

The Wing of the Wind: A Nouelette of the Sea

J. H. Ingraham

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The Wing of the Wind: A Nouelette of the Sea

J. H. Ingraham

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PART FIRST. IN PORT.

CHAPTER FIRST.

IN WHICH THE HERO IS INTRODUCED TO THE READER AND SOME DESCRIPTION OF THE "WING OF THE WIND" IS GIVEN.

THE scene of the following tale opens in the month of September, 1827, at that period when the Colombian revolution was creating no little sensation in the world, and especially in the United States, a nation ever foremost to extend its sympathy to a people struggling for political freedom. As the infant Republic had few resources, and no navy, of any force, vessels were fitted out in some of the ports of the States for the purpose of aiding the Colombians in their efforts to establish their Independence. One or two of these ships were purchased by the Colombian government and volunteers for the service were called for, with offers of large pay and an abundance of prize money.

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There were, however, vessels of a different description, fitted out for this enterprise. They were privateers, so far as a commission of letter of marque went, but pirates in fact; for their crews did not contain one Colombian; being chiefly composed of unprincipled American seamen, and sailors of all nations. These vessels were usually commanded by adventurous Sea Captains, who had too lawless a reputation to get ships in the merchant-service to command, or by officers who had been degraded from the naval service for some misdemeanors.

At the time our story opens, there had been a vessel lying for some days, in the harbor of Boston, preparing for sea. She was a large top-sail schooner of nearly two hundred tons burden. She was pierced for twelve guns, and had a very warlike and saucy appearance. She was one of the handsomest craft that had been seen afloat in Boston harbor for many years. The spring of her head, as it swelled from the raking stern, was enough to gladden an old tar's eye, with its nautical grace, and the air of lightness which it threw over the whole bow. The view of her trail-boards, navelhoods, and head-knees, embraced in one sweep of the eye, was very fine. The bow was very sharp, and flared gently from the bends up to the covering board, from, whence it assumed a bolder, and more dashy spring, which it carried upward to the rail.

Her shear was so nicely graduated, that although her sides were handsomely rounded, one viewing her broadside on would suppose her almost straight. Her run was clear fore and aft, and the stern extremely light and graceful. Outside she was painted black, with a white streak upon the bead beneath the ports, which were lined with bright scarlet. Forward she had a top-gallant forecastle, the height of the rail extending aft to the windlass. She carried pole top-gallant masts, and royal masts fore and aft; but set to carry skysails rather than royals. Her masts and spars were of the most beautiful proportions; and her rigging was set with the nicest nautical precision.

This beautiful schooner had the week before come into port, and anchored off Central wharf. She showed Colombian colors; and it was soon understood that she had come in to ship men for the Colombian service. No one, however, knew whence she came; nor was her commander known to any person, that any one could find out.

The schooner had been eight days at her anchorage, quietly shipping such adventurers as chose to embark on the service for which she was said to be destined; but her captain had not yet been seen. On the evening of the eighth day, while it was still twilight, a young man wrapped to the eyes in a cloak emerged from an obscure alley near Ann street, and took his way rapidly, and as if not desiring to be recognized, towards the harbor. He threaded the street along the dock until he came to Central wharf, when taking the rear or upper walk, he pursued his course at a quick step till he reached the extremity of the pier. It was by this time night. The stars sparkled in the bosom of the harbor, and dark shadows enveloped the shipping and distant islands. Here and there a boat passing from the wharf to some vessel in the stream; or some belated fisherman coming in from the outer bay in his light skiff, only broke the quiet of the limpid water. Directly opposite to him lay the beautiful Colombian schooner, her graceful proportions still clear and distinct in the waning twilight.

"Boatman," called the young man, addressing a man who was seated in the stern of a small boat fastened to the steps of the pier, and smoking a pipe as if enjoying the luxury of repose after the labors of the day.

"Yer honor!" responded the man springing to his feet. "Do you want to go off, sir?"

"Yes. Take me on board the schooner."

"That I'll do in a jiffy, sir. Plase to step in, sir. The sate is clane, sir."

The young man stepped into the little boat, and seating himself in the stern-sheets, spoke not until the boat came under the schooner's gangway.

"Boat ahoy!" challenged the sentry at his post.

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"A shore boat. I would come on board," answered the young man.

"The orders are not to let any boat come alongside after sun-down!"

"I have business with the commander."

"The captain is not on board," answered an officer coming to the side. "What do you wish?"

"Are you in present command of the vessel?"

"Yes."

"Then, perhaps, my business may be made known to you!"

"Pull alongside, boatman," ordered the lieutenant. The man obeyed; and the next moment the person whom he had brought to the schooner stood upon her deck.

"Can I speak with you, sir?" he asked of the officer.

"Yes, if your words must be private."

He then turned and led the way into the cabin, which was an apartment furnished with elegance and taste.

"Now, sir, we are alone," remarked the officer, fixing a keen glance upon the visitor, who still concealed his features by his cap and cloak.

"I am told this is a Colombian vessel, and that she sails in a day or two for the gulf."

"Yes, we expect to get away by the day after to-morrow," answered the lieutenant, bluffly.

"Is it possible to have an interview with her captain?" asked the young man, dropping the cloak from his face, and pushing back his cap, as if there was nothing to be feared from recognition while on board the schooner.

"The captain is on shore. He does not stay on board," answered the officer, looking at the features of the stranger with admiration, combined with curiosity. His visitor was a young man, not more than five-and-twenty, tall and well formed, with a very handsome, manly face. He had blue eyes and a clear florid complexion, with wavy light brown hair. His mouth was very fine, and his whole face decidedly noble in its aspect; yet it was stamped with an air of sadness that struck the officer with feelings akin to sympathy. He at once became interested in him.

The stranger regarded the lieutenant for an instant with a fixed gaze, as if deliberating whether to confide to him his object in visiting the schooner. There was an air of nautical frankness in the officer's countenance that invited confidence; yet he hesitated.

"If you are particularly desirous to see the captain, I think I can place you in the way of it," said the lieutenant, who observed his embarrassment.

"I should be obliged to you."

"I think I can trust you. The captain, to tell you the truth, don't care to be seen here in Boston. He, however, may not object to your seeing him, if you have business that concerns him."

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"It does not so much concern him as myself."

"Do you know him?"

"I have never seen him!"

"Then you are not his enemy!"

"No!"

"You shall see him!"

As the lieutenant, who had the air of a bold, frank, reckless fellow, spoke, he wrote a few words upon a slip of paper and handed them to his guest.

"Take this to the house named on it, and ask of a man you will see there, who has but one eye and a scar on his lip, to conduct you to Captain Lightfoot!"

The young man took the card with many expressions of thanks, and left the schooner for the shore-boat. He soon reached the pier from which he had embarked, and took his way up the wharf. As he went, he took the same precautions as before against being recognised. After reaching the head of the wharf, he took his way along India-street, through Merchants' Row to Ann. He entered this close and winding thoroughfare, and traversed its crowded walks until he came to a tavern, over the door of which was hung a gilded anchor.

"This is the place 'The Gold Anchor,' " he said, glancing at his card.

He made his way through a crowd of sailors and women, who were congregated about the door smoking, drinking, singing, and fighting, and found himself in an ill-lighted room, dark with the clouds of tobacco smoke that floated in it.

"Hulloah, shipmate, in the long togs," said an old man-of-war's man to him, as he slightly jostled him, "don't spread so much canvass, or else mind your helm a little better!"

"What does the blasted land-lubber want in these cruisings?" growled another. "I say, shore-purser treat us all round, or we'll take three reefs in your main-sail!"

"Stop that talk there, lads! Can't a gentleman come into my house but you must pay off your talk-tackle, as if the world shouldn't have nobody on it but old salts!"

"That's the way it should be, Blinker. If I had the say, I'd have all sailors and pretty lasses!" answered the tar.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?" asked the landlord, civilly, of the stranger, whose entrance into his tap-room had drawn upon him the notice of his regular customers.

"I want to see the person whose name is on this paper."

The host took the paper from him, and placing it close to the light, began closely, with his one eye, to examine the writing. Finding he could not make it out by legitimate reading, he proceeded to spell letter by letter, when the bearer interrupted him.

"It is Captain Lightfoot I wish to see."

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"Oh, yes, I see it is! So you want to see the captain?" he demanded, bending a sharp glance upon him. "Who did this paper come from?"

"His lieutenant on board the schooner."

"Oh, aye, Westwood. Confound him, he can't write a hand a christian can make head or tail of. He must have been tipsy when he wrote this, for the writing looks as drunk as a fiddler!"

The young gentleman smiled, for to his eyes the writing was very fair and legible, indeed rather an unusually good specimen of penmanship. But Blinker, doubtless, had forgotten his schooling.

"Can I see the captain?"

"I will go and ask him. What name?"

"That is of no consequence!"

"Well, I will let him know you are here, and what your signals are!"

With this, he called to an old man—o'—war's man to mind the "tap," and then quitted the room by a door that led to a flight of stairs. He had been absent about three minutes, when he returned and made a gesture for the young man to follow him.

They passed through the door and up the stairs into a sort of hall or lumber room, through which they went into an entry, at the extremity of which was another flight of stairs which descended. Taking these, they came to a door at the foot, which was ajar, and from which came the sounds of mirth, of song, and the uproar of loud voices.

"Go in through this and the door beyond, and you will find him," said the host. "I must now return to the tap."

With these words he departed, taking the light with him, and leaving the young man in darkness, save a glimmer from the distant door to which Blinker had directed his attention, and from which came the sound of revelry.

He stood where he was for a few seconds irresolute. He was uncertain whether he ought to advance or retire, for he by no means liked the position in which he found himself placed. He was, however, not deficient in courage. But the character of the place in which he had been directed to find the captain of the schooner, the mysterious manner in which he had been directed to it, and the sounds of riotous indulgence that now assailed his ears, as he stood alone in the darkness of the strange place, naturally awakened suspicion and called for wariness.

"Is it possible this captain is revelling with his crew," he said to himself, as the words of a popular seaman's song reached him, accompanied with an uproarious chorus. "If I find him in yonder scene, the chief spirit of it, I shall find in him some rough and brutal officer, to whom I shall not care to commit my destiny. Yet I will not shrink! To advance is my only alternative. Infamy, death are behind me. I have no safety no shelter from the laws or from my self, but this which is now held out to me!"

As he spoke he advanced with a firm step towards the door.

CHAPTER SECOND.

OUR HERO IS INTRODUCED INTO A STRANGE SCENE HE IS AT A LOSS WHAT TO MAKE OF ITS CHIEF PERSONAGE. AT LENGTH HE FINDS THE CAPTAIN, WHO IS DESCRIBED.

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The confusion of voices subsided somewhat, as he approached the entrance to the apartment which contained the revellers. A rough, yet not unmusical voice now struck up a sentimental song in answer to a loud call for such a production. The stranger paused at the door and listened to the following stanzas:

"Oh, lady come to my bark with me, And reign the queen of the sunny sea; My bark's a palace, my deck's a throne, And thou, there, love, shall reign alone, Then lady share my bark with me, And reign the queen of the sunny sea. "A gallant ship, and a boundless sea, A piping breeze and a foe on our lee, My pennon streaming so gay from the mast, My cannon booming loud and fast; Then lady share my bark with me, And reign the queen of the sunny sea "Thy raven locks are worth Java's Isle, Can the spices of India buy thy smile? The glories of sea and the splendor of land, They all shall be thine for the wave of thy hand; Then lady share my bark with me, And reign the queen of the sunny sea!"

"A pleasant song; my lad, a right rare ditty for such a rough knot," said a rich manly voice, in a clear bold manner. "Give him applause, boys, for he merits it!"

The response was uproarious, and amid the noise the young man pushed open the door a little way, and looked in upon the party. The room was a low ceiled apartment, about forty feet in length, and fourteen wide, and was partly subterranean, receiving light by day only from little windows placed in the wall just under the ceiling, level with the ground above. It was the dance hall of the "Golden Anchor," and had witnessed many a wilder and more lawless scene than that which the young man gazed in upon. The hall was now converted into a sort of supper room. In the centre extended a long table, covered with the broken fragments of a feast, and thickly set with bottles and tumblers. Around it were seated full eight-and-forty men, some with glasses in their hands, some smoking, others singing snatches of songs. At the head of the board, so far as he was visible through the clouds of tobacco smoke, which nearly extinguished the candles that hung around the dirty walls, was seated a man, small in stature, but built with great compactness of bone and muscle, and yet with a figure of the most finished symmetry. He had a very high broad brow, beneath which sparkled a pair of fine grey eyes. His lips were thin and very flexible, expressing faithfully every emotion of a nature that was impulsive and fiery. He was dressed in an ordinary seaman's blue jacket, with a loose cravat, and his collar turned back. He looked like a young man of great decision of character, and one also thoroughly imbued with vice. His air was that of an unprincipled and reckless adventurer.

"Ho, who stands at the door?" he suddenly called out as his quick eye caught the shadowy outline of the stranger's figure in the door.

Every eye was turned towards the entrance, and the intruder advanced into the room with a bold step, and an air at once fearless and imposing.

"I seek the captain of the Colombian schooner?" he said aloud. "I am told by the landlord, I shall find him here!"

"Then you have been told the truth. My lads drink to Blinker's health, for you see he has once in his life told the truth! Come, sir, will you join us: walk this way?"

"With pleasure," answered the young man, as he took the glass which the leader of the revels placed in his hand.

"Here, we drink to Blinker, boys, all! The next time he tells the truth, he shall treat the whole ship's crew!"

The toast was drank with loud repetitions, and many a rough oath sworn in mirthfulness, and clenched by a thump upon the board that made every thing ring again.

"Now, silence, boys. Let us see what this strange sail wants. Sir, you look like a good man, and true, though you sail under broadcloth. To what are we indebted for the honor of your visit?" This was spoken with a courtesy that

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at once stamped the speaker, in spite of all the low and rude associations connected with, and around him, as a gentleman, at least by birth and education.

"I desire to speak with Captain Lightfoot, if, as I understand, you are that person?"

"Oh, that is another matter," he answered, assuming his former light and reckless tone. "I thought you said you wished to see the Captain of the schooner!"

"Is it not the same person?"

"Oh, no. You see I am only captain of these boys here. I am called what is it I am called, my lads?"

"Mild Segar," answered twenty voices, laughing.

"Yes, I am `The Mild Segar!' That is my name: I have no other, I believe, lads!"

"None!" was the response of every tongue that was not too tipsy to articulate.

"You see, sir, that I am not Captain Lightfoot, but `The Mild Segar!' "

The young man did not know whether to be angry, or to laugh outright. He had, however, too much at stake to show feeling where he had his own deep interest to look after.

"Then, if you are not Captain Lightfoot, merry sir, will you be so kind as to inform me where I can find him?"

"Well, these are a part of his crew. Ask them if they have yet seen any other captain than I?"

"No; we know no other than `Mild Segar,' this is as true as if Blinker spoke it," pertly answered a lad near the head of the board, who had a segar in his lips, and a tumbler of grog in his hand.

"That is the only captain we know of," responded a grey-headed, old salt; "and I wouldn't care to sail under a better!"

"Then, where is your Captain Lightfoot?" demanded the stranger, something impatiently.

"Keep cool, my good master," said the young man who rejoiced in the appellation of "The Mild Segar." "Is your business of moment with Captain Lightfoot?"

"Yes. Will you inform me where I can see him?"

"I will lead you to him. My lads, you will excuse me for awhile. I shall expect you to keep order and behave yourselves while I am gone. I will be back in good time. Now, Sir Stranger in the long cloak, if you will come with me, I will bring you to speech with this Captain Lightfoot!"

"Gladly," answered the visiter.

The "Mild Segar" then rose from the table and opening a door behind his chair motioned to his guest to pass through it. He then went after him, up a winding stair-case, old and broken, which led them into an ante-room, the walls of which were rough boards and timber a rude chamber, wholly destitute of furniture. At its extremity was a window, half-way open. Through this window he passed by a light bound. The stranger followed him, and found himself upon a sort of gallery which run along the side of the building. They traversed it for the distance of

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thirty feet, when the seaman took a key from his pocket and unlocked a door, admitting him into a room brightly lighted and very handsomely furnished. The transition was so surprising that the stranger gazed around him with astonishment. The rich furniture, the gorgeous carpet, the beautiful curtains, costly books strewn around, a guitar and a flute upon a marble table, were objects that filled him with surprise.

"Remain here a few moments and I will inform Captain Lightfoot of your presence," said "the Mild Segar," smiling slightly at his surprise. Before the other could make any reply the sailor had disappeared into an adjoining apartment. He had full time to make his observations upon what he beheld around him. The apartment was evidently that of a man of taste and luxury. The walls were hung with fine paintings, and upon the table were two miniatures in lockets. He took up one of them. It was the portrait of a beautiful girl. He started when he looked upon it, and the quick color came to his cheeks.

"Is it possible? yet it cannot be. How should he have her likeness? But, if it is not hers, whose can it be? Who can so perfectly resemble Alice Ashley? I am confounded. The same brow and chestnut hair, the same hazel eyes and superb figure! It must be she! I will ask him how he came by it. I will look at the other!"

It was the miniature of a strikingly handsome young man in naval uniform. He gazed upon it for a few moments with the air of one studying a resemblance.

"I have somewhere seen a face like this, where I cannot tell. It seems familiar, and yet it is not. The likeness puzzles me. Who can I have seen that it looks like. Perhaps no one. But the more I gaze upon it, the more satisfied I am that the expression of that eye I have met before. How singular that I should have lighted upon two such miniatures here! Who can this Captain Lightfoot be! This is certainly the living image of the beautiful girl, who has had more influence over my destinies than any man living. It looks as I saw her last fourteen months ago. I am all curiosity to know who this Colombian captain can be!"

"You have your wish, sir," said a voice near him.

He turned quickly, and beheld before him the very counterpart and original of the miniature; save that instead of the uniform of the United States navy, he wore the richly laced coat of the Colombian service. He was a man not above six and twenty, with a symmetrical elegance of figure that at once arrested the eye. He was not more than five feet seven inches in height; but his air of haughty superiority gave him a tone more imposing than mere height could have conferred. His complexion was fair, with light locks on either cheek, and playing upon his glittering collar. The expression of his face was singularly daring and resolute. There was something in it to fear as well as to admire. He wore a chapeau, heavy with lace, that became him much, while it gave a martial tone to his shapely features. By his side was suspended a jewel-hilted sword, in a silver chased scabbard; and upon each of his shoulders was a massive epaulette. His laced coat was open in front sufficiently to display a ruffled bosom of the deepest lace, in the folds of which sparkled a diamond. Upon the little finger of his right hand was a large seal cornelian ring, the scarlet hue of the stone contrasting finely with the whiteness of his small hand.

The stranger noticed all these points at a glance, and then rested upon his face a look of close scrutiny. He thought he had seen him before; but a moment's reflection convinced him that it was his resemblance to the miniature only that he recognized.

"You desire to see Captain Lightfoot," he said in a quiet tone.

"Yes."

"Then be seated, sir. I am that person. Whom have I the honor of receiving?"

"If you please, I will for the present withhold my name," answered the young man with a look of embarrassment.

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"Just as you please. I will hear your business with me,"

"You command the Colombian schooner?"

"Yes."

"You wish to engage volunteers?"

"It is for this I put into Boston harbor. I have now completed my compliment of men. They are now making merry to-night here before going on board. It is their last frolic ashore. Perhaps you heard them as you came this way."

"Yes. I went in among them expecting to find you. I met, however, with a young man who styled himself 'The Mild Segar;' who seemed to be an odd compound of folly and good sense. It was through him I found you at last."

"Yes, he is a sort of agent of mine in enlisting the crew. Every man that enlists passes under his eye. He probes them; weighs them; guages and tries their calibre. If they answer his purpose he knows they answer mine. He is my right hand, sir. He prevents the necessity of my appearing in the business, as I don't care to be seen by my men till I am at sea. There is nothing like a little mystery sometimes."

"You seem to like it, sir, from the manner in which you live and act."

"Did you come hither to see how that was?" demanded the captain in a slight tone of suspicion. "I may have other reasons for wishing to keep secret. You are here and see me. You may be a spy or a friend. But it is not material. You can do me no injury, inasmuch as you are altogether, while here, in my power. Why have you sought this interview? You do not look like a man whose for tunes are so despairing that you would like to take up with a birth in my schooner; yet you have seen the sea."

"Yes, I have. If you will hear me I will briefly explain why I have sought you; for I find that you are the man I expected to find you."

"I am glad you are pleased. Let me hear what you have to say."

Thus speaking the Colombian Captain threw himself at his ease upon a lounge, and prepared to listen.

CHAPTER THIRD.

OUR HERO HEARS THE STORY OF THE COLOMBIAN CAPTAIN, AND THEN RELATES HIS OWN HISTORY IN RETURN.

The stranger, after remaining a few moments silent, as if undecided whether to make the captain the confidant of his communication, at length begun thus:

"My object in visiting you, sir, is to offer myself as a volunteer in the Colombian service. You look surprised; but it is my wish to enter on board your schooner, and sail with you on the expedition which is before you!"

"I am surprised, for your appearance is not that of a mere adventurer!"

"Yet I am an adventurer. Circumstances have recently transpired that render it necessary I should fly my country!"

"Ah!" ejaculated the captain, with the air of one who had received intelligence of a pleasing kind. "But do you

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suppose, sir," he added, with well feigned displeasure, "that the Colombian service is one which is so desperate that it must take outlaws into it?"

"I am not ignorant, captain, either of the nature of the service or of your own position in it!"

"What! How am I to understand you? Is this an insult?" cried the Colombian officer, starting up, his eyes flashing fire.

"No, not by any means," responded the other, calmly. "In a word, sir, I have information that the Colombian navy is composed of reckless adventurers. I have understood that the captain of 'The Wing of the Wind,' which is now lying in this harbor, was once an officer in the navy, and was broken for some offence of a grave nature!"

"You know me then. I demand who you are?"

"No, sir. I do not know you. But if you will be calm, I will be frank with you in all things. I will tell you my history and my wishes. You will find that I am not unfitted for your companionship, and I trust that we shall be friends when we better know each other!"

"You are a bold speaker!"

"I never yet feared any man, sir, that I am aware of. What I utter with my lips, I am ever ready to maintain with my hands!"

"I like you for that speech! Give me your hand! There, this grasp makes us friends. Now let me know something about you. But first, how did you hear that the captain of the schooner had once been in the navy? I was not aware that any one suspected me here!"

"I had been in search of you several hours before I went on board your vessel; for when I first tried to find you, I was told, by one of your men I met on the wharf, that you were not on board, but lodging at some house in town, he could not tell me which. I went to several places in search of you. At one, a tavern on the same street with this, I overheard two persons talking together. They were men-of-war's men; one, I think, a boatswain, the other a master's mate. I overheard your name "

"What name?" quickly demanded the captain.

"Lightfoot. The sound of the person's name for whom I was looking drew my attention. I listened:

"`They do say that her skipper is a young 'un,' said the boatswain, `and I believe it, if the man I had pointed out to me to-day by Blinker is he!"

"`Oh, that was on'y his sub a chap that ships his men for him,' answered the other. `But I'll tell you what, Jack, I've seen him myself!"

"`That's more than any o' his men can say,' responded the boatswain.

"`Well, that is as it may be. I was stan'in' on the stoop close by the Neptune, when I saw a young gentleman come out o' Blinker's in a blue frock-coat and white beaver. Ah, says I to my eye, I've seen your figur'head afore! So I looks sharp at him, and remembers him a luff on board the 'Pence, when I sailed in her. I know'd him at onct.'"

"`Well, who was he, Jack?" inquired the other.

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"`Why, you see, it was a luff what had a love for more money than came to him in a regular way through the purser's fingers. There wasn't an officer aboard after we left Callao, where all hands was paid in gold, what didn't lose some of it afore we got to Rio. It was plain there was a thief aboard. At least two thousand dollars in gold pieces had been stole from one or the other of the officers. So they made a fired muss about it, and after we dropped anchor in Rio, a general search was made. The bird was found. The same man I saw coming out of Blinker's was the chap!"

"`What did they do with him?' asked the other.

"`Why, for the credit o' the sarvice, after he had giv' it all up, they let him just quietly resign, coz it didn't look well to have an American officer court-martialed for stealing money. Well, he quit the service at Rio as dead as a herrin'. We left him there, and I han't seen him since, till to-day.'

"`And how do you know he is captain of the schooner?' demanded his friend.

"`Why, I shouldn't ha' known, but just as I was looking after him, wonderin' whose gold he found to line his pockets with now, I seed a man with the Colombian button, who was passing, touch him on the shoulder, and the two together walked back into Blinker's. Says I, I'll see what this is to come to, for I had nothing to do but look about me and get what fun was going. I went in ater 'em. They goes in back of the tap, and I, bold like, goes up to Blinker, and says I to One-eye, "That's the captain o' the schooner with the button, ant it?" "No," says he, "not he with the button, he's on'y a luff." "Then the other's the captain," says I. "Oh, no, not he," he stammered. "Well, if you have any interest in the Colombian service," says I, "just tell that officer with the button to have nothing to do with the white hat!" At this Blinker laughed and winked his one eye, and I then could have sworn he meant by it that he was the captain himself. So I put it hard to him, and at last, when he found I stuck to it, he made me swear to be silent, and then told me he was! So you see the Colombian service has much honor, Jack!"

"You report conversations with great accuracy, sir," said Captain Lightfoot, with a slight tone of irony. "Did you hear any more in my praise?"

"I heard nothing of moment, as they finished their glasses and rose to leave. But what I heard gave me sufficient knowledge of your true position, and led me to make a confidant of you, and unite my destiny with your's. You will pardon my speaking so plainly as I have done just now, but it is best we should understand one another. I am, as I said, an outlaw. I am flying from the laws of my native land. At this moment the officers of justice are in full cry in pursuit of me. I wish to join your vessel in the character of an officer. I have been two voyages to sea as a supercargo, during which I made myself a seaman and complete master of navigation. Will you accept of me and my services?"

"I do not know whether to trust you or not. I suspect you are a spy, to treat you plainly. I believe you have some motive deeper than meets my eye in coming to me. You do not look like a reckless adventurer. I am in want of another faithful lieutenant. The person I hoped to engage as my first officer has declined to-day. But I cannot engage with you, unless I know who you are, and why you seek this service. With reference to myself you have heard the truth. I was a gambler, and losses tempted me to take the gold of my fellow officers. I intended to restore it ere it should be missed. The idea of theft was degrading to my mind even in thought; for I have possessed high and honorable feelings. But gaming, like the poisonous Upas, tainted the whole moral atmosphere of my soul. It dulled the nice sense of honor which is the helm to every man's bosom. It caused me to be blind to the heinousness of my own act. I stole, and was detected, and became infamous. I could have destroyed myself, but love of life held my hand. I found myself on shore at Rio, a stranger, moneyless, friendless, degraded. Every man knew my story, and everywhere the finger of scorn was pointed at me. I was glad to take refuge on board the first vessel that offered. I shipped as a common sailor in a Brazillian brig, bound to Pernambuco. After various adventures I found myself in Colombia. The Revolution was just commencing. The enemy had the day before my arrival, taken possession of their only frigate and anchored her outside of the bar a league from the town. I

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conceived the idea of getting possession of her. I asked of the Commandant a boat and thirty-five volunteers. I obtained them. Fortune favored me. I boarded the frigate, cut her cables, made sail on her, and took her back into port and safely anchored her under the guns of the fortress. For this act I was made a Captain in the Colombian navy, and the charge of the frigate given to me; being in one day promoted from a mere adventurer, a common sailor, to rank, consideration and influence. I was successful in several subsequent engagements, till my pilot lost my frigate, by grounding her upon a ledge. To prevent the enemy from getting possession of her, I set fire to her and burned her to the water's edge.

"I was then commissioned to visit the United States, and purchase four vessels for the service. Three of them have already gone out, and the fourth lies now in the harbor. She was built at Bath, on the Kennebec, where the finest ships in the world are now constructed. I have shipped all my men, and to-morrow night, or the next day, I shall weigh, and put to sea. Now you know all about me. You see why I do not care to appear in public. In Colombia I am a man of honor, here I am infamous! Now what have you to unfold touching yourself. It is best, if we sail together, that we know one another!"

"I am gratified to find that you are not altogether the reckless and unprincipled person, that the conversation which I overheard, led me to suspect. Nevertheless, I was not and am not in a situation to choose. Were you anything less than a pirate, I must have the refuge and security your vessel can give me!"

"And suppose I were a pirate?" asked the other with a smile.

"Our interview would of course end here!" responded the young man promptly, "I am ready to enter the Colombian service, but I am not a buccanier!"

"Nor am I; I did but venture the question."

"It was an unnecessary one."

"You say you have fled from justice to me!"

"Yes, but I am not a criminal in my own eyes. What I have done was an act of irresistible necessity. I do not feel myself guilty or degraded. I grieve at it, but my soul is free from stain!"

"Then why do you fly? Nay, why do you call yourself an outlaw? You seem to use words without meaning!"

"Hear my story, and then judge," said the young man, bitterly. "I am an only son. My father was a merchant in this city, of wealth and consideration. I loved him with the strongest filial affection. From my youth he indulged me in every wish of my heart. When I became of sufficient age, he took me into his counting-room, after having by a thorough mercantile education, fitted me for its duties. Here I soon became familiar with all his business, and was his chief confidant in his financial operations. My father was a very proud and sensitive man. He feared the whispers of the world more than the voice of God. To him all human honor lay in commercial integrity. To fail to meet a note was in his mind irreparable dishonor. A breath against his credit would have destroyed his peace and driven him to madness.

"He was rich, and prosperous. He owned ships and houses. Wealth and honors crowded thick upon him. But when the sun gains the meridian he begins to go downward. So it is with men. So it was with my father. His freighted ships came into port no more. Fires laid waste his houses in the city. Stocks fell and became worthless. Yet, withal, to my surprise, my father's business remained firm. His notes were duly met, his engagements all punctually fulfilled. How this was done I knew not at the time. He withdrew his confidence from me. He never smiled. He was much alone. He seemed wretched, yet tried to conceal his feelings from me. He sent ships to sea again, he built houses, he purchased stocks. I was amazed, but at length the truth was revealed. My father had

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sustained himself, saved his `honor' as a merchant, by blasting his honor as a man. He had committed enormous forgeries to save his house from `failing,' a word more terrible to a merchant's ears than death!"

"How did you learn this fact?" asked the Colombian Captain, who had listened with deep interest to the impassioned, rapid narrative which his visiter gave of his father's acts.

"From his own lips. The crisis was reached beyond which there could be no further advance. The accumulated forgeries he had committed hung over him like a full-charged cloud, ready to pour their fury upon his head. He told me all that he had done. He told that twelve hours would place him in the eyes of the world a criminal. He then said he had not the courage to live and meet the stroke he had levelled at him-self, and should take his life that night by his own hands!"

Here the young man paused, overcome by the intensity of his emotions. The Colombian officer, in the meanwhile, rose and lighting a segar at a lamp upon the mantel, resumed his seat and calmly waited for his guest to proceed in his narrative.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

IN WHICH THE HERO CONTINUES HIS NARRATIVE, AND UNFOLDS TO THE CAPTAIN THE WHOLE OF THE HISTORY OF HIS CRIME.

THE young man, after a short interval of silence, then resumed his history:

"The communication, made me by my father, at first overwhelmed me. I felt, however, the necessity of firmness and self-possession. As calmly as I could, I inquired of him a detail of the facts. I learned from him that the forgeries amounted to no less than sixty-four thousand dollars, and that they were all uttered in the name of one gentleman, a very rich merchant, who had three years before retired from business, and who was my father's personal friend. It was my father's intimacy with him, indeed, that afforded him the facilities of which he had so madly availed himself.

"Having heard all that he had to say, I deliberated as to the course to be pursued; not only for the preservation of my father's good name before the world, on which mine also hung suspended, but for the safety of his life; for he was firmly bent on self-destruction; talking of it with desperate calmness. At length I made up my mind. I entreated my father to give me six hours to attempt to save him. He promised it to me. I left him, and hastened to the residence of the gentleman whose name my misguided parent had made such criminal use of. It was about ten o'clock at night. I was admitted after sending in my name. I found him in his dressing gown and slippers just about retiring to bed. He received me kindly; for I had always been a favorite with him, but with a look of surprise and inquiry. After a few moments conversation upon indifferent subjects, during which I was torturing my mind for some mode to break the painful subject to him, so as not in the outset to alarm his fears and rouse his anger. Every thing, I felt, depended on getting at his kindlier feelings in the outset.

"`You seem to have something on your mind,' he said, kindly. `Speak freely.'

"I then began to unfold to him my father's acts. I spoke of him first as a merchant of probity and honor. I alluded to his prosperity and influence. I then reverted to his losses and his disappointments. I then boldly told him how that, tempted in an evil hour, he had used a name fraudulently, and how that, from once using it, he had taken it many times; and that, on the faith and probity of that name, he had the last two years sustained himself in business, and maintained outwardly unimpeached his mercantile honor. I concluded by saying that a crisis had arrived when exposure must follow, and that my father had resolved to take his own life rather than endure the scorn and infamy that awaited him.

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" `And now, sir,' I added, `I have come here to throw myself and my poor father upon your mercy. You alone can save him!'

" `I! How? What can I do?' he cried, after his first emotions of surprise had passed.

" `You only can do it. It is your name, sir, he has forged;' I answered as firmly as I could articulate.

" `My name!' he exclaimed, turning as pale as ashes; and then instantly becoming the hue of crimson, while his eyes flashed fire.

" `Yes, sir,' I answered. `I repeat it with grief and shame. There is no alternative but your mercy. To-morrow, as the bank, where you deposit, winds up its concerns, and you, of course, transfer your funds to another, the discovery of the large deficiency must of necessity be made known to you. Sir,' I cried, `you can save my father's honor and his life. Spare his grey hairs! Spare me the ignominy that I must inherit from him if he is exposed.'

" `Silence, young man,' he commanded sternly. `You plead to me in vain in your guilty father's behalf. He has done what can never be forgiven. He has taken advantage of my friendship and confidence to rob me. He has wormed out of me the knowledge of all my money affairs to avail himself of it in uttering forged paper with my name. I dare say my credit and good name has suffered through this public use of it. It has been hawked in the streets for sale I have no doubt. You are as guilty as he is. You must have known of it all; and now, when judgment knocks at the door, you fly to me for protection from the punishment due to your crimes. Not a word. Your father has placed himself beyond the pale of my pity or mercy.'

"As he spoke he became so excited that he rose and paced the room violently. All at once he seized the bell-handle; I divined his purpose, and springing forward arrested his hand.

" `Sir, do not, I implore you, take the step you meditate! Do not deliver my father up into the hands of the law, or what is worse, drive him to self-murder.'

" `Do you dare to prevent me from ringing my own bell in my own house?' he demanded. `Let go my hand, sirrah!'

" `Not until you promise that you will spare my father,' I cried, in desperate grief. `I assure you he is penitent. If you will spare him, I will devote my life to restoring to the bank that he has taken! You lose it not, sir! The bank is the sufferer; why should you seek revenge?'

" `I am the sufferer in this free use of my name a name that never yet had a stain upon it. No, sir, your father must drink the cup he has mixed; and if you are like guilty with him, you must drink it also! Stand aside.'

" `What would you do?' I asked, pale and trembling with resentment.

" `I would call my servants, first to detain you as a partner in guilt with your base father, and then to despatch officers to secure him, ere he escapes earthly justice by suicide!'

" `Then,' cried I fiercely, (for grief, despair, and a hundred tumultuous feelings had almost maddened me,) `then you shall not have your revengeful desire! My father shall not perish, in honor, in body and in soul, to gratify your resentment!'

"As I spoke, I took a knife from my pocket, and severing the bellcord high above his reach, cast it at his feet. I then stood before him with an air of haughty defiance. He gazed upon me for a moment, as if he could not believe his own senses; and then springing upon me, grasped me by the throat. He was a strong, athletic man, though

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upwards of fifty-five. His attack was so sudden, that I was hurled to the ground before I could present any resistance. He was placing his knee upon my breast, when by a powerful effort, I cast him off, and leaped to my feet. He rose with me. A desperate struggle took place, he endeavoring to secure my arms, I making every exertion to release myself, and baffle his intentions. A second time he grasped my throat. It was the grasp of a vice. I grew dizzy, I felt my powers failing. My knife was still open in my hand.

"`Release me,' I gasped, `or I will kill you!'

"He replied by pressing my throat more closely with his clenched hand. I struck the knife into his bosom, and with a cry of pain and terror, he let go his hold, staggered back, and would have fallen headlong to the floor, but for my arm. I caught him and arrested his fall. The sight of the flowing blood filled me with horror and agony inconceivable only to the murderer, who beholds his victim dying beneath his hand. I placed him upon a sofa, and would have staunched the blood, forgetful of my own danger; for voices were at the door, and it was shaken by heavy blows. The noise of the struggle had brought the household to the scene. But the door was locked. I had turned the key as soon as I had cut the bell-rope, to prevent him from opening and giving the alarm. The loud appeals and knocks for admission, recalled me to a lively sense of my own danger. I laid my hand upon the heart. It seemed to be still. I removed it to the brow. It was cold and clammy. I felt I could do no more that death had affixed upon the mortal clay his seal! A window was near me. I threw it up, and sprung forth heedless where I alighted. I reached the street, and my father's house. I found him walking his chamber, awaiting my return. I must have presented before his eyes a fearful spectacle with my wild eye, pale face, and disordered, bloodstained garb, for he shrieked when I entered, and fled from me! I addressed him in a voice that did not sound to my ears like my own. I told him what I had done! all I had done. I then laughed loud and merrily, and said to him that he might now live and be happy, for his accuser was no more.

"My father regarded me when I had done speaking, with a look that will never be forgotten by me while life lasts. It was a look of stony despair, of horror, guilt and remorse. He spoke not, he moved neither muscle nor eye-lid. The color of the life blood went out from his countenance as sunlight flies before a shadow. He gazed and gazed on, and I stood transfixed, returning his look with freezing veins. As I looked the eye became more and more stony, and the cheek and forehead more and more livid, the whole frame of the man more and more rigid and immovable. I stood beholding him with dread and fear creeping upon my soul, as if I were gazing upon one up-risen from among buried dead. At length I could endure the sight no longer. I approached him and took his hand in mine. It fell from my grasp powerless, nerveless. It was cold as a hand of marble. It was a dead man's hand! My father had died there where he stood! Oh, what a fearful spectacle for mortal eyes, and the eyes of a son! I but I will not dwell upon it! I did not approach him again, I dared not! I fled from the room, leaving the horrible statue standing there! I locked the door behind me, and fled from the house. Whither I went, I have no distinct recollection. I have some faint idea that I haunted the outside of the house of the murdered merchant, like a restless ghost; I remember being upon the Common, and gazing upon the open skies and far off stars with a feeling of despair, that the quiet of the heavens always deepens in the bosoms of the wretched. At dawn I retraced my steps to my father's house. I entered, and passing to my room, threw myself upon my bed and slept. I awoke at noon. A noise at the street door awaked me. I looked out of the window, and saw the officers of justice! I knew they had come to apprehend me for the murder, for I remembered that I had left my hat in the room where I had struggled with the merchant. My first impulse was to deliver myself up. My next was a desire of self-preservation! I felt I was not a murderer in my heart. I felt I was not so guilty as the world would make me! I shrunk from being arraigned as a criminal. I threw on my cloak and cap I took gold from my desk, and then by a private way escaped from the house. I sought an obscure retreat. Here I had time to deliberate and decide upon some course of action for the future though dark, full dark seemed all the future to me, and scarcely worth the trouble of making any resolutions about. I at length recollected your vessel, and that as it would sail soon, it would afford me an asylum; and I reflected that I might in another land find life, which I now so loathed, endurable. I therefore sought you out; and as night set in, I visited your schooner under a disguise that sufficiently protected me. I have found you here! You now know why I have sought you. It remains now for you to say whether you will give me a position in your vessel or not!"

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"This is certainly a very extraordinary story," said the Colombian officer, who had listened throughout with the most absorbed attention. "You are in truth to be commiserated. I am your friend in your present strait, and will give you the berth you desire. I should, however, recommend you to keep very close. Your cloak and cap are not sufficient safe-guard. They may hide your features, but the very fact of hiding them will expose you to suspicion in the minds of the vigilant police. If men could wear veils like the other sex, then you might walk the streets at all hours in perfect security; but as this fashion is, unfortunately for us, not in vogue, you had best either remain here until I sail, or else on board the schooner!"

"I will remain here, as the schooner may be searched."

"That is likely, as our Colombian vessels are not much in credit here. These rooms are at your service. Keep them closely. Tomorrow I shall have my furniture removed again on board ship, and take you on board at the same time. What you see here is a part of my cabin furnishing, which I had brought on shore to make my quarters feel home-like! You see I am somewhat addicted to luxurious comfort. I will get you to-morrow the uniform the officer whose place you take was to have. I will also pick up what news I hear that may interest yourself, touching this unfortunate affair. Now, if you will give me your name, my dear friend?"

"Field Falcon! It is in every man's mouth ere now as that of a murderer," added the young man, bitterly.

"You did the act fairly in self-defence. Let that comfort you. Now take a segar. It is a universal soother! We will smoke and talk of pleasanter things."

Thus speaking, he handed Falcon a segar, but instead of lighting it he took up the miniature and began to regard it closely.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

CONTAINING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE TWO HEROES IN THEIR MORE SOCIAL RELATION; WITH SOME HINTS AT A RIVALRY. THE WING OF THE WIND TAKES HER DEPARTURE SOMEWHAT ABRUPTLY.

"THAT miniature seems to fix your attention, Mr. Falcon! Have you seen any one that it resembles?" asked Lightfoot, after surveying him for a few moments in silence.

"I was about to ask you for whom it was taken?" asked Falcon, earnestly looking up.

"A fair girl whom I once loved, but who has cast me off when the rest of the world did!"

"It cannot be that you have ever known and loved Alice Ashley?" said Field, with a slight tremor of the lip, and a darkening expression in his eyes.

Lightfoot made no reply. He did not change a muscle of his well-schooled features. He saw at a glance that Falcon had known and he suspected had loved the original. His policy dictated to him secrecy; for if his suspicions were true, his new officer and himself would on the instant be foes instead of friends. He wished also to draw his secret from him. At length he said in a light way:

"Who is Alice Ashley? Do you know a person of that name that this resembles?"

"She is a fair maiden whom I have long felt a strong attachment to. This miniature is a wondrous likeness of her. Yet it may be mere accident nay, it must be!"

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"The faces of the beautiful have more or less similitude to one another. The picture is a little pastime of my leisure hours, and taken from memory. You will excuse me if I withhold the name!"

"I have no curiosity," answered Field, not a little relieved at the removal of his suspicions.

"Who is Miss Ashley? It seems to me I have heard the name!"

"She is the daughter of an eminent lawyer and judge, who now resides not far from New Haven in a very elegant villa which he has recently erected there. He formerly resided in Boston, where he acquired his fortune and honors. It was here I met with her, and formed for her a very strong attachment. But some freak of the heart, I know not from what cause, if any, she all at once grew cold towards me. In vain I asked her the reason of her altered manner in vain I solicited her forgiveness if I had given her offence. Her only reply was that I had not offended her. Her manner chilled me, and I at length ceased to seek her presence, in which I only found myself wretched from her cold indifference. Thus we gradually grew estranged, and then she removed to her father's new abode on the Sound, and I have not since beheld her. This miniature is a striking resemblance to her; and when I first took it up, I was not a little moved, for I suspected I had discovered the secret of her estrangement to me!"

"I should like very much to see one who is so like this picture," answered Lightfoot, carelessly. "But you will now excuse me. I have to see about getting my men aboard. Why do you regard me so closely? Do you see any likeness in me to any of your friends?" inquired the captain, with a smile.

"I at first thought, when you entered, that it was to the miniature of yourself I had been looking at I discovered the familiar look which puzzled me; but now I am satisfied that it is to the young seaman, he who styled himself so facetiously 'The Mild Segar!' Your air, voice and manner are his!"

"They ought to be, for I and 'The Mild Segar' are one and the same person!"

"Then the riddle is solved. I recognise it to be so now very clearly; but your different costume deceived me, as well as your superior tone of address. This is an odd conceit!"

"I have assumed the character in which you first beheld me to be enabled to choose and pick my own crew. I wished to ship them myself, and I could not effect my object in my known rank as captain; and besides I did not care to be known openly, for I have too much pride to meet men who have known me as an officer, and see and feel their looks of contempt!"

"Then none of your crew are aware that 'Mild Segar' is their captain?"

"Not one of them. They only look upon me as a merry, reckless rogue, hail-fellow with them, and in full confidence with 'the captain.' When I get on board and off soundings, they will then know who I am!"

"Won't the discovery weaken your authority?"

"On the contrary it will strengthen it. To a sailor no officer is more feared and respected than the one with whom they may have been placed, by accident, for a time on a free and familiar footing. Besides I know all their characters and peccadilloes, which they have freely shown me, and they will feel that I *know* them that I possess a knowledge which is power! I must now go and see the lads I left at their revels, and have them packed away to-night ready for being sent on board in the morning. Blinker will see that they are safely cared for. He is my confidant, and an invaluable aid he is to me in getting my crew. He was once a man-o'-war's man, and I did him a service, in saving his back from the cat, that he has never forgotten. He is a great villain, but is to me as faithful as a hound. Now, good night, for a time. Here is a sofa, if you care to seek forgetfulness of the exciting events of the day in sleep!"

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With these words he left the room, and shortly reappearing in his costume of a sailor, returned to the subterranean hall he had left an hour before. Faulcon cast himself upon the sofa, but not to sleep. His mind was active. His thoughts were painful and deeply agitated. His memory run over rapidly the events of the day. He beheld again the murdered merchant lying at his feet, whom he tried to convince himself he had slain in self-defence; and again the horrible form of his ghostly father stood before his appalled gaze. He found himself all at once by a sudden stroke the son of a forger and a murderer! All his prospects in life were blasted as if by lightning. In one day he had become an outlaw a felon hunted by the officers of justice! He groaned in despair. Death seemed to him a relief from his condition of anguish. He sprung to his feet with a cry of despair and wild grief. He paced the room in distress of mind inconceivable by any one less wretched than he was. At length, wearied with this intense mental excitement, he once more threw his feverish frame upon the sofa, and by-and-bye slept.

He was awaked in the morning by the hand of the captain laid with a light touch upon his arm.

"Come, my friend, it is time we were abroad ship. I have ordered a coach, in which you will reach the pier in security. I have had news this morning, which determines me to get under-weight with the first tide, which will be by twelve o'clock. My men are all on board, and, as you see, all my furniture, save the sofa you lie on, which I shall leave behind!"

Faulcon rose to his feet. The day was far advanced. He stood a few seconds inert and lost. But a moment's reflection brought back to his wretched mind all the scenes of the day before, and reminded him that he was an outlaw. He shuddered at the recollection, and became pale.

"You are too sensitive, man. Take this tumbler of brandy. You need it to quiet your nerves! What! you never drink strong waters! Then so much the better. I wish I had never learned; but now I can't do without them!"

"I shall be calmer soon. Is the coach ready?"

"Yes!"

"Then I am!" He passed his hand two or three times across his brow, as if under strong mental suffering, and then staggered towards the door. He felt his weakness, and making an effort to control his feelings, succeeded in doing so. He walked to the coach with a firm step.

"Keep your face hid, Faulcon!" said the captain, warningly.

"Yes, I quite forgot the necessity of disguising myself," answered the wretched young man; wretched not only because he had, as believed, slain a fellow being, but from having lost name and character, both of which had been so dear to him.

They entered the carriage together, and drove to the dock. Here they alighted. Lightfoot was dressed as a citizen, in a blue coat and white waist; while Faulcon was wrapped in his cloak with his cloth cap drawn down over his eyes. The cutter from the schooner was in waiting, with a coxswain and four men at their oars. As Faulcon stepped into the boat, and Lightfoot prepared to follow, with the words "shove off," upon his lips, a man touched his arm. He turned to see who it was, and beheld a stout person in a thick box coat, and carrying a large heavy cane.

"Who is the gentleman in the boat?" asked the man with a certain bold, inquisitive air.

"He is my friend an invalid!"

"I should like to see his face!"

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"You would, hey?" answered Lightfoot, giving the boat a strong push with his foot, and leaping into it. "Let fall, and give way, men! Lively, lively?" he called.

The oarsmen bent to their oars with a good will, and impelled the cutter many fathoms from the stairs. The man whom he had eluded, and who was an officer of the police, immediately shouted for a boat to pursue, at the same time calling on the persons around to embark with him, and aid in the capture of a murderer; for he said that the man in the cloak must be Faulcon, and no one else.

The officer was delayed full five minutes before he could obtain and man a boat, when he put off with three other police officers, who had come to his aid. Lightfoot, when within hailing distance of the schooner, stood up in the stern of the boat, and gave orders to his lieutenant on board, to loose the topsails and jib, and slip the cable without delay. When he reached the gangway, part of the men were already aloft, casting the sails loose from the yards, and others had manned the jib-halyards. Lightfoot sprung upon deck, and with his voice, cheered the men to active exertions. The police-boat in the meanwhile, pulled steadily for the schooner, and coming near, hailed.

"What do you desire?" answered Lightfoot, looking over the quarter railing.

"The surrender of the man in the cloak, who is a murderer!"

"Come and take him; but I caution you beforehand, for my men are about to throw cold shot over the side, and if any of them should stave the bottom of your boat through, you must not blame me!"

"You are no better than a pirate," answered the police officer with terrible anger. "If I can't get my man, I know who can! In less than half an hour you shall have a brig-of-war after you!"

"Give my compliments to her commander," responded Lightfoot, gaily, "and tell him I should like to have him come and dine with me if he can catch me!"

The police officer, after replying by a round volley of oaths, gave orders to his men to pull in the direction of the Charlestown Navy Yard, where rode at anchor the gun-brig Boxer, all ready for sea.

"This fellow will give us trouble, after all. You see now, Mr. Faulcon, I am your friend. I could have given you up. I must lose my cable and anchor to save you now. I may have to risk a battle also, for the Boxer is a fast sailer as the wind now is, NN. W. But you need not apprehend being taken. My beautiful Wing of the Wind will out-sail any thing that floats. There, we are in motion. See the top-sails begin to feel the wind, and swell like balloons! Hear the singing about her bows, and the gurgle under her counter. We have steerage way on her now, and can laugh at the Boxer!"

The police-boat pulled swiftly towards the gun-brig. Her course was watched with interest by the Colombian captain and Faulcon. They saw her reach the vessel and board her. In a few seconds afterwards, the shrill piping of the boatswain's whistle broke upon their ears across the water. The top-sails in a few moments opened to the breeze, and in ten minutes the brig-of-war was standing on after the schooner with top-gallantsails set.

The Wing of the Wind had, however, got down as far as the Castle, when the Boxer got under-weigh, and had full two miles the advantage of her. The schooner passed the Castle under full sail, with the Colombian flag flying, and in half an hour after slipping her cable, was below the islands, and lightly dancing to the undulations of the ocean billows. The brig cracked on after her with royals aloft, and and studden-sails abeam, before a seven-knot nor-wester, and when last visible, outside "the Lower Light," seemed to be fast gaining on the chase.

PART SECOND. AT SEA.

"Once more upon the sea, Our stately vessel bounds away."

CHAPTER SIXTH.

IT TAKES UP THE NARRATIVE AFTER A YEAR'S ELAPSE IN OTHER SEAS, AND SHOWS WHAT EVENTS HAVE TRANSPIRED, WITH THEIR BEARING UPON THE PROGRESS OF THE STORY.

A YEAR has passed away, checquered with varied and exciting scenes, since the events transpired which are recorded in the preceding chapters of this tale. The schooner had effectually baffled the pursuing gun-brig by her superior sailing, and before night had left her so far astern as to show only her topsails above the horizon. The ensuing morning, the "Wing of the Wind" had before her and around her only the wide blue ocean and the arching skies. She steered a southerly course for many days, and after a quick passage reached her destination. Here the captain once more mingled in the strife of battle, and gained many signal victories. Faulcon, who soon became a skilful sailor, was with him in all his battles as his first lieutenant, and contributed not a little, by his prowess, in achieving the brilliant successes that distinguished the cruises of "The Wing of the Wind."

At length the war ended, and the navy was ordered to be laid up. On the day this command was issued, Lightfoot returned to port with a valuable prize. The authorities went on board to take possession, when he demanded to be paid for his services and those of his crew during the war.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have long and faithfully served you in your struggle for independence. You have achieved it. I have asked you for none of the pay due me. You owe me more than twenty thousand dollars. Pay me and I will surrender my prize. Refuse, and I shall appropriate its specie to my own use!"

The agents of the constitutional government, surprised at this bold position assumed by the American adventurer, returned to the shore and made their report. It was received by the authorities with indignation, and a message was at once despatched to the rebellious captain, at once to surrender his prize and the command of his schooner, and appear before them on shore, or he should be fired into from the batteries, within point blank shot of which the schooner and her prize lay.

Lightfoot smiled scornfully at this summons, and ordering the messenger to be put in irons, commanded his men to proceed and convey the specie, of which there were twenty-one kegs in silver Spanish pesos, from the prize into the schooner. While this was doing, he gave orders to have everything in readiness to slip to sea at a moment's notice.

The detention of their messenger led the authorities to suspect some foul play, and taking a position upon the battlements of the fortress, where they could see down into the vessels, they were enabled, by the aid of spy-glasses, to comprehend all that was going forward.

"They seem to be watching us closely, Faulcon," said Lightfoot, after regarding them a few moments. "Their guns will soon begin to bark!"

"You are playing a bold part, Lightfoot," answered Faulcon, gravely. "I am not desirous of bringing their fire upon us, or engaging in a quarrel with the government. We shall lose all our laurels and honors acquired the past year. I am inclined to pacific measures. The government will pay you in good time. Let us at once yield, and place affairs on their former amicable footing!"

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"I am in no humor to be insulted and dictated to by these proud and vain Colombian patriots. They make us their tools, and then cast us off when the war has ended. If I surrender the prize, I shall next have to surrender the schooner. I shall be turned ashore without vessel or money, and have my way to make up again into the world. No, Faulcon, while we have a deck beneath our feet let us hold it. It is my intention, as soon as the last keg of dollars is placed in the schooner, to set the crew of prisoners ashore in their own boats, then weigh anchor and run away with the schooner, as a part of the debt due to me!"

"You will at once place yourself in the position of a pirate! The government will proclaim you such to the world!"

"Let it! What is in a name. It will not make me a pirate unless I choose to capture under the flag!"

"I am not satisfied with this course you contemplate. If you are going to leave the harbor, I will resign my rank and quit the schooner!"

"I will not accept it, my dear fellow. You are too sensitive in little points. But hear that! We have no time to discuss the matter now. Wait till we get into blue water!"

As he spoke, a shot, the flash of which had been seen by Lightfoot, who had been all the while closely watching the battery, whizzed above their heads, and buried itself in the main-mast of the Spanish ship, that lay alongside of the Wing of the Wind. As the anchor was already hove short, it was soon free from the bottom, while as if by magic, the schooner was enveloped in a cloud of canvass. The lashings which confined her to her prize, were at the same instant severed, and gracefully doubling her bows, she flung a flowing sheet broad to the wind, and glided out from the harbor. The fire of the batteries was tremendous. The shot flew thickly around her, and passed through her sails, but she held steadily on her course without firing a gun.

"They are poor marksmen, and have bad powder, these Colombians," said Lightfoot, laughing: "well, they can't say but they have done their best to stop me. That last shot fell short a hundred fathom; they can't do any thing more. We have fairly escaped them. I fear that slow match, Westwood," he added, turning to his second lieutenant, "must have gone out. Are you sure you left it alight?"

"Yes," answered the officer, "and laid the train with my own hand!"

"Yes, there rises the smoke through her hatches. See the flame leap up after it. Now, my good friends ashore, you have not only lost your beautiful Wing of the Wind, your Ala del Viento, but the Spanish prize-ship!"

While he was speaking, the prize from which they were about a mile distant, became enveloped in smoke and flames. Red tongues of fire climbed the rigging, and entwined themselves about the yards, and gaining the main-royal mast-head, leaped fiercely into the sky like serpents. Several boats which had put off from the shore on the first appearance of the smoke issuing from the hold, now lay at a distance, the occupants appalled and gazing upon the work of ruin they could no longer hope to arrest.

Suddenly the flames were put out by dense volumes of black smoke that rolled upward from the deck, like clouds from the crater of a volcano. It was followed by a loud report like the explosion of a thunder-bolt, and flaming spars and fiery fragments in hosts, mingled with showers of spars and burning cinders, were discharged hundreds of feet into the air. The sound of the falling missiles fell upon the ears of those on board the schooner like the rushing noise of a hurricane sweeping along the sea. Then all was still. A huge murkey wreath of brown smoke floating slowly away from the scene, casting beneath upon the water a shadow like night, alone remained as a memento of that work of destruction. Where the ship had a few moments before rode proudly in all the bravery of her towering masts, was only the waveless surface of the harbor dotted here and there by a charred fragment of the wreck of fire.

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The faces of all on board the schooner were made grave by the sublimity of the scene they had witnessed. Lightfoot was silent and thoughtful for several moments afterwards; for the spectacle of a noble structure falling into ruin, fills the soul of the most inconsiderate with sadness it so startling and eloquently points human nature to its own end.

"That was a brave and yet melancholy sight," said Lightfoot, at length speaking and addressing his lieutenant.

"Yes, and I think the Colombians should thank you for getting up for them such a grand exhibition of fire-works," answered Westwood.

"They would have been better satisfied, doubtless, if it had been in the night," answered Lightfoot in a gay tone. "But let it pass. We are once more upon the open sea, and this time in a vessel of our own, that owes no allegiance to any flag!"

"Do you douse the Colombian?"

"I have hardly decided whether to keep it flying where it is, or take some fancy flag of my own."

"But what is to be done with Mr. Faulcon, sir?" inquired Westwood in an under tone. "He never will consent to sail with you under a free flag!"

"I will look after him. I command my own vessel. I shall talk with him by-and-by, after he gets a little calmed down. No, as you say, he is rather too particular, especially since he heard not long ago, that the merchant whom he believed he had murdered, was not dead, but had recovered from his wounds. This news at once made a new man of him!"

"Yes, I saw it did plainly. He is as cheerful now as he was before gloomy! Well, it is natural a man should feel better when he finds he is not a murderer after all!"

"Yes, and this knowledge has made Faulcon too virtuous for me!"

"You had better have let him gone ashore when he wished to!"

"It was because he wished to, that I would not let him. It vexed me to see him show a feather so much higher than mine. Besides, I think I can prevail on him to remain with me. He is a good officer, and has the bravery of a lion. He is too valuable a person for me to part with easily!"

"Well, you may succeed, but I doubt it. What are you to do with this Spanish gentleman and his beautiful daughter in the cabin?"

"I hardly know. But that does not concern you. I shall look after my prisoners!"

"It is likely the old man would ransom himself at a round price!"

"I shall see to him, Lieutenant Westwood. Attend to the duties of the ship!"

The lieutenant went forward with the careless air of a good-natured bluff rogue, who cared no more for sharp words than for a sharp nor-wester, while Lightfoot, after looking around and taking a glance at the compass, and giving an order or two, descended into the cabin. He opened the door of a state-room on the starboard side, in which sat Faulcon upon a chest, and heavily ironed.

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Before explaining this circumstance, we will return again to the moment when the schooner was getting underweigh to run from the harbor, and when Faulcon refused to remain on board and share in her piratical departure. Having tendered his resignation, which Lightfoot refused to accept, Faulcon was about to reply and repeat his resolution not to stay on board, when the firing from the battery called Lightfoot's attention. Faulcon, without a word to him, sprung into the stern boat, and began to let it down at one end, while a man whom he called to sprung to the other fall. The creaking of the davit-blocks caught the ear of the captain, who immediately discovered the attempted flight of his first officer. With an eye that literally blazed with anger, he sprung aft to the taffrail, and leveling a pistol at the head of the seaman at the bow fall, he ordered him on peril of his life to hoist again. At the same moment he directed three or four men who were near to spring into the boat and arrest Faulcon.

The boat had by this time descended within reach of the water, and as Faulcon stood in the stern, letting the rope glide through his hands, he saw suddenly appear at the cabin windows, which he was so near that he could both touch them and look into them, a young and wondrously beautiful maiden, who had been taken prisoner in the Spanish ship, and whom, with her father, Lightfoot had placed, after the capture, in his own cabin. Her face expressed alarm and eager solicitude. It spoke what she wished of him more eloquently than these few words which she uttered in a low thrilling tone:

"Oh, sir, if you are going to the land, leave me not! You only have been kind to me. Save me and my father!"

"I will not leave you! I will remain for your protection," answered Faulcon, in the same under tone. "I thank you, lady, for reminding me of my duty!"

"Thanks, noble sir! I overheard your words on deck, and I trembled for my fate, and for my father, should you depart!"

"Be courageous, and trust in me," he answered, firmly. Then raising his voice, he answered Lightfoot, as the men were reluctantly (for Faulcon was a favorite with the men) descending the fall to obey his order,

"Do not take the trouble to come down after me, my lads. I find I cannot escape, and I surrender myself prisoner!"

"Hoist away the boat with him!" cried Lightfoot to the men, as they alighted in the bottom. "Well, sir, you did not succeed, and by-and-bye you will thank me that you did not," he said to Faulcon, as he stepped from the boat on deck; "but I cannot trust you till we get in blue water. You are of too much value to me, my dear Faulcon, to let you get off in this way. So you must pardon me if I take care that you are kept secure until we get off too far for you to think of swimming to the land. Bring irons this way, Westwood, and let Mr. Faulcon try the bracelets for a few hours!"

All this was said in a tone of ironical pleasantry, underneath which lay bitter feelings of hostility.

The young officer quietly suffered himself to be ironed, and then being conducted below, was secured in his state-room. This treatment drew from him no other emotion than contempt for its author, and a certain feeling of satisfaction that by remaining he had it in his power to become the protector of a lovely girl, who had appealed to him with looks and words too eloquent for him to resist. In the capture of the Spanish ship he had saved her from the rude and free license of such a scene of lawless excitement by his own personal influence, and during the three days she and her father had been in the schooner, his protection had been her safeguard. He felt deeply interested in her, though not with that deep feeling which has its origin in the heart. But now that she had thrown herself upon his protection, as the only arm upon which she could lean, now that she was in the power of a man who had cast off allegiance to all government, he felt awakened towards her in his bosom an emotion kindred to love.

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"I will save her or die with her," was his internal resolve, while he was gazing upon her beautiful face, as she tearfully implored him not to leave her.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

HOW THE WING OF THE WIND SAILS FOR CUBA, WITH OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE STORY. THE HEROINE.

As the captain of the schooner opened the door of the state-room, Faulcon raised his eye to his, and slightly moved his lip with an expression of defiance.

"My dear Field," said Lightfoot, assuming a frank, friendly tone, "I am sorry to have been compelled to resort to this course to keep you on board. Come, let us be friends. Let me remove your irons myself. There is no need of a quarrel between us!"

"I submit to greater power than any I command," answered Faulcon "I am willing to remain on board until you reach some port. I shall then expect you to let me quit your vessel. You can have no motive in having me on board, so long as I positively refuse to act with you!"

"What objection have you?" asked Lightfoot, with a slight frown, as he cast the manacles he had removed upon the floor of the cabin; "what is your objection to remaining with me? I still sail under the same flag which has for a twelve-month floated above your head!"

"I do not object to sailing under the Colombian flag, when honorably used. You have severed your allegiance to the government, and have attached yourself to no other. You will be pronounced against as a pirate."

"But I am not a pirate!"

"I am ignorant of your intended course. Will you explain your plans to me?"

"Cheerfully, if by that means I can bring you to duty. I shall first sail for the Havanna, where Don Diego Valido has told me he has funds!"

"You will not dare enter the Havanna, with all your daring, under the Colombian flag!"

"Why not? The war has ended! But still as the Navy is disbanded, I think, under all circumstances, that I will hoist the stars and stripes!"

"You will then be declared a pirate by the United States. You are playing too reckless a game for me, Captain Lightfoot!"

"I play the game to suit myself. The schooner is my own. But I won't be angry with you. We ought to be friends. You owe me gratitude for protecting you in Boston. But let that pass. If you think yourself more virtuous than I am, why you may go on shore at the Havanna!"

"I shall avail myself of this permission, be assured. Do you intend to land the two prisoners there also?"

"Yes; if the Don planks down the ransom I mean to demand!"

"And if he refuses?"

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"I shall then make up my mind what course to take with them!"

This was spoken with a reckless air, and in a tone somewhat imperative, as well as impatient. Faulcon made no reply, though his indignant feelings rose to his lips. He felt that discretion was the part he should choose; and that for the present he ought to feign what he did not feel, that he might the more successfully effect not only his own departure from the schooner, but the escape of the lovely Castillian girl, for whom he feared a fate was in store, which he dared not contemplate.

"My dear captain," he said with a light laugh, "as I can't do any better, I will return to my duty as first officer of the schooner, until we reach Havanna, that is, provided you engage in no enterprize of a free character, such as bringing defenceless vessels to! As we are no longer a Colombian cruiser, this vocation is at an end!"

"I have no intention of molesting any one. You mistake me. I shall by—and—bye sell my schooner perhaps take her to New York or Boston for the purpose, after leaving the Havanna. I have not, I confess, any great compunctions about cruising a few weeks first on my own account, and I confess it is a great temptation, with so fine a vessel, and such a picked crew. Do you know that I shipped these men myself, with an eye one day to hoisting a free flag. I had not, you see, much faith in the Colombian revolution; and believing it would, ere long, end in smoke, I chose my crew for my own purposes after. There is not a man on board that would not hail a free flag hoisted to the peak with three cheers. But don't fear! While I have such a moral gentleman on board as yourself, I shall do nothing naughty! Will you come on deck with me, and let my men see we are friends again!"

"Yes. Until you reach Havanna, I will remain in my station as an officer of the schooner. There we part," added Faulcon, firmly.

"Just as you please. Come, shall we go up?"

They ascended to the deck together, and Faulcon, taking his spy-glass from the beackets, began to survey the receding port, as if nothing had happened. Lightfoot felt that he had gained him over to his interests, and had no doubt but that he would be willing to remain in the vessel even after they reached Havanna.

The passage was longer than usual on account of light winds and strong head-currents. During the voyage, Faulcon carried himself with such caution, that Lightfoot did not once suspect his sincerity. His confidence in him was once more fully established; and the day before the schooner made Cape St. Antonio, on the western extremity of Cuba, he did not hesitate to believe that he would be ready to enter into a scheme that he had planned for acquiring riches, for the prominent trait in the character of the recreant Colombian captain, was avarice the accumulation of gold upon gold. His plan will be unfolded in the conversation he held with Westwood the evening of the day on which they made the Island, and while Faulcon had gone below after his watch was over.

"There is no question now, but that we have our man," said Lightfoot to his lieutenant. "I have had several talks with him, and he seems to yield a point every time!"

"I don't think he will back out when the time comes for action. Have you told him what you have decided to do!"

"No. I merely hinted that I might hoist the free flag after we had landed the old man, and got his ransom money! He took the information very coolly!"

"Has he said any thing more about leaving the schooner at Havanna?"

"Not a word. I told him yesterday, if he would give up this foolish idea, that I would give him one thousand dollars, and that he should share one third of my share in whatever prizes we took!"

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"He is a good officer, and would be useful in a fight to lead on the men, who are all somehow confoundedly attached to him. I thought, when he was arrested, we should have had a mutiny off hand; and I believe it was only the hot firing from the battery that diverted the minds of the men from it! It seems to me that if I was in your place I should prefer that he went ashore at Havanna. If he was disposed, he might create a party in the schooner, and do you mischief!"

"I do not fear him. He has no idea of such a thing. I see you are fishing for his berth, Westwood!"

"Not I! I am content with mine. What said he when you spoke of landing the old Don? Didn't he ask if the daughter was to go also?"

"Yes, and with no little earnestness. But I quietly replied that I thought as ladies' society was very refining, I had half a mind to detain her on board!"

"Did he make any remark?"

"Not a word. But why do you ask? You seem to question me something closely, as if you had an under meaning to your words!"

"Have you suspected nothing?"

"I don't quite understand you!"

"Lieutenant Faulcon is in love with the beautiful Senorita Adelaida!"

"Are you sure of this?"

"I know it. I have heard them conversing together, not only in the cabin but when on deck. Last evening they were leaning, just here, over the quarter railing, talking love by the half hour!"

"If I thought he was attached to her, I should love him less than I do. It must be so, and this is the secret of her aversion to me. Do you know, I can't get a civil word from her. She seems to avoid me as if I was some hideous, one-eyed monster. So, so, Faulcon is the man then! I now can account for his so readily consenting to remain in the schooner and go to Havanna. But, by St. Paul, he shall be disappointed if he expects that she will land there with him or with her father. I had half made up my mind to keep her on board before you told me of this, and now I have resolved to do it. Neither he nor she shall leave the schooner. I will keep him on board to witness my triumph to his own confusion!"

"And won't you land the Don? You won't lose the ransom money? He will refuse to give you an order on his banker there, unless it includes his daughter also!"

"That is true," said Lightfoot, musingly. "I can't lose the money, nor can I give up the lovely Spaniard. I love both the gold and the lady equally. Well, I am glad you have told me what you have. I shall act accordingly. Faulcon shall be defeated!"

"Can't you manage to send off the old Don after the money, when you get to Havanna, and say that in the boat in which he forwards it to the schooner his daughter shall return?"

"This artifice may do. I will try it. But then I fear it will fail. He won't be likely to trust me. I will manage differently, for it is now quite time I took off the mask. I will not go into Havanna, but lay off the coast, and send a boat with the Don's order for the money. This order I will compel him to give at the mouth of the pistol. When

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the money comes (you, my trusty Westwood, shall be my messenger) I will handsomely thank the Don, then hoist the free flag and hey for the boundless sea!"

"That is the only life, after all," answered Westwood, with sparkling eyes. "I am glad that course is settled. But what will you do with master Faulcon?"

"I shall take care of him!"

"There will be trouble, unless he is quietly put overboard!"

"That wouldn't suit me. I want to triumph over him in the regards of the fair Spaniard!"

"What port do you intend to make?"

"I think I shall run into New York first, and there refit and supply my magazine, and get all ready for being a twelvemonth at sea. I shall leave Faulcon and the Don there!"

"Well, I consent to your plans on condition you give me a fourth share of all prizes we take, and that if you ship another lieutenant he shall be second and I first!"

"I agree to this! How does she stand now, helmsman?"

"East by North, sir half North."

"That is well. We are not many hours sail now from Havana. By midnight we shall be off the port!"

The schooner was now sailing steadily along, with the Cuban coast on the starboard hand, and about five miles distant. The wind was light from the south-west, and nearly aft. The night was clear and starry, and the waves scarcely lifted the vessel on their gently rolling undulations.

At the windows of the cabin, while the conversation just narrated was passing on deck, sat the lovely Spanish prisoner leaning upon her hand, and pensively gazing upon the phosphorescent waters as they fretted about the moving rudder, and rippled and danced away in a hundred circling wreaths far astern.

A footstep arrested her ear. She turned with a heightened glow upon her cheek, and met, with a smile, the tender and impassioned gaze of the eyes of the young man who had given her his heart.

"You seem unusually sad, fair Adelaida," he said, taking her hand from her cheek and pressing it in his, while he sat by her side.

"I have much reason to be sad, senor," she answered, in a rich low voice, just tremulous enough with emotion to be touching. "I have less and less confidence in the pledges of the captain of this vessel. You are my only bulwark from the dangers with which I am environed!"

"Have you any new reason for these apprehensions?" he asked quickly, anxiously.

"*He* has been here pressing upon me his hateful suit! He but it is painful to speak of this. In you only I can trust for protection! I fear his fiery temper and his power!"

"Do not fear. He shall not harm you! He shall die by my hand if it be needful for your safety and happiness. Take courage. Tomorrow we shall be at Havanna. You will then be free!"

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"I hope so. But how is he to be trusted? My father has money in the city, and will send an order for it; but how do we know that when he receives it he will fulfil his promise to send us ashore?"

"He dare not refuse! He refuses it at the peril of his life!"

"Do not speak so loudly, senior! I would not have him suspect your interest in me, lest you should fall a victim. Return, for I fear he may discover us together!"

Field pressed her hand to his lips and entered his state-room, firm in his purpose that Lightfoot should answer with his life for her safety, and the fulfilment of his promises to himself and her.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

SHOWING HOW OUR CHARACTERS BEGIN TO DEVELOPE THEMSELVES, AND ALSO BRINGETH MATTERS TO A MORE DECISIVE POSITION.

The middle watch that night was drawing towards its expiration, and the helmsman was impatiently inspecting from minute to minute, the little time piece in the binnacle, to know when to shout the cheering cry of "eight bells," when the light of the Moro Castle became visible. It cast its long train of light far along the intermediate waters, and pointed them to their port. Falcon was on deck, although it was not his watch. His anxiety for the fate of the lovely captive prevented him from seeking repose. He had been walking the quarter-deck for nearly two hours in silence. Occasionally Westwood, who had the deck, would address him a question or two, but as he was but briefly answered, he left him to his own thoughts.

The more Falcon reflected upon what the Spanish maiden had told him, the more thoroughly was he convinced that Lightfoot meditated treachery both towards the old man and his daughter. He therefore resolved to be active in watching him, and anticipating any evil that might be meditated against them. In the fair prisoner he had become interested with the strongest feelings of his nature. He loved her passionately. He knew that his affection was reciprocated; and this sweet consciousness made her doubly dear to his heart. He felt for her, therefore, as any man would feel for one he loved, whom he found placed in the power of a lawless and bold adventurer, whose impulses and passions were the laws of his conduct. He was as lively in his watchfulness and fears as if he had been captured with her, and was equally Lightfoot's prisoner. He planned ways and means to effect her escape as well as his own, should treachery contrive her detention. Yet withal, he hoped for the best. He trusted that Lightfoot's cupidity would conquer his wayward love for the fair captive; for that the Colombian captain loved her, he was well convinced, though with a love as free and impetuous as his own spirit.

As he saw the light of Havanna streaming across the dippled wave, his heart throbbed quicker. He felt that the test was at hand, whether Lightfoot would prove true to his pledge.

"Eight bells!" called out the helmsman in a lively tone, as if glad that his two hours "trick" at the wheel had terminated.

"Eight bells," repeated the boatswain's mate forward; and at the same time began to toll the double strokes of the by-gone "watch" upon the schooner's bell.

For a few moments all was bustle in the changing the watch, one coming up, and the other going down to turn in. Lightfoot himself also made his appearance on deck. The schooner was now rapidly nearing the light, which grew larger and larger, till at length the dark outline of the tower from which it shone, became distinctly visible, with the towering walls of the fortresses, and the black masses of the shore.

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"You will run in at once, without coming to," remarked Faulcon, turning to the captain.

"No, I think I will lay off on till daylight! Indeed, I don't know as I shall run in at all!"

"What do you intend to do? Send your passengers in a boat?"

"I shall first send Westwood to the city with the Don's order for the ransom. He says he will pay me ten thousand dollars for himself and the senora!"

"And when Westwood returns with the money you send them ashore?"

"Of course!"

"I shall go in the same boat!"

"As you please. You have made up your mind, I suppose, not to remain with me?"

"Yes. I am satisfied your future course is to be one I cannot join you in. Hitherto I have done nothing dishonorable, for, thank God, I am not a murderer! In the Colombian service I have faithfully done my duty, and won a fair name for courage as a patriot, and skill as a seaman. I shall not now forfeit it by following your lawless fortunes under a free flag, which I am satisfied it is your intention to hoist as soon as you leave the Havanna!"

"You are plain-spoken," answered Lightfoot, sarcastically.

"It is best I should be so, that we may understand one another. I do not wish you should entertain the thought for an instant that I am as unprincipled as you are! I love my native country, and I hope one day to be restored to its bosom with honor. I respect myself as a man. I would scorn to commit a deed unworthy a good citizen or an honest man! I should feel happy if I possessed sufficient influence with you to prevail upon you to give up your lawless idea, sell your schooner, if you won't return her to Colombia, and give your life to purposes more worthy of your talents!"

"I am exceedingly obliged to you for your advice, and will by-and-bye take it into grave consideration, Mr. Faulcon. At present I have to look after other matters. This is your watch, I believe. You will heave the schooner to under her fore-topsail and foresail. We will lay off the port till sunrise, and then I shall send in a boat!"

Thus speaking, Lightfoot turned abruptly on his heel, and walked forward to light a cigar at the caboose, where the steward was making him a cup of coffee, which he always had at the close of the middle-watch. The words he had heard from Faulcon's lips had vexed him, and confirmed him in his determination to pursue his original intention already communicated by him to Westwood, the basis of which was a rival's vengeance, as well as an evil man's hatred of one more honorable in principle than himself.

Faulcon brought the vessel to, and in a little while after she became stationary, Lightfoot went below. Faulcon observed that he went to his own state-room and closed the door. He knew that he had turned in, and as Westwood had also gone below, he had the deck to himself. For some minutes he paced it fore and aft in deep thought. At length he extended his walk forward among the men, who were either standing about the fore-castle, or seated on the gun carriages, or taking exercise in a short cat-walk athwart ships in the clear space left just abaft the windlass.

He passed round the bows of the launch at a slow step, looking carefully in the faces of the men. At length he stopped before one of them, and said in an under tone:

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"Mosley, I want you to walk aft to the capstan after I leave you. I have something to say to you!"

"Yes, sir," responded the person he addressed, a large, stout man, wrapped to the chin in a monkey jacket, in the pockets of which both hands were thrust, while he himself leaned against a gun.

Faulcon then passed aft, and in a moment or two Mosley came as far as the capstan.

"Mosley," said Faulcon, approaching him, and speaking in a whisper, "I know you are a faithful friend to me!"

"I hope you don't doubt it, sir!"

"No. I am about to avail myself of your friendship, and place in you the greatest confidence one man can place in another!"

"I hope I shall prove myself worthy of it, sir."

"I know you will. I know your character, and that you are not corrupted by the lawless atmosphere that prevails on board the schooner. What I have to say to you is this. You need not be reminded of the circumstances under which Captain Lightfoot has quitted the Colombian service; nor need a man of your knowledge and judgment of things be told that he is at this moment neither more nor less than a pirate!"

"That is what I have myself been thinking of for the last four days, and talking about it to some of the best men in my watch!"

"And did they seem to think with you?" asked Faulcon, quickly.

"Yes, sir."

"And what opinions did they express?"

"Some of them said they didn't care how soon they left the schooner then, for though they were willing to serve in the Colombian service, they were not willing to turn pirates after, to suit a whim of their captain. Others said that they had rather sail under the free flag, and share a plenty of prize-money, than under that of Colombia, and get no pay!"

"Did you note the men who made the first reply?"

"Yes."

"Could you name them?"

"All of them, sir;" and Mosley began to repeat the names of several of the best men in the schooner.

"I believed that these were good men, and true. Now, Mosley, I will say what further I have to communicate. It is Captain Lightfoot's intention, without doubt, to hoist the free flag after he gets the ransom money at Havanna for the Don and his daughter. But I have my suspicions that he intends to deceive them, and after receiving the money, refuse to let them depart. Moreover, I believe that he will try to send me ashore, that I may not cross his purposes. Now, I have no alternative but to prepare to meet whatever emergency may occur. I am resolved never to quit the schooner without the Spanish maiden. If Lightfoot keeps her on board, he keeps me also. In a word, I am strongly attached to her, and mean to protect her with my life. Now, I wish you to sound as many of the rest of the crew as you can. Begin by suggesting that the schooner must be in some sort a pirate, having left the

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Colombian colors, and not taken up those of any other nation. Invite the discussion of it among the men, and observe carefully their sentiments, and mark the men who indignantly express themselves opposed to anything like piracy. Get the opinion of every man, and then report to me. It is my intention, if Lightfoot proves false and treacherous in this matter of ransoming his prisoners, to make an attempt to seize upon the schooner!"

"I am glad to hear that, sir. You can do it, I know! Half the men would be willing to join you!"

"You must first feel their pulse, and know how that of each man beats in reference to such an enterprize. It will be attended with danger and bloodshed; for Lightfoot will resist so long as he can wield a cutlass, and those men who will fight on his right will be the most desperate portion of the crew."

"Yes, sir, I know that. Only the real desperadoes will stick to him. I hope, almost, that he will be false, and keep the prisoners, for I want to see you in command!"

"If I succeed I shall take her back to Colombia, and restore her to the government!"

"This will make you at once, sir! It will tell them that we are not all pirates, and so prevent those on board, who are inclined to be honest, from being forever after branded as bucaniers. I am sure, sir, you will get full thirty out of the sixty-eight men on board to side with you. But I will go forward and talk with 'em. It is the best word I have heard for many a day, that you are going to try to take the schooner, sir. I have respectable relatives in New England, and though I have been a little wild in my day, I am no bucanier, and that Captain Lightfoot shall know if he sets out to hoist the black bunting, should you and the prisoners be set ashore!"

"Be discreet, and not too earnest with the men!"

"I understand, Mr. Faulcon. I will not let the worst of them suspect anything, while I will get at his opinions like a lawyer!"

Thus saying, Mosley went forward again, while Faulcon with a more cheerful spirit, and in the confidence of yet being able to afford full protection to the beautiful maiden whose image was mirrored in his heart as the evening star in the depths of a still fountain.

At length morning dawned. The east blushed with roseate glory, like a young bride awaking on her first nuptial morn. Gorgeous clouds of purple, golden and saffron dyes, like fragments of the rent curtain of day, which at first hung upon the opal skies, parted slowly, and from the midst the rising sun leaped to his car and flung his blazing banner over the world. The towers of the Moro first caught his glittering beams. Upon the battlements rose the magnificent ensign of Spain to welcome him, while from the embrasures thundered deep-mouthed cannon. To the mast-heads of the fleet anchored beneath in the port, fluttered, like birds of paradise mounting to their morning perch, the gay flags of a hundred nations, while from numerous vessels of war the echoing artillery announced and re-announced that another day had been created.

The schooner lay in full view of the harbor, and of the city embracing its curving shores. From the towers of the cathedral and churches tolled, in rich and solemn cadence, the numerous matin bells, the sound swelling and lessening upon the breeze that bore it from the green land towards them. Everywhere around the schooner upon the sunny sea were vessels and craft of all sizes, some under sail, others at anchor, and two or three like themselves lying to. The scene, altogether, was one of great beauty, and for a few moments after he came on deck, Lightfoot stood silently contemplating it; for nature speaks to every human soul, and it listens irresistibly to her voice.

CHAPTER NINTH.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE WING OF THE WIND SHOWS HIMSELF LESS WISE THAN HIS LIEUTENANT.

The Captain of the "Wing of the Wind," after a few moments spent in looking around him, approached Falcon with an air of seeming frankness, and said with a smile:

"Well, my moral friend, we are now off the Havanna. What is your decision, to go on shore, or remain and try your fortunes on the sea with me. You are by no means rich, yet, and are not so likely to be so any where as by sticking to the schooner!"

"I have already given you my answer, Captain Lightfoot," replied Falcon firmly. "What is your intention touching your passengers?"

"I keep my own counsel. As I no longer consider you an officer of the ship, I shall not deem it my duty to consult with you. It will depend, however, on the Don himself. I have just sent word to him in his state-room, by my steward, that I wish to converse with him in the cabin. I will go down and see what he will say!"

Lightfoot then left him and descended into the cabin. Falcon felt a strong impulse to follow him, and be present at the interview; but feared bringing on a crisis prematurely that might defeat his ultimate success. He, however, recollecting that the sky-light was open, sauntered aft, and took a position near it, so that he could look down into the centre of the cabin, and where he might catch something of what should transpire. The great events at stake, he felt, justified him in thus listening.

When Lightfoot entered the cabin, Don Diego Valido was already there. He was a tall, thin, intellectual looking man, with a dark olive complexion, black hair, half sown with the silver dust of fifty years. He was seated in an arm chair, but when the captain entered, he rose and bowed with dignity. His face was pale, and the expression at once anxious and keenly inquiring.

"We are off Havanna, senior," said Lightfoot, throwing himself upon a sofa, and motioning to his captive to be seated.

"Yes, I have seen the Moro from the cabin windows! I trust now you are ready to fulfil your promise, to ransom me and my daughter," added Don Diego, firmly regarding his countenance.

"That will be as circumstances turn up, Don Diego," answered Lightfoot with a careless air.

"It can depend on no contingency, senior captain," replied the Spaniard, with a look of surprise and displeasure. "I am not ignorant of your present position as an outlaw from all flags; but yet, as we were captured in open and fair warfare by you, under the Colombian colors, it is but justice that we should be liberated freely, now that hostilities have ceased!"

"I am no longer bound by what occurred under the Colombian flag, senior!"

"Yet you are bound by the laws of humanity and honor!"

"I am the judge of this, not you!"

"You should at once set me and my child on shore. Instead of that, you demand an enormous ransom. From an honorable officer in the service of a republic, you are all at once a pirate, demanding gold for the liberty of your

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captives!"

"You are rich, I am poor, Don Diego. If you love your money more than liberty, be it so. I will set sail northward, and still give you free passage with me wherever I cruise!"

"No you shall have the money!"

"I am then content. What authority will you give me to obtain it?"

"My check on my banker!"

"Fill it out at once. I cannot delay long off the port, lest I draw the attention of the authorities, and they send out a cutter to learn who I am!"

"If I give you an order for ten thousand dollars, you will"

"Twenty thousand, Don Diego," said Lightfoot coolly.

"Twenty thousand! senor captain," repeated the Spanish gentleman with indignant surprise.

"Yes, not a peso less!"

"You said ten thousand, yesterday!"

"Ten thousand be it then, for your own ransom, if you leave your lovely daughter on board! Ten thousand, otherwise, for her!"

Don Diego looked as if he would vent his fierce anger and contempt in speech; but trembling for the safety of his beloved child, he drew forth his pocket-book, and taking from it a stamped paper, filled it for the whole amount. Lightfoot watched him with a smile of peculiar triumph.

"But before I place this in your hands, senor, what security have I that you will, when you receive the money, liberate me and the Don Adelaida?"

"My word!"

"It is not enough!"

"You must abide by it, for I can give you no other, Don Diego!"

"It is no security, senor. You will not abide by it unless you please. I cannot trust you!"

"Very well," answered Lightfoot, rising and speaking in a tone of well-feigned indifference; "all then that remains, is for me to make sail and leave Havanna behind!"

The Spaniard was for a few moments silent. He seemed undecided how to act.

"Come, senor, time pressed!"

"I refuse to send for the money," he answered in a tone very positive and firm.

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"Then let the consequences that may follow to you, aye, and to your daughter, rest upon your own head!"

At this moment the beautiful Senorita Valido entered hurriedly from her state-room. She threw herself, all tears, and trembling with fears that could not otherwise than fill her with the deepest alarm for herself, left longer in the power of a man like Lightfoot.

"Do what he asks, dearest father? Make no resistance to his demand. Trust to his word, and I feel assured he will honorably fulfil it!"

Lightfoot gazed upon the charming girl with admiration, as she hung upon her father, looking with beautiful earnestness up into his face, for the signs of his compliance with her entreaty. He thought he had never beheld so lovely a creature. Her tall and graceful figure voluptuously pliant at the waist, and bending like a willow with every motion; her dark, lustrous eyes, rich with the full depths of feeling; the enchanting contour of her superb head and faultless profile, altogether with the bewildering power that dwells ever in beauty in tears, thrilled him to the soul, and enchained his senses. He had not before fully felt the fascinating spell of her presence.

"Her faith in my honor, so prettily spoken, had well nigh made me resolve to keep faith to her father," he said mentally; "but I shall no longer keep it. Her beauty has sealed her own fate! Sooner would I lose my schooner than so fair a treasure! But I must conceal my feelings. Don Diego," he added aloud, "I give you my word that I will, on receiving the money on board, at once land you in my boat at Havanna!"

"Father, consent! There is no alternative!" exclaimed Adelaida.

"Be it so! I will trust him! Here, senor, is the order for the ransom for myself and my daughter. I hope you will use despatch. The address of the banker is written at the foot of the draft."

"This will be paid without inquiry?"

"Yes. It is but four weeks since we left Havanna, near which, as I have said, I reside, in the Spanish ship you captured, to visit Vera Cruz, where I had business!"

"I will say then that the draft came from Vera Cruz. Date it at that place. Thanks, senor! This will make it surer! I hope within three or four hours you will once more tread the green shores of your native isle, fair lady," said Lightfoot, as he left the cabin for the deck.

On reaching it, he called Westwood to his side.

"I have the order for the Don's ransom here. I got it without resorting to violence, through the intercession of his charming daughter; I entrust it to you. You will find the banking-house in El Calle Militar. Present it with confidence, saying that it came from Vera Cruz, where the Don, after a little hesitation, dated it. The money will be paid you in gold and silver, which you will at once get exchanged into a draft on New York, whither I intend to sail after leaving this island. Use all despatch. Take with you my gig with four oars. I have selected the men. I have ordered them to keep close in the boat, and hold communication with no one. They, however, can be trusted. Now let there be no delay. Leave the schooner at once!"

"You are sending off a boat, sir," said Faulcon, as the gig came under the lee gangway for Westwood to get into it.

"Yes, Westwood goes for the ransom money."

"I will go on shore with him then!"

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"No, you had best wait until the Don goes," answered Lightfoot, with a look as if he suspected that Faulcon wished to betray the character of his vessel to some one of the men-of-war in port; and this was, indeed, the motive which led Faulcon to ask to go there. No other would have tempted him to quit the schooner, leaving Adelaida on board; but while the cutter was getting ready, the idea suddenly flashed upon his mind, that if he could get intelligence to the sloop of war Lexington, which he saw lying at anchor in the harbor, she might send out her boats and capture her, as the wind was too light to suffer her to escape. He felt vexed at the refusal to let him go; but with that self-confidence and courage which characterised him in scenes of peril, he resolved to abide the issue.

It was about eight in the morning when the lieutenant of the schooner quitted it for the city. Six bells had just struck, when Faulcon, who had been nearly the whole of the three hours pacing the deck and anxiously watching the shore, discerned the cutter returning from her mission.

At length, as it came near, it was apparent to all that Lieutenant Westwood was not on board. This discovery had evidently been made much sooner by Lightfoot, who had been watching her through his glass, and who seemed very greatly annoyed, without Faulcon's suspecting the cause, until the nearer progress of the boat gave him the explanation. He feared the worst possibly that the money had been refused to him and that he had sent off for instructions. The boat at length reached the side with the four oarsmen.

"Where is Mr. Westwood?" demanded Lightfoot, as calmly as he could speak, for he began to suspect that his lieutenant had proved treacherous.

"Here is a note from him, sir," answered the bow-oarsman as he stepped across the gangway.

"Oh, then all is right, I dare say," answered Lightfoot.

He did not, however, open the note on deck, but descended into the cabin, for his suspicions were still alive, and he did not care to betray to Faulcon's keen observation any of his emotions.

Alone, he tore the seal. The missle read as follows:

"Havanna, Calle Militar.

"My Dear Captain:

From a child I have prayed as hard as I knew how, never to be led into temptation; but then I never expected I should be tempted with such a round lump as twenty thousand bright silver dollars! To tell you frankly, the temptation is irresistible. I have beat against it, but it has fairly got to the windward of me. I have weighed the whole matter and feel that I shall not again have such an opportunity to make my fortune; and so I tender you my resignation. It is better to have twenty thousand in hand, than run the chance of picking it up at sea from prizes, and then by-and-bye swing at the yard-arm of a man-of-war. I am content with the cool "XX". I do but follow your example with the Colombians. I take this with better conscience, inasmuch as it does no injury either to the Don or his daughter; for had the money got on board they would never have come off. So, taking this moral view of the case, I shall decline going on board again. I shall take this note to the cutter and despatch it to you. I wish you a pleasant cruise, plenty of prize money, and plenty of slack to the rope that will one day be gently bent about your neck with a running noose.

Yours ever,

Bailey Westwood.

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To the Captain of "The Wing of the Wind," Outer Road. – P. S. I will not betray you and your vessel to the authorities, so do not fear. I am so perfectly content with the twenty thousand pesos that I bear you no malice. I trust that you will be able to supply my place with as good an officer, but never trust him with twenty thousand Ferdinandos. Ever yours, B. W."

CHAPTER TENTH.

A CONSULTATION TAKES PLACE BETWEEN THE CHIEF PERSONAGES OF THE TALE, DURING WHICH DUPLICITY TAKES THE CHAIR, AND DIAMOND CUTS DIAMOND.

When Lightfoot had finished the perusal of the note which Westwood had thus so cavalierly despatched to him, he remained standing a few moments gazing upon the signature with flashing eyes, and a face as colorless as marble. He felt that he had been exceeded in duplicity by his under officer. His bosom swelled with unutterable rage Disappointment and fierce anger nearly overwhelmed him. He pressed his lips together till a drop of blood spotted their ashy hue.

"May the vengeance of Satan have him," he at length muttered as he crushed the letter in his grasp. "I will yet be avenged upon him for this! Let him not think I will let this gross outrage pass. I will not forget him while I breathe God's breath! But I must be calm. It will not do to expose this treachery either to Faulcon or my crew. They might triumph, and it might work against me. I will turn it to my own purposes. The fate of the Spanish girl is sealed from this moment. Telley," he called to his steward.

"Sir," answered the mulatto, appearing from the steerage.

"Go on deck and send Don Diego into the cabin. Also tell Mr. Faulcon I wish to see him. Now to appear unmoved. They must not suspect my disappointment. To lose twenty thousand dollars and have a valuable officer turn traitor all at one stroke, will require some firmness to bear without betraying emotion. Ah, Don Diego, take a seat. Mr. Faulcon, I sent for you."

"What news have you from the town?" asked Faulcon earnestly.

"No more than what I expected. Westwood writes me that on presenting the draft he was so closely questioned that his hesitation betrayed him; and they have detained him until he can bring evidence of its genuineness. He has, therefore, sent off to me to know what to do."

"This is unfortunate," exclaimed Faulcon, who believed the falsehood.

"I will go on shore myself, senor," said Don Diego. "I will obtain the money and bring it off to you!"

"I dare not trust you. The arrest of Westwood will already have placed me in a perilous position. I have done my part. I have faithfully fulfilled my pledge. It has not been my fault that the money has not been sent off. I have nothing further to perform."

"What do you intend then to do?" demanded Faulcon in a steady tone.

"To go on deck and make sail, leaving Westwood to his fate. As I shall want a lieutenant, I shall detain you; and you have the choice either of doing your duty or being put into irons and confined in the steerage. No dark looks, gentlemen, both! I am master of my own ship, and can enforce my own decisions. You are in my power and must comply with my dictates. A word from me and you are both ironed and chained to a bolt between decks!"

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The countenance of Faulcon became almost livid with anger. Don Diego looked the very image of surprise and horror, but the expression of his face suddenly altered to one of desperate determination. He seemed about to spring upon the captain, and, upon the spot, take the life of the man so lost to all principle so destitute of all humanity. Faulcon caught his eye and checked him with a significant look.

"Captain Lightfoot," he said as if wholly unmoved, "what you say is true. You have done your part, and it is not your fault that the money has not been sent. If you refuse to take further steps you cannot be blamed. I have no wish to lay in irons when I can have the free use of the deck. This freedom I am willing to purchase by continuing to act as your officer, provided you will inform me where you intend to cruise."

"I intend to run down the gulf and perhaps touch at Baltimore and New York."

"What do you purpose to do with Don Diego Valido and his daughter?"

"Let them remain on board until I have ransom for them. If the Don is so rich as he represents, he can manage to get me the money at New-York as well as here. I shall therefore sail for that port."

"Under what flag?"

"I shall at present retain the Colombian."

"Well, I will remain with you and act as your officer. There is my hand upon it."

Lightfoot looked surprised at this frank and sudden alteration in him; but suspecting that his motive was to be near Dona Adelaida, he concealed a secret smile of triumphant malice, and answered in a cordial way, pressing his hand.

"You have then been playing the smooth puritan, hey, all along! I never believed you were very sincere. So now the matter is settled. I am sorry to lose Westwood, but I will supply his place by some one from among the men."

"You can easily find some one who can act as second lieutenant."

"Yes, I have thought of Crummel and of Mosley."

"Crummel is a good seaman and can enforce authority," answered Faulcon. He liked not the man, and knew that he was one of Lightfoot's most faithful fellows. He, however, praised him, that Lightfoot might not suspect his preference of Mosley, believing that when he saw that he spoke favorably of him, he would decide to take the man he wished. His knowledge of Lightfoot's character proved to be correct.

"You think that Crummel would do, eh?"

"Yes, he is a thorough seaman."

"So is Mosley. Do you object to him?"

"No, not particularly, but"

"I think Mosley is the best of the two; I think, on the whole, I will appoint him. Now, I will to the deck and arrange the matter, and give orders for getting sail once more on the schooner."

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With these words he went on deck just as Adelaida was coming down into the cabin. He merely glanced at her and passed up the stairs.

During the conversation between Faulcon and the captain, Don Diego sat bewildered and agitated by the most painful suspicions. He understood from it that his only friend had sided with his enemy, and that himself and child were left to their combined evil power. When, therefore, Lightfoot left them, he turned his eyes upon Faulcon with looks of anger and severe reproach, and was about to speak his feelings, when Faulcon said:

"Don Diego, do not judge me from what you have just heard; I am still your friend and the friend of Dona Adelaida. I can only serve you by deceiving him. We are equally in his power. I must profess to comply with his views that I may overthrow him."

"Forgive me, senior," cried Don Diego, extending his hand.

"It was natural you should suspect me. I am gratified to know that I played my part so well as to deceive you. I feel that I have also deceived him."

"What has occurred? Has the ransom been refused?" asked the trembling girl, looking from one to the other with lively apprehension.

"The captain informs us that his lieutenant wrote that the bankers detained him until they could have evidence of the genuineness of the draft."

"That I question. They could not have suspected. They would have paid it at once," said Don Diego.

"I myself doubt whether it was presented, or else a plan has been entered into between Lightfoot and his lieutenant that he should remain on shore, with the money, so that he could have an excuse for detaining you on board, and demanding additional ransom at New York."

Dona Adelaida, who was looking down with tearful eyes, and filled with painful forebodings of evil, from the course events were taking, suddenly rose and caught up a crumpled note that lay upon the floor in one corner of the cabin.

"It is to Captain Lightfoot," she said.

"And in Westwood's handwriting. It must be the note he just received. He has crumpled it up and thrown it down in a moment of passion, and left, forgetting it. Watch the companion-way closely, Don Diego, while I read it."

He then read rapidly and distinctly the whole of the letter which Lightfoot had cast at his feet in his fury, and neglected to recover before going on deck.

"Now we have light," said Faulcon as he crushed the note again and cast it back into the corner, so that Lightfoot might not suspect that it had been read. "The money was obtained, and Westwood has outwitted his master."

"Then, Captain Lightfoot cannot be so much blamed, dreadful as our situation has now become," said Dona Adelaida.

"Thanks, sweet lady, for that gentle speech," cried Lightfoot from the head of the companion-way. "I know not what has changed your mind in my favor, but that expression of good will has reached my ears, and bid me hope I shall yet find favor in your eyes. Faulcon, I came to call you on deck."

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"Would to heaven I had never uttered it!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands. "It will give him license to intrude his hateful presence more upon me!"

"Fear not, lady! Captain Lightfoot's authority in this vessel shall end before another sun rises!" said Faulcon, in a low tone, and with a firm air. "There is a cloud hanging above his head he little suspects. We can have no belief in his intentions to restore you to liberty after reading that note. Westwood implies that it was his purpose to keep both the money and you! The man's destiny is fixed. His power ends with this day's light!"

"God bless you! senor Faulcon," cried the lovely Spaniard. "I will pray for your success!"

"And I will give my arm to aid it," answered Don Diego, firmly. "It is yet vigorous, and can deal justice to a wicked oppressor! I fear you alone can do little to aid us, noble sir! He has great power at command!"

"So have I. Thirty-four of the men on board have been sounded, and I know them to be ready to co-operate with me in taking the vessel from the hands of this lawless man. To-night the attempt will be made! Be full of hope, for his power ends in a few hours!"

"You forget, Mr. Faulcon, that you are not a passenger, but an officer," said Lightfoot, coming down, with an angry brow. "This is no time to be dallying with beauty, sir! Your duties call you to the deck. The schooner is once more underweigh, and leaving the port astern. I leave the command of the deck to you, and will take your place here awhile!"

All the time he was speaking, Faulcon observed that he was sharply looking about upon the cabin floor, as if in search of something, with a troubled aspect. As he left the cabin to go on deck, he beheld him hastily advance to the corner where his letter lay, pick it up, and after inspecting its appearance an instant, thrust it into his pocket with a look of much relief; at the same time he sent a searching glance around upon their faces, to see if he could detect in them the knowledge of the contents of the letter. When Faulcon took the deck, he found the schooner moving steadily from the land with all her sails drawing. Her progress was about three knots through the water, though the wind was scarcely strong enough to move a merchant-ship, that was about a cable's length abeam of them, more than a knot and a half an hour; but the Wing of the Wind would glide over the surface of the sea, fanned by zephyrs, so swift and wing-like was her motion.

As he walked the deck, now glancing at the fading shores and receding towers and battlements of the Moro Castle, and now scanning the spreading canvass of his vessel, and watching her progress through the water, he was closely thinking over his project for getting possession of her. Upon it depended the safety of the beautiful Castilian, the happiness of Don Diego, and his own; for now that he so tenderly loved the fair foreigner, his happiness was involved in her destiny. Moreover, he wished to recapture the vessel and take her back to Colombia, not only to surrender Lightfoot to the authorities, but to show the republic and the world that he had no part in the piratical act by which they had been robbed of her. He knew that the lawless deed had already gone forth to the world, and that all connected with it had been published and branded with infamy. No longer looking upon himself in the condemning light of a murderer, and proudly conscious of not having been guilty of any act of a dishonorable nature, he felt a just ambition in desiring to wipe from his name the reproach that he felt must attach to it from his connection with Lightfoot in his present course, and to win by the act he now contemplated a fair fame, that would dissipate the shadows that were now darkening his name. Thus love and honor and justice were combined, as the motives that inspired his soul to the daring achievement before him.

With a look of satisfaction he let his eye range along the decks frowning with their batteries of guns, and singled out here and there from among the crew that were grouped about them, the men on whom he felt he could rely when the decisive moment should arrive for action. That moment he resolved not to defer beyond that night, as every hour was charged with peril to the safety of Dona Adelaida, towards whom he felt Lightfoot would take a bold and decided course when he should once get into blue water.

PART THIRD. THE SCHOONER.

"Revenge, which still we find, The basest frailty of a baser mind."

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

A BRIEF RECAPITULATION OF EVENTS BY-GONE, THAT PROVE TO HAVE AN INTIMATE CONNECTION WITH THOSE PRESENT AND FUTURE.

The wind, as the schooner gained a broader offing from the island, and approached the verge of the gulf-stream, began to strengthen and haul from the north-west to the northward. Lightfoot laid his course close-hauled, steering east-north-east, so as to hug the edge of the gulf, and avail himself of its current, which aided him fully three knots. After running eastward, up with the longitude of Matanzas, he tacked ship to stretch diagonally across the gulf for the Florida coast, along which it was his intention to run up his latitudes to Baltimore or New York; for he was undecided whether to stop at the former port. His object in desiring to visit New York was two-fold. He knew that the information of the disbanding of the Colombian navy had not yet reached there, as he would probably be the first vessel from Colombia sailing since that event. He was aware, therefore, that he could enter the port in security under Colombian colors, and take in such stores and armament as he would require in the year's piratical cruise which he had in contemplation. At present his vessel was illy supplied with shot and powder, and was deficient in cutlasses, boarding-pistols, and other weapons of naval warfare. He also wanted to add to his guns a forty-four pounder, pivot-mounted, to enable him to disable vessels at a distance. This was one motive in leading him to steer for New York, and with it was now combined the hope of getting a new draft from Don Diego to enable him to purchase these munitions and pay his men.

Another motive was based on vanity and revenge. While he was in the navy he had met with Alice Ashley at a naval ball given at Charlestown. He was enamored with her at first sight, and having learned that her father was wealthy, he systematically resolved to propose for her hand. He visited her frequently, and, possessing, when he chose to use it, a fascination of address that was pleasing, he succeeded in winning an interest in her feelings. As his character was then fair, the sky of love seemed propitious. But on his voyage to the Pacific he lost name and character, and with it her regard. He had bestowed upon her several little gifts, which he found on his return to the United States had been forwarded to his address many months. They were accompanied by a note of the most cutting scorn, which aroused all his vindictiveness against her; and he internally resolved that whenever it was in his power he would be avenged upon her. To keep her ever in mind, and with a sort of spirit of bravado, he painted her miniature, for he was a finished amateur in painting, and also his own, which he always kept side by side in a case he had made for them. This was in itself a species of triumph and power gratifying to him, for his depraved soul naturally stooped to low revenges.

The residence of Judge Ashley near the waters of the Sound, had suggested to his mind more than once the feasibility of landing near and calling upon her, only for the purpose of showing before her his scorn and defiance. Repeatedly, while in the Colombian service, he had been tempted to sail northward and enter the Sound to make this visit; but circumstances had changed his determination, or only deferred it.

When, now, he found himself in command of a fast sailing, armed vessel, uncontrolled by any will but his own, accountable to no authority but his own pleasure, his first desire was to visit upon Alice Ashley the retribution he had long been harboring in his bosom against her. To carry out this object was the second motive for inducing him to steer to the northward after leaving Cuba. Precisely what he intended to do, should he succeed in obtaining an interview with her, he did not himself know. He resolved first to see her, and then be governed by the circumstances of the moment. A sort of vague idea of making her a captive by force and taking her on board his vessel, passed at times through his mind; but as yet he had formed no definite purpose of conduct. Perhaps it will not be out of place in this paragraph to mention that Lightfoot was aware, when addressing Alice Ashley, that she

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had a preference for a certain young man called Field Falcon. He had never seen him, but it was enough that he was his rival. He therefore resolved to destroy him in her esteem, and succeeded by an ingenious series of anonymous letters, reflecting upon the moral character of Falcon, and stating that in his cups he had talked openly of his passion for her, and its return by her. This statement, anonymous though it was, produced a certain effect, and led to that coldness of manner which had ultimately banished Field wholly from her presence. He was ignorant, of course, of the secret enemy that had been at work to ruin him in her estimation; but when he mentioned his name long after this to Lightfoot, in the chamber at the Golden Anchor, the latter instantly recognised his rival, but, with characteristic presence of mind, did not suffer any movement of lip or eye to betray him. Thus singularly was Falcon's destiny involved with his, of whom of all men he had reason to be the foe.

It was now evening. The shores of Cuba had faded in the distance towards the close of the day, so that when the sun went down only the twin breasts of "the Pan of Matanzas" were visible above the horizon. To the northward a single ship was painted against the sky, but too far remote to distinguish whether she was a ship-of-war or merchantman; and in towards the island, a lugger was creeping slowly along, under her sharp latteen sails, folded together like the wings of a swallow.

The shades of evening veiled all these objects, and only the shadowy ocean and the deep blue sky, with its host of stars, met the mariner's eye. Lightfoot walked the quarter deck of his vessel in a thoughtful and restless mood. Everything that had transpired that day, had gone at odds with his impatient spirit. He had sought the society of Adelaida, who, instead of remaining in the cabin as he came down, had retired to her state-room. Falcon was silent, and seemed to shun intercourse with him, though he attended faithfully to his duties on deck. Don Diego conversed with him with reluctance, and with an air of one who both feared and despised him. He brooded over also his loss both in money and a useful officer, whom he now missed to confide with. Altogether his spirit was unusually impatient, and his worst feelings were uppermost.

"This state of uncertainty and cowardly hesitation shall not last," he muttered, as he paused in his walk and bent over the quarter, as if watching to catch a view of the ship he had seen before sunset, and which he supposed to be standing for him. "I am master here! and what boots it if I am, and I fear to exercise my authority. Do I fear Falcon? I will do so no longer. He has resumed his duty, but I cannot trust him. I will bring matters to a crisis at once. The ship that is ahead is directly in our track, steering south and westwardly. We shall soon meet. If she is a merchant, I will prepare to take her! If Falcon refuses, I will put him in irons, and keep him there. Don Diego I will send on board the prize after I have rifled her, and his fair daughter, who so disdains me, shall remain and become my bride, priest or no priest. I will keep Falcon in chains to grace the nuptials. It will be a triumph! I will then, by-and-bye, tell him how that he owes to me his banishment from the heart of Miss Ashley. This will be the consummation of revenge altogether. Something whispers in my heart that it is hellish. Be it so. What have I to do with any thing heavenly! I am an evil man, and never expect to be otherwise than what I am. What should withhold me from carrying out my will! I will follow freely its bent. I have cast off national allegiance, what have I to do with clinging to minor considerations. If Falcon must die by my hand by-and-bye, he must die. If Dona Adelaida is weary of me, the deep sea is a quiet resting place. This night I or Falcon shall be master, both of the schooner and her. I will balance, and swing no longer between hesitation and decision. Ha! there looms up a sail, a point off the weather bow. It is the ship on the opposite tack."

"Sail ho!" shouted the lookout forward.

"Aye, aye! It has already been made out aft. Mr. Mosley," he called to the seaman who had been promoted to Westwood's berth, "have the larboard bow gun all ready to fire! I want to speak this ship if she is a merchantman."

"And what if she is an armed vessel, Captain Lightfoot?"

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"I shall not trouble her. Go and see that my orders are obeyed. Now," he added to himself, "will I put this Faulcon to the test. If he falters, he shall be arrested and ironed on the spot."

"What sail is in sight, sir?" asked Faulcon, coming on deck at this moment.

"The ship that we saw at sun-down in the northern board!"

"Yes, I can make her out plainly," said Faulcon looking at her through his glass. "She seems a very large vessel, and has either real ports or quakers!"

"She looks surprisingly like a sloop-of-war. Keep away a point, helmsman. There, let her be as she is. All ready there, Mr. Mosley, to bring the schooner to, if we should speak her also have the gun clear!"

"What do you intend to do?" asked Faulcon quickly, and in a tone of surprise.

"It is my intention merely to speak her, if she should prove a merchantman, otherwise to pass quietly on my way, for I have no desire to play at billiards with a twenty-gun-ship!"

"Why have you ordered a gun to be got ready?"

"I don't know that I am called upon to explain my actions. This is my watch, and I have the deck, as well, I believe, as the command of the schooner. But, if it will relieve your curiosity, I will say that I ordered the gun to be cleared to fire across her fore-foot, to bring her to, in case she should prove refractory. These large packet-ships sometimes treat schooners with contempt."

Thus saying, Lightfoot abruptly turned from him, and went below. Faulcon walked forward, where Mosley stood by the gun.

"My brave friend, the time approaches for us to act!"

"I see that, sir. I believe it is his intention to board the ship, if she should turn out to be unarmed."

"That is my belief. Are all the men you have spoken with, and whose names you gave me, to be relied on?"

"To a man, sir! They have all said that if it comes to any thing like piracy, they will join you in taking the schooner!"

"Have you removed all the weapons from the racks and chests, save just the number you need to arm our thirty-four men?"

"Yes, I have done it in all my watch. The cutlasses and pistols for our use are all hid in the hammock nettings, just abaft the starboard fore rigging. The true men know where they are, and can lay their hands on them in the dark."

"You have done your part well. Be quiet, and obey all orders from Captain Lightfoot, till you hear me give the signal."

"What is the word, sir?"

"Colombia!"

"It is a good one, sir."

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"You will make as many prisoners as you can, cutting down only those who resist!"

"It would be best to kill them, every mother's son of them!"

"No; we can secure them on board, and I should rather carry them into Colombia, prisoners. But here comes Lightfoot. I will go aft, and soon learn his purposes."

When Faulcon reached the quarter-deck, he saw that Lightfoot was armed with a cutlass, and a brace of pistols in his belt. He made no remark, but after taking a look at the ship, which was now about half a mile off, he went into the cabin. Here he also armed himself with his own pistols, but drew on over his weapons his watch-coat. Don Diego and Adelaida, hearing him call to them, came forth from their state-rooms in alarm, for the cry of a sail ahead, and the subsequent bustle of preparation on deck, led them to suppose some important event at hand.

"My brave Adelaida, you have now to fortify yourself for a scene of strife. A ship is in sight, and Lightfoot intends to board her, doubtless to make a prize of her, as he has gone on deck armed. I shall refuse to take a part in the act. This will bring on a crisis between us. I shall call on my men to seize the schooner, and it will not be many minutes before it will be in our hands. Do not doubt! Do not tremble, my dearest senora! Justice and right are with us. But farewell. I must to the deck. You will not see me again, dear Adelaida, till you see me a victor!"

He hurriedly embraced her, and hastened to the deck. Don Diego would have led her to her state-room, but as she firmly refused to go from the cabin, he took his sword beneath his cloak, and leaving her, ascended to the deck.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE TRUE INTENTIONS OF LIGHTFOOT BECOMING MANIFEST, FAULCON TAKES A POSITION THAT BRINGS ON A CRISIS.

WHEN Faulcon regained the deck he found Lightfoot near the companion-way with his spy-glass bent upon the ship, which was now within a quarter of a mile to leeward, for though to windward at first, Lightfoot, by bracing sharp, had worked to windward of her.

"She is a merchant-man with all her warlike display of ports," he said, addressing Faulcon. "Her yards are not square enough for a man-of-war, and her masts stoop too much. Boatswain, pipe all hands to quarters."

"You don't mean to fire into her?"

"Not if she yields gracefully. But I have no time to discuss points with you, Mr. Faulcon. Attend to your duty, and command the battery."

As he spoke he seized a trumpet and swinging himself into the main rigging by the peak-halyards, prepared to hall the ship which was now within pistol shot of the schooner, and steering in a direction opposite to, but parallel with her course. She was a large vessel, and displayed distinctly a checkered range of ports. She rose and fell with majestic motion upon the billows, and moved proudly on, as if disdainful of the little vessel that was dancing towards her.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Lightfoot, suddenly through his trumpet.

"Ho! the schooner!"

"What ship is that?"

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"The Washington, from New-York bound to New-Orleans."

"Back your fore-topsails and send a boat on board of me."

"What schooner is that?"

"The Colombian schooner of war, Ala del Viento."

"You have no authority to board an American ship," responded a firm voice from the quarter-deck of the Washington. "So I shall keep on my course unless you are in distress," and the stately ship moved proudly on her way.

"Stand by with the gun, forward."

"All ready, sir!"

"Fire a shot into her."

Mosley, however, pointed the gun far forward of the ship and fired it, for Faulcon had directed him to obey orders. The next moment the fore-yard of the ship swung aback to the mast, and the ship became stationary.

"Back the fore-topsail," cried Lightfoot to Mosley, and the schooner also ceased her onward motion and stood still abeam of the ship.

"What is your purpose of stopping this vessel upon the high seas?" asked Faulcon of Lightfoot, as he heard the order given on board the ship to lower away a boat.

"To get out of her what specie she may have on board as freight, and lighten the trunks of the passengers of their doubloons."

"In a word, you are a pirate, and mean to plunder her."

"You have hit it, Mr. Faulcon; and as I command the schooner, I shall expect you to co-operate with me."

"You mistake your man, freebooter," responded Faulcon, sternly.

"What? do you say you will refuse to obey my orders, Mr. Faulcon?"

"I do, sir, most positively."

"Ho! Crummel, bring those irons here that you have ready. You are once more my prisoner, sir."

As Lightfoot spoke, he drew a pistol from his belt and levelled it at the heart of Faulcon. The latter struck it from his grasp into the air, drew his cutlass, and at the same time shouted the watch-word, "Colombia!"

In an instant, the deck of the schooner, fore and aft, presented an extraordinary scene. The partisans of Faulcon being dispersed in all quarters, mingled with the adherents of Lightfoot, rushed to their deposit of arms, and attacked them. The piratical part of the crew being unarmed, and wholly unsuspecting of the revolt, were taken by surprise. Some of them seized hand-spikes and resisted, but were either shot or cut down. Some escaped into the rigging, others fled below to get weapons which were not to be obtained, and two or three leaped into the water. The deck, amidships and forward, was, for a few moments, a scene of strife and carnage. Mosley was everywhere

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leading and encouraging his party, and having got possession of all the deck forward of the capstan, came aft. Here Crummel and three other men attacked him with pikes and fragments of spars, but several of his band coming to his aid, the three men were taken prisoners, while Crummel, refusing to yield, fell by a bullet from Mosley's pistol.

In the meanwhile Faulcon and Lightfoot were closely engaged in a spirited combat with cutlasses. The latter had received one pistol shot and two severe sabre blows in the arm and temples, which only increased his ferocity. He attacked Faulcon like an enraged tiger, at every other blow venting upon him the most fearful imprecations.

"You had best yield, Lightfoot," cried Faulcon. "Your schooner, you see, is in my hands. Your reign is at end. Yield, and your life shall be spared."

"Never to thee, traitor!" answered the Captain, springing forward to try a grapple with him.

"Then I will set my men to disarm you, for I have no wish to kill you. You shall live to suffer the penalty due to your crimes."

"You, craven, shall never live to witness it," cried Lightfoot, throwing himself with his whole weight upon him, and shortening his cutlass so as to press it against his heart. Faulcon's life was for a moment in no little peril. He felt the point of the blade forced against his breast, when Don Diego, seeing his imminent danger, flew to his aid, and with a thrust of his sword, pierced his arm and paralyzed its power. With a deep curse the pirate drew back, and at the same instant, was seized by Mosley and two or three men, and thrown to the deck. The irons which he had prepared for Faulcon were placed upon his own wrists, and he was led by Faulcon's command into the steerage and chained to a bolt in the deck.

"He will bleed to death, sir," said Mosley as he returned to Faulcon. "He refuses to have the blood staunched."

"Then let him have his own pleasure," answered Faulcon, sternly. "I would rather he should live; for I should like to have the satisfaction of surrendering him a prisoner to the Colombians. Are his wounds deep?"

"I think not, sir."

"Mervin," said Faulcon to a young man who had once been a student of surgery, and who at times acted in the capacity of surgeon to the men, "go into the steerage, and examine his wounds, and see if you can prevail upon him to have them cared for! Now, Mosley, I believe the schooner is in our hands!"

"Yes, Mr. Faulcon, after a bloody contest too!"

"How many were killed?"

"At least nine of them, sir, and some dozen wounded!"

"And the rest are forward, prisoners?"

"Yes, sir. Every man under the guard of one of our own people!"

"Have them all ironed and secured below; and then restore the schooner to its former order!"

"What is to be done about the ship, sir? There she lays, and her boat stops half way between the vessels, where the beginning of the fray caused those in her to cease rowing."

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"I will go on board of her. Man the cutter!"

The ship was still remaining in the position where she had been hove to. The sudden noise of the contest the report of pistols the clashing of cutlasses the cries of the combatants reaching them over the water, filled them with surprise.

"There is a mutiny or the devil to pay on board there," exclaimed the captain of the packet, as he sprung into the mizzen rigging of his vessel, to see what was going on. "The fellow is a pirate, there is no doubt, and they have come to loggerheads about us. I hope they will kill each other to a man. They fight like wolves. It is no boy's play there. Hear the plunges into the sea!"

At intervals the flashes of the discharged pistols gave them a momentary, but full view of the deadly struggle fore and aft upon the schooner's deck; and the contest was witnessed by them all, captain, passengers and crew, with the most intense surprise and curiosity. They felt a personal interest in the issue, for they believed that their fate was in some way involved in it.

"The more there are killed, the better our chance will be," cried the captain of the ship, as the noise of the battle grew louder.

At length the sounds of the combat ceased. The clash of cutlasses, the ringing of pistols was at an end; and a cloud of smoke hung over the schooner, so lately the scene of such a terrific struggle between man and his fellow. The captain of the packet now watched the further progress of events with the most intense anxiety. He had called to his boat, which had begun to pull towards the schooner, to lay on its oars, and it now remained rocking upon the billows, about half a cable's length from both vessels. He would have made sail and endeavored now to escape, but feared that the attempt might bring upon him a broadside from the schooner, which he saw by the glare of the pistols fired off in the fight, carried ten guns. He, however, armed his crew and passengers, numbering in all, nearly sixty men, by breaking open several cases of muskets that he carried as freight; and resolved to resist any attempt to carry his ship by boarding. Several cutlasses and pikes were also distributed among the party, who were very resolute in their purpose to defend the ship to the last; for there were several ladies on board, wives and daughters, whose presence alone was sufficient to inspire them with the most resolute resistance to the freebooters.

In the midst of the silence that prevailed on the decks of both vessels, the packet captain heard distinctly the order given by Faulcon to lower and man the cutter.

"We shall now know the worst, and the meaning of this battle among them," he said, as the cutter began to pull towards them. "Do not fear, ladies! He visits us only in a small six oared boat. His intentions are pacific at least, now!"

"Shall you let him come aboard, captain?" asked two or three of the passengers, cocking their guns.

"To be sure! I want to know his business. We have nothing to fear from a boat's crew. They have come up with my boat, and some words are spoken between them! They seem to be civil ones. Now both boats are pulling along together!"

Their progress was watched with the most eager curiosity, until the cutter from the schooner came under the gangway.

"Throw him a rope," cried the captain of the ship. "Now let down the gangway—ladder!"

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The rope was caught by the bow-oarsman, and the boat drawn alongside. Faulcon then stepped upon the gangway-ladder, and ascended to the deck by the aid of his right arm alone, for his left was wounded by a blow from Lightfoot's cutlass, and now hung in a sling.

"Who is the captain of this ship?" he inquired, in a tone at once courteous and commanding, as he gazed round upon the dense group gathered about the gangway, rendered visible by the light of several lanterns held by seamen.

"I am, sir," answered Captain Bunker, advancing a step.

"I have come on board to inform you that you are no longer detained. You are at liberty to proceed on your voyage!"

"Why was I brought to by a shot, sir?" he demanded sharply. "And if you please, inform us what bloody work has been going on in your schooner. Are you her captain?"

"I am now! I was not fifteen minutes ago!"

"Then she has changed hands! You have had a mutiny?"

"Yes. The vessel was three weeks ago in the Colombian service. The war having ended, her captain, to remunerate himself for a debt due him by the government, run to sea with his schooner, and resolved to hoist the free flag. I was his lieutenant, and refusing to join him, was thrown into irons. At length I feigned to yield, was restored to my duty, and formed secretly a plan to retake the schooner, and carry her back into Colombia. His purpose to board and plunder your vessel, was the signal for resistance on my part, and hastened the crisis. You witnessed the struggle. I had on my side thirty-four out of seventy men. We have carried the vessel, and her captain is in irons. I have boarded you to make this explanation, and to express my regret at your detention."

"With this address, Faulcon bowed, and turned as if about to quit the ship, when to his surprise, he heard his name pronounced by a female voice, with an exclamation of sudden recognition. The tones, ere he looked round at the speaker, thrilled to his soul. He directed his eyes to the place whence the voice came, and beheld leaning upon the arm of her father, Alice Ashley, pale and fragile, and regarding him with a look of the most eager attention and touching interest.

"No, my brave captain," exclaimed the commander of the packet-ship, taking his hand, and grasping it warmly; "you are not to get off so easily. Come into the cabin, and let us have a glass of wine. You need it after such hard fighting as I have seen you engaged in to-night!"

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

SHOWS HOW LOVE NEVER PERISHES, THOUGH IT MAY SLEEP LONG; ALSO HOW FAULCON'S FORTUNES BRIGHTEN.

FAULCON doubtless would have left the ship, declining the invitation of its frank-hearted captain, had he not recognised Alice Ashley thus unexpectedly among the passengers, and seen that she regarded him with looks of deeper interest than he believed she could entertain for him. With an embarrassed manner, that was caused partly by joyful surprise, at once more beholding her who had never been forgotten by him, notwithstanding his later affection for Don Adelaida, he accepted the invitation, and was ushered by the captain into his sumptuous cabin. Several of the gentlemen were also asked down, and wine and refreshments were brought and placed before them. The health of Faulcon, who had not yet given his name, was drank with enthusiasm; for aside from their

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admiration of his bravery, they all felt that they owed to him the preservation of the ship from plunder, and perhaps the safety of their own lives.

"You have not given us the name of your late captain, sir," said the commander of the packet, after they had drank once or twice round.

"He was once an officer in the navy, but degraded for some misconduct, when he went into the patriot service. His name is Lightfoot!"

"Lightfoot; I know no such name in the service," said an old gentleman, who wore the naval button.

"This is not his true name. His real name is Richard Level!"

"Then do I know who he is! I am not surprised at his career! You say he is on board in irons?" demanded the old naval captain.

"Yes, sir. I intend to carry him to Colombia as a prisoner!"

"I hope that they will string him up with five fathom of three-ply. Sir, you have done not only Colombia service in taking possession of the schooner, but you have done service to every maritime nation. May I know whom I have the honor of addressing?" continued the officer in a frank tone of kindness and respect.

"My name I fear will do little credit to me, as it has been, in my native city, associated with a crime, of which, God be thanked, I am now innocent, but which drove me an exile into the patriot service. My name is Field Faulcon, gentlemen!"

"Then you are the young man who, a year ago, wounded Mr. Tilghman in a personal rencontre?" exclaimed the captain. "Mr. Tilghman, do you recognise this brave man, for I believe you are alive, and can speak for yourself!" continued the captain, addressing a gentleman who that moment made his appearance into the cabin from his state-room. "This, Captain Faulcon, is the gentleman I believe whom you struck down, and supposed you had killed. It is no longer ago than yesterday, he was relating the circumstance to us after dinner, around this very table; and I will bear testimony that he handsomely acquitted you of any thing dishonorable!"

Faulcon gazed with a degree of surprise, not to be expressed by words, upon the figure of Mr. Tilghman, his person wrapped in an Indian dressing gown, and a plaid cap covering his bald forehead. The merchant regarded him in return, with looks of curiosity and astonishment.

"Is it possible I see you again, Mr. Faulcon. Well, we meet under very different circumstances from our last parting! I am glad to meet you again, and under such honorable auspices for yourself. Do not draw back and look so pale. There is my hand! I am no ghost, though you like to have made one of me. But that is past. I was more to blame than you were! I did not take into consideration all things then, as I ought to have done. You acted in self-defence. It was not heaven's will that I should die that you should be a murderer!"

"I thank God that you live, sir," said Faulcon with a voice tremulous with grateful emotions.

"Yes, so do I. I recovered; but in my illness I had time to look at the whole matter in its proper bearings. Your father, who committed suicide the same day, had left behind him a full statement of all his forgeries, and fully exculpating you from all blame or knowledge of the transactions by which he had ruined himself! I then, too late regretted my course towards you, and would gladly have paid much more money to have had your father's death off my conscience!"

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"My father did not take his own life, sir," said Faulcon, with feeling. "When I returned to him and told him what you had said, and what I had done, he died under the overwhelming influence of horror and despair! He died, sir, as I talked with him! died as he stood before me! and remained standing a corpse, gazing upon me with glassy eyes! I fled with terror. I escaped on board this vessel, then lying in Boston harbor under Colombian colors."

"I can only regret what has occurred, Mr. Faulcon," said Mr. Tilghman. "I feel that leniency on my part would have saved your father's life. I have severely condemned myself for his death. I could have prevented it. I have been troubled too at your absence from your country, and I wish to say to you that one great object in my coming on ship-board was to go to New Orleans and thence to Colombia, where I might find you, assure you of my existence, of my forgiveness, and thus open to you once more a return to your native land!"

"This goodness overwhelms me, sir. I can scarcely credit my senses," exclaimed Faulcon. "Is it possible that the cloud which has so long darkened my soul is at once dissipated. I am indeed rewarded for not yielding to despair and the temptations to a lawless career that are held forth to the outlaw. I have, at least, through all my wanderings, retained inviolable my integrity as an honest American, and now have I my rich reward in your forgiveness, and in my restoration to my good name and my country's confidence."

"This is certainly one of the most surprising affairs I ever fell in with," exclaimed the captain of the packet. "One would certainly think somebody was up in the sky pulling the wires to make all work so ship-shape here below. Well, my friends, it is the truth that somebody's at the helm o' this great man-o'-war, the globe, and that although we may work up our reckoning, the chronometer of Providence is what we sail by, after all."

Mr. Tilghman, after some moments silence, once more grasped the hand of his young friend, with tears in his eyes, and seemed to feel as if, in showing kindness to him, he was in some sort atoning for not extending that mercy to his father which might have saved his life. Faulcon's hand was grasped by those of all present, and for a few minutes he felt like a child. It was with an effort he could refrain from shedding tears; for the best and deepest emotions of his heart were all called to the surface. The reflection that he was once more restored to the society of honorable men, and that he had given evidence of deserving their regard by his gallantry in capturing the schooner before their eyes, made his bosom glow with new feelings, and awakened all the nobler attributes of his nature. He seemed to feel himself another man. He began again to feel that self-respect which is the balance wheel to all manliness and elevation of character; above all, he was impressed with a profound sense of gratitude to that Great Cause of all causes, which had directed to this happy issue the series of events which held such an influential bearing upon his destiny.

With these reflections, came with sad joy, the thought of Alice Ashley. From the moment he had caught a glimpse of her sweet pale face on deck, she had vanished. Nor could he see her father in the cabin among the other gentlemen. The sight of her, so frail and delicate, as if suffering from illness, had awakened all his past affection towards her; for those that are once truly loved are loved ever. The severed heart may by-and-bye cling to another with love, but it will forevermore dwell in memory with gentle tenderness, and often with thrilling sensibility, upon her whom it once worshipped. True love never dieth! It may wane and become invisible, as does the moon, but when memory reflects from the past the once beloved object, the soul overflows with love, as the moon, when once more it turns its broad bosom to the sun, is filled again with light.

So Faulcon's heart turned towards the sun of his first adoration. His bosom thrilled with a sweet delight, and the star of hope once more sparkled on the horizon. He now looked eagerly around for her who filled his thoughts. Several ladies were grouped near the companion-way, gazing upon the youthful hero, to whom they owed their protection, but Alice was not among them. He feared he should not behold her again, or if he should, that she might regard him with indifference or scorn. But when he recalled that look of pleased recognition, and the softly-spoken, eager exclamation with which she repeated his name, and the pale, ethereal countenance, in which only dwelt serene and celestial benignity, he would not believe his own doubts and fears. Her looks of illness distressed him. They touched him to the heart, and moved all his sympathy. He forgot her former treatment, and

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had room in his bosom only for the tenderest sympathy. He wished once more to see her again before he left the ship, but he felt that it could not be.

"Alice no longer feels hostile towards me," he said, mentally, "for her looks were kind; but she has thought best to keep from my view. Be it so. I will try and forget her. I will make an effort to banish all hope. I thought I had well nigh forgotten her. I thought that in the love I have lately entertained towards Dona Adelaida was buried all tender recollections of Alice. But the sight of her has shown me that, although I may love Adelaida, my heart has never yet fully renounced its allegiance to her who first awakened its love!"

"You are thoughtful, Captain Faulcon," said the commander of the packet-ship. "Come, sir, we will once more have a bumper round to you and Mr. Tilghman."

"If you please, I will now go on board," said Faulcon, after the bumper had been drank. "I have left the schooner in a disordered condition, and it is necessary that everything should be done to secure the prisoners."

"How many have you on board?"

"About twenty-one or two."

"Have you room for them all?"

"Yes, between decks."

"You must take good care they don't rise upon you before you get into the port of the republic."

"I have means for keeping them safe, sir. I wish you and the gentlemen, and also the ladies present, good evening."

"If you will go, I will not detain you. The world shall hear of your gallantry, sir! You shall have a name yet that you will have need to be proud to wear!"

Faulcon ascended to the deck, escorted by the captain. As he was crossing to the gangway, Alice Ashley approached him with her hand extended. He took it, bewildered with joyful wonder.

"Mr. Faulcon," said Alice, in a tone at once trembling and calm, "in behalf of the ladies on board this ship, I present you grateful acknowledgments for the protection you have extended to us. Your bravery commands our admiration, and you will always be remembered by us with that gratitude which is due to a brave and generous benefactor!"

As she ceased, she left in his hand a folded paper, and the next moment left the deck. He placed the note in his bosom, and then, after taking leave of nearly all the passengers who crowded about the gangway, he descended into his boat, and in five minutes afterwards stood once more on the quarter-deck of the schooner. He was met by Don Diego and Dona Adelaida. The latter clasped his hand between hers and pressed it to her lips. He felt warm tears fall upon it, and his heart was moved, while his conscience gently upbraided him for letting his affections play the truant, or rather turn back to their former love; for all his feelings towards Alice had been revived in their strength.

"Senor, I owe you life and honor," were the ardent expressions of grateful feeling with which the beautiful Spaniard met him, now for the first time since his conquest of the vessel; for he had left the schooner directly for the ship, without descending into the cabin to see her, where he had earnestly desired her to remain through the conflict. She had obeyed, and now met him as he came on board, to pour forth her gratitude.

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"I am rewarded in your safety, Dona Adelaida," he said, slightly embarrassed by the warmth of her feelings.

The words were kind. He could have said neither more nor less. Yet there was to her quick ear something cold in their cadence that caused her to look up with surprise.

"Have I offended you, senor ?" she asked, impulsively.

"No, Adelaida ! I am very happy that you are safe from the power of Captain Lightfoot. But this deck is no place for you. The traces of the fight are all around. Will you soon retire to your cabin ? In the morning you will see nothing upon deck to offend the eye. Buenos noches, fair senorita !"

"Felices noches, senor!" answered Dona Adelaida, in a sad tone ; and taking her father's arm, she slowly descended to the cabin, feeling in her heart that Faulcon's manner, tone and feelings had in one short half hour undergone a change.

"Now that I am free from the power of that dark-hearted captain, I see Senor Faulcon no longer loves me," she said, as she reached her state-room, and speaking with a melancholy air. "Did he regard me only while I was in danger? Did he love me only because I was unprotected ? Then it was pity and sympathy, and not love! Well. I will not let him discover that I feel this change in him. I will see if to-morrow he is thus; and if so, I will speak to him no more of love. I will be grateful for what I owe him, and if he cares no more for me, I can the more closely cherish his grateful memory in my heart of hearts !"

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

OUR HERO BEING IN A DILEMMA BETWEEN TWO, MAKES A VIRTUE OF NECESSITY, AND ALSO A SPEECH.

Faulcon now called Mosley and ascertained from him that the prisoners were secured in irons and the schooner nearly restored to her former orderly condition. He thanked the faithful officer for his promptness, and also for his brave services in the re-capture of the schooner. Then calling the men aft, he addressed to them eloquently and warmly a few words of thanks for the part they had taken, assuring them that their conduct would be rewarded by the Colombian government, as well as by the approval of their own breasts. Giving them a few directions with reference to their future duties, he hastened for a few moments to his state-room to peruse the paper which Alice Ashley had left in his hand.

He closed his door, and by the light of a lamp, read the address. It was in pencil, written in tremulous letters, and read simply, "To Field Faulcon, Esq." He opened it with fingers scarce less agitated than were those that traced his name upon the outside. It was unsealed and had been hurriedly folded together. He read, with what emotions the reader will conceive who follows with him its delicately pencilled lines, the words below:

"Sir,

Your appearance on board your gallantry, the reflection that I owe to you more than life, impels me to address you. I owe you an apology for my past treatment of you when once you bestowed upon me your regard. I ask your forgiveness, though I have never forgiven myself. I was influenced to act as I did by representations made to my father and myself, against your character. They bore the air of truth, and were believed. Circumstances afterwards convinced me that I had done you injustice, and that you had been the victim of one whom you had ignorantly made your enemy. He deliberately plotted your ruin in my estimation, and, I am sorry to say, so far succeeded as to lead me to take a position with regard to you, which it has since deeply pained me to reflect upon. I now embrace the first opportunity an opportunity I have long wished for to make this avowal. It is due to myself as

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well as to you.

"Permit me to congratulate you upon the noble conduct you have just exhibited, and to assure you of my esteem. I pray that your future course may be bright and distinguished. I shall probably, not live to see you take the position among men which I feel you will yet do. I am dying slowly of consumption, to alleviate which, in some degree, I am now taking a southern voyage, a voyage which, but for your generous courage, would have terminated to all on board most disastrously. Farewell.

Your friend,

Alice Ashley."

"Noble, excellent creature! Angelic Alice! How generously have you acted in thus voluntarily overstepping the reserve of your sex, and thus confiding in me. It is like yourself, frank and open-hearted as a spirited, unsuspecting child. How my heart swells and bounds with the reflowing current of my former love. Can I hope from what you have here written? Can I discern in one line the sweet truth that you love me still? I tremble between hope and doubt. Dying! Alas! she speaks too truly, I fear. I marked her pale cheek and altered form. She looked like a flower just drooping to fall to the ground. Dying! no, you cannot die you will not die! My love shall enfold you as the vine embraces the breaking branch, and uphold and strengthen you. I will see you again; I will cast myself at your feet; I will learn from your own lips if I can still hope to be loved as you have once loved me. Dearest, blest Alice!"

He pressed the pencilled name again and again to his lips, manifesting in his ardent passion the undying power of love in the heart.

"But how shall I behold her again? I have sterner duties before me, than kneeling at a maiden's feet. The ship is bound to New-Orleans. They will probably remain the winter there if she lives. If she lives! Oh, let her live, that I may once more behold her and tell her that I still love that all my heart is her own! I am tempted once more to go on board the ship; but by this, she is a mile astern, sailing on her course. I will steer for Colombia, and after surrendering my prisoners to the government, hasten to meet Alice in New-Orleans. Sweet, noble girl! What benevolent angel prompted you to write thus to me to overwhelm my soul with a flood of kindness!"

Thus speaking, he again pressed to his lips the note, thrust it into his breast, and opened his state-room door to go on deck. Dona Adelaida was seated in the cabin, her hand upon her brow, and her whole attitude like one very sorrowful.

"Senora, you seem not to be well," he said kindly, and taking her hand.

She started and looked up, and then colored with beautiful confusion.

"I thought, senor, you were upon deck. The air of the cabin is cooler than in my state-room."

"Adelaida," he said, seating himself by her side, and speaking in a tone of tenderness, yet one not wholly free from embarrassment, "I have a few words to say to you, will you listen?"

"Speak, senor," she replied in a low voice, dropping her large oriental eyes to the floor.

"I first saw you in the midst of peril and battle, lady. Your beauty and misfortunes enlisted my sympathy, and I extended to you my protection. Afterwards your gentle and noble qualities of heart and mind, as I saw them developed, interested me deeply; and in the impulse of my feelings I confessed to you the power they had over me. Your persecution by Captain Lightfoot strengthened still more my interest in you, through sympathy for your

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situation. I thought that my heart was yours. But, lady, forgive me! I knew not my heart. But you shall hear its history and then judge me. A long time ago, I loved a beautiful girl of the northern land. She was as fair as the pearl on the ocean strand, and her eyes were like the deep blue of the summer sea. She had a spirit proud but gentle much like thine. She was a woman to love and worship with the heart's reverence. We loved our souls were one. At length coldness took the place of affection in her heart towards me. She banished me from her presence. I could never learn from her silent lips wherein I had offended. She would see me no more, and I became an exile from my native land. I bore away with me her image in my heart; and though I forgave, I could not forget her. Time, which befriends all the sad and disappointed, gradually soothed the keenness of my regret; and by—and—by I banished her, as I believed, from my heart.

"I saw you. My bosom yearned to reflect some other heart in the mirror of its affections, and your image fell there, and was retained with pride and gratitude. There was much in you that reminded me of her I had loved, and this made you still dearer to me. I should never have doubted that I loved you with all my heart, but for what has this night occurred. Are you listening, lady? for I am before you a penitent, confessing for absolution!"

"I hear you, senor," answered the maiden, in an even tone. "Proceed."

"On board the ship, I found that lady a passenger with her father. When she beheld me, she repeated my name in a tone between pleasure and surprise. I caught her eyes. They rested kindly upon me. When last I saw them, they were lighted up by the brilliancy of haughty scorn. I saw her but to pity and love; for her cheek had lost its rose, her form its elasticity, and she seemed like one just hovering between two worlds.

"As I left the ship, she spoke kindly to me, taking my hand, and left in it a note, which I have just been reading. The sight of her, with the perusal of the note, has revived all my long slumbering love and devotion. Here is the note. Read it, while I go on deck. When you have perused it, tell me if you will forgive me for withdrawing from you my false affections, (which, nevertheless, I did believe to be true,) and giving them to her who first awakened them in my soul. I throw myself wholly upon your generous nature. I have frankly unfolded to you all. I would not coldly conduct towards you, and leave you to uncertain suspicions. I have freely told you the truth, and cast myself upon your mercy. You would do right to answer that it is not material to you on whom I place my affections, and laugh at me as a very vain lover to suppose that any recreancy of mine could move you. But you are above such arts as these. I feel that you will extend towards me the same frankness I have bestowed. I await my sentence, Adelaida!"

"Senor," answered the fair Spaniard, "I should be lost to all sense of gratitude to question the propriety of any course you see fit to take. To you I owe my life and honor. I have no demand upon your affections. You have extended towards me all that I can look for or hope for. I will confess that gratitude for your kindness has taken a tenderer form in my heart. But I will not be selfish. I freely resign to you all claim you think I may have upon your affections. It is enough for me to owe to you all that I now do. Your happiness is first in my mind. I do not wish to read the note. Your words are truth to me. I shall ever pray for your happiness and the life of her whom you love. Give back to her freely all your heart! I should be grieved to think that you felt bound by any obligation to me, senor!"

"You are very generous, Senora Adelaida," said Faulcon, much relieved by the manner in which she had received his communication.

"I owe everything to you. Shall I not bestow anything in return?"

"Well, senor captain," said Don Diego, entering the cabin, "we are once more free, and in safety. How shall we repay you?"

"I need no thanks, senor!"

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"Captain Falcon," called Mosley at the companion-way.

"Well?" answered Falcon, hastening to the deck.

"There is an ugly-looking black cloud rising in the south-west. Hadn't we better make sail?"

"I thought I had given the order some time ago, to fill away. I must have forgotten it. Square away the fore-yard again."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The schooner was now put on directly before the wind which blew from the north. The ship was just visible astern, about two miles distant. Falcon stood watching the cloud which rose rapidly and grew each moment darker. Don Diego approached him and said,

"What course do you steer, Captain?"

"You, of course, do not wish to go to Colombia, and I was just thinking that I would run into Havanna and leave you and Dona Adelaida."

"That would be doing us a kindness, senior. How far are we from the port?"

"Not more than seventy miles. I will put in there and leave you."

"A thousand thanks, senior captain. You increase our debt of gratitude to you each moment."

"Keep her away two points, helmsman," said Falcon. "Haul aft the main and fore sheets and brace up the top-sail yards;" he called to the crew. Now, Mr. Mosley, we will divide our people into watches, and you must act as my first lieutenant. As I have no second, I shall keep the starboard watch myself. Don Diego, you had best sleep while you can. In the morning by ten o'clock we shall be inside the Moro Castle."

"In a few minutes Falcon had the quarter deck to himself. Mosley and his watch had gone below. His own watch, consisting of seventeen men, were stationed forward, save four, who, armed with pistols and cutlasses, stood guard over the prisoners at the fore and main hatches.

"How is Lightfoot now?" asked Falcon, going to the steerage hatch and speaking to the young man who had acted as surgeon.

"He sleeps, sir, since his wounds were dressed."

"None of them, I think you said, are very serious."

"No, sir."

"See that his chains don't chafe them."

"They are all clear, sir."

"Very well. Let your watch be over him till eight bells. It is now past two o'clock."

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Faulcon now began to give his attention to the approaching cloud which came up with the threatening aspect of a tornado. After watching it a few seconds he gave an order to furl the main-topsail. This was soon followed by sending men aloft to take a close reef in the foretopsail. The mainsail was next furled and a single reef taken in the foresail and one in the jib. Each moment the western horizon grew blacker, and midnight darkness seemed to be settling upon the ocean like the broad-winged vulture upon his nest.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

SHOWING HOW EVENTS ARE CONTROLLED BY A POWER ABOVE, FOR THE CONFUSION OF THE EVIL AND THE REWARD AND HONOR OF THE GOOD.

THE darkness which hung upon the deep, was succeeded by a fearful stillness. The wind died away, and the waves seemed to sink into the bosom of the ocean with a leaden weight. Then far off from the south-west, came a low growling sound. It grew louder and fiercer, and a white glaring line that Faulcon knew was a wall of foam driven forward by the mad hurricane, was visible along the near horizon. Louder roared the winds and the tossed billows, and the sound filled the firmest soul with dread. The schooner was put square before it, and the next moment the wild wall of waters leaped over the traffrail, and the schooner was in an instant submerged to her gunwales, and involved in a whirlpool of spray, as if a cataract had poured itself down upon her decks. The vessel struggled like a living thing to throw off the weight of water, and emerged at length with her bows from the vortex, and rode proudly above the billowy sea. For about twenty minutes she was driven onward with the fierce tempest, wholly at its mercy. Her masts both curved forward with the strong pressure of the wind, and her velocity through the water seemed like that of a bird.

At length the power of the tornado ceased. The clouds parted, and exposed here and there a glittering star; and the foaming sea began to subside, and change from a snowy white surface to its deep blue color. Faulcon was now able to get the schooner under the control of her helm and to carry sail, for he had been all the while scudding under the close-reefed fore-topsail. The wind once more swung round to the northward, and he was able to lay his course a second time for Havanna.

Having withstood the tornado with safety himself, he began to fear for the ship, which he knew must have been struck by it before it reached him. He thought painfully of the danger Alice had been in, and was filled with anxiety for her preservation.

The morning at length dawned, and by the increasing light of day, the coast of Cuba became visible about five leagues to the southward. As the sun rose, he was able to make out the faint outline of the towers of the Moro Castle. He stood on for the port under crowded sail; and about nine o'clock was so near that he could distinguish with his glass the Spanish flag upon the battlements; and see the shipping in the harbor, with the roofs and turrets of the city beyond. Numerous small craft were sailing in and out of the harbor, or gliding along the coast. In the entrance was moored a huge line-of-battle-ship, stripped, but with her batteries in order, serving as a guard ship. A United States sloop-of-war and a British frigate lay at anchor just inside of her; and a number of Spanish ships of war were moored deeper in the harbor. These objects opened one after another upon Faulcon's gaze as he stood upon the after gun-carriage watching the progress of his swift vessel through the water. Nearer and nearer he advanced to the opening of the port, more and more distinct appeared everything on shore. Closer and closer under the shadow of the Gibraltar-like Moro, the schooner moved, until the battlements frowned above them, and an officer from their summit hailed them with a loud challenge.

"What schooner of war is that?"

"The Wing of the Wind."

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"What nation? Show your colors."

"Colombian!"

"You will come to anchor between the guard ship and the Spanish frigate."

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered Faulcon, who saw that although the hostilities between Spain and the new republic had ceased, that the Spanish authorities still retained a lively jealousy of their late foes.

As he passed the Castle, and entered the harbor, he all at once uttered an exclamation of joyful surprise. Just ahead of him, and hitherto concealed by being on the inner side of the U. S. sloop-of-war, was the packet-ship Washington at anchor. A glance was sufficient to explain to him the reason of her being there. Her fore-topmast was gone, all her boats carried away, and her bulwarks forward stove, so that every thing level with the deck was visible to the eye. He saw that she had suffered greatly in the tornado, and had barely escaped from utter shipwreck. He lufted a little as he came under her stern, and hailed, just as Captain Bunker himself hailed him.

"You have bravely rode out the tornado, Captain," said the latter, "or else you were only on the skirts of it! You see how it has served me. I thought at one time, we should have to go to the bottom! I have lost only a few spars and some of my forward bulwarks, with boats and caboose! I am glad to see you again!"

"Thank you, sir! Are all your passengers safe and well?" asked Faulcon, as his schooner sailed with a graceful curve round the ship's quarter.

"Yes, all. Will you come on board and dine?"

"With pleasure," answered Faulcon, as his vessel glided on.

"How do you get along with your prisoners?"

"They are very quiet."

"Where do you anchor?"

"Close by you."

"I am glad of that!" responded the captain with frank cordiality.

In a few seconds the schooner dropped her anchor within cable's length of the ship, and with her sails furled, lay like some fairy bark among the larger war-ships that were moored around her. She was now boarded by an armed boat from the Castle, and Faulcon briefly explained the events which had transpired. The Spanish officer then went below to look at the prisoners, who were lying about between decks in their chains, sullen and ferocious. They came last to Lightfoot, who had the steerage to himself. They found him reclining upon a mattress, and looking very pale, but with an expression of determined hate upon his features.

"So you have come to gaze on me as if I were a chained tiger!" he said, addressing Faulcon fiercely.

"No. The Spanish officer wished to see the prisoners, and I came with him. I have refrained from visiting you. I do not wish to triumph over a fallen man."

"I wish to speak with you, Faulcon," said Lightfoot, as he and the Spanish officer were passing out.

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"Well, what have you to say?"

"You remember that miniature?"

"Yes."

"You thought it resembled Alice Ashley."

"Yes."

"It is her likeness. Alice Ashley and I were once lovers."

"You and she?" cried Faulcon with surprise.

"Yes. Does it not make you love me better?" he asked with savage malice. "See, this is her picture! I kiss its sweet lips before your eyes, for I know you were also her lover."

"Your wounded condition only prevents me from punishing this insult to my feelings, Lightfoot! How is it that you have seen this lady?"

"I supplanted you. I loved her, but found she loved another. I resolved to destroy you in her opinion, and I succeeded."

"Then you are the person to whom I owe my banishment from her presence. You were my secret foe the author of the anonymous communications to which she listened."

"Yes, Faulcon. If it will give you pleasure to know it, I am the man! She was a sweet girl, and I would have sacrificed myself to win her, much less you."

"This confession was only needed to seal your doom. You might have been leniently treated by the Colombian government, and punished perhaps only with imprisonment. The Spanish officer now on board, has desired me to surrender you as pirates. You will not find mercy here, or favor. I shall comply with his request. You shall die the death you so richly merit."

With these words Faulcon approached him, and took from him by force, the miniature of Alice Ashley.

"This, villain, you shall no longer desecrate."

"It is very manly in you to take advantage of my weakness to rob me."

"I do not reproach myself when one so base as you are is the object of my violence. We shall probably not meet again. I shall go on deck and inform the Spanish officer that I surrender you and your party to him, and desire him to send for you. I shall be glad when the schooner is freed from you. I shall take her back to Colombia, and the government will not need your presence to know what I have done for it. Now, Captain Lightfoot, farewell. I would as a friend recommend to you to make your peace with heaven."

"Heaven! I know nothing about a heaven. Leave me to myself. I don't want any preaching."

Faulcon departed, and meeting the Spanish officer on deck, told him that he had decided to surrender the pirates into his hands. While he was speaking, a barge belonging to the American sloop-of-war pulled alongside, containing the captain of the packet-ship, Mr. Tilghman, and Mr. Ashley and his daughter, besides two or three

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other ladies.

"Captain Faulcon," said the American captain, "I have had a visit from the lieutenant of the American sloop-of-war, and as he has heard of your services and courage, he desired to visit you. Mr. Tilghman and Mr. Ashley, and Miss Ashley, also desired to accompany us; and so you see we make quite a party; we have fairly boarded you."

"I surrender myself a willing captive to such fair boarders," answered Faulcon, slightly resting his glance upon Alice Ashley's face. Their eyes met, the expression was kindly, and at once their hearts flowed into one. While Captain Bunker was explaining to the Spanish commandant of the port how his ship had been saved through Faulcon's gallantry, the latter had been approached by Mr. Ashley, who taking his hand, said, leading him to Alice

"My daughter, Mr. Faulcon. You were once friends, and will need no introduction."

"Alice, your note filled my soul with joy and hope," said Faulcon, in a low tone. "Tell me, shall I hope?"

"Oh, is it possible, Mr. Faulcon, you can still think of me with kindness?" she asked in tremulous accents, while her face lighted up with pleasure.

"I can only think of you with love, Alice. You are dear nay, dearer to me than ever. Say that I may be once more regarded by you as in times past."

"I am willing, in any way, to atone to you, Field, for my past unkindness. It has caused me more unhappiness than I can speak of. The reflection, that after all, you are kind"

"Kind, dearest Alice! That is a cold word. I love you with the deepest tenderness. Your pale cheek and drooping form bring tears into my eyes."

"Nay, now that I know you love me still, Field, I shall be better. I am happier at this little moment than I have been for a year past."

"How blest your words make me, Alice! Then you permit me to hope?"

"To hope for all that I have power to give, Field," she answered, deeply blushing.

"Sweet, kind Alice!" he cried, pressing her hand. "But why that start?"

"It is he!" she cried, with emotion.

"Who?" demanded Faulcon. He followed her looks and beheld Lightfoot, whom the Spanish officer had ordered to be brought on deck. He was leaning upon the arms of two men, and regarding them with the eyes of the demon of hatred.

"That man has confessed himself the secret foe who would have ruined me."

"Yes, Field, I have since learned his baseness and treachery. It is horrible! I cannot look upon him! Oh, that I should ever have been so wicked as to believe him! Forgive me, Field!"

"With all my heart, Alice. Walk aft with me. He will soon be removed into the boat. Ah, here comes on deck Dona Adelaida and her father!"

The Wing of the Wind: A Nouelette of the Sea

"She is very beautiful. Who is she?"

"They were taken prisoners by Lightfoot and rescued by me. They land in Havanna this morning. You must know her, Alice."

As he was about to leave her to approach the fair Spaniard, Lightfoot, who had not kept his eyes off Faulcon and Alice, suddenly rushed forward to the capstan, on which lay a pair of pistols, and seizing hold of one, levelled it at Faulcon and pulled the trigger. Adelaida saw the direction in which the pistol was aimed, and impulsively threw herself between its course and the bosom of him whom she now gave proof that she loved better than life.

She fell dead at Faulcon's feet. He bent over her a moment and then fixed his eyes upon the murderer, who bitterly muttered his disappointment. He would have rushed forward and shot him dead for the deed, but he felt that his death by his hand, would be no adequate retribution.

"I leave you, monster, to the ignominious death of the gallows!" he said, sternly. "You have given to heaven another angel. Yet I would rather far, the ball had entered my own heart."

The Colombian renegade was soon removed with his partisans from the schooner, and in a few days afterwards were executed, Lightfoot showing himself hardened and vindictive to the last moment. A few moments before he was swung off, he was shown by Captain Bunker a "Gaceta," in which was recorded, that that morning were married by the chaplain of the American sloop-of-war, "Field Faulcon, Esquire, late of the Colombian service, to Alice Ashley, only daughter of Thomas Ashley, Esquire, of Boston.

THE END.