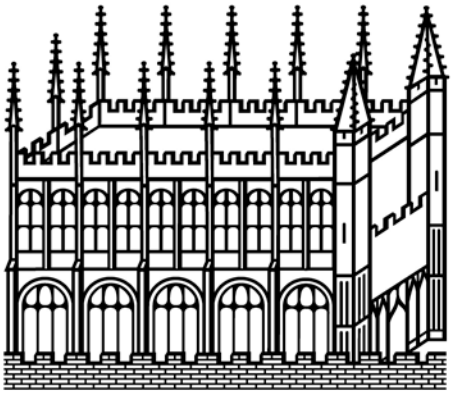
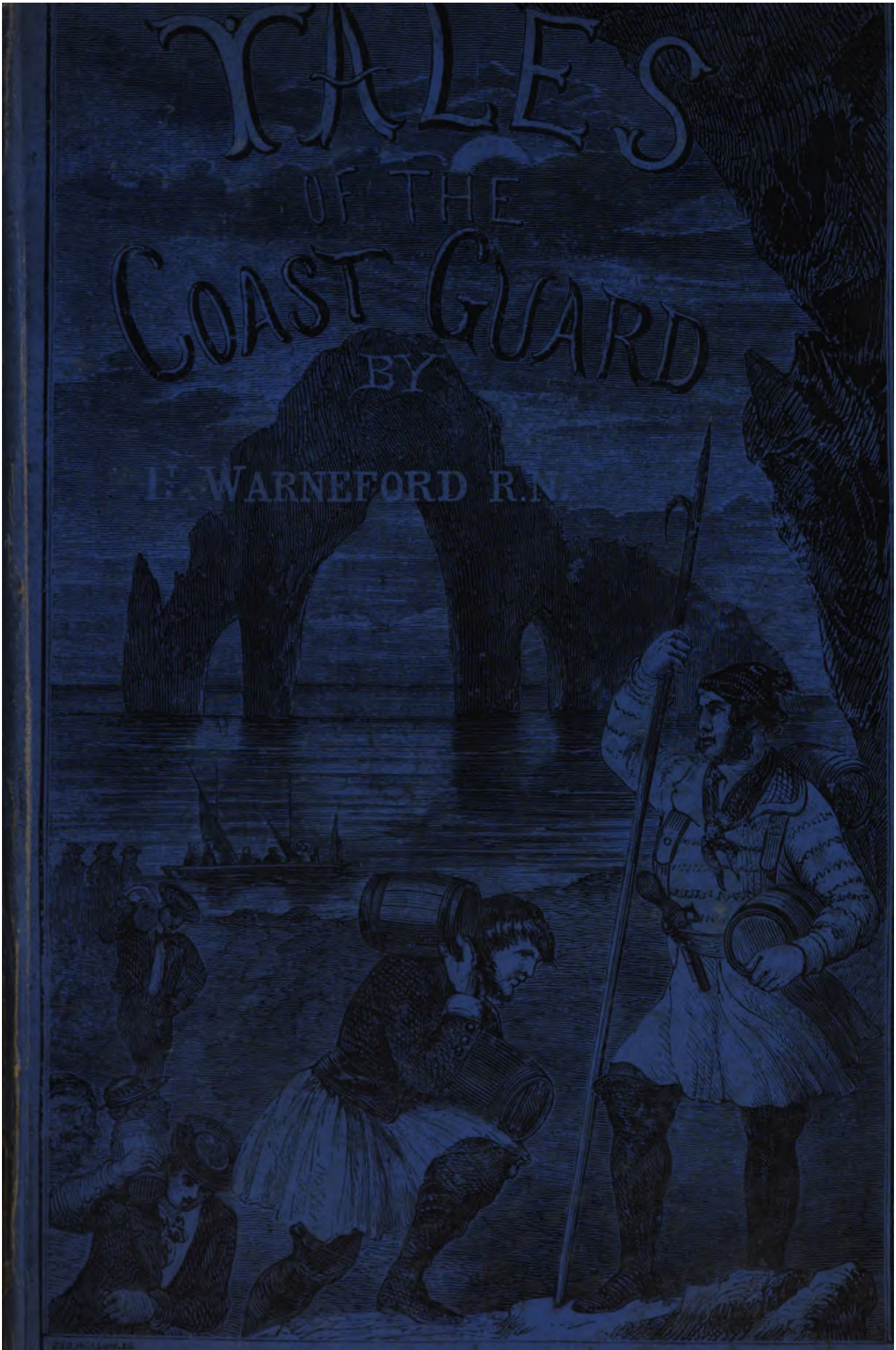


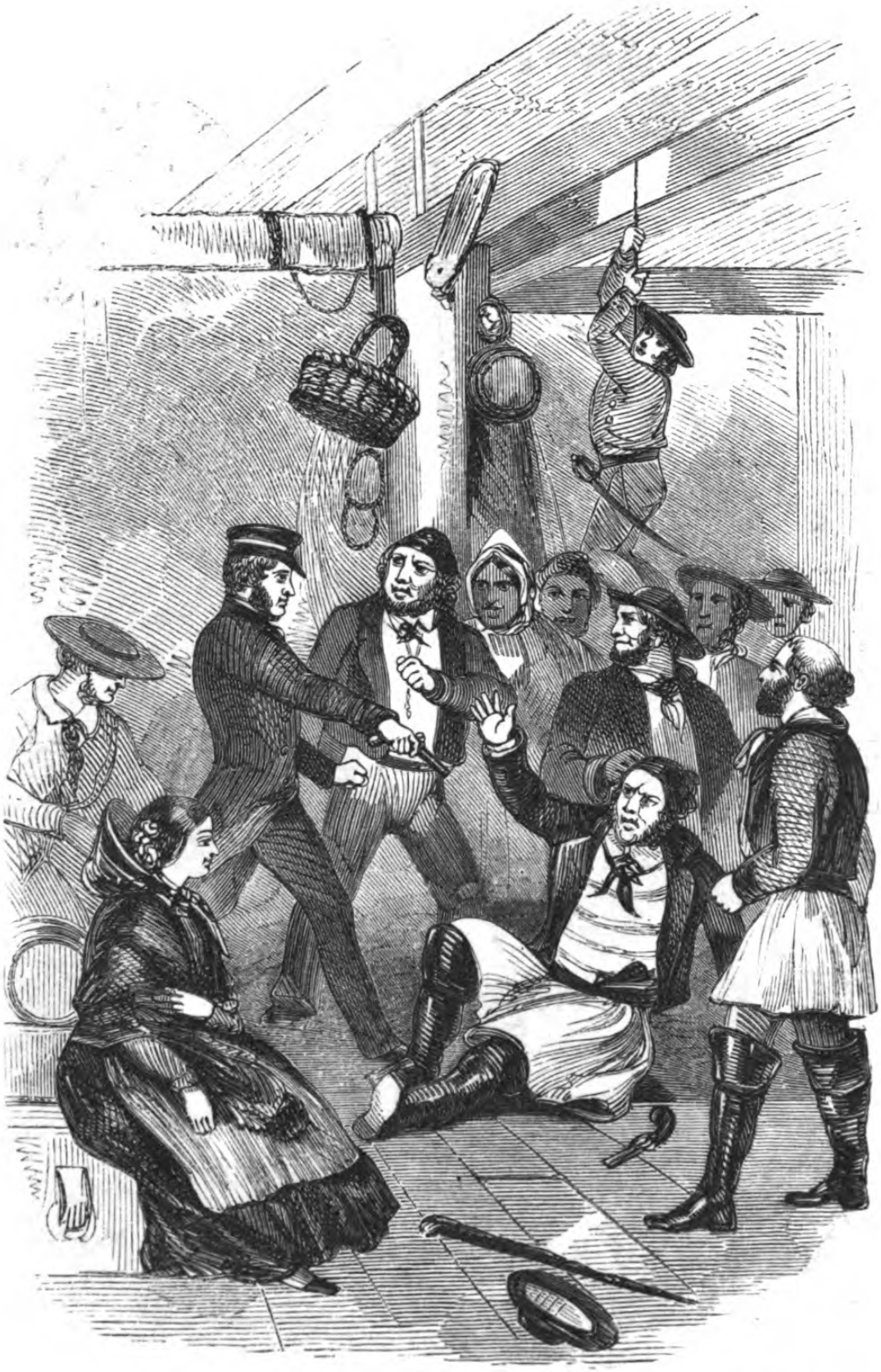
TALES OF THE COAST GUARD

BY

F. WARNEFORD R.N.



J. & C. P. BROWN



A rope had been made fast to one of the rafters, down which we all quietly slid.—p. 131.

TALES OF THE COAST GUARD

BY

Lt WARNEFORD. R.N.

J.&C.P.BROWN

AVE MARIA LANE LONDON.

TALES

OF

The Coast Guard.

BY

LIEUTENANT WARNEFORD, R.N.

"There be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves; and the peril of waters, winds, and rocks."

SHAKSPERE.

LONDON:
J. & C. BROWN & CO AVE MARIA LANE.
1856.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

Preface.

It has occurred to me whilst running over the Printer's proofs of these transcripts from a Journal, the last page of which was written nearly thirty years ago, that some of the incidents may lack likelihood in the eyes of men whose experience of the Coast-Guard Service is of modern date. Those gentlemen will, however, please to remember that the now efficient organization of the Preventive Service, formerly carried on without plan, or more

correctly without methodized intelligence, combined with a great reduction of duties, has so crippled the chances and gains of the professional smuggler, that whilst the risk to be run is much greater, he has no longer the same inducement to encounter it. Given, however, the same conditions—prohibitive duties and a comparatively inefficient Preventive Service, as on the coast of Spain in the present day—and adventures such as I have sketched would soon cease to startle by their novelty or strangeness.

R. W.

London, 1856.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

MOTHER AND SON.

It may be as well to observe at starting, that the slight, unpretending sketches I am about to jot down of a few rough adventures in the Preventive Service of this country will present no fancy pictures of high-souled, dashing smugglers, such as I have seen spouting heroics at minor theatres—rollicking gentlemen, who abound in all the first-rate virtues of generosity, daring, gallantry, and skill, slightly clouded, if at all, by an irresistible propensity for defrauding the revenue—more, it is usually made to appear, for the fun

and dash of the thing, or to rig out amiable sweethearts or devoted wives with expensive nick-nacks, than for any liking for the, in the main, idle and skulking life of the professional smuggler. I never ran athwart any such gentry; but then it is right to state that my experience was confined to a couple of hundred miles or thereabouts of the southern coasts of England, and those heroes, I fancy, are only to be found, if at all, in latitudes frequented by their relatives—the horse-marines. The fellows I now and then overhauled were of quite another stamp, and seldom sailors either, at least not of the true salt-water lick. Handy enough in a boat, no doubt, but with much better land than sea legs, as many an unsuccessful shore-chase has but too frequently proved to my entire conviction. I am speaking of between thirty and forty years ago, at which time your genuine sea-dog but little relished such a hide-and-seek along-shore life, especially if anything better could be had; and it can, I should think, be hardly otherwise in these days of steam revenue-cruisers, admirably organised coast-guard, reduced duties, and, consequently, consumptive profits. Thus much hinted by way of warning to readers of a romantic taste, I proceed with the narrative of my first adventure in the revenue-service, prefacing it with a brief chapter of my earlier history, without which it would be nearly if not altogether unintelligible.

I was born at Itchen, a village distant in those days

about a mile and a half, by land and ferry, from Southampton. How much nearer the, as I hear and read, rapidly-increasing town has since approached I cannot say, as it will be twenty-nine years next July since I finally quitted the neighbourhood. The village, at that time chiefly inhabited by ferry and fishermen, crept in a straggling sort of way up a declivity from the margin of the Itchen river, which there reaches and joins the Southampton estuary, till it arrives at Pear-Tree Green, an eminence commanding one of the finest and most varied land-and-water views the eye of man has, I think, ever rested upon. My father, Arthur Warneford, a retired lieutenant of the royal navy, was not a native of the place, as his name alone would sufficiently indicate to a person acquainted with the then Itchen people—almost every one of whom was either a Dible or a Diaper—but he had been many years settled there, and Pear-Tree Churchyard contained the dust of his wife and five children—I and my sister Jane, who was a year older than myself, being all of his numerous family who survived their childhood. We were in fair circumstances, as my father, in addition to his half-pay, possessed an income of something above a hundred pounds a-year. Jane and I were carefully, though of course not highly or expensively educated; and as soon as I had attained the warrior-age of sixteen, I was despatched to sea to fight my country's battles—Sir Joseph Yorke having, at my father's re-

quest, kindly obtained a midshipman's warrant for me; and not very long after joining the ship to which I was appointed, I found myself, to my great astonishment, doubling the French line at the Nile—an exploit which I have since read of with far more satisfaction than I remember to have experienced during its performance.

Four years passed before I had an opportunity of revisiting home; and it was with a beating as well as joyful heart, and light, elastic step, that I set off to walk the distance from Gosport to Itchen. I need hardly say that I was welcomed by Jane with tears of love and happiness. It was not long, however, before certain circumstances occurred which induced my worthy but peremptory father to cut my leave of absence suddenly and unmercifully short. I have before noticed that the aborigines of my native place were for the most part Dibles or Diapers. Well, it happened that among the former was one Ellen Dible, the daughter of a fisherman somewhat more prosperous than many of his fellows. This young lady was a slim, active, blue-eyed, bright-haired gipsy, about three years younger than myself, but somewhat tall and womanly for her age, of a light, charming figure, and rather genteel manners; which latter quality, by-the-by, must have come by nature, for but little education of any kind had fallen to her share. She was, it may be supposed, the *belle* of the place, and very numerous were her rustic admirers; but they all vanished in a

twinkling, awe-struck by my uniform, and especially by the dangling dirk, which I occasionally handled in a very alarming manner; and I, sentimental moon-calf that I was, fell, as it is termed, deeply and earnestly in love with the village beauty! It must have been her personal graces alone—her conversation it could not be—which thus entranced me; for she seldom spoke, and then in reply only, and in mono-syllables; but she listened divinely, and as we strolled in the evening through the fields and woods between Ichen and Netley Abbey, gazed with such en-chanting eloquence in my face as I poured forth the popular love and nonsense poetry of the time, that it is very possible I might have been sooner or later entrapped into a ruinous marriage—not by her, poor girl! she was, I am sure, as guileless as infancy, but by her parents, who were scheming, artful people—had not my father discovered what was going on, and in his rough way dispelled my silly day-dreams at once and for ever.

The churchyard at the summit of Pear-Tree Green, it used to be commonly said, was that in which Gray composed his famous "Elegy," or at all events which partially inspired it. I know not if this be correct; but I remember thinking, as I sat one fine September evening by the side of Ellen Dible upon the flat wooden railing which then enclosed it, that the tradition had great likelihood. The broad and tranquil waters of the Southampton and Itchen rivers

—bounded in the far distance by the New Forest, with its wavy masses of varying light and shade, and on the left by the leafy woods, from out of which I often think the gray ruins of the old abbey must in these days look grimly and spectre-like forth upon the teeming, restless life which mocks its hoary solitude—were at the full of a spring-tide. It was just, too, the hour of "parting day;" and as the sun-tipped spires of the Southampton churches faded gradually into indistinctness, and the earlier stars looked forth, the curfew, mellowed by distance into music, came to us upon the light air which gently stirred fair Ellen's glossy ringlets, as she, with her bonnet in her hand—for our walk had tired her—looked with her dove-innocent, transparent eye in mine while I repeated Gray's melodious lines. The Elegy was concluded, and I was rapturising even more vehemently than was my wont, when, whack! I received a blow on my shoulder, which sent us both off the rail; for Ellen held me by the arm, and it was quite as much as I could do to keep my feet when I reached them. I turned fiercely round, only to encounter the angry and sardonic countenance of my father. "I'll have no more of this nonsense, Bob!" he gruffly exclaimed. "Be off home with you, and to-morrow I'll see you safe on board your ship, depend upon it. As for this pretty minx," he continued, addressing Ellen, who so trembled with confusion and dismay that she could scarcely tie her bonnet-strings, "I

should think she would be better employed in mending her father's shirts, or darning her brother's stockings, than in gossipping her time away with a brainless young lubber like you." I was of course awfully incensed, but present resistance, I knew, was useless; and after contriving to exchange a mute gesture with Ellen of eternal love, constancy, and despair, we took our several ways homewards. Before twelve o'clock the next day I was posting to Gosport, accompanied by my father, but not till after I had obtained, through the agency of my soft-hearted sister, a farewell interview with Ellen, when we of course made fervent vows of mutual fidelity—affirmed and consecrated, at Ellen's suggestion, by the mystical ceremony of breaking a crooked sixpence in halves—a moiety to be worn by each of us about our necks, as an eternal memorial and pendant protest against the flinty hearts of fathers.

This boyish fancy faded but slowly and lingeringly away with the busy and tumultuous years which passed over my head, till the peace of 1815 cast me an almost useless sea-waif upon the land, to take root and vegetate there as I best might upon a lieutenant's half-pay. My father had died about two years before, and the hundred a year he left us was scarcely more than sufficient for the support of my sister, whose chances of an eligible marriage had vanished with her comeliness, which a virulent attack of smallpox had utterly destroyed, though it had in nothing changed

the patient sweetness of her disposition, and the gentle loving spirit that shone through all its disfiguring scars and seams. I had never heard directly from Ellen Dible, although, during the first months of separation, I had written to her many times; the reason of which was partially explained by a few lines in one of Jane's letters, announcing Ellen Dible's marriage—it seemed under some kind of moral compulsion—to a person of her own grade, and their removal from Itchen. This happened about six months after my last interview with her. I made no further inquiries; and, Jane thinking the subject might be a painful one, it happened that, by a kind of tacit understanding, it was never afterwards alluded to between us.

The utter weariness of an idle shore life soon became insupportable, and I determined to solicit the good offices of Sir Joseph Yorke with the Admiralty. The gallant admiral had now taken up his permanent residence near Hamble, a village on the river of that name, which issues into the Southampton water not very far from opposite Calshot Castle. Sir Joseph was drowned there about eight or nine years after I left the station. A more perfect gentleman, let me pause a moment to say, or a better seaman, than Sir Joseph, never, I believe, existed; and of a handsome, commanding presence too—"half-way up a hatchway" at least, to use his own humorous self-description, his legs scarcely corresponding in vigorous

outline to the rest of his person. He received me with his usual frank urbanity, and I left him provided with a letter to the secretary of the Admiralty—the ultimate and not long-delayed result of which was my appointment to the command of the *Rose* revenue-cutter, the duties attached to which consisted in carefully watching, in the interest of His Majesty's customs, the shores of the Southampton river, the Solent sea, the Wight, and other contiguous portions of the seaboard of Hants and Dorset.

The ways of smugglers were of course new to me; but we had several experienced hands on board, and as I zealously applied myself to the study of the art of contraband, I was not long in acquiring a competent knowledge of the traditional contrivances employed to defraud the revenue. Little of interest occurred during the first three or four weeks of my novel command, except that, by the sharpened vigilance of our look-out, certain circumstances came to light, strongly indicating that Barnaby Diaper, the owner of a cutter-rigged fishing-vessel of rather large burthen, living near Hamble Creek, was extensively engaged in the then profitable practice of running moonshine, demurely and industriously as, when ashore, he appeared to be everlastingly mending his nets, or cobbling the bottom of the smack's boat. He was a hale, wiry fellow this Barnaby—Old Barnaby, as he was familiarly called, surnames in those localities being seldom used—with a wooden stolidity of

countenance which utterly defied scrutiny if it did not silence suspicion. His son, who was a partner in the cutter, lived at Weston, a beautifully-situated hamlet between Itchen and Netley. A vigilant watch was consequently kept upon the movements of the Barnabys, father, son, and grandson—this last a smart, precocious youngster, I understood, of about sixteen years of age, by which family trio the suspicious *Blue-eyed Maid* was, with occasional assistance, manned, sailed, and worked. Very rarely, indeed, was the *Blue-eyed Maid* observed to be engaged in her ostensible occupation. She would suddenly disappear, and as suddenly return, and always, we soon came to notice, on the nights when the *Rose* happened to be absent from the Southampton waters.

We had missed her for upwards of a week, when information reached us that a large lugger we had chased without success a few nights previously would attempt to run a cargo at a spot not far from Lymington, soon after midnight. I accordingly, as soon as darkness had fallen, ran down, and stood off and on, within signal distance of the shore-men with whom I had communicated, till dawn, in vain expectation of the promised prize. I strongly suspected that we had been humbugged; and on rounding Calshot Castle on our return, I had no doubt of it, for there, sure enough, was the *Blue-eyed Maid* riding lightly at anchor off Hamble Creek, and from her slight draught of water it was quite evident that her cargo, what-

ever it might have consisted of, had been landed, or otherwise disposed of. They had been smart with their work, for the summer night and our absence had lasted but a few hours only. I boarded her, and found Old Barnaby, whom I knew by sight, and his two descendants, whom I had not before seen, busily engaged swabbing the cutter's deck, and getting matters generally into order and ship-shape. The son a good deal resembled the old man, except that his features wore a much more intelligent and good-humoured expression; and the boy was an active, bold-eyed, curly-headed youngster, whose countenance, but for a provoking sauciness of expression, apparently habitual to him, would have been quite handsome. I thought I had seen his face somewhere before, and he, I noticed, suddenly stopped from his work on hearing my name, and looked at me with a smiling but earnest curiosity. The morning's work had, I saw, been thoroughly performed; and as I was in no humour for a profitless game of cross questions and crooked answers, I, after exchanging one or two colloquial courtesies, in which I had by no means the advantage, returned to the *Rose* more than ever satisfied that the interesting family I had left required, and would probably repay, the closest watchfulness and care.

On the evening of the same day the *Blue-eyed Maid* again vanished: a fortnight slipped by, and she had not reappeared; when the *Rose*, having slightly

grazed her bottom in going over the shifting shingle at the north-west of the Wight, went into Portsmouth harbour to be examined. Some of her copper was found to be stripped off; there were other trifling damages; and two or three days would elapse before she could be got ready for service. This interval I spent with my sister. The evening after I arrived at Itchen, Jane and I visited Southampton, and accompanied an ancient female acquaintance residing in Bugle Street—a dull, grass-grown place in those days, whatever it may be now—to the theatre in, I believe, the same street. The performances were not over till near twelve o'clock, and after escorting the ladies home, I wended my way towards the Sun Inn on the quay, where I was to sleep—my sister remaining for the night with our friend. The weather, which had been dark and squally an hour or two before, was now remarkably fine and calm; and the porter of the inn telling me they should not close the house for some time longer, I strolled towards the Platform Battery, mounted by a single piece of brass ordnance overlooking the river, and pointing menacingly towards the village of Hythe. The tide was at the full, and a faint breeze slightly rippled the magnificent expanse of water which glanced and sparkled in the bright moon and starlight of a cloudless autumn sky. My attention was not long absorbed by the beauty of the scene, peerless as I deemed it; for unless my eyes strangely deceived me,

the *Blue-eyed Maid* had returned, and quietly anchored off Weston. She appeared to have but just brought up; for the mainsail, three new patches in which chiefly enabled me to recognise her, was still flapping in the wind, and it appeared to me—though from the distance, and the shadow of the dark background of woods in which she lay, it was diffcult to speak with certainty—that she was deeply laden. There was not a moment to be lost; and fortunately, just in the nick of time, a boat with two watermen approached the platform steps. I tendered them a guinea to put me on board the smack off Weston—an offer which they eagerly accepted; and I was soon speeding over the waters to her. My uniform must have apprised the Barnabys of the nature of the visit about to be paid them; for when we were within about a quarter of a mile of their vessel, two figures, which I easily recognised as Old Barnaby and his grandson, jumped into a boat that had been loading alongside, and rowed desperately for the shore, but at a point considerably farther up the river, towards Itchen. There appeared to be no one left on board the *Blue-eyed Maid*, and the shore-confederates of the smugglers did not show themselves, conjecturing doubtless, as I had calculated they would, upon my having plenty of help within signal call. I therefore determined to capture the boat first, and return with her to the cutter. The watermen, excited by the chase, pulled with a will, and in about ten minutes we ran along-

side the Barnabys' boat, jumped in, and found her loaded to the gunwale with brandy kegs.

"Fairly caught at last, old fellow!" I exclaimed, exultingly, in reply to the maledictions he showered on us. "And now pull the boat's head round, and make for the *Blue-eyed Maid*, or I'll run you through the body."

"Pull her head round yourself," he sullenly rejoined, as he rose from the thwart, and unshipped his oar. "It's bad enough to be robbed of one's hard arnings athout helping the thieves to do it!"

His refusal was of no consequence; the watermen's light skiff was made fast astern, and in a few minutes we were pulling steadily towards the still motionless cutter. Old Barnaby was fumbling among the tubs in search, as he growled out, of his pea-jacket; his hopeful grandson was seated at the stern, whistling the then popular air of the "Woodpecker" with great energy and perfect coolness; and I was standing with my back towards them in the bow of the boat, when the stroke-oarsman suddenly exclaimed, "What are you at with the boat's painter, you young devil's cub?" The quick mocking laugh of the boy, and the words, "Now, grandfer, now!" replied to him. Old Barnaby sprang into the boat which the lad had brought close up to the stern, pushing her off as he did so with all his strength; and then the boy, holding the painter or boat-rope,

which he had detached from the ring it had been fastened to, in his hand, jumped over the side; in another instant he was hauled out of the water by Barnaby, and both were seated and pulling lustily, and with exulting shouts, round in the direction of the *Blue-eyed Maid*, before we had recovered from the surprise which the suddenness and completeness of the trick we had been played excited. We were, however, very speedily in vigorous chase; and as the wind, though favourable, and evidently rising, was still light, we had little doubt of success, especially as some precious minutes must be lost to the smuggler in getting underweigh, neither jib nor foresail being as yet set. The watermen bent fiercely to their oars; and heavily-laden as the boat was, we were beginning to slip freely through the water, when an exclamation from one of the men announced another and more perilous trick that the Barnabys had played us. Old Barnaby, in pretending to fumble about for his jacket, had contrived to unship a large plug expressly contrived for the purpose of sinking the boat whenever the exigences of their vocation might render such an operation advisable; and the water was coming in like a sluice. There was no help for it, and the boat's head was immediately turned towards the shore. Another vociferous shout rung in our ears as the full success of their scheme was observed by the Barnabys, replied to of course by the furious but impotent execrations of the

watermen. The boat sank rapidly; and we were still about a hundred yards from the shore, when we found ourselves splashing about in the water, which, fortunately, was not more than up to the arm-pits of the shortest of us, but so full of strong and tangled seaweed, that swimming was out of the question; and we had to wade slowly and painfully through it, a step on a spot of more than usually soft mud plumping us down every now and then over head and ears. After reaching the shore and shaking ourselves, we found leisure to look in the direction of the *Blue-eyed Maid*, and had the exquisite pleasure of seeing her glide gracefully through the water as she stood down the river, impelled by the fast-freshening breeze, and towing the watermen's boat securely at her stern.

There were no means of pursuit; and after indulging in sundry energetic vocables hardly worth repeating, we retreated in savage discomfiture towards Weston, plentifully sprinkling the grass and gravel as we slowly passed along; knocked up the landlord of a public-house, and turning in as soon as possible, happily exchanged our dripping attire for warm blankets and clean sheets, beneath the soothing influence of which I, for one, was soon sound asleep.

Day had hardly dawned when we were all three up, and overhauling the mud and weeds—the tide was quite gone out—for the captured boat and tubs. They had vanished utterly: the fairies about Weston

had spirited them away while we slept, leaving no vestige whatever of the spoil to which we had naturally looked as some trifling compensation for the night's mishap, and the loss of the watermen's boat, to say nothing of the sousing we had got. It was a miserable business certainly, and my promise to provide my helpmates with another boat, should their own not be recovered, soothed but very slightly their sadly-ruffled tempers. But lamentations were useless, and after the lugubrious expression of a dismal hope for better luck next time, we separated.

This pleasant incident did not in the least abate my anxiety to get once more within hailing distance of the Barnabys; but for a long time my efforts were entirely fruitless, and I had begun to think that the *Blue-eyed Maid* had been permanently transferred to another and less-vigilantly watched station, when a slight inkling of intelligence dispelled that fear. My plan was soon formed. I caused it to be carelessly given out on shore that the *Rose* had sprung her bowsprit in the gale a day or two before, and was going the next afternoon into Portsmouth to get another. In pursuance of this intention, the *Rose* soon after noon slipped her moorings, and sailed for that port; remained quietly there till about nine o'clock in the evening, and then came out under close-reefed storm canvas, for it was blowing great guns from the northward, and steered for the

Southampton River. The night was as black as pitch; and but for the continuous and vivid flashes of lightning, no object more than a hundred yards distant from the vessel could have been discerned. We ran up abeam of Hythe without perceiving the object of our search, then tacked, stood across to the other side, and then retraced our course. We were within a short distance of Hamble River, when a prolonged flash threw a ghastly light upon the raging waters, and plainly revealed the *Blue-eyed Maid* lying-to under the lee of the north shore, and, it may be, about half a mile ahead of us. Unfortunately she saw us at the same moment, and as soon as way could be got upon her she luffed sharply up, and a minute afterwards was flying through the water in the hope of yet escaping her unexpected enemy. By edging away to leeward I contrived to cut her off effectually from running into the Channel by the Needles passage; but nothing daunted, she held boldly on without attempting to reduce an inch of canvas, although, from the press she carried, fairly buried in the sea. Right in the course she was steering, the *Donegal*, a huge eighty-gun ship, was riding at anchor off Spithead. Old Barnaby, who, I could discern by his streaming white hairs, was at the helm, in his anxiety to keep as well to windward of us as possible, determined to pass as closely as he prudently could, under the stern of the line-of-battle ship. Unfortunately, just as the little cutter was in

the act of doing so, a furious blast of wind tore away her jib as if it had been cobweb; and, pressed by her large mainsail, the slight vessel flew up into the wind, meeting the *Donegal* as the huge ship drove back from a strain which had brought her half-way to her anchors. The crash was decisive, and caused the instant disappearance of the unfortunate smuggler. The cry of the drowning men, if they had time to utter one, was lost amid the raging of the tempest; and although we threw overboard every loose spar we could lay hands on, it was with scarcely the slightest hope that such aid could avail them in that wild sea. I tacked as speedily as possible, and repassed the spot; but the white foam of the waves, as they leaped and dashed about the leviathan bulk of the *Donegal*, was all that could be perceived, eagerly as we peered over the surface of the angry waters. The *Rose* then stood on, and in little more than an hour afterwards was safely anchored off Hythe.

The boy Barnaby, I was glad to hear a day or two afterwards, had not accompanied his father and grandfather in the last trip made by the *Blue-eyed Maid*, and had consequently escaped the fate which had so suddenly overtaken them, and for which it appeared that the smuggling community held me morally accountable. This was to be expected; but I had too often and too lately been familiar with death at sea in every shape, by the rage of man as well as that of the elements, to be more than slightly

and temporarily affected by such an incident; so that all remembrance of it would probably have soon passed away but for an occurrence which took place about a month subsequently. One of the officers of the shore-force received information that two large luggers, laden with brandy and tobacco from Guernsey, were expected on the following night on some point of the coast between Hamble and Weston; and that, as the cargoes were very valuable, a desperate resistance to the coast-guard, in the event of detection, had been organised. Our plan was soon arranged. The *Rose* was sent away with barely enough of men to handle her, and with the remainder of the crew, I, as soon as night fell, took up a position a little above Netley Abbey. Two other detachments of the coast-guard were posted along the shore, at intervals of about a mile, all, of course, connected by signal-men not more than a hundred yards apart. There was a faint starlight, but the moon would not rise till near midnight; and from this circumstance, as well as from the state of the tides, we could pretty well calculate when to expect our friends, should they come at all. It was not long before we were quite satisfied, from the stealthy movements of a number of persons about the spot, that the information we had received was correct. Just after eleven o'clock a low, peculiar whistle, taken up from distance to distance, was heard; and by placing our ears to the ground, the quick jerk of oars in the rullocks was

quite apparent. After about five minutes of eager restlessness, I gave the impatiently-expected order; we all emerged from our places of concealment, and with cautious but rapid steps advanced upon the by this time busy smugglers. The two luggers were beached upon the soft sand or mud, and between forty and fifty men were each receiving two three-gallon kegs, with which they speeded off to the carts in waiting at a little distance. There were also about twenty fellows ranged as a guard, all armed as efficiently as ourselves. I gave the word; but before we could close with the astonished desperadoes, they fired a pistol volley, by which one seaman, John Batley, a fine athletic young man, was killed, and two others seriously wounded. This done, the scoundrels fled in all directions, hotly pursued of course. I was getting near one of them, when a lad, who was running by his side, suddenly turned, and raising a pistol, discharged it at my head. He fortunately missed his mark, though the whistle of the bullet was unpleasantly close. I closed with and caught the young rascal, who struggled desperately, and to my extreme surprise, I had almost written dismay, discovered that he was young Barnaby! It was not a time for words, and hastily consigning the boy to the custody of the nearest seaman, with a brief order to take care of him, I resumed the pursuit. A bootless one it proved. Favoured by their numbers, their perfect acquaintance with the

hedge-and-ditch neighbourhood, the contrabandists all contrived to escape. The carts also got off, and our only captures were the boy, the luggers, which there had been no time to get off, and their cargoes, with the exception of the few kegs that had reached the carts.

The hunt after the dispersed smugglers was continued by the different parties who came in subsequently to our brush with them, so that after the two wounded seamen had been carried off on litters, and a sufficient guard left in the captured boats, only two men remained with me. The body of John Batley was deposited for the present in one of the luggers, and then the two sailors and myself moved forward to Itchen with the prisoner, where I intended to place him in custody for the night.

The face of the lad was deadly pale, and I noticed that he had been painfully affected by the sight of the corpse; but when I addressed him, his expressive features assumed a scornful, defying expression. First ordering the two men to drop astern out of hearing, I said: "You will be hanged for your share in this night's work, young man, depend upon it."

"Hanged!" he exclaimed in a quick, nervous tone; "hanged! You say that to frighten me! It was not I who shot the man! You know that; or perhaps," he added with a kind of hysterical cry, "perhaps you want to kill me as you did father."

"I have no more inclination, my poor boy," I an-

swered, "to injure you than I had to harm your father. Why, indeed, should I have borne him any ill-will?"

"Why should you? Oh, I know very well!"

"You know more than I do then; but enough of this folly. I wish, I hardly know why, to save you. It was not you, I am quite aware, that fired the fatal shot, but that makes no difference as to your legal guilt. But I think if you could put us on the track of your associates, you might yourself escape."

The lad's fine eyes perfectly lightened with scorn and indignation: "Turn informer!" he exclaimed. "Betray them that loved and trusted me! Never—if they could hang me a thousand times over!"

I made no answer, and nothing more was said till we had reached and were passing the Abbey ruins. The boy then abruptly stopped, and with quivering voice, whilst his eyes filled with tears, said: "I should like to see my mother."

"See your mother! There can be no particular objection to that; but she lives further on at Weston, does she not?"

"No, we have sold off, and moved to Aunt Diaper's, at Netley, up yonder. In a day or two we should have started for Hull, where mother's father's brother lives, and I was to have been 'prenticed to the captain of a Greenlander; but now," he continued with an irrepressible outburst of grief and terror, "Jack Ketch will, you say, be my master, and I shall be only 'prenticed to the gallows."

"Why, if this be so, did your mother permit you to join the lawless desperadoes to whom you owe your present unhappy and degraded position?"

"Mother did not know of it; she thinks I am gone to Southampton to inquire about the day the vessel sails for Hull. Mother will die if I am hanged!" exclaimed the lad with a renewed burst of passionate grief; "and surely you would not kill *her?*"

"It is not very likely I should wish to do so, considering that I have never seen her."

"Oh yes—yes, you have!" he sharply rejoined. "Then perhaps you do not know! Untie or cut these cords," he added, approaching close to me and speaking in a low, quick whisper; "give me a chance: mother's girl's name was Ellen Dible!"

Had the lad's fettered arm been free, and he had suddenly dealt me a blow with a knife or dagger, the stroke could not have been more sharp or terrible than these words conveyed.

"God of mercy!" I exclaimed, as the momently-arrested blood again shot through my heart with reactive violence, "can this be true?"

"Yes, yes—true, quite true!" continued the boy, with the same earnest look and low, hurried speech. "I saw, when your waistcoat flew open in the struggle just now, what was at the end of the black ribbon. You will give me a chance for mother's sake, won't you?"

A storm of grief, regret, remorse, was sweeping

through my brain, and I could not for a while make any answer, though the lad's burning eyes continued fixed with fevered anxiety upon my face.

At last I said, gasped rather: "I cannot release you—it is impossible; but all that can be done—all that can—can legally be done, shall be"—— The boy's countenance fell, and he was again deadly pale. "You shall see your mother," I added. "Tell Johnson where to seek her; he is acquainted with Netley." This was done, and the man walked briskly off upon his errand.

"Come this way," I said, after a few minutes' reflection, and directing my steps towards the old ruined fort by the shore, built, I suppose, as a defence to the abbey against pirates. There was but one flight of steps to the summit, and no mode of egress save by the entrance from whence they led. "I will relieve you of these cords while your mother is with you. Go up to the top of the fort. You will be unobserved, and we can watch here against any foolish attempt at escape."

Ten minutes had not elapsed when the mother, accompanied by Johnson, and sobbing convulsively, appeared. Roberts hailed her, and after a brief explanation, she ascended the steps with tottering but hasty feet to embrace her son. A quarter of an hour, she had been told, would be allowed for the interview.

The allotted time had passed, and I was getting

impatient, when a cry from the summit of the fort or tower, as if for help to some one at a distance, roused and startled us. As we stepped out of the gateway, and looked upwards to ascertain the meaning of the sudden cry, the lad darted out and sped off with surprising speed. One of the men instantly snatched a pistol from his waistbelt, but at a gesture from me put it back. "He cannot escape," I said. "Follow me, but use no unnecessary violence." Finding that we gained rapidly upon him, the lad darted through a low, narrow gateway, into the interior of the abbey ruins, trusting, I imagined, to baffle us in the darkness and intricacy of the place. I just caught sight of him as he disappeared up a long flight of crumbling, winding steps, from which he issued through a narrow aperture upon a lofty wall, some five or six feet wide, and overgrown with grass and weeds. I followed in terrible anxiety, for I feared that in his desperation he would spring off and destroy himself. I shouted loudly to him for God's sake to stop. He did so within a few feet of the end of the wall. I ran quickly towards him, and as I neared him he threw away his hat, and revealed the face of—Ellen Dible!

I stopped, bewildered, dizzy, paralysed. Doubtless the mellowing radiance of the night softened or concealed the ravages which time must have imprinted on her features; for as I gazed upon the spirit-beauty of her excited, beseeching countenance,

the old time came back upon me with a power and intensity which an hour before I could not have believed possible. The men hailed repeatedly from below, but I was too bewildered, too excited, to answer: their shouts, and the young mother's supplicating sobs—she seemed scarcely older than when I parted from her—sounded in my ears like the far-off cries and murmurs of a bewildering, chaotic dream. She must have gathered hope and confidence from the emotion I doubtless exhibited, for as soon as the confusion and ringing in my brain had partially subsided, I could hear her say: "You will save my boy—my only son: for my sake you will save him?"

Another shout from the men below demanded if I had got the prisoner. "Ay, ay," I mechanically replied, and they immediately hastened to join us.

"Which way—which way is he gone?" I asked, as the seamen approached.

She instinctively caught my meaning: "By the shore to Weston," she hurriedly answered; "he will find a boat there."

The men now came up: "The chase has led us astray," I said: "look there."

"His mother, by jingo!" cried Johnson. "They must have changed clothes!"

"Yes: the boy is off—to—to Hamble, I have no doubt. You both follow in that direction: I'll pursue by the Weston and Itchen road."

The men started off to obey this order, and as they

did so, I heard her broken murmur of "Bless you, Robert—bless you!" I turned away, faint, reeling with excitement, muttered a hasty farewell, and with disordered steps and flaming pulse hurried homewards. The mother I never saw again: the son at whose escape from justice I thus weakly, it may be criminally, connived, I met a few years ago in London. He is the captain of a first-class ship in the Australian trade, and a smarter sailor I think I never beheld. His mother is still alive, and lives with her daughter-in-law at Chelsea.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

THE SMUGGLERS' HOSTAGE.

Only one of the seamen wounded in the brush with the smugglers previously narrated recovered. The other, James Norton, having been hit grievously on the left knee-cap, it was found necessary to take off the leg, and the poor fellow sank under the operation. The most energetic measures were, it may be supposed, immediately adopted to bring the guilty parties to justice. The government offered a large reward to any one—excepting, of course, those who fired the fatal shots—that would give information

leading to the conviction of the offenders, and an active inquiry was at once set on foot, and vigorously carried on throughout the neighbourhood. The result was the apprehension of a number of persons to whom suspicion pointed, and the ultimate committal of five of them to the Winchester March assize on the capital charge. It was, however, very doubtful that we had secured one of the chief culprits. There was no evidence that the men in prison were owners of the goods attempted to be run, were armed at the time, or in any way concerned in the affair, save as temporary helpers; and even on this last point the proof with regard to two or three of them was by no means clear. From the blood-tracks leading to a considerable distance, discovered the morning after the affray, it was certain that the hurried and random shots of the seamen must have taken fearful effect on several of the fugitive contrabandists, but not one of these wounded men could be found; and it was greatly feared that the deaths of the two men would remain unavenged. Once during the preliminary investigation I thought we had a chance of letting daylight in upon the confused and foggy business. I was called out of the justice-room at Hamble, where the depositions were being taken before several of the county magistrates, to see a woman who said she had an important communication to make to me in private. This woman, a sightly person, with a clear, healthy, open English look,

though now overcast with bitter grief, I had frequently seen before, and knew her to be the wife of one of the prisoners, Richard White by name, the youngest, and, as I thought, the least implicated of them all. They kept, I knew, a chandler's shop at Hythe, on the south shore of the Southampton River, and just on the skirts of the New Forest. But for one or two self-betraying words dropped in the flurry caused by his sudden apprehension, there was really nothing against him except that he had been seen in close covert discourse with two of the other prisoners on the evening the unfortunate collision took place. His wife, I found, had been terribly scared by a remark of one of the magistrates, and the instant we were alone, she asked me with a hysterical whimper, if I really thought they would hang Richard.

"There cannot be two opinions about it," I promptly replied, desirous of deepening the impression made upon her. "In fact, morally speaking, I look upon him as half-hanged already."

"Oh dear!—oh dear!" sobbed the woman. "What, for mercy's sake, is to be done? Suppose," she added, hesitatingly—"suppose Richard to be willing, would he, do you think, be allowed to turn king's evidence?"

"He knows, then, who the rascals in chief are, where they are to be found, and"——

"I did not say that," she hastily interrupted. "I did not say that: I only meant supposing—suppose Richard"——

"Oh, never mind supposing!—don't think to bamboozle me with supposes!" I sharply rejoined. "Persuade your husband to make a clean breast of it whilst there is yet time—if indeed it be not already too late," I added, as the door of the justice-room opened, and the prisoners, handcuffed and strongly guarded, came out—"for both he and his companions are, I suppose, fully committed for trial."

The wife screamed violently at the sight of her manacled husband—a youngish, meek-faced chap, looking as if butter would scarcely melt in his mouth—and endeavoured to embrace him, but was roughly pushed back by the constables. The examination, I found, had been adjourned till the next day, when the prisoners would be again brought up for the formal completion of the depositions.

Mrs. White again approached me, as, after a few minutes' conference with the magistrates, I was leaving the place. She was yet paler than before, but had ceased whimpering; and there was a feverish light in her eyes which I thought indicated that she had taken a resolution, though seemingly a painful one.

"I worked, sir, as you are aware, many years for Miss Warneford before I married," began the woman; "and as she knows me to be honest and trustworthy, I thought perhaps you might be willing to help us through this trouble?"

"There is nothing like helping one's self, Mrs. White, depend upon it," I answered, "in this as in

every other trouble. Your husband can steer clear of the gallows without my assistance."

"Are you sure, sir, that if Richard could point out where the men who shot Batley and Norton are to be found, he would himself get clear?"

"There cannot be a doubt about it, and pocket the reward into the bargain."

"No—no. God forbid! We'll have no reward—no blood-money!" she added, with a shuddering whisper; "not if it was the Indies of gold! We'll sell all, and leave this part of the country. When can I see Richard?" she resumed after a brief silence —"see him alone, away from the evil companions who have brought this shame upon him. I can persuade him, I know, to save his own life and mine." Without further preface I conducted her to the solicitor for the prosecution, and it was arranged that she should have an interview with her husband early on the following morning, previous to the final examination of the prisoners.

I was early in attendance at the temporary court-house the next day, where I found Mrs. White sitting alone in a small waiting-room in a state of fevered yet dumb anxiety and fear. It was already whispered that her husband was to be admitted evidence for the crown, and the wife had sought the concealment and refuge of the ante-room from the scowling looks and muttered threats of the numerous groups of people waiting outside for the appearance of the prisoners.

It was clear to me that she herself wavered in purpose and resolution, and, but for the belief instilled into her that there was no other mode of saving her husband from the gallows, would at once have retracted the solicitations to which it was understood he had reluctantly yielded. The moral code of the amphibious inhabitants of the coast did not, it must be borne in mind, affix any very deep stain upon the act of shooting the two seamen. It was done, according to them, in hot blood and self-defence, and though to be regretted for the victims' sake, was by no means to be looked upon in the light of a common or deliberate murder. This state of opinion of course branded the expected betrayal of his comrades by Richard White as a dastardly crime of the blackest dye; and when he was brought up, a yell of execration burst forth which completely unnerved him, and I greatly feared that the necessary disclosures would not be made. As he was passing the door of the waiting-room where his wife sat cowering with shame and terror, he stepped eagerly towards her, seized her almost fiercely by the hands, and exclaimed in a shaking voice, "I cannot do it, Martha!—I can't and I wun't!" The poor woman burst into tears, and with a choking voice, as she clung round his neck, urged him, though falteringly, to save his own life—hers—that of their child. The pleadings of the wife and mother were again successful—the more easily, perhaps, that the hootings of the mob had ceased, or at all events could not be heard where he

then stood. The prisoner was immediately conducted before the magistrates, and I went in at the same time. The chairman briefly assured him that if he should be the means of bringing the men who actually slew Batley and Norton to justice, there could be no doubt the king's pardon would be extended to him. White trembled very much while thus addressed, and his changing countenance plainly showed how violent were the conflicting impulses by which he was alternately swayed and dominated. At last he spoke, but the first faint, husky words were interrupted by the vehement yet indistinct cry of a woman; and then his wife burst into the room, wildly exclaiming, "No, no, Richard—don't—not a word, for God's sake—not a word!" The apparently-frantic woman, before any one could interfere, reached, threw her arms round her husband, and whispered something, with rapid and smothered accents, in his ear, which it was immediately plain would deprive us of our witness. The woman's inflamed, disordered aspect was perfectly maniacal; and the moment she saw that White comprehended her meaning, away she flew out of the room with the same wild hurry she had exhibited on entering. The suddenness of the thing took everybody completely by surprise, and excused the fault of the constables in permitting her to approach the prisoner. After the lapse of a few minutes, White was again asked if he had any statement to make: "Only," he doggedly answered, "what I've said afore

—that I am innocent of the sailors being shot, and mortal sorry for it too!" Nothing further could be got out of him. The angry and menacing warning of the chairman produced no impression; and finding both threats and expostulations useless, White was finally committed with the other prisoners, to take their trials at the Hampshire assize on the charge of wilful murder. The woman's extraordinary behaviour had been caused, it was conjectured, by a communication made to her by a seafaring man a minute or two after her husband had gone into the justice-room. She had instantly, on leaving the court-house, taken boat for Hythe.

Weeks wore away, and the month of January had arrived without bringing any additional fact to light in connection with the affair. In the meantime I had been zealous and active in my vocation, but although tolerably successful, not nearly so much as I conceived the many sources of private information I had in various ways contrived to obtain, the carefully-arranged and boldly-executed schemes I had devised, and the perseverance with which I followed them up, entitled me to expect. The smuggling fraternity proved keener hands than I had judged them to be, not unfrequently taking the wind suddenly out of my sails when upon the most ingeniously-contrived tack, and at the very moment I was hugging myself upon assured success. This remarkable sagacity in penetrating my designs, when just on the eve of fulfilment,

gave rise to numberless hazy suspicions which I was exceedingly anxious to clear up, and it was not long before a very unexpected and remarkable opportunity of doing so occurred.

I was fond of wild-fowl shooting, and occasionally used to amuse myself with a duck-gun upon the Southampton water, chiefly off Marchwood and Millbrook, up towards Redbridge, where tolerable sport was frequently to be found. One afternoon, when thus engaged, accompanied by one of the cutter's crew, in a small hired boat, it suddenly came on about half-past three to snow furiously. I had gone rather high up the river, and as the tide was flowing, the pull back to Southampton in such bitter and blinding weather was an unpleasant and laborious one. I took an oar just to keep myself from freezing, and we had reached off Cracknor Hard, near Marchwood, when I caught sight of a large boat, whose character and present occupation could not be mistaken. She was about to creep up, as it is called, a number of tubs sunk there under adverse circumstances perhaps, or in order to their being fished up and secured at the first favourable opportunity. There could be no doubt with respect to the business in hand, as I could distinctly see two men, about two hundred yards apart on the shore, waving their arms to shape the boat's course to the exact spot where the tubs had been deposited. The mode by which the contraband confederacy manage to place a precise and

—the great point—an *invisible* mark, where a boat or larger vessel may find it prudent to sink her cargo, is simple and ingenious enough: two persons on shore, standing two or three hundred yards apart —the boat or vessel being about midway between them—first carefully mark the places on which they stand, and then each of them notes the object on the opposite shore in line with the boat and himself. It is obvious that the two men have but to stand again in the same places, and wave the boat into line with the distant object—to the point, in fact, where the line of sight of both meet and cross, and the exact spot will be ascertained and reached. If there be no opposite shore or distant fixed objects, the operation is more difficult and uncertain, but to clever and practised hands a star will suffice. This process in trigonometry was now going on; and, considering that we were near the shore, and almost within call of assistance—that there were but five men in the boat, all probably unarmed, whilst we had a loaded duck-gun and a pair of double-barrelled pistols, which the frequently sudden exigencies of the service had taught me never to be without—and that, moreover, the Nelson school in which I had graduated instructed its pupils not to count adverse odds too curiously, I determined to make one amongst them—two, rather, if the man with me, who had only about a couple of months previously entered on board the *Rose*, should prove worth anything, as of course I supposed he would.

Our two oars were at once unshipped; and, first ordering the man to take the gun and lie close in the bow of the boat, I seated myself at the stern, and sculled quietly stem on towards the smuggler. The atmosphere was so thick with the driving snow and fast-falling darkness, and we glided so noiselessly through the water, that I nothing doubted of closing unobserved with the busy and preoccupied smuggler, when that rascal Rawlings jumped suddenly to his feet, exclaiming in a loud voice, "They have mizzled, sir; let me help pull!" and then seizing an oar without waiting for a reply, he made a circle with it through the air, and let it fall heavily into the rowlock. Sure enough they saw us plainly enough now, and were off in a crack, and at a speed which rendered pursuit both hopeless and absurd. Rawlings, unable to face me, kept his eyes fixed in the direction of the smuggler; and upon reflection I was rather glad he did so, as my first impulsive movement, with the half-formed intention of throwing him overboard, had thereby, I thought, escaped his notice. A few moments restored my habitual self-restraint, and I said as calmly as I could, "They are off indeed, and it is quite useless striving to overtake them. Do you take both oars, and pull as quickly as you can to the near steps of Southampton quay." He did so, and I presently bethought me of discharging the gun, since there was no longer the chance of a shot either at ducks or smugglers. It happened, I could not conceive how,

that the mouth of the barrel had become choked with snow, and it consequently burst, about twelve inches down, scattering the fragments in all directions. I was unhurt, but Rawlings uttered a sharp cry of pain, dropped the oars, and clapped his hands to his forehead. A jagged piece of iron had struck him there, and the wound, though I could see not at all a serious one, bled profusely. He either was, however, or pretended to be in great pain, and I determined on landing at Cracknor Hard, and getting the hurt looked to. This was done. A Marchwood practitioner examined the wound, stanched the hemorrhage, and jestingly remarking how fortunate it was the iron had struck so slightly-susceptible a part as the head, pronounced the injury to be unimportant. This opinion the man did not at all coincide with. He still appeared to suffer greatly, and I agreed that he should sleep at the public-house—the only one there—for that night at all events, and if not quite restored, the next also; but to report himself on board on the day following at the latest. This arrangement effected, I walked to Hythe, and there took boat for the *Rose*, then lying about three miles farther down the river, very earnestly employed the while in running up various trifling matters previously logged against Rawlings to a certainly significant though still perplexing sum-total. There was, however, I did not doubt, a good time coming, and that I determined patiently and very watchfully to await.

I had arranged to dine the next day and spend the evening with my sister and a few friends; and accordingly, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, I arrived at Pear-Tree Green. Important news awaited me. Mrs. White had been there in a state of great agitation, to request that I would cross over to Hythe as soon as it was dusk, where, on landing, I should be met by a girl in a red shawl, who would conduct me to her. It was necessary, she left word, that I should be alone, and not in uniform, but well armed; and that it would be advisable a strong party of the cutter's men should be ordered to lie within hail off the Hythe landing-place. Fortunately the boat which had brought me to Itchen had not yet proceeded on its return, and I immediately sent for the coxswain, Tom Sawley, a man in whom I had entire confidence, and gave him directions in accordance with Mrs. White's suggestions. I then swallowed a hasty dinner, changed my dress, crossed over the ferry, and it being quite dark when I reached the Southampton Quay, at once embarked in a wherry for Hythe. A girl in a red shawl was, I found, waiting on the Hard, and the instant I had landed, she walked smartly away. I followed, and she led on in the direction of Fawley. We had left the village about a half a mile behind us, when the girl gradually checked her hitherto rapid pace till I had come up within speaking or rather hearing distance. She then, still continuing her walk, and without looking

round, said: "That whitewashed cottage yonder on the right, Captain Warneford, is the place where Mrs. White expects you. Take no notice of me, and walk in without knocking. There may be people watching us now." The cottage pointed out was about a couple of hundred yards ahead, and there was no other habitation that I could see near it. I walked on as the girl directed, lifted the latch, and there, sure enough, stood Mrs. White alone, as pale as a spectre, and shaking with nervous agitation. It was a wretched place, with a clay-floor, and the only articles of furniture visible in the dull light of a penny candle were a crazy three-clawed round table, two broken rush-bottom chairs, and a rusty iron fender and poker. This was not, be it understood, Mrs. White's home.

"Now, then, Mrs. White," I said, after a brief recognition, "bear a hand, if you please, with whatever communication you intend to favour me with. I trust also," I added, finding she did not answer so quickly as, in my impatience, I thought she ought to have done, "that you will keep this time a steady, straightforward course, and not suddenly double and run off when least expected to do so. You know what I mean?"

"I do; and presently I will tell you why I acted so strangely. I have now to inform you that the men who are believed to have killed Batley and Norton are within two miles of this spot. They are

four—though one, Tom Etheridge, need care little now for earthly kings or justices. He is dying, if not already dead. They were all wounded by pistol-shots. Three have been for some time recovered, and to-morrow night they quit the Forest, I think, for the Welsh coast, if you permit them to do so."

"If it depend on me, my good woman, you may be sure that Winchester not Wales will be their destination."

"One of the cutter's men, Sam Rawlings, is a confederate of the smugglers."

"By Jupiter, I have thought so!" I interrupted. "The impudent rascal! But never mind, go ahead."

"The boat which he risked a good deal yesterday, he says, to prevent falling into your hands, is that in which they propose to take their departure, Rawlings with them, who is determined not to trust himself again on the deck of the *Rose*."

"He is right: but go on—who are the others?"

"The chief of them is Daniel Squibb: you must have heard of him."

"Frequently, and always as a hardened, reckless ruffian with whom the trade of smuggling is but an occasional, and compared with others he indulges in, a respectable occupation."

"That," said the woman, in a low voice and with a perceptible shudder, "is I believe quite true. The others, besides Etheridge, are Harry Withers and

William Stokes. You must also know them by name at least."

"I do. And now what is to hinder us from summoning the men, who no doubt by this time are off the Hard, and securing the fellows—but two miles distant you say—at once?"

"That cannot be," promptly rejoined the woman, in a peremptory tone. "That cannot be, Lieutenant Warneford. You must first meet those desperate men alone."

"Alone! You must have lost your senses to propose such a thing!"

"It would be no wonder if I had," she sadly replied; "and I have no doubt that I shall do so if you fail me. I cannot think you will: you are known to be a daring man, and in a close hand-to-hand struggle must, I should think, from sheer personal strength, as well as frequent practice, be more than a match for any ruffian, however powerful."

This very complimentary speech took me thoroughly aback. "Why, what the deuce, Mrs White," I cried, "are you talking about? I am not certainly so likely to faint at the click of a pistol-lock or the flash of a cutlass as a school-girl; still I have by no means the enthusiastic love for close hand to-hand encounters with desperate men which you appear to suppose."

"I will explain," said the agitated woman, "as briefly as I can. You must recollect my little boy—you have frequently seen him at Miss Warneford's?"

"Ay—a little rosy-cheeked fellow, four or five years of age."

"Yes!" ejaculated the mother with a spasmodic cry of grief. "He, the light, and joy, and hope of my life, has been taken from me "——

"Dead!"

"No, no; but worse—far worse I fear, but that I trust in you. You remember the morning my husband was to have told the magistrates where the men whose names I have mentioned might be found?"

"To be sure I do, and the fool's trick you caused him to play us and himself."

"It was no fault of mine. The rumour that Richard intended to turn king's evidence was—how I know not—in everybody's mouth hours before he had promised me to do so. A minute after my husband entered the justice-room with you, a man came to me and whispered that my child had been secured as a hostage, and was at that moment in Squibb's power, who had sworn to kill him should the hiding-place of the ruffians be discovered through my husband's or any other person's information. The villain would, I knew, keep his dreadful word were he certain of being hacked in pieces the next moment for doing so. I hastened home in a state almost of frenzy, to find the terrible statement true. The child had been wiled away, no one I dared question knew by whom, or how, or when. He is still in Daniel Squibb's power, and should they be attacked, the first victim

would, I well know, be my child. I have since ministered to their necessities like a slave, in the hope that when they left the place my boy would be restored. Yesterday I was told by Squibb himself that he should, for fear of accidents, take the child away with them; and if he does," exclaimed the unfortunate creature with a wild bitterness of grief, "I should never see him more—never, except perhaps at the hulks, or the gallows, for which he would be fitly trained. Save me, Lieutenant Warneford," cried the frantic woman as she fell on her knees and strove to grasp mine—" save me from that living death: my boy from the horrible fate which must else overtake him! You have faced death a hundred times for mere honour's sake, and will you now shrink back when humanity, compassion, generosity, pleading for a helpless, brokenhearted woman—for the menaced life, far more, the menaced soul, of an innocent child implore your help?"

This was certainly a very delightful predicament to find one's self suddenly placed in, and I must say that I was quite as much puzzled and confounded as excited and distressed. Here was a little woman, certainly somewhat, and yet not much above her class, all at once endowed with, and breaking into a strain of pathetic and reproachful eloquence for my especial benefit; and for the benevolent purpose, as it seemed—for I as yet hardly comprehended what she was exactly driving at—of inducing me to sacri-

fice my own life in order to afford her a chance, and a poor one, of saving her son's.

Still the woman's agony of grief affected me, and I said as I raised her up: "If you can show me, Mrs. White, that there is a fair chance of success, it will be another matter. What is it you propose?"

"This!" she answered with great readiness. "The girl you saw will go for the men. The instant they arrive you, I, and they will set out together. The sailors must stop at a spot within about three-quarters of a mile of Squibb's and his companions' hiding-place. You and I will go on. I shall enter the place with a message from Rawlings, whom I saw about three hours ago. They are without any light at nights; I can secretly introduce you into the building, and place you in concealment close to Squibb and the child. I will then return for the men. We will approach as silently and swiftly as possible, and when near you will hear this." She whistled a bar of a popular tune. "It is their private signal-whistle, and will not alarm them. When the rush takes place, Squibb will endeavour to seize and slay the child; but a brave and powerful man like you will surely be able to shield the boy, even against all three of the ruffians, during the very short time that will elapse before they are completely overpowered?"

"Upon my word, Mrs. White," I said, "you have sketched a very pretty play, which I have no doubt

would go off to the entire satisfaction of everybody except the person you propose honouring with the principal part. Why not let the seamen approach, in the first instance, within call of the fellows' hiding-hole? That would greatly diminish the risk."

"That would never do," she said; "they would certainly be discovered, and the child would be at once massacred out of revenge." In short, she had such a multiplicity of replies to all I could urge against the scheme, and was so vehement in her entreaties, that seeing that it was not an altogether desperate undertaking, and remembering how anxious the gentry at head-quarters were to secure the slayers of the two seamen, which object could not be accomplished without Mrs. White's aid, I at last agreed to try the venture.

"You give me your word of honour as a gentleman," said Mrs. White, "that after I have shown you where to find Squibb and his comrades you will not attack them in any other mode than that upon which we have agreed?" I gave the required pledge; the girl in the red shawl, furnished with the necessary credentials, started off to summon the men; and the instant they arrived we made silently, in a zig-zag direction, towards Fawley, keeping ourselves as much as possible within the shade of the Forest trees. After about twenty minutes' march the men were halted, and Mrs. White and I proceeded alone.

She stopped as we were about to emerge into a

more open part of the Forest. "Look there!" she whispered: "you see the farm-building in the direction of the light beyond?" I nodded assent. "It is there the men you seek are sheltered. The farmer to whom it belongs," added the woman with a meaning smile, "has never been near it since Squibb happened to find the key in the outer-door, and no one would think of suspecting so very respectable a man of harbouring smugglers. Now, Lieutenant Warneford," she continued with great seriousness of manner, "attend to what I say. There is a man always looking out from an upper loft. You see the hedge on the right: crawl along the further side of it, and make cautiously for the gable-end of the building. There is a small door there which I will gently open. A few feet within there is a ladder leading to the place where the men lie, but you will be concealed from them by a number of trusses of hay and straw: the seamen must rush in at the large gate of which I have got a duplicate key."

Having thus spoken Mrs. White moved swiftly off, leaving me, I must confess, in no very enviable state of mind. Her scheme, ugly enough at first view, did anything but improve upon more intimate acquaintance, and I had half a mind not to proceed farther with it. There were, it seemed, *four* sturdy ruffians, including the look-out—now for the first time heard of—to contend with; and should I be discovered before the arrival of the seamen, the

result could scarcely be problematical. Nevertheless, sustained by the professional contempt of danger in which I had been reared, the knowledge that I possessed remarkable skill with the pistol, and the recollection of many perhaps greater perils successfully overcome, I ventured on, and in about ten minutes found myself close by the door at the gable-end. So far all was well. I could hear a confused murmur of voices within, but nothing distinctly. At last the door gently opened, and Mrs. White appeared at the aperture. She was, I saw, ghastly pale, and trembling with terror now the moment of trial had come, bravely as she before talked of the business. Her finger was on her lip, and she motioned me to go in. I did so as softly as if I had been treading on eggs. The door closed behind me, and it was black as the inside of a tar-barrel. In a few moments my eyes became better accustomed to the darkness, and perceiving the ladder—a weak, slight affair—I placed my right foot softly upon one of the lower rungs, which, the instant my weight was fairly upon it, snapped short in the middle with a loud crack. "What's that?" cried one of the fellows in a fierce voice, apparently a few inches only overhead. "It's me," promptly replied Mrs. White, who was standing just without the door, listening in terrified silence. "Do you want me?" "Not I," returned the surly savage; "only mind you don't forget—for I don't like your looks, as I told you—that upon the first

alarm I'll blow this young un's head off as sure as my name is Daniel Squibb. I say," he again called out after a few moments' silence, "what time did you say Sam Rawlings would be here?"

"About ten o'clock, he said," answered Mrs. White. A grunt of satisfaction was the only reply. The door again closed, and I, with better fortune than before, noiselessly ascended the crazy ladder. A small corner of the floor, I found on reaching it, was partitioned off from the rest, as Mrs. White had stated, by trusses of hay and straw, behind which I crawled, and after a while contrived to get a view of the amiable party to whom I found myself in such dangerous proximity. The moon shone brilliantly in upon them, and I could see their features distinctly. They were all dressed and armed with pistols stuck in their waist-belts. The great brawny figure of Daniel Squibb was stretched upon a heap of straw, covered by some dirty blanketing, and by his side lay a young child—fast asleep, I thought, judging by the natural ease and grace of his reclining posture. Two others, Stokes and Withers, were sitting half up in similar beds, and farther on lay a fourth. It required but one look at the white, rigid, pinched features, and open blindly-staring eyes, to recognise it as the recently-deceased, untended corpse of Etheridge, whom I had frequently seen. Excepting frequent pulls at the black bottles, one of which stood by the side of each of the living men, there was nothing

done or said for some time. At last Squibb, happened to look in the direction of the dead body, said with a half shudder: "Throw a blanket over the face, Harry; it ain't pleasant to look upon, 'specially just now."

"It's a good thing though," resumed Squibb, after another suck at the brandy bottle—"it's a good thing he's gone. We can be off now without any fear of leaving him to peach upon us. But for that we might have mizzled two or three weeks ago."

"Ay, Matey," replied Withers, "that's true, but I misdoubt Mother White."

"So do I; but this young fellow here will keep her within bounds. She don't seem to have any notion that we are off to-night."

"I don't think," said Withers; and the trio relapsed into silence, broken only by the *glug-glug* of the liquor they swallowed, as it glided out of the necks of the bottles down their seasoned and unslakable throats.

Mrs. White expected to return with the men in about half an hour; but that time had long past, and still they came not. I was becoming feverishly impatient, when the signal-whistle was heard, instantly replied to by the look-out in the loft above.

"Who can this be?" said Squibb. "It's not time for Rawlings yet, according to Mrs. White."

The three fellows rose and listened anxiously, and I observed Squibb take a pistol from his belt and cock it,

The look-out man now made his appearance. "It's only Rawlings," he said.

"All right!" echoed Squibb, evidently greatly relieved, and returning the pistol to its place.

Presently I heard footsteps approaching by the way I had entered. The only thing apparently now to be done was to sell my life as dearly as I could, and I collected myself in the dark corner where I was shrouded for that purpose. The new-comer stepped briskly up; and without pausing to look round, made his way over the hay and straw to his friends.

"You are early, Sam," remarked Squibb. "White's wife said you would not be here till ten o'clock."

"I wasn't going to tell her exactly when I was coming or we were going."

"All right!" interjected Squibb, with an approving nod.

"Dick Hessel's boat will be off Luttrell's Folly at twelve o'clock to-night precisely," added Mr. Rawlings.

"That's capital, Sam!" replied the chief of the gang. "And you, I suppose, mean to shove off with us?"

"That I do indeed. The skipper smells a rat, and I shall be brought up with a round turn when least expected or desired if I don't make myself scarce, now I have an opportunity."

"I should like to catch that Mr. Warneford," said Squibb, with a bitter, venemous accent, and his blood-

shot eyes, inflamed with drink, sparkled with deadly ferocity—"I should like to catch that fellow within a couple or so of yards of this little barker"—and he again drew forth and flourished a long pistol—"some fine night with nobody but ourselves within sight or hearing, and if I didn't drill a neat hole through his canister, it would be a pity, that's all!" The other fellows savagely coincided in Squibb's pleasant aspiration.

"It was a bold stroke, entering on board the *Rose*," continued Rawlings; "but it's getting much too risky now, so that—— Hollo!—who's that, I wonder?"

It was a repetition of the signal-whistle, and, judging by the tremulous weakness with which it was given, I guessed by whom. The five fellows—for the look-out had not returned to his perch—became rigid and breathless with eager attention. The whistling was repeated. "That's Martha White," said Squibb: "what but mischief can bring *her* here again?" He then grasped the little boy, who had been for some time awake, with fierce violence by the hair. "Dare to whimper," he said in low, deadly tones, "or breathe louder than usual—only dare!"

"Lend me a back," said one of the fellows, "that I may look out at the window."

"Hark!" cried Squibb. "There is some one unlocking the front gate. Who should that be? Look over the stairs, Stokes—quick! quick! By all the devils, if it be, as I suspect, I will blow this imp's

brains out whatever be the consequence—quick!" and the ruthless savage held the muzzle of the pistol within six inches of the head of the boy, who seemed dumb with terror.

I hesitated for a moment how to act. To show myself, and rush upon the scoundrel, would in all probability precipitate the child's fate, Squibb now being at a distance of four or five yards from me. Adopting another expedient, in full reliance upon my oft-tried skill and coolness, I took deliberate aim at the ruffian's head, steadying my arm upon a haytruss, and waiting only to be sure as to who the new-comers were.

"Who is it?" again fiercely demanded Squibb. "Speak, will you?"

"Betrayed!" shrieked Stokes. "The *Rose* men are upon us!"

As the first syllable left the man's lips I fired. The report was followed by a frightful yell from Squibb. The bullet had struck his right jaw and broken it. He whirled round with the sudden agony, and the pistol in his hand dropped harmlessly on the floor. The next moment all was uproar, confusion, and dismay—the loud shouts of the sailors, the frenzied screams of the woman, and the maledictions of the smugglers, who, after a vain show of resistance, essayed to escape by the way I had entered, mingling in deafening uproar and confusion. They were all secured except Rawlings, who contrived to

escape; and very luckily for him that he did so, or unquestionably the reward for his share in the business would have been an hour's dangle at the yard-arm. The instant I showed myself, Squibb, though frightfully mangled, and for some moments stunned with pain, snatched another pistol from his belt, covered me, fired, missed, and I immediately grappled him. He was a burly, powerfully-framed man, but he was so enfeebled by drink, his recent illness, and present wound, that I pinned him to the floor almost without an effort; and as soon as the bustle was over he was properly secured, and carried off, foaming and blaspheming with rage. Mrs. White hugged her child, so fortunately rescued, with convulsive passion, while incoherently pouring forth joy and thanksgiving to Heaven and blessings upon me.

The prisoners were tried and found guilty of the capital charge, Richard White being admitted as approver; but neither of them suffered the extreme penalty of the law. They were all, however, transported—three for life, and the others for varying terms. White and family removed, I believe, to London. They never claimed the reward.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

ALLY SOMERS.

When I joined the *Scorpion* sloop of war, then (1812) on the West India station, there were a father and son amongst the crew whose names, as borne on the ship's books, were John Somers and John *Alice* Somers. The oddity in this country of giving a boy a female baptismal name had been no doubt jestingly remarked upon by those who were aware of it, but with the sailors the lad passed as *Ally* Somers. The father was approaching fifty, the son could not have been more than seventeen years of age. The elder Somers, who

had attained to the rating of boatswain, was a stern, hard, silent man, with a look as cold and clear as polished steel, and a cast-iron mouth, indicative of inflexible, indomitable firmness of will and resolution. The son, on the contrary, though somewhat resembling his father in outline of feature, had a mild, attractive, almost feminine aspect, and a slight graceful frame. I was not long in discovering that, obdurate and self-engrossed as the man appeared, the boy was really the idol-image in which his affections and his hopes were centred. His eye constantly followed the motions of the lad, and it appeared to be his unceasing aim and study to lighten the duties he had to perform, and to shield him from the rough usage to which youngsters in his position were generally subjected by the motley crews of those days. One day a strong instance in proof of this master-feeling occurred. Ally Somers some time prievously, when on shore with a party, despatched to obtain a supply of water, had, during the temporary absence of the officer in command, been rather severely rope's-ended by one of the seamen for some trifling misconduct, and a few slight marks were left on the lad's back. The rage of the father, when informed of the circumstance, was extreme, and it was with difficulty that he was restrained from inflicting instant chastisement on the offender. An opportunity for partially wreaking his hoarded vengeance occurred about six weeks afterwards, and it was eagerly embraced. The sailor who had ill-used young Somers

was sentenced to receive two dozen lashes for drunkenness and insubordination. He was ordered to strip, placed at the gratings, and the punishment began. Somers, the boatswain, iron or sour-tempered as he might be, was by no means harsh or cruel in his office, and his assistants, upon whom the revolting office of flogging usually devolved, influenced by him, were about the gentlest-handed boatswain's-mates I ever saw practise. On this occasion he was in another and very different mood. Two blows only had been struck when Somers, with an angry rebuke to the mate for not doing his duty, snatched the cat from his hand, and himself lashed the culprit with a ferocity so terribly effective, that Captain Gore, a merciful and just officer, instantly remitted half the number of lashes, and the man was rescued from the unsparing hands of the vindictive boatswain.

Other instances of the intensity of affection glowing within the stern man's breast for his comparatively weak and delicate boy manifested themselves. Once in action, when the lad, during a tumultuous and murderous struggle, in beating off a determined attempt to carry the sloop by boarding, chanced to stumble on the slippery deck, he was overtaken before he could recover himself, and involved in the fierce assault which at the forecastle was momently successful. I was myself hotly engaged in another part of the fight; but attention being suddenly called to the forepart of the ship by the enemy's triumphant shouts, I glanced

round just in time to see the boatswain leap, with the yell and bound of a tiger, into the mêlée, and strike right and left with such tremendous ferocity and power as instantly to check the advancing rush. Our men promptly rallied, and the deck was in a few minutes cleared of every living foe that had recently profaned it. Ally Somers, who had received rather a severe flesh wound, and fainted from loss of blood, was instantly caught up by his father, and carried with headlong impatience below. When the surgeon, after a brief look at the hurt, said, "There is no harm done, Somers," the high-strung nerves of the boatswain gave way, and he fell back upon a locker temporarily prostrate, and insensible from sudden revulsion of feeling. Several times I was an unintentional auditor of scraps of conversation between the two whilst the lad was on the sick-list, from which I gathered that Ally was the sole issue of a marriage which had left bitter memories in the mind of the father; but whether arising from the early death of his wife, or other causes, I did not ascertain. Somers was, it appeared, a native of the west of England, and it was quite evident had received a much better education than usually falls to individuals of his class.

At the close of the war Somers and his son were, with thousands of others, turned adrift from the royal service. Some months after my appointment to the command of the revenue-cutter, I chanced to meet the

father in the village of Totton, about four miles out of Southampton, on the New Forest Road. He had, I found, re-entered the navy, but chancing to receive a hurt by the falling of a heavy block on his right knee, had been invalided with a small pension, upon which he was now living at about a hundred yards from the spot where we had accidentally met. Ally, he informed me, was the skipper of a small craft trading between Guernsey and Southampton. There was little change in the appearance of the man, except that the crippled condition of his leg appeared to have had an effect the reverse of softening upon his stern and rugged aspect and temper. When paid off he was, I knew, entitled to a considerable sum in prize-money, the greater part of which he told me he had recently received.

About a couple of months after this meeting with the father, I fell in with the son. I was strolling at about eleven in the forenoon along the front of the Southampton customhouse, when my eye fell upon a young man, in a seaman's dress, busily engaged with three others in loading a cart with bundles of laths which had been landed shortly before from a small vessel alongside the quay. It was Ally Somers sure enough; and so much improved in looks since I last saw him, that but for a certain air of fragility—inherited probably from his mother—he might have been pronounced a handsome fine young fellow. The laths, upwards of two hundred bundles, which he was so

busily assisting to cart, he had brought from Guernsey, and were a very common importation from that island: Guernsey possessing the right of sending its own produce customs free to England, a slight duty, only tant-amount to what the foreign timber of which the laths were made would have been liable to, was levied upon them, and this was ascertained by the proper officer simply measuring the length and girth of the bundles. This had been done, and the laths marked as "passed." It struck me that the manner of Ally Somers was greatly flurried and excited, and when he saw me approaching, evidently with an intention to accost him, this agitation perceptibly increased. He turned deadly pale, and absolutely trembled with ill-concealed apprehension. He was somewhat reassured by my frank salutation; and after a few commonplace inquiries I walked away, evidently to his great relief, and he with his sailors continued their eager work of loading the cart. I could not help suspecting that something was wrong, though I could not make up my mind to verify the surmise his perturbed and hurried manner excited. Once in a skirmish on shore his father, the boatswain, had saved my life by sending a timely bullet through the head of a huge negro who held me for the moment at his mercy. Besides, I might be wrong after all, and I had no right to presume that the officer who had passed the laths had not made a sufficient examination of them. The flurry of the young man might arise from physical weakness and

the severe labour he was performing in such hot weather. These reasons, or more truly these excuses for doing nothing, were passing through my brain, when I observed the hasty approach of the collector of customs himself towards the cart, followed by several of his subordinates. Young Somers saw him as quickly as I did, and the young man's first impulse, it was quite plain, was flight. A thought no doubt of the hopelessness of such an attempt arrested his steps, and he stood quaking with terror by the side of the cart, his right hand grasping for support at one of the wheel-spokes.

"One of you lend me a knife," said the collector, addressing the officers of customs.

A knife was quickly opened and handed to him: he severed the strong cords which bound one of the bundles of laths together, and they flew asunder, disclosing a long tin tube of considerable diameter, closely rammed with tobacco! All the other bundles contained a similar deposit; and so large was the quantity of the heavily-taxed weed thus unexpectedly made lawful prize of, that a profit, I was assured, of not less than 500*l.* or 600*l.* would have been made by the audacious smuggler had he succeeded in his bold and ingenious attempt. The ends of the bundles had been filled up with short pieces of lath, so that, except by the process now adopted, it was impossible to detect that the cargo was not *bonâ fide* what it had been declared to be. The penalties to which Somers

had rendered himself liable were immense, the vessel also was forfeited, and the unfortunate young man's liberty at the mercy of the crown. He looked the very picture of despair, and I felt assured that ruin, utter and complete, had fallen upon him.

He was led off in custody, and had gone some dozen paces when he stopped shortly, appeared to make some request to the officers by whom he was escorted, and then turning round, intimated by a supplicatory gesture that he wished to speak to me. I drew near, and at my request the officers fell back out of hearing. He was so utterly prostrated by the calamity by which he had been so suddenly overtaken, that he could not for several moments speak intelligibly. I felt a good deal concerned for so mere a boy, and one too so entirely unfitted by temperament and nerve to carry through such desperate enterprises, or bear up against their failure.

"This is a bad business," I said; "but the venture has not, I trust, been made with your own or your father's money?"

"Every penny of it," he replied in a dry, fainting voice, "was our own. Father lent me all his prize-money, and we are both miserable beggars!"

"What in the name of madness could induce you to venture your all upon a single throw in so hazardous a game?"

"I will tell you," he went on hurriedly to say in the same feeble and trembling tone: "I am not fitted

for a sea-life—not strong, not hardy enough. I longed for a quiet peaceful home ashore. A hope of one offered itself. I made the acquaintance of Richard Sylvester, a miller near Ealing. He is a good man, but griping as far as money is concerned. I formed an attachment for his eldest daughter Maria; and he consented to our union, and to taking me as a partner in his business, if I could pay down five hundred pounds. I was too eager to wait long; besides I thought that perhaps——But it boots not to speak of that now: I set more than life upon this cast; I have lost, and am now bankrupt of resource or hope! Will you break this news to my father, and see"—— His remaining firmness gave way, as the thought he would have uttered struggled to his lips, and the meek-hearted young man burst into tears, and wept piteously like a girl. A number of persons were collecting round us, and I gently urged him to walk on to the customhouse. A few minutes afterwards I left him there, with a promise to comply with his request without delay.

I found John Somers at home, and had scarcely uttered twenty words when he jumped at once to the true conclusion.

"Out with it, sir!" exclaimed the steel-nerved man. "But you need not; I see it all. Ally has failed—the tobacco has been seized—and he is in prison."

Spite of himself his breath came thick and short, and he presently added with a fierce burst, whilst

glance of fire leaped from his eyes: "He has been betrayed, and I think I know by whom."

"Your suspicion that he has been informed against is very likely correct, but you will, I think, have some difficulty in ascertaining by whom. The customhouse authorities are careful not to allow the names of their informants to leak through their office-doors."

"I would find him were he hidden in the centre of the earth!" rejoined the ex-boatswain with another vengeful outcry which startled one like an explosion. "But," added the strong and fierce-willed man after a few moments' silence, "its useless prating of the matter like a wench. We must part company at once. I thank you, sir, and will tell Ally you called." I mentioned the other request made by his son. "That is a rotten plank to hold by," he said. "Ally's chance is over there, and it would be mere waste of time to call on the old man: his resolution is hard and unyielding as his own millstones. Maria Sylvester is gone with the five hundred pounds her father bargained for; and the girl's tears, if she shed any, will soon be dry. I warned Ally of the peril of steering his course in life by the deceptive light of woman's capricious smiles and vanities; but he, poor, flexile, gentle-minded boy, heeded me not. I may not longer delay: he will be anxious to see me. Good-day, sir."

The consequence which I chiefly feared came to

pass, even more speedily than I had apprehended. It being impossible to liquidate the penalties incurred. Ally Somers was imprisoned as a crown debtor; and at that period, whatever may be the case now, revenue penalties could not be got rid of by insolvent-court schedules. The prospect of an indefinite term of imprisonment, with other causes of grief and depression, broke down the always fragile health of the prisoner, and he died ere yet his youth was well begun, after about six months' confinement only.

The tidings were brought me by the old man himself. I was seated in the cabin of the *Rose* cutter when it was announced that John Somers was alongside in a boat, and wished to see me. I directed that he should be allowed to come aboard, and presently the old man, with despair visible in every line of his countenance, in every glance of his restless, flaming eyes, entered the cabin.

"I am come to tell you, sir, that Ally is dead."

"I was somewhat prepared for this bad news, Mr. Somers," I answered. "It's hard upon you, but it should be bravely borne with."

He laughed strangely. "To be sure—to be sure," he said, "that is wise counsel—very wise; but that which I want now more than wise counsel is ten pounds!—ten pounds, which I shall never be able to repay."

"Ten pounds!"

"Yes: you may remember that I once saved your

life. If that piece of service was worth the sum I have mentioned, you can now discharge the obligation. I have parted with everything, and Ally's last prayer was to be buried beside his —— Beside a grave, an early and an untimely one, like his own, many miles away!"

"I understand: it is a natural and pious wish, and you shall have the money."

"Thank you. The funeral over, I have but one more thing to do in life, and that is to assist you in securing Cocquerel whilst running one of his most valuable cargoes."

"Cocquerel, the Guernseyman you mean?"

"Ay, so he calls himself; but I fancy he at one time hailed from another port. He is the man who sold Ally's secret to the revenue-officers!"

"Are you sure?"

"As death! He was Ally's only confidant, and Ally's father is now in Cocquerel's confidence. It is but natural," added Somers, and a bitter, deadly sneer curled his ashy lips—"it is but natural, you know, that I should be eager to assist in pillaging a government which caged my son, and held him under its iron bars till life had fled. Cocquerel understands this, and trusts me fully; but that which he does *not* understand, know, or suspect," continued the fierce old man, sinking his voice to a whisper, and leaning forward with his face close to mine, "is that John Somers has found out *who* it was that sold his

boy's life! Did he know that, and know *me* too, there would be sounder sleepers than he in these dark nights."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing more, of course," he replied, in a more checked and guarded tone, "than to retort the trick he played Ally something after his own fashion."

"That is a fair revenge enough, and I'll not balk you. Now, then, for your plan."

Various details were discussed, and it was settled that on that day week Somers was again to communicate with me. He then took leave.

At the appointed time Somers returned, and appeared to be in high but flighty spirits. Everything was, he said, arranged, and success all but certain. His scheme was then canvassed and finally agreed upon, and he again left the vessel.

The arrangement for the surprise and capture of Cocquerel was this:—That notorious smuggler intended running a large cargo on the coast of Dorsetshire, on the north of Portland, at a place where the cliffs are high, precipitous, and abrupt, and at that time very inefficiently watched by the shore-force. Near the spot selected is, or was, a kind of cavern, worn by the action of the sea in the chalky stratum, which at neap-tides was partially dry, and at the time of our enterprise would effectually conceal a boat from the observation of any one who did not actually

peer in directly at its mouth. Cocquerel was to leave Guernsey the next day in a large boat, with two lug-sails, but chiefly depending for speed upon its sweeps. It was calculated that he would reach his destination about midnight. Somers had undertaken the duty of shore-signalman, and if danger were apprehended, was to warn the smugglers that hawks were abroad by burning a blue-light. The manner of running the cargo was to be this:—Somers was provided with a windlass and sufficient length of rope, with a kind of rope-cradle at the end of it, in which a man could sit, or a couple of kegs be slung, to reach the boat. The windlass he was to secure firmly at the edge of the cliff, and two or three of the men having been drawn up, other windlasses were to be fixed, by means of which it was calculated that in about half an hour the entire cargo would be safely carried off by the carts which Somers had undertaken to have ready on the spot. The signal for our appearance on the scene of action, the positive old man persisted, should be that agreed upon for the warning of the smugglers—the sudden ignition of a blue-light. This did not seem the cleverest possible mode of procedure; but as the cavern in which we were to conceal ourselves was but a few yards northward of the spot marked out for the landing, and Somers promised he would only give the signal when the smugglers were in full work, I had little fear that, if other accidents did not capsize our scheme, they would be able to escape us.

The next afternoon the largest boat belonging to the *Rose* was fully manned; and leaving the cutter quietly at anchor in the Southampton River, just above Calshot, we pulled with the tide—for there was but a light air, and that favourable for the smugglers, not for us—to our hiding-place, which we reached about eight o'clock in the evening.

The hours crept very slowly and dismally away, amidst the darkness and hoarse echoes and moanings of the cavern, into which the sea and wind, which were gradually rising, dashed and howled with much and increasing violence. Occasional peeps at my watch, by the light of a lantern carefully shaded seaward, warned us that ten, eleven, twelve, one o'clock, had passed, without bringing the friends we so anxiously expected, and fears of ultimate disappointment were chilling us far more than the cold night-breeze, when a man in the bow of the boat said in a whisper that he could hear the dash of oars. We all instantly listened with eager attention; but it was not till we had brought the boat to the entrance of the opening that the man's assertion was verified. There it was clear enough; and the near approach of a large boat, with the regular jerk of the oars or sweeps, was distinctly audible. The loud, clear hail of their shore-signalman, answered by the "All right" of the smugglers, left no doubt that the expected prey was within our grasp; and I had a mind to pounce upon them at once, but was withheld by a

promise which I had been obliged several times to repeat, that I would not, under any circumstances, do so till the signal-flame sent its light over the water.

As soon as the noise and bustle of laying in the sweeps, lowering the sails, and unstepping the masts, had subsided, we heard Somers hail the boat, and insist that the captain should come up before any of the others, as there was a difficulty about the carts which he alone could settle. The reply was a growl of assent, and we could hear by the click of the check to the cogwheel of the windlass that Somers was paying out the rope. Presently Cocquerel was heard to get into the cradle I have spoken of, to which a line was fastened, in order to steady his ascent from below. The order was given to turn away, and the renewed click, click, announced that he was ascending the face of the cliff. I could hardly comprehend this manœuvre, which seemed to indicate the escape of the man we were the most anxious to secure, and the order to shove off was just on my lips when a powerful blue-light, flamed suddenly forth, accompanied by a fierce but indistinct shout, or roar rather, from Somers. The men replied by a loud cheer, and we shot smartly out; but having, to avoid a line of reef, to row in a straight direction for about a cable's length, the smugglers, panic-stricken and bewildered as they were, had time to get way upon their lugger, and were plying their sweeps with desperate energy

before the revenue-boat was fairly turned in direct pursuit. The frantic effort to escape was vain, and so was the still more frantic effort at resistance offered when we ran alongside. We did not hurt them much: one or two were knocked down by the sailors' brass-butted pistols; and after being secured, they had leisure to vent their rage in polyglot curses, part French, part English, and part Guernsey *patois*, and I to look round and see what had become of Cocquerel.

The blue-light still shed a livid radiance all around, and, to my inexpressible horror and dismay, I saw that the unfortunate man was suspended in the rope cradle, within about a fathom's length of the brow of the cliff, upon which Somers was standing and gazing at his victim with looks of demoniac rage and triumph. The deadly trap contrived by the inexorable old man was instantly apparent; and to Cocquerel's frenzied screams for help I replied by shouting to him to cut himself loose at once, as his only chance, for the barrel of a pistol gleamed distinctly in the hands of Somers.

"Lieutenant Warneford," cried the exulting maniac—he was nothing less—"I have caught this Cocquerel nicely for you—got him swinging here in the prettiest cradle he was ever rocked in in his life. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Cut loose at once!" I again shouted; and the men, as terribly impressed as myself with the horror of the wretched smuggler's position, swept the boat

rapidly towards the spot. "Somers, if you shoot that man you shall die on the gallows!"

"Cut himself loose, do you say, lieutenant?" screamed Somers, heedless of my last observation. "He can't! He has no knife—ha! ha! ha! And if he had, this pistol would be swifter than that; but I'll cut him loose presently, never fear. Look here, Jacques Cocquerel," he continued, laying himself flat down on the cliff, and stretching his right arm over it till the mouth of his pistol was within a yard of Cocquerel's head, "this contains payment in full for your kindness to Ally Somers—a debt which I could in no other manner completely repay!"

At this moment the blue-light suddenly expired, and we were involved in what by contrast was total darkness. We could still, however, hear the frantic laughter and exulting gibes of the merciless old man, in answer to Cocquerel's shrieking appeals for mercy; and after a while, when the figures of the two men had become partially visible, we could distinguish the words, "One, two, three!" followed by the report of a pistol, and a half-minute afterwards a dark body shot down the white face of the cliff, and disappeared beneath the waters.

The body of Cocquerel never reappeared; and the only tidings I ever heard of Somers were contained in the following paragraph which I read some years afterwards in the 'Hampshire Telegraph,' a journal at that time published at Portsmouth:—

"The body of an aged, wretched man, was found frozen to death in the churchyard on Wednesday morning last, near two adjoining graves, one of which, that of Alice Maynard, recalls the painful circumstances connected with the sad story of the death of that ill-fated, and, as we believe, entirely innocent person. At the inquest holden on Friday, it was ascertained beyond a doubt that the deceased is John Maynard, who after his wife's untimely death, assumed the name of Somers, and was, we believe, the person who shot a French smuggler, with whom he had quarrelled, at the back of the Isle of Wight, under somewhat peculiar circumstances, about seven years ago. He was buried in the grave that contains the body of his son, John Alice Maynard, which was interred there shortly before the commission of the homicide just alluded to. There has never been, to our knowledge, any regular investigation of that affair, but we believe that then, as before, Maynard's pistol was pointed by a frantic and causeless jealousy.—[*Plymouth paper.*]"

There are several mistakes sufficiently obvious to the reader in this paragraph; but of the main fact that John Somers, *alias* Maynard, perished as described in the Devonshire journal, there can be no reasonable doubt.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

PROMISE UNFULFILLED.

THE *Rose* had been becalmed for several days in Cowes Harbour, and utterly at a loss how else to cheat the time, I employed myself one afternoon in sauntering up and down the quay, whistling for a breeze, and listlessly watching the slow approach of a row-boat, bringing the mail and a few passengers from Southampton, the packet-cutter to which the boat belonged being as hopelessly immovable, except for such drift as the tide gave her, as the *Rose*. The slowness of its approach—for I expected a messeng-

with letters—added to my impatient weariness; and as, according to my reckoning, it would be at least an hour before the boat reached the landing-steps, I returned to the Fountain Inn in the High Street, called for a glass of negus, and as I lazily sipped it, once more turned over the newspapers lying on the table, though with scarcely a hope of coming athwart a line that I had not read half-a-dozen times before. I was mistaken. There was a 'Cornwall Gazette' amongst them which I had not before seen, and in one corner of it I lit upon this, to me in all respects new and extremely interesting paragraph:—"We copy the following statement from a contemporary, solely for the purpose of contradicting it: 'It is said that the leader of the smugglers in the late desperate affray with the coast-guard in Mount Bay was no other than Mr. George Polwhele Hendrick, of Lostwithiel, formerly, as our readers are aware, a lieutenant in the royal navy, and dismissed the king's service by sentence of court-martial at the close of the war.' There is no foundation for this imputation. Mrs. Hendrick, of Lostwithiel, requests us to state that her son, from whom she heard but about ten days since, commands a first-class ship in the merchant navy of the United States."

I was exceedingly astonished. The court-martial I had not heard of; and having never overhauled the Navy List for such a purpose, the absence of the name of G. P. Hendrick had escaped my notice. What

could have been his offence? Some hasty, passionate act, no doubt; for of misbehaviour before the enemy, or of the commission of deliberate wrong, it was impossible to suspect him. He was, I personally knew, as eager as flame in combat; and his frank, perhaps heedless, generosity of temperament, was abundantly apparent to every one acquainted with him. I had known him for a short time only; but the fews days of our acquaintance were passed under circumstances which bring out the true nature of a man more prominently and unmistakably than might twenty years of hum-drum, every-day life. The varnish of our pretension falls quickly off in presence of sudden and extreme peril—peril especially requiring presence of mind and energy to beat it back. It was in such a position that I recognised some of the high qualities of Lieutenant Hendrick. The two sloops of war in which we respectively served were consorts for awhile on the South African coast, during which time we fell in with a Franco-Italian privateer or pirate—for the distinction between the two is much more technical than real. She was to leeward when we sighted her, and not very distant from the shore, and so quickly did she shoal her water, that pursuit by either of the sloops was out of the question. Being a stout vessel of her class, and full of men, four boats—three of the *Scorpion's* and one of her consort's—were detached in pursuit. The breeze gradually failed, and we were fast coming up with our friend

when he vanished behind a headland, on rounding which we found he had disappeared up a narrow, winding river, of no great depth of water. We of course followed, and after about a quarter of an hour's hard pull, found, on suddenly turning a sharp elbow of the stream, that we had caught a Tartar. We had, in fact, come upon a complete nest of privateers—a rendezvous or depôt they termed it. The vessel was already anchored across the channel, and we were flanked on each shore by a crowd of desperadoes, well provided with small arms, and with two or three pieces of light ordnance amongst them. The shouts of defiance with which they greeted us, as we swept into the deadly trap, were instantly followed by a general and murderous discharge of both musketry and artillery; and as the smoke cleared away I saw that the leading pinnace, commanded by Hendrick, had been literally knocked to pieces, and that the surviving portion of the crew were splashing about in the river.

There was time but for one look, for if we allowed the rascals time to reload their guns our own fate would inevitably be a similar one. The men understood this, and with a loud cheer swept eagerly on towards the privateer, whilst the two remaining boats engaged the flanking shore forces, and I was soon involved in about the fiercest *mêlée* I ever had the honour to assist in. The furious struggle on the deck of the privateer lasted but about five minutes only, at the end of which all that remained of us were thrust

over the side. Some tumbled into the boat, others, like myself, were pitched into the river. As soon as I came to the surface, and had time to shake my ears and look about me, I saw Lieutenant Hendrick, who, the instant the pinnace he commanded was destroyed, had with equal daring and presence of mind swam towards a boat at the privateer's stern, cut the rope that held her with the sword he carried between his teeth, and forthwith began picking up his half-drowned boat's crew. This was already accomplished, and he now performed the same service for me and mine. This done, we again sprang at our ugly customer, he at the bow, and I about midships. Hendrick was the first to leap on the enemy's deck; and so fierce and well-sustained was the assault this time, that in less than ten minutes we were undisputed victors so far as the vessel was concerned. The fight on the shore continued obstinate and bloody, and it was not till we had twice discharged the privateer's guns amongst the desperate rascals that they broke and fled. The dashing, yet cool and skilful bravery evinced by Lieutenant Hendrick in this brief but tumultuous and sanguinary affair was admirably remarked upon by all who witnessed it, few of whom, whilst gazing at the sinewy, active form, the fine, pale, flashing countenance, and the dark, thunderous eyes of the young officer—if I may use such a term, for in their calmest aspect a latent volcano appeared to slumber in their gleaming depths—could refuse to

subscribe to the opinion of a distinguished admiral, who more than once observed that there was no more promising officer in the British naval service than Lieutenant Hendrick.

Well, all this, which has taken me so many words to relate, flashed before me like a scene in a theatre, as I read the paragraph in the Cornish paper. The *Scorpion* and her consort parted company a few days after this fight, and I had not since then seen or heard of Hendrick till now. I was losing myself in conjectures as to the probable or possible cause of so disgraceful a termination to a career that promised so brilliantly, when the striking of the bar-clock warned me that the mail-boat was by this time arrived. I sallied forth and reached the pier-steps just a minute or so before the boat arrived there. The messenger I expected was in her; and I was turning away with the parcel he handed me, when my attention was arrested by a stout, unwieldy fellow, who stumbled awkwardly out of the boat, and hurriedly came up the steps. The face of the man was pale, thin, hatchet-shaped, and anxious, and the gray, ferrety eyes were restless and perturbed; whilst the stout, round body was that of a yeoman of the bulkiest class, but so awkwardly made up that it did not require any very lengthened scrutiny to perceive that the shrunken carcase appropriate to such a lanky and dismal visage occupied but a small space within the thick casting of padding and extra garments in which it was

swathed. His light-brown wig, too, surmounted by a broad-brimmer, had got a little awry, dangerously revealing the scanty locks of iron-gray beneath. It was not difficult to run up these little items to a pretty accurate sum-total, and I had little doubt that the hasting and nervous traveller was fleeing either from a constable or a sheriff's officer. It was, however, no affair of mine, and I was soon busy with the letters just brought me.

The most important tidings they contained was that Captain Pickard—the master of a smuggling craft of some celebrity, called *Les Trois Frères*, in which for the last twelve months or more he had been carrying on a daring and successful trade throughout the whole line of the southern and western coasts—was likely to be found at this particular time near a particular spot at the back of the Wight. This information was from a sure source in the enemy's camp, and it was consequently with great satisfaction that I observed indications of the coming on of a breeze, and in all probability a stiff one. I was not disappointed; and in less than an hour the *Rose* was stretching her white wings beneath a brisk north-wester over to Portsmouth, where I had some slight official business to transact previous to looking after friend Pickard. This was speedily despatched, and I was stepping into the boat on my return to the cutter when a panting messenger informed me that the port-admiral desired to see me instantly.

"The telegraph has just announced," said the admiral, "that Sparkes, the defaulter, who has for some time successfully avoided capture, will attempt to leave the kingdom from the Wight, as he is known to have been in communication with some of the smuggling gentry there. He is supposed to have a large amount of government moneys in his possession; you will therefore, Lieutenant Warneford, exert yourself vigilantly to secure him."

"What is his description?"

"Mr. James," replied the admiral, addressing one of the telegraph clerks, "give Lieutenant Warneford the description transmitted." Mr. James did so, and I read: "Is said to have disguised himself as a stout countryman; wears a blue coat with bright buttoms, buff waistcoat, a brown wig, and a Quaker's hat. He is of a slight, lanky figure, five feet nine inches in height. He has two pock-marks on his forehead, and lisps in his speech."

"By Jove, sir!" I exclaimed, "I saw this fellow only about two hours ago." I then briefly related what had occurred, and was directed not to lose a moment in hastening to secure the fugitive.

The wind had considerably increased by this time, and the *Rose* was soon again off Cowes, where Mr. Roberts, the first mate, and six men, were sent on shore with orders to make the best of his way to Bonchurch—about which spot I knew, if anywhere, the brown-wigged gentleman would endeavour to

embark—whilst the *Rose* went round to intercept him seaward; which she did at a spanking rate, for it was now blowing half a gale of wind. Evening had fallen before we reached our destination, but so clear and bright with moon and stars that distant objects were as visible as by day. I had rightly guessed how it would be, for we had no sooner opened up Bonchurch shore or beach than Roberts signaled us that our man was on board the cutter running off at about a league from us in the direction of Cape La Hogue. I knew, too, from the cutter's build, and the cut and set of her sails, that she was no other than Captain Pickard's boasted craft, so there was a chance of killing two birds with one stone. We evidently gained, though slowly, upon *Les Trois Frères;* and this, after about a quarter of an hour's run, appeared to be her captain's own opinion, for he suddenly changed his course, and stood towards the Channel Islands, in the hope, I doubted not, that I should not follow him in such weather as was likely to come on through the dangerous intricacies of the iron-bound coast about Guernsey and the adjacent islets. Master Pickard was mistaken; for knowing the extreme probability of being led such a dance, I had brought a pilot with me from Cowes, as well acquainted with Channel navigation as the smuggler himself could be. *Les Trois Frères*, it was soon evident, was now upon her best point of sailing, and it was all we could do to hold our own with her. This was vexatious: but

the aspect of the heavens forbade me showing more canvas, greatly as I was tempted to do so.

It was lucky I did not. The stars were still shining over our heads from an expanse of blue without a cloud, and the full moon also as yet held her course unobscured, but there had gathered round her a glittering halo-like ring, and away to windward huge masses of black cloud, piled confusedly on each other, were fast spreading over the heavens. The thick darkness had spread over about half the visible sky, presenting a singular contrast to the silver brightness of the other portion, when suddenly a sheet of vivid flame broke out of the blackness, instantly followed by deafening explosions, as if a thousand cannons were bursting immediately over our heads. At the same moment the tempest came leaping and hissing along the white-crested waves, and struck the *Rose* abeam with such terrible force, that for one startling moment I doubted if she would right again. It was a vain fear; and in a second or two she was tearing through the water at a tremendous rate. *Les Trois Frères* had not been so lucky: she had carried away her topmast, and sustained other damage; but so well and boldly was she handled, and so perfectly under command appeared her crew, that these accidents were, so far as it was possible to do so, promptly repaired; and so little was she crippled in comparative speed, that although it was clear enough, after a time, that the *Rose* gained something on her,

it was so slowly that the issue of the chase continued extremely doubtful. The race was an exciting one: the Caskets, Alderney, were swiftly past, and at about two o'clock in the morning we made the Guernsey Lights. We were by this time within a mile of *Les Trois Frères;* and she, determined at all risks to get rid of her pursuer, ventured upon passing through a narrow opening between the small islets of Herm and Jethou, abreast of Guernsey—the same passage, I believe, by which Captain, afterwards Admiral Lord Saumarez, escaped with his frigate from a French squadron in the early days of the last war.

Fine and light as the night had again become, the attempt, blowing as it did, was a perilous, and proved to be a fatal one. *Les Trois Frères* struck upon a reef on the side of Jethou—a rock with then but one poor habitation upon it, which one might throw a biscuit over; and by the time the *Rose* had brought up in the Guernsey Roads, the smuggler, as far as could be ascertained by our night-glasses, had entirely disappeared. What had become of the crew and the important passenger was the next point to be ascertained; but although the wind had by this time somewhat abated, it was not, under the pilot's advice, till near eight o'clock that the *Rose's* boat, with myself and a stout crew, pulled off for the scene of the catastrophe. We needed not to have hurried ourselves. The half-drowned smugglers, all but three

of whom had escaped with life, were in a truly sorry plight, every one of them being more or less maimed, bruised, and bleeding. *Les Trois Frères* had gone entirely to pieces, and as there was no possible means of escape from the desolate place, our arrival, with the supplies we brought, was looked upon rather as a deliverance than otherwise. To my inquiries respecting their passenger, the men answered by saying he was in the house with the captain. I immediately proceeded thither, and found one of the two rooms on the ground-floor occupied by four or five of the worst injured of the contrabandists, and the gentleman I was chiefly in pursuit of, Mr. Samuel Sparkes. There was no mistaking Mr. Sparkes, notwithstanding he had substituted the disguise of a sailor for that of a jolly agriculturist.

"You are, I believe, sir, the Mr. Samuel Sparkes for whose presence certain personages in London are just now rather anxious?"

His deathly face grew more corpse-like as I spoke, but he nevertheless managed to stammer out: "No; Jamth Edward, thir."

"At all events, that pretty lisp, and those two marks on the forehead, belong to Samuel Sparkes, Esquire, and you must be detained till you satisfactorily explain how you came by them. Stevens, take this person into close custody, and have him searched at once. And now, gentlemen smugglers," I continued, "pray inform me where I may see your renowned captain?"

"He is in the next room," replied a decent-tongued chap, sitting near the fire; "and he desired me to give his compliments to Lieutenant Warneford, and say he wished to see him *alone*."

"Very civil and considerate upon my word! In this room, do you say?"

"Yes, sir; in that room." I pushed open a rickety door, and found myself in a dingy hole of a room, little more than about a couple of yards square, at the further side of which stood a lithe, sinewy man in a blue pea-jacket, and with a fur-cap on his head. His back was towards me; and as my entrance did not cause him to change his position, I said: "You are Captain Pickard, I am informed?"

He swung sharply round as I spoke, threw off his cap, and said briefly and sternly: "Yes, Warneford, I *am* Captain Pickard."

The sudden unmasking of a loaded battery immediately in my front could not have so confounded and startled me as these words did, as they issued from the lips of the man before me. The curling black hair, the dark flashing eyes, the marble features, were those of Lieutenant Hendrick—of the gallant seaman whose vigorous arm I had seen turn the tide of battle against desperate odds on the deck of the privateer!

"Hendrick!" I at length exclaimed, for the sudden inrush of painful emotion choked my speech for a time—"can it indeed be you?"

"Ay, truly, Warneford. The Hendrick of whom

Collingwood prophesied high things is fallen thus low; and worse remains behind. There is a price set upon my capture, as you know; and escape is, I take it, out of the question." I comprehended the slow, meaning tone in which the last sentence was spoken, and the keen glance that accompanied it. Hendrick, too, instantly read the decisive though unspoken reply.

"Of course it is out of the question," he went on. "I was but a fool to even seem to doubt that it was. You must do your duty, Warneford, I know; and since this fatal mishap was to occur, I am glad for many reasons that I have fallen into your hands."

"So am not I; and I wish with all my soul you had successfully threaded the passage you essayed."

"The fellow who undertook to pilot us failed in nerve at the critical moment. Had he not done so, *Les Trois Frères* would have been long since beyond your reach. But the past is past, and the future of dark and bitter time will be swift and brief."

"What have you especially to dread? I know a reward has been offered for your apprehension, but not for what precise offence."

"The unfortunate business in Mount Bay."

"Good God! The newspaper was right then! But neither of the wounded men have died, I hear, so that—that"——

"The *mercy* of transportation may, you think, be substituted for the capital penalty." He laughed bitterly.

"Or—or," I hesitatingly suggested, "you may not be identified—that is, legally so."

"Easily, easily, Warneford, I must not trust to that rotten cable. Neither the coast-guard nor the fellows with me know me indeed as Hendrick, ex-lieutenant of the royal navy; and that is a secret you will, I know, religiously respect."

I promised to do so: the painful interview terminated; and in about two hours the captain and surviving crew of *Les Trois Frères*, and Mr. Samuel Sparkes, were safely on board the *Rose*. Hendrick had papers to arrange; and as the security of his person was all I was responsible for, he was accommodated in my cabin, where I left him to confer with the Guernsey authorities, in whose bailiwick Jethou is situated. The matter of jurisdiction—the offences with which the prisoners were charged having been committed in England—was soon arranged; and by five o'clock in the evening the *Rose* was on her way to England, under an eight-knot breeze from the south-west.

As soon as we were fairly under way, I went below to have a last conference with the unfortunate Hendrick. There was a parcel on the table directed to "Mrs. Hendrick, Lostwithiel, Cornwall—care of Lieutenant Warneford." Placing it in my hands, he entreated me to see it securely conveyed to its address unexamined and unopened. I assured him that I would do so; and tears, roughly dashed away, sprang

to his eyes as he grasped and shook my hand. I felt half-choked; and when he again solemnly adjured me, under no circumstances, to disclose the identity of Captain Pickard and Lieutenant Hendrick, I could only reply by a seaman's hand-grip, requiring no additional pledge of words.

We sat silently down, and I ordered some wine to be brought in. "You promised to tell me," I said, "how all this unhappy business came about."

"I am about to do so," he answered. "It is an old tale, of which the last black chapter owes its colour, let me frankly own, to my own hot and impatient temper as much as to a complication of adverse circumstances." He poured out a glass of wine, and proceeded at first slowly and calmly, but gradually, as passion gathered strength and way upon him, with flushed and impetuous eagerness to the close:—

"I was born near Lostwithiel, Cornwall. My father, a younger and needy son of no profession, died when I was eight years of age. My mother has about eighty pounds a year in her own right, and with that pittance, helped by self-privation, unfelt because endured for her darling boy, she gave me a sufficient education, and fitted me out respectably; when, thanks to Pellew, I obtained a midshipman's warrant in the British service. This occurred in my sixteenth year. Dr. Redstone, at whose "High School" I acquired what slight classical learning, long since forgotten, I once possessed, was married in second nup-

tials to a virago of a wife, who brought him, besides her precious self, a red-headed cub by a former marriage. His, the son's name, was Kershaw. The doctor had one child about my own age, a daughter, Ellen Redstone. I am not about to prate to you of the bread-and-butter sentiment of mere children, nor of Ellen's wonderful graces of mind and person: I doubt, indeed, if I thought her very pretty at the time; but she was meekness itself, and my boy's heart used, I well remember, to leap as if it would burst my bosom at witnessing her patient submission to the tyranny of her mother-in-law; and one of the greatest pleasures I ever experienced was giving young Kershaw, a much bigger fellow than myself, a good thrashing for some brutality towards her—an exploit that of course rendered me a remarkable favourite with the great bumpkin's mother.

"Well, I went to sea, and did not again see Ellen till seven years afterwards, when, during absence on sick leave, I met her at Penzance, in the neighbourhood of which place the doctor had for some time resided. She was vastly improved in person, but was still meek, dove-eyed, gentle Ellen, and pretty nearly as much dominated by her mother-in-law as formerly. Our child-acquaintance was renewed; and, suffice it to say, that I soon came to love her with a fervency surprising even to myself. My affection was reciprocated: we pledged faith with each other; and it was agreed that at the close of the war,

whenever that should be, we were to marry, and dwell together like turtle-doves in the pretty hermitage that Ellen's fancy loved to conjure up, and with her voice of music untiringly dilate upon. I was again at sea, and the answer to my first letter brought the surprising intelligence that Mrs. Redstone had become quite reconciled to our future union, and that I might consequently send my letters direct to the High School. Ellen's letter was prettily expressed enough, but somehow I did not like its tone: it did not read like her spoken language at all events. This, however, must, I concluded, be mere fancy; and our correspondence continued for a couple of years—till the peace in fact—when the frigate, of which I was now second-lieutenant, arrived at Plymouth to be paid off. We were awaiting the admiral's inspection, which for some reason or other was unusually delayed, when a bag of letters was brought on board, with one for me bearing the Penzance postmark. I tore it open, and found that it was subscribed by an old and intimate friend. He had accidentally met with Ellen Redstone for the first time since I left. She looked thin and ill, and in answer to his persistent questioning, had told him she had only heard once from me since I went to sea, and that was to renounce our engagement; and she added that she was going to be married in a day or two to the Rev. Mr. Williams, a dissenting minister of fair means and respectable character. My friend assured her there must be some

mistake, but she shook her head incredulously; and with eyes brimful of tears, and shaking voice, bade him when he saw me, say that she freely forgave me, but that her heart was broken. This was the substance, and as I read, a hurricane of dismay and rage possessed me. There was not, I felt a moment to be lost. Unfortunately the captain was absent, and the frigate temporarily under the command of the first-lieutenant. You know Lieutenant ——?"

"I did, for one of the most cold-blooded martinets that ever trod a quarter-deck."

"Well, him I sought, and asked temporary leave of absence. He refused. I explained, hurriedly, imploringly explained, the circumstances in which I was placed. He sneeringly replied, that sentimental nonsense of that kind could not be permitted to interfere with the king's service. You know, Warneford, how naturally hot and impetuous is my temper, and at that moment my brain seemed literally aflame: high words followed, and in a transport of rage I struck the taunting coward a violent blow in the face—following up the outrage by drawing my sword, and challenging him to instant combat. You may guess the sequel. I was immediately arrested by the guard, and tried a few days afterwards by court-martial. Exmouth stood my friend, or I know not what sentence might have been passed, and I was dismissed the service."

"I was laid up for several weeks by fever about that

time," I remarked; "and it thus happened, doubtless, that I did not see any report of the trial."

"The moment I was liberated I hastened, almost in a state of madness, to Penzance. It was all true, and I was too late! Ellen had been married something more than a week. It was Kershaw and his mother's doings. Him I half killed; but it is needless to go into details of the frantic violence with which I conducted myself. I broke madly into the presence of the newly-married couple: Ellen swooned with terror, and her husband, white with consternation, and trembling in every limb, had barely, I remember, sufficient power to stammer out, 'that he would pray for me.' The next six months is a blank. I went to London; fell into evil courses, drank, gambled; heard after awhile that Ellen was dead—the shock of which partially checked my downward progress—partially only. I left off drinking but not gambling, and ultimately I became connected with a number of disreputable persons, amongst whom was your prisoner Sparkes. He found part of the capital with which I have been carrying on the contraband trade for the last two years. I had, however, fully determined to withdraw myself from the dangerous though exciting pursuit. This was to have been my last trip; but you know, he added bitterly, "it is always upon the last turn of the dice that the devil wins his victim."

He ceased speaking, and we both remained silent

for several minutes. What on my part *could* be said or suggested?

"You hinted just now," I remarked after awhile, "that all your remaining property was in this parcel. You have, however, of course reserved sufficient for your defence?"

A strange smile curled his lip, and a wild, brief flash of light broke from his dark eyes, as he answered: "O yes; more than enough—more, much more than will be required!"

"I am glad of that." We were again silent, and I presently exclaimed: "Suppose we take a turn on deck—the heat here stifles one."

"With all my heart," he answered; and we both left the cabin.

We continued to pace the deck side by side for some time without interchanging a syllable. The night was beautifully clear and fine, and the cool breeze that swept over the star and moon-lit waters gradually allayed the feverish nervousness which the unfortunate lieutenant's narrative had excited.

"A beautiful, however illusive world," he by-and-by sadly resumed, "this Death—now so close at my heels—wrenches us from! And yet you and I, Warneford, have seen men rush to encounter the King of Terrors, as he is called, as readily as if summoned to a bridal."

"A sense of duty and a habit of discipline will

always overpower, in men of our race and profession, the vulgar fear of death."

"Is it not also, think you, that the greater fear of disgrace, dishonour in the eyes of the world, which outweighs the lesser dread?"

"No doubt that has an immense influence. What would our sweethearts, sisters, mothers say if they heard we had turned craven? What would they say in England? Nelson well understood this feeling, and appealed to it in his last great signal."

"Ay, to be sure," he musingly replied; "what would our mothers say—feel rather—at witnessing their sons' dishonour? That is the master-chord!" We once more relapsed into silence; and after another dozen or so turns on the deck, Hendrick seated himself on the combings of the main hatchway. His countenance, I observed, was still pale as marble, but a livelier, more resolute expression had gradually kindled in his brilliant eyes. He was, I concluded, nerving himself to meet the chances of his position with constancy and fortitude.

"I shall go below again," I said. "Come; it may be some weeks before we have another glass of wine together."

"I will be with you directly," he answered, and I went down. He did not, however, follow, and I was about calling him when I heard his step on the stairs. He stopped at the threshold of the cabin, and there was a flushing intensity of expression about his

face which quite startled me. As if moved by second thoughts, he stepped in. "One last glass with you, Warneford: God bless you!" He drained and set the glass on the table. "The lights at the corner of the Wight are just made," he hurriedly went on. "It is not likely I shall have an opportunity of again speaking with you alone; and let me again hear you say that you will, under any circumstances, keep secret from all the world—my mother especially—that Captain Pickard and Lieutenant Hendrick were one person."

"I will; but why——"

"God bless you!" he broke in. "I must on deck again."

He vanished as he spoke, and a dim suspicion of his purpose arose in my mind; but before I could act upon it, a loud confused outcry arose on the deck, and as I rushed up the cabin stairs, I heard, amidst the hurrying to and fro of feet, the cries of "Man overboard!"—"'Bout ship!"—Down with the helm!" The cause of the commotion was soon explained: Hendrick had sprung overboard; and looking in the direction pointed out by the man at the wheel, I plainly discerned him, already considerably astern of the cutter. His face was turned towards us, and the instant I appeared he waved one arm wildly in the air: I could hear the words, "Your promise!" distinctly, and the next instant the moonlight played upon the spot where he had vanished. Boats were

lowered, and we passed and repassed over and near the place for nearly half an hour. Vainly: he did not reappear!

I have only further to add, that the parcel intrusted to me was safely delivered, and that I have reason to believe Mrs. Hendrick remained to her last hour ignorant of the sad fate of her son. It was her impression, induced by his last letter, that he was about to enter the South American service under Cochrane, and she ultimately resigned herself to a belief that he had there met a brave man's death. My promise was scrupulously kept, nor is it by this publication in the slightest degree broken; for both the names of Hendrick and Pickard are fictitious, and so is the place assigned as that of the lieutenant's birth. That rascal Sparkes, I am glad to be able to say—chasing whom made me an actor in the melancholy affair—was sent over the Herring-pond for life.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

THE LAST REVEL.

When I was quite a lad, a servant lived with us of the name of Anne Stacey. She had been in the service of William Cobbett, the political writer, who resided for some years at Botley, a village a few miles distant from Itchen. Anne might be about two or three and twenty years of age when she came to us; and a very notable industrious servant she was, and remarked, moreover, as possessing a strong religious bias. Her features, everybody agreed, were comely and intelligent. But that advantage in

the matrimonial market was more than neutralised by her unfortunate figure, which, owing, as we understood, to a fall in her childhood, was hopelessly deformed, though still strongly set and muscular. Albeit, a sum of money—about fifty pounds—scraped together by thrifty self-denial, during a dozen years of servitude, amply compensated in the eyes of several idle and needy young fellows for the unlovely outline of her person; and Anne, with an infatuation too common with persons of her class and condition, and in spite of repeated warning, and the secret misgivings, one would suppose, of her own mind, married the best-looking, but most worthless and dissipated of them all. This man, Henry Ransome by name, was, I have been informed, constantly intoxicated during the first three months of wedlock, and then the ill-assorted couple disappeared from the neighbourhood of Itchen, and took up their abode in one of the hamlets of the New Forest. Many years afterwards, when I joined the Preventive Service, I frequently heard mention of his name as that of a man singularly skilful in defrauding the revenue, as well as in avoiding the penalties which surround that dangerous vocation. One day he was pointed out to me, when standing by the Cross-house near the Ferry, in company with a comparatively youthful desperado, whose real name was John Wyatt, though generally known amongst the smuggling fraternity and other personal intimates, by the *sobriquet* of

Black Jack—on account, I suppose, of his dark, heavy-browed, scowling figure-head, one of the most repulsive, I think, I have ever seen. Anne's husband, Henry Ransome, seemed, so far as very brief observation enabled me to judge, quite a different person from his much younger, as well as much bigger and brawnier associate. I did not doubt that, before excessive indulgence had wasted his now pallid features, and sapped the vigour of his thin and shaking frame, he had been a smart, good-looking chap enough; and there was, it struck me, spite of his reputation as "a knowing one," considerably more of the dupe than the knave, of the fool than the villain, in the dreary, downcast, skulking expression that flitted over his features as his eye caught mine intently regarding him. I noticed also that he had a dry, hard cough, and I set down in my own mind as certain that he would, ere many months passed away, be consigned, like scores of his fellows, to a brandy-hastened grave. He indicated my presence—proximity, rather—to Wyatt, by a nudge on the elbow, whereupon that respectable personage swung sharply round, and returned my scrutinizing gaze by one of insolent defiance and bravado, which he contrived to render still more emphatic by thrusting his tongue into his cheek. This done, he gathered up a coil of rope from one of the seats of the Cross-house, and said, "Come, Harry, let's be off. That gentleman seems to want to take

our picturs—on account that our mugs are such handsome ones, no doubt; and if it was a mildish afternoon, I shouldn't mind having mine done; but as the weather's rather nippy like, we'd better be toddling, I think." They then swaggered off and crossed the Ferry.

Two or three weeks afterwards, I again met with them, under the following circumstances:—I landed from the *Rose* at Lymington, for the purpose of going by coach to Lyndhurst, a considerable village in the New Forest, from which an ex-chancellor derives his title. I had appointed to meet a confidential agent there at the Fox and Hounds Inn, a third-rate tavern, situate at the foot of the hill upon which the place is built; and as the evening promised to be clear and fine, though cold, I anticipated a bracing, cross-country walk afterwards in the direction of Hythe, in the neighbourhood whereof dwelt a person—neither a seaman nor a smuggler—whose favour I was just then very diligently cultivating. It was the month of November; and on being set down at the door of the inn somewhere about six o'clock in the evening, I quietly entered, and took a seat in the smoking-room unrecognised, as I thought, by any one—for I was not in uniform. My man had not arrived; and after waiting a few minutes, I stepped out to inquire at the bar if such a person had been there. To my great surprise, a young woman—girl would be a better word, for she could not be more than seventeen, or,

at the utmost, eighteen years old—whom I had noticed on the outside of the coach, was just asking if one Dr. Lee was expected. This was precisely the individual who was to meet me, and I looked with some curiosity at the inquirer. She was a coarsely, but neatly-attired person, of a pretty figure, interesting, but dejected cast of features, and with large, dark, sorrowing eyes. Thoughtfulness and care were not less marked in the humble, subdued tone in which she spoke. "Could I sit down anywhere till he comes?" she timidly asked, after hearing the bar-woman's reply. The servant civilly invited her to take a seat by the bar-fire, and I returned, without saying anything, to the smoking-room, rang the bell, and ordered a glass of brandy and water, and some biscuits. I had been seated a very short time only, when the quick, consequential step, and sharp, cracked voice of Dr. Lee sounded along the passage; and after a momentary pause at the bar, his round, smirking, good-humoured, knavish face looked in at the parlour-door, where, seeing me alone, he winked with uncommon expression, and said aloud, "A prime fire in the smoking-room, I see; I shall treat myself to a whiff there presently." This said, the shining face vanished, in order, I doubted not, that its owner might confer with the young girl who had been inquiring for him. This Lee, I must observe, had no legal right to the prefix of Doctor tacked to his name. He was merely a peripatetic quacksalver and vender

of infallible medicines, who, having wielded the pestle in an apothecary's shop for some years during his youth, had acquired a little skill in the use of drugs, and could open a vein or draw a tooth with considerable dexterity. He had a large, but not, I think, very remunerative practice amongst the poaching, deer-stealing, smuggling community of those parts, to whom it was of vital importance that the hurts received in their desperate pursuits should be tended by some one not inclined to babble of the number, circumstances, or whereabouts of his patients. This essential condition, Lee, hypocrite and knave as he was, strictly fulfilled; and no inducement could, I think, have prevailed upon him to betray the hiding-place of a wounded or suffering client. In other respects, he permitted himself a more profitable freedom of action, thereto compelled, he was wont apologetically to remark, by the wretchedly poor remuneration obtained by his medical practice. If, however, specie was scarce amongst his clients, spirits, as his rubicund, carbuncled face flamingly testified, were very plentiful. There was a receipt in full painted there for a prodigious amount of drugs and chemicals; so that, on the whole, he could have had no great reason to complain.

He soon reappeared, and took a chair by the fire, which, after civilly saluting me, he stirred almost fiercely, eyeing as he did so the blazing coals with a half-abstracted and sullen, cowed, disquieted look

altogether unusual with him. At least whenever I had before seen him, he had been as loquacious and boastful as a Gascon.

"What is the matter, doctor?" I said. "You appear strangely down upon your luck all at once."

"Hush—hush! Speak lower, sir, pray. The fact is, I have just heard that a fellow is lurking about here—— You have not, I hope, asked for me of any one?"

"I have not; but what if I had?"

"Why, you see, sir, that suspicion—calumny, Shakspeare says, could not be escaped, even if one were pure as snow—and more especially, therefore, when one is not quite so—so—— Ahem!—you understand?"

"Very well, indeed. You would say, that when one is *not* actually immaculate—calumny, suspicion takes an earlier and firmer hold."

"Just so; exactly—and, in fact—ha!"——

The door was suddenly thrown open, and the doctor fairly leaped to his feet with ill-disguised alarm. It was only the barmaid, to ask if he had rung. He had not done so; and as it was perfectly understood that I paid for all on these occasions, that fact alone was abundantly conclusive as to the disordered state of his intellect. He now ordered brandy and water, a pipe, and a screw of tobacco. These ministrants to a mind disturbed somewhat calmed the doctor's excitement, and his cunning gray eyes soon brightly twinkled again through a haze of curling smoke.

"Did you notice," he resumed, "a female sitting in the bar? She knows you."

"A young, intelligent-looking girl. Yes. Who is she?"

"Young!" replied Lee, evasively, I thought. "Well, it's true she *is* young in years, but not in experience—in suffering, poor girl, as I can bear witness?"

"There are, indeed, but faint indications of the mirth and lightness of youth or childhood in those timid, apprehensive eyes of hers."

"She never had a childhood. Girls of her condition seldom have. Her father's booked for the next world, and by an early stage too, unless he mends his manners, and that I hardly see how he's to do. The girl's been to Lymington to see after a place. Can't have it. Her father's character is against her. Unfortunate; for she's a good girl."

"I am sorry for her. But come, to business. How about the matter you wot of?"

"Here are all the particulars," answered Lee, with an easy transition from a sentimental to a common-sense, business-like tone, and at the same time unscrewing the lid of a tortoiseshell tobacco-box, and taking a folded paper from it. "I keep these matters generally here; for if I were to drop such an article—just now, especially—I might as well be hung out to dry at once."

I glanced over the paper. "Place, date, hour

correct, and thoroughly to be depended upon you say, eh?"

"Correct as Cocker, I'll answer for it. It would be a spicy run for them, if there were no man-traps in the way."

I placed the paper in my waistcoat-pocket, and then handed the doctor his preliminary fee. The touch of gold had not its usual electrical effect upon him. His nervous fit was coming on again. "I wish," he puffed out—"I wish I was safe out of this part of the country, or else that a certain person I know was transported; then indeed"——

"And who may that certain person be, doctor?" demanded a grim-looking rascal, as he softly opened the door. "Not me, I hope?"

I instantly recognised the fellow, and so did the doctor, who had again bounded from his chair, and was shaking all over as if with ague, whilst his very carbuncles became pallid with affright. "You—u—u," he stammered—"You—u—u, Wyatt: God forbid!"

Wyatt was, I saw, muddled with liquor. This was lucky for poor Lee. "Well, never mind if it *was* me, old brick," rejoined the fellow; "or at least you have been a brick, though I'm misdoubting you'll die a pantile after all. But here's luck; all's one for that." He held a pewter-pot in one hand, and a pipe in the other, and as he drank, his somewhat confused but baleful look continued levelled savagely along the

pewter at the terrified doctor. There was, I saw, mischief in the man.

"I'd drink yours," continued the reckless scamp, as he paused for breath, drew the back of his pipe-hand across his mouth, and stared as steadily as he could in my face—"I'd drink your health, if I only knew your name."

"You'll hear it plainly enough, my fine fellow, when you're in the dock one of these days, just before the judge sends you to the hulks, or, which is perhaps the likelier, to the gallows. And this man, too," I added, with a gesture towards Lee, whom I hardly dared venture to look at, "who has been pitching me such a pretty rigmarole, is, I see, a fellow-rogue to yourself. This house appears to be little better than a thieves' rendezvous, upon my word."

Wyatt regarded me with a deadly scowl as he answered: "Ay, ay, you're a brave cock, Master Warneford, upon your own dunghill. It may be my turn some day. Here, doctor, a word with you outside." They both left the room, and I rang the bell, discharged the score, and was just going when Lee returned. He was still pale and shaky, though considerably recovered from the panic-terror excited by the sudden entrance of Wyatt.

"Thank Heaven, he's gone!" said the doctor; "and less sour and suspicious than I feared him to be. But tell me, sir, do you intend walking from here to Hythe?"

"I so purpose. Why do you ask?"

"Because the young girl you saw in the bar went off ten minutes ago by the same road. She was too late for a farmer's cart, which she expected to return by. Wyatt, too, is off in the same direction."

"She will have company then."

"Evil company, I fear. Her father and he have lately quarrelled; and her, I know, he bears a grudge against, for refusing, as the talk goes, to have anything to say to him."

"Very well; don't alarm yourself. I shall soon overtake them, and you may depend the big drunken bully shall neither insult nor molest her. Good-night."

It was a lonely walk for a girl to take on a winter evening, although the weather was brilliantly light and clear, and it was not yet much past seven o'clock. Except, perchance, a deer-keeper, or a deer-stealer, it was not likely she would meet a human being for two or three miles together, and farm and other houses near the track were very sparsely scattered here and there. I walked swiftly on, and soon came within sight of Wyatt; but so eagerly was his attention directed ahead, that he did not observe me till we were close abreast of each other.

"You here!" he exclaimed, fairly gnashing his teeth with rage. "I only wish"——

"That you had one or two friends, within hail, eh? Well, it's better for your own health that you have not, depend upon it. I have four barrels with me,

and each of them, as you well know, carries a life, one of which should be yours, as sure as that black head is on your shoulders."

He answered only by a snarl and a malediction, and we proceeded on pretty nearly together. He appeared to be much soberer than before: perhaps the keen air had cooled him somewhat, or he might have been shamming it a little at the inn to hoodwink the doctor. Five or six minutes brought us to a sharp turn of the road, where we caught sight of the young woman, who was not more than thirty or forty yards ahead. Presently, the sound of footsteps appeared to strike her ear, for she looked quickly round, and an expression of alarm escaped her. I was in the shadow of the road, so that, in the first instance, she saw only Wyatt. Another moment, and her terrified glance rested upon me.

"Lieutenant Warneford!" she exclaimed.

"Ay, my good girl, that is my name. You appear frightened—not at me, I hope?"

"O no, not at you," she hastily answered, the colour vividly returning to her pale cheeks.

"This good-looking person is, I daresay, a sweetheart of yours; so I'll just keep astern out of earshot. My road lies past your dwelling."

The girl appeared to understand me, and, reassured, walked on. Wyatt lopping sullenly along beside her. I did not choose to have a fellow of his stamp, and in his present mood, walking behind *me*.

Nothing was said that I heard for about a mile and a half, when Wyatt, with a snarling "good-night" to the girl, turned off by a path on the left, and was quickly out of sight.

"I am not very far from home now, sir," said the young woman, hesitatingly. She thought, perhaps, that I might leave her, now Wyatt had disappeared.

"Pray go on, then," I said; "I will see you safe there, though somewhat pressed for time."

We walked side by side, and after awhile she said in a low tone, and with still downcast eyes: "My mother lived servant in your family once, sir."

"The deuce! Your name is Ransome, then, I suspect."

"Yes, sir—Mary Ransome." A sad sigh accompanied these words. I pitied the poor girl from my heart, but having nothing very consolatory to suggest, I held my peace.

"There is mother!" she cried in an almost joyful tone. She pointed to a woman standing in the open doorway of a mean dwelling at no great distance, in apparently anxious expectation. Mary Ransome hastened forwards, and whispered a few sentences to her mother, who fondly embraced her.

"I am very grateful to you, sir, for seeing Mary safely home. You do not, I daresay, remember me?"

"You are greatly changed, I perceive, and not by years alone."

"Ah, sir!" Tears started to the eyes of both

mother and daughter. "Would you," added the woman, "step in a moment? Perhaps a few words from you might have effect." She looked, whilst thus speaking, at her weak, consumptive-looking husband, who was seated by the fireplace with a large green baize-covered Bible open before him on a round table. There is no sermon so impressive as that which gleams from an apparently yawning and inevitable grave; and none, too, more quickly forgotten, if by any resource of art, and reinvigoration of nature, the tombward progress be arrested, and life pulsate joyously again. I was about to make some remark upon the suicidal folly of persisting in a course which almost necessarily led to misery and ruin, when the but partially-closed doorway was darkened by the burly figure of Wyatt.

"A very nice company, by jingo!" growled the ruffian; "you only want the doctor to be quite complete. But hark ye, Ransome," he continued, addressing the sick man, who cowered beneath his scowling gaze like a beaten hound—"mind and keep a still tongue in that calf's head of yourn, or else prepare yourself to—to take—to take—what follows. You know me as well as I do you. Good-night."

With this caution, the fellow disappeared; and after a few words, which the unfortunate family were too frightened to listen to, or scarcely to hear, I also went my way.

The information received from Dr. Lee relative to

the contemplated run near Hurst Castle proved strictly accurate. The surprise of the smugglers was in consequence complete, and the goods, the value of which was considerable, were easily secured. There occurred also several of the ordinary casualties that attend such encounters—casualties which always excited in my mind a strong feeling of regret, that the revenue of the country could not be assured by other and less hazardous expedients. No life was, however, lost, and we made no prisoners. To my great surprise I caught, at the beginning of the affray, a glimpse of the bottle-green coat, drab knee-cords, with gaiter continuations, of the doctor. They, however, very quickly vanished; and till about a week afterwards, I concluded that their owner had escaped in a whole skin. I was mistaken.

I had passed the evening at the house whither my steps were directed when I escorted Mary Ransome home, and it was growing late, when the servant-maid announced that a young woman, seemingly in great trouble, after inquiring if Lieutenant Warneford was there, had requested to see him immediately, and was waiting below for that purpose. It was, I found, Mary Ransome, in a state of great flurry and excitement. She brought a hastily-scribbled note from Dr. Lee, to the effect that Wyatt, from motives of suspicion, had insisted that both he and Ransome should be present at the attempt near Hurst Castle; that the doctor, in his hurry to get out of harm's way, had

attempted a leap which, owing to his haste, awkwardness, and the frosty atmosphere and ground, had resulted in a compound fracture of his right leg; that he had been borne off in a state of insensibility; on recovering from which he found himself in Wyatt's power, who, by rifling his pockets, had found some memoranda that left no doubt of Lee's treason towards the smuggling fraternity. The bearer of the note would, he said, further explain, as he could not risk delaying sending it for another moment—only he begged to say his life depended upon me.

"Life!" I exclaimed, addressing the pale, quaking girl; "nonsense! Such gentry as Wyatt are not certainly particular to a shade or two, but they rarely go that length."

"They will make away with father as well as Dr. Lee," she shudderingly replied: "I am sure of it. Wyatt is mad with rage." She trembled so violently, as hardly to be able to stand, and I made her sit down.

"You cannot mean that the scoundrel contemplates murder?"

"Yes—yes! believe me, sir, he does. You know the *Fair Rosamond*, now lying off Marchwood?" she continued, growing every instant paler and paler.

"The trader to St. Michael's for oranges and other fruits?"

"That is but a blind, sir. She belongs to the same company as the boats you captured at Hurst Castle.

She will complete landing her cargo early to-morrow morning, and drop down the river with the ebb-tide just about dawn."

"The deuce they will! The cunning rascals. But go on. What would you further say?"

"Wyatt insists that both the doctor and my father shall sail in her. They will be carried on board, and —and when at sea—you know—you understand"——

"Be drowned, you fear. That is possible, certainly; but I cannot think they would have more to fear than a good keel-hauling. Still, the matter must be looked to, more especially as Lee's predicament is owing to the information he has given the king's officers. Where are they confined?"

She described the place, which I remembered very well, having searched it not more than a fortnight previously. I then assured her that I would get her father as well as Lee out of the smugglers' hands by force, if necessary; upon hearing which the poor girl's agitation came to a climax, and she went off into strong hysterics. There was no time to be lost, so committing her to the care of the servant, I took leave of my friends, and made the best of my way to Hythe, hard off which a boat, I knew, awaited me; revolving as I sped along, the best mode of procedure. I hailed the boat, and instructed one of the men—Dick Redhead, he was generally called, from his fiery poll—a sharp, clever fellow was Dick—to proceed immediately to the house I had left, and accompany

the young woman to the spot indicated, and remain in ambush, with both eyes wide open, about the place till I arrived. The *Rose* was fortunately off Southampton Quay; we soon reached her, shifted to a larger boat, and I and a stout crew were on our way, in a very little time, to have a word with that deceitful *Fair Rosamond*, which we could still see lying quietly at anchor a couple of miles up the river. We were quickly alongside, but, to our great surprise, found no one on board. There was, however, a considerable quantity of contraband spirits in the hold; and this not only confirmed the girl's story, but constituted the *Fair Rosamond* a lawful prize. I left four men in her, with strict orders to lie close and not show themselves, and with the rest hastened on shore, and pushed on to the doctor's rescue. The night was dark and stormy, which was so far the better for our purpose; but when we reached the place, no Dick Redhead could be seen! This was queer, and prowling stealthily round the building, we found that it was securely barred, sheltered, and fastened up, although by the light through the chinks, and a confused hum, it seemed, of merry voices, there was a considerable number of guests within. Still Master Dick did not show, and I was thoroughly at a loss how to act. It would not certainly have been difficult to force an entrance, but I doubted that I should be justified in doing so; besides, if they were such desperadoes as Mary Ransome intimated, such a measure

must be attended with loss of life—a risk not to be incurred except when all less hazardous expedients had failed, and then only for a sufficient and well-defined purpose. I was thus cogitating, when there suddenly burst forth, overpowering the howling of the wind and the pattering of the rain, a rattling and familiar chorus, sung by at least a dozen rough voices; and I had not a doubt that the crew of the *Fair Rosamond* were assisting at a farewell revel previous to sailing, as that Hope, which tells so many flattering tales, assured them that they would, at dawn.

Such merriment did not certainly sound like the ferocious exultations of intending assassins; still, I was very anxious to make ten or a dozen amongst them; and continuing to cast about for the means of doing so, our attention was at length fixed upon a strange object, not unlike a thirty-six pounder red-hot round shot, not in the least cooled by the rain, projecting curiously from a small aperture, which answered for a window, halfway up the sloping roof. It proved to be Master Dick's fiery head, but he made us out before we did him. "Is that Bill Simpson?" queried Dick, very anxiously. The seaman addressed, as soon as he could shove in a word edgewise with the chorus and the numerous wind-instruments of the Forest, answered that "it *was* Bill Simpson; and who the blazes was that up there?" To which the answer was, that "it was Dick, and that he should be obliged,

if Bill had a rope with him, he would shy up one end of it." Of course we had a rope: an end was shied up, made fast, and down tumbled Master Dick Redhead without his hat, which in his hurry, it appeared, he had left behind in the banqueting-room. His explanation was brief and explicit. He had accompanied the young woman to the present building, as I ordered; and being a good deal wrought upon by her grief and lamentations, had suggested that it might be possible to get Dr. Lee and her father to a place of safety without delay, proverbially dangerous. This seemed feasible; inasmuch as the fellow left in charge by Wyatt was found to be dead-drunk, chiefly owing, I comprehended, to some powerful ingredients infused in his liquor by Dr. Lee. All was going on swimmingly, when just as Dick had got the doctor on his back, an alarm was given that the crew of the *Fair Rosamond* were close at hand, and Dick had but just time to climb with great difficulty into the crazy loft overhead, when a dozen brawny fellows entered the place, and forthwith proceeded to make merry.

A brief council was now held, and it was unanimously deemed advisable that we should all climb up to Dick's hiding-place by means of the rope, and thence contrive to drop down upon the convivial gentlemen below, in as convenient a manner as possible, and when least expected. We soon scaled the loft, but after-proceedings were not so easy. The loft was a make-shift, temporary one, consisting of

loose planks resting upon the cross rafters of the roof, and at a considerable height from the floor upon which the smugglers were carousing. It would, no doubt, have been easy enough to have slid down by a rope; but this would place the first three or four men, if no more, at the mercy of the contrabandists, who, I could see through the wide chinks, were all armed, and not so drunk but that they thoroughly knew what they were about. It behoved us to be cool, and consider well the best course to pursue. Whilst doing so, I had leisure to contemplate the scene below. Wyatt was not there; but around the table, lighted by two dip-candles stuck in the necks of black bottles, and provided with abundance of liquor, tobacco, tin pannikins, and clay-pipes, sat twelve or thirteen ill-favoured fellows, any one of whom a prudent man would, I am very sure, have rather trusted with a shilling than a sovereign. The unfortunate doctor, pale and sepulchral as the death he evidently dreaded to be near at hand, was sitting propped up in a rude arm-chair; and Ransome, worse, I thought, than when I had seen him a few weeks previously, was reclining on a chest, in front of which stood his wife and daughter in a condition of feverish excitement. There at first appeared, from the temper of the roisterers, to be no cause for any very grave apprehension; but the aspect of affairs soon changed, and I eagerly availed myself of a suggestion of Dick Redhead's, and gave directions that preparation for

its execution should be instantly and silently commenced. The thought had struck Dick when perched up there alone, and naturally looking about for all available means of defence, should he be discovered. Let me restate my position and responsibilities. It was my duty to rescue Lee, the agent of the Customs, from the dangerous predicament in which he was placed; and the question was how to effect this without loss of life. It would, no doubt, have been easy enough to have turned up one or two of the loose planks, and have shot half the smugglers before they could have made their escape. This, however, was out of the question, and hence the adoption of Dick's proposal. It was this: in the loft where we lay, for stand upright we could not, there was, amongst several empty ones, one full cask, containing illicit spirits of some kind, and measuring perhaps, between forty and fifty gallons. It was wood-hooped, and could be easily unheaded by the men's knives, and at a given signal, be soused right upon the heads of the party beneath, creating a consternation, confusion, and dismay during which we might all descend, and end the business, I hoped, without bloodshed.

This was our plan, and we had need to be quick about it, for, as I have said, the state of affairs below had suddenly changed, and much for the worse. A whistle was heard without; the front entrance was hastily unbarred, and in strode Wyatt (Black Jack), and well did he on this occasion vindicate the justice

of his popular designation. Everybody was in a moment silent, and most of those who could, stood up. "What's this infernal row going on for?" he fiercely growled. "Do you want to get the sharks upon us again?" There was no answer, and one of the men handed him a pannikin of liquor, which he drank greedily. "Lee," he savagely exclaimed, as he put down the vessel, "you set out with us in half an hour at latest."

"Mercy, mercy!" gasped the nerveless, feeble wretch: "mercy!"

"Oh, ay, we'll give you plenty of that, and some to spare. You, too, Ransome, prepare yourself, as well as your dainty daughter here"—— He stopped suddenly, not, it seemed, checked by the frienzied outcries of the females, but by a renewed and piercing whistle on the outside. In the meantime, our fellows were getting on famously with the hoops of the huge spirit-cask. "Why, that is Richards' whistle," he exclaimed. "What the furies can this mean? Unbar the door!"

This was instantly done, and a man, a sailor by his dress, rushed in. "The *Fair Rosamond* is captured, and the preventive men are in possession of her!"

My "Quick! quick!" to the men, though uttered too loud, from the suddenness of the surprise, was happily lost in the rageful outburst of Wyatt. "Hell-fire!" he roared out. "But you lie; it cannot be!"

"It is true," rejoined the man. "I and Clarke went

on shore about an hour ago in the punt, just to get a nip of brandy this cold night, as you won't let us break bulk on board. When we returned, Tom went up the side first, was nabbed, and I had hardly time, upon hearing him sing out, to shove off and escape myself."

We were now ready, and two of the planks just over Wyatt's head were carefully turned over. He seemed for a moment paralysed—for a moment only. Suddenly he sprang towards Mary Ransome, grasped her hair with one hand, and in the other held a cocked pistol: "You," he shouted—"you, accursed minx, have done this. You went out two hours ago!"——

I lifted my hand. "Hurra! Take that, you cowardly lubber!" roared Dick Redhead; and down went the avalanche of liquid, knocking not only the pistol out of Wyatt's hand, but himself clean off his legs, and nearly drowning Mary Ransome, her mother, and half-a-dozen others. A rope had been made fast to one of the rafters, down which we all quietly slid before the astonished smugglers could comprehend what had happened. Resistance was then out of the question, and they did not attempt it. I took Wyatt and one or two others into custody, for having contraband spirits in their possession; and the remainder were permitted to make themselves scarce as quickly as might be—a license they promptly availed themselves of.

I have but a few words to add. Henry Ransome died, I heard, not long afterwards, of pulmonary consumption, brought on by the abuse of alcoholic liquors, and his wife and daughter ultimately got into respectable service. Mary Ransome married in due time, and with better discretion than her mother, for she does, or did, keep one of the branch post-offices in Bermondsey. Dr. Lee disappeared from the neighbourhood the instant the state of his leg enabled him to do so; and John Wyatt, *alias* Black Jack, was transported for life, under the *alias* of John Martin, for a highway robbery near Fareham, in the year 1827. I afterwards saw him on board the convict hulk at Portsmouth.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

THE CAPTIVE FORGER.

I HAD a conference with Sir Joseph Yorke one afternoon, at Portsmouth, shortly after receiving a rather extraordinary commission from the Comptroller of the Coast-Guard, and the Secretary of the Admiralty, and had no sooner made him acquainted with its chief features, the plan of action sketched out, and the kind of person I stood chiefly in need of to successfully carry into effect the instructions of my superiors, than he exclaimed, "Warneford, I know the very man that will suit you: Tom Davis, one of the cleverest

fellows in his way I ever met with—cool as steel, and sober, too, except when off duty, as a water-cask. A native, moreover, I verily believe, of the very place you mention—certainly of Devonshire. We shall find or hear of him, I daresay, somewhere about Common-hard. Let us after him at once. He was my coxswain for a long time, but has been many months out of a berth, and is of course hard aground; so that I shall serve him as well as you."

We had not far to go. The very first street we turned into presented an amusingly characteristic scene. About fifteen men, belonging to an Austrian vessel of war, then in the harbour, had taken advantage of being on shore to procure themselves a supply of fresh fish, as every one of them had two or three suspended from his right-hand forefinger. They were walking, unaccompanied by an officer, as far as I saw, quietly and steadily in single-file, along the edge of the pavement, towards the harbour: when it is added that they wore braces, stocks round their necks—perhaps this was a part of shore *dress* —small gold rings in their ears, and had that drilled, half-military carriage which distinguishes the levies of the maritime conscriptions of continental states, the contrast they offered to the rolling gait, the loose array, the slack apparel, the tipsy, boisterous fun, and altogether devil-may-care aspect of a party of British man-of-war's men ashore under similar circumstances, was certainly a very striking one.

This was clearly the opinion of a smart, athletic, English seaman, who chanced to meet the foreigners; and instantly swinging himself off the pavement into the gutter, contemplated them as they passed with such a half-drunken yet intense look, made up of astonishment, contempt, disdain, as it is possible to conceive. He remained dumb till the last had gone by, and then slowly turning on his heel, breathed out his pent-up compassion and surprise in one emphatic exclamation: "Well, I'm ——!"

We had approached so closely, that the coarse participle which concluded the sentence was uttered almost directly in Sir Joseph's face, a circumstance which brought the sailor suddenly up in some dismay.

"You *will* be, Tom Davis," exclaimed the admiral, sternly enough, but for the merry twinkle of his eyes —"you *will* be, depend upon it, if you don't shake off the disgraceful habit you are giving way to. What right have you to grin and sneer at those respectable foreign A B's, I should like to know? I'm sure you couldn't toe a line of kerbstone at this moment, as straight as they are doing it. And how would *you* look, I wonder, strapped up in stays and braces, your nose cocked into the air by a throat collar, and with rings in your ears!—eh!"

"But *aint* they lubbers, your honour?" replied Davis, quickly recovering from his momentary confusion. "Only look at that long, wall-sided——"

"Hold your tongue, sir! I have recommended you to this gentleman for a particular service; though, if he were to judge of your general conduct by present appearances, he would certainly have nothing to do with you."

Davis mumbled out something about having nothing else to do but drink to drown care; and as I knew from Sir Joseph, that, like hundreds of other seamen I have known, he could resolutely abstain from liquor when it was necessary to do so, and as I altogether greatly liked his aspect, especially his keen, resolute, honest look, we soon came to an understanding, and it was agreed that he should call on me early the following morning for precise instructions.

The duty to be performed had been necessitated by the following circumstances: it had come to the knowledge of the Customs' authorities, that vast quantities of goods, silk, lace, and gloves especially, were constantly smuggled into England, chiefly along the coast of Devonshire, by a skilfully-organised agency, possessed of resources so great as to baffle all ordinary means of repression. The rendezvous of the local agents of this formidable confederacy, the head-quarters of which were without question in London, was supposed to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Sidmouth, the charming Devonshire village on the little River Sid, which issues into the sea near the beautiful bay contiguous to the Dorset

line of coast. There was no blame attributed to the Preventive Service attached to the locality, either ashore or afloat; but it was deemed necessary that the cunning and novel expedients had recourse to in order to defraud the national revenue should be met, and, if possible, defeated, by similar devices exerted in its defence. For this purpose I had the honour of being selected. All doubtful as well as reliable information in possession of the authorities was placed in my hands, and the general course of action indicated, but still leaving me a large discretionary margin; and it was ordered that no lack of means should stand in the way of the successful accomplishment of the mission with which I was trusted.

At my interview the next morning with Davis, I was glad to find that his natural intelligence, his quick mother-wit, was as strongly-marked as his fine seaman-like qualities. He was a native of Plymouth, and known by several persons about Sidmouth as a prime sailor, though just then out of luck. It was not long, either, before I discovered that he, like most of us, had his Dorado, with its attendant houri, in shadowy perspective. In other words, that a fishing-bark of some fifteen tons burden—a cottage on the Devonshire coast, with scarlet-bean or other runners climbing up its front, and festooning an arbour, in which a pipe might now and then be sweetly smoked—a black-eyed damsel, at service in Tynemouth, to light and cheer it, with "toddlin wee

things" in the distance—were the dreams he had indulged in, though but faintly of late—dreams that, as we talked and planned, assumed the colour of realities; for the reward to him, if successful, would be large. I was not sorry that he had this additional incentive to exertion; for the enterprise, I neither attempted to conceal from myself nor from him, was a perilous one.

It was at length determined that Davis should set off at once—not by coach, as that would by no means accord with the character of a distressed mariner, but on his ten toes—to Sidmouth, hang about there, and let it be well understood that he was in want of employment, and not particular to a shade of what kind, so it was a paying one. He was unknown to any of the crew of the *Rose*, and we agreed that he should remain so; and that, in fact, no person whatever, except myself and Sir Joseph Yorke, was to know that he and I were in correspondence with each other. Tom started off in high spirits; and a week afterwards, a large lugger-boat we had captured some time before—but now so entirely transmogrified by paint and fresh old sails, that her former owners could not have recognised her—was despatched in charge of four trusty men to a near point on the Dorset coast, with the ostensible object of fishing there. Ten more reliable seamen were sent off in five separate parties, and took up their abodes at various inland places within easy reach of each other,

under strict orders to, as much as possible, avoid observation. This done, I started for London, booked myself by the *Eclipse* Devonshire coach as Lieutenant Robert—a compromise, by the way, between my unconquerable dislike to the assumption of a feigned name and the intimation of the desirableness of doing so, I had received at head-quarters—and was duly set down at the "Lord Exmouth" roadside inn, about four miles out of Sidmouth on the London road.

Tom Davis had arrived some days before, and although he would not risk even a wink as I passed him, was, I soon found, getting on very well indeed. The manner in which our correspondence was carried on soon gave rise to a rumour, that I was engaged in a clandestine correspondence with a lady of the neighbourhood—an imputation, by-the-by, which did not in the slightest degree damage me with the fair folk of the inn and tiny neighbourhood. Davis received a number of folded sheets of paper—envelopes were unknown in those days—directed in my sister Jane's handwriting to "Lieutenant Robert, Exmouth Inn, near Sidmouth;" together with a small lady's seal, bearing the motto, "Toujours à vous;" words which I overheard one of the ushers at a neighbouring school render, at the instance of the curious barmaid, into, "All days to you!" These sheets were filled up by Davis—who wrote a tolerable hand, though his spelling was rather Devonian—and slily posted in the night.

The memoranda with which I had been officially furnished, stated that one Silas Hartley, residing at Trafalgar Cottage, a few miles from Sidmouth, had exhibited great zeal in aid of the Preventive Service, although as yet attended by unsuccessful results only. One step, especially, advised by him had proved very unfortunate. Suspicion had been vaguely entertained by an officer of the Coast-Guard—how suggested it was not said — of Mr. Denbigh, the occupier of Bauvale House, a handsome place about five miles east of Sidmouth, and something more than a mile and a half inland. These dim, and, as it proved, unfounded surmises, were strengthened by Silas Hartley's half-hints; and at last the officer was hastily awakened early in the morning by Silas, with the information, that a cargo of goods had been run just previously, and that he had himself seen the last loaded cart enter the courtyard of Bauvale House. This statement, corroborated by a country labourer, was fully credited: an entrance was forced, and the place ransacked from roof to cellar, without the slightest article or evidence being found to palliate, much less to justify, the unwarrantable intrusion. The result was, that an action for compensation in damages had been brought by Mr. Denbigh, and was now pending. Mr. Denbigh was understood to be a person of large fortune, had qualified, or was about to qualify, as a county magistrate, and bore an excellent character in the neighbourhood. Still, Silas Hartley's good faith

in the matter did not appear to be doubted, notwithstanding he had in this instance been so egregiously mistaken, and I had been directed to communicate with him. The conclusion I came to, after inquiry and examining the locality, was, that the injurious suspicion entertained of Mr. Denbigh had its chief foundation in the evident adaptability of Bauvale House for a smuggler's depôt. It has, I believe, been long since pulled down; but somewhere about thirty years ago, it stood amidst a thick wood, was certainly less than two miles inland, and led to from a long line of coast by half-a-dozen foot and cart-ruts, through a considerable extent of which even horsemen would be concealed by the high banks and the generally woody and uneven nature of the ground. And, after all, might not Silas Hartley be himself connected with the smuggling confederacy—employed to throw dust in the eyes of the preventive officers, and shield the real offenders, by diverting attention from them to innocent persons? It struck me as very likely to be so, and with this impression strong in my mind, I called at Trafalgar Cottage about noon one day.

The door was suddenly opened—violently jerked back, as it were, upon its grating hinges—by a gaunt, herculean figure, with a strongly-marked countenance, flaming at the moment with a fierce and angry light, unequalled in its intensity by any painting I have ever seen. I stepped back, as if physically

struck. Silas Hartley, for it was he, forcibly mollifying his rugged aspect, and with an attempt at a smile, mocked by his quivering, ashy lips and burning eyes, said quickly: "Don't be alarmed, Lieutenant Warneford—Oh, I know you very well! I am but just come in; and we"—he jerked his head in the direction of a woman, young apparently, rocking herself to and fro in a wooden-seated chair, and with her face buried in her apron, sobbing violently—"and we have been terribly put out by the refusal of a scoundrel to redeem"——

"Father! father!" screamed the female, dropping the apron from her face, and starting up with hands raised in a warning, imploring attitude. I now saw that she was young and comely. "Father!"

"Ay, ay, girl; I know, I understand. I was saying we had been disturbed, sir, by the refusal of a—a—well, hard words, to be sure, neither break bones nor butter parsnips—by the refusal of a person to redeem a—a debt solemnly promised to be discharged; and you, Mr. Warneford, caught us just in the flurry of it: that's all."

I had no difficulty, on involuntarily glancing round the apartment, to understand how keenly a delay of expected payment must be felt there.

"Poor, very poor, aint we?" fiercely broke out Silas Hartley, who had partially comprehended my look, and speaking with a kind of exultant bitterness 'Miserably poor! Bare walls, rough floor, cold hearth,

are to you signs of misery, wretchedness! Ah! Sir, if you once knew what real misery"——

"Father! father!" again broke in the weeping girl.

"To be sure, to be sure—right, girl," rejoined Hartley, checking himself—"right: I am not quite mad yet." There was silence for a minute or two; and then the strong-willed man, having thoroughly subdued himself, as far at least as outward appearance went, turned calmly towards me, handed a chair, seated himself, and said in bland tones, as startling by contrast as his previous fury: "And now, Lieutenant Warneford, we will, if you please, talk about the smugglers."

The scene I had just witnessed had so entirely capsized all my previous notions and suspicions of the man, and set me so completely adrift as to his position and purposes, that I listened with but slight attention or interest to his rambling talk. All that he said, I had heard or read before; and feeling that, for some motive or other, he was endeavouring, very clumsily—for his thoughts were not with his speech—to bamboozle me, I rose to leave, at the same moment that the young woman, with a modest courtesy, passed into an inner room. Hartley's back was towards me as he closed the door after her, and I said carelessly: "I am going to call upon your great neighbour, Mr. Denbigh, who"——

There was a fragment of looking-glass jammed between three nails on the wall in front of Hartley

as he stood. As the word Denbigh passed my lips, he became instantly bolt upright, involuntarily or mechanically, as it were; and a section of the same face that had met me at the door, glared for a passing moment from the broken mirror. I stopped suddenly, but he did not look round, and presently stooped to tie one of his shoe-strings. By the time he turned towards me, his face was calm again. And here I may remark, that it had struck me several times, during his incoherent talk about smuggling, that his countenance, when fiercely quiet, so to speak, was that of a man condemned to death, or some other tremendous and inevitable penalty, undeserved, it might be, and certainly bitterly rebelled against.

"You are going to call on Squire Denbigh, are you?" said he. "Well, a very nice man is Squire Denbigh." The deadliness of hate concentrated in the tone of these words could only be appreciated by the hearer of them.

"No friend of yours, I perceive. Well, good-bye. I wish you well."

"Good-day, sir," he replied, grasping my extended hand. "Nay, sir, excuse me; it is kind of you, and we are, it is true, poor! but this cannot be."

"You are a seaman, I see that plainly enough, and should not scruple at a trifling gift from one."

"True, I know the colour of blue water, but cannot for all that accept alms, even from you, Lieutenant Warneford."

I said no more; the door gently closed behind me, and I went my way. I felt a good deal puzzled—discomfited would, perhaps, be the better word; for I had hoped for a very different result from the visit. There was evidently some mystery about the man, and I hated mysteries, especially such as appeared to foreshadow a sinister catastrophe, too many of which had already fallen in my way; and as Silas Hartley's griefs could not be in anywise connected with the special business I had in hand, I resolved to think no more, or, at all events, as little as possible, on the subject.

I found Mr. Denbigh at home; and, having sent in my name, I was at once admitted. Here, again, was a very different man from what I expected. Mr. Denbigh was a shortish, sour, eager-eyed man of some fifty years of age, already stooping in his gait, and with no character in his face save that of remorseless greed and relentless cunning. He was seated in an apartment, half dining-room, half library, the furniture of which, though costly enough, appeared to have been taken haphazard from a furniture-store, so little did the articles harmonise with each other. My ostensible business was to solicit the favour of shooting over a portion of his property. This was readily granted; and indeed his liberality in such matters was the chief reason, I found, of his local popularity.

"There is also, Lieutenant Robert," said Mr.

Denbigh, "a fine trout-stream on the estate, in which you are very welcome to fish."

"It is late in the year for trout-fishing," I answered with some surprise.

"Ah, true! it may be," rejoined Mr. Denbigh, slightly colouring; "but I do not much interest myself —not of late years, at least—in these things."

Odd! thought I. Here is a country squire confoundedly out of his latitude in the country! I was, I perceived, painfully taxing his politeness, as the impatient fumbling of his fingers amongst a number papers on the table before him plainly indicated; and I at once took leave. The door opened as I moved towards it, and a young man hastily entered with some papers in his hand. He was rather a good-looking person, save for a certain cowed, dejected expression, discernible at a glance.

"Will it be necessary, sir"——he began.

"How dare you!" sternly, almost passionately, interrupted Mr. Denbigh—"how dare you intrude here unsummoned, especially when I am, as now, engaged?"

The young man looked frightened; and I, bowing hurriedly, hastened out of the room and the house.

I had not been fortunate in either of my visits; and my temper, by the time I reached the 'Lord Exmouth,' was a good deal ruffled by a consciousness that I was making lee rather than headway in the business intrusted to me. Happily, Tom Davis, it

was soon apparent, was sailing right before the wind to the desired haven. The rollicking humour of the man, his strong but always controllable love of alcoholic potations, his well-known poverty, together with his reputation as a first-rate seaman, had quickly pointed him out as likely to prove both an able and willing instrument in the hands of the contrabandists. Golding, one of their agents, sounded him on the matter; and Tom gradually yielded, with coy reluctance, to his seductive overtures; and overcome by the glittering bait, finally agreed to take service with Golding's employers, whoever they might be—a knowledge still carefully hidden from him. Tom subsequently informed me, that it was necessary something should be done to increase Golding's confidence in his stanchness, and that he was casting about for some means of effecting that essential purpose. A sudden thought and an uncalculated chance enabled him speedily to do so, and in a way, too, that took me for the moment thoroughly aback. I was strolling listlessly about in the vicinity of Bauvale House, when my eye lighted upon a group of three persons at a considerable distance, whom a nearer approach discovered to be Hartley, Davis, and Golding. They did not heed me till I was just passing them, and then Silas Hartley, slightly touching his hat, said, "Good-day, Mr. Robert." "Good-day," I replied. Tom, who was unconcernedly turning away, stopped short, looked me hard in the face, as if

to perfectly assure himself that he was right, and then said, with an iron impudence that almost lifted me off my feet: "Mr. Robert, did you say? Why, this gentleman is Lieutenant Warneford, of His Majesty's Preventive Service!"

"Warneford!" exclaimed Golding. "What! the commander of the *Rose* revenue-cutter!"

"The very identical fluke!" rejoined Tom, with the coolness of an iceberg. "I have seen him at Portsmouth scores of times. He's come here, no doubt, to try and put salt upon some of our tails."

The insolent merriment which followed this sally sent the hot blood to the very tips of my ears. "You impudent rascal!" I began—"I have a mind to"——

"Easy, easy," broke in Davis: "that quarter-deck lingo is very well in its place, but it won't do here."

The fellow's sneering laugh was again echoed by his companions, and then they, at his suggestion, walked away. They had not gone half-a-dozen yards, when Tom turned round, favoured me with a "sight," —that is, he extended his outspread hands, joined at the thumb and little finger, and projected from the tip of his nose towards me, under cover of which mocking gesture he contrived to squint me a look that instantly converted the angry astonishment I felt into admiration of Tom's quickness of resource and imperturbable cunning. Nothing could have been devised so likely to stamp Tom's trustworthiness in his employer's eyes; whilst, as matters were turning,

the further conccalment of my real name was of the slightest possible importance. I was still laughing at Tom's device, when I was startled by a new and queer incident. Opening up by a rather sharp turn an avenue of the coppice, whom should I come suddenly upon but a pair of unfortunate lovers, as it appeared, passionately weeping and lamenting—the lady especially—in each other's arms! A few words I unintentionally caught: "He will not, cannot violate his promise this time; be sure he will not, dear Mary," said the gentleman.

"There is no trust—no faith to be placed in him!" sobbed the female. "None"——

At this moment they both caught sight of me, and I of them; and great was my surprise to discover in them the young man I had seen at Bauvale House and Silas Hartley's daughter! Simultaneously with me, a stout, thick-set man, whom I recognised as the servant that had opened the door of Mr. Denbigh's mansion, appeared upon the scene. He was the first to speak: "You have been missed, Mr. Richard," he said sternly and abruptly, "and must instantly come in."

"Yes—yes," stammered the young man: the same terrified look that I had before observed darkening his countenance. "I am coming."

He imprinted two or three passionate kisses on the young woman's forehead, and then hurriedly followed his summoner. Mary Hartley also hastened quickly homewards, sobbing as she fleetly sped along.

So, thought I, the cause of the grief I witnessed at Trafalgar Cottage is a mere contrariety or mischance in love. I am glad of it; for I feared it had a deeper, a more incurable source. The young man is doubtless a dependent relative of the gentleman he stands in such awe of, and the unequal match is very property forbidden. Well! Time has a balm for all such sorrows.

The next day I received a letter from Davis, stating that he was in high favour with Golding, and that a great stroke was contemplated, which would not, however, he thought, be adventured upon as long as I remained in the neighbourhood. This I had partly foreseen; and I departed the same evening ostensibly for London, but really, as I advised Tom, for Poole, in Dorset. The second day after my arrival there, Davis wrote me that his hopes were verified, and that he and five others were about to set out immediately for St. Malo, France, to assist in taking charge of two large boat-loads of costly goods. More than this, he did not at present know; but he advised that, as postal communication was very slow between France and England, I should at once proceed in the lugger-boat to Jersey. He would direct his letter to the post-office there, and means could no doubt thus be contrived of intercepting and capturing the contra-bandist expedition. I promptly adopted Tom's advice in its essentials. The boat was despatched to Jersey with four men only in her, who were to let it be

surmised that they were brandy and tobacco purchasers. The rest of the seamen went, some from Plymouth, others from Southampton, with orders to be apparently unknown to each other, and in want of berths. I went singly from Weymouth. I had not the slightest doubt that our friends had agents in that island; and the tidings that Lieutenant Warneford, with a powerful crew, was lurking about there, would no question have reached St. Malo, and ruined the entire plan. Hence these precautions.

I lodged at the Union Hotel in the Royal Square, under my assumed name of Robert, and exactly at the end of one slow-dragging week, received the welcome signal from Davis. The boats, like our large luggers, were all prepared, and the precise time of departure determined on. One, Tom commanded: they would, he said, touch at Guernsey, in order to take on board one Maître Perchard, who, for some reason or other, did not trust himself in St. Malo. This Perchard was, it seemed, a chief person in the confederacy; but, as it was said, he had been frequently and lately in Devonshire and other parts of England on these expeditions, it would not be advisable that I should land at Guernsey, but quietly await them in the roads.

So far, so good; still there was a much more important object to be obtained than the mere capture of he two boats, valuable as the booty might be—namely, the discovery and conviction of the principals, and

this, by Tom's letter, appeared to be as far off as ever. However, great progress had at all events been made; and at early dawn I left St. Helier's harbour with a light leading wind, and arrived in about five hours off Guernsey, all but four of us carefully concealed from observation.

About two o'clock we sighted the two boats, easily recognisable by Davis's description, and an hour afterwards they were lying-to off Guernsey, in wait for Maître Perchard. He came on board without delay, and the voyage was continued, we leading at about a mile ahead without apparently incurring the slightest suspicion. The affair, as far as the two luggers went, was now as good as settled; still I determined, in order to avoid unnecessary bloodshedding, to defer the attack till night had fallen: indeed, but that such a continued hanging on by them would certainly have exited suspicion, I should have preferred waiting till they were close in with the Devonshire shore.

There was a light breeze, a gently-heaving swell, and just sufficient starlight to distinguish objects of any size three or four hundred yards off, when our boat, quietly helped by a couple of sweeps, stole gradually up in the wake of that I had seen Maître Perchard go on board of. We were unnoticed for some time; but at length I observed a bustle on board the smuggler, and I briefly bade the men be ready. A moment after a tall, stout figure hailed us from the smuggler's stern-sheets, and angrily demanded if we

knew where we were steering to! I thought I knew the voice, but there was no time for a second thought on the matter. "Give way, men!" I shouted: half-a-dozen sweeps, as I spoke, dropped into the water; in another minute, we were alongside our opponent; there was a wild tumult, a brief struggle, and the first boat was ours. The captives were hastily secured; and then returning with ten of the men to our own boat, we made after the other, which, having taken the alarm, was making off with sweep and sail. They had no chance in speed with us, and, thanks to Tom Davis's precaution, none in fight either. Half a-dozen pistols, the charges of which had been carefully withdrawn, were snapped in our faces, the holders were knocked or thrown down, and the capture was complete. I shook hands heartily with Tom, and congratulated him on his coolness and success—a proceeding which of course elicited a roar of execration from the entrapped and defeated smugglers who witnessed it. The boats were now brought together, and prompted by a recollection of the huge fellow's voice who hailed us, I took a lantern from one of the men, stepped to where Maître Perchard was lying, threw the light upon his grim features, and discovered, as I suspected, that he was—Silas Hartley! I did not reply to the fierce scowl which sat upon his features. In about ten minutes, all the smugglers, save Hartley, were secured on board His Majesty's boat, under the charge of four seamen, and in another

would have been on their way to Plymouth gaol, when I was informed that Silas Hartley wished to have speech of me before the boat left with the prisoners.

"What have you to say, Mr. Hartley?" I asked. He had become, I perceived, quite calm, and seemingly resigned.

"This: I know what your chief aim is, and that without me it cannot be accomplished. Tom Davis, clever as he is, cannot help you."

"Be it so: what then?"

"It will take some time for us to come to an understanding, and minutes are now precious. Do you first order that the long blue surcoats and glazed hats of four of the French prisoners be exchanged for the jackets and caps of four of your own crew. That done, get the boats under way as quickly as possible."

There could be no harm in complying with this intimation. I gave the necessary orders, and in a few minutes the prisoners were off, and we steering for Sidmouth.

Silas Hartley was unbound; I took the helm; he seated himself beside me, as he insisted on speaking in whispers only, out of earshot of the men.

"Davis knows nothing," said he, "of who are his employers, save Golding: I do. They are wealthy men, and Denbigh is their well-paid, confidential agent."

"Ah! then the story you told the officer was true?"

"Literally so; yes. There were thousands of pounds' worth of smuggled goods in Bauvale House when it was searched; but it was done to mislead of course."

"Where or how could the goods have been hidden?"

"Very curiously. There is a deep round well in one of the cellars of the building, constructed no doubt when Bauvale House was a place of strength. It is now perfectly dry. The goods are thrown into it, a waterproof tub, exactly fitting the well, is then lowered down, filled with water; and no one suspects, after letting down an empty bucket and drawing it up full, that silks and laces are concealed beneath."

"A famous contrivance, upon my word!"

"Yes; but you will not penetrate there with these goods, nor procure any evidence of Denbigh's and his confederates' complicity without my assistance. Till my voice is heard in the jargon agreed upon, the gates of his court-yard will not, depend upon it, be opened. He trusts no other, and that because I am hopelessly in the villain's power."

"Hopelessly in his power! How then"——

"Hearken, Lieutenant Warneford, to a brief, sad tale, and then say if you will help me. You have noticed a young man of about twenty-five years of age, at Bauvale House?"

"Yes; and I have also noticed that he is a lover of Mary Hartley."

"A lover! yes, truly, in one sense they are lovers—they are brother and sister!"

"Brother and sister?"

"Yes. That young man is never permitted to be five minutes out of the sight of either Denbigh or one of his partners, Barnes, who usually acts as servant. The reason is this," continued Silas Hartley, so hurriedly as scarcely to be intelligible: "my son, Richard, was given up for a time to wild courses: he became acquainted with Denbigh, who with others in London, is, or was, proprietor of a "hell" there. Richard was there entrapped, and ruined. I supplied him as long as I could. Finally, as they say, he forged upon Bingley to a considerable amount, and they have the fatal document still in their possession. It has made me their slave, and till within the last half-hour there seemed no hope of escape from the dreadful bondage. —You do not answer!" he continued. "It is well, perhaps, you should not, till all is told. The mad act was, I know, committed in a moment of intoxication, delirium—delirium purposely excited by Denbigh's agents. You know the penalty of forgery in this country, and must, I think, now understand me? Often, often has the callous villain promised me my son's deliverance as the reward of a successful run, and always refused to redeem his promise. He has sworn to do so if I succeed in this venture. He would, I doubt not, have violated that pledge also.—Still you do not speak! Look, you, sir, we are not

so poor as you may believe—nay, nay, I could not mean that: we have enough, I meant to say, had we but twelve hours' start, to reach America. You see how you may help us in this fearful strait. But twelve hours' start for him, not me: I care not for myself; and he, sir, is not, alas! technically, but really innocent as yourself of the deed, for he was insane, mad when he committed it!"

Silas Hartley's hand pressed my arm with a gripe of steel, and his flaming eyes shone into mine with terrible intensity. I did not speak for many seconds —indeed I could not. At last I rose, and placing the tiller in his hand, said: "You, Mr. Hartley, know our course best. Should I, by your means, succeed in unkennelling this nest of rascals, I do not see that I shall have any right to detain your son."

The father's suspended breath burst forth almost in a scream as I ceased to speak, followed by a few brief, choking sobs. I went forward; and when I returned some minutes afterwards, his usual impassibility had returned, but there was a light in his eye I had not seen there before.

As we approached the coast, the usual signals were made under Hartley's direction, and favourably answered by lights on the shore. A false alarm had, he told me, succeeded; and the preventive officers were on the look-out miles distant from the contemplated point of landing.

"Only four seamen, and they Frenchmen," said

Hartley, as the decisive moment approached, "will be allowed to enter Bauvale House with me. It is time, therefore, that you don these coats and hats."

Tom Davis, I, and two seamen, did so; and nothing more was said, except a caution to the three men not to speak if questioned.

The run was completely successful. Four large carts were in attendance; the goods were speedily placed in them, and away we went, with the four carters—nine in all—towards Bauvale House. We halted within about 200 yards of the gate, where Hartley dismounted, went up, gave a peculiar whistle, and communicated with some one inside. The doors were immediately thrown open, and in we drove. The cellar opened on the court-yard, and the carts uptipped their loads into its mouth. We followed close upon Hartley's heels. The obscurity of the place, lighted only by two candles, one carried by Mr. Denbigh, and the other by Barnes, greatly favoured us. The packages were tumbled into the well; the tub was lowered, twenty or thirty buckets of water were thrown in, and all was complete. Denbigh was all the time chuckling with delight. "Show these men into the kitchen, Maître Perchard," he said, as he and Barnes walked away. "And let them have some refreshment. This is a capital night's work. And then do you come and receive their wages."

We accompanied Hartley in the dark, holding by

each other's coats, to the kitchen. He left us for a moment or so, and then returned with a candle. His face was white as paper, but lustrous with exultation and triumph, and we followed him stealthily to the dining-room. He opened the door, passed in, but did not close it, and we could hear distinctly all that passed where we stood, just outside.

"There is the money," said Denbigh's shrill voice, tossing at the same time, as we heard, a heavy purse on the table—"with an extra five sovereigns for yourself."

"Yes, yes," said Hartley; "but my son's release, so often solemnly promised me"——

"For God's sake, gentlemen, do not deceive us this time!" said the meek subdued voice of the son. "You know well that in intention I was innocent as a child."

A brutal laugh was the answer. "Innocent here, innocent there," mocked the savage tones of Barnes, "has nothing to do with it. We cannot part with you yet awhile."

An exulting shout burst from the excited father. "Hear the accursed traitors! Hear them, my friends! hear them *Lieutenant Warneford!* They cannot part with him yet awhile—ha! ha! ha!"

The suddenness of this unexpected stroke was terrible, and Denbigh and Barnes looked more, as we entered, like startled ghosts than living men. The sailors instantly, at a gesture from me, proceeded to

secure and bind them. I looked hard at Silas Hartley: he comprehended my meaning, and whispered hastily to his son, who hurried out of the room. This broke Denbigh's trance of terror.

"Stop that man, Lieutenant Warneford!" he screamed. "Arrest him: he is a felon!"

"What man?"

"He who has just run off—Richard Hartley. He is a felon—a forger, I tell you, and I can prove it!"

"Possibly; but I have no authority to detain felons. You can prefer the charge hereafter."

"But in the meantime he will escape!" screamed the miserably vindictive man, and then stamped and howled with baffled rage. There was, however, no help for it. The two prisoners were secured in the house for the night, and late the following evening, lodged in Exeter gaol. A formidable conspiracy was effectually broken up, and enormous penalties were liquidated, out of court, by parties against whom legal proofs of complicity were obtained.

The Hartleys, both father and son—for Silas slipped off unnoticed in the confusion—*did* escape to the United States. I often heard of them as thriving there. In 1840, the sister, then a Mrs. Boydon, informed me of her father's death, since which I have received no tidings concerning them. I made a clean breast of the whole matter to the authorities, and can at least very confidently say, that the course I had taken with respect to young Hartley was not *dis-*

approved of. Tom Davis, I must not omit to state, has still got his fishing-vessel, his cottage, his houri, much plumper than she was thirty years ago—and lots of bairns, three of whom are taller, but not, I think, better or braver men than their father.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

ESTHER PURKIS.

THOSE who, in the days when I was employed in the neighbourhood, had occasion to visit Beaulieu Abbey, in the New Forest, a few miles inland from Hythe—and now, I believe, perhaps then, the property of the Scottish Dukes of Buccleuch—may remember the garrulous old portress who showed the apartments wherein Margaret of Anjou sought and found refuge during some perilous crisis of her changeful fortunes; the furniture said to have been used by the royal guest, and certain stains on the

floor, which—as at Holyrood, and, I dare say, many other ancient palaces—remain, spite of fuller's earth and carpenter's plane, an ineffaceable memorial of the dark deed of blood perpetrated upon the accusing spot. Many people thereabout make, or made it, a point of once seeing those interesting relics; and I —following the general example, incuriously, and solely from having an idle hour to spare, whilst waiting at the Beaulieu Arms for dinner and the Southampton custom-house official who had appointed to share it with me—strolled towards the magnificent ruins, saw and heard all that the portress had to show and say, and was leaving the place much more impressed with the good taste displayed by the ancient monks of Beaulieu in the selection of a site for their splendid abbey, than with the legends associated therewith, when, upon reaching, or rather stumbling to the bottom of a narrow broken flight of steps, I encountered with some violence the foremost of a party of four sight-seekers like myself; the collision being instantly followed by a very hearty malediction, the wording and accent whereof sufficiently indicated to my practised ear that I had run foul of a seaman, and one, too, from the "north countrie." The man staggered back, myself following, into the daylight. "Oh, it's you, is it, Mr. Warneford!" he exclaimed, upon recognising my features, in a tone which proved that his irritation was not at all appeased by that recognition.

"It is so; and you will excuse me for adding, that I am now, and for the first time, made aware that Philip Frost is as well acquainted with the colour of blue water as I am myself."

"Yes, and with the colour of blue blazes too," replied the fellow, still smarting under the blow received in his face from the hilt of my sword, which in descending the dark winding steps, I had carried in my hand, feeling my way occasionally therewith. "Come along, Smith. This way, Esther."

The party immediately disappeared—the two females with a curtsey—and returning slowly to the Beaulieu Arms, I referred to the following passage in my official memorandum book:—"Philip Frost, about thirty years of age, tall, well-made, dark hair and complexion, reads and writes well. Keeps a shop in the general line at Hythe. Supposed to have served under another name in the royal navy, but always affects, when in company, a landsman's speech. Ostensible business not of a kind to warrant the lavish expenditure in which he frequently indulges. Should be heedfully looked after; graver suspicions attaching to him, though loosely, than infractions of the revenue laws."

"No question that Philip Frost is a seaman," I mentally murmured as I closed the book, whether of the royal navy or not; and is unquestionably a fellow of surprising self-command and imitative faculty—not in the way of speech only but of gait

and manner—so much so, that I, not easily, I flatter myself, deceived in such matters, have reported that as far as I could judge from close, though certainly not frequent observation, Philip Frost, the Hythe shopkeeper, was what he assumed to be, a tradesman, possessed of a little income independent of his business, and a rattling, rollicking fellow, addicted rather to contraband love than brandy ventures. The mask so carefully worn having, however, slipped, in a moment of strong irritation, partially aside, it became my duty, of course, to ascertain, if possible, what else beside "seaman" was concealed beneath—a ticklish task, with so wary a hand, I could not doubt. As a first inductive step towards that result, it might be as well, I decided, to inquire who those companions of his were—what was Smith? what besides a fresh-looking, comely, country lass was Esther? and what and who the elder, stern-visaged female with her?

These queries, put by me as covertly as possible to several persons likely to know, during the next ten days or a fortnight, received but a partial, unsatisfactory solution. Smith—Robert Smith—a young, somewhat cadaverous-looking man, had come into the neighbourhood about a fortnight before, professing to be a veterinary surgeon, but had hitherto met with slight encouragement in that line of life. He had always been one of the most constant gossips frequenting Philip Frost's shop, and latterly the

intimacy of the pair had become closer than ever. Esther Purkis, and her sour-looking sister Deborah, were the orphan daughters of one John Purkis, a stern, hard-grained father, priding himself upon being a descendant of the Purkises, mentioned in old records as charcoal-burners, in the New Forest, who had given proofs of loyalty and hardihood that had attracted the notice and rewards of princes; an unproductive heritage, withal, judged by the poor holding—a clay-wall cottage and about two acres of partially-reclaimed forest-land—which this descendant bequeathed his daughters. John Purkis had, however, it was rumoured, scraped together "an old stocking"—in the queer phrase of those parts; an "old stocking" meaning a hoarded, concealed, unboasted-of sum of money. This hoard it was that had enabled Esther Purkis, with the reluctant consent of her sister, to cut such a dash at the Hythe, Beaulieu, and other rustic revels, directly it was possible for her, without losing caste as a Christian, to doff the mourning worn for her father. Deborah invariably accompanied her volatile sister to those merry-makings, but took no pleasure or part therein herself, except in watching over Esther with anxious, untiring solicitude. The humble and solitary homestead of these damsels was situated in the heart of the forest, their nearest neighbours being the dwellers in the hamlet of Brockenhurst, distant from their cottage two miles at least. Philip Frost had met

Esther Purkis at a Hythe revel, and had since wooed her company with a constancy rare for him, and bodeful, in the opinion of the country folk, of nothing but evil to the pretty, thoughtless girl, however zealously guardful of her sister Deborah might be.

Interesting enough all that to students of the lights and shadows of English rustic life, but to me, in a professional point of view, of very slight value, except as vaguely shadowing forth a possibly near phase in the fascinating shopkeeper's career, when His Majesty's officers might perhaps be able to take a novel and accurate view of his true occupation, through the vengeful eyes of the stern, and in the supposed case, we might rely, implacable sister. For the present, at all events, it was expedient to leave Philip Frost, apparently unwatched, to his own devices; and nothing in fact occurred till the following October—I have been speaking of the month of June—to remind me of him, and then he and his friend Robert Smith turned up very suddenly and strangely.

The English Channel is, in the present day, as well lighted as Pall Mall or Piccadilly; and there was not very much to complain of, in that respect, of the Trinity House in my time. Still, experience and reflection had warned me that it was of essential importance to the safe navigation thereof—more especially in foggy, hazy weather—not to wholly trust to Admiralty charts or Trinity lights, but to so well study the

comparatively minute appearances of the coast, as to be able to identify particular spots by other indications than lofty or prominent headlands, which often loom through a hazy atmosphere in utterly misleading proportions. By minuter indications I mean, amongst others, the inclination or dip of the strata of the coast, the marks, green, brown, black, which are here and there stamped upon it by various agencies. This practice of mine saved the *Rose* one hazy October afternoon from grounding upon a reef of sand and shingle, from which the officer of the watch, and all on board except myself, believed we were at least two leagues distant; and had I chanced to remain below five minutes longer, I should have been all too late to avert the imminent mischance. It was but "touch and go," prompt as were the exertions of the crew the moment I discerned the true position of the cutter; and we had barely ourselves escaped the danger, when the report of a musket to leeward—and as we eagerly peered in the direction of the flash, the figures of two men, exaggerated into unnatural dimensions by the haze as they waved their hats and shouted lustily for assistance—apprised us that others had been as unskilful and less lucky than we. A boat was at once lowered and pulled towards the men, who were standing upon the half-deck of a large barge-like boat, that was gradually filling through the holes, which the swell in lifting her up from, and plumping her down upon the reef,

was knocking in her bottom. She was partially laden with square fir boxes, which were got with some difficulty into the *Rose's* boat, and brought safely on board with the men, whom I recognised, the moment they reached the deck, to be Philip Frost and Robert Smith.

"Hallo!" I exclaimed, in undisguised amazement. "What, in the name of wonder, has brought *you* here?"

"The silly supposition," replied Frost, with cool indifference and effrontery—"the silly supposition that the officers of the king's cruiser knew their way from Portland to the Solent, better than we did ourselves."

"From Portland!" said I, glancing at the fir boxes; "those cases are then, I suppose, filled with Portland stone?"

"No, sir. We left Alderney at daybreak this morning, and the boxes you will find contain eggs and a few fat geese, which, certified to be Channel Island produce, are not—you, sir, are quite aware—liable to duty," replied Frost, handing me, as he spoke, the certificate of origin, signed by the constable, or deputy bailiff, I forget which, of the Island of Alderney.

"We will, at all events, have a peep at these certified eggs and geese," said I. "Open the boxes, every one of them."

This was quickly done, Frost and Smith readily assisting. There was nothing, as they stated, but eggs

and twenty or thirty fat geese. In fact, their anxiety to get the packages out of the sinking boat into the *Rose* had already satisfied me that they were, for this time at all events, engaged in legitimate trade.

"Will Lieutenant Warneford accept of a few dozen eggs?" said Frost.

"Not I. The boat is loss enough without my adding to it."

The *Rose* stood on, and a favourable breeze by-and-by springing up, we dropped anchor off Hythe about five o'clock. Frost hailed two watermen's boats, and, after expressing much gratitude for the service I had rendered him and his partner, the two left with their merchandize for Hythe.

I had put off my uniform, and was just going over the side into the boat in waiting to convey me on shore at Southampton, where I was engaged to spend the evening, when we were hailed by a customs' boat, the officer in charge of which inquired if we had sighted a quarter-decked skiff, lightly laden with egg boxes.

"Yes; and saw her fill and go down," I replied, adding a relation of the circumstances.

"Then of course you have the men and merchandize safe on board?" said the officer.

"Not at all: the men are gone ashore with their Channel Island geese and eggs: I have the certificate of origin."

"Certificate of origin!" exclaimed the man:

"why we have positive information that every one of those geese would be stuffed full of Valenciennes lace!"

"Valenciennes lace!"

"Just that, sir. Our information, I assure you, is positive, and entirely trustworthy."

"Valenciennes lace!" I repeated, in hot, burning confusion. "The audacious rascals! Shove off; pull for your lives," I added, as I leaped into the boat alongside. "To Hythe, not Southampton!"

We reached the landing-place in next-to-no time; and, accompanied by three or four of the men, I speeded off with furious haste to Frost's shop. There he stood, in the midst of his egg-boxes, smoking a comfortable pipe: Smith did not show.

"About those geese, Frost!" I exclaimed: "Hand them over if you please, and at once."

"Which, sir? the land or sea geese?" replied the fellow, with a mocking glance at the men and myself. "The first-named respectable individuals are, I must tell you, already gone to the ladies and gentlemen that bespoke them; and as to the others, *they* may go to old Nick—begging his pardon for recommending him such company—as soon as they please, for anything Philip Frost cares!"

Our savage search—ransack, of the boxes, the house, and stable—availed nothing: we were done brown, as the Vulgate hath it, and might go home to our mammas.

"I owe you one for this, my fine fellow," said I, as I slammed out of the house; "and I generally contrive to pay *my* debts."

"Owe me one goose," shouted Frost after me. "Only one, noble captain! Why then the boot's on the other leg, as I owe *you* for two dozen prime ones—not to reckon the giblets, which were valuable."

If the law would but have permitted us just to once—only once—keel-haul the insolent rascal! Wouldn't he have remembered it till the day of his death! I should say he would, decidedly!

Seven or eight weeks had passed away, and Christmas was approaching, when it happened that I again dined at the Beaulieu Arms. As I was leaving the coffee-room, in obedience to the announcement that dinner was served, I caught a glimpse of Deborah Purkis just quitting the house. Her harsh features were red and swollen with weeping, and she was sobbing violently.

"A bad business, sir," said the landlady, in reply to my questioning look. "She came here to inquire for Philip Frost, who, since his extraordinary good luck about two months ago, has gradually cast her sister off."

"Esther Purkis is not his wife, then?"

"Oh dear no, sir, though she ought to be, poor thing. Frost is now making up to Mary Dawkins, Farmer Dawkins's only child: that will be a fine catch for the heartless fellow, as far as money goes,

if he doesn't happen to miss it, which I hope to heaven he may."

"Mary Dawkins! I think I know that flashy damsel by sight, and that I have seen her walking more than once with Smith, Philip Frost's crony."

"Quite right, sir, and they have had, folks say, already more than one violent quarrel about the girl, or, properly speaking, about her money, for the wench herself is not of much account."

"Dinner is getting cold, Captain Warneford," suggested the serving girl,—a civil lass, from whom I was always sure of promotion; and my colloquy with the proprietress of the Beaulieu Arms terminated.

The reader will follow what I have further to write with greater ease if I relate the remaining incidents, not as they came, disjointedly, confusedly to my knowledge, but as they actually occurred.

Robert Smith, as the landlady intimated, had been the favoured, if not accepted, swain of giddy Mary Dawkins, till ousted by the superior fascinations of his friend Frost—a successful rivalry which he, of course, bitterly resented. Old Dawkins, it appeared, encouraged Smith, and, moreover, being a man of conscience, and in consequence of various infirmities not likely to remain much longer in this world, he insisted that Frost was bound to marry Esther Purkis, a moral view of the case which Smith strongly enforced. This was an obstacle—the old man being notoriously stedfast to any opinion he had once

formed—which it behoved Frost to remove, or give up all hope of obtaining the sole object of his pursuit, the girl's fortune. The mode of effecting this paramount purpose would seem to have preoccupied him for some months, till the middle of March in the following year, when he suddenly sought a reconciliation with Esther Purkis, who, with the facile credulity of a simple, loving nature, immediately forgave the cruel wrong and shame she had suffered at his hands, again believed his protestations, and was again deceived,—much worse than deceived—if the dark looks, and muttered half hints of honest folk were to be credited: those looks and hints, liberally interpreted, amounted to this,—that after he had been reconciled to Esther Purkis about a week, he drank tea with her alone, or at least had so contrived matters that Deborah was not within when he reached their solitary home that evening; that a few hours after he left on his return to Hythe, Deborah Purkis arrived at the house of Mr. Rogers, a surgeon residing at Brockenhurst, in a state of distraction, her sister having been taken suddenly and alarmingly ill: the surgeon went away with her, and two days afterwards it was known to the few persons who took any real interest in the poor young woman's fate, that Esther Purkis was dead! As, however, Mr. Rogers did not stir in the matter, the sinister rumours that had got afloat died away, and the sympathy which Deborah Purkis might have else attracted was chilled in the

minds of the simple peasantry by her resolve, sanctioned by the surgeon, to bury Esther in the garden attached to their dwelling, instead of consecrated ground; like a dog, in short, they said; and the untimely end of the unfortunate girl was eclipsed, in the rustic mind of the district, by the portentous heathenism of her surviving sister. About six weeks after this, old Dawkins died, also suddenly, if a man afflicted with so many warning ailments could be said to die suddenly. The last obstacle to the success of Frost's matrimonial speculation being thus removed, the game was his own; and as early as the first day in June it was known that a marriage licence had been applied for, and that Philip Frost would the following week wed Mary Dawkins and full five thousand pounds!

All this time, taciturn, seemingly impassive Robert Smith had not for one instant ceased to ponder over his defeat, and dream of vengeance,—of yet dashing the brimming cup of fortune from the lips of his treacherous, triumphant friend. Me, he naturally looked upon, after the pretty goose trick I had been played, as a very willing assistant in checkmating Martin Frost, should a reasonable chance of doing so effectually present itself; and with that view he favoured me with sundry items of intelligence affecting that person, which, though not very important of themselves, might, pieced out with other scraps in possession of the Admiralty officials, prove sufficient,

it was for a brief while believed, to bring the man within the hangman's clutches. Frost's real name was suspected to be *Parsons*, once an A.B. on board the *Rodney*, and the Abram Parsons, who the reader may remember figured as the leader of the mutiny in which Captain Hearn, of the *Prince* East Indiaman, lost his life. The case, however, broke down at the very first step taken to establish it. One of the convicted mutineers, undergoing his sentence at the hulks, was brought to Hythe, and asked to point out Parsons amongst a number of men sitting with Frost in an alehouse, when he, to the unspeakable chagrin of Smith, pitched, after a lengthened scrutiny upon one of my own crew, who at the time of the mutiny was serving on board the *Rose*: not the less apparent to me was it that the man's pale, flurried aspect and demeanour gave involuntary and faithful evidence of a fearful soul, agitated by remorse and apprehensive of impending doom: my suspicions, albeit, did not refer to his past, that is, his long-since past life. The terror which lay shuddering at his heart, not to be calmed by the copious libations of brandy, in which, with daily-accelerated progress in that soul strewn path of ruin, he had, since the death of Esther Purkis, indulged, had, I surmised, a more recent origin; but the silence of Mr. Rogers, forbidding a more frightful suspicion, I and others, with whom I occasionally spoke on the subject, were at last fain to attribute the change in Frost's appearance

and habits to remorse for his breach of faith with that unfortunate girl, and as he could not conceal from himself her consequent untimely death. He ever avoided the slightest allusion to the Purkises; and once upon chancing to meet with Deborah, at a turn of the forest road, had fled from her presence raving like one possessed. This story, I should state, rested upon the mere *ipse dixit* of Robert Smith, whose passions of rage and hatred, as the time drew near that was to crown his rival's triumph, would have been uncontrollable, but for some mastering apprehension, which, till the very day previous to that of the intended marriage, held him bound to silence. It was then cast off with a vengeance. Smith came on board the *Rose*, on the day in question (June 10), and satisfied himself that the Admiralty, baffled in their first tentative effort to prove the complicity of Frost in crimes of which he was, I believe, suspected, solely, certainly chiefly, upon the evidence of anonymous letters (Smith's own, very probably: it was he, I had reason to believe, who gave the Customs information about the lace-lined geese), was not inclined to pursue the inquiry further: not, at all events, for the present. Smith went away, muttering that "he would put a spoke in the fellow's wheel, though he should himself swing for it." Frost, he informed me, had made every preparation for taking final leave of Hythe and its vicinity: Smith, therefore, to succeed, had need be swift in his purpose.

He *was* swift and fatal. The task, nevertheless, which he had nerved himself, as he thought, to go through with, required, when the decisive hour struck, the potent stimulus of drink to carry it boldly through, and it was subsequently known that he swallowed—tossed down his throat—an unusually large quantity of ardent spirits before betaking himself to the solitary abode of Deborah Purkis, where he arrived at about seven o'clock in the evening; Deborah receiving her unexpected visitor with the grim sullenness that, since her sister's decease, had more than ever characterized the slight intercourse she held with the unsympathising forest-world. Smith began with profuse assertions of his own perfect innocence of intention with respect to the dark deed he was about to reveal; which prologue elicited no response, favourable or otherwise, from the stern, silent woman: coming at last, with evidently a supreme effort of resolute will, to the gist of the communication he was there to make, he said that on the morning previous to Esther Purkis's death, Frost had obtained of him a quantity of sulphuric acid, which he always kept by him in his veterinary laboratory, and which deadly drug Frost had a notion could not be discovered by *post-mortem* examination of the body of a person that had been killed with it. Smith—unsuspecting Smith!—was completely imposed upon at the time by the pretence alleged by Frost for obtaining the poisonous acid, gave him what he required, "and by that

sulphuric acid," added Smith, with solemnity, "your sister Esther Purkis, I am as certain as that I myself live, was poisoned by Philip Frost!"

A yell of triumph—of agony—both it seemed to the terribly startled man, echoed his words, followed by, "I knew it! I could have sworn to it! spite of what the doctor said!" in Deborah's harsh, screaming tones. "He shall hang for it, the atrocious monster! and you, *you* shall this moment," added the excited woman, "away with me to the nearest magistrate!"

"No, no! that won't do!" exclaimed Smith, sobered somewhat by the effect produced by the decisive plunge he had made; "you can call me as a witness, a king's witness, you know, afterwards!" and he turned hastily towards the door, as if to effect his escape.

"You shall go with *me!*" cried Deborah, as she sprang at, and clutched him by the collar. "You were an accomplice by your own account in the devilish deed; whether intentionally or not remains to be seen! Lion! Lion!" she called out, lustily, Smith still struggling to release himself—"Lion!" and in bounded an enormous bull mastiff, which, but for her quick interposition would have instantly fastened upon the apocryphal surgeon and real smuggler's throat. "Guard him, Lion! guard him!" she continued, to the ferocious, but obedient brute, and releasing her own hold, "I shall not be more than two or three minutes putting on a bonnet and

shawl, and locking up the place; and then, as I have said, you and I will go at once before the nearest magistrate. We shall be no more than just in time to spoil to-morrow's dainty doings: guard him, Lion!"

Deborah then left the room, her prisoner remaining under the effectual safeguard of the fierce animal she had summoned to her aid. Directly she returned, the resolute woman seized Smith by the arm, and took the road to Mr. Fowler's, a county magistrate, closely escorted by the watchful dog. It was nearly dark when they reached that gentleman's house, where their arrival and the story they had to tell naturally excited a great sensation.

Mr. Rogers, the surgeon, and two Brockenhurst constables, were sent for in all haste; and although the precise nature of the charge which Deborah Purkis was there to prefer was not openly spoken of out of the justice-room, enough transpired to induce an assistant gardener in Mr. Fowler's employ, and a relation, I believe, of Mary Dawkins, to hasten off to her with the startling, though imperfect, intelligence.

He reached her dwelling soon after Frost, to whom she was strongly attached, had left the house, which she too—a few feverish hours passed—was to quit for ever with her chosen husband. The terrified young woman immediately despatched the bringer of the terrible news with a note to Frost—an office which he reluctantly undertook for a considerable bribe.

Ten minutes afterwards, another note was sent off by a more willing messenger—and soon another—to make sure that one, at least, would reach him—and then, all done that could be done—the distracted bride, and equally panic-stricken cousin and bridesmaid, awaited in fearful suspense, till their terrible apprehensions should be confirmed or dissipated.

Frost, I must here premise, had some time before sold his shop business, and was at that time residing at a cottage by the shore, a little eastward of Hythe hard. After leaving Mary Dawkins he had gone directly home—except that he called upon, and remained about ten minutes with, the person who was to give away the bride, to remind him of the hour at which his presence would be required in the morning. Night was setting in, dark and stormy, and Frost had just barred his door against the fast-rising summer-tempest—one of the fiercest, whilst it lasted, which I have known in that locality—when a hurried knocking thereat caused him to reopen it. He had only partially done so, when a note was thrown in by some one who immediately ran off, fearing, as he afterwards said, to be known as having held any communication that evening with Frost. Of course, Frost picked up and read the note so strangely delivered;—with what feelings may be imagined. Presently afterwards—he had been striding about, without his hat, outside his cottage, peering into the distance—no doubt after the vanished letter-carrier,

and was still so occupied when the second messenger came up and delivered *his* missive. Frost ran in doors—read a repetition of the terrible warning—and was still reading it, for the twentieth, fiftieth time, perhaps—so fascinated, confounded, by the sudden terror that had fallen upon him, does he appear to have been—when the door latch was gently lifted, and Esther Purkis, herself, stood before him, her features white as the clothes in which she was clad, and holding in her outstretched hand a note, precisely similar to those which he had just before received! The unutterable horror which such a vision must have inspired, deprived the guilty wretch of what power of reasoning yet remained to him; he rushed out of the house with a cry of terror and despair, and followed, pursued, by the dreadful apparition, fled with maniacal speed towards the hard, leapt into a wherry—pushed off, heedless that the boat had neither rudders sails, nor oar aboard—and was in a few minutes helplessly adrift upon the raging waters, wherein a few minutes sooner or later he perished. The wherry was found the next morning, bottom upwards, and the body of the wretched man was washed ashore three or four days afterwards.

He did not probably hear the cry of anguish sent up to heaven by Esther Purkis, as she fell senseless upon the ground. Albeit, this unhappy young woman had not died, as purposely reported with the sanction of Mr. Rogers and Mr. Fowler, her mind had not survived

the premature confinement brought on by the shock of Deborah's rash announcement, that the man she loved with such misplaced devotion had simulated a renewal of affection, solely with a view of finding an opportunity to destroy her life. It happened that Deborah had quietly and unobservedly entered the room where the two sat at tea, just in time to see Frost furtively empty something from a bottle into Esther's cup. Her strong presence of mind did not even at such a moment desert her. She greeted Frost in her ordinary manner; contrived, unperceived by him, to change Esther's cup; and he went away almost immediately after his supposed victim had, as he thought, swallowed the fatal potion. Fear of the atrocious miscreant—at what he might attempt against them both, if challenged at the moment, for his murderous intent—caused Deborah to permit him to depart, in the belief that his full purpose had been successfully accomplished.

To Deborah's astonishment, Mr. Rogers pronounced the supposed poison to be a perfectly innocent medicament—a discovery that, as previously intimated, came too late to save the intellect of poor Esther, who had since been kept in careful seclusion by her sister; and it seemed that could Deborah have found a purchaser of their cottage and ground, they would both have long since left Hampshire. Smith's revelation had been overheard by the still loving maniac, who contrived to escape during her sister's absence, and

hastened, in the first instance, to Mary Dawkins' dwelling, no doubt to warn her of the danger which threatened Frost. On her way there she met the third messenger—a woman, and rather strong-minded one—who speedily recognised that it was no ghost, but Esther Purkis herself, that for a moment had nearly scared her out of her wits. She told Esther where she was going, and the purport of the note of which she was the bearer, and, moreover, readily intrusted its delivery to the eager girl; herself returning as fast as her legs could carry her, to spread the news of Esther Purkis being still in the land of the living.

Smith must have deceived Frost with respect to the sulphuric acid, the proposed use of which he, perhaps, suspected; and at last despairing to frustrate the marriage with Mary Dawkins by any other means, had hit upon the desperate expedient, the result of which has been seen. At the inquest held upon the body of Philip Frost, he veered back to what, I suppose, must be the true story, though there are difficulties in the way of its absolute credence. A verdict of "Found drowned" was recorded; and I am not aware that any further legal investigation took place, nor of what subsequently became of the Purkises—Robert Smith—or Mary Dawkins. It occurs to me, however, that I once heard that the last-named damsel ultimately married Smith.

Tales of the Coast-Guard.

ST. MICHAEL'S CLOCK.

I HAVE mentioned in 'Mother and Son' that my sister Jane's chances of an eligible marriage had vanished with her comeliness, which a virulent attack of small-pox had utterly destroyed. These words were not so much the expression of a conjectural opinion, as the record of an ascertained fact; which fact, jostled out of memory during the next six or seven busy years, was suddenly recalled thereto at about the expiration of that period, in connection with other incidents which plunged me for a time

into a sea of perils and perplexities. With the narrative of those perils and perplexities I propose to conclude these roughly-drawn life-sketches; but first—or reader and writer will not start fair with each other—a few words, explanatory of the said ascertained fact, with its correlative circumstances, will be necessary.

During my midshipman-days there came to reside at Bitterne, a village distant a mile or thereaway in the direction of Gosport from Itchen, a crooked, crabbed fellow, of the name of Treherne. He came, it was understood, from the Cornish mining districts, but the why and wherefore of his migration thence was known only to himself, and, possibly, to his daughter Lilian, a fair young girl whom I once, and only once saw, when revisiting home on leave, after my first four years' sea experience. My boyish fancy was at that time so completely enthralled by the charms of pretty Ellen Dible, that I had not a thought, scarcely a look, for any other damsel; yet for all that I could not but feel a strong emotion of surprise at the contrast presented by handsome Lilian Treherne and her coarse-grained, round-shouldered father. Still many a fair branch springs from a gnarled, unpromising trunk, and with some such profound reflection the Trehernes, and all interest in them, passed from my mind, and regained no hold there, notwithstanding that their names frequently figured in my sister's letters, as those of very intimate visit-

ing acquaintances. The years flew by; I had passed for lieutenant, and been appointed to the *Scorpion* sloop of war, when the name of Edward Penson—a cousin of theirs—often occurred, in connection, principally, with that of Lilian Treherne, whom, according to Jane, he greatly resembled, not in person only, but other gracious gifts. Had my sister continued to write of the young man in that style, a strong interest in the matter would doubtless have sprung up in my mind; but succeeding letters—and Jane was an untiring correspondent—contained no allusion either to him or to "dear Lilian," albeit a more joyous tone, or I fancied so, rang through my sister's usually staid style and placid sentences. A long silence ensued, broken by a curt communication from my father, informing me that she had narrowly escaped with life from a virulent attack of small-pox. Two or three months, perhaps more than that, subsequently, I received a letter from Jane herself, written with such a feeble, trembling hand, and breathing such utter dejectedness of spirit, that, but for her name at the end, I could hardly have believed it to be from her. She referred with poorly-affected unconcern "to the entire loss of any good looks I may have possessed—a slight matter, you know;"—and again spoke in affectionate terms of "dear Lilian," but the incomparable cousin was neither named, nor in the slightest manner alluded to.

These light straws which, had I known anything

at all of the bearings of the case, would have shown me plainly enough how the wind blew, were scarcely heeded by me; my sister's correspondence gradually reassumed its former quietude of thought and expression; and when, at the final conclusion of peace, I returned home, the gentle sadness of her manner appeared to my unprying eyes, nothing more than a shadow of the grief that had fallen upon her at our father's death.

Meanwhile I must have known, though by what means I do not now remember, that the Trehernes had long since left that part of the country; but their name or any reference to them had not passed my lips in conversation with my sister, till I one day chanced in her presence to take up a book, in the fly-leaf of which I read that it was a present from Lilian Treherne to her beloved friend, Jane Warneford.

"By-the-by, sister mine," I exclaimed, "what has become of those Trehernes? You never by any chance speak of them now, though at one time your letters were full of their sayings and doings, those especially of Lilian and her captivating cousin, Edward Pearson, or Peacock—I forget the young fellow's precise name?"

"Edward Penson," was the reply, in a low, unquiet voice, spite of a manifest effort at indifference. "It is now many years since Mr. Treherne quitted this neighbourhood; he resides, I believe, near Penzance, Cornwall. Lilian was married some time before he left."

"To her cousin?"

"No, to a Mr. Brunton, a shipowner, whom she met for the first time at a Southampton ball. I heard from her perhaps half-a-dozen times afterwards; and about two years ago I saw her husband's name in the list of bankrupts."

"And Edward Penson?"

"I know nothing of Edward Penson." I could not see Jane's face, which was persistently averted, its owner having suddenly become intensely interested in some geraniums ranged on the window-sill; but I nevertheless comprehended that the topic was a painful one, and I forbore to press it. From other, and I thought sufficiently reliable information, I gathered that a strange game of cross purposes had at one time been played between my sister, Lilian Treherne, and Edward Penson. That gay gentleman had first appeared at Bitterne in the character of a suitor for his cousin Lilian's favour; but after the lapse of a few weeks, it was noticed by the gossips of the vicinage that his attentions were transferred to Miss Warneford, and that an estrangement had in consequence taken place between the supposedly-rival maidens. This wooing would, it was not doubted, have ended in a wedding, but for this irretrievable effacement of the bride-expectant's comeliness; whereupon the disenchanted lover, who had been attracted by the beauty of the casket, not the priceless jewel which it enshrined and veiled, broke off the engagement, and after a strenuous, but unsuccessful effort to recover his

former footing with Lilian Treherne, vanished by the Southampton mail-coach into unknown space, and had not since reappeared, nor, as far as my informants knew, been heard of.

I have now brought up the leeway of my story to the time when I myself became an actor therein; and what follows will be comparatively plain sailing. That time was, my diary records, the 3rd of July 1824, about three weeks prior to my forty-third birthday; a stubborn fact, the significance of which it would have been as well that I had more fully recognised; but of that anon.

Well, on the 3rd of July 1824, and a broiling hot day it was, I left the *Rose* at anchor off Netley Abbey, and strolled homewards through the woods and fields, in compliance with the request contained in a note received from my sister the previous evening, to the effect that her old friend, Lilian Treherne, now Mrs. Brunton and a widow, had unexpectedly called upon her, and that she, Jane, was desirous of introducing us to each other. I have never for a moment believed there was any malice aforethought, on my sister's part, in this arrangement. She knew her own age, and, therefore, mine, and had moreover implicit faith in Moore's melodious moonshine, that "the hallowed form is ne'er forgot, which first love traced," and that I was consequently superabundantly shielded from harm by age and Ellen Dible. Be that as it may, my unprophetic pulse was not in the faintest

degree hurried by the promise of again beholding the girl, in whose presence I had passed, about a quarter of a century before, a careless hour, and who, I doubted not—in spite of a highly-pitched parenthetical note of admiration to the contrary in my sister's missive—had by this time developed into a stout, blowsy dame of middle and motherly age. To this cause—that I expected nothing or worse—I attribute, in some degree, the bewildered admiration with which, surprised into rudeness, I stared at the lady, presented to me by Jane, as my old and dear friend Mrs. Brunton. "Old" friend! Why yes, reckoning by the almanack she would be something, not much, on the sunny side of forty; but so gently had time dealt with her, that it seemed to me, not only during the first dazzle, but when my accustomed eyes could be better trusted, that not more than five or six-and-twenty years—and all bright, cloudless ones—shone in those blue, sparkling eyes, and tinted that clear complexion, not perhaps with the rosy radiance of life's jocund spring, but with the softer, warmer light of its early summer. A stout, blowsy, motherly dame, forsooth! The widow's distracting figure was, on the contrary, only just sufficiently developed to perfect and round its graceful outline. But enough for the present of woman-witcheries. Suffice it to say that I was greatly struck with the lady's appearance, and that her conversation, in which there lurked, or I dreamt so, an intangible, but not the less real and

indescribably agreeable caressingness of tone, deepened that impression. Ah! Robert Warneford, you were in those days a fine fellow in your own conceit and it may be admitted that you could sail or fight a ship; circumvent, or shoot smugglers with some degree of success; but you were, withal, no more a match for a handsome widow than my uncle Toby himself! Of course your excuse, and a valid one, is, that your adult life had been passed at sea, and on royal shipboard. Just so. Venus was born of the sea; the sire of her mischievous son was the god of battles, and hence, as you remember the classical chaplain of the *Sybille* used to say, the susceptibility of seamen—man-of-war's seamen—ought to be looked upon as an inevitable, hereditary fate or necessity. I, from experience, unreservedly endorse the chaplain's theory.

Reverting to plain fact, I have to say that the gay-tempered lady, whose name, in these pages, I have changed to Brunton, had, we found, revisited the haunts of her girlhood, chiefly in the hope of benefiting the health of her daughter, Caroline, a pretty, delicate girl, just out of her teens. She proposed remaining near us two or three months, and there happening to be no suitable lodgings vacant at Itchen, they, after some delay, took up their abode in a pleasantly-situated cottage near Hythe. I was a frequent visitor there; and the person, "neither a smuggler nor a sailor," whose good opinion it is hinted in 'The Last Revel,' I was desirous of cultivating, was no

other than Mrs. Brunton. Whether I was making headway or leeway amidst the capicious currents of the charming woman's favour, drifting silently but surely amidst the rocks and shoals of disappointment, or gliding gently, imperceptibly, towards the haven of marriage—I, unskilled mariner, rashly embarked upon an unknown, dangerous sea, knew not, could not so much as guess. I was always very graciously received; and she discoursed with me of her position and prospects with an apparent frankness and unreserve which sometimes flattered, sometimes irritated me. Her father, Joel Treherne, was, she informed me, still in the land of the living, and permanently domiciled at Maraziou, or Market-Jew, Mount Bay, Cornwall. Since her husband's death she had resided with him, and he was, in the main, kind and generous—happily so, for she had no other dependence. One evening I found her with an open letter in her hand; she appeared to be painfully agitated, and in reply to the self-betraying exclamation of surprise and concern that escaped me, she replied—her soft, low words accompanied by a blush and smile, very difficult of interpretation—"I have just received a letter from a—from a friend, which informs me that my father is suffering from an unusually severe attack of gout: it behoves me, therefore, to hasten home at once. You have heard, Lieutenant Warneford," she abruptly added, "of one Edward Penson—a cousin of mine?"

"Yes, I remember the name. May I presume to ask," I went on with unreflecting impetuosity to say—"may I presume to ask if the emotion I witness is attributable to that presumptuous coxcomb?"

"Sir!" haughtily rejoined madam, with a flash sufficient to blind one, "Sir!"

"I crave pardon; but you may remember that my sister's name was once mixed up with that of Edward Penson; and—and"—

"To be sure I remember," said the widow, subsiding at once into smiles and good humour; "and moreover, that what you allude to occurred two or three-and-twenty years ago, a lapse of time which surely ought to shield Edward Penson—who must, I think, be about your own age—from the imputation of coxcombry, inasmuch that my cousin, though a very sorry fellow, is not without some grains of common sense."

"I understand, madam. Very well, indeed! Of course!"

"He suddenly reappeared," continued Mrs. Brunton, heedless of the heat and anger she had excited by her sarcastic inuendo, "about a twelvemonth ago; took up his abode within a stone's throw of our dwelling; has, at last, this letter informs me, succeeded in overcoming my father's antipathy towards him, and is now a constant visitor at Grove Cottage."

"An astute knave, madam, although he must, at the advanced age of forty-three, as you suggest, have

cast off his youthful coxcombry and presumption, just as other reptiles do, at stated periods, *their* glittering outsides!"

"Come, come!" laughed the lady, "I said nothing of advanced age: mine, you know, is within four or five years of yours."

"It may be so written in the parish register, madam, but the clearer evidence of your face and person strikes off a decade at least from that reckoning."

"So, my fierce, flattering friend, you have said a hundred times at the very least; and upon my word I believe you really think so. By-the-by, this letter reminds me that an old acquaintance of yours is a not very far-off neighbour of ours."

"You mean the commander of the Coast-guard in the Mount Bay district?"

"Nay, I mean Peter Sommerford, assistant-surgeon of the *Scorpion*, when you were the first Luff!"

"Peter Sommerford! I remember him well, and as the prince of good fellows. How is he carrying on the war?"

"The war of life? With fair success, I believe: he has a good practice, in partnership with his nephew, Charles Sommerford, at Penzance, whither he removed about six years ago from Liskeard."

"Married?"

"Oh dear, no; a confirmed bachelor, with no more wish to marry than—than you have!"

"Humph!"

"He would be delighted to see you; but that I suppose is out of the question. If, however," added the lady, speaking very fast and in soft vibrating tones; "if, however, you should visit Cornwall, my father would be very pleased if you made his house your home. He greatly respected *your* father; and of your own professional career and character he always speaks in high terms. You might have influence with him, especially with reference to Edward Penson, who treated your sister so scurvily. And I too should be pleased to welcome there the brother of my gentle, single-minded friend. Good Heaven, Lieutenant Warneford! Why—what on earth!—Ha! Caroline!"

As sure as you are alive, I had dropped upon one knee, caught the widow's hand, and was devouring it with kisses, when in bounced Miss Caroline! Up I jumped, staring wildly, and utterly confounded by the mother's flaming indignation—whether real or put on, I knew not—and the daughter's bewildered astonishment. A pretty trio of cataleptic fools we must have looked like! At least I know that *my* limbs and muscles were perfectly independent of my will, and remained so till after—God knows how many mortal minutes—the spell was broken by a burst of convulsive merriment from the widow, instantly joined in by Miss Caroline, amidst which I bolted out of the room and house, reached Hythe hard with-

out drawing breath, and, it yet wanting a full hour to the time at which I had directed a boat to be in attendance, I made prize of a punt, and, after a stiff pull, found myself on board the *Rose*, turned in, tossed about, savagely-restless through the night, and dozed off in the morning just as I ought to have been getting up.

Upon a quiet overhauling of what had occurred, especially of that wildering woman's flattering, faltering invitation to the brother of "her gentle, single-minded friend" to follow her to Cornwall, I did not see that I had made a greater fool of myself than a man in love, whether he be forty or twenty-three, is expected to do upon such occasions. One thing, at all events, was quite clear, namely, that it would be my own fault if I was ever placed in such a predicament again. In future, the *Rose* should be my sole mistress, professional success my only aspiration. Like Rob Roy—I had been reading the then popular romance of that name a few days previously—like Rob Roy, who, if his virago of a wife could be believed, was never properly his own man except when flourishing away with his broadsword amidst his native heather, I was thoroughly myself only upon the quarter-deck, with my gallant seamen, amidst tempest, or the tramp and flash and white smoke of battle. Not, perhaps, decidedly pleasant varieties of experience in themselves, but emphatically so when compared with being caught by a grinning, gawky girl upon your

knees before her mother! To the quarter-deck, with its duties and perils, I, resolutely banishing from my mind all "trivial, fond records," swore thenceforth to exclusively devote myself:—one of those perjuries at which it has been said Jove laughs, though I doubt it, forasmuch that, were it so, Jove would have leisure for nothing else.

I continued steadily on board during the next four days, upon the last of which Mrs. Brunton and daughter took their departure for Cornwall. Rather to my surprise, I found that my appetite continued pretty good, and that in a very short time I had regained, or nearly so, my old cheerfulness and alacrity of mind; whence I concluded that I must have taken the disorder mildly, a consequence, perhaps, of the Ellen-Dible vaccination in early life. I was again busily occupied and absorbed by my exciting professional duties—successfully so in the main—and in the following spring I was selected for the especial mission to the Devonshire coast, of which the progress and result have been already narrated. My share of prize money, some ten times as large as that of Tom Davis, combined with previous savings and my half pay—the commandership for so many years, in those piping days of peace, dreamed and despaired of, being as hopelessly far off as ever—would amply suffice for the future; and I, spite of my wise vows, continually caught myself, not exactly castle, but cottage orné building, usually in the

neighbourhood of Weston; the inhabitant of the said cottage, who, as I returned home, weary and sad, of an evening, I could discern through the Venetian blind by the bright fire-blaze anxiously awaiting my coming; and who, in the sweet summer-time strolled or sat by my side in the trimly-kept flower-garden, or amidst the abbey-woods, being always, frequently as I strove to vary the image if only for variety's sake, a youthful matron with bright-brown entangling hair, and those blue, laughing eyes that had so misled and mocked me. These sentimental follies were kept afloat in my brain by the active correspondence that had sprung up between Mrs. Brunton and my sister, from which Jane often favoured me with sugary extracts suggestive of pleasant dream-fancies, however insidiously pernicious to a man intrusted with serious and important duties. One scrap of information, addressed especially to me by Mrs. Brunton, though not in the slightest degree extraordinary in itself, surprised me by the emphasis with which it was expressed. It was that Dr. Lee, of whose connection with the smuggling fraternity of the New Forest the writer had heard from me, was seemingly pursuing the same perilous avocation about Mount Bay, and had more than once hinted to Mrs. Brunton herself, it would seem, that if the *Rose* were unexpectedly to slip round to the westward, there was business to be done between the Lizard and the Land's End. "It would be well, my dear Jane,"

added the lady, that you mentioned this to your brother. It might be of importance to him professionally; the Preventive Service about here not being carried on as energetically just now as could be wished." This I already perfectly well knew, and the reason thereof; the naval officer commanding there, a veteran seaman who had come in at the hawse-pipe and worked himself aft by more than forty years of active and frequently gallant service, having for some time been physically incapable of the onerous duties which the authorities, regardless of his urgent request to be superannuated, cruelly or thoughtlessly persisted in exacting from him. But the fair widow's suggestion of the desirableness of *my* presence in that quarter of the world, remembering, as I distinctly did, a former intimation to the same effect, and the catastrophe which ensued, how should I interpret that? In its literal sense only? That upon the face of it seemed absurd: what cared she about the efficiency or non-efficiency of the Preventive Service? and as to the professional advantage I might derive from a slight, cursory look in—all that under the circumstances would be possible—at the smuggling haunts and capabilities of the Cornish coast; that, too, with all respect for Lee's easily-purchasable information, was very like a whale! Still a lurking inclination to once more strive to sound the smiling and, perhaps, not always treacherous depths of a woman's words or wiles, kept, as it were, watch and watch in my mind,

with reasoned judgment, now suggesting one course, now another—a state of incertitude which seemed interminable as ever, when it was suddenly blown to the winds by a letter, of which the subdued, despondent tone, and reluctant half-hints shaped indistinctly forth some terrible and closely-impending calamity, mainly brought about by Mr. Edward Penson, who, it seemed, moreover, might be laid securely by the heels and deprived of the power of working harm to her or hers, were a man of resource and energy to undertake the task. "How much such a man would deserve of me," it was added, "you, dearest Jane, who know so well what an utterly unscrupulous villain Edward Penson is, can better imagine than I can permit myself to express. Is the age of chivalry, think you, really extinct, as somebody has said or written? Not, at all events, or I shall be hugely mistaken, in the British naval service."

This, surely, was plain speaking. There could not be a doubt of that; not the shadow of a doubt, for all my infidel sister's merry smile. I would set out at once, that was, as quickly as certain official preliminaries could be arranged, preliminaries which, all circumstances considered, would not, I was pretty sure, be found difficult of adjustment; whilst as to Mr. Edward Penson——The increasingly-quizzical expression of Jane's look checked me upon that tack, and to excuse or account for the hot blood flaming in my face, I exclaimed with peremptory interrogation,

"Pray, what authority has Mrs. Brunton for intimating that you have had especial experience of Penson's unscrupulous villany?"

The bright smile upon my sister's face was displaced as I spoke by an angry pallor, and she presently said, "Mrs. Brunton has abundant authority for that intimation—assertion rather. Edward Penson is one of the meanest miscreants that ever—but Lilian shall have leave to give you the particulars, I cannot. You do not suppose," added Jane, with hasty deprecation of the effect produced by her words —"you do not, cannot suppose, Robert, that it is anything for which your sister has cause to blush?"

"No, not at all; God forbid!"

"And of course you will not think of making a personal quarrel of a matter that occurred at about the close of the last century?"

"Certainly not: I shall find cause of quarrel enough, depend upon it, if I come athwart the gentleman, without mixing up your name in the affair; though what you say at once sets aside any scruple on my part to engage therein. The Comptroller is fortunately at Southampton, and will, I doubt not, readily agree with me that it is desirable, in furtherance of the king's service, that the *Rose* should, for once in a way, stretch her wings a few leagues further westward than she usually does. And *your* friend, Jane, has, there can be no doubt, a *right* to count upon my sympathy and aid."

"Of course she has——Hush! hush! One may surely laugh without—Well, good-bye! God bless my brother! My love to Lilian; I shall write by this post to inform her that Lieutenant Warneford will, by the time she receives my letter, have in all probability arrived off Mount Bay, upon *the king's service!*"

The foregoing dialogue took place a few minutes after the post-delivery of letters at Itchen: at three o'clock of the same day I left the Star Inn, Southampton, after a satisfactory conference with the Comptroller of the Coast-Guard; by nightfall the *Rose* had cleared the Needles passage, under half a gale from the north-east, and early on the following evening the King's revenue-cutter was lying quietly in Penzance harbour, having, as reported, to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of others, sprung a leak, and sustained other damage in chasing a suspicious craft, which required to be immediately looked to.

Penzance was a wretchedly dull place, in those days, except during the months of July and August, when the pilchard fishery lent it temporary life and animation. The most noticeable thing to me, in my then mood of mind, was a brass-plate upon a door of one of the best houses in the main street, with 'P. and C. Sommerford, Surgeons,' inscribed thereon: I did not, however, call upon my old acquaintance, being desirous of making a few observations before doing so. And, in truth, I was more than half

ashamed, upon reflection, of the Quixotic haste with which I had speeded to the rescue of a lady, who, according to my judgment and experience, must herself be a match for twenty Edward Pensons. Some delay, therefore, in calling at Grove Cottage, Market-Jew, was desirable. Lee, I knew, would seek me as early as he prudently could, an expectation which was realized, as I was returning on board the *Rose*, late in the evening of the second day following my arrival. He encountered me at a turn of the road leading to Market-Jew, distant about a mile from Penzance, and five minutes afterwards we were snugly seated in the back-room of a small public-house close by. He appeared to be in tolerable good case, stouter in person and better dressed than formerly; but the same flippant, loquacious knave as ever. I was soon in possession of all he had to communicate in a general way about the distinctive peculiarities of Mount Bay smuggling; especially the facilities afforded there by the pilchard fishery, which being carried on by numerous heavy boats, the adroit contrabandists could frequently mingle with them without exciting notice, and haul to shore at some convenient point during the night huge nets or *senes*, as they are locally termed, containing spirit-kegs, *etcetera*, instead of pilchards. That profitable season was now past; and the gainful traffic had reverted to more circuitous channels. The apparition of the *Rose* in Penzance harbour had, moreover, greatly

alarmed the smugglers, who, for one or more reasons, suspected there were traitors in their own ranks:—an unfortunate tendency of mind which, Dr. Lee feared, would nullify to a great extent, the zeal and experience of the commander of that too-famous cutter.

"This state of things once ascertained, Lieutenant Warneford," added Lee, "will not, I venture to prophecy, deem it advisable to keep the *Rose* very long away from her old cruising-ground?"

"Not probably for a month of Sundays. But now tell me, if I have, to your knowledge, ever exchanged numbers with any of the keen hands about this part of the coast?"

"Myself excepted, I think not. But there is one, nevertheless, a little bird has whistled in my ear, who knows Lieutenant Warneford at the present time of asking, a trifle better than he loves him; and would much prefer to meet Belzebub—rather a friend of his I should say, which accounts for the preference—than that zealous servant of the king, in these parts, just now. And the first letter of that keen hand's name," added Lee, with a twinkle of the eye, which might mean something or nothing, "is Edward Penson!"

"Ho! ho! I have, it strikes me, heard that name before: a Cornishman, I presume?"

"One would suppose so from the name:—

'By Tre, and Pol, and Pen,
You may know the Cornishmen.'

So, at least, sayeth the old distich. I, however, remember to have met with the gentleman many years agone, about the New Forest, as well as in Itchen, Hamble, Bitterne. And that I am right in saying so," continued the fellow, with a much sharper twinkle than before, "is corroborated by the fact that he is about to marry the daughter of a queer individual who once resided in that locality, and of whom you, sir, may possibly retain some slight recollection, —one Joel Treherne.—Dear me what a pity," added the rascal, as he stooped to pick up the fragments of a tumbler, which, by an uncontrollable movement of surprise, I had knocked off the table, "What a thousand pities!—for to say nothing of the good liquor wasted, the glass is of double flint, and handsomely cut."

"Please to have done grinning, sir, and tell me your authority for so absurd a lie."

"A lie, that the glass is of double flint, or ——"

"Stuff! That Mrs. Brunton is about to marry such a pitiful rascal as Edward Penson."

"Mrs. Brunton! Upon my conscience, that *is* the lady's name, though, for the moment, it had unaccountably slipped my memory. Well, excuse me, sir. Jesting, I know, is generally out of place with a quarter-deck officer; and I am quite serious in repeating that the marriage in question is on the carpet; though opinions vary as to when, if ever, it will actually come off. Mr. Penson is unquestion-

ably for an early day, and so is old Treherne. But you know, sir, there may be breakers ahead, however smooth the sea within the range of the best of telescopes."

"Is Treherne a confederate of Penson's?"

"In the noble art of running moonshine? Very seldom I think; never, except when the temptation is great, and the risk very small. They are, however, thick as thieves, and sit up night after night, drinking and gambling till all's blue. The old one is a deep card at that fun though, and lucky as Penson has been in the aforesaid noble art, he has almost always pockets to let."

"Treherne must be a very old man."

"Yes, very; seventy-eight or nine, I should say, but originally tough as pin-wire; and till within the last nine or ten months, it would, notwithstanding an occasional fit of gout, have taken a man half-a-day to kill him with a pickaxe. But brandy is fast putting up his shutters. I have myself," added the comical, richly-carbuncled knave, as he mixed his fifth or sixth tumbler, "preached moderation to him till my throat was dry as a sawpit. All labour thrown away! I might as well have whistled dance tunes to a dead donkey and expected it to get up and turn partners."

"Do you know Miss Caroline Brunton, Treherne's granddaughter?"

"By sight, sir; and *that* is a privilege, though certainly not so great an one, as you may agree, though

of course tastes differ—as in her mother's case. The young lady, I am happy to say, is to all appearance restored to genuine, enduring health. An almost marvellous cure, it is thought about here, and has, it is very loudly whispered, secured to Dr. Sommerford a place in the mother, Mrs. Brunton's heart, which is Penson's chief difficulty.——Are you off, sir"? he went on to say, as I jumped up and rang the bell impatiently. "One moment; one word, sir; upon a matter of business—of duty rather—namely, the delivery into your hands of this note from—Mrs. Brunton."

"Curse your flippant, drunken impudence!" I exclaimed, snatching the note from him, and having hastily settled the score, I hurried off on board the *Rose* with my prize. There was no occasion in the world for such breathless haste; though the note was a civil note enough, and—considering all things,—not more civil than cool. "Mrs. Brunton presents her own and Mr. Treherne's compliments to Lieutenant Warneford, and hopes to see him at Grove Cottage, as early as the professional duties which have called him to this part of the country will permit." Talk of the sphinx!—But comparisons are absurd.

Still, I might as well shape my course for Market-Jew, on the following morning, and endeavour to ascertain, by ocular demonstration, how the land lay. And the more reasonably, as the following morning was Sunday morning, and my professional duties were not particularly exigent at that time and on that day.

I reached the village of Market-Jew (I retain this mode of spelling, because it best expressed to my ear the local pronunciation of the name of the place) at about eleven o'clock. Market-Jew, then, is built, or huddled together, opposite Saint Michael's Mount, with which famous stronghold of the olden time it was connected by a pebble causeway, which at low water was dry and firm throughout. Upon calling at Grove Cottage, on the western outskirt of the village, I was informed that Mr. Treherne was confined to his bed, and that Mrs. and Miss Brunton were gone to the parish church, Saint Hilary—distant about two miles. This being so, I concluded to beguile the time by a leisurely stroll in the direction of the said church; and the service not having concluded when I reached there, amused myself by sauntering in the ancient graveyard, and perusing the quaint, and in some instances, altogether strange epitaphs, which, though unmistakably spelt by the unlettered muse, were as obviously quite unfitted to teach the rustic moralist how to die. This one for instance—long since, I dare say, removed, and at the time I speak of, barely legible:—

"Here lies Ned,
I'm glad he's dead;
If there must be another,
I wish 'twere his brother,
And for the good of the nation
His whole generation!"

I was slowly repeating the last line, when the

sharp, cracked voice of Lee sounded close behind me.

"To that epitaph, Lieutenant Warneford," said Lee, "you will be chiefly indebted for my zealous and indispensable co-operation in any enterprise, whether of law, love, or war, which you may undertake against one Edward Penson. I happened, when flustered by drink, and consequently feeble, off my guard, and under considerable provocation moreover, to tell that big, burly brute that it must have been prophetically indited for him, so exactly would it suit himself and kin; and got a kicking for my candour which confined me to bed for a month, to say nothing of the moral indignity of the outrage. But the battle is not always to the strong; and please—Ah! this way comes the gentleman himself! Good day, Mr. Penson."

"Good day, Lee," was the gruff response of a tall, fair, well-formed, well-dressed man who had just left the church, the earliest to do so of the congregation. It was easy to see there was deadly feud between him and Lee, though, for some reason, attempted to be veiled by a thin mask of civility.

"This gentleman," persisted Lee, "is Lieutenant Warneford, Commander of the *Rose* revenue-cutter, now in Penzance harbour. Mr. Edward Penson, Lieutenant Warneford. Lieutenant Warneford, Mr. Edward Penson."

The man's face flushed hotly at these words, and

his eyes glared as might a wild beast's suddenly surprised and at bay. He, however, constrained himself to bow stiffly, muttered some common-place phrase, and passed on, unreplied to by me either by voice or gesture. The liberated congregation were by this time pouring fast out of the church, and amongst them came Mrs. and Miss Brunton, by whom I was received with evident pleasure and cordiality. They were both looking their best; Mrs. Brunton, to even unprejudiced eyes, more like the elder sister, than the mother of Caroline. We did not come up with Penson, nor did he favour us with the light of his countenance during the remainder of the day; and after a charming walk of, I suppose from the distance, three-quarters of an hour, scarcely five minutes as the time flew with me, we arrived at Grove Cottage, where I was quite as much startled as pleased to find my old friend Sommerford and his nephew Charles, both evidently meaning to stay out the afternoon there, should the cholera in the meanwhile break out in Penzance or elsewhere.

Mr. Treherne did not join us—he was slowly and doubtfully recovering from an attack of delirium tremens—and there was but exactly one man too many, that one being the elder Sommerford in my reckoning, and me, quite as certainly in his. We were, albeit, excellent friends, and as the day declined he so increased in kindness and cordiality as to press upon my acceptance a seat in his gig to

Penzance; Charles, to oblige his uncle's old friend, cheerfully consenting to remain behind and sleep at the King's Head, an arrangement which I resolutely declined, upon the sufficient plea that it was probable I should, in carrying out my professional duties, be compelled to remain several days at Market-Jew. Firm friends as Sommerford and I were, and still, I am happy to say, remain, I should not have liked at the moment I made that announcement to have been bound upon an operating table, with Peter Sommerford, as more than once had previously happened, about to operate upon me. The homicidal feeling—if I did not grossly misinterpret my friend's glanceof fire—was but as the lightning's flash; and presently putting on manful resolution, he ordered his horse to be put to at once, bade the ladies adieu, and then asked me to take a turn with him in the garden for a few minutes. "Save me from a challenge," was my involuntary thought, and a momentary apprehension of the same kind must have prompted the widow's instant, and not over-polite exclamation, "Now, Mr. Charles Sommerford, be quick, or your uncle will be gone without you." "No hurry, Charles," interposed the uncle, as we left the room together; "the mare cannot have been put-to yet. Adieu, ladies, once more. Now, sir."

"Warneford," said my friend, as soon as he fancied—mistakenly, I afterwards knew—that we were out of earshot, "you and I love the same woman; but that

can be hardly a sufficient reason, it strikes me, for attempting to blow each other's brains out!"

"No reason in life, it strikes me also."

"Very good. Let each of us, then, fairly take his chance. I cannot help, however, warning you that Mrs. Brunton is, I fear, somewhat of a tantalising temper. I say this to save you from avoidable pain and disappointment. I, now, have been the honoured instrument, under Providence, of saving her child from an untimely grave."

"Why, then, did you not pop the question to so devoted a mother, whilst the impression was still recent?"

"That is precisely what I did do."

"Ha! and met with a repulse?"

"No; not at all."

"With acceptance, then?"

"No; she merely laughed at me."

"Humph! Possibly that is a way she has got."

"By Jove! I think so; and for that very reason I have warned you against lulling yourself in a fool's paradise. Oh, here's Charles. Well, good-bye Warneford, and success to the winner whichever he may be."

"With all my heart; good-bye."

Crack went the whip, round went the wheels, and I returned to the Grove Cottage parlour. Mrs. Brunton was there alone, by the open window, gazing with pensive admiration, or pretending to do

so, at the tranquil splendour of the scene without; the magnificent waters of the bay serenely, softly swelling to the radiant kisses of the summer stars, all unheedful of the frowning Mount whose grim shadow the full harvest moon cast seaward, leaving the vast silver surface of the bay undimmed in its heaven-mirrored glory!

"Very beautiful!" I exclaimed, drawing near to the lady, and placing my chair as closely as I dared to hers. "Very beautiful! But what, after all, is the light of summer stars, the voluptuous swell of moonlit waters, compared with—with—"

I stopped abruptly—brought up for want of words, or from incapacity of articulation; both, perhaps. In fact I had taken several more glasses of wine than I usually permitted myself: hence my unwonted boldness, and, in some degree, sudden obfuscation; though I think the freezing glance which madam fixed me with had much to do with that. Be this as it may, upon finding myself so completely taken aback, I sat peaceably down and inquired for Miss Caroline. The simplicity of this bit of pathos instantly threw the changeful lady into a violent paroxysm of mirth, which, at last over, our conversation became by slow degrees serious, animated, interesting, and I left Grove Cottage that evening with a thorough knowledge of the service expected of me, and assured of the priceless guerdon which awaited upon success; the substance of which three

hours' colloquy I must endeavour to render in as many minutes.

Joel Treherne—a man of modest wealth, about five hundred a year, chiefly acquired by successful mining speculations—married in middle age a young girl whose sole attraction, in his eyes, was her personal beauty. He was of an irritable and extremely jealous temperament; bitter quarrels ensued between the ill-matched pair, and not long after the birth of Lilian, a separation was mutually agreed upon and carried into effect. Treherne retained the custody of his child; and after flitting restlessly about from place to place during some twelve years, he and Lilian settled—the wife having died some months previously—at Bitterne, as before related. Edward Penson, a handsome man in his youth, and always a needy spendthrift, was Mrs. Treherne's only brother's son, and he, taking advantage of the remorse which he heard had been displayed by the crabbed, but not wholly implacable husband for the death of his abandoned wife, introduced himself at Bitterne, and made pretensions to Lilian Treherne's hand, which pretensions were peremptorily discountenanced by both father and daughter, the moment they were plainly advanced. Thus foiled, and imagining Mr. Warneford to be much better off than he really was—Miss Warneford being, moreover, an unquestionably attractive and amiable girl—Penson adroitly transferred his attentions to her; and successfully, so far as the guileless

girl was herself concerned, but Mrs. Brunton believed my father had been ignorant of the engagement till a comparatively late period. The evanishment of Jane's beauty afforded Penson a decent pretext for cancelling the hasty contract he had entered into; and sooth to say, I, myself, had never greatly blamed him for having done so. But I had argued in total ignorance of the real facts of the case. The fellow had renewed his addresses after my sister's recovery to health; protested that mere physical beauty had ever been of slight value in his eyes, and Jane, agreeing, asked her father's consent to the union. He then discovered that he had greatly overrated Mr. Warneford's property, who bluntly informed him that he should have but about a hundred a-year to bequeath; and as he had a son as well as daughter, half of that income at the most was all Jane could reasonably expect. This elucidation decided Penson; but my father having incidentally mentioned that his daughter had about a hundred pounds bequeathed to her by an aunt, in her own actual possession, the wretched caitiff dissembled his disappointment and determination till he had, under some lying pretence, wheedled the simple girl out of that sum, with which he forthwith disappeared from the neighbourhood.

Lilian Treherne subsequently married Mr. Brunton, in opposition to her father's wishes; the wayward man vouchsafing no other reason for objecting to the marriage, than a selfish wish that his daughter should

continue to live single and with him. It was many years before a reconciliation took place, the first effectual step in which direction being the obtainment of his consent to receive Caroline Brunton on a visit to Grove Cottage. He became attached to the child; made a will, during a sharp fit of illness, bequeathing her every farthing of which he might die possessed; and ultimately, soon after the death of Mr. Brunton, received her mother again under his own roof. Matters then went on smoothly enough, till Edward Penson once more turned up, and by force of unconquerable persistence, by encouraging Treherne's propensity to drink, and stimulating his for some years growing passion for play, obtained a complete ascendency over the mind of the now feeble, fast-decaying old man; which ascendency, however, it was remarkable, was utterly cast off during the absence of Penson —a rare and brief occurrence now-a-days, the plotter being rarely absent from the side of his victim. Treherne had in consequence been induced to make —or more correctly, to determine upon making—an entire change in the disposition of his property, which was to be settled upon his daughter, Mrs. Brunton, jointly with Edward Penson, upon condition that she married the said Edward Penson, with remainder to him should he survive her; whilst her refusal to become his wife would deprive her of every shilling. Positive legal instructions to the above effect had been given, and deeds embodying the

iniquitous provisions would have been by this time signed and sealed, but for the illness from which Joel Treherne was, it was believed, slowly recovering. To defeat Penson's purpose, Mrs. Brunton had hit upon a scheme, which with my assistance she believed could hardly fail of success. It was this. Penson had been, it was supposed, all his life engaged in the contraband trade, and was now obliged to venture largely; Treherne refusing to part with a shilling of money during his own life; and a chief link in the chain, moreover, which bound the avaricious old gamester to Penson, being the readiness with which that worthy permitted him to win his (Penson's) money. He had, however, hitherto managed to keep himself out of the clutches of the Coast-guard—a continuous good fortune which it was now designed to interrupt. In a very few days, as Lee—now, as we have seen, his deadly enemy—had ascertained, an unusually bold attempt would be made, under Penson's personal direction, to run a large quantity of goods on the Cornish coast; and unless our intelligence and courage failed us, we should not only spoil a prime venture, but fix our plotting friend with penalties that would lay him fast in jail, as long as the Crown, an obdurate creditor, chose to keep him there. I, it will be easily believed, entered heartily into this promising project; and having mastered the details, as far as they were known to Mrs. Brunton, agreed to see Lee in the morning, and prepare

for action without delay, I took the liberty of saying—

"And should I succeed, madam, in sweeping this reptile from your path—may I hope that in return—no, not in return—that is talking absurdly—may I flatter myself that you will—will in fine——"

"Feel for ever grateful to you? How can you doubt that I shall," replied Mrs. Brunton with demurest gravity.

"Gratitude be hanged! Excuse, dear lady, my apparent rudeness: you can read better than I can speak what I feel. Mine is no passing, ephemeral fancy. Long ago I manifested the love—the reverence——"

"You mean when Caroline interrupted you so opportunely! Well, but consider, Lieutenant Warneford," continued the widow, not, however, withdrawing the hand I held in both mine. "There is your friend Sommerford. He saved that dear girl's life, and he warned you, this very evening, that I had half promised myself to him."

"Nay, nay, madam; but that you laughed at him."

"Which is, *you* know, a way I have got. Do you know," she added, as soon as her exuberant merriment permitted; "do you know, I have been thinking that the quaker-arrangement you two desperate lovers came to in the garden, was not at all complimentary to me. You ought at least to have tossed up to decide which should forthwith hang himself! It

would have spared me so much embarrassment. There, do leave go my hand. I am positively ashamed of you. It was not in that way Jane told me you wooed, and did not win either, the enchanting Ellen Dible. By-the-by, have you that damsel's picture ?"

" One word,—but one serious word."

" And what shall that one word be ?—No !—Yes ! —No ! Remember, that if you succeed in our enterprise, I shall not bring you a shilling !"

" So much the better. I have enough for both."

" Say you so ! well, then, in good faith—yes ! Now Lieutenant Warneford, don't be silly. Why the man's gone suddenly mad ! Caroline, love ! No, I did *not* ring,—but you are just come in time to wish Lieutenant Warneford good-night. He was at this moment hoping to see you before he went. Were you not, sir ?"

I and Lee had numerous conferences, with which I need not weary the reader ; enough to say, that just one week from my coming to an understanding with Mrs. Brunton—that is, on the following Sunday night, I was lying-to, as well as I could, in a well-manned boat, off Cudden Point, the eastern horn of Mount Bay. It was a fearful night—the giant Tregagle—as they say down there—roaring his very loudest. But neither wind nor sea, howl and rage as they may, are always strong and fierce enough to rebuke man's lust of gain ; and at about two o'clock in the morning, a flash of lightning, which lit up the whole scene for

miles around, showed us a large lugger upon the crest of a huge wave, not more than about fifty fathoms distance from us, and shooting onwards with hurricane speed towards a narrow creek, or armlet of the sea, not very far within the Point. This was our expected prey; and a fierce shout, inaudible two yards off, amidst the crashing thunder, and roar of the sea, arose from the *Rose* men as their oars fell into the water, and we started in scarcely governable pursuit. The lugger descried us almost as soon as we saw her; and if the smugglers' shout of defiance was puffed back in their throats by the wind, their gestures showed they did not, though surprised, intend to yield without a struggle; and that struggle would, I saw, be a fierce one, for we were about matched in numbers, and the rascals, like ourselves, were armed to the teeth. "Give way, men—with a will!" I was shouting, more as a relief to my own excitement, than because needed by the rowers, as we swept past a projecting angle of the coast into somewhat smoother water; "with a will now—hurrah!" when, to my surprise and consternation, my crow of defiance was echoed, not only from the lugger ahead, but from another of the same force close behind, though not till that moment observed. This was more, much more, than we had bargained for, and we, moreover, narrowly escaped being presently struck right abeam, and cut clean in halves, by the sharpish bow of our new friend. There was

no avoiding, there was no attempting to avoid, the furious and critical contest which immediately ensued. One moment the *Rose's* boat swept close to the side of a lugger, and the next a hurrying sea forced asunder the eager combatants, hurling them apart to a distance which rendered pistol, as well as cutlass, useless, leaving for a time only the musket available. This fearful combat, though on a small scale, lit up and reverberated as it was by the elemental conflict raging around, above, beneath us, was withal a terribly exciting one; and rather the more so to me, that I was somewhat of an old hand in sea-fights; for how wildly do the hearts of men leap up, their blood flame to lava, in fierce response to the God of battles, when he calls to them with the old war-cries which sounded in their ears in conflicts where they won the flags that hang asleep in glory in the castles of our monarchs, in the palaces of our nation! It was so in this instance; the luggers being at least half-manned by Frenchmen, and the cries consequently of "*Courage, mes enfans!*"—"*Tonnere de Dieu!*"—"*Vive la France!*"—"*Sacre bleu!*" and so on, mingled screamingly with the fuller, deeper, more confident, coarser shouts belched forth from British throats! How the contest might, but for an accident, or an awkwardness, have terminated, I cannot presume to hazard an opinion. As it happened, fortunately for us, in any view of the matter, the lugger furthest at sea suddenly broached-to, filled, went down, disappeared in

a moment; save a score of struggling wretches, whose cries the tempest stilled, whose bodies the wild sea swallowed, in a scarcely longer space of time than that. This catastrophe caused a panic in the remaining lugger, which was as quickly as possible beached at the most favourable spot for such an operation that could be selected, and with a success almost miraculous in such weather. The vessel knocked itself to pieces in no time, but the surviving men escaped; cursing us lustily, as their rageful gestures testified, as they speeded off inland.

My duty as an officer of the Coast-guard had been successfully enough carried out; not so the *extra*-professional purpose which I had chiefly at heart in the affair. Penson—who, we were pretty sure, was on board one of the luggers— had, I afterwards found, escaped; and no legal evidence of his complicity, or that he had been within miles of the spot, could be adduced—a misfortune which deepened the regret I felt for the fate of poor Lee, who, in his hot zeal against Penson, *would* accompany us in the boat. His skull had been pierced by a musket-bullet, and he must have died without more than a momentary pang.

Foiled in effecting Penson's capture, my own enterprise, so far as Mrs. Brunton was concerned, had failed utterly, and I retired late to bed the next evening at the King's Head, in moody discomfiture, having in vain by an earnest, and, I flattered myself, eloquent personal appeal, attempted during the day

to prevail upon that lady to place herself and daughter, without further ado or delay, under my guardianship of husband and stepfather. Remembering, however, many cogent arguments after I left her, which I had forgotten to urge, I filled a foolscap sheet of paper with them, and despatched it before going to bed. The answer came just after dawn the next morning—Mr. Joel Treherne had expired suddenly about three hours before!

I pass over the next ten days. The funeral rites had been duly celebrated, and though some natural tears were dropped by Mrs. Brunton, her affliction could not be a very profound one; and preparations were set about for her and Caroline's early removal to Penzance, where she should remain till, after a decent interval of time, our engagement should be consecrated by Holy Church.

The remainder of the narrative will be clearer, if, in relating it, I avail myself, as I go on, of the knowledge which I did not, in fact, wholly attain till after the catastrophe.

First, then, Joel Treherne's will in favour of Caroline Brunton, no other having been subsequently executed, remained in force, and that young lady thus became the undisputed heiress to about six hundred pounds a-year, beside Grove Cottage, furniture, plate, &c. But a codicil thereto, unknown, unsuspected by Mrs. Brunton, provided that, in the event of the said Caroline dying childless—she was about

fourteen at the date of the codicil—the entire property should pass to Edward Penson. This, however, as Caroline was in perfect health, did not cause much concern. Edward Penson, it is necessary to observe, had not showed in Market-Jew since Mr. Treherne's death, though it was known that he had not yet left the neighbourhood. I have already stated that the causeway leading from Market-Jew to Mount St. Michael—the strip of level land that is at the base of the Mount, upon which some thirty or forty huts and houses were, at the time I speak of, built—was overflowed at high-water. I have to add that a bell rings, or then rang, from the chapel near the summit of the Mount, at the last moment that it is perfectly safe to pass from the Mount to the opposite side. There are also sea-phenomena, peculiar, I believe, to that part of the English coast, recorded by Sir Henry de la Beche, who was more than once in danger of his life from them. These are sudden and violent oscillations of the waters of the bay, sometimes in the calmest weather, whereby huge waves, sufficient to swamp the largest boats, roll in with the noise of thunder, creating a temporary but tremendous surf, which not only dashes furiously upon the beach, but hurls its spray to the summit of the nearer cliffs. This is all that, by way of especial preface, need, I think, be said.

The last day of September 1825 was a brilliant one, and there was not enough of wind to blow out a

lady's cambric handkerchief. It would be high water at two o'clock; and, having accompanied Caroline Brunton from Market-Jew to the Mount, upon a visit to Mrs. Carstairs, a bedridden relative residing there—a pious duty fulfilled by her, or Mrs. Brunton, always once, sometimes twice in each week—I took a small boat and skulled out to the seaward side of the Mount, bathed, fished, read, and was still lazily dozing over the whims and woes of some now-forgotten Damon and Phyllis, when the loud ringing of St. Michael's warning-bell broke my day-dream, and, gazing hurriedly around, I noticed that the tide was making at a prodigious rate; and that, albeit not a breath of air was stirring, a strange kind of ground-swell rocked the tiny coble in which I was embarked with a jerking motion I could not account for. I was a good deal annoyed, besides, that I had heedlessly broken my promise to Caroline Brunton to call for and accompany her to Grove Cottage. There was, however, no help for it, and I could do nothing better than skull vigorously shoreward. Whilst doing so, it struck me that the position of the sun indicated a considerably more advanced time of day than one o'clock, the latest moment at which St. Michael's bell should have pealed forth its warning; and I pulled out my watch. Heaven and earth! a quarter to two only; within fifteen minutes of high tide, and Caroline—the thought swept through me with the flush of fever—

depending first upon me and then upon the bell, was possibly at that moment traversing the causeway! What cry was that? A seagull's? Another moment removed all doubt. It was the agonising scream of a human being—of a girl; and presently a tumult of cries and shouts from the foot of the Mount echoed, but could not drown that single one which pierced through all with the supernatural force which despair lends to its victim. A few minutes of desperate exertion brought me within near view of the causeway; and thereon, about midway, environed by the heaving, turbid tide, which already dashed up to her knees, staggering helplessly to and fro, and shrieking piteously, was Caroline Brunton! Not a boat save mine was within a mile of the spot; at least, bewildered as I was, I could see none. The unfortunate girl recognised me instantly; and, as if I needed urging, called to me with piteous cries and gestures. There could—I had barely presence of mind to reflect—be now no real danger, now that I was within twenty yards of her; less!—less!—less!—not one!—had reached, clasped her in my arms, and was turning with her to the punt, when it rose above me, ascending the dark, almost perpendicular wall, as it were, of a giant wave, in which I was instantly whelmed with my precious burthen, and struggling desperately with the hissing, whirling water. The passing onward of the immense wave, cast or dropped the boat upon the causeway with a

force which crushed it as one might a walnut-shell. I fell upon the pebbles with less, but still wounding force; twice, thrice, again the wave-force lifted, dashed me upon the causeway; after which I remember little, save that thickest darkness sealed my eyes, which recovered not their light, and then with infinite agony, till about, I was told, half-an-hour after, I and the equally senseless girl whom I held with the steel grasp of death, disappeared for the last time beneath the strangely-agitated sea, which, as if its work had been accomplished in our destruction, was calm ten minutes afterwards as it had been during the forenoon. We—myself and Caroline Brunton—had been saved by the strenuous exertions of some seamen of the *Rose*, who, happening to be on shore-leave at Market-Jew, had seized a boat, and, by dint of skill and resolution, forced it safely to the spot where I had sunk, and picked us up, it was for some time feared, too late.

Neither of us had fully recovered consciousness, when the miserable author of our peril and sufferings —of Caroline Brunton's death in acted-out intention —met with the reward of his great crime. John Powell, one of the boat's crew, had chanced to hear that the veteran officer, before spoken of, commanding the Cornwall Coast-guard had expressed a wish to communicate with Mr. Edward Penson solely with the view—now all chance of succeeding to Mr. Treherne's property had gone from him—of inducing

him to afford, for a valuable consideration, available information respecting his associates in the late and former contraband ventures. Powell, after assisting at our rescue, strolled over and about the Mount, caught sight of Penson; first hallooed, and then gave chase after him, merely to announce the expressed and friendly wishes of the officer. The wicked flee when no man pursueth, and Edward Penson, panic-stricken by his own inward sense of guilt, fled amain; Powell continuing to halloo and pursue with unabated vigour, and, at last, with something of the excitement of a regular hunt. This continued till Penson, frantic with terror, attempted to elude his supposed enemy by crawling along a narrow ledge of rock which looks sheer down a fissure, some hundred feet in depth. A shout from Powell, it was said or supposed, caused the wretch to momently loose his hand-grasp; it was irrecoverable—he fell; was taken up frightfully mangled, and with barely sufficient life remaining to confess that he, acted upon by a sudden demoniac impulse, had contrived to gradually put back St. Michael's clock three-quarters of an hour, in the hope and expectation that Caroline Brunton, trusting to St. Michael's bell, would be drowned in passing over the causeway, and he, Penson, be thereby enriched. It is not often that even-handed justice so promptly commends the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to our own lips.

My story—stories, I should say, are now told,

though it may, perhaps, be proper to add to this one the important item, that Robert Warneford, bachelor, and Lilian Brunton, widow, were united in holy wedlock on the 1st of March 1826.— *Vale! Vale!*

END OF THE TALES OF THE COAST-GUARD.

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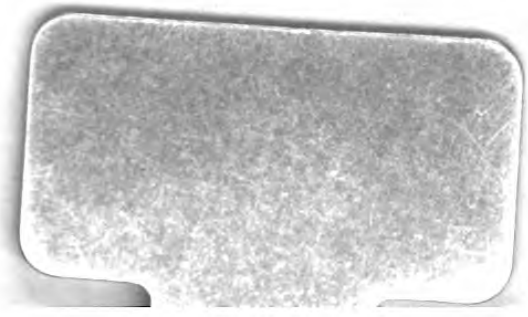

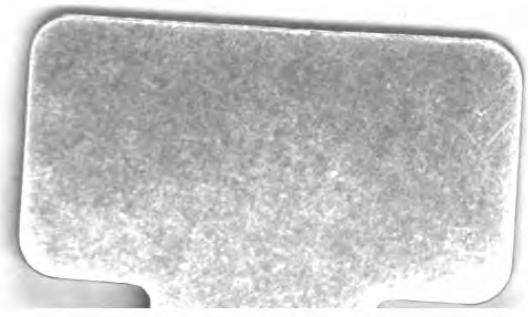

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BY

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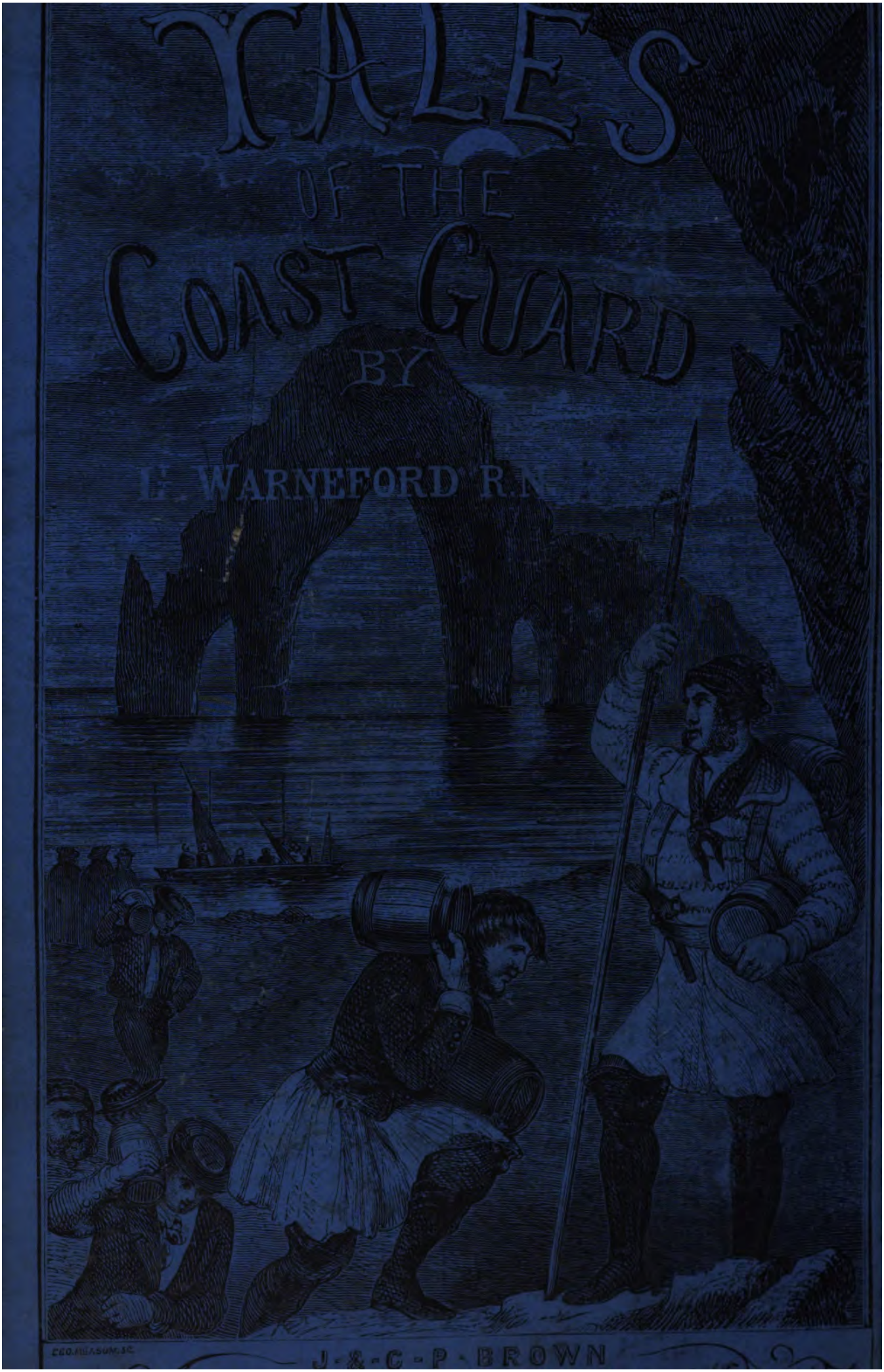

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