



Jack Tier

or, the Florida Reef



Part 2: Chapter 4

But no—he surely is not dreaming.
Another minute makes it clear,
A scream, a rush, a burning tear,
From Inez’ cheek, dispel the fear
That bliss like his is only seeming.

—Washington Alston.

A moment of appalled surprise succeeded the instant when Harry and Rose first ascertained the real character of the vessel that had entered the haven of the Dry Tortugas. Then the first turned toward Jack Tier, and sternly demanded an explanation of his apparent faithlessness.

“Rascal,” he cried, “has this treachery been intended? Did you not see the brig and know her?”

“Hush, Harry—dear Harry,” exclaimed Rose, entreatingly. “My life for it, Jack has not been faithless.”

“Why, then, has he not let us know that the brig was coming? For more than an hour has he been aloft, on the look-out, and here are we taken quite by surprise. Rely on it, Rose, he has seen the approach of the brig, and might have sooner put us on our guard.”

“Ay, ay, lay it on, maty,” said Jack, coolly, neither angry nor mortified, so far as appearances went, at these expressions of dissatisfaction; “my back is used to it. If I didn’t know what it is to get hard raps on the knuckles, I should be but a young steward. But, as for this business, a little reflection will tell you I am not to blame.”

“Give us your own explanations, for without them I shall trust you no longer.”



“Well, sir, what good would it have done, had I told you the brig was standing for this place? There she came down, like a race-horse, and escape for you was impossible. As the wind is now blowin’, the Molly would go two feet to the boat’s one, and a chase would have been madness.”

“I don’t know that, sirrah” answered the mate.” The boat might have got into the smaller passages of the reef, where the brig could not enter, or she might have dodged about among these islets, until it was night, and then escaped in the darkness.”

“I thought of all that, Mr. Mulford, but it came too late. When I first went aloft, I came out on the north-west side of the lantern, and took my seat, to look out for the sloop-of-war, as you bade me, sir. Well, there I was sweepin’ the horizon with the glass for the better part of an hour, sometimes fancyin’ I saw her, and then givin’ it up; for to this moment I am not sartain there isn’t a sail off here to the westward, turning up toward the light on a bowline; but if there be, she’s too far off to know anything partic’lar about her. Well, sir, there I sat, looking for the Poughkeepsie, for the better part of an hour, when I thought I would go round on t’ other side of the lantern and take a look to windward. My heart was in my mouth, I can tell you, Miss Rose, when I saw the brig; and I felt both glad and sorry. Glad on my own account, and sorry on your’n. There she was, however, and no help for it, within two miles of this very spot, and coming down as if she despised touching the water at all. Now, what could I do? There was n’t time, Mr. Mulford, to get the boat out, and the mast stepped, afore we should have been within reach of canister, and Stephen Spike would not have spared that, in order to get you again within his power.”

“Depend on it, Harry, this is all true,” said Rose, earnestly. “I know Jack well, and can answer for his fidelity. He wishes to, and if he can he will return to the brig, whither he thinks his duty calls him, but he will never willingly betray us—least of all, me. Do I speak as I ought, Jack?”

“Gospel truth, Miss Rose, and Mr. Mulford will get over this squall, as soon as he comes to think of matters as he ought. There ’s my hand, maty, to show I bear no malice.”

“I take it, Jack, for I must believe you honest, after all you have done for us. Excuse my warmth, which, if a little unreasonable, was somewhat natural under the circumstances. I suppose our case is now hopeless, and that we shall all be soon on board the brig again; for Spike will hardly think of abandoning me again on an island provisioned and fitted as is this!”

“It’s not so sartain, sir, that you fall into his hands at all,” put in Jack. “The men of the brig will never come here of their own accord, depend on that, for sailors don’t



like graves. Spike has come in here a'ter the schooner's chain, that he dropped into the water when he made sail from the sloop-of-war, at the time he was here afore, and is not expectin' to find us here. No—no—he thinks we are beatin' up toward Key West this very minute, if, indeed, he has missed us at all. 'T is possible he believes the boat has got adrift by accident, and has no thought of our bein' out of the brig."

"That is impossible, Jack. Do you suppose he is ignorant that Rose is missing?"

"Sartain of it, maty, if Mrs. Budd has read the letter well that Miss Rose left for her, and Biddy has obeyed orders. If they've followed instructions, Miss Rose is thought to be in her state-room, mournin' for a young man who was abandoned on a naked rock, and Jack Tier, havin' eat somethin' that has disagreed with him, is in his berth. Recollect, Spike will not be apt to look into Miss Rose's state-room or my berth, to see if all this is true. The cook and Josh are both in my secret, and know I mean to come back, and when the fit is over I have only to return to duty, like any other hand. It is my calculation that Spike believes both Miss Rose and myself on board the Molly at this very moment."

"And the boat—what can he suppose has become of the boat?"

"Sartainly, the boat makes the only chance ag'in us. But the boat was ridin' by its painter astarn, and accidents sometimes happen to such craft. Then we two are the very last he will suspect of havin' made off in the boat by ourselves. There'll be Mrs. Budd and Biddy as a sort of pledge that Miss Rose is aboard, and as for Jack Tier, he is too insignificant to occupy the captain's thoughts just now. He will probably muster the people for'ard, when he finds the boat is gone, but I do not think he'll trouble the cabins or state-rooms."

Mulford admitted that this was possible, though it scarcely seemed probable to him. There was no help, however, for the actual state of things, and they all now turned their attention to the brig, and to the movements of those on board her. Jack Tier had swung-to the outer-door of the house, as soon as the Swash came in view through it, and fortunately none of the windows on that side of the building had been opened at all. The air entered to windward, which was on the rear of the dwelling, so that it was possible to be comfortable and yet leave the front, in view from the vessel, with its deserted air. As for the brig, she had already anchored and got both her boats into the water. The yawl was hauled alongside, in readiness for any service that might be required of it, while the launch had been manned at once, and was already weighing the anchor, and securing the chain to which Tier had alluded. All this served very much to lessen the uneasiness of Mulford and Rose, as it went far to prove that Spike



had not come to the Dry Tortugas in quest of them, as, at first, both had very naturally supposed. It might, indeed, turn out that his sole object was to obtain this anchor and chain, with a view to use them in raising the ill-fated vessel that had now twice gone to the bottom.

“I wish an explanation with you, Jack, on one other point,” said the mate, after all three had been for sometime observing the movements on board and around the Swash. “Do you actually intend to get on board the brig?”

“If it’s to be done, maty. My v’y’ge is up with you and Miss Rose. I may be said to have shipped for Key West and a market, and the market’s found at this port.”

“You will hardly leave us yet, Jack,” said Rose, with a manner and emphasis that did not fail to strike her betrothed lover, though he could in no way account for either. That Rose should not wish to be left alone with him in that solitary place was natural enough; or, might rather be referred to education and the peculiar notions of her sex; but he could not understand why so much importance should be attached to the presence of a being of Jack Tier’s mould and character. It was true, that there was little choice, under present circumstances, but it occurred to Mulford that Rose had manifested the same strange predilection when there might have been something nearer to a selection. The moment, however, was not one for much reflection on the subject.

“You will hardly leave us yet, Jack?” said Rose, in the manner related.

“It’s now or never, Miss Rose. If the brig once gets away from this anchorage without me, I may never lay eyes on her ag’in. Her time is nearly up, for wood and iron won’t hold together always, any more than flesh and blood. Consider how many years I’ve been busy in huntin’ her up, and how hard ’t will be to lose that which has given me so many weary days and sleepless nights to find.”

Rose said no more. If not convinced, she was evidently silenced, while Harry was left to wonder and surmise, as best he might. Both quitted the subject, to watch the people of the brig. By this time the anchor had been lifted, and the chain was heaving in on board the vessel, by means of a line that had been got around its bight. The work went on rapidly, and Mulford observed to Rose that he did not think it was the intention of Spike to remain long at the Tortugas, inasmuch as his brig was riding by a very short range of cable. This opinion was confirmed, half an hour later, when it was seen that the launch was hooked on and hoisted in again, as soon as the chain and anchor of the schooner were secured.

Jack Tier watched every movement with palpable uneasiness. His apprehensions that Spike would obtain all he wanted, and be off before he could rejoin him, increased



at each instant, and he did not scruple to announce an intention to take the boat and go alongside of the Swash at every hazard, rather than be left.

“You do not reflect on what you say, Jack,” answered Harry; “unless, indeed, it be your intention to betray us. How could you appear in the boat, at this place, without letting it be known that we must be hard by?”

“That don’t follow at all, maty,” answered Jack. “Suppose I go alongside the brig and own to the captain that I took the boat last night, with the hope of findin’ you, and that failin’ to succeed, I bore up for this port, to look for provisions and water. Miss Rose he thinks on board at this moment, and in my judgment he would take me at my word, give me a good cursing, and think no more about it.”

“It would never do, Jack,” interposed Rose, instantly. “It would cause the destruction of Harry, as Spike would not believe you had not found him, without an examination of this house.”

“What are they about with the yawl, Mr. Mulford?” asked Jack, whose eye was never off the vessel for a single moment. “It’s gettin’ to be so dark that one can hardly see the boat, but it seems as if they’re about to man the yawl.”

“They are, and there goes a lantern into it. And that is Spike himself coming down the brig’s side this instant.”

“They can only bring a lantern to search this house,” exclaimed Rose. “Oh! Harry, you are lost!”

“I rather think the lantern is for the light-house,” answered Mulford, whose coolness, at what was certainly a most trying moment, did not desert him. “Spike may wish to keep the light burning, for once before, you will remember, he had it kindled after the keeper was removed. As for his sailing, he would not be apt to sail until the moon rises; and in beating back to the wreck the light may serve to let him know the bearings and position of the reef.”

“There they come,” whispered Rose, half breathless with alarm. “The boat has left the brig, and is coming directly hither!”

All this was true enough. The yawl had shoved off, and with two men to row it, was pulling for the wharf in front of the house, and among the timbers of which lay the boat, pretty well concealed beneath a sort of bridge. Mulford would not retreat, though he looked to the fastenings of the door as a means of increasing his chances of defence. In the stern-sheets of the boat sat two men, though it was not easy to ascertain who they were by the fading light. One was known to be Spike, however, and the other, it was conjectured, must be Don Juan Montefalderon, from the circumstance of his being in



the place of honour. Three minutes solved this question, the boat reaching the wharf by that time. It was instantly secured, and all four of the men left it. Spike was now plainly to be discerned by means of the lantern which he carried in his own hands. He gave some orders, in his customary authoritative way, and in a high key, after which he led the way from the wharf, walking side by side with the Señor Montefalderon. These two last came up within a yard of the door of the house, where they paused, enabling those within not only to see their persons and the working of their countenances, but to hear all that was said; this last the more especially, since Spike never thought it necessary to keep his powerful voice within moderate limits.

“It’s hardly worth while, Don Wan, for you to go into the light-house,” said Spike. “’T is but a greasy, dirty place at the best, and one’s clothes are never the better for dealin’ with ile. Here, Bill, take the lantern, and get a filled can, that we may go up and trim and fill the lamp, and make a blaze. Bear a hand, lads, and I’ll be a’ter ye afore you reach the lantern. Be careful with the flame about the ile, for seamen ought never to wish to see a lighthouse destroyed.”

“What do you expect to gain by lighting the lamps above, Don Esteban?” demanded the Mexican, when the sailors had disappeared in the light-house, taking their own lantern with them.

“It’s wisest to keep things reg’lar about this spot, Don Wan, which will prevent unnecessary suspicions. But, as the brig stretches in toward the reef to-night, on our way back, the light will be a great assistance. I am short of officers, you know, and want all the help of this sort I can get.”

“To be sincere with you, Don Esteban, I greatly regret you are so short of officers, and do not yet despair of inducing you to go and take off the mate, whom I hear you have left on a barren rock. He was a fine young fellow, Señor Spike, and the deed was not one that you will wish to remember a few years hence.”

“The fellow run, and I took him at his word, Don Wan. I’m not obliged to receive back a deserter unless it suits me.”

“We are all obliged to see we do not cause a fellow creature the loss of life. This will prove the death of the charming young woman who is so much attached to him, unless you relent and are merciful!”

“Women have tender looks but tough hearts,” answered Spike, carelessly, though Mulford felt certain, by the tone of his voice, that great bitterness of feeling lay smothered beneath the affected indifference of his manner; “few die of love.”



“The young lady has not been on deck all day; and the Irish woman tells me that she does nothing but drink water—the certain proof of a high fever.”

“Ay, ay, she keeps her room if you will, Don Wan, but she is not about to make a dupe of me by any such tricks. I must go and look to the lamps, however, and you will find the graves you seek in the rear of this house, about thirty yards behind it, you’ll remember. That’s a very pretty cross you’ve made, señor, and the skipper of the schooner’s soul will be all the better for settin’ it up at the head of his grave.”

“It will serve to let those who come after us know that a Christian sleeps beneath the sand, Don Esteban,” answered the Mexican, mildly. “I have no other expectation from this sacred symbol.”

The two now separated, Spike going into the light-house, little in a hurry, while Don Juan Montefalderon walked round the building to its rear in quest of the grave. Mulford waited a moment for Spike to get a short distance up the stairs of the high tower he had to ascend, when placing the arm of Rose within his own, he opened the door in the rear of the house, and walked boldly toward the Mexican. Don Juan was actually forcing the pointed end of his little cross into the sand, at the head of his countryman’s grave, when Mulford and his trembling companion reached the spot. Although night had shut in, it was not so dark that persons could not be recognised at small distances. The Señor Montefalderon was startled at an apparition so sudden and unexpected, when Mulford saluted him by name; but recognising first the voice of Harry, and then the persons of himself and his companion, surprise, rather than alarm, became the emotion that was uppermost. Notwithstanding the strength of the first of these feelings, he instantly saluted the young couple with the polished ease that marked his manner, which had much of the courtesy of a Castilian in it, tempered a little, perhaps, by the greater flexibility of a Southern American.

“I see you,” exclaimed Don Juan, “and must believe my eyes. Without their evidence, however, I could scarce believe it can be you two, one of whom I thought on board the brig, and the other suffering a most miserable death on a naked rock.”

“I am aware of your kind feelings in our behalf, Don Juan,” said Mulford, “and it is the reason I now confide in you. I was taken off that rock by means of the boat, which you doubtless have missed; and this is the gentle being who has been the means of saving my life. To her and Jack Tier, who is yonder, under the shadows of the house, I owe my not being the victim of Spike’s cruelty.”



“I now comprehend the whole matter, Don Henriquez. Jack Tier has managed the boat for the señorita; and those whom we were told were too ill to be seen on deck, have been really out of the brig!”

“Such are the facts, señor, and from you there is no wish to conceal them. We are then to understand that the absence of Rose and Jack from the brig is not known to Spike.”

“I believe not, señor. He has alluded to both, once or twice to-day, as being ill below; but would you not do well to retire within the shade of the dwelling, lest a glance from the lantern might let those in it know that I am not alone.”

“There is little danger, Don Juan, as they who stand near a light cannot well see those who are in the darkness. Besides, they are high in the air, while we are on the ground, which will greatly add to the obscurity down here. We can retire, nevertheless, as I have a few questions to ask, which may as well be put in perfect security, as put where there is any risk.”

The three now drew near the house, Rose actually stepping within its door, though Harry remained on its exterior, in order to watch the proceedings of those in the lighthouse. Here the Señor Montefalderon entered into a more detailed explanation of what had occurred on board the brig, since the appearance of day, that very morning. According to his account of the matter, Spike had immediately called upon the people to explain the loss of the boat. Tier was not interrogated on this occasion, it being understood he had gone below and turned in, after having the look-out for fully half the night. As no one could, or would, give an account of the manner in which the boat was missing, Josh was ordered to go below and question Jack on the subject. Whether it was from consciousness of his connection with the escape of Jack, and apprehensions of the consequences, or from innate good-nature, and a desire to befriend the lovers, this black now admitted that Jack confessed to him that the boat had got away from him while endeavouring to shift the turns of its painter from a cleet where they ought not to be, to their proper place. This occurred early in Jack’s watch, according to Josh’s story, and had not been reported, as the boat did not properly belong to the brig, and was an incumbrance rather than an advantage. The mate admired the negro’s cunning, as Don Juan related this part of his story, which put him in a situation to throw all the blame on Jack’s mendacity in the event of a discovery, while it had the effect to allow the fugitives more time for their escape. The result was, that Spike bestowed a few hearty curses, as usual, on the clumsiness of Jack Tier, and seemed to forget all about the matter. It is probable he connected Jack’s abstaining from showing himself on



deck, and his alleged indisposition, with his supposed delinquency in this matter of the boat. From that moment the captain appeared to give himself no further concern on the subject, the boat having been, in truth, an incumbrance rather than a benefit, as stated.

As for Rose, her keeping her room, under the circumstances, was so very natural, that the Señor Montefalderon had been completely deceived, as, from his tranquillity on this point, there was no question was the case with Spike also. Biddy appeared on deck, though the widow did not, and the Irish woman shook her head anxiously when questioned about her young mistress, giving the spectators reason to suppose that the latter was in a very bad way.

As respects the brig and her movements, Spike had got under way as soon as there was light enough to find his course, and had run through the passage. It is probable that the boat was seen; for something that was taken for a small sail had just been made out for a single instant, and then became lost again. This little sail was made, if made at all, in the direction of the Dry Tortugas, but so completely was all suspicion at rest in the minds of those on the quarter-deck of the Swash, that neither Spike nor the Mexican had the least idea what it was. When the circumstance was reported to the former, he answered that it was probably some small wrecker, of which many were hovering about the reef, and added, laughingly, though in a way to prove how little he thought seriously on the subject at all, “who knows but the light-house boat has fallen into their hands, and that they’ve made sail on her; if they have, my word for it, that she goes, hull, spars, rigging, canvas, and cargo, all in a lump, for salvage.”

As the brig came out of the passage, in broad day, the heads of the schooner’s masts were seen, as a matter of course. This induced Spike to heave-to, lower a boat, and to go in person to examine the condition of the wreck. It will be seen that Jack’s presence could now be all the better dispensed with. The examination, with the soundings, and other calculations connected with raising the vessel, occupied hours. When they were completed, Spike returned on board, run up his boat, and squared away for the Dry Tortugas. Señor Montefalderon confirmed the justice of Jack Tier’s surmises, as to the object of this unexpected visit. The brig had come solely for the chain and anchor mentioned, and having secured them, it was Spike’s intention to get under way and beat up to the wreck again as soon as the moon rose. As for the sloop-of-war, he believed she had given him up; for by this time she must know that she had no chance with the brig, so long as the latter kept near the reef, and that she ran the constant hazard of shipwreck, while playing so near the dangers herself.



Before the Señor Montefalderon exhausted all he had to communicate, he was interrupted by Jack Tier with a singular proposition. Jack's great desire was to get on board the Swash; and he now begged the Mexican to let Mulford take the yawl and scull him off to the brig, and return to the islet before Spike and his companions should descend from the lantern of the light-house. The little fellow insisted there was sufficient time for such a purpose, as the three in the lantern had not yet succeeded in filling the lamps with the oil necessary to their burning for a night—a duty that usually occupied the regular keeper for an hour. Five or six minutes would suffice for him; and if he were seen going up the brig's side, it would be easy for him to maintain that he had come ashore in the boat. No one took such precise note of what was going on; as to be able to contradict him; and as to Spike and the men with him, they would probably never hear anything about it.

Don Juan Montefalderon was struck with the boldness of Jack Tier's plan, but refused his assent to it. He deemed it too hazardous, but substituted a project of his own. The moon would not rise until near eleven, and it wanted several hours before the time of sailing. When they returned to the brig, he would procure his cloak, and scull himself ashore, being perfectly used to managing a boat in this way, under the pretence of wishing to pass an hour longer near the grave of his countryman. At the expiration of that hour he would take Jack off, concealed beneath his cloak—an exploit of no great difficulty in the darkness, especially as no one would be on deck but a hand or two keeping the anchor-watch. With this arrangement, therefore, Jack Tier was obliged to be content.

Some fifteen or twenty minutes more passed; during which the Mexican again alluded to his country, and his regrets at her deplorable situation. The battles of the 8th and 9th of May; two combats that ought to, and which will reflect high honour on the little army that won them, as well as on that hardly worked, and in some respects hardly used, service to which they belong, had been just fought. Don Juan mentioned these events without reserve; and frankly admitted that success had fallen to the portion of much the weaker party. He ascribed the victory to the great superiority of the American officers of inferior rank; it being well known that in the service of the "Republic of the North," as he termed America, men who had been regularly educated at the military academy, and who had reached the period of middle life, were serving in the stations of captains, and sometimes in that of lieutenants; men who, in many cases, were fitted to command regiments and brigades, having been kept in these lower stations by the tardiness with which promotion comes in an army like that of this country.



Don Juan Montefalderon was not sufficiently conversant with the subject, perhaps, else he might have added, that when occasions do offer to bestow on these gentlemen the preferment they have so hardly and patiently earned, they are too often neglected, in order to extend the circle of vulgar political patronage. He did not know that when a new regiment of dragoons was raised, one permanent in its character, and intended to be identified with the army in all future time, that, instead of giving its commissions to those who had fairly earned them by long privations and faithful service, they were given, with one or two exceptions, to strangers.

No government trifles more with its army and navy than our own. So niggardly are the master-spirits at Washington of the honours justly earned by military men, that we have fleets still commanded by captains, and armies by officers whose regular duty it would be to command brigades. The world is edified with the sight of forces sufficient, in numbers, and every other military requisite, to make one of Napoleon's corps de armée, led by one whose commission would place him properly at the head of a brigade, and nobly led, too. Here, when so favourable an occasion offers to add a regiment or two to the old permanent line of the army, and thus infuse new life into its hope deferred, the opportunity is overlooked, and the rank and file are to be obtained by cramming, instead of by a generous regard to the interests of the gallant gentlemen who have done so much for the honour of the American name, and, unhappily, so little for themselves. The extra-patriots of the nation, and they form a legion large enough to trample the "Halls of the Montezumas" under their feet, tell us that the reward of those other patriots beneath the shadows of the Sierra Madre, is to be in the love and approbation of their fellow citizens, at the very moment when they are giving the palpable proof of the value of this esteem, and of the inconstancy of popular applause, by pointing their fingers, on account of an inadvertent expression in a letter, at the gallant soldier who taught, in our own times, the troops of this country to stand up to the best appointed regiments of England, and to carry off victory from the pride of Europe, in fair field-fights. Alas! Alas! it is true of nations as well as of men, in their simplest and earliest forms of association, that there are "secrets in all families;" and it will no more do to dwell on our own, than it would edify us to expose those of poor Mexico.

The discourse between the Señor Montefalderon and Mulford was interesting, as it ever has been when the former spoke of his unfortunate country. On the subject of the battles of May he was candid, and admitted his deep mortification and regrets. He had expected more from the force collected on the Rio Grande, though, understanding the



northern character better than most of his countrymen, he had not been as much taken by surprise as the great bulk of his own nation.

“Nevertheless, Don Henrique,” he concluded, for the voice of Spike was just then heard as he was descending the stairs of the light-house, “nevertheless, Don Henrique, there is one thing that your people, brave, energetic, and powerful as I acknowledge them to be, would do well to remember, and it is this—no nation of the numbers of ours can be, or ever was conquered, unless by the force of political combinations. In a certain state of society a government may be overturned, or a capital taken, and carry a whole country along with it, but our condition is one not likely to bring about such a result. We are of a race different from the Anglo-Saxon, and it will not be easy either to assimilate us to your own, or wholly to subdue us. In those parts of the country, where the population is small, in time, no doubt, the Spanish race might be absorbed, and your sway established; but ages of war would be necessary entirely to obliterate our usages, our language, and our religion from the peopled portions of Mexico.”

It might be well for some among us to reflect on these matters. The opinions of Don Juan, in our judgment, being entitled to the consideration of all prudent and considerate men.

As Spike descended to the door of the light-house, Harry, Rose, and Jack Tier retired within that of the dwelling. Presently the voice of the captain was heard hailing the Mexican, and together they walked to the wharf, the former boasting to the latter of his success in making a brilliant light. Brilliant it was, indeed; so brilliant as to give Mulford many misgivings on the subject of the boat. The light from the lantern fell upon the wharf, and he could see the boat from the window where he stood, with Spike standing nearly over it, waiting for the men to get his own yawl ready. It is true, the captain’s back was toward the dangerous object, and the planks of the bridge were partly between him and it; but there was a serious danger that was solely averted by the circumstance that Spike was so earnestly dilating on some subject to Don Juan, as to look only at that gentleman’s face. A minute later they were all in the yawl, which pulled rapidly toward the brig.

Don Juan Montefalderon was not long absent. Ten minutes sufficed for the boat to reach the Swash, for him to obtain his cloak, and to return to the islet alone, no one in the vessel feeling a desire to interfere with his imaginary prayers. As for the people, it was not probable that one in the brig could have been induced to accompany him to the graves at that hour; though everybody but Josh had turned-in, as he informed Mulford, to catch short naps previously to the hour of getting the brig under way. As



for the steward, he had been placed on the look-out as the greatest idler on board. All this was exceedingly favourable to Jack Tier's project, since Josh was already in the secret of his absence, and would not be likely to betray his return. After a brief consultation, it was agreed to wait half an hour or an hour, in order to let the sleepers lose all consciousness, when Don Juan proposed returning to the vessel with his new companion.

The thirty or forty minutes that succeeded were passed in general conversation. On this occasion the Señor Montefalderon spoke more freely than he had yet done of recent events. He let it be plainly seen how much he despised Spike, and how irksome to him was the intercourse he was obliged to maintain, and to which he only submitted through a sense of duty. The money known to be in the schooner, was of a larger amount than had been supposed; and every dollar was so important to Mexico, at that moment, that he did not like to abandon it, else, did he declare, that he would quit the brig at once, and share in the fortunes of Harry and Rose. He courteously expressed his best wishes for the happiness of the young couple, and delicately intimated that, under the circumstances, he supposed that they would be united as soon as they could reach a place where the marriage rite could be celebrated. This was said in the most judicious way possible; so delicately as not to wound any one's feelings, and in a way to cause it to resemble the announcement of an expectation, rather than the piece of paternal advice for which it was really intended. Harry was delighted with this suggestion of his Mexican friend—the most loyal American may still have a sincere friend of Mexican birth and Mexican feelings, too—since it favoured not only his secret wishes, but his secret expectations also.

At the appointed moment, Don Juan Montefalderon and Jack Tier took their leave of the two they left behind them. Rose manifested what to Harry seemed a strange reluctance to part with the little steward; but Tier was bent on profiting by this excellent opportunity to get back to the brig. They went, accordingly, and the anxious listeners, who watched the slightest movement of the yawl, from the shore, had reason to believe that Jack was smuggled in without detection. They heard the familiar sound of the oar falling in the boat, and Mulford said that Josh's voice might be distinguished, answering to a call from Don Juan. No noise or clamour was heard, such as Spike would certainly have made, had he detected the deception that had been practised on himself.

Harry and Rose were now alone. The former suggested that the latter should take possession of one of the little bed-rooms that are usually to be found in American



dwelling of the dimensions and humble character of the lighthouse abode, while he kept watch until the brig should sail. Until Spike was fairly off, he would not trust himself to sleep; but there was no sufficient reason why Rose should not endeavour to repair the evil of a broken night's rest, like that which had been passed in the boat. With this understanding, then, our heroine took possession of her little apartment, where she threw herself on the bed in her clothes, while Mulford walked out into the air, as the most effective means of helping to keep his eyes open.

It was now some time past ten, and before eleven the moon would rise. The mate consequently knew that his watch could not be long before Spike would quit the neighbourhood—a circumstance pregnant with immense relief to him, at least. So long as that unscrupulous, and now nearly desperate, man remained anywhere near Rose, he felt that she could not be safe; and as he paced the sands, on the off, or outer side of the islet, in order to be beyond the influence of the light in the lantern, his eye was scarcely a moment taken away from the Swash, so impatiently and anxiously did he wait for the signs of some movement on board her.

The moon rose, and Mulford heard the well-known raps on the booby-hatch, which precedes the call of “all hands,” on board a merchant-man. “All hands up anchor, ahoy!” succeeded, and in less than five minutes the bustle on board the brig announced the fact, that her people were “getting the anchor.” By this time it had got to be so light that the mate deemed it prudent to return to the house, in order that he might conceal his person within its shadows. Awake Rose he would not, though he knew she would witness the departure of the Swash with a satisfaction little short of his own. He thought he would wait, that when he did speak to her at all, it might be to announce their entire safety. As regarded the aunt, Rose was much relieved on her account, by the knowledge that Jack Tier would not fail to let Mrs. Budd know everything connected with her own situation and prospects. The desertion of Jack, after coming so far with her, had pained our heroine in a way we cannot at present explain; but go he would, probably feeling assured there was no longer any necessity for his continuance with the lovers, in order to prevail on Rose to escape from Spike.

The Swash was not long in getting her ground-tackle, and the brig was soon seen with her topsail aback, waiting to cat the anchor. This done, the yards swung round, and the topsail filled. It was blowing just a good breeze for such a craft to carry whole sail on a bow-line with, and away the light and active craft started, like the racer that is galloping for daily exercise. Of course there were several passages by which a vessel might quit the group of islets, some being larger, and some smaller, but all having sufficient water



for a brigantine of the Molly's draught. Determined not to lose an inch of distance unnecessarily, Spike luffed close up to the wind, making an effort to pass out to windward of the light. In order to do this, however, it became necessary for him to make two short tacks within the haven, which brought him far enough to the southward and eastward to effect his purpose. While this was doing, the mate, who perfectly understood the object of the manoeuvres, passed to the side of the light-house that was opposite to that on which the dwelling was placed, with a view to get a better sight of the vessel as she stood out to sea. In order to do this, however, it was necessary for the young man to pass through a broad bit of moonlight but he trusted for his not being seen, to the active manner in which all hands were employed on board the vessel. It would seem that, in this respect, Mulford trusted without his host, for as the vessel drew near, he perceived that six or eight figures were on the guns of the Swash, or in her rigging, gesticulating eagerly, and seemingly pointing to the very spot where he stood. When the brig got fairly abeam of the light, she would not be a hundred yards distant from it, and fearful to complete the exposure of his person, which he had so inadvertently and unexpectedly commenced, our mate drew up close to the wall of the light-house, against which he sustained himself in a position as immovable as possible. This movement had been seen by a single seaman on board the Swash, and the man happened to be one of those who had landed with Spike only two hours before. His name was Barlow.

"Captain Spike, sir," called out Barlow, who was coiling up rigging on the forecastle, and was consequently obliged to call out so loud as to be heard by all on board, "yonder is a man at the foot of the light-house."

By this time, the moon coming out bright through an opening in the clouds, Mulford had become conscious of the risk he ran, and was drawn up, as immovable as the pile itself, against the stones of the light-house. Such an announcement brought everybody to leeward, and every head over the bulwarks. Spike himself sprang into the lee main-chains, where his view was unobstructed, and where Mulford saw and recognised him, even better than he was seen and recognised in his own person. All this time the brig was moving ahead.

"A man, Barlow!" exclaimed Spike, in the way one a little bewildered by an announcement expresses his surprise. "A man! that can never be. There is no one at the light-house, you know."

"There he stands, sir, with his back to the tower, and his face this way. His dark figure against the white-washed stones is plain enough to be seen. Living, or dead, sir, that is the mate!"



“Living it cannot be,” answered Spike, though he gulped at the words the next moment.

A general exclamation now showed that everybody recognised the mate, whose figure, stature, dress, and even features, were by this time all tolerably distinct. The fixed attitude, however, the immovable statue-like rigidity of the form, and all the other known circumstances of Harry’s case, united to produce a common and simultaneous impression among the superstitious mariners, that what they saw was but the ghostly shadow of one lately departed to the world of spirits. Even Spike was not free from this illusion, and his knees shook beneath him, there where he stood, in the channels of a vessel that he had handled like a top in so many gales and tempests. With him, however, the illusion was neither absolute nor lasting. A second thought told him it could scarcely be so, and then he found his voice. By this time the brig was nearly abreast of where Harry stood.

“You Josh!” called out Spike, in a voice of thunder, loud enough to startle even Mrs. Budd and Bidy in their berths.

“Lor’ help us all!” answered the negro, “what will come next t’ing aboard dis wessel! Here I be, sir.”

“Pass the fowling-piece out of my state-room. Both barrels are loaded with ball; I’ll try him, though the bullets are only lead.”

A common exclamation of dissatisfaction escaped the men, while Josh was obeying the order. “It’s no use.”

“You never can hurt one of them things,” “Something will befall the brig on account of this,” and “It’s the mate’s sperit, and sperits can’t be harmed by lead or iron,” were the sort of remarks made by the seamen, during the short interval between the issuing the order for the fowling-piece and its execution.

“There ’t is, Cap’in Spike,” said Josh, passing the piece up through the rigging, “but ’t will no more shoot that thing, than one of our carronades would blow up Gibraltar.”

By this time Spike was very determined, his lips being compressed and his teeth set, as he took the gun and cocked it. Then he hailed. As all that passed occurred, as it might be, at once, the brig even at that moment was little more than abreast of the immovable mate, and about eighty yards from him.

“Light-house, there!” cried Spike—“Living or dead, answer or I fire.”

No answer came, and no motion appeared in the dark figure that was now very plainly visible, under a bright moon, drawn in high relief against the glittering white of the tower. Spike dropped the muzzle to its aim, and fired.



So intense was the attention of all in the Swash, that a wink of Harry's could almost have been seen, had he betrayed even that slight sign of human infirmity at the flash and the report. The ball was flattened against a stone of the building, within a foot of the mate's body; but he did not stir. All depended now on his perfect immovability, as he well knew; and he so far commanded himself, as to remain rigid as if of stone himself.

"There! one can see how it is—no life in that being," said one. "I know'd how it would end," added another. "Nothing but silver, and that cast on purpose, will ever lay it," continued a third. But Spike disregarded all. This time he was resolved that his aim should be better, and he was inveterately deliberate in getting it. Just as he pulled the trigger, however, Don Juan Montefalderon touched his elbow, the piece was fired, and there stood the immovable figure as before, fixed against the tower. Spike was turning angrily to chide his Mexican friend for deranging his aim, when the report of an answering musket came back like an echo. Every eye was turned toward the figure, but it moved not. Then the humming sound of an advancing ball was heard, and a bullet passed, whistling hoarsely, through the rigging, and fell some distance to windward. Every head disappeared below the bulwarks. Even Spike was so far astonished as to spring in upon deck, and, for a single instant, not a man was to be seen above the monkey-rail of the brig. Then Spike recovered himself and jumped upon a gun. His first look was toward the light-house, now on the vessel's lee-quarter; but the spot where had so lately been seen the form of Mulford, showed nothing but the glittering brightness of the white-washed stones!

The reader will not be surprised to learn that all these events produced a strange and deep impression on board the Molly Swash. The few who might have thrown a little light on the matter were discreetly silent, while all that portion of the crew which was in the dark, firmly believed that the spirit of the murdered mate was visiting them, in order to avenge the wrongs inflicted on it in the flesh. The superstition of sailors is as deep as it is general. All those of the Molly, too, were salts of the old school, sea-dogs of a past generation, properly speaking, and mariners who had got their notions in the early part of the century, when the spirit of progress was less active than it is at present.

Spike himself might have had other misgivings, and believed that he had seen the living form of his intended victim, but for the extraordinary and ghost-like echo of his last discharge. There was nothing visible, or intelligible, from which that fire could have come, and he was perfectly bewildered by the whole occurrence. An intention to round-to, as soon as through the passage, down boat and land, which had



been promptly conceived when he found that his first aim had failed, was as suddenly abandoned, and he gave the command to “board fore-tack;” immediately after, his call was to “pack on the brig,” and not without a little tremour in his voice, as soon as he perceived that the figure had vanished. The crew was not slow to obey these orders, and in ten minutes, the Swash was a mile from the light, standing to the northward and eastward, under a press of canvas, and with a freshening breeze.

To return to the islets. Harry, from the first, had seen that everything depended on his remaining motionless. As the people of the brig were partly in shadow, he could not, and did not, fully understand how completely he was himself exposed, in consequence of the brightness of all around him, and he had at first hoped to be mistaken for some accidental resemblance to a man. His nerves were well tried by the use of the fowling-piece, but they proved equal to the necessities of the occasion. But, when an answering report came from the rear, or from the opposite side of the islet, he darted round the tower, as much taken by surprise, and overcome by wonder, as any one else who heard it. It was this rapid movement which caused his flight to be unnoticed, all the men of the brig dodging below their own bulwarks at that precise instant.

As the light-house was now between the mate and the brig, he had no longer any motive for trying to conceal himself. His first thought was of Rose, and, strange as it may seem, for some little time he fancied that she had found a musket in the dwelling, and discharged it, in order to aid his escape. The events had passed so swiftly, that there was no time for the cool consideration of anything, and it is not surprising that some extravagances mingled with the first surmises of all these.

On reaching the door of the house, therefore, Harry was by no means surprised at seeing Rose standing in it, gazing at the swiftly receding brigantine. He even looked for the musket, expecting to see it lying at her feet, or leaning against the wall of the building. Rose, however, was entirely unarmed, and as dependent on him for support, as when he had parted from her, an hour or two before.

“Where did you find that musket, Rose, and what have you done with it?” inquired Harry, as soon as he had looked in every place he thought likely to hold such an implement.

“Musket, Harry! I have had no musket, though the report of fire-arms, near by, awoke me from a sweet sleep.”

“Is this possible! I had imprudently trusted myself on the other side of the light-house, while the moon was behind clouds, and when they broke suddenly away, its light betrayed me to those on board the brig. Spike fired at me twice, without injuring



me; when, to my astonishment, an answering report was heard from the islet. What is more, the piece was charged with a ball-cartridge, for I heard the whistling of the bullet as it passed on its way to the brig.”

“And you supposed I had fired that musket?”

“Whom else could I suppose had done it? You are not a very likely person to do such a thing, I will own, my love; but there are none but us two here.”

“It must be Jack Tier,” exclaimed Rose suddenly.

“That is impossible, since he has left us.”

“One never knows. Jack understood how anxious I was to retain him with us, and he is so capricious and full of schemes, that he may have contrived to get out of the brig, as artfully as he got on board her.”

“If Jack Tier be actually on this islet, I shall set him down as little else than a conjuror.”

“Hist!” interrupted Rose, “what noise is that in the direction of the wharf? It sounds like an oar falling in a boat.”

Mulford heard that well-known sound, as well as his companion, and, followed by Rose, he passed swiftly through the house, coming out at the front, next the wharf. The moon was still shining bright, and the mystery of the echoing report, and answering shot, was immediately explained. A large boat, one that pulled ten oars, at least, was just coming up to the end of the wharf, and the manner in which its oars were unshipped and tossed, announced to the mate that the crew were man-of-war’s men. He walked hastily forward to meet them.

Three officers first left the boat together. The gold bands of their caps showed that they belonged to the quarter-deck, a fact that the light of the moon made apparent at once, though it was not strong enough to render features distinct. As Mulford continued to advance, however, the three officers saluted him.

“I see you have got the light under way once more,” observed the leader of the party. “Last night it was as dark as Erebus in your lantern.”

“The light-house keeper and his assistant have both been drowned,” answered Mulford. “The lamps have been lit to-night by the people of the brig which has just gone out.”

“Pray, sir, what brig may that be?”

“The Molly Swash, of New York; a craft that I lately belonged to myself, but which I have left on account of her evil doings.”

“The Molly Swash, Stephen Spike master and owner, bound to Key West and a market, with a cargo of eight hundred barrels of flour, and that of a quality so lively



and pungent that it explodes like gunpowder! I beg your pardon, Mr. Mate, for not recognising you sooner. Have you forgotten the Poughkeepsie, Captain Mull, and her far-reaching Paixhans?”

“I ought to ask your pardon, Mr. Wallace, for not recognising you sooner, too. But one does not distinguish well by moonlight. I am delighted to see you, sir, and now hope that, with my assistance, a stop can be put to the career of the brig.”

“What, Mr. Mate, do you turn against your craft?” said Wallace, under the impulsive feeling which induces all loyal men to have a distaste for treachery of every sort, “the seaman should love the very planks of his vessel.”

“I fully understand you, Mr. Wallace, and will own that, for a long time, I was tied to rascality by the opinions to which you allude. But, when you come to hear my explanation, I do not fear your judgment in the least.”

Mulford now led the way into the house, whither Rose had already retreated, and where she had lighted candles, and made other womanly arrangements for receiving her guests. At Harry’s suggestion, some of the soup was placed over coals, to warm up for the party, and our heroine made her preparations to comfort them also with a cup of tea. While she was thus employed, Mulford gave the whole history of his connection with the brig, his indisposition to quit the latter, the full exposure of Spike’s treason, his own desertion, if desertion it could be called, the loss of the schooner, and his abandonment on the rock, and the manner in which he had been finally relieved. It was scarcely possible to relate all these matters, and altogether avoid allusions to the schemes of Spike in connection with Rose, and the relation in which our young man himself stood toward her. Although Mulford touched on these points with great delicacy, it was as a seaman talking to seamen, and he could not entirely throw aside the frankness of the profession. Ashore, men live in the privacy of their own domestic circles, and their secrets, and secret thoughts, are “family secrets,” of which it has passed into a proverb to say, that there are always some, even in the best of these communities. On shipboard, or in the camp, it is very different. The close contact in which men are brought with each other, the necessity that exists for opening the heart and expanding the charities, gets in time to influence the whole character, and a certain degree of frankness and simplicity, takes the place of the reserve and acting that might have been quickened in the same individual, under a different system of schooling. But Mulford was frank by nature, as well as by his sea-education, and his companions on this occasion were pretty well possessed of all his wishes and plans, in reference to Rose, even to his hope of falling in with the chaplain of the Poughkeepsie, by the time his story was all told.



The fact that Rose was occupied in another room, most of the time, had made these explanations all the easier, and spared her many a blush. As for the man-of-war's men, they listened to the tale, with manly interest and a generous sympathy.

"I am glad to hear your explanation, Mr. Mate," said Wallace, cordially, as soon as Harry had done, "and there's my hand, in proof that I approve of your course. I own to a radical dislike of a turncoat, or a traitor to his craft, Brother Hollins"—looking at the elder of his two companions, one of whom was the midshipman who had originally accompanied him on board the Swash—"and am glad to find that our friend Mulford here is neither. A true-hearted sailor can be excused for deserting even his own ship, under such circumstances."

"I am glad to hear even this little concession from you, Wallace," answered Hollins, good-naturedly, and speaking with a mild expression of benevolence, on a very calm and thoughtful countenance. "Your mess is as heterodox as any I ever sailed with, on the subject of our duties, in this respect."

"I hold it to be a sailor's duty to stick by his ship, reverend and dear sir."

This mode of address, which was used by the "ship's gentleman" in the cant of the ward-room, as a pleasantry of an old shipmate, for the two had long sailed together in other vessels, at once announced to Harry that he saw the very chaplain for whose presence he had been so anxiously wishing. The "reverend and dear sir" smiled at the sally of his friend, a sort of thing to which he was very well accustomed, but he answered with a gravity and point that, it is to be presumed, he thought befitting his holy office.

It may be well to remark here, that the Rev. Mr. Hollins was not one of the "lunch'd chaplains," that used to do discredit to the navy of this country, or a layman dubbed with such a title, and rated that he might get the pay and become a boon companion of the captain, at the table and in his frolics ashore. Those days are gone by, and ministers of the gospel are now really employed to care for the souls of the poor sailors, who so long have been treated by others, and have treated themselves, indeed, as if they were beings without souls, altogether. In these particulars, the world has certainly advanced, though the wise and the good, in looking around them, may feel more cause for astonishment in contemplating what it once was, than to rejoice in what it actually is. But intellect has certainly improved in the aggregate, if not in its especial dispensations, and men will not now submit to abuses that, within the recollections of a generation, they even cherished. In reference to the more intellectual appointments of a ship of war, the commander excepted, for we contend he who directs all, ought to possess the most



capacity, but, in reference to what are ordinarily believed to be the more intellectual appointments of a vessel of war, the surgeon and the chaplain, we well recollect opinions that were expressed to us, many years since, by two officers of the highest rank known to the service. "When I first entered the navy," said one of these old Benbows, "if I had occasion for the amputation of a leg, and the question lay between the carpenter and the doctor, d—e, but I would have tried the carpenter first, for I felt pretty certain he would have been the most likely to get through with the job." "In old times," said the other, "when a chaplain joined a ship, the question immediately arose, whether the mess were to convert the chaplain, or the chaplain, the mess; and the mess generally got the best of it." There was very little exaggeration in either of these opinions. But, happily, all this is changed vastly for the better, and a navy-surgeon is necessarily a man of education and experience; in very many instances, men of high talents are to be found among them; while chaplains can do something better than play at backgammon, eat terrapins, when in what may be called terra-pin-ports, and drink brandy and water, or pure Bob Smith.

"It is a great mistake, Wallace, to fancy that the highest duty a man owes, is either to his ship or to his country," observed the Rev. Mr. Hollins, quietly. "The highest duty of each and all of us, is to God; and whatever conflicts with that duty, must be avoided as a transgression of his laws, and consequently as sin."

"You surprise me, reverend and dear sir! I do not remember ever to have heard you broach such opinions before, which might be interpreted to mean that a fellow might be disloyal to his flag."

"Because the opinion might be liable to misinterpretation. Still, I do not go as far as many of my friends on this subject. If Decatur ever really said, 'Our country, right or wrong,' he said what might be just enough, and creditable enough, in certain cases, and taken with the fair limitations that he probably intended should accompany the sentiment; but, if he meant it as an absolute and controlling principle, it was not possible to be more in error. In this last sense, such a rule of conduct might, and in old times often would, have justified idolatry; nay, it is a species of idolatry in itself, since it is putting country before God. Sailors may not always be able to make the just distinctions in these cases, but the quarter-deck should be so, irreverend and dear sir."

Wallace laughed, and then he turned the discourse to the subject more properly before them.

"I understand you to say, Mr. Mulford," he remarked, "that, in your opinion, the Swash has gone to try to raise the unfortunate Mexican schooner, a second time, from the depths of the ocean?"



“From the rock on which she lies. Under the circumstances, I hardly think he would have come hither for the chain and cable, unless with some such object. We know, moreover, that such was his intention when we left the brig.”

“And you can take us to the very spot where that wreck lies?”

“Without any difficulty. Her masts are partly out of water, and we hung on to them, in our boat, no later than last night, or this morning rather.”

“So far, well. Your conduct in all this affair will be duly appreciated, and Captain Mull will not fail to represent it in a right point of view to the government.”

“Where is the ship, sir? I looked for her most anxiously, without success, last evening; nor had Jack Tier, the little fellow I have named to you, any better luck; though I sent him aloft, as high as the lantern in the light-house, for that purpose.”

“The ship is off here to the northward and westward, some six leagues or so. At sunset she may have been a little further. We have supposed that the Swash would be coming back hither, and had laid a trap for her, which came very near taking her alive.”

“What is the trap you mean, sir—though taking Stephen Spike alive, is sooner said than done.”

“Our plan has been to catch him with our boats. With the greater draft of water of the Poughkeepsie, and the heels of your brig, sir, a regular chase about these reefs, as we knew from experience, would be almost hopeless. It was, therefore, necessary to use head-work, and some man-of-war traverses, in order to lay hold of him. Yesterday afternoon we hoisted out three cutters, manned them, and made sail in them all, under our luggs, working up against the trades. Each boat took its own course, one going off, the west end of the reef, one going more to the eastward, while I came this way, to look in at the Dry Tortugas. Spike will be lucky if he do not fall in with our third cutter, which is under the fourth lieutenant, should he stand on far on the same tack as that on which he left this place. Let him try his fortune, however. As for our boat, as soon as I saw the lamps burning in the lantern, I made the best of my way hither, and got sight of the brig, just as she loosened her sails. Then I took in my own luggs, and came on with the oars. Had we continued under our canvas, with this breeze, I almost think we might have overhauled the rascal.”

“It would have been impossible, sir. The moment he got a sight of your sails, he would have been off in a contrary direction, and that brig really seems to fly, whenever there is a pressing occasion for her to move. You did the wisest thing you could have done, and barely missed him, as it was. He has not seen you at all, as it is, and will be all the less on his guard, against the next visit from the ship.”



“Not seen me! Why, sir, the fellow fired at us twice with a musket; why he did not use a carronade, is more than I can tell.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Wallace; those two shots were intended for me, though I now fully comprehend why you answered them.”

“Answered them! yes, indeed; who would not answer such a salute, and gun for gun, if he had a chance. I certainly thought he was firing at us, and having a musket between my legs, I let fly in return, and even the chaplain here will allow that was returning ‘good for evil.’ But explain your meaning.”

Mulford now went into the details of the incidents connected with his coming into the moon-light, at the foot of the light-house. That he was not mistaken as to the party for whom the shots were intended, was plain enough to him, from the words that passed aloud among the people of the Swash, as well as from the circumstance that both balls struck the stones of the tower quite near him. This statement explained everything to Wallace, who now fully comprehended the cause and motive of each incident.

It was now near eleven, and Rose had prepared the table for supper. The gentlemen of the Poughkeepsie manifested great interest in the movements of the Hebe-like little attendant who was caring for their wants. When the cloth was to be laid, the midshipman offered his assistance, but his superior directed him to send a hand or two up from the wharf, where the crew of the cutter were lounging or sleeping after their cruise. These men had been thought of, too; and a vessel filled with smoking soup was taken to them, by one of their own number.

The supper was as cheerful as it was excellent. The dry humour of Wallace, the mild intelligence of the chaplain, the good sense of Harry, and the spirited information of Rose, contributed, each in its particular way, to make the meal memorable in more senses than one. The laugh came easily at that table, and it was twelve o’clock, before the party thought of breaking up.

The dispositions for the night were soon made. Rose returned to her little room, where she could now sleep in comfort, and without apprehension. The gentlemen made the disposition of their persons, that circumstances allowed; each finding something on which to repose, that was preferable to a plank. As for the men, they were accustomed to hard fare, and enjoyed their present good-luck, to the top of their bent. It was quite late, before they had done “spinning their yarns,” and “cracking their jokes,” around the pot of turtle-soup, and the can of grog that succeeded it. By half-past twelve, however, everybody was asleep.

Mulford was the first person afoot the following morning. He left the house just as the sun rose, and perceiving that the “coast was clear” of sharks, he threw off his light



attire, and plunged into the sea. Refreshed with this indulgence, he was returning toward the building, when he met the chaplain coming in quest of him. This gentleman, a man of real piety, and of great discretion, had been singularly struck, on the preceding night, with the narrative of our young mate; and he had not failed to note the allusions, slight as they were, and delicately put as they had been, to himself. He saw, at once, the propriety of marrying a couple so situated, and now sought Harry, with a view to bring about so desirable an event, by intimating his entire willingness to officiate. It is scarcely necessary to say that very few words were wanting, to persuade the young man to fall into his views; and as to Rose, he had handed her a short note on the same subject, which he was of opinion, would be likely to bring her to the same way of thinking.

An hour later, all the officers, Harry and Rose, were assembled in what might be termed the light-house parlour. The Rev. Mr. Hollins had neither band, gown, nor surplice; but he had what was far better, feeling and piety. Without a prayer-book he never moved; and he read the marriage ceremony with a solemnity that was communicated to all present. The ring was that which had been used at the marriage of Rose's parents, and which she wore habitually, though not on the left hand. In a word, Harry and Rose were as firmly and legally united, on that solitary and almost unknown islet, as could have been the case, had they stood up before the altar of mother Trinity itself, with a bishop to officiate, and a legion of attendants. After the compliments which succeeded the ceremony, the whole party sat down to breakfast.

If the supper had been agreeable, the morning meal was not less so. Rose was timid and blushing, as became a bride, though she could not but feel how much more respectable her position became under the protection of Harry as his wife, than it had been while she was only his betrothed. The most delicate dehortment, on the part of her companions, soon relieved her embarrassment however, and the breakfast passed off without cause for an unhappy moment.

"The ship's standing in toward the light, sir," reported the cockswain of the cutter, as the party was still lingering around the table, as if unwilling to bring so pleasant a meal to a close. "Since the mist has broke away, we see her, sir, even to her ports and dead-eyes."

"In that case, Sam, she can't be very far off," answered Wallace. "Ay, there goes a gun from her, at this moment, as much as to say, 'what has become of all of my boats?' Run down and let off a musket; perhaps she will make out to hear that, as we must be rather to windward, if anything."

The signal was given and understood. A quarter of an hour later, the Poughkeepsie began to shorten sail. Then Wallace stationed himself in the cutter, in the centre of one



of the passages, signalling the ship to come on. Ten minutes later still, the noble craft came into the haven, passing the still burning light, with her topsails just lifting, and making a graceful sweep under very reduced sail, she came to the wind, very near the spot where the Swash had lain only ten hours before, and dropped an anchor.

