



# Jack Tier

or, the Florida Reef



## Part 1: Chapter 3

The western wave was all a flame,  
The day was well nigh done,  
Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad bright sun;  
When that strange ship drove suddenly  
Betwixt us and the sun.

—*The Ancient Mariner.*

At that hour, on the succeeding morning, when the light of day is just beginning to chase away the shadows of night, the *Molly Swash* became visible within the gloom of the high land which surrounds so much of the bay of Hempstead, under easy sail, backing and filling, in order to keep within her hiding-place, until a look could be had at the state of things without. Half an hour later, she was so near the entrance of the estuary, as to enable the look-outs aloft to ascertain that the coast was clear, when Spike ordered the helm to be put up, and the brig to be kept away to her course. At this precise moment, Rose appeared on deck, refreshed by the sleep of a quiet night; and with cheeks tinged with a colour even more delicate than that which was now glowing in the eastern sky, and which was almost as brilliant.

“We stopped in this bit of a harbour for the night, Miss Rose, that is all;” said Spike, observing that his fair passenger was looking about her, in some little surprise, at finding the vessel so near the land, and seemingly so much out of her proper position. “Yes, we always do that, when we first start on a v’y’ge, and before the brig gets used to travelling—don’t we, Mr. Mulford?”



Mr. Mulford, who knew how hopeless was the attempt to mystify Rose, as one might mystify her credulous and weak-minded aunt, and who had no disposition to deal any way but fairly by the beautiful, and in one sense now helpless young creature before him, did not see fit to make any reply. Offend Spike he did not dare to do, more especially under present circumstances; and mislead Rose he would not do. He affected not to hear the question, therefore, but issuing an order about the head-sails, he walked forward as if to see it executed. Rose herself was not under as much restraint as the young mate.

“It is convenient, Captain Spike,” she coolly answered for Mulford, “to have stopping-places, for vessels that are wearied, and I remember the time when my uncle used to tell me of such matters, very much in the same vein; but, it was before I was twelve years old.”

Spike hemmed, and he looked a little foolish, but Clench, the boatswain, coming aft to say something to him in confidence, just at that moment, he was enabled to avoid the awkwardness of attempting to explain. This man Clench, or Clinch, as the name was pronounced, was deep in the captain’s secrets; far more so than was his mate, and would have been filling Mulford’s station at that very time, had he not been hopelessly ignorant of navigation. On the present occasion, his business was to point out to the captain, two or three lines of smoke, that were visible above the water of the Sound, in the eastern board; one of which he was apprehensive might turn out to be the smoke of the revenue craft, from which they had so recently escaped.

“Steamers are no rarities in Long Island Sound, Clench,” observed the captain, levelling his glass at the most suspected of the smokes. “That must be a Providence, or Stonington chap, coming west with the Boston train.”

“Either of them would have been further west, by this time, Captain Spike,” returned the doubting, but watchful boatswain. “It’s a large smoke, and I fear it is the revenue fellow coming back, after having had a look well to the eastward, and satisfying himself that we are not to be had in that quarter.”

Spike growled out his assent to the possibility of such a conjecture, and promised vigilance. This satisfied his subordinate for the moment, and he walked forward, or to the place where he belonged. In the mean time, the widow came on deck, smiling, and snuffing the salt air, and ready to be delighted with anything that was maritime.

“Good morning, Captain Spike,” she cried—“Are we in the offing, yet?—you know I desired to be told when we are in the offing, for I intend to write a letter to my poor Mr. Budd’s sister, Mrs. Sprague, as soon as we get to the offing.”



“What is the offing, aunt?” inquired the handsome niece.

“Why you have hardly been at sea long enough to understand me, child, should I attempt to explain. The offing, however, is the place where the last letters are always written to the owners, and to friends ashore. The term comes, I suppose, from the circumstance that the vessel is about to be off, and it is natural to think of those we leave behind, at such a moment. I intend to write to your aunt Sprague, my dear, the instant I hear we are in the offing; and what is more, I intend to make you my amanuensis.”

“But how will the letter be sent, aunty?—I have no more objections to writing than any one else, but I do not see how the letter is to be sent. Really, the sea is a curious region, with its stopping-places for the night, and its offings to write letters at!”

“Yes, it’s all as you say, Rose—a most remarkable region is the sea! You’ll admire it, as I admire it, when you come to know it better; and as your poor uncle admired it, and as Captain Spike admires it, too. As for the letters, they can be sent ashore by the pilot, as letters are always sent.”

“But, aunty, there is no pilot in the *Swash*—for Captain Spike refused to take one on board.”

“Rose!—You don’t understand what you are talking about! No vessel ever yet sailed without a pilot, if indeed any can. It’s opposed to the law, not to have a pilot; and now I remember to have heard your dear uncle say it wasn’t a voyage if a vessel didn’t take away a pilot.”

“But if they take them away, aunty, how can they send the letters ashore by them?”

“Poh! Poh! Child; you don’t know what you’re saying; but you’ll overlook it, I hope, Captain Spike, for Rose is quick, and will soon learn to know better. As if letters couldn’t be sent ashore by the pilot, though he was a hundred thousand miles from land! But, Captain Spike, you must let me know when we are about to get off the Sound, for I know that the pilot is always sent ashore with his letters, before the vessel gets off the Sound.”

“Yes, yes,” returned the captain, a little mystified by the widow, though he knew her so well, and understood her so well—“you shall know, ma’am, when we get off soundings, for I suppose that is what you mean.”

“What is the difference? Off the Sound, or off the soundings, of course, must mean the same thing. But, Rosy, we will go below and write to your aunt at once, for I see a light-house yonder, and light-houses are always put just off the soundings.”

Rose, who always suspected her aunt’s nautical talk, though she did not know how to correct it, and was not sorry to put an end to it, now, by going below, and spreading



her own writing materials, in readiness to write, as the other dictated. Biddy Noon was present, sewing on some of her own finery.

“Now write, as I tell you, Rose,” commenced the widow—“My dear sister Sprague—Here we are, at last, just off the soundings, with light-houses all round us, and so many capes and islands in sight, that it does seem as if the vessel never could find its way through them all. Some of these islands must be the West Indies”—“Aunty, that can never be!” exclaimed Rose—“we left New York only yesterday.”

“What of that? Had it been old times, I grant you several days might be necessary to get a sight of the West Indies, but, now, when a letter can be written to a friend in Boston, and an answer received in half an hour, it requires no such time to go to the West Indies. Besides, what other islands are there in this part of the world?—They can’t be England—”

“No—no,”—said Rose, at once seeing it would be preferable to admit they were the West Indies; so the letter went on:—“Some of these islands must be the West Indies, and it is high time we saw some of them, for we are nearly off the Sound, and the light-houses are getting to be quite numerous. I think we have already seen four since we left the wharf. But, my dear sister Sprague, you will be delighted to hear how much better Rose’s health is already becoming—”

“My health, aunty! Why, I never knew an ill day in my life!”

“Don’t tell me that, my darling; I know too well what all these deceptive appearances of health amount to. I would not alarm you for the world, Rosy dear, but a careful parent—and I’m your parent in affection, if not by nature—but a careful parent’s eye is not to be deceived. I know you look well, but you are ill, my child; though, Heaven be praised, the sea air and hydropathy are already doing you a monstrous deal of good.”

As Mrs. Budd concluded, she wiped her eyes, and appeared really glad that her niece had a less consumptive look than when she embarked. Rose sat, gazing at her aunt, in mute astonishment. She knew how much and truly she was beloved, and that induced her to be more tolerant of her connection’s foibles than even duty demanded. Feeling was blended with her respect, but it was almost too much for her, to learn that this long, and in some respects painful voyage, was undertaken on her account, and without the smallest necessity for it. The vexation, however, would have been largely increased, but for certain free communications that had occasionally occurred between her and the handsome mate, since the moment of her coming on board the brig. Rose knew that Harry Mulford loved her, too, for he had told her as much with a seaman’s



frankness; and though she had never let him know that his partiality was returned, her woman's heart was fast inclining toward him, with all her sex's tenderness. This made the mistake of her aunt tolerable, though Rose was exceedingly vexed it should ever have occurred.

"Why, my dearest aunt," she cried, "they told me it was on your account that this voyage was undertaken!"

"I know they did, poor, dear Rosy, and that was in order not to alarm you. Some persons of delicate constitutions—"

"But my constitution is not in the least delicate, aunt; on the contrary, it is as good as possible; a blessing for which, I trust, I am truly grateful, I did not know but you might be suffering, though you do look so well, for they all agreed in telling me you had need of a sea-voyage."

"I, a subject for hydropathy! Why, child, water is no more necessary to me than it is to a cat."

"But going to sea, aunty, is not hydropathy—"

"Don't say that, Rosy; do not say that, my dear. It is hydropathy on a large scale, as Captain Spike says; and when he gets us into blue water, he has promised that you shall have all the benefits of the treatment."

Rose was silent and thoughtful; after which she spoke quickly, like one to whom an important thought had suddenly occurred.

"And Captain Spike, then, was consulted in my case?" she asked.

"He was, my dear, and you have every reason to be grateful to him. He was the first to discover a change in your appearance, and to suggest a sea voyage. Marine Hydropathy, he said, he was sure would get you up again; for Captain Spike thinks your constitution good at the bottom, though the high colour you have proves too high a state of habitual excitement."

"Was Dr. Monson consulted at all, aunt?"

"Not at all. You know the doctors are all against hydropathy, and mesmerism, and the magnetic telegraph, and everything that is new; so we thought it best not to consult him."

"And my aunt Sprague?"

"Yes, she was consulted after everything was settled, and when I knew her notions could not undo what had been already done. But she is a seaman's widow, as well as myself, and has a great notion of the virtue of sea air."

"Then it would seem that Doctor Spike was the principal adviser in my case!"





"I own that he was, Rosy dear. Captain Spike was brought up by your uncle, who has often told me what a thorough seaman he was. "There's Spike, now," he said to me one day, "he can almost make his brig talk"—this very brig too, your uncle meant, Rosy, and, of course, one of the best vessels in the world to take hydropathy in."

"Yes, aunty," returned Rose, playing with the pen, while her air proved how little her mind was in her words. "Well, what shall I say next to my aunt Sprague?"

"Rose's health is already becoming confirmed," resumed the widow, who thought it best to encourage her niece by as strong terms as she could employ, "and I shall extol hydropathy to the skies, as long as I live. As soon as we reach our port of destination, my dear sister Sprague, I shall write you a line to let you know it, by the magnetic telegraph—"

"But there is no magnetic telegraph on the sea, aunty," interrupted Rose, looking up from the paper, with her clear, serene, blue eyes, expressing even her surprise, at this touch of the relict's ignorance.

"Don't tell me that, Rosy, child, when everybody says the sparks will fly round the whole earth, just as soon as they will fly from New York to Philadelphia."

"But they must have something to fly on, aunty; and the ocean will not sustain wires, or posts."

"Well, there is no need of being so particular; if there is no telegraph, the letter must come by mail. You can say telegraph, here, and when your aunt gets the letter, the postmark will tell her how it came. It looks better to talk about telegraphic communications, child."

Rose resumed her pen, and wrote at her aunt's dictation, as follows:—"By the magnetic telegraph, when I hope to be able to tell you that our dear Rose is well. As yet, we both enjoy the ocean exceedingly; but when we get off the Sound, into blue water, and have sent the pilot ashore, or discharged him, I ought to say, which puts me in mind of telling you that a cannon was discharged at us only last night, and that the ball whistled so near me, that I heard it as plain as ever you heard Rose's piano."

"Had I not better first tell my aunt Sprague what is to be done when the pilot is discharged?"

"No; tell her about the cannon that was discharged, first, and about the ball that I heard. I had almost forgot that adventure, which was a very remarkable one, was it not, Biddy?"

"Indeed, Missus, and it was! and Miss Rose might put in the letter how we both screamed at that cannon, and might have been heard as plainly, every bit of it, as the ball."



“Say nothing on the subject, Rose, or we shall never hear the last of it. So, darling, you may conclude in your own way, for I believe I have told your aunt all that comes to mind.”

Rose did as desired, finishing the epistle in a very few words, for, rightly enough, she had taken it into her head there was no pilot to be discharged, and consequently that the letter would never be sent. Her short but frequent conferences with Mulford were fast opening her eyes, not to say her heart, and she was beginning to see Captain Spike in his true character, which was that of a great scoundrel. It is true, that the mate had not long judged his commander quite so harshly; but had rather seen his beautiful brig, and her rare qualities, in her owner and commander, than the man himself; but jealousy had quickened his observation of late, and Stephen Spike had lost ground sensibly with Harry Mulford, within the last week. Two or three times before, the young man had thought of seeking another berth, on account of certain distrusts of Spike’s occupations; but he was poor, and so long as he remained in the *Swash*, Harry’s opportunities of meeting Rose were greatly increased. This circumstance, indeed, was the secret of his still being in the “*Molly*,” as Spike usually called his craft; the last voyage having excited suspicions that were rather of a delicate nature. Then the young man really loved the brig, which, if she could not be literally made to talk, could be made to do almost everything else. A vessel, and a small vessel, too, is rather contracted as to space, but those who wish to converse can contrive to speak together often, even in such narrow limits. Such had been the fact with Rose Budd and the handsome mate. Twenty times since they sailed, short as that time was, had Mulford contrived to get so near to Rose, as to talk with her, unheard by others. It is true, that he seldom ventured to do this, so long as the captain was in sight, but Spike was often below, and opportunities were constantly occurring. It was in the course of these frequent but brief conversations, that Harry had made certain dark hints touching the character of his commander, and the known recklessness of his proceedings. Rose had taken the alarm, and fully comprehending her aunt’s mental imbecility, her situation was already giving her great uneasiness. She had some undefined hopes from the revenue steamer; though, strangely enough as it appeared to her, her youngest and most approved suitor betrayed a strong desire to escape from that craft, at the very moment he was expressing his apprehensions on account of her presence in the brig. This contradiction arose from a certain esprit de corps, which seldom fails, more or less, to identify the mariner with his ship.

But the writing was finished, and the letter sealed with wax, Mrs. Budd being quite as particular in that ceremony as Lord Nelson, when the females again repaired on deck.



They found Spike and his mate sweeping the eastern part of the Sound with their glasses, with a view to look out for enemies; or, what to them, just then, was much the same thing, government craft. In this occupation, Rose was a little vexed to see that Mulford was almost as much interested as Spike himself, the love of his vessel seemingly overcoming his love for her, if not his love of the right—she knew of no reason, however, why the captain should dread any other vessel, and felt sufficiently provoked to question him a little on the subject, if it were only to let him see that the niece was not as completely his dupe as the aunt. She had not been on deck five minutes, therefore, during which time several expressions had escaped the two sailors touching their apprehensions of vessels seen in the distance, ere she commenced her inquiries.

“And why should we fear meeting with other vessels?” Rose plainly demanded—“here in Long Island Sound, and within the power of the laws of the country?”

“Fear?” exclaimed Spike, a little startled, and a good deal surprised at this straightforward question—“Fear, Miss Rose! You do not think we are afraid, though there are many reasons why we do not wish to be spoken by certain craft that are hovering about. In the first place, you know it is war time—I suppose you know, Madam Budd, that America is at war with Mexico?”

“Certainly,” answered the widow, with dignity—“and that is a sufficient reason, Rose, why one vessel should chase, and another should run. If you had heard your poor uncle relate, as I have done, all his chasings and runnings away, in the war times, child, you would understand these things better. Why, I’ve heard your uncle say that, in some of his long voyages, he has run thousands and thousands of miles, with sails set on both sides, and all over his ship!”

“Yes, aunty, and so have I, but that was ‘running before the wind,’ as he used to call it.”

“I s’pose, however, Miss Rose,” put in Spike, who saw that the niece would soon get the better of the aunt;—“I s’pose, Miss Rose, that you’ll acknowledge that America is at war with Mexico?”

“I am sorry to say that such is the fact, but I remember to have heard you say, yourself, Captain Spike, when my aunt was induced to undertake this voyage, that you did not consider there was the smallest danger from any Mexicans.”

“Yes, you did, Captain Spike,” added the aunt—“you did say there was no danger from Mexicans.”

“Nor is there a bit, Madam Budd, if Miss Rose, and your honoured self, will only hear me. There is no danger, because the brig has the heels of anything Mexico can





send to sea. She has sold her steamers, and, as for anything else under her flag, I would not care a straw.”

“The steamer from which we ran, last evening, and which actually fired off a cannon at us, was not Mexican, but American,” said Rose, with a pointed manner that put Spike to his trumps.

“Oh! That steamer—” he stammered—“that was a race—only a race, Miss Rose, and I wouldn’t let her come near me, for the world. I should never hear the last of it, in the insurance offices, and on ’change, did I let her overhaul us. You see, Miss Rose—you see, Madam Budd—” Spike ever found it most convenient to address his mystifying discourse to the aunt, in preference to addressing it to the niece—“You see, Madam Budd, the master of that craft and I are old cronies—sailed together when boys, and set great store by each other. We met only last evening, just a’ter I had left your own agreeable mansion, Madam Budd, and says he, ‘Spike, when do you sail?’ ‘To-morrow’s flood, Jones,’ says I—his name is Jones;—Peter Jones, and as good a fellow as ever lived. ‘Do you go by the Hook, or by Hell-Gate—’”

“Hurl-Gate, Captain Spike, if you please—or Whirl-Gate, which some people think is the true sound; but the other way of saying it is awful.”

“Well, the captain, my old master, always called it Hell-Gate, and I learned the trick from him—”

“I know he did, and so do all sailors; but genteel people, now-a-days, say nothing but Hurl-Gate, or Whirl-Gate.”

Rose smiled at this; as did Mulford; but neither said anything, the subject having once before been up between them. As for ourselves, we are still so old-fashioned as to say, and write, Hell-Gate, and intend so to do, in spite of all the Yankees that have yet passed through it, or who ever shall pass through it, and that is saying a great deal. We do not like changing names to suit their uneasy spirits.

“Call the place Hurl-Gate, and go on with your story,” said the widow, complacently.

“Yes, Madam Budd—‘Do you go by the Hook, or by Whirl-Gate?’ said Jones. ‘By Whirl-a-Gig-Gate,’ says I. ‘Well,’ says he, ‘I shall go through the Gate myself, in the course of the morning. We may meet somewhere to the eastward, and, if we do, I’ll bet you a beaver,’ says he, ‘that I show you my stern.’ ‘Agreed,’ says I, and we shook hands upon it. That’s the whole history of our giving the steamer the slip, last night, and of my not wishing to let her speak me.”



“But you went into a bay, and let her go past you,” said Rose, coolly enough as to manner, but with great point as to substance. “Was not that a singular way of winning a race?”

“It does seem so, Miss Rose, but it’s all plain enough, when understood. I found that steam was too much for sails, and I stood up into the bay to let them run past us, in hopes they would never find out the trick. I care as little for a hat as any man, but I do care a good deal about having it reported on ’change that the *Molly* was beat, by even a steamer.”

This ended the discourse for the moment, Clench again having something to say to his captain in private.

“How much of that explanation am I to believe, and how much disbelieve?” asked Rose, the instant she was left alone with Harry. “If it be all invention, it was a ready and ingenious story.”

“No part of it is true. He no more expected that the steamer would pass through Hell-Gate, than I expected it myself. There was no bet, or race, therefore; but it was our wish to avoid Uncle Sam’s cruiser, that was all.”

“And why should you wish any such thing?”

“On my honour, I can give you no better reason, so far as I am concerned, than the fact that, wishing to keep clear of her, I do not like to be overhauled. Nor can I tell you why Spike is so much in earnest in holding the revenue vessel at arm’s length; I know he dislikes all such craft, as a matter of course, but I can see no particular reason for it just now. A more innocent cargo was never stuck into a vessel’s hold.”

“What is it?”

“Flour; and no great matter of that. The brig is not half full, being just in beautiful ballast trim, as if ready for a race. I can see no sufficient reason, beyond native antipathy, why Captain Spike should wish to avoid any craft, for it is humbug his dread of a Mexican, and least of all, here, in Long Island Sound. All that story about Jones is a tub for whales.”

“Thank you for the allusion; my aunt and myself being the whales.”

“You know I do mean—can mean nothing, Rose, that is disrespectful to either yourself or your aunt.”

Rose looked up, and she looked pleased. Then she mused in silence, for some time, when she again spoke.

“Why have you remained another voyage with such a man, Harry?” she asked, earnestly.



“Because, as his first officer, I have had access to your house, when I could not have had it otherwise; and because I have apprehended that he might persuade Mrs. Budd, as he had boasted to me it was his intention to do, to make this voyage.”

Rose now looked grateful; and deeply grateful did she feel, and had reason to feel. Harry had concealed no portion of his history from her. Like herself, he was a shipmaster’s child, but one better educated and better connected than was customary for the class. His father had paid a good deal of attention to the youth’s early years, but had made a seaman of him, out of choice. The father had lost his all, however, with his life, in a shipwreck; and Harry was thrown upon his own resources, at the early age of twenty. He had made one or two voyages as a second mate, when chance threw him in Spike’s way, who, pleased with some evidences of coolness and skill, that he had shown in a foreign port, on the occasion of another loss, took him as his first officer; in which situation he had remained ever since, partly from choice and partly from necessity. On the other hand, Rose had a fortune; by no means a large one, but several thousands in possession, from her own father, and as many more in reversion from her uncle. It was this money, taken in connection with the credulous imbecility of the aunt, that had awakened the cupidity, and excited the hopes of Spike. After a life of lawless adventure, one that had been chequered by every shade of luck, he found himself growing old, with his brig growing old with him, and little left beside his vessel and the sort of half cargo that was in her hold. Want of means, indeed, was the reason that the flour-barrels were not more numerous.

Rose heard Mulford’s explanation favourably, as indeed she heard most of that which came from him, but did not renew the discourse, Spike’s conference with the boatswain just then terminating. The captain now came aft, and began to speak of the performances of his vessel in a way to show that he took great pride in them.

“We are travelling at the rate of ten knots, Madam Budd,” he said exultingly, “and that will take us clear of the land, before night shuts in ag’in. Montauk is a good place for an offing; I ask for no better.”

“Shall we then have two offings, this voyage, Captain Spike?” asked Rose, a little sarcastically. “If we are in the offing now, and are to be in the offing when we reach Montauk, there must be two such places.”

“Rosy, dear, you amaze me!” put in the aunt. “There is no offing until the pilot is discharged, and when he’s discharged there is nothing but offing. It’s all offing. On the Sound, is the first great change that befalls a vessel as she goes to sea; then comes the offing; next the pilot is discharged—then—then—what comes next, Captain Spike?”



“Then the vessel takes her departure—an old navigator like yourself, Madam Budd, ought not to forget the departure.”

“Quite true, sir. The departure is a very important portion of a seaman’s life. Often and often have I heard my poor dear Mr. Budd talk about his departures. His departures, and his offings and his—”

“Land-falls,” added Spike, perceiving that the shipmaster’s relict was a little at fault.

“Thank you, sir; the hint is quite welcome. His landfalls, also, were often in his mouth.”

“What is a land-fall, aunty?” inquired Rose—“It appears a strange term to be used by one who lives on the water.”

“Oh! There is no end to the curiosities of sailors! A ‘land-fall,’ my dear, means a shipwreck, of course. To fall on the land, and a very unpleasant fall it is, when a vessel should keep on the water. I’ve heard of dreadful land-falls in my day, in which hundreds of souls have been swept into eternity, in an instant.”

“Yes; yes, Madam Budd—there are such accidents truly, and serious things be they to encounter,” answered Spike, hemming a little to clear his throat, as was much his practice whenever the widow ran into any unusually extravagant blunder; “yes, serious things to encounter. But the land-fall that I mean is a different sort of thing; being, as you well know, what we say when we come in sight of land, a’ter a v’y’ge; or, meaning the land we may happen first to see. The departure is the beginning of our calculation when we lose sight of the last cape or headland, and the land-fall closes it, by letting us know where we are, at the other end of our journey, as you probably remember.”

“Is there not such a thing as clearing out in navigation?” asked Rose, quickly, willing to cover a little confusion that was manifest in her aunt’s manner.

“Not exactly in navigation, Miss Rose, but clearing out, with honest folk, ought to come first, and navigation a’terwards. Clearing out means going through the Custom-House, accordin’ to law.”

“And the *Molly Swash* has cleared out, I hope?”

“Sartain—a more lawful clearance was never given in Wall Street; it’s for Key West and a market. I did think of making it Havana and a market, but port-charges are lightest at Key West.”

“Then Key West is the place to which we are bound?”

“It ought to be, agreeable to papers; though vessels sometimes miss the ports for which they clear.”



Rose put no more questions; and her aunt, being conscious that she had not appeared to advantage in the affair of the “land-fall,” was also disposed to be silent. Spike and Mulford had their attention drawn to the vessel, and the conversation dropped.

The reader can readily suppose that the *Molly Swash* had not been standing still all this time. So far from this, she was running “down Sound,” with the wind on her quarter, or at south-west, making great head-way, as she was close under the south shore, or on the island side of the water she was in. The vessel had no other motion than that of her speed, and the females escaped everything like sea-sickness, for the time being. This enabled them to attend to making certain arrangements necessary to their comforts below, previously to getting into rough water. In acquitting herself of this task, Rose received much useful advice from Josh, though his new assistant, Jack Tier, turned out to be a prize indeed, in the cabins. The first was only a steward; but the last proved himself not only a handy person of his calling, but one full of resources—a genius, in his way. Josh soon became so sensible of his own inferiority, in contributing to the comforts of females, that he yielded the entire management of the “ladies’ cabin,” as a little place that might have been ten feet square, was called, to his uncouth-looking, but really expert deputy. Jack waddled about below, as if born and brought up in such a place, and seemed every way fitted for his office. In height, and in build generally, there was a surprising conformity between the widow and the steward’s deputy, a circumstance which might induce one to think they must often have been in each other’s way, in a space so small; though, in point of fact, Jack never ran foul of any one. He seemed to avoid this inconvenience by a species of nautical instinct.

Towards the turn of the day, Rose had everything arranged, and was surprised to find how much room she had made for her aunt and herself, by means of Jack’s hints, and how much more comfortable it was possible to be, in that small cabin, than she had at first supposed.

After dinner, Spike took his siesta. He slept in a little state-room that stood on the starboard side of the quarter-deck, quite aft; as Mulford did in one on the larboard. These two state-rooms were fixtures; but a light deck overhead, which connected them, shipped and unshipped, forming a shelter for the man at the wheel, when in its place, as well as for the officer of the watch, should he see fit to use it, in bad weather. This sort of cuddy, Spike termed his “coach-house.”

The captain had no sooner gone into his state-room, and closed its window, movements that were understood by Mulford, than the latter took occasion to intimate





to Rose, by means of Jack Tier, the state of things on deck, when the young man was favoured with the young lady's company.

"He has turned in for his afternoon's nap, and will sleep for just one hour, blow high, or blow low," said the mate, placing himself at Rose's side on the trunk, which formed the usual seat for those who could presume to take the liberty of sitting down on the quarter-deck. "It's a habit with him, and we can count on it, with perfect security."

"His doing so, now, is a sign that he has no immediate fears of the revenue steamer?"

"The coast is quite clear of her. We have taken good looks at every smoke, but can see nothing that appears like our late companion. She has doubtless gone to the eastward, on duty, and merely chased us, on her road."

"But why should she chase us, at all?"

"Because we ran. Let a dog run, or a man run, or a cat run, ten to one but something starts in chase. It is human nature, I believe, to give chase; though I will admit there was something suspicious about that steamer's movements—her anchoring off the Fort, for instance. But let her go, for the present; are you getting things right, and to your mind, below decks?"

"Very much so. The cabin is small, and the two state-rooms the merest drawers that ever were used, but, by putting everything in its place, we have made sufficient room, and no doubt shall be comfortable."

"I am sorry you did not call on me for assistance. The mate has a prescriptive right to help stow away."

"We made out without your services," returned Rose, slightly blushing—"Jack Tier, as he is called, Josh's assistant, is a very useful person, and has been our adviser and manager. I want no better for such services."

"He is a queer fellow, all round. Take him altogether, I hardly ever saw so droll a being! As thick as he's long, with a waddle like a duck, a voice that is cracked, hair like bristles, and knee high; the man might make a fortune as a show. Tom Thumb is scarcely a greater curiosity."

"He is singular in 'build,' as you call it," returned Rose, laughing, "but, I can assure you that he is a most excellent fellow in his way—worth a dozen of Josh. Do you know, Harry, that I suspect he has strong feelings towards Captain Spike; though whether of like or dislike, friendship or enmity, I am at a loss to say."



“And why do you think that he has any feeling at all? I have heard Spike say he left the fellow ashore, somewhere down on the Spanish Main, or in the Islands, quite twenty years since; but a sailor would scarce carry a grudge so long a time, for such a thing as that.”

“I do not know—but feeling there is, and much of it, too; though, whether hostile or friendly, I will not undertake to say.”

“I’ll look to the chap, now you tell me this. It is a little odd, the manner in which he got on board us, taken in connection with the company he was in, and a discovery may be made. Here he is, however; and, as I keep the keys of the magazine, he can do us no great harm, unless he scuttles the brig.”

“Magazine! Is there such a thing here?”

“To be sure there is, and ammunition enough in it to keep eight carronades in lively conversation for a couple of hours.”

“A carronade is what you call a gun, is it not?”

“A piece of a one—being somewhat short, like your friend, Jack Tier, who is shaped a good deal like a carronade.”

Rose smiled—nay, half laughed, for Harry’s pleasantries almost took the character of wit in her eyes, but she did not the less pursue her inquiries.

“Guns! And where are they, if they be on this vessel?”

“Do not use such a lubberly expression, my dear Rose, if you respect your father’s profession. ‘On a vessel’, is a new-fangled Americanism, that is neither fish, flesh, nor red-herring, as we sailors say—neither English nor Greek.”

“What should I say, then? My wish is not to parade sea-talk, but to use it correctly, when I use it at all.”

“The expression is hardly ‘sea-talk,’ as you call it, but every-day English—that is, when rightly used. ‘On a vessel’ is no more English than it is nautical—no sailor ever used such an expression.”

“Tell me what I ought to say, and you will find me a willing, if not an apt scholar. I am certain of having often read it, in the newspapers, and that quite lately.”

“I’ll answer for that, and it’s another proof of its being wrong. ‘In a vessel’ is as correct as ‘in a coach’, and ‘on a vessel’ as wrong as can be; but you can say ‘on board a vessel’, though not ‘on the boards of a vessel;’ as Mrs. Budd has it.”

“Mr. Mulford!”

“I beg a thousand pardons, Rose, and will offend no more—though she does make some very queer mistakes!”



“My aunt thinks it an honour to my uncle’s memory, to be able to use the language of his professional life, and if she does sometimes make mistakes that are absurd, it is with motives so respectable that no sailor should deride them.”

“I am rebuked for ever. Mrs. Budd may call the anchor a silver spoon, hereafter, without my even smiling. But if the aunt has this kind remembrance of a seaman’s life, why cannot the niece think equally well of it?”

“Perhaps she does,” returned Rose, smiling again—“seeing all its attractions through the claims of Captain Spike.”

“I think half the danger from him gone, now that you seem so much on your guard. What an odious piece of deception, to persuade Mrs. Budd that you were fast falling into a decline!”

“One so odious that I shall surely quit the brig at the first port we enter, or even in the first suitable vessel that we may speak.”

“And Mrs. Budd—could you persuade her to such a course?”

“You scarce know us, Harry Mulford. My aunt commands, when there is no serious duty to perform, but we change places when there is. I can persuade her to anything that is right, in ten minutes.”

“You might persuade a world!” cried Harry, with strong admiration expressed in his countenance; after which he began to converse with Rose, on a subject so interesting to themselves, that we do not think it prudent to relate any more of the discourse, forgetting all about the guns.

About four o’clock, of a fine summer’s afternoon, the *Swash* went through the Race, on the best of the ebb, and with a staggering south-west wind. Her movement by the land, just at that point, could not have been less than at the rate of fifteen miles in the hour. Spike was in high spirits, for his brig had got on famously that day, and there was nothing in sight to the eastward. He made no doubt, as he had told his mate, that the steamer had gone into the Vineyard Sound, and that she was bound over the shoals.

“They want to make political capital out of her,” he added, using one of the slang phrases, that the “business habits” of the American people are so rapidly incorporating with the common language of the country—“They want to make political capital out of her, Harry, and must show her off to the Boston folk, who are full of notions. Well, let them turn her to as much account in that way as they please, so long as they keep her clear of the *Molly*. Your sarvant, Madam Budd”—addressing the widow, who just at that moment came on deck—“a fine a’ternoon, and likely to be a clear night to run off the coast in.”



“Clear nights are desirable, and most of all at sea, Captain Spike,” returned the relict, in her best, complacent manner, “whether it be to run off a coast, or to run on a coast. In either case, a clear night, or a bright moon must be useful.”

Captain Spike rolled his tobacco over in his mouth, and cast a furtive glance at the mate, but he did not presume to hazard any further manifestations of his disposition to laugh.

“Yes, Madam Budd,” he answered, “it is quite as you say, and I am only surprised where you have picked up so much of what I call useful nautical knowledge.”

“We live and learn, sir. You will recollect that this is not my first voyage, having made one before, and that I passed a happy, happy, thirty years, in the society of my poor, dear husband, Rose’s uncle. One must have been dull, indeed, not to have picked up, from such a companion, much of a calling that was so dear to him, and the particulars of which were so very dear to him. He actually gave me lessons in the ‘sea dialect,’ as he called it, which probably is the true reason I am so accurate and general in my acquisitions.”

“Yes, Madam Budd—yes—hem—you are—yes, you are wonderful in that way. We shall soon get an offing, now, Madam Budd—yes, soon get an offing, now.”

“And take in our departure, Captain Spike—” added the widow, with a very intelligent smile.

“Yes, take our departure. Montauk is yonder, just coming in sight; only some three hours’ run from this spot. When we get there, the open ocean will lie before us; and give me the open sea, and I’ll not call the king my uncle.”

“Was he your uncle, Captain Spike?”

“Only in a philanthropic way, Madam Budd. Yes, let us get a good offing, and a rapping to’ gallant breeze, and I do not think I should care much for two of Uncle Sam’s new-fashioned revenue craft, one on each side of me.”

“How delightful do I find such conversation, Rose! It’s as much like your poor, dear uncle’s, as one pea is like another. ‘Yes,’ he used to say, too, ‘let me only have one on each side of me, and a wrapper round the topgallant sail to hold the breeze, and I’d not call the king my uncle.’ Now I think of it, he used to talk about the king as his uncle, too.”

“It was all talk, aunty. He had no uncle, and, what is more, he had no king.”

“That’s quite true, Miss Rose,” rejoined Spike, attempting a bow, which ended in a sort of jerk. “It is not very becoming in us republicans to be talking of kings, but a habit is a habit. Our forefathers had kings, and we drop into their ways without thinking of what we are doing. Fore-topgallant yard, there?”



“Sir.”

“Keep a bright look-out, ahead. Let me know the instant you make anything in the neighbourhood of Montauk.”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

“As I was saying, Madam Budd, we seamen drop into our forefathers’ ways. Now, when I was a youngster, I remember, one day, that we fell in with a ketch—you know, Miss Rose, what a ketch is, I suppose?”

“I have not the least notion of it, sir.”

“Rosy, you amaze me!” exclaimed the aunt—“and you a ship-master’s niece, and a ship-master’s daughter! A catch is a trick that sailors have, when they quiz landsmen.”

“Yes, Madam Budd, yes; we have them sort of catches, too; but I now mean the vessel with a peculiar rig, which we call a ketch, you know.”

“Is it the full-jigger, or the half-jigger sort, that you mean?”

Spike could hardly stand this, and he had to hail the topgallant-yard again, in order to keep the command of his muscles, for he saw by the pretty frown that was gathering on the brow of Rose, that she was regarding the matter a little seriously. Luckily, the answer of the man on the yard diverted the mind of the widow from the subject, and prevented the necessity of any reply.

“There’s a light, of course, sir, on Montauk, is there not, Captain Spike?” demanded the seaman who was aloft.

“To be sure there is—every head-land, hereabouts, has its light; and some have two.”

“Ay, ay, sir—it’s that which puzzles me; I think I see one light-house, and I’m not certain but I see two.”

“If there is anything like a second, it must be a sail. Montauk has but one light.”

Mulford sprang into the fore-rigging, and in a minute was on the yard. He soon came down, and reported the lighthouse in sight, with the afternoon’s sun shining on it, but no sail near.

“My poor, dear Mr. Budd used to tell a story of his being cast away on a light-house, in the East Indies,” put in the relict, as soon as the mate had ended his report, “which always affected me. It seems there were three ships of them together, in an awful tempest directly off the land—”

“That was comfortable, any how,” cried Spike;—“if it must blow hard, let it come off the land, say I.”

“Yes, sir, it was directly off the land, as my poor husband always said, which made it so much the worse you must know, Rosy; though Captain Spike’s gallant spirit would rather encounter danger than not. It blew what they call a Hyson, in the Chinese seas—”





“A what, aunty?—Hyson is the name of a tea, you know.”

“A Hyson, I’m pretty sure it was; and I suppose the wind is named after the tea, or the tea after the wind.”

“The ladies do get in a gale, sometimes, over their tea,” said Spike gallantly. “But I rather think Madam Budd must mean a Typhoon.”

“That’s it—a Typhoon, or a Hyson—there is not much difference between them, you see. Well, it blew a Typhoon, and they are always mortal to somebody. This my poor Mr. Budd well knew, and he had set his chronometer for that Typhoon—”

“Excuse me, aunty, it was the barometer that he was watching—the chronometer was his watch.”

“So it was—his watch on deck was his chronometer, I declare. I am forgetting a part of my education. Do you know the use of a chronometer, now, Rose? You have seen your uncle’s often, but do you know how he used it?”

“Not in the least, aunty. My uncle often tried to explain it, but I never could understand him.”

“It must have been, then, because Captain Budd did not try to make himself comprehended,” said Mulford, “for I feel certain nothing would be easier than to make you understand the uses of the chronometer.”

“I should like to learn it from you, Mr. Mulford,” answered the charming girl, with an emphasis so slight on the ‘you,’ that no one observed it but the mate, but which was clear enough to him, and caused every nerve to thrill.

“I can attempt it,” answered the young man, “if it be agreeable to Mrs. Budd, who would probably like to hear it herself.”

“Certainly, Mr. Mulford; though I fancy you can say little on such a subject that I have not often heard already, from my poor, dear Mr. Budd.”

This was not very encouraging, truly; but Rose continuing to look interested, the mate proceeded.

“The use of the chronometer is to ascertain the longitude,” said Harry, “and the manner of doing it is, simply this: A chronometer is nothing more nor less than a watch, made with more care than usual, so as to keep the most accurate time. They are of all sizes, from that of a clock, down to this which I wear in my fob, and which is a watch in size and appearance. Now, the nautical almanacs are all calculated to some particular meridian—”

“Yes,” interrupted the relict, “Mr. Budd had a great deal to say about meridians.”

“That of London, or Greenwich, being the meridian used by those who use the English Almanacs, and those of Paris or St. Petersburg, by the French and Russians.



Each of these places has an observatory, and chronometers that are kept carefully regulated, the year round. Every chronometer is set by the regulator of the particular observatory or place to which the almanac used is calculated.”

“How wonderfully like my poor, dear Mr. Budd, all this is, Rosy! Meridians, and calculated, and almanacs! I could almost think I heard your uncle entertaining me with one of his nautical discussions, I declare!”

“Now the sun rises earlier in places east, than in places west of us.”

“It rises earlier in the summer, but later in the winter, everywhere, Mr. Mulford.”

“Yes, my dear Madam; but the sun rises earlier every day, in London, than it does in New York.”

“That is impossible,” said the widow, dogmatically—“Why should not the sun rise at the same time in England and America?”

“Because England is east of America, aunty. The sun does not move, you know, but only appears to us to move, because the earth turns round from west to east, which causes those who are farthest east to see it first. That is what Mr. Mulford means.”

“Rose has explained it perfectly well,” continued the mate. “Now the earth is divided into 360 degrees, and the day is divided into 24 hours. If 360 be divided by 24, the quotient will be 15. It follows that, for each fifteen degrees of longitude, there is a difference of just one hour in the rising of the sun, all over the earth, where it rises at all. New York is near five times 15 degrees west of Greenwich, and the sun consequently rises five hours later at New York than at London.”

“There must be a mistake in this, Rosy,” said the relict, in a tone of desperate resignation, in which the desire to break out in dissent, was struggling oddly enough with an assumed dignity of deportment. “I’ve always heard that the people of London are some of the latest in the world. Then, I’ve been in London, and know that the sun rises in New York, in December, a good deal earlier than it does in London, by the clock—yes, by the clock.”

“True enough, by the clock, Mrs. Budd, for London is more than ten degrees north of New York, and the farther north you go, the later the sun rises in winter, and the earlier in summer.”

The relict merely shrugged her shoulders, as much as to say that she knew no such thing; but Rose, who had been well taught, raised her serene eyes to her aunt’s face, and mildly said—“All true, aunty, and that is owing to the fact that the earth is smaller at each end than in the middle.”



“Fiddle faddle with your middles and ends, Rose—I’ve been in London, dear, and know that the sun rises later there than in New York, in the month of December, and that I know by the clock, I tell you.”

“The reason of which is,” resumed Mulford, “because the clocks of each place keep the time of that place. Now, it is different with the chronometers; they are set in the observatory of Greenwich, and keep the time of Greenwich. This watch chronometer was set there, only six months since; and this time, as you see, is near nine o’clock, when in truth it is only about four o’clock here, where we are.”

“I wonder you keep such a watch, Mr. Mulford!”

“I keep it,” returned the mate, smiling, “because I know it to keep good time. It has the Greenwich time; and, as your watch has the New York time, by comparing them together, it is quite easy to find the longitude of New York.”

“Do you, then, keep watches to compare with your chronometers?” asked Rose, with interest.

“Certainly not; as that would require a watch for every separate part of the ocean, and then we should only get known longitudes. It would be impracticable, and load a ship with nothing but watches. What we do is this: We set our chronometers at Greenwich, and thus keep the Greenwich true time wherever we go. The greatest attention is paid to the chronometers, to see that they receive no injuries; and usually there are two, and often more of them, to compare one with another, in order to see that they go well. When in the middle of the ocean, for instance, we find the true time of the day at that spot, by ascertaining the height of the sun. This we do by means of our quadrants, or sextants; for, as the sun is always in the zenith at twelve o’clock, nothing is easier than to do this, when the sun can be seen, and an arc of the heavens measured. At the instant the height of the sun is ascertained by one observer, he calls to another, who notes the time on the chronometer. The difference in these two times, or that of the chronometer and that of the sun, gives the distance in degrees and minutes, between the longitude of Greenwich and that of the place on the ocean where the observer is; and that gives him his longitude. If the difference is three hours and twenty minutes, in time, the distance from Greenwich is fifty degrees of longitude, because the sun rises three hours and twenty minutes sooner in London, than in the fiftieth degree of west longitude.”

“A watch is a watch, Rosy,” put in the aunt, doggedly—“and time is time.—When it’s four o’clock at our house, it’s four o’clock at your aunt Sprague’s, and it’s so all over the world. The world may turn round—I’ll not deny it, for your uncle often said as



much as that, but it cannot turn in the way Mr. Mulford says, or we should all fall off it, at night, when it was bottom upwards. No, sir, no; you've started wrong. My poor, dear, late Mr. Budd, always admitted that the world turned round, as the books say; but when I suggested to him the difficulty of keeping things in their places, with the earth upside down, he acknowledged candidly—for he was all candour, I must say that for him—and owned that he had made a discovery by means of his barometer, which showed that the world did not turn round in the way you describe, or by rolling over, but by whirling about, as one turns in a dance. You must remember your uncle's telling me this, Rose?"

Rose did remember her uncle's telling her aunt this, as well as a great many other similar prodigies. Captain Budd had married his silly wife on account of her pretty face, and when the novelty of that was over, he often amused himself by inventing all sorts of absurdities, to amuse both her and himself. Among other things, Rose well remembered his quieting her aunt's scruples about falling off the earth, by laying down the theory that the world did not "roll over," but "whirl round." But Rose did not answer the question.

"Objects are kept in their places on the earth by means of attraction," Mulford ventured to say, with a great deal of humility of manner. "I believe it is thought there is no up or down, except as we go from or towards the earth; and that would make the position of the last a matter of indifference, as respects objects keeping on it."

"Attractions are great advantages, I will own, sir, especially to our sex. I think it will be acknowledged there has been no want of them in our family, any more than there has been of sense and information. Sense and information we pride ourselves on; attractions being gifts from God, we try to think less of them. But all the attractions in the world could not keep Rosy, here, from falling off the earth, did it ever come bottom upwards. And, mercy on me, where would she fall to!"

Mulford saw that argument was useless, and he confined his remarks, during the rest of the conversation, to showing Rose the manner in which the longitude of a place might be ascertained, with the aid of the chronometer, and by means of observations to get the true time of day, at the particular place itself. Rose was so quick-witted, and already so well instructed, as easily to comprehend the principles; the details being matters of no great moment to one of her sex and habits. But Mrs. Budd remained antagonist to the last. She obstinately maintained that twelve o'clock was twelve o'clock; or, if there was any difference, "London hours were notoriously later than those of New York."



Against such assertions arguments were obviously useless, and Mulford, perceiving that Rose began to fidget, had sufficient tact to change the conversation altogether.

And still the *Molly Swash* kept in swift motion. Montauk was by this time abeam, and the little brigantine began to rise and fall, on the long swells of the Atlantic, which now opened before her, in one vast sheet of green and rolling waters. On her right lay the termination of Long Island; a low, rocky cape, with its light, and a few fields in tillage, for the uses of those who tended it. It was the “land’s end” of New York, while the island that was heaving up out of the sea, at a distance of about twenty miles to the eastward, was the property of Rhode Island, being called Blok Island. Between the two, the *Swash* shaped her course for the ocean.

Spike had betrayed uneasiness, as his brig came up with Montauk; but the coast seemed clear, with not even a distant sail in sight, and he came aft, rubbing his hands with delight, speaking cheerfully.

“All right, Mr. Mulford,” he cried—“everything ship-shape and brister-fashion—not even a smack fishing here-away, which is a little remarkable. Ha!—What are you staring at, over the quarter, there?”

“Look here, sir, directly in the wake of the setting sun, which we are now opening from the land—is not that a sail?”

“Sail! Impossible, sir. What should a sail be doing in there, so near Montauk—no man ever saw a sail there in his life. It’s a spot in the sun, Madam Budd, that my mate has got a glimpse at, and, sailor-like, he mistakes it for a sail! Ha—ha—ha—yes, Harry, it’s a spot in the sun.”

“It is a spot on the sun, as you say, but it’s a spot made by a vessel—and here is a boat pulling towards her, might and main; going from the light, as if carrying news.”

It was no longer possible for Spike’s hopes to deceive him. There was a vessel, sure enough; though, when first seen, it was so directly in a line with the fiery orb of the setting sun, as to escape common observation. As the brig went foaming on towards the ocean, however, the black speck was soon brought out of the range of the orb of day, and Spike’s glass was instantly levelled at it.

“Just as one might expect, Mr. Mulford,” cried the captain, lowering his glass, and looking aloft to see what could be done to help his craft along; “a bloody revenue cutter, as I’m a wicked sinner! There she lies, sir, within musket shot of the shore, hid behind the point, as it might be in waiting for us, with her head to the southward, her helm hard down, topsail aback, and foresail brailled; as wicked looking a thing as





Free Trade and Sailor's Rights ever ran from. My life on it, sir, she's been put in that precise spot, in waiting for the *Molly* to arrive. You see, as we stand on, it places her as handsomely to windward of us, as the heart of man could desire."

"It is a revenue cutter, sir; now she's out of the sun's wake, that is plain enough. And that is her boat, which has been sent to the light to keep a look-out for us. Well, sir, she's to windward; but we have everything set for our course, and as we are fairly abeam, she must be a great traveller to overhaul us."

"I thought these bloody cutters were all down in the Gulf," growled the captain, casting his eyes aloft again, to see that everything drew. "I'm sure the newspapers have mentioned as many as twenty that are down there, and here is one, lying behind Montauk, like a snake in the grass!"

"At any rate, by the time he gets his boat up we shall get the start of him—ay, there he fills and falls off, to go and meet her. He'll soon be after us, Captain Spike, at racing speed."

Everything occurred as those two mariners had foreseen. The revenue cutter, one of the usual fore-top-sail schooners that are employed in that service, up and down the coast, had no sooner hoisted up her boat, than she made sail, a little off the wind, on a line to close with the *Swash*. As for the brig, she had hauled up to an easy bowline, as she came round Montauk, and was now standing off south southeast, still having the wind at south-west. The weatherly position of the cutter enabled her to steer rather more than one point freer. At the commencement of this chase, the vessels were about a mile and a half apart, a distance too great to enable the cutter to render the light guns she carried available, and it was obvious from the first, that everything depended on speed. And speed it was, truly; both vessels fairly flying; the *Molly Swash* having at last met with something very like her match. Half an hour satisfied both Spike and Mulford that, by giving the cutter the advantage of one point in a freer wind, she would certainly get alongside of them, and the alternative was therefore to keep off.

"A starn chase is a long chase, all the world over," cried Spike—"edge away, sir; edge away, sir, and bring the cutter well on our quarter."

This order was obeyed; but to the surprise of those in the *Swash*, the cutter did not exactly follow, though she kept off a little more. Her object seemed to be to maintain her weatherly position, and in this manner the two vessels ran on for an hour longer, until the *Swash* had made most of the distance between Montauk and Blok Island. Objects were even becoming dimly visible on the last, and the light on the point was just becoming visible, a lone star above a waste of desert, the sun having been down now fully a quarter of an hour, and twilight beginning to draw the curtain of night over the waters.



“A craft under Blok,” shouted the look-out, that was still kept aloft as a necessary precaution.

“What sort of a craft?” demanded Spike, fiercely; for the very mention of a sail, at that moment, aroused all his ire. “Arn’t you making a frigate out of an apple-orchard?”

“It’s the steamer, sir. I can now see her smoke. She’s just clearing the land, on the south side of the island, and seems to be coming round to meet us.”

A long, low, eloquent whistle from the captain, succeeded this announcement. The man aloft was right. It was the steamer, sure enough; and she had been lying hid behind Blok Island, exactly as her consort had been placed behind Montauk, in waiting for their chase to arrive. The result was, to put the *Molly Swash* in exceeding jeopardy, and the reason why the cutter kept so well to windward was fully explained. To pass out to sea between these two craft was hopeless. There remained but a single alternative from capture by one or by the other,—and that Spike adopted instantly. He kept his brig dead away, setting studding-sails on both sides. This change of course brought the cutter nearly aft, or somewhat on the other quarter, and laid the brig’s head in a direction to carry her close to the northern coast of the island. But the principal advantage was gained over the steamer, which could not keep off, without first standing a mile or two, or even more, to the westward, in order to clear the land. This was so much clear gain to the *Swash*, which was running off at racing speed, on a north-east course, while her most dangerous enemy was still heading to the westward. As for the cutter, she kept away; but it was soon apparent that the brig had the heels of her, dead before the wind.

Darkness now began to close around the three vessels; the brig and the schooner soon becoming visible to each other principally by means of their night-glasses; though the steamer’s position could be easily distinguished by means of her flaming chimney. This latter vessel stood to the westward for a quarter of an hour, when her commander appeared to become suddenly conscious of the ground he was losing, and he wore short round, and went off before the wind, under steam and canvas; intending to meet the chase off the northern side of the island. The very person who had hailed the *Swash*, as she was leaving the wharf, who had passed her in Hell-Gate, with Jack Tier in his boat, and who had joined her off Throgmorton’s, was now on her deck, urging her commander by every consideration not to let the brig escape. It was at his suggestion that the course was changed. Nervous, and eager to seize the brig, he prevailed on the commander of the steamer to alter his course. Had he done no more than this, all might have been well; but so exaggerated were his notions of the *Swash*’s sailing, that, instead of suffering the steamer to keep close along the eastern side of the island, he persuaded her commander of the necessity of standing off a long distance to the northward and



eastward, with a view to get ahead of the chase. This was not bad advice, were there any certainly that Spike would stand on, of which, however, he had no intention.

The night set in dark and cloudy; and, the instant that Spike saw, by means of the flaming chimney, that the steamer had wore, and was going to the eastward of Blok, his plan was laid. Calling to Mulford, he communicated it to him, and was glad to find that his intelligent mate was of his own way of thinking. The necessary orders were given, accordingly, and everything was got ready for its execution.

In the meantime, the two revenue craft were much in earnest. The schooner was one of the fastest in the service, and had been placed under Montauk, as described, in the confident expectation of her being able to compete with even the *Molly Swash* successfully, more especially if brought upon a bowline. Her commander watched the receding form of the brig with the closest attention, until it was entirely swallowed up in the darkness, under the land, towards which he then sheered himself, in order to prevent the *Swash* from hauling up, and turning to windward, close in under the shadow of the island. Against this manoeuvre, however, the cutter had now taken an effectual precaution, and her people were satisfied that escape in that way was impossible.

On the other hand, the steamer was doing very well. Driven by the breeze, and propelled by her wheels, away she went, edging further and further from the island, as the person from the Custom-House succeeded, as it might be, inch by inch, in persuading the captain of the necessity of his so doing. At length a sail was dimly seen ahead, and then no doubt was entertained that the brig had got to the northward and eastward of them. Half an hour brought the steamer alongside of this sail, which turned out to be a brig that had come over the shoals, and was beating into the ocean, on her way to one of the southern ports. Her captain said there had nothing passed to the eastward.

Round went the steamer, and in went all her canvas. Ten minutes later the lookout saw a sail to the westward, standing before the wind. Odd as it might seem, the steamer's people now fancied they were sure of the *Swash*. There she was, coming directly for them, with squared yards! The distance was short, or a vessel could not have been seen by that light, and the two craft were soon near each other. A gun was actually cleared on board the steamer, ere it was ascertained that the stranger was the schooner! It was now midnight, and nothing was in sight but the coasting brig. Reluctantly, the revenue people gave the matter up; the *Molly Swash* having again eluded them, though by means unknown.

