'in Spike, and does n't want to fall in athwart his hawse any more."

"Y-e-s, dat my judgment too," put in the cook. "We wishes you well, Jack, and we wishes Miss Rose well, and Mr. Mulford well, but we can't, no how, run ath'art hawse, as Josh says. Dat is my judgment, too."

"Well, if your minds are made up to this, my darkies, I s'pose there'll be no changing them," said Jack. "At all ewents you'll lend us a hand, by answering any hail that may come from aft, in my watch, and in keepin' our secret. There's another thing you can do for us, which may be of service. Should Captain Spike miss the boat, and lay any trap to catch us, you can just light this here bit of lantern and hang it over the brig's bows, where he'll not be likely to see it, that we may know matters are going wrong, and give the craft a wide berth."

"Sartain," said Josh, who entered heartily into the affair, so far as good wishes for its success were concerned, at the very moment when he had a most salutary care of his own back. "Sartain; we do all dat, and no t'ank asked. It no great matter to answer a hail, or to light a lantern and sling him over de bows; and if Captain Spike want to know who did it, let him find out."

Here both negroes laughed heartily, manifesting so little care to suppress their mirth, that Rose trembled lest their noise should awaken Spike. Accustomed sounds, however, seldom produce this effect on the ears of the sleeper, and the heavy breathing from the state-room, succeeded the merriment of the blacks, as soon as the latter ceased. Jack now announced his readiness to depart. Some little care and management were necessary to get into the boat noiselessly, more especially with Bidy. It was done however, with the assistance of the blacks, who cast off the painter, when Jack gave the boat a shove to clear the brig, and suffered it to drift astern for a considerable distance before he ventured to cast loose the sail.

"I know Spike well," said Jack, in answer to a remonstrance from the impatient Rose concerning his delay: "A single flap of that canvas would wake him up, with the brig anchored, while he would sleep through a salute of heavy guns if it came in regular course. Quick ears has old Stephen, and it's best to humour them. In a minute more we'll set our canvas and be off."

All was done as Jack desired, and the boat got away from the brig unheard and undetected. It was blowing a good breeze, and Jack Tier had no sooner got the sail on the boat, than away it started at a speed that would have soon distanced Spike in his



yawl, and with his best oarsmen. The main point was to keep the course, though the direction of the wind was a great assistant. By keeping the wind abeam, Jack thought he should be going toward the rock of Mulford. In one hour, or even in less time, he expected to reach it, and he was guided by time, in his calculations, as much as by any other criterion. Previously to quitting the brig, he had gone up a few ratlins of the fore-rigging to take the bearings of the fire on Mulford's rock, but the light was no longer visible. As no star was to be seen, the course was a little vague, but Jack was navigator enough to understand that by keeping on the weather side of the channel he was in the right road, and that his great danger of missing his object was in over-running it.

So much of the reef was above water, that it was not difficult to steer a boat along its margin. The darkness, to be sure, rendered it a little uncertain how near they were running to the rocks, but, on the whole, Jack assured Rose he had no great difficulty in getting along.

"These trades are almost as good as compasses," he said, "and the rocks are better, if we can keep close aboard them without going on to them. I do not know the exact distance of the spot we seek from the brig, but I judged it to be about two leagues, as I looked at it from aloft. Now, this boat will travel them two leagues in an hour, with this breeze and in smooth water."

"I wish you had seen the fire again before we left the brig," said Rose, too anxious for the result not to feel uneasiness on some account or other.

"The mate is asleep, and the fire has burned down; that's the explanation. Besides, fuel is not too plenty on a place like that Mr. Mulford inhabits just now. As we get near the spot, I shall look out for embers, which may sarve as a light-house, or beacon, to guide us into port."

"Mr. Mulford will be charmed to see us, now that we take him wather!" exclaimed Bidy. "Wather is a blessed thing, and it's hard will be the heart that does not fale gratitude for a planty of swate wather."

"The maty has plenty of food and water where he is," said Jack. "I'll answer for both them sarcumstances. I saw him turn a turtle as plain as if I had been at his elbow, and I saw him drinking at a hole in the rock, as heartily as a boy ever pulled at a gimblet-hole in a molasses hogs-head."

"But the distance was so great, Jack, I should hardly think you could have distinguished objects so small."

"I went by the motions altogether. I saw the man, and I saw the movements, and I knowed what the last meant. It's true I couldn't swear to the turtle, though I saw



something on the rock that I knowed, by the way in which it was handled, must be a turtle. Then I saw the mate kneel, and put his head low, and then I knowed he was drinking.”

“Perhaps he prayed,” said Rose, solemnly.

“Not he. Sailors isn’t so apt to pray, Miss Rose; not as apt as they ought to be. Women for prayers, and men for work. Mr. Mulford is no worse than many others, but I doubt if he be much given to that_.”

To this Rose made no answer, but Biddy took the matter up, and, as the boat went briskly ahead, she pursued the subject.

“Then more is the shame for him,” said the Irish woman, “and Miss Rose, and missus, and even I prayin’ for him, all as if he was our own brudder. It’s seldom I ask anything for a heretic, but I could not forget a fine young man like Mr. Mulford, and Miss Rose so partial to him, and he in so bad a way. He ought to be ashamed to make his brags that he is too proud to pray.”

“Harry has made no such wicked boast,” put in Rose, mildly; “nor do we know that he has not prayed for us, as well as for himself. It may all be a mistake of Jack’s, you know.”

“Yes,” added Jack, coolly, “it may be a mistake, a’ter all, for I was lookin’ at the maty six miles off, and through a spy-glass. No one can be sure of anything at such a distance. So overlook the matter, my good Biddy, and carry Mr. Mulford the nice things you’ve mustered in that basket, all the same as if he was pope.”

“This is a subject we had better drop,” Rose quietly observed.

“Anything to oblige you, Miss Rose, though religion is a matter it would do me no harm to talk about once and awhile. It’s many a long year since I’ve had time and opportunity to bring my thoughts to dwell on holy things. Ever since I left my mother’s side, I’ve been a wanderer in my mind, as much as in my body.”

“Poor Jack! I understand and feel for your sufferings; but a better time will come, when you may return to the habits of your youth, and to the observances of your church.”

“I don’t know that, Miss Rose; I don’t know that,” answered Tier, placing the elbow of his short arm on the seemingly shorter leg, and bending his head so low as to lean his face on the palm of the hand, an attitude in which he appeared to be suffering keenly through his recollections. “Childhood and innocence never come back to us in this world. What the grave may do, we shall all learn in time.”

“Innocence can return to all with repentance, Jack; and the heart that prompts you to do acts as generous as this you are now engaged in, must contain some good seed yet.”



“If Jack will go to a praste and just confess, when he can find a father, it will do his sowl good,” said Bidy, who was touched by the mental suffering of the strange little being at her side.

But the necessity of managing the boat soon compelled its coxswain to raise his head, and to attend to his duty. The wind sometimes came in puffs, and at such moments Jack saw that the large sail of the light-house boat required watching, a circumstance that induced him to shake off his melancholy, and give his mind more exclusively to the business before him. As for Rose, she sympathised deeply with Jack Tier, for she knew his history, his origin, the story of his youth, and the well-grounded causes of his contrition and regrets. From her, Jack had concealed nothing, the gentle commiseration of one like Rose being a balm to wounds that had bled for long and bitter years. The great poet of our language, and the greatest that ever lived, perhaps, short of the inspired writers of the Old Testament, and old Homer and Dante, has well reminded us that the “little beetle,” in yielding its breath, can “feel a pang as great as when a giant dies.” Thus is it, too, in morals. Abasement, and misery, and poverty, and sin, may, and all do, contribute to lower the tone of our moral existence; but the principle that has been planted by nature, can be eradicated by nature only. It exists as long as we exist; and if dormant for a time, under the pressure of circumstances, it merely lies, in the moral system, like the acorn, or the chestnut, in the ground, waiting its time and season to sprout, and bud, and blossom. Should that time never arrive, it is not because the seed is not there, but because it is neglected. Thus was it with the singular being of whose feelings we have just spoken. The germ of goodness had been implanted early in him, and was nursed with tenderness and care, until, self-willed, and governed by passion; he had thrown off the connections of youth and childhood, to connect himself with Spike—a connection that had left him what he was. Before closing our legend, we shall have occasion to explain it.

“We have run our hour; Miss Rose,” resumed Jack, breaking a continued silence, during which the boat had passed through a long line of water; “we have run our hour, and ought to be near the rock we are in search of. But the morning is so dark that I fear we shall have difficulty in finding it. It will never do to run past it, and we must haul closer into the reef, and shorten sail, that we may be sartain to make no such mistake.”

Rose begged her companion to omit no precaution, as it would be dreadful to fail in their search, after incurring so much risk in their own persons.

“Harry may be sleeping on the sea-weed of which you spoke,” she added, “and the danger of passing him will be much increased in such a case. What a gloomy and



frightful spot is this, in which to abandon a human being! I fear, Jack, that we have come faster than we have supposed, and may already have passed the rock.”

“I hope not, Miss Rose—it seemed to me a good two leagues to the place where I saw him, and the boat is fast that will run two leagues in an hour.”

“We do not know the time, Jack, and are obliged to guess at that as well as at the distance. How very dark it is!”

Dark, in one sense, it was not, though Rose’s apprehensions, doubtless, induced her to magnify every evil. The clouds certainly lessened the light of the moon; but there was still enough of the last to enable one to see surrounding objects; and most especially to render distinct the character of the solitude that reigned over the place.

The proximity of the reef, which formed a weather shore to the boat, prevented anything like a swell on the water, notwithstanding the steadiness and strength of the breeze, which had now blown for near twenty-four hours. The same wind, in open water, would have raised sea enough to cause a ship to pitch, or roll; whereas, the light-house boat, placed where she was, scarce rose and fell under the undulations of the channel through which she was glancing.

“This is a good boat, and a fast boat too,” observed Jack Tier, after he had luffed up several minutes, in order to make sure of his proximity to the reef; “and it might carry us all safe enough to Key West, or certainly back to the Dry Tortugas, was we inclined to try our hands at either.”

“I cannot quit my aunt,” said Rose, quickly, “so we will not even think of any such thing.”

“No, ’t would never do to abandon the missus,” said Bidy, “and she on the wrack wid us, and falin’ the want of wather as much as ourselves.”

“We three have sartainly gone through much in company,” returned Jack, “and it ought to make us friends for life.”

“I trust it will, Jack; I hope, when we return to New York, to see you among us, anchored, as you would call it, for the rest of your days under my aunt’s roof, or under my own, should I ever have one.”

“No, Miss Rose, my business is with the *Swash* and her captain. I shall stick by both, now I’ve found ’em again, until they once more desert me. A man’s duty is his duty, and a woman’s duty is her duty.”

“You same to like the brig and her captain, Jack Tier,” observed Bidy, “and there’s no use in gainsaying such a likin’. What will come to pass, must come to pass. Captain Spike is a mighty great sailor, anyway.”



“He’s a willian!” muttered Jack.

“There!” cried Rose, almost breathless, “there is a rock above the water, surely. Do not fly by it so swiftly, Jack, but let us stop and examine it.”

“There is a rock, sure enough, and a large piece it is,” answered Tier. “We will go alongside of it, and see what it is made of. Bidy shall be boat-keeper, while you and I, Miss Rose, explore.”

Jack had thrown the boat into the wind, and was shooting close alongside of the reef, even while speaking. The party found no difficulty in landing; the margin of the rock admitting the boat to lie close alongside of it, and its surface being even and dry. Jack had brailed the sail, and he brought the painter ashore, and fastened it securely to a fragment of stone, that made a very sufficient anchor. In addition to this precaution, a lazy painter was put into Bidy’s hands, and she was directed not to let go of it while her companions were absent. These arrangements concluded, Rose and Jack commenced a hurried examination of the spot.

A few minutes sufficed to give our adventurers a tolerably accurate notion of the general features of the place on which they had landed. It was a considerable portion of the reef that was usually above water, and which had even some fragments of soil, or sand, on which was a stunted growth of bushes. Of these last, however, there were very few, nor were there many spots of the sand. Drift-wood and sea-weed were lodged in considerable quantities about its margin, and, in places, piles of both had been tossed upon the rock itself, by the billows of former gales of wind. Nor was it long before Jack discovered a turtle that had been up to a hillock of sand, probably to deposit its eggs. There was enough of the sportsman in Jack, notwithstanding the business he was on, to turn this animal; though with what object, he might have been puzzled himself to say. This exploit effected, Jack followed Rose as fast as his short legs would permit, our heroine pressing forward eagerly, though almost without hope, in order to ascertain if Mulford were there.

“I am afraid this is not the rock,” said Rose, nearly breathless with her own haste, when Jack had overtaken her. “I see nothing of him, and we have passed over most of the place.”

“Very true, Miss Rose,” answered her companion, who was in a good humour on account of his capture of the turtle; “but there are other rocks besides this. Ha! What was that, yonder,” pointing with a finger, “here, more toward the brig. As I’m a sinner, there was a flashing, as of fire.”

“If a fire, it must be that made by Harry. Let us go to the spot at once.”



Jack led the way, and, sure enough, he soon reached a place where the embers of what had been a considerable body of fire, were smouldering on the rock. The wind had probably caused some brand to kindle momentarily, which was the object that had caught Tier's eye. No doubt any longer remained of their having found the very place where the mate had cooked his supper, and lighted his beacon, though he himself was not near it. Around these embers were all the signs of Mulford's having made the meal, of which Jack had seen the preparations. A portion of the turtle, much the greater part of it, indeed, lay in its shell; and piles of wood and sea-weed, both dry, had been placed at hand, ready for use. A ship's topgallant-yard, with most of its rope attached, lay with a charred end near the fire, of where the fire had been, the wood having burned until the flames went out for want of contact with other fuel. There were many pieces of boards of pitch-pine in the adjacent heap, and two or three beautiful planks of the same wood, entire. In short, from the character and quantity of the materials of this nature that had thus been heaped together, Jack gave it as his opinion that some vessel, freighted with lumber, had been wrecked to windward, and that the adjacent rocks had been receiving the tribute of her cargo. Wrecks are of very, very frequent occurrence on the Florida Reef; and there are always moments when such gleanings are to be made in some part of it or other.

"I see no better way to give a call to the mate, Miss Rose, than to throw some of this dry weed, and some of this lumber on the fire," said Jack, after he had rummaged about the place sufficiently to become master of its condition. "There is plenty of ammunition, and here goes for a broadside."

Jack had no great difficulty in effecting his object. In a few minutes he succeeded in obtaining a flame, and then he fed it with such fragments of the brands and boards as were best adapted to his purpose. The flames extended gradually, and by the time Tier had dragged the topgallant-yard over the pile, and placed several planks, on their edges, alongside of it, the whole was ready to burst into a blaze. The light was shed athwart the rock for a long distance, and the whole place, which was lately so gloomy and obscure, now became gay, under the bright radiance of a blazing fire.

"There is a beacon-light that might almost be seen on board!" said Jack, exulting in his success. "If the mate is anywhere in this latitude, he will soon turn up."

"I see nothing of him," answered Rose, in a melancholy voice. "Surely, surely, Jack, he cannot have left the rock just as we have come to rescue him!"

Rose and her companion had turned their faces from the fire to look in an opposite direction in quest of him they sought. Unseen by them, a human form advanced swiftly



toward the fire, from a point on its other side. It advanced nearer, then hesitated, afterward rushed forward with a tread that caused the two to turn, and at the next moment, Rose was clasped to the heart of Mulford.

