

THE
NOANK'S
LOG



A PRIVATEER
OF THE
REVOLUTION

STODDARD

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LOTHROP

W. O. STODDARD.

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Log, by W. O. Stoddard

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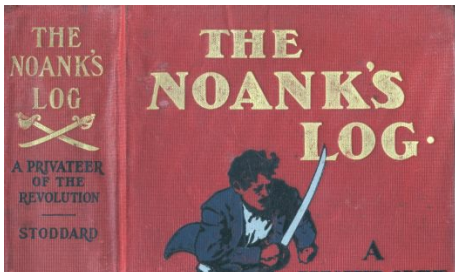
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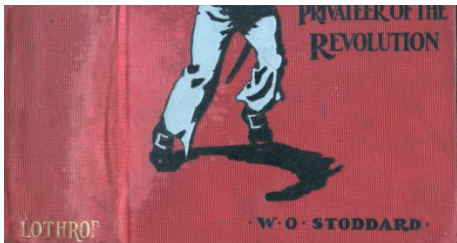
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THE NOANK'S LOG ***

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The NOANK'S LOG

A PRIVATEER OF THE REVOLUTION

BY W. O. STODDARD

Author of "Guert Ten Eyck," "Gid Granger," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL CRAWFORD

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PREFACE.

The latter half of the year 1776 and the whole of the year 1777 have been vaguely and erroneously described as "the dark hour" of the war for American independence. It is true that our armies, hastily gathered and imperfectly equipped, had been outnumbered and defeated in several important engagements. Beyond that purely military fact there was no real darkness. Upon the sea the success of the Americans had been phenomenal. Before the end of the year 1777, the commerce of Great Britain had suffered losses which dismayed her merchants. As early as the 6th of February, 1778, Mr. Woodbridge, alderman of London, testified at the bar of the House of Lords that the number of British ships taken by American cruisers already reached the startling number of seven hundred and thirty-three. Of these many had been retaken, but the Americans had succeeded in carrying into port, as prizes, five hundred and fifty-nine. The value of these and their cargoes was declared to be moderately estimated at over ten millions of dollars. Only a few of the American cruisers were public vessels, sent out either by individual states or by the United States. All the others were private armed ships, "letters of marque and reprisal" privateers. Something of their character and cruising is set forth in this story of the old whaler *Noank*, of New London.

Something is also told of the condition and feeling of the people on the land during the misunderstood gloomy days. The years of the Revolutionary War were not altogether years of disaster, devastation, and depression. They were rather years of development and prosperity. The war was fought and its victory won not only for political, but for social, industrial, and financial freedom. All the energies of the American people had been fettered. As the war went on, and without waiting for its close, all these energies became free to work out the great results at which the world now wonders.

We are justly proud of our navy. It was founded by our sailors themselves, without the help of any Navy Department, or Treasury Department, or national shipyards, or naval academies. There were, however, very good admirals, commodores, and captains among the self-taught heroes who went out then in ships in which, ton for ton and gun for gun, they were able to outsail and outfought any other cruisers then afloat.

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THE NOANK'S LOG.

CHAPTER I.

A WOUNDED NATION AT BAY.

It is well to fix the date of the beginning of a narrative.

Through the mist and the icy rain, with fixed bayonets and steadfast hearts, up the main street of Trenton town dashed the iron men from the frost and famine camp on the opposite bank of the Delaware.

Among their foremost files, leading them in person, rode their commander-in-chief. Beyond, at the central street crossing, a party of Hessian soldiers were half frantically getting a brace of field-pieces to bear upon the advancing American column. They were loading with grape, and if they had been permitted to fire at that short range, George Washington and all the men around him would have been swept away.

Young Captain William Washington and a mere

boy-officer named James Monroe, with a few Virginians and Marylanders, rushed in ahead of their main column. Nearly every man went down, killed or wounded, but they prevented the firing of those two guns. Just before their rush, the cause of American liberty was in great peril. Just after it, the victory of Trenton was secure.

So it is set down in written history, and there are a great many curious statements made by historians.

This was a sort of midnight, it is said,—the dark hour of the Revolutionary War.

Manhattan Island, with its harbor and its important military and naval features, had been definitely lost to the Americans and occupied by the British. Its defences had been so developed that it was now practically unassailable by any force which the patriots could bring against it. From this time forward its harbor and bay were to be the safe refuge and rendezvous of the fleets of the king of England. Here were to land and from hence were to march, with only one important exception, the armies sent over to crush the rebellious colonies.

Nevertheless, Great Britain had won back just so much of American land, and no more, as her troops could continuously control with forts and camps. Upon all of her land, everywhere beyond the range of British cannon and the visitation of British bayonets and sabres, the colonists were as firm as ever. It is an exceedingly remarkable fact that probably not one county in any colony south of the Canadas contained a numerical majority of royalists, or "Tories." Still, however, these were numerous, sincere, zealous, and they fully doubled the effective strength of the varied forces sent over from beyond the sea.

The tide of disaster to the American arms had hardly been checked at any point in the north. Fort Washington had bloodily fallen; Fort Lee had been abandoned; the battle of White Plains had been fought, with sharp losses upon both sides. After vainly striving to keep together a dissolving army, General Washington with a small but utterly

devoted remnant, had retreated to contend with cold and starvation in their desolate winter quarters beyond the Delaware.

For a time, the red-cross flag of England seemed to be floating triumphantly over land and sea. All Europe regarded the American cause as hopelessly lost. The American character and the actual condition of the colonies was but little understood on the other side of the Atlantic. The truth of the situation was that the men who had wrested the wilderness from the hard-fighting red men, and who had been steadily building up a new, free country, during several generations, were unaware of any really crushing disaster. At a few points, which most of them had never seen, they had been driven back a little from the sea-coast, and that was about all. Among their snow-clad hills and valleys they were sensibly calculating the actual importance of their military reverses, and were preparing to try those battles again, or others like them. A bitter, revengeful, implacable feeling was everywhere increasing, for several aggravating causes. In the winter days of 1776-77, wounded America was dangerously AT BAY.

It was on Christmas morning, at the hour when the Hessians of Colonel Rahl were giving up their arms and military stores in Trenton town. At that very hour, a group of people, who would have gone wild with delight over such news as was to come from Trenton, sat down to a plentiful breakfast in a Connecticut farm-house. It was a house in the outskirts of New London, near the bank of the Thames River, and in view of the splendid harbor. As yet there were several vacant chairs at the table.

"Guert Ten Eyck," said a tall, noble-looking old woman, as she turned away from one of the frosted windows, "of what good is thy schooner and her fine French guns? Thee has not fired a shot with one of them. How does thee know that thee can hit anything?"

"Yes, we did, Rachel Tarns," was very cheerfully responded from across the table. "We blazed away

at that brig. We hit her, too. Good Quakers ought not to want us to hurt people."

"Guert," she tartly replied, "thee has done no harm, I will instruct thee. If thee is thyself a Friend, thee must not use carnal weapons, but if thee is one of the world's people thee may do what is in thee for the ships and armies of thy good King George. Do I not love him exceedingly? Hath he not seized my dwelling for a barracks, and hath he not driven me and mine out of my own city of New York, for what his servants call treasonable utterances?"

"Rachel!" came with much energy from the head of the table. "I can't fight, any more'n you can. You love him just the way you do for pretty good reasons. So do I, for 'pressing my husband and sons into his navy. Thank God! they've all escaped now, and they're ready to sink such ships as they were flogged in—"

"Mother Avery," interrupted a stalwart young man at her side, "that's what we mean to do if we can. British men-o'-war are not easy to sink, though. We've something to think of just now. If our harbor batteries aren't strengthened the British could clean out New London any day. Their cruisers steer out o' range of Ledyard's long thirty-twos, but there's not enough of 'em. We haven't powder enough, either."

"Vine," said Rachel Tarns, "does thee not see the peaceful nature of thy long cannon? They keep thy foes at a distance, and they prevent the unnecessary shedding of blood. I am glad they are on thy fort."

"Rachel Tarns," said Guert, "you gave Aleck Hamilton the first powder he ever had for his field-pieces. You're a real good Quaker. I wish you'd come on board the *Noank*, though, and see how we've armed her. She's all ready for sea."

"What we're waiting for," said Vine Avery, "is a chance to do something. Father won't say just what his next notion's goin' to be."

"He says he won't wait much longer," said Guert.
"I wish you would," said Rachel Tarns, "but I can't."

"You may!" she answered firmly, and then her face grew shadowy.

He was a well-built, wiry looking young fellow, with dark and piercing eyes. His face wore at this moment a look that was not only courageous, but older than his apparent years seemed to call for. It was a look that well might grow in the face of an American boy of that day, whether sailor or soldier.

Others had now come in to fill the chairs at the table. At the end of it, opposite Mrs. Avery, sat a strong looking, squarely built man whom nobody need have mistaken for anything else than a first-rate Yankee sea-captain.

The house they were in was of somewhat irregular construction. Its main part, the doorstep of which was not many yards from the road fence, was a square frame building. At the right of its wide central passage, or hall, was the ample dining room. Opening into this at the rear was a room almost equally large that was evidently much older. Its walls were not made of sawed lumber, nor were they even plastered. They were of huge, rudely squared logs and these had been cut from the primeval forest when the first white settlers landed on that coast. They had made their houses as strong as so many small forts. In the outer doors of this room, and here and there in its thick sides, were cut loopholes, now covered over, through which the earlier Averys could have thrust their gun muzzles to defend their scalps from assaults of their unpleasant Pequot neighbors. There were legends in the family of sharp skirmishes in the dooryard. All of that region had been the battle-ground of white and red men and this was one reason why such captains as Putnam, and Knowlton, and Nathan Hale had been able to rally such remarkably stubborn fighters to march to Breed's Hill and to the New York and New Jersey battlefields.

"What's that, Rachel Tarns, about getting news from New York?" at last inquired Captain Avery, laying down his knife and fork. "I'd rather git good

news from Washington's army. I'm not givin' 'em up, yet, by any manner o' means."

"That's all right, father," said his son Vine, "but I do wish we knew of a supply ship, inward bound. I'd like to strike for ammunition for the *Noank* and for the batteries. We're not fixed out for a long voyage till we can fire more rounds than we could now."

There was a Yankee drawl in his speech, a kind of twang, but there was nothing coarse in the manners or appearance of young Avery, and his sailor father had an intelligent face, not at all destitute of what is called refinement.

"I wish thee might have thy will," responded Rachel, earnestly.

"Vine!" exclaimed his mother. "Hark! Somebody's coming. Rachel, didn't you hear that?"

"I did!" said Rachel, rising. "That was Coco's voice and Up-na-tan's. The old redskin's talking louder than he is used to about something."

"He can screech loud enough," said Guert. "I've heard him give the Manhattan warwhoop. Coco can almost outyell him, too."

At that moment, the front door swung open unceremoniously, and a pair of very extraordinary human forms came stalking in.

"Up-na-tan!" shouted Guert, with boyish eagerness. "Coco! All loaded down with muskets! What have they been up to?"

"Heap more, out on sled," replied a deep, mellow, African voice. "Ole chief an' Coco been among lobsters. Tole a heap."

"Thee bad black man!" said Rachel Tams. "Up-na-tan, has thee been wicked, too? What has thee been stealing?"

"Ole woman no talk," came half humorously from the very tall shape which had now halted in front of

her. "Up-na-tan been all over own island. See King George army. See church prison. Ship prison. See many prisoners. All die, soon. Ole chief say he kill redcoat for kill prisoner. Coco say, too. Good black man. Good Indian."

He might be good, but he was ferociously ugly. The only Indian features discernible about his dress were his moccasins and an old but hidden buckskin shirt. Over this he now had on a tremendous military cloak of dark cloth. On his head was a 'coonskin cap, such as any Connecticut farmer boy might wear. He now put down on the floor no less than six good-looking muskets, all duly fitted with bayonets. Coco did the same, and he, for looks, was equally distinguished. His tall, gaunt figure was surmounted by an undipped mop of white wool, over a face that was a marvel of deeply wrinkled African features. He also wore a military cloak, and both garments were such as might have been lost in some way by petty officers of a Hessian battalion. They were not British, at all events.

Guert glanced at the muskets on the floor and then sprang out of the door to discover what else this brace of uncommon foragers had brought home with them. Just outside the gate there was quite enough to astonish him. It was not a mere hand-sled, but what the country people called a "jumper." It was rudely but strongly made of split saplings, its parts being held together mostly by wooden pins. It had no better floor than could be made of split shingles, and on this lay, now, a closely packed collection of muskets, with several swords, pistols, and a miscellaneous lot of belts, cartridge-boxes, and knapsacks. Coco and Up-na-tan had plainly been borrowing liberally, somewhere or other, and Guert hastened back into the house to get an explanation. Curiously enough, however, both of the foragers had refused to give anything of the kind to the assembly in the Avery dining room.

"Where has thee been, chief?" had been asked by Rachel Tarns. "Tell us what thee and Coco have been doing. We all wish to hear."

"No, no!" interrupted the Indian; "Coco shut

mouth. Ole chief tell Guert mother. Where ole woman gone? Want see her!"

"That's so," said Guert. "Mother's about the only one that can do anything with either of them. They used to live a good deal at our house, you know."

There had all the while been one vacant chair at the table, waiting for somebody that was expected, and now through the kitchen door came hurrying in a not very tall but vigorous-looking woman.

"Mother!" said Guert. "So glad you came in! Speak to 'em! Make 'em tell what they've been doing!"

She proved that she understood them better than he or the rest did by not asking either of them a question. She stepped quickly forward and shook hands, with the red man first and then with the black. She stooped and examined the weapons on the floor.

"Sled outside," said Up-na-tan. "Ole woman go see."

Out she went silently, and the dining room was deserted, for everybody followed her. In front of the jumper stood a very tired-looking pony, and she pointed at him inquiringly. He himself was nothing wonderful, but his harness was at least remarkable. It was made up of ropes and strips of cloth. Some of the strips were red, some green, and the rest were blue, the whole being, nevertheless, somewhat otherwise than ornamental.

"Ole chief find pony in wood," said Up-na-tan. "Hess'n tie him on tree. Find sled in ole barn. Hess'n go sleep. Drink rum. No wake up. Ole chief an' Coco load sled. Feel hungry, now. Tell more by and by."

His way of telling left it a little uncertain as to whether or not intemperance was the only cause that prevented the soldier sleepers from awaking to interfere with the taking away of their arms and accoutrements. He seemed, however, to derive

great satisfaction from the interest and approval manifested by Mrs. Ten Eyck.

"Come in and get your breakfast," she said. "Rachel Tarns and I'll cook for you while you talk. Rachel, they must have the best we can give them. I've cooked for Up-na-tan. 'Tisn't the first meal he's had here, either. He's an old friend of mine and yours."

"Good!" grunted Up-na-tan. "Ole woman give chief coffee, many time." He appeared, nevertheless, a good deal as if he were giving her commands rather than requests, so dignified and peremptory was his manner of speech. No doubt it was the correct fashion, as between any chief and any kind of squaw, although he followed her into the house as if he in some way belonged to her, and Coco did the same.

"Guert come," he said. "Lyme Avery, Vine, all rest, 'tay in room. Tarns woman come."

The door into the kitchen was closed behind them in accordance with his wishes, and the breakfast-table party was compelled to restrain its curiosity for the time being.

"We must let the old redskin have his own way," remarked Captain Avery. "Nobody but Guert's mother knows how to deal with him. The old pirate!"

"That's just what he is, or what he has been," said Vine Avery. "He hardly makes any secret of it. I believe he has a notion, to this day, that Captain Kidd sailed under orders from General Washington and the Continental Congress."

"Captain Kidd wasn't much worse than some o' the British cruisers," grumbled his father. "They'll all call us pirates, too, and I guess we'd better not let ourselves be taken prisoners."

Mrs. Avery's face turned a little paler, at that moment, but she said to him, courageously:—

"Lyme! Do you and Vine fight to the very last! I'm

glad that Robert is with Washington. I wish they had these muskets there! No, they may be just what's wanted at our forts here."

"More muskets, more cannon, and more powder," said Vine. "Oh! how I ache to know how those fellows captured 'em! There isn't any better scout than an Indian, but both of 'em are reg'lar scalpers."

They might be. They looked like it. They were unsurpassed specimens of out and out red and black savagery, with the added advantage, or disadvantage, of paleface piratical training and experience by sea and land. The very room they were now in was a kind of memorial of old-time barbarisms, and it might again become a fort—a block-house, at least—almost any day.

All the farm-houses of Westchester County, New York, not far away, if not already burned or deserted, had become even as so many "block-houses," so to speak. They were to be held desperately, now and then, against the lawless attacks of the Cowboys and Skinners who were carrying on guerilla warfare over what was sarcastically termed "the neutral ground" between the British and American outposts.

The huge fireplace, before which Mrs. Ten Eyck and Rachel Tams began at once to prepare breakfast for their hungry friends, had an iron bar crossing it, a few feet up. This was to prevent Pequots, Narragansetts, or other night visitors from bringing their knives and tomahawks into the house by way of the chimney. Upon the deerhorn hooks above the mantel hung no less than three long-barrelled, bell-mouthed fowling pieces, such as had hurled slugs and buckshot among the melting columns of the British regulars in front of the breastwork on Bunker Hill, or, more correctly, Breed's Hill. A sabre hung beside them, and a long-shafted whaling lance rested in the nearest corner at the right, with a harpoon for a companion.

All these things had been taken in at a glance by the two foragers, or scouts, or spies, or whatever

the two halves, or seconds, or thirds, or minutes, or minutes duty they had been performing most of recently.

"Keep still, Guert," commanded his mother. "Let the chief tell."

Gravely, slowly, in very plain and not badly cut up English, with now and then a word or so in Dutch, Up-na-tan told his story, aided, or otherwise, by sundry sharply rebuked interjections from Coco. The first thing which seemed to be noteworthy was that the British on Manhattan Island considered the rebel cause hopeless. Its armed forces, moreover, were so broken up or so far away that the vicinity of New York was but carelessly patrolled. There had been hardly any obstacle to hinder the going in or the coming out of a white-headed old slave and a wandering Indian. The red men of New York, for that matter, were supposed to be all more or less friendly to their British Great Father George across the ocean. All black men, too, were understood to be not unwillingly released from rebel masters, provided they were not set at work again for anybody else.

Up-na-tan's greatest interest appeared to cling to the forts and to the cannon in them, but he answered Rachel Tarns quite clearly concerning the conditions of the American soldiers held as prisoners. All the large churches were full of them, he said, packed almost to suffocation. One or more old hulks of warships, anchored in the harbor, were as horribly crowded. The worst of these was the old sixty-four gun ship, *Jersey*, lying in Wallabout Bay, near the Long Island shore. Up-na-tan and Coco had rowed around her in a stolen boat and had been fired upon by her deck guard, and they had seen a dozen at least of dead rebels thrown overboard, to be carried out to sea by the tide.

"Redcoat kill 'em all, some day," said the Indian. "Kill men in ole church. Bury 'em somewhere." He seemed to have an idea that the doomed Americans did not perish by disease or suffocation altogether. He believed that their captors selected about so many of them every day, to be dealt with after the Iroquois or Algonquin fashion. This was strictly an

Indian notion of the customary usages of war. It did not stir his sensibilities, if he had any, as it did those of the warm-hearted Quaker woman and Mrs. Ten Eyck. Guert listened with a terribly vindictive feeling, such as was sadly increasing among all the people of the colonies. It was to account for, though not to excuse, many a deed of ruthless retaliation during the remainder of the war. In skirmish after skirmish, raid after raid, battle after battle, the innocent were to suffer for the guilty. Brave and right-minded servants and soldiers of Great Britain were to perish miserably, because of these evil dealings with prisoners of war in and about Manhattan Island.

"Thy scouting among the forts and camps hath small value," said Rachel Tams, thoughtfully. "If Washington knew all, he hath not wherewith to attack the king's forces."

"No, no!" exclaimed the Indian. "Not now. Washington come again, some day. Kill all lobster. Take back island. Up-na-tan help him. Coco no talk. Ole chief tell more."

Aided by expressive gestures and by an occasional question from Mrs. Ten Eyck, he made the remainder of his story both clear and interesting. He and Coco had crossed the Harlem, homeward bound, in an old dugout canoe. They had worked their way out through the British lines by keeping under the cover of woods, to a point not far from the White Plains battle-field. Here, one evening, they had discovered a Hessian foraging party in a deserted farm-house. The soldiers were having a grand carouse, thinking themselves out of all danger.

"Musket all 'tack up in front of house," said Up-na-tan. "One Hess'n walk up an' down, sentry, till he tumble. Fall on face. Coco find sled in barn. Find pony. Up-na-tan take all musket. Pile 'em on sled. Harness pony, all pretty good. Come away."

"Didn't you go into the house?" asked Guert, excitedly. "Didn't any of 'em know what you were doing? How'd you get your cloak?"

"Boy shut mouth," said Up-na-tan. "Ole chief want cloak. Coco, too, want more musket, pistol, powder. Hate Hess'n. All in house go sleep hard. No wake up. Lie still. Pony pull sled to New London."

Mrs. Ten Eyck's face was very pale and so was that of Rachel Tams. They believed that they understood only too well why the Manhattan warrior and the grim Ashantee who had been his comrade in this affair, preferred to say no more concerning the undisturbable slumber of that unfortunate detail of Hessians.

"Guert," said his mother, "go in and get your breakfast. The chief and Coco have had theirs. Rachel, you and I must have a talk with Captain Avery."

CHAPTER II.

MORE POWDER.

"Captain Watts, I must say it. I don't a bit like this tryin' to run in without a convoy."

"Nor I either, mate," said the captain, with an upward glance at the rigging and a side squint across the sea. "Tisn't any fault o' mine. I protested."

"I heard ye," replied the mate. "They only laughed at us. They said the king's cruisers'd swep' these waters as clean as the Channel. Glad ye know 'em."

"Know 'em?" laughed Captain Watts. "I'm a Massachusetts man. I know 'em like a book. Don't need any pilot."

"How 'bout Hell Gate, when we get there? We've lost a ship or two—"

"Brackett, man," interrupted the skipper, more seriously, "that's a long reach ahead, yet. I know Hell Gate channel when we get there. Our risks'll be in the sound. The rebels haven't any reg'lar cruisers. What we've to look out for is the Long Island whaleboat men. Tough customers. They say nigh half on 'em are redskins,—Indian scalpers."

"Well! As to them," said the mate, "we can beat 'em off. Our four-pounder popguns'd be good against whaleboats but not for anything bigger."

"Six on 'em," said Captain Watts. "We can handle 'em, too."

"I'd rather 'twas a frigate," said the mate. "Our crew's none too strong, and half of 'em are 'pressed men. No fight in 'em."

"Oh, yes, they'll have to fight," was responded. "Fight or hang, perhaps. I hate a 'pressed man. Anyhow, it'll take a better wind than this to show us Hell Gate channel before day after to-morrow. We'll be tackin' about in the sound, to-night."

"It's a'most a calm! Bitter cold, too."

He was a very intelligent looking British sailor, that first mate of the *Windsor*. She was a bark-rigged vessel of possibly six hundred tons, and she was freighted heavily with military and other supplies for the king's forces at New York.

Somehow or other, the discontented mate could not say why or how, the *Windsor* had become separated from her convoy and consorts. These were seeking their harbor by way of Sandy Hook, while she had been sent through Long Island Sound. She was hardly in it yet, although it may be a wide water question as to precisely at what line the sound begins. Not a sail of any kind larger than a fisherman's shallop was in sight. There was solid comfort to be had in the knowledge that the Americans had no navy, and that all these waters were regularly patrolled by English armed vessels. It looked as if there could be no good cause for anxiety, and Mate Brackett was compelled to accept the situation. He turned away, and the

accept the situation. He turned away, and the captain himself went below, hopefully remarking:—

"Cold weather's nothin'. There'll be more wind, by and by. We'll be ready to take it when it comes."

"He's a prime seaman. No doubt o' that," said the mate, looking after him. "He's pilot enough, too, and our bein' here's no fault o' his. We'll be ready for any rebel boats, though. I'll cast loose the guns, such as they are, and I'll get up powder and ball. Grapeshot'd be the thing for boats. Sweep 'em at short range. This 'ere craft's goin' to reach port, if we fight our way in!"

He was showing pretty good judgment and plenty of courage. His six guns, three on a side, looked serviceable. The crew appeared to be numerous enough to handle so few pieces as that, whatever their other deficiencies might be. Part of them, indeed were first-rate British tars, the best fighters in the world. As for Captain Watts, he was understood to be an American Tory of the strongest kind, to be depended upon even more than if he had been a Hull man or a Londoner. No set of men, anywhere, ever showed more self-sacrificing devotion to their political principles than did the loyalists, or royalists, of America in their long, fruitless struggle with what they deemed treason and rebellion.

It is possible that Mate Brackett might have studied his cannon and their capacities even more carefully than he did, if at that morning hour he could have been for a few minutes one of a little group upon the deck of a craft that was at anchor in New London harbor.

The tonnage of this vessel was much less than that of the *Windsor*, but she was sharper in the nose, cleaner in the run, trimmer, handsomer. She was schooner-rigged, with tall, tapering, raking masts that promised for her an ample spread of canvas. She was, in short, one of the new type of vessels for which the American shipyards were already becoming distinguished. She had been built for the whale-fishery, and that meant, to the understanding

of Yankee sailors, that she was to have speed enough to race a school of runaway whales, strength to stand the squeeze of an icefloe, the bump of an iceberg, or the blast and billows of a hurricane. She must also have fair stowage room between decks and in her hold for many casks of oil.

"Up-na-tan like long guns," said one of the voices on the deck of the *Noank*. "Now! Coco swing him. No man help. One man swing. All 'tan back. Brack man try."

He was asking a practical question as an experienced gunner. It was necessary to know whether or not the pivoting of that long, brass eighteen-pounder had been perfectly done for freedom of movement. In action there would be men enough to handle it, but even the work of many hands should not be impeded by overtight fittings and needless frictions.

"Ugh! Good!" he exclaimed, as his black comrade turned the gun back and forth, and then he tried it himself.

"Captain Avery, that's so, he can do it," remarked Guert Ten Eyck, thoughtfully, "but those two are made of iron and hickory. It isn't every fellow can do what they can."

"No, I guess not," laughed Captain Avery.

"I'm glad the old Buccaneers are pleased, though. There goes the redskin to the other guns. He can't find any fault with 'em. Not one of 'em's a short nose."

Three on a side, polished to glittering, the long brass sixes slept upon their perfectly fitted carriages. Every one of them bore the mark of the *fleur de lis*, for they were of a pattern which the French royal foundries were turning out for the light cruisers of King Louis. Such of them as were already mounted in that manner were lazily waiting for a formal declaration of war with England. These here, however, and others like them, were already coming on that very year. Before a great while, the

carrying on that very war. Before a great while, the entire French navy was to become auxiliary to that of the United States, and considerable French land forces were to march to victory shoulder to shoulder with the Continentals under General Washington.

The sailor comrades of Up-na-tan and Coco were evidently well aware that the savage-looking couple had seen much sea service upon armed vessels. The less said about it the better, perhaps, but some of it had been upon British cruisers, in whatever manner it had been escaped from. Some of it had been, it was said, under a very different fighting flag. Their inspection of the broadside guns was therefore watched with interest.

"Long!" said Up-na-tan. "Good. Shoot bullet far. Not big enough. Want nine-pounder. Old chief like big gun. Knock hole in ship. Sink her quick."

"Take out cargo first," muttered Coco.

"Then sink ship. Not lose cargo."

"Jest so!" exclaimed Captain Avery. "That's what we'll do! Chief, I believe the frame of the *Noank* is strong enough to carry a long thirty-two and six eighteens."

"No!" replied the Indian, firmly. "Too much big gun 'poil schooner. No run fast any more."

According to the red man's judgment, therefore, the Yankee skipper's enthusiasm might lead him to overload his swift vessel or make her topheavy in a sea. It was likely that things were just as well as they were. At all events, her brilliant armament and her disciplined ordering gave her an exceedingly efficient and warlike air as she rode there waiting her sailing orders.

"Sam Prentice's boat!" suddenly called out a voice, aft. "Father, he's headed for us. Here he comes, rowing hard!"

"*Noank* ahoy!" came across the water, from as far away as a pair of strong lungs could send it. "I

say! Is Lyme Avery aboard?"

"Every man's aboard! All ready! What news?" went back through the speaking trumpet in the hands of Vine Avery, at the stern.

"Tell him to h'st anchor! British ship sighted away east'ard! Not a man-o'-war. 'Rouse him!"

"All hands up anchor!" roared Captain Avery. "Run in the guns! Close the ports! Gear that pivot-gun fast! Up-na-tan, that's your work."

"Ugh!" said the Indian. "Shoot pretty soon."

Vine and Sam Prentice were exchanging messages rapidly as the rowboat came nearer. All on board could hear, and now the trumpeter turned to note the eager, fierce activity of the old Manhattan.

"It does you good, doesn't it," he said. "You're dyin' for a chance to try your Frenchers."

"Ugh!" grunted the chief, patting the pivot-gun affectionately. "Sink ship for ole King George. Kill plenty lobster! Kill all captain! Whoo-oo-oo!"

His hand was at his mouth, and the screech he sent forth was the warwhoop of his vanished tribe, —if any ears of white men can distinguish between one warwhoop and another. That he had been a sailor, however, was not at all remarkable. All of the New England coast Indians and the many small clans of Long Island had been from time immemorial termed "fish Indians" by their inland red cousins. The island clans were also known as "little bush" Indians. All that now remained of them took to the sea as their natural inheritance, and their best men were in good demand for their exceptional skill as harpooners.

The anchor of the *Noank* was beginning to come up when the boat of Sam Prentice reached the side.

"Did you sight her yourself, Sam?" asked Captain Avery.

"Well, I did," said Sam. "I was out more scoutin' than fishin', and I had a good glass. She's a bark, heavy laden. It's a light wind for anything o' her rig. She can't git away from our nippers. I didn't lose time gettin' any nigher. I came right in."

"On board with you," said the captain. "It's 'bout time the *Noank* took somethin'. We've been cooped up in New London harbor long enough."

"That's so!" said Sam Prentice, as he scrambled over the bulwark. "I'm hungry for a fight myself."

He was a wiry, sailorlike man, of middle age, with merry, black eyes which yet had a steely flash in them. Up came the anchor. Out swung the booms. The light wind was just the thing for the *Noank's* rig, and every sail she could spread went swiftly to its place. She was a beauty when all her canvas was showing. A numerous and growing crowd was gathered at the piers and wharves, for Sam Prentice's news had reached the shore also. Cheer after cheer went up as the sails began to fill.

"Anneke Ten Eyck!" exclaimed Mrs. Avery. "I'm so glad Lyme was all ready. He didn't have to wait a minute after Sam got there."

"I'm glad Guert's with him," said Mrs. Ten Eyck. "If he wants to be a sea-captain, I won't hinder him."

"God be with them all!" was the loud and earnest response of Rachel Tams. "I trust that they may do their whole duty by the ships of the man George, who calleth himself our king."

"Lyme Avery's jest the man to 'tend to that," called out a deep, hoarse voice, farther along the pier. "He was 'pressed, once, by George's men, and he means to make 'em pay for his lost time."

"So was my son, Vine," said Mrs. Avery. "He has something more'n lost time to make 'em account for."

"Nearly forty New London boys were 'pressed, first and last," said a sad-faced old woman. "One of

mine fell at Brooklyn and one's in the Jersey prison-ship. It's the king's work."

"We're sorry for you, Mrs. Williams," said another woman. "I don't know where mine are. We can't get any word from our 'pressed boys. God pity 'em!—God in heaven send success to the *Noank* and Lyme Avery! To our sailors on the sea and our soldiers on the land!"

"Amen!" went up from several earnest voices, and then there was another round of hearty cheers.

Away down the broad harbor the gallant schooner was speeding, with Guert Ten Eyck astride of her bowsprit. Up-na-tan and Coco were crouching like a pair of tigers at the side of the pivot guns. The crew was both numerous and well selected, for it consisted of the pick of the New London whaling veterans. The majority of them, of course, were middle aged or even elderly, so many of the younger men had marched away with Putnam or were at this time garrisoning the forts of the harbor.

There was to be no long and tiresome waiting. Hardly was the *Noank* well out beyond the point at the harbor mouth before Sam Prentice, from his perch aloft, called down to his friends on the deck:

"I've sighted her! She's made too long a tack this way for her good. We'll git out well to wind'ard of her. She's sure game!"

Every seaman on board understood just what that meant, and he was answered by a storm of cheers. Nevertheless, the face of Captain Avery was serious, for he had no means of knowing what might really be the strength and armament of the stranger.

As for her, she had all sail set, and her skipper was at the helm, while Mate Brackett was in the maintop taking anxious observations.

"Sail to wind'ard," he said to himself. "Hope there's no mischief in her. Anyhow, I'll go down and

have Captain Watts send the men to quarters."

Down he went and reported, and Captain Watts responded vigorously.

"Most likely a coaster," he said, "but we won't take any chances. Call the men. Any but a pretty strong rebel 'll sheer away if she finds we're ready for her. We'll shoot first, Brackett. I'm a fightin' man—I am!"

"All right, sir," said Brackett, more cheerily. "I've served on a cruiser. Men! All hands clear away for action! Cast loose the guns!"

He was in right good earnest, like the brave British seaman that he was, and the supply ship, in spite of having too much deck cargo, soon began to take on a decidedly warlike appearance. There was no audible grumbling among her crew as they went to their posts of duty, but a sharp observer might have noted that several of them, from time to time, cast wistful glances landward and then looked gloomily into each others' faces.

"No hope!" muttered one of them.

"They are hanging deserters," hissed another. "I saw one run up."

"I saw one flogged to death," came savagely from a third, "but I'll take my chance if I git one."

Mate Brackett was now busy with his glass, and he was telling himself how much he longed for a stronger breeze, coming from some other point of the compass.

"Hurrah!" he suddenly sang out. "Captain Watts, we're all right, now! British flag!"

"Keep to your guns!" roared back the captain. "I'll stand away from her, just the same. If you throw away the *Windsor* I'll have you hung!"

More fiercely vehement than ever became now his apparent readiness for fighting. He called another man to the wheel and went out among the

guns. He ordered up more muskets, pistols, pikes, cutlasses, and armed himself to the teeth, as if to repel boarders.

"They'd call me a Tory," he said to the mate. "They shoot Tories. I'm fighting for my life, if that there sail is a Yankee. Her flag's as like as not a trick to keep us from getting ready."

"We'll be ready," replied the mate; but all the men had heard the remark of Captain Watts concerning his chances.

Nearer and nearer, before the somewhat freshening breeze, came the strange schooner, with the merchant flag of Great Britain fluttering out to declare how peaceable and friendly was her character. Mate Brackett's glass could as yet discover no sign of evil, unless it might be that a widespread old sail which he saw on the deck amidships had been put there to cover up the wrong kind of deck cargo.

"She hasn't any business that I know of to head for us," he said to his commander, suspiciously. "We must be ready to give her a broadside."

"Luff!" instantly sang out Captain Watts to the man at the helm. "They can't fool me! Brackett, no nonsense, now! Bring the larboard guns to bear! I'll hail her! Ship ahoy! What schooner's that?"

His hail was given through his trumpet, and no answer came during a full half minute, while the schooner sped nearer. Then suddenly a storm of exclamations arose from the men, and Brackett groaned aloud.

"Just what old Watts was afraid of!" he exclaimed. "He's a gone man! So are all of us! The rebel flag! Guns!"

The *Noank* was indeed flying the stars and stripes now, instead of the red-cross flag of England. The old sail amidships had been jerked away, and there stood Up-na-tan, with one hand upon the breech of his long eighteen and the other holding a lighted ~~board ready to touch her off~~ *gun at the same*

anyard ready to touch her oil. Open at the same moment went the three starboard ports, and out ran the noses of the dangerous six-pounders.

"Heave to, or I'll sink ye!" came fiercely down the wind. "Surrender, or I'll send ye to the bottom!"

"It's no use, Captain Watts," said Brackett, dolefully; "she carries too many guns for us. We may as well give up."

"Men!" shouted the captain, "what do you say? Are you with me? Shall we fight it out? I'm ready!"

"Not a man of us, captain," sturdily responded one of the crew. "This 'ere isn't nothin' but a supply ship. We ain't bound as if 'twas a man-o'-war. No use, either."

"Brackett," said Watts, "you may haul down the flag, then. I won't. I call you all to witness that I've done my duty! Mate, the rebels won't shoot you. Report me dead to Captain Milliard of the *Cleopatra*. He ordered me to run in through the sound against my will."

"I'll give a good report of you," hurriedly responded the mate, while other and not unwilling hands hauled down the flag, "but that long eighteen alone would be too much for our popguns."

The two ships were now near enough for grappling, and in a few minutes more they were side by side upon the quiet sea.

"I surrender to you, sir," said Captain Watts to Captain Avery, as the latter sprang on board, followed by a swarm of brawny whalers. "I claim good treatment for my men, whatever you may do to me."

"I know you, sir," said Avery, sternly. "You are Watts, the Marblehead Tory. Step aft with me. There's an account to settle with you. Sam Prentice, look out for the prisoners. Vine, get ready to cast off and head for New London. Send 'em all below—"

"All but some of 'em," said Sam, with a broad grin. "Men! Every 'pressed American step out!"

No less than nine of the *Windsor's* crew obeyed that order, while all the rest sullenly surrendered their useless weapons to Coco and Guert Ten Eyck and a couple of sailors who were ordered to receive them.

Not on deck, fore or aft, but down in the cabin did the skipper of the captured supply ship give his account of himself and his cargo. Hardly was the cabin door shut behind them before Captain Avery laughed aloud, inquiring:—

"Now, Luke Watts, how did ye make it out! They'll hang ye, yet."



THE MARBLEHEAD TORY.

" 'Now, Luke Watts! they'll hang ye yet,' said Captain Avery."

THE MARBLEHEAD TORY.

**" 'Now, Luke Watts! they'll hang ye yet,' said
Captain Avery."**

"No, they won't," said Watts. "I've taken across ship after ship for 'em. I'm a known Tory, ye know. Worst kind. I promised jest sech another good Tory, in London, though, that I'd try and deliver this cargo to the blasted rebels. It's mostly guns, and ammunition, and clothing. I managed to git written orders from Captain Milliard, commandin' our convoy, to run through the Sound, contrary to my advice. You see, he's an opinionated man. I got him swearin' mad, and I had to obey, ye know. It has turned out jest as I warned him it would, and he can't say a word."

"You're a razor!" laughed Avery. "Then you tacked right over within easy reach of us, all reg'lar. Now! What are we to do with the crew? We don't want 'em on shore."

"Well!" said Watts. "The 'pressed men'll jine ye, all of 'em. They hate me like p'ison, for I da'sn't let 'em have a smell of how it really is. Take good care of Brackett, anyhow. He's a prime seaman. He saved one of our fellows from a floggin', once. All the rest o' the crew deserve somethin' better'n prison."

"Prison?" said Avery. "They're not prisoners of war. I don't want 'em, even if they are. I wouldn't hurt a hair o' their heads. I'm no butcher."

"Come on deck, then," said Watts, "and be kerful how you talk anythin' but rough to me."

Up they went, to find both vessels sailing steadily away toward the mouth of the harbor. Already they were so near that a booming cannon from Fort Griswold informed that the *Noank's* success was joyfully understood on shore.

The crew of the *Windsor* were now summoned

up from their temporary confinement in the hold, and were ordered to get out their own longboat ready for launching. They were told that all British tars were to go free and to make the best of their way to New York or to the first British ship they might meet. The impressed Americans listened in silence, for every man of them knew that in case of his escape, even in this manner, there would be thenceforth a possible rope around his neck. Whether impressed or not, he was considered bound to stick to the British flag, come what might.

"Captain Watts," said the commander of the *Noank*, "do you demand these men? They are Americans."

"I do demand them," replied Watts. "You have no right to keep them, and they'll all be hung as deserters."

"They can't help themselves," said Captain Avery, furiously. "Sam Prentice, iron every one o' those 'pressed men and put 'em all down in the hold. If they try to git away, shoot 'em. I'll put 'em ashore or kill 'em. You can't have 'em, Watts."

"That saves 'em," whispered Watts to himself. "He's another razor. I can report jist how they were took."

At all events, not one of the nine Americans made any resistance which called for shooting him.

"Now, Luke Watts," said the angry American privateer captain, "it's your turn. You are taken in arms against your country. Sam Prentice, Levi Hotchkiss, Vine Avery, speak out! Shall we hang Luke Watts? Or shall we shoot him? Or shall we let him go?"

"We can't safely let him go," began Sam. "He's a dangerous traitor."

"I protest!" interrupted Mate Brackett, courageously. "He has only done his duty to his king. He wasn't even serving on a ship of war. You haven't any right to hang him."

"You're an Englishman," said Avery. "I didn't ask you. Shut your mouth!"

"I won't!" said Brackett; "not if you shoot me. If you hang Captain Watts, we'll hang a dozen Yankees. We've plenty of 'em, too. It'll be blood for blood!"

"Father," said Vine, "let him go. All the men'd say so."

Behind him at that moment stood Up-na-tan, grinning ferociously, with his glittering long knife out.

"So! So! Up-na-tan!" he snarled. "Take 'calp! No let him go. Knife good! Kill!"

None of the others were doing anything theatrical except the two captains, and all the while the longboat was hurriedly made ready for the short and entirely safe, but probably cold, uncomfortable voyage before them.

"Captain Luke Watts," said his captor, sternly, "I suppose I must let you go. Don't let me ever ketch ye again, though. It's time for us to hang Tories. Brackett, you and your men lower that boat and git into her, short order. Luke Watts can pilot you in. Start along now. Every man may take his own kit."

"Come on, Captain Watts," said the hearty British sailor. "Your shave's been a narrer one. I thought you was bound for the yardarm, this time."

"I owe you something," replied Watts. "I'll stand by ye, any day."

The queer piece of very good unprofessional acting was played to its ending. The longboat was lowered, the men got into her, with provisions for two days, and away she went, her own sail careening her as if it were in haste to get from under the brazen muzzles of the *Noank's* French guns.

"It's awful to be a traitor," remarked Sam Prentice, gravely. "Who'd ha' thought it of a Marblehead man!"

"Sam!" said Lyme Avery, and the rest of his remark consisted of his right eye tightly shut and his left eye very wide open.

"Ugh! Good!" chuckled Up-na-tan, and Guert Ten Eyck laughed aloud.

Not for one moment had the subtle, keen-eyed red man been deceived, and Guert had caught the truth of it all from him.

"Not a word, Guert," said Captain Avery. "He may be able to do it again."

"Didn't fool ole brack man," said Coco. "S'pose he 'tone bline? Wen King George 'ply ship tack right for New London, then it's 'cause he was 'tendin' to go right there."

"No talk," said Up-na-tan. "Ole chief like Watt. He bring plenty powder for *Noank* gun. Fort gun, too. Now schooner go to sea. Good!"

The impressed men were freed of their manacles as soon as the longboat was well away. They could be cheerful enough now, for the prudent management of Lyme Avery had made their necks safe, unless they should be taken by the British from an American armed ship.

Up the broad, beautiful harbor the *Noank* and her prize sailed merrily, while guns from the fort batteries saluted her and crowds of patriotic New Londoners swarmed upon the piers and wharves to do full honor to so really important a success. At one pier head were gathered all the members ashore of the Avery household.

"There he comes!" exclaimed Mrs. Avery; "Lyne's in that boat; Guert and Vine are with him. Neither of them were hurt."

"I hope there wasn't much fighting," said Guert's mother. "I do so hate to have men killed."

"Anneke Ten Eyck," said Rachel Tarns, "thy wicked son hath once more aided the rebels in stealing a ship from thy good king. Thee has not brought him up well. He needeth instruction or he will become as bad as is the man George Washington himself, God bless him!"

CHAPTER III.

THE UNFORGOTTEN HERO.

More than one day's work was required to ascertain the full value of the *Windsor* as a bearer of supplies to the forts and ships of the United States, instead of to those of Great Britain.

"All the things the *Noank* was short of," Captain Avery said, "are goin' into her now. There isn't any secret to be kept concernin' her sailin' orders, either. She's bound for the West Indies to see what she can do."

Perhaps it was at his own table that his plans and the reasons for them were most thoroughly discussed, but all his crew and their many advisers were satisfied, and a number of prime seamen who were not to go on this trip roundly declared their great envy of those who could.

"Tobacco," they said, "sugar, if it's a home-bound trader. If it's one from England, then Lyme'll get loads o' 'sorted stuff, such as they ship for the West Injy trade."

There were other vessels preparing and some were already at sea. The year, therefore, promised to be a busy one for New London. So it did in a number of other American ports, and it behooved Great Britain to increase, if she could, the number and efficiency of her cruisers.

One continual black shadow rested over the port and town, and that was the great probability of a British attack, at no distant day.

"They've their hands pretty full, just now," people said. "The winter isn't their best time, either, but some day or other we shall see a fleet out yonder, and redcoats and Hessians and Tories boating ashore."

It was an entirely reasonable prediction, but its fulfilment was to be almost unaccountably postponed. When its hour arrived, at last, nearly two years later, New London was in ashes and Fort Griswold was a slaughter-pen.

"Mother," said Guert, on his return to the house from one of his visits to the *Noank*. "I wish you could go with us to the West Indies, the Antilles. Think of it! Summer all the while!"

"But no oranges, or lemons, or pineapples just now," she said laughingly. "I mean to go, some day.

Perhaps you will take me in your own ship."

"Any ship of mine will be your ship," he said. "I wish I had some money to leave with you, now. It's awful to think of your being poor."

"Our New York farm will be of no use to us," she said, "until the king's troops leave the island. I shall be very comfortable here, though, except that I shall all the while be waiting for you to come home again."

Very brave was she, under her somewhat difficult circumstances. All the New London people were kind, especially the Averys, but she expected to be poor in purse for some time to come. As to that, however, she had a surprise in store. That very evening, after dark, Up-na-tan lingered in the kitchen.

"Chief see ole woman," he said. "See nobody but Guert mother."

No sooner were they alone than he pulled from under his captured military cloak a small purse, and handed it to her.

"No Kidd money," he said. "Lobster money. Pay ole woman for King George take farm"

She hesitated a moment, and then she exclaimed:
—

"God sent it, I do believe! I'll take it. You won't need it at sea."

"Up-na-tan no want money," he replied contemptuously. "Ole chief go fight. Come back. Go to ole woman house. Own house. Money belong to ole woman."

"Thank you!" she said.

"No," grumbled the Indian; "no thank at all. Up-na-tan good!"

So the conference ended, for he stalked out of the house, and she examined the purse.

"Nearly twenty pounds, of all sorts," she said. "Now I needn't borrow of Rachel for ever so long. I want to let Guert know. He will feel better."

The Indian had but obeyed the simple rules of his training. Any kind of game, however captured, was for the squaw of his wigwam to administer. Her business would be to provide for the hunter as best she could. In former days he had always been free of the Ten Eyck house and farm. It was his. The game he had recently taken was in the form of gold and silver, but there could be no question as to what he was bound to do with it.

Neither he or his Ashantee comrade were inclined to spend much time on shore. Hardly anything could induce them to come away from the keen pleasure they were having in the handling and stowage of much powder and shot. The varied weapons which they examined and put in order were as so many jewels, to be fondly admired and even patted.

If Mrs. Ten Eyck had anything else to depress her spirits she tried not to let Guert know it. All her table talk, when he was there, was brimming with warlike patriotism. Nevertheless, he was her only son and she was a widow. She could not but wish, at times, that he were a soldier instead of a sailor, to belong to the quiet garrison of Fort Griswold, for instance, and to come over to the Avery house now and then.

He was sent for, somewhat peremptorily, one day, not by her but by Rachel Tarns, and when he arrived she herself opened the door for him.

"I am glad thee came so early," she said to him. "I have somewhat to say to thee. Come in, hither."

Very dignified was she, at any time, and he was accustomed to obey her without asking needless questions. He followed her, therefore, as she led on into the parlor, opposite the dining room, the main thought in his mind being:—

"I wish she'd hurry up with it. I want to get back to the *Noank*, as soon as I've seen mother."

"What is it?" he began, after the door of the parlor closed behind them, but she cut him short.

"I will not quite tell thee," she said. "Some things thee does not need to know. Thy old friend, Maud Wolcott, will be here presently. One cometh with her to whom I forbid thee to speak. After they arrive, thou art to do as I shall then direct thee."

"All right," said Guert. "I don't care who it is. I'll be glad to see Maud, though. She's about the best girl I know. Pretty, too."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth before there came a jingle of sleighbells in the road, and it ceased before the house.

"Remain thee here," said Rachel, as she arose and hurried out.

Guert obeyed, but he went to a window and he saw a trim-looking, two-seated sleigh. A man he did not know was hitching the horse to the post near the gate. The sleigh had brought a full load of passengers, all women.

"That's Maud Wolcott," exclaimed Guert. "The girl that's with her is taller than she is, and she's all muffled up. I can't see her face. How Maud did

jump out o' that cutter! The two others are old women. Rachel knows 'em."

The first girl out of the sleigh was in the house quickly. She came like a flash into the parlor and, as her hood flew back, a mass of brown curls went tumbling down over her shoulders.

"Guert!" she said, breathlessly. "I'm so glad you're here! We were told you were going."

"We're going!" said Guert. "We're bound for the West Indies. We've taken one British ship, already. I'm a privateer, Maud! Oh! but ain't I glad to see you again. It's like old times!"

"You're growing," she said. "I wish I could go to sea, or fight the British. We haven't any chance to talk, now."

He might be very glad, but, after all, he seemed a little afraid, and a kind of bashfulness grew upon him as he shook hands with her. She must have been a year younger than he was,—but then, she was so very pretty, and he was only a boy.

Half a dozen questions and answers went back and forth between them, as between old acquaintances, near neighbors. Then the parlor door opened to let in Rachel Tarns and the "all muffled up" girl who had been in the sleigh with Maud. She did not speak to anybody, but went and sat down, silently, at the other window of the parlor.

"Guert," said Rachel, "sit thee down here, by me and Maud. Thee will talk only of what I bid thee, and thee will ask no foolish questions."

"All right," said Guert. "What is it you want me to say? Maud hasn't told me, yet, half o' what I want to know."

"If thee were older," she said, "thee would have more good sense. I have a reason that I will not tell thee. I wish thee to give me a full account of all thy dealings with that brave man, Nathan Hale. Thee saw him die, and there is no other that knoweth many things that are well known to thee."

"I hate to tell everything," he said.

"Thee must!" exclaimed Rachel. "Thee will not leave out a word that he spake or a deed that he did."

Something flashed brightly into the quick mind of Guert just then. He could not exactly shape it, but it came when he caught the sound of a low sob from under the veil of the girl at the other window. "I'll begin where I first saw him," he said.

He did not at all know after that how his boyish enthusiasm helped him to draw his word pictures of Captain Hale's daring scout work, of boat and land adventures by night and day, in company with him and Up-na-tan and Coco. He told it more rapidly and vividly as a kind of excitement spurred him. He did not know that beyond the half-open door of the next room his mother and several other persons were listening. Two of them had come in the cutter with Maud, and yet another sleigh had brought visitors to the Avery house. There were to be very loving and tenacious memories to treasure all that he was telling.

Guert came at last, sorrowfully, more slowly, to the tragic end of all in the old orchard near the East River. He told of the troops, and the crowd, and the tree, and he repeated the last words of the hero who perished there.

"That I can give but one life for Liberty!" he said, and there his own voice choked him while a

and then his own voice echoed this, "Glory! Glory! Glory!"

Throughout Guert's narrative, there had been something almost painful in the forward-leaning eagerness of the veiled girl at the window. She was standing now, and a sigh that was more a sob broke from her as she held out to him a hand with something that she was grasping tightly. Rachel stepped forward and took it, opening it as she did so. Only a small, leather case it was, containing a miniature.

"My boy," said Rachel, "is that like thy friend? Look well at it. Tell me."

"It's a real good picture," said Guert, wiping his eyes as he looked more closely. "It's like him, but there isn't the light and the smile that was on his face when he stood with the rope around his neck under that old apple tree."

"That is enough," said Rachel, turning away with the miniature. "I think not many eyes will ever see this thing again."

"Not any," came faintly from under the veil. "I mean to have it buried with me. Nobody else has any right to it. I must go now."

The girl at the window had risen as she spoke. She came forward and took Guert's hand for a moment. Then, in a voice that was tremulous with feeling, she said:—

"Let me thank you for all you have said. Thank you for your friendship for him. God bless you!"

In spite of its sadness, her voice had in it a half-triumphant tone. Rachel gave her back the miniature, and she turned to go. No one spoke to her. Guert could not have said a word if he had

net. Guert could not have said a word if he had tried, but Maud sprang to her side.

"Good-by, Guert," she said. "I'll see you again, some day. I'm going with her, now."

"Good-by, Maud," said Guert. "I did so want a talk with you, but I s'pose I can't this time. We are to sail right away. The *Noank's* all ready."

Both of the sleighs at the gate were quickly crowded. They were driven away, and hardly had the jingling of their bells died out up the road, before Rachel Tarns came and put an arm around Guert. She, too, was wiping her eyes.

"Thee was a brave, good boy," she said, "and I love thee very much. Thee is too young, now, and thy picture hath never been painted. Some day thee may need one to give away, as Nathan did. If it shall please God to let thee die for thy country, somebody may will to keep it in memory of thee."

"Mother would," said Guert. "I'll get one, as soon as I can. But Nathan Hale'll be remembered well enough without any picture. All the men in America 'll remember him. He was a hero!"

The voice of Vine Avery was at the front door, shouting loudly for Guert, and out he darted, not even stopping to inquire who of all the friends or family of his hero had been listening in the dining room.

"What is it?" he eagerly asked, as he joined Vine at the doorstep.

"Powder and shot all stowed," said Vine. "Everything's ready now. As soon as the rest of the *Windsor's* cargo's out, they're going to tow her up the river, out o' harm's way. Father says we're to be all on board, now. Come on!"

"Oh, Guert!" said his mother, for she had followed him, and her arms were around his neck. "I can't say a word to keep you back! Be as brave as Nathan Hale was! God keep you from all harm! Do your duty! Good-by!"

It was an awful struggle for poor Guert, but he would not let himself cry before Vine Avery and the sailors who were with him. All he could do, therefore, was to hug his mother and kiss her. His last good-by went into her ear and down into her heart in a low, hoarse whisper.

Away marched the last squad of the crew of the *Noank*, and Mrs. Avery stood at the gate and watched them until they were hidden from her eyes beyond the turn of the road.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEWS FROM TRENTON.

"What is it, Sam?"

"I guess, Lyme, we'd better hold on a bit. The fort lookout sends word that a British cruiser's in sight, off the harbor."

Sam Prentice was in a rowboat, just reaching the side of the *Noank*, and his commander was leaning over the rail.

"I'd like to send a shot at her," he said. "None o' those ten-gun brigs, if it's one o' them, carry long guns or heavy ones."

"Can't say," replied Sam. "Maybe it's a bigger

feller. He won't dare to run in under the battery guns, anyhow. He can't look into the harbor."

"I wish he would," laughed the captain. "If he's goin' to try a game of tackin' off and on, and watchin', though, we must make out to run past him in the night."

"We mustn't be stuck any longer here," said Sam. "Are all the crew aboard?"

"All but you," was the reply. "Send your boat ashore. We'll find out what she is. I won't let any single cruiser keep me cooped up in port, now my powder and shot's found for me. We'll up anchor, Sam."

The first mate of the *Noank*, for such he was to be, came over the rail, and his boat was pulled shoreward.

"Isn't she fine!" he said, as he glanced admiringly around him. "We're in good fightin' order, Lyme."

"Sam," said the captain, "just study those timbers, will ye. Only heavy shot'd do any great harm to our bulwarks. I had her built the very strongest kind. Now! Some o' the new British craft are said to be light timbered, even for rough weather. Their own sailors hate 'em, and we can take their judgment of 'em."

"It's likely to be good," said Sam. "What a British able seaman doesn't know 'bout his own ship, isn't worth knowin'."

Further talk indicated that they both held high opinions of the mariners of England. Against them, as individuals, the war had not aroused any ill feeling. There was, indeed, among intelligent Americans, a very general perception that King George's war against his transatlantic subjects was

anything but popular with the great mass of the overtaxed English people. It was a pity, a great pity, that stupid, bad management and recklessly tyrannical statesmanship, in a sort of combination with needless military severities, had done so much to foster hatred and provoke revenge. It was true, too, although all Americans did not know or did not appreciate it, that their side of the controversy had been ably set forth in the Parliament of Great Britain by prominent and patriotic Englishmen, such as Chatham and Colonel Barre.

The old whaler *Noank*, of New London, however, had now become an American war vessel. Her crew and her commander were compelled, henceforth, to regard as enemies the captains and the crews of all vessels, armed or unarmed, carrying the red-cross flag instead of the stars and stripes.

"I tell you what, Sam," remarked Captain Avery, at last, "I wish we had news from New York and from Washington's army. The latest we heard of him and the boys made things look awfully dark."

"Don't let yourself git too down in the mouth!" replied Sam. "I guess the sun'll shine ag'in, Sunday. It's a long lane that has no turnin'. Washington's an old Indian fighter. He's likely to turn on 'em, sudden and unexpected, like a redskin on a trail that's been followed too closely."

"It won't do to go after a Mohawk too far into the woods, sometimes," growled Avery. "Not unless you're willin' to risk a shot from a bush. Now, do you know, I wish I knew, too, what's been the dealin' of the British admirals with Luke Watts, for losin' the *Windsor*. We owe that man a good deal,—we do!"

"They won't hurt him," said Sam. "It wasn't any

fault o' his'n."

In some such manner, all over the country, men and women were comforting themselves, under the shadow of death which seemed to have settled down over the cause of American independence. They knew that the Continental army was shattered. It was destitute, freezing, starving, and it was said to be dwindling away.

Somewhere, however, among the ragged tents and miserable huts of its winter quarters, was a man who had shown himself so superior to other men that in him there was still a hope. From him something unexpected and startling might come at any hour.

As for Luke Watts, formerly the skipper of the British supply ship *Windsor*, now a prize in New London harbor, Captain Avery and his mate spoke again of him and of the difficulties into which he might have fallen. Possibly it would have done them good to have been near enough to see and hear him at that very hour of the day.

A good longboat, with a strong crew anxious to make time and get into a warmer place, had had only a short run of it from New London to New York. Here was Luke, therefore, in the cabin of a British seventy-four, standing before a gloomy-faced party of naval officers. With him were his mate, Brackett, and several of the sailors of the *Windsor*. It was evident that her loss had been inquired into, and that all the testimonies had been given. If this was to be considered as a kind of naval court martial, it was as ready as it ever would be to declare its verdict.

"Gentlemen," said the burly post-captain who appeared to be the ranking officer, "it's a bad affair! We needed that ammunition. Even the land forces

are running so short that movements are hindered. If, however, we are to find fault with any man, we must censure the captain of the *Cleopatra*. This man Watts is proved to have gone into the Sound against his will and protest. I am glad that the rebels did not hang him. His recorded judgment of the danger to be encountered was entirely correct. Watts, I shall want you to pilot home one of our empty troop-ships."

"I know her, sir," replied Luke, promptly. "I beg to say no, sir. Not unless she has twice the ballast that's in her now. I'd like permission to say a word more, sir."

"Speak out! What is it?"

"A ten-gun brig in the Sound can't catch that New London pirate—"

"The *Boxer* is cruising around that station," interrupted the captain. "She's a clipper to go."

"No use," said Luke, shaking his head. "The old whaler'll get away."

"What would you do, then?" roughly demanded another officer.

"A strong corvette, or two of'em, off Point Judith and Montauk, to catch her as she runs out," said Luke. "She'll fight any small vessel. She carries a splendid pivot-gun, and she has six long sixes. She will be handled by prime seamen."

"Gentlemen," remarked the captain, "I agree with him. We have found the advice of this man Watts to be correct in every case. I believe he is right, now. We must do as he says or that pirate, perhaps others with her, will escape us. I will put him in charge of the *Termagant*. I'll feel safer about her, if she is sailed home by a man with a rebel rope

around his neck."

There was a general expression of assent, and then Watts spoke again.

"I want Brackett, if I can have him," he said. "I never had a better mate. There's fight in him, too."

"You may have him," he was told, and several of the officers present expressed their great regret that so many impressed American seamen had been ironed by Captain Avery and compelled to escape from a return to man-of-war duty. They ought never to have been detailed, it was asserted.

"We can't hang 'em for desertion," they said, half jocularly. "All we could do, if we caught them, would be to set them at work again."

Nevertheless, four of these escaped men were now voluntarily among the crew of the *Noank*. The remaining five had preferred to make the best of their ways to their several homes. Not one of them all had chosen to seek the friendly shelter of the British navy, so near and so ready to receive them.

Luke Watts and his friends were dismissed and went on deck. Shortly afterward, their own longboat carried them to the *Termagant* troopship, and the first words uttered by the Marblehead skipper after reaching her, were duly reported to his superiors.

"Men!" he had exclaimed, as he glanced around him. "This thing isn't fit to go to sea. She's been handled by lubbers. We've work before us, if we don't want to go to the bottom or be overhauled by the *Yankees*. Jest look at her spars and riggin'!"

All things were working together, therefore, to strengthen the confidence reposed in him, in spite of the curious fact that he had skilfully delivered the

Windsor and her cargo in New London instead of in New York.

"We had a narrer escape not many miles beyond Hell Gate," he had reported. "One o' those Long Island buccaneer whaleboats chased us more 'n an hour. They gave it up then, and we got through. 'Twas a close shave. Half on 'em are Montauk and Shinnecock redskins. Reg'lar scalpers."

He had told the truth, as he had appeared to do at every point of the account which he had given of himself, and now the very men who had captured him and let him go, neglecting to hang him, were about to learn why that Long Island whaleboat had not followed him any farther. There had been plenty of time for such a boat to get away, a long distance.

The lookout on the rampart of Fort Griswold, the same keen-eyed watcher who had sent warning to the *Noank* of the danger in the offing, was busy with his telescope.

"The cruiser's a brig!" he sang out. "I can make her out, now. She's one o' the new patterns. She's chasin' a whaleboat. I wish she'd roller it onto one o' them there ledges. She's firin'. It's long range, but it looks kind o' bad for the Long Islanders. There ain't any of our boats out, to-day. It's from t'other shore."

He was watching, now, with intense excitement. There is hardly anything else so interesting as a chase at sea with cannonading in it. All this time, however, Captain Lyme Avery had been growing feverish. He knew nothing of Luke Watts, nothing at all of the Long Island whaleboat and her pursuer, but he shouted to the men at the capstan:—

"Heave away, boys! I'm goin' to have a look at that there Britisher. We won't run any fool risks but

we'll find out what she is, anyhow."

Hearty cheers answered him and a loud war-whoop from Up-na-tan, for every man on board had long since become sick of harbor inactivity. They were also all the more ready for a brush with the enemy after having brought in so fine a prize on their first venture, and they now had plenty of powder and shot to fire away.

Only the mainsail swung out after the anchor was raised, but a fair wind was blowing and the *Noank* went swiftly seaward with the tide in her favor.

"Hark!" said Sam Prentice; "guns again! Something's up, Up-na-tan! Oh, you and Coco are at your pivot-gun! Free her! Have her all ready. She's the only piece on board that's likely to be of any use."

"Let 'em alone!" called out Captain Avery. "They know what they're about. They're old gunners. I don't care so much, jest now, 'bout how they got their trainin'. See 'em!"

They were not by any means a handsome pair at any time, and they were several shades uglier than usual. The Ashantee was grinning frightfully, and the teeth he showed must have been filed to obtain so sharklike a pointing. The red man was not grinning, but all the wrinkles in his face seemed to grow deeper and his complexion darker. He was charging his guns with solemnly scrupulous care.

"No miss!" he said. "Up-na-tan find out what big gun good for."

His first charge was going in, therefore, for a purpose of practical inquiry into the character of the long eighteen. The foundries of that day could not manufacture large weapons with mathematical precision. Hardly any two could be said to be

exactly alike, except in appearance. It followed that each gun had good or bad features of its own. From ship to ship, throughout the royal navy, the gunners published the qualities of their brazen or iron favorites, and there were cannon of celebrity which old salts would go far to see.

The sound of the British firing came up somewhat dulled against the wind. It was not until they were out of the harbor that the sailors of the *Noank* discovered how really near were both friends and foes. The latter were still outside of the range of any of the fort guns. Hardly more than a mile and a half nearer was the whaleboat from Long Island. It could be seen that it was full of men, and they were showing splendid pluck, for they were rowing steadily, while every now and then a shot from the brig dropped dangerously near them. One iron bullet, hitting fairly, might knock their frail though swift craft all to pieces. Up went sail after sail upon the *Noank*, as she speeded along, and an officer on the British cruiser's deck had good reason for the astonishment with which he called out:—

"There she comes! You don't mean to say she's coming out to fight us?"

"It looks like it," responded another officer near him. "We can make match-wood of her if we can get close enough. I wish I knew what her armament is. These Yankees have more impudence!"

He did not have to wait many minutes before he learned something. The *Noank* whirled away upon the starboard tack around the point, and, just as she steadied herself upon her new course, out roared her pivot-gun.

Up-na-tan stood erect as soon as he touched off his piece, and he anxiously watched for the results.

"Tid! ykee!" he shouted triumphantly. "Gee

Ugh! whoop! he shouted triumphantly. Gun good! Shoot straight! Hit 'em!"

"Right!" said Captain Avery, who had been watching through a glass. "If the old pirate didn't land that shot on her! It's pretty long range, too."

"Load quick, now!" said the Indian. "Ole chief hit her again!"

His assistants were already feverishly busy with their loading, while he stood and proudly patted his cannon, very much as if it deserved praise and could appreciate his approval.

Loud were the exclamations of surprise and wrath on board the *Boxer*. No one had been killed or wounded, but the brig's longboat had been stove to bits, and all the pigs and chickens which had been cooped in it for the time being, and there were many of them, were running frantically about the main deck. That is, all but one large, fat pig, for he had suddenly been made pork of, and he would run and squeal no more.

The telescopes at the fort had also been taking observations, and loud cheers from the gathered garrison honored the crack shot of Up-na-tan. The crew of the *Noank* cheered lustily, and so did the rowers of the whaleboat. One of the fort batteries tried its guns a moment later, but all its shots fell short. Nevertheless, it was only a little short, and it warned the captain of the *Boxer*. He knew, now, about how much nearer it would be wise for him to run. Up-na-tan's next shot was well enough aimed, but it did no mischief. It went over the brig, with an unpleasant suggestion of what damage that sort of thing might do to spars and rigging.

"Luff! luff!" sang out the captain. "'Tisn't worth while to chase that boat any farther in. Let's see if we can't draw out the schooner. I'd like to get her

away from those land batteries. They're too heavy metal for us."

"She has the wind of us," remarked his sailing master, doubtfully. "She can do as she pleases 'bout coming any too near."

"She's a clipper, anyhow," growled the captain. "Nothing can beat these New Englanders in handling canvas. The king needs every man of 'em."

His own sailors were just then more than a little busied with pig and poultry gathering, and one badly scared bird rashly flew overboard.

Captain Avery was to disappoint Up-na-tan and Coco. They were to have no more long-range practice with the eighteen-pounder.

One more shot that they sent was an unsatisfactory miss, and then the distance began to increase instead of diminishing, as the schooner went about.

"Our fellows are safe now," said Sam Prentice. "Here they come. Look at 'em! More Indians than white men."

None the less were they excellent oarsmen and daring freebooters, and before the end of the war the "whaleboat fleet," as it came to be called, was to earn a not altogether pleasant reputation.

Not many more minutes passed before the boat was near enough for a hail. In it, forward, stood up a tall white man, balancing himself and swinging his hat while he enthusiastically sent to the *Noank*:—

"Schooner ahoy! Hurrah! News from the Continental army! General Washington smashed the redcoats! Beat 'em on Christmas day at Trenton! Then he follered 'em up and knocked Cornwallis all

to flinders at Princeton! We're a-beginnin' to flail 'em! Hurrah!"

Wild was the cheering which answered him from the schooner. Some of the men began to dance, and Sam Prentice yelled:—

"Shake hands, Lyme Avery! I jest knew it'd come! I said so! We're goin' to flail 'em! Our turn's got here!"

Up-na-tan expressed his feelings in whoop after whoop, and Coco's yell was terrific.

"Won't the shore people jump?" said Guert Ten Eyck. "Oh! How I want to get in and tell mother!"

The news-bringer had described the Trenton victory fairly, but he had somewhat exaggerated the results of the severe fight at Princeton. Lord Cornwallis had not reported it in precisely that manner. The boat was now running along with the *Noank*, however, and the story of Washington's splendid work for liberty was fired into the schooner at short range, wadding and all. A pretty interesting conclusion for it was the account of the manner in which the news had been obtained in New York and carried along the Long Island shore, all the way to New London.

"We had to hug the land close," said the narrator, "but here we are."

"Home! Home!" shouted Captain Avery. "The folks must have this to cheer 'em up. It's the first bit of good news we've had in many a long day. Hurrah for George Washington! God bless him!"

It was an instantly arriving vexation, then, that the brisk breeze and the tide, so favorable for coming out, were not so much so for running in.

The *Boxer's* captain had also his vexations, for he shortly remarked:—

"There she goes! The boat's with her. We're not to have a chance at her to-day. If I can get at her, I'll sink her! She'll come out again."

That was precisely the purpose in the mind of Lyme Avery, and he did not intend any long delay, either.

CHAPTER V.

THE BRIG AND THE SCHOONER.

"Blaze away! Gun at a time!" shouted Captain Avery, as the *Noank* tacked across the harbor mouth. "We can afford a few blank cartridges for such news as this is."

"The whaleboat's goin' to beat us gettin' in," replied Sam Prentice. "The folks'll know it all before we git there."

"Don't care if they do," said the captain. "We'll only be in port ag'in a few hours, anyhow. Night's our time. We know, now, jest what the cruiser is, and there doesn't seem to be another 'round."

The *Noank's* sixes were, therefore, shouting to the forts and the town that good news of some kind was coming. The men at the batteries heard and wondered, and grew impatient. They thought they knew all there was to be known of the mere exchange of shots with the *Boxer*. Their friends had not been harmed; neither had the brig; the whaleboat had escaped; and that was all that they

could understand. Now, however, they saw the *Noank* sending up every American flag she had on board.

What could it mean? Lyme Avery was not a man to have suddenly lost his balance of mind.

"Something's up," they said. "No matter what it is, we'll answer him."

So a roaring salute was fired for something or other that was as yet unknown to the gunners, and more flags went up on the forts; while the joyous cannonading called out of their houses nearly all the population of New London, every soul as full of eager curiosity as were the soldiers of the garrisons.

Out they came, and they were not at all an unprosperous looking lot of men and women and children. Probably the most important thing which the war statesmen of Great Britain overlooked in making their calculations for subduing the colonies was that the resources of America were in no danger of becoming exhausted. On the contrary, nearly all the states were growing richer instead of poorer. Strangely enough, the war itself was a powerful agent for the development of America. Continental paper money was as yet answering very well for local payments and exchanges, and its subsequent depreciation was of less importance than a great many people imagined. Nothing was really lost when a paper dollar dwindled to fifty cents and then went down to ten—or nothing. Nearly all the old farms were as good as ever, and new ones were opening daily. There were more acres under cultivation—a great many more—all over the country, out of the range of British army foraging parties. The farms which the foragers could not reach included all of the New England states, all of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, nearly all of South Carolina and

Georgia, and all of New York above the Hudson River highlands. A large part of even harassed New Jersey was doing very well.

Something more than merely the farming interests were to be taken into consideration, moreover. Prior to the rebellion, the policy of the mother country had choked to death all manufacturing undertakings in America, in order that the colonies might serve only as markets for English-made goods. Now, not only was the prohibition removed, but the rebels were absolutely compelled to manufacture for themselves. They were altogether willing to set about it. They had an abundance of raw materials, and could increase their productions of all sorts. They had great mechanical skill, marvellous inventive genius, and unlimited water-power. Everywhere began to spring up woollen and cotton factories, potteries, iron works, wagon shops, tanneries, and other new industries unknown before.

Cattle, horses, sheep, swine, mules, multiplied without any hinderance whatever from the war. For all food products there were more mouths to fill, and for all things salable there was more power to pay. It followed that there soon were many more tradesmen, merchants, and middlemen, doing vastly more business, whether for cash or barter.

There were more men, too, and more women. The sad losses of men in battles, camps, prisons, were only a small number compared with the thousands of stalwart youths who were growing up. These, too, were growing up as Americans, knowing no allegiance to England, full of eager patriotism, and ready, whenever their turns might come, to take their places in the army or in the navy.

There were desolated regions, but the area of

hope was limited. As a whole, the new republic was increasing tremendously in both wealth and population. Its resources for all war purposes were growing from day to day through all the dark years of the Revolution.

The New Londoners had no idea of waiting patiently under such circumstances as these, with so much salute firing tantalizing them. Boats of all sorts put out, and these were shortly met by the Long Island news-carriers. Their entry had not depended at all upon the wind, and not much upon even the tide, so well they were pulling.

Guert and his *Noank* friends, therefore, were robbed of the pleasure of being the first to tell the great tidings from the bank of the Delaware. It swiftly reached the shore, to be greeted with half-mad enthusiasm. Before the *Noank* lowered her last sail at her wharf, there were men on horseback and men in sleighs, and women, too, even more excitedly, all speeding out to villages and towns and farm-houses to set the hearts of patriots on fire with joy and hope.

It was quite likely that every courier would picture the success of General Washington at least as large as the reality. Lord Cornwallis himself, rallying his somewhat scattered detachments to strike back at his unexpected assailant, was aware of stinging losses, but not that he had been seriously defeated. He had suffered a sharp check, and he had afterward failed to surround and capture Mr. Washington and his brave ragamuffins. That appeared to be about all. It hardly occurred to the self-confident British generals that so small an affair as that of Trenton, or a drawn battle like that of Princeton, could have any great or permanent consequences. Little did they imagine how great a change was made in the minds, in the courage and hope of a host of previously dispirited Americans.

There had been many, for instance, who had been losing confidence in Washington's ability as a general. He had been too often defeated, and they could not rightly understand or estimate the causes for his reverses, or how well he had done in spite of terrible disadvantages. Now, as his star again blazed forth, these very faultfinders were ready to believe him one of the greatest generals of the age.

The political consequences were invaluable. Not only the Congress at Philadelphia, but the state legislatures, most of them, were more ready to push along with measures of a military nature. The entire aspect of affairs underwent a visible change, not only in America, but, very soon, in Europe.

Especially dense was the crowd that gathered at the wharf toward which the *Noank* was to be steered. All the other crowds probably wished that they had known just where to go. Most of them at once set out on a run in the corrected direction. The cheering done had already made a great many of the patriots somewhat hoarse, and they were all the readier to hear as well as talk.

"Oh! Guert!" exclaimed his mother, as she hugged him, the moment he came over upon the wharf. "I'm glad of the victories, but I'm gladder still to see you safe back again!"

"Up-na-tan hit the brig, mother," he said. "Captain Avery says we can run out right past her. Hurrah for General Washington!"

"Thee bad boy!" said Rachel Tarns, behind Mrs. Ten Eyck. "Thee and thy schooner should have been with him at Trenton. He was in need of thy fine French guns and thy sailors."

"That's so, I guess!" said Guert. "We'd ha' sailed right in, if we'd been there. I'd like to ha' seen the

fighting, I never seen before. He come to his own old battle. Mother, Up-na-tan's going to teach me how to handle cannon. He says he's going to make a good gunner of me."

"I want you to be a captain," she said.

"Guert," said Rachel, "I wish thee might become as good an artilleryman as thy old friend Alexander Hamilton. It is my pride and joy, this day, that I paid for the first powder for his cannon. I also praise the Lord that Alexander knoweth so well what to do with them and with the powder."

"I'll learn what to do with mine," said Guert. "Tisn't easy, though. 'Tisn't like handling a rifle or a shotgun. It's a good deal in the loading and in guessing distances."

"Up-na-tan," was Rachel's next half-humorous inquiry, "thee wicked old Indian! Has thee been shooting at thy good king with thy big gun?"

"Ole woman no talk!" grumbled the Manhattan. "Up-na-tan all mad! Want long thirty-two. Pivot-gun too small. Hit lobster brig. No sink her."

"Ole chief not take any 'calp," chuckled Coco, maliciously, "so he feel bad. Want 'calp somebody, soon's he can. Now old Coco had fight, s'pose he 'bout ready for he supper."

That feeling seemed to have spread very widely, as if good news were calculated to produce good appetites. It was a hungry time as well as a triumph, and in many houses there were home-made feasts, that evening. There was one, for instance, at the Avery house, and Guert was there, of course. He was glad of one more visit to his mother, but a peculiarly warlike thrill went over him before he reached the gate. It was when Lyme Avery said to his mate, as they separated:—

"Sam Prentice, tell your wife to send you out good and early. We're goin' to have another brush with that there British brig, to-morrow, if the wind's at all right for it."

"I don't know," replied Sam. "Our best hold is to slip past her, if we can, and git out into the open sea. It wouldn't do to run back into the Sound, but I'd like to pick up another prize right here. We might."

"A little too risky," said the captain, "with her on the watch. That's the talk, though. We're goin' to bring more'n one prize into New London, 'fore we git through."

Guert was well aware that the *Noank* had taken out what were called "letters of marque and reprisal," and was therefore a regularly authorized and commissioned commerce-destroyer. She was one of many. In several of the colonial ports, north and south, precisely such sea-wolves had long since made their preparations, and some were already at sea. They were making serious havoc and were soon to make more in the widely distributed, ocean-going commerce of Great Britain. It was a cruel, destructive, uncivilized kind of warfare, but it was customary among all the nations of the earth. In like manner, at this very date, British privateers were out after American prizes. These latter, moreover, had the regular cruisers of England as auxiliaries. Less agreeably, sometimes, the warships came in as business rivals or to claim a division of spoils. The Yankee privateers themselves constituted nearly the entire navy of the United States.

Sunrise does not come early in the month of January. It seems to come earlier and there is more of it, if the weather is clear. On the next morning after the arrival of the Trenton news, however, a

after the arrival of the Boston news, however, a thick white mist came drifting up New London harbor from the sea. There was only a light wind blowing from the westward, and it promised to be one of the hazy days of winter, such as come before a thaw.

"This 'ere is jest the thing for us," remarked Captain Avery, when he came out to see about the weather. "It's the right kind o' breeze for a schooner, and it's jest the wrong thing for a square rig. We can spread more canvas for our draft and tonnage than that king's brig can, anyhow."

There was no one to dispute him, and he and Vine and Guert were shortly on their way to the wharf. The Yankee shipbuilders, with abundance of the best timber at hand and any number of bays and inlets to work in, had constructed admirable shipyards upon plans of their own. Point after point they had gone away from antiquated models, and they had already made many important improvements in the building and rigging of all kinds of craft. Before many years, the whole sea-going world was to be forced to recognize their superiority.

All of the *Noank's* crew were on board when her captain reached her, and he at once gave orders to cast off from the wharf. Only a very few of her friends came down to see her go. Farewells had been already said, for the greater part, and even the sailors' wives had been aware that there would be no lingering. The Long Island whaleboat was nowhere to be seen. It might be that her hardy oarsmen, their errand accomplished, had set out to recross to their own shore under the cover of darkness.

"Some o' those island chaps," remarked Sam Prentice, "ain't but a little better'n so many buccaneers. They're up to 'most any kind o'

pillagin'. Do ye know, Lyme, the first o' the West Injy pirates, long ago, made their beginnin' with very much that kind o' open boat? It was a good while before they were able to supply themselves with the right kind o' sailin' vessels."

"They did it, though," said Lyme.

"Murderous lot they were, too," said Vine. "They never left anybody alive to tell tales of 'em."

"Ugh! Ugh!" came from Up-na-tan, in a sort of snarl. "All Kidd men dead now. No come again."

The Manhattan had seated himself upon a coil of rope and was busy with a hone and the edge of a cutlass, as if he hoped to use it soon.

"No, they're not," replied Prentice, with energy. "There's enough of 'em yet. Some say they're gettin' worse'n ever within a year or so. This 'ere schooner's got to keep a sharp lookout for 'em, soon's we're among the islands."

"That's so, Sam," said Captain Avery. "I'll tell ye one thing more, too. I'd ruther come to close quarters with a cruiser like that there British brig than with one o' those half-Spanish West Injy picaroons. Some right well-armed British and French fightin' craft have found 'em dreadfully hard to handle."

"So would we," said Sam, "and I wouldn't at all mind sendin' one of 'em to the bottom. It'd be a matter o' life and death, ye know, for they don't show any kind o' mercy. Not to man, woman, or child."

Guert listened intently, for he had already heard, year after year, a great many terrible yarns concerning the rovers of the Antilles. Part of his daily business, too, was to listen well to whatever

daily business, too, was to listen well to whatever he might hear, and he was learning a great deal in various ways. Brought up on Manhattan Island, as he had been, he was familiar, of course, with the external appearance of all kinds of shipping, whether of war or peace. He had also seen a great deal of boat service. Now, however, he had discovered that all this had not made a sailor of him. He was only a mere beginner, although it seemed to him that he had been getting along rapidly ever since he first saw the *Noank*. This was his first actual cruising, but he had spent a great deal of time on board while she was waiting in port. He believed that he knew every nook and corner of her. He could go aloft like a squirrel or a monkey, but for all that he felt dreadfully raw and green among such a crew of seasoned old mariners. Every man of them, almost, could tell of long voyages. They knew the Antilles well, and the other groups of American islands. Some knew more of the coasts of South America, some of Europe. More in number, and even more full of daring and of danger, were the tales he had heard of the whale fishery, with its glimpse of ice-fields, icebergs, frozen seas, and its combats not only with the oil-producing monsters of the sea, but with white bears also, and walruses, and hostile red men; to him, therefore, these men of the *Noank's* company were the heroes of the ocean. He admired them tremendously, just now, as they discussed, in their matter-of-fact way, quietly, calmly, fearlessly, the seemingly desperate chances just before them. They all admitted, without hesitation, that it was a pretty doubtful problem whether or not they would be able to escape not only the one cruiser near them, but afterward the vigilant British blockade of the Sound entrance and of the adjacent waters. The *Noank* had very serious risks to run before she could spread her wings on the Atlantic.

The mist was hanging lower, thicker, whiter, and

the morning gun from Fort Griswold had long since announced that in the opinion of the gunners the sun had risen.

"Hullo! What?" exclaimed Captain Avery, springing to his feet. "Another? They don't fire a shotted gun jest for sunrise."

His practical ears had told him that this report was not made by a blank cartridge. What could it mean?

"Gunner saw lobster ship," said Up-na-tan, quietly.

Away he went, then, toward his long eighteen, followed by Coco and Guert and several sailors.

"Captain Avery," he called back, "ole chief get gun ready. S'pose fort gunner no fool."

"Ready with her!" said the captain. "Ready! Every gun! Silence, all! This fog's a friend of ours."

The Indian's understanding of the shotted cannon was correct. The sharp-eyed lookout upon the rampart had detected something more than fog in the general whiteness which concealed the sea, and the nearest gunner had at once put in a nine-pound ball on top of his signal cartridge.

"That brig has crept in to watch for the *Noank*," they said to each other. "Let's give her a pill."

The pill went well enough for a warning to the *Boxer* that her sly creeping in had been discovered, but it did no damage. Probably its best use was the response it provoked from the too hasty gunners of the *Boxer*. For the brig to fire at the fort was mere bravado, of course; but her commander was nettled.

"Give 'em a broadside!" he roared. "Let 'em have it. They can't strike us out here in the mist. Blaze away!"

All the port guns of the brig, five in number, were of small account against earth and stone works; but they could express warlike feeling, and they immediately did so, and they did one thing more.

"Good!" said Captain Avery, as he heard them. "Now I know jest where she is. Wish I knew how she's headed. We've all sail on. Keep still, all! We can slip past her."

As quietly as so many ghosts, the men went hither and thither about their duties. They had not very much to do, for every square yard of the schooner's canvas was already taking that fair light wind. The brig, on the other hand, was by no means under full sail, for some reason, and she was tacking now that she might run deeper into the fog and out of the way of harm from the fort batteries. These were not wasting any more ammunition upon her, or rather upon the mist and the sea. Only her topsails had been seen, in the first place, and these had been quickly hidden again. The two vessels were, nevertheless, drawing nearer to each other, unawares. There was no carefully kept silence on board the *Boxer*; on the contrary, her crew were every now and then doing something to send out notice to any ears near enough to hear. At close quarters she would have been a dangerous antagonist for the Yankee schooner. There was nothing at all to be made in a fight with her, and Captain Avery was strongly averse to the idea of having his vessel crippled or worse at the very outset of his voyage.

A wonderful thing is a curtain of sea fog. Sometimes it may be beautiful, but it is never at all under human control. The *Noank* was running

swiftly along and the very breeze which made her do so was getting its grip upon the banks of vapor. It tore one of these in the middle, suddenly. A great rift was opened, and clear water showed across one short half-mile of the tossing sea.

"There she blows!" sang out an old harpooner of the *Noank's* crew, as if the *Boxer* had been a whale.

"Luff! Luff!" shouted the British commander. "Bring your guns to bear! We have her! Hurrah!"

"Whoo-oop! Up-na-tan!" came fiercely from behind the breech of the *Noank's* long eighteen, and the Manhattan's warwhoop was closely followed by the roar of his gun.

"Hard a-lee!" called out Captain Avery. "Sam! Run her into the fog. All hands, to go about. We must get under cover ag'in."

Short range and a good aim, with the *Boxer's* masts nearly in line, had been bad for the Englishman's triumph. Down came his foretopmast, splintered at the cap, dragging with it enough of spars and hamper to assure that anything like racing condition had been knocked out of the brig. She obeyed her helm, at first. She swung around and her port broadside was delivered; but it was a mere waste of powder and round iron. Not a shot touched the saucy *Noank*, speeding away through a fog bank.

Loud, indeed, was the startled exclamation of the astonished British commander as he surveyed his unexpected damages.

"Pon my soul!" he said. "That pirate is going to get away from us. This is too bad, altogether!"

His sailors sprang to do what they might for the

wreck, but the appearance of things was unpromising.

"Good for you, Up-na-tan!" said Captain Avery. "That shot tells for old practice. I guess I'd better make you captain of that gun."

"Ole chief keep gun," replied the Indian. "Find gun shoot straight. Good!"

"I'm mighty glad o' that," said the captain. "I mean to train every hand on board, though. We may get stuck where we can't afford to miss a shot. Straight shootin' is better than the heaviest kind o' shootin' that doesn't hit."

The breeze was increasing finely, and away went the swift privateer. She had escaped from her first pursuer, and not far ahead of her, now, were pretty surely her next batch of perils.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRITISH FLEET.

The easterly end of Long Island is exceedingly ragged in its contour. It is made up of straggling promontories, bays, inlets, and the adjacent waters contain many islands, large and small, with outlying rocky ledges. The opposite shore, the mainland of New England, is of a similar character. Between them, the eastern sound and the neck of water by which it is to be entered, provide a great deal of pretty circumspect navigation.

It is said, although no one now living was there at the time to collect testimony, that once the mainland

and the island were connected by a rugged isthmus, now sunken or washed away. If it were ever there, enough of it is left to require good piloting.

A fleet of war-ships proposing to blockade or supervise the port of Boston, may at the same time extend its operations so as to cork up the Sound. This process, if made sufficiently thorough, may include in the blockade such ports as New London, Providence, New Haven, and their smaller neighbors. All of these, during the Revolutionary War, were not only developing rapidly their regular commercial relations but were nests of privateering enterprises.

The British naval authorities were often unable to detail for this part of their general blockade of America a sufficient number of ships, and it was a service much disliked by their captains and crews, especially in winter.

The area of ocean to be patrolled was wide, and in spite of all watching the Yankee ships ran in and out. Boston, especially, was building up again, after its long period of military occupation, siege, and desolation, much to the disgust of its many enemies.

During some hours after the escape of the *Noank* from the *Boxer*, Up-na-tan was down in the hold, and Guert Ten Eyck was with him. The old Manhattan was no builder of ships, whatever he might be able to do for a canoe, but he had seen a great many, here and there. He seemed now to be carrying on a kind of critical investigation of the naval architecture of the schooner.

"What is it?" asked Guert, as his red friend placed a hand curiously upon one of the ribs of the vessel and glanced from that to other timbers.

"Ugh!" said Up-na-tan. "Good stick. Like lobster war-shin. All make schooner strong. Carry long

will ship, it make schooner strong carry long gun!"

"Captain Avery wishes she could," said Guert. "The mate thinks she can't."

"No gun anyhow, now," said the chief, shaking his head. "Wait!"

The subject of the Manhattan's inquiry belonged to a controversy then going forward among the royal naval constructors and sea-captains. The reason why England's third and fourth rate cruisers carried only light guns, and many of them, was simply their frail timbering. Too heavy artillery might rack them dangerously. It would call for precisely the strength of frame provided by American shipyards for craft which might bump an ice-floe.

Up-na-tan was still further informing himself concerning the skeleton of the *Noank*, when a shout from above summoned them both.

"Guert," called down Captain Avery, "you and he come to the cabin. Now all's clear, you must learn something."

On the deck all things were quiet. Not a sail was in sight that indicated a craft as large as their own. The schooner was spinning along, with all sails set and a fair wind in them. Everything about her, from deck to topmast, wore a clean, orderly, service look, that spoke volumes for the high character of her crew. She was all ready to do her best at any moment, and she was sure of being well handled. Perhaps a seaman would have critically remarked upon the fact that with such a wind she was not taking a course directly out into the Atlantic.

The captain's cabin, well aft below deck, was a small affair. It seemed almost crowded when only half a dozen persons were in it.

"Now, Guert," said Captain Avery, "if I don't make the chief understand, you must explain it to him. Talk Dutch, or any other lingo. He's the sharpest lookout there is on board, and he's a prime steersman. He must know what some things mean."

"What things?" asked Guert.

Two rugged old sailors who had entered the cabin with Sam Prentice, also looked on inquiringly, while the captain went to a locker and took out of it a leather case.

"Guert," he said, "it's the first duty of the commander of a ship that's being taken by an enemy to put his private signal-book overboard. It's kept weighted all the while, so it will sink. Now, Luke Watts did his duty in that particular. His mate and his crew looked on and saw him do it. So did I. They saw him drown something like this."

The case was open, now, and out of it was drawn what appeared to be several sheets of parchments, wired together, so that they might be rolled up like a pamphlet.

"Ugh!" said Up-na-tan. "Chief know 'em. Ship talk with lantern. Talk to other ship with flag. Captain got plenty lantern? Plenty flag? Tell Up-na-tan how."

A deep cupboard under the captain's bunk was at once thrown open, and its contents were interesting. Red, green, blue, yellow, white, large lanterns and small. Beside them lay a collection of sheafs of rockets, each of which carried a written parchment tab to tell its nature. Signal flags were there, also, in tightly tied-up rolls, and Up-na-tan loudly grunted his approval of them.

"First, now, for the book," said the captain.

"Every man on board can be trusted to know signals. There isn't one traitor in the *Noank*, nor a fool, either. Sam and I must go on deck. You and the men and the redskin stay here and study those things. Git 'em all into your head, if you can. We may have a lot o' sharp dodgin' to do, this cruise."

Out he went, taking Sam with him, and then it at once appeared that Guert had become a remarkable kind of schoolmaster, trying to explain to others what he did not know himself. The two sailors were not altogether unlettered men, but lack of practice had left them slow at deciphering handwriting, and Guert seemed to have a knack of it. As for the Indian, he did not know one letter from another, but he could handle flags and lanterns as if they were hunting signs or the totems of clans and tribes. Signal after signal was picked out and its working practically illustrated in questions or answers.

"Top!" exclaimed Up-na-tan, at last. "Head full! See more by and by." So said the sailors, and Guert himself felt as if he had been going through a hard time at a new school.

"But wasn't that a cute thing of Luke Watts!" he thought, as he came on deck. "I'd like to try some o' those signals on a British ship. I don't know how far we've run. The captain says our tightest squeeze isn't far ahead of us, now."

The schooner, oddly enough, was actually running within sight of Block Island. Some, at least, of her perils must be behind her. Perhaps more would have been if a sailing vessel could go straight ahead, in any direction, like a steamer. That, however, is one of several things that she cannot do. Many an hour of swift sailing, tacking back and forth, must often be extended in gaining only a few miles of her true course.

The crew of the *Noank* were not at all puzzled by the peculiar manner in which she was handled, and some of their faces betrayed anxiety.

"Guess ole Avery wish dark come," remarked Coco to his friends as they stood together at the foremast. "Lobster out yonder, somewhere."

It was only about the middle of the afternoon, and the captain's telescope was busy every few minutes.

"Ugh!" said Up-na-tan. "Tack to Montauk. No go out yet. Captain head good. Want fog. Want night."

There was a laugh behind them, and Guert swung around to ask of Sam Prentice:—

"Can you tell me how it is, sir?"

"I guess I can," said the mate. "We know a good deal more'n we did. While you were all below, we spoke a Providence man. Cod-fisher. My boy, there's a whole fleet of Britishers out there, somewhere, spread all along. Merchantmen, troop-ships, cruisers. Some of 'em heavy fellers. We must keep well in, for a while."

"Ugh!" said the red man. "Mate let ole chief take glass. Want look."

Prentice had with him his marine telescope, an unusually good one, and he at once handed it to the Manhattan.

"Your eyes are 'most as good as glasses," he said. "Let's see what you can make out with that. I saw a sail, myself. Pretty well down, easterly."

There is a great deal of difference in eyes, even in good ones, and the American red men possess peculiar faculties for sign reading.

"Ugh!" said the Indian, after slowly and carefully sweeping the sea and the horizon with the glass. "Bad! *Noank* 'tay in. One war-ship. One, two, three, four other ship."

"Men-of-war and the convoy!" exclaimed Prentice. "Tyme Avery! Here they are! Come this

way! If the redskin hasn't sighted 'em!"

"Ship o' line," now remarked Up-na-tan. "Frigate. Little gun ship."

"Let me take the glass," said the captain, as he came; "it's a good deal more'n we had reason to expect. Makes things look kind o' cloudy."

"Well," said Sam, "it's about what the Boston pilot told that Providence feller. If we'd ha' gone on in too much of a hurry, we'd ha' run right in among 'em."

"They're north o' their best course for New York," remarked the captain. "I wonder if any of 'em are from Halifax. It may mean more army to fight General Washington."

"Mebbe," said Sam. "It's likely some of 'em are the reg'lar coast cruisers. As for the convoy, they're slow and heavy. It's about the course I'd expect them to run."

"We'll take in sail and heave to," said the captain. "Our safest hidin'd be under Martha's Vineyard."

They were not a very long reach from that island now. There were several fishing smacks in sight, and none of them were taking in sail. It looked, rather, as if they were all heading homeward. Perhaps they, too, had been warned of a British

fleet, and every man on board of them was in danger of pitiless impressment, if his boat were to come within range of the guns of a king's ship.

In came the sails of the *Noank*, and then came a time of watching, waiting, and anxiety.

"Nine sail in sight," remarked Captain Avery, at last, "and there's more'n that to come. British flag on every one of 'em. Of course, they've sighted us, long before this."

"One comin' for us, I guess," said Coco.

"Headin' this way, sure!"

"I guess so," said the captain, quietly. "It's gettin' dusk, though. Her glasses won't do any good, much longer.—Men! All sail! Jump, now! Our time's come!"

His manner had undergone a sudden change, and there was a red flush on his face. The men heard him say to his son:—

"No, Vine, I won't be taken. I'll fight that nighest feller, if I've got to. He isn't a heavy one."

His orders went out fast, and the schooner was quickly under a cloud of canvas. She had indeed been noticed by the British commanders, and arrangements had been made to overhaul her, as a matter of course.

Her flight, or at least her escape, from such a fleet as she was now facing, was an absurdity not to be thought of. Whatever sort of American craft she might be, she was soon to have an officer and a boat's crew on board of her, ascertaining how many of her sailors it was best to take into the service of the king.

"Father," suggested Vine, "they won't send a boat till they're nearer than this, a good deal. The sea's getting a bit rough, too, and the wind's fresh'ning."

"I don't care how many boats they send," replied the captain. "I can sink 'em as they come. We'll run farther in behind Nantucket, but we won't go too far. The redskin says he saw a topsail off the channel that's cut too square to suit us."

"Reg'lar cruiser's tops'l," put in Sam Prentice. "How she came to be there, I don't know. Are they layin' a trap for us? Lyme, this 'ere's goin' to be touch and go."

"It'll be go, then," said the captain.

"Maybe we won't touch, either. It's promisin' the darkest kind o' night. They won't dream o' what our next long tack'll be.—Men! All hands! Hark a moment, now!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" came back from all sides, and as

many as could came crowding around him.

"There may be more'n twenty sail, of all sorts, yonder, for all we know," he said. "We make it out it's the British army supply fleet, with troop-ships full of redcoats and Hessians. Likely, too, there are reg'lar merchantmen for New York. They've a strong convoy, j'ined, jest now, by the blockade ships, big and little. I calc'late, the more of 'em there is, the better for us. I'm goin' to run the *Noank* right through 'em. Sam Prentice, take some men and fetch up the lanterns and rockets. Now, boys, I ain't sure but we'll have a little fun, but there mustn't be a loud word spoke on board this schooner."

With subdued laughter and chuckles of appreciation, the men scattered to their duties. There was not a sign of fear among them and hardly an expression of doubt as to the result.

The schooner herself seemed to go into the daring undertaking before her, with all her heart as well as with all sails set. She swung around upon her seaward tack and went with a speed that did her credit.

It was dark, and the darkness was deepening. Far away as yet, and in all directions, the lights that were hung out by the British ships, both of war and peace, were glimmering and twinkling as they rose and fell with the surges that bore them. It was shortly evident that some of these were signals that

were exchanging, in accordance with the directions of the secret signal code, and Captain Avery began to assort and arrange his lanterns.

"Sam," he said, "I guess I'll answer that call to close up with the flag-ship. All the rest of our fleet are answerin' it."

"Lyme," responded Prentice, "I'm in for fun, if there is any. Why couldn't we mix 'em up?"

"We'll try, anyhow," said the captain.

"Cap'n," put in Up-na-tan, almost respectfully, so strong was getting to be his warrior admiration for the cunning and courage of his commander, "s'pose we tell lobster ship, rebel enemy come. Rebel right here. Make 'em feel good. Fire gun!"

"I guess that's about as sharp a thing as we could do," replied the captain. "Guert, pick out those white rockets. Hand 'em over."

Guert was having the fireworks under his especial charge, for he was found able to read the somewhat roughly written tabs.

"Here they are, sir," he said in half a minute. "There's plenty more of that kind."

Vine Avery had the lanterns, and he had already made use of them in mocking replies to more than one swinging, dancing signal.

Now, as the captain lighted the rockets, up into the gloom went fizzing and flashing the prescribed announcement of danger. Each rocket let out, as it exploded, a pretty large ball of red flame, as if to emphasize its message. War-ship after war-ship told her character by responding with a similar rocket, the merchantmen keeping quiet, and then from the flag-ship of the fleet came the boom of a heavy gun.

"Heavens!" suddenly exclaimed Captain Avery, as he watched for those responses. "One o' their cruisers is nigher'n I'd counted on! Starboard your helm, Sanders! All ready to go about!"

"Ship ahoy!" came out of the gloom beyond them. "*Amphitrite*! What ship's that? Where are the enemy? What is she?"

"*Kr-g-h-um-n*, of Liverpool," sang out Captain Avery huskily, indistinctly, through his trumpet.

"They won't make much out of that," Guert was thinking, but the British officer angrily shouted back:

"*Kraken*, of Liverpool? You blockhead! What do I care for that? Where away's the Yankee?"

"Armed schooner, sir! Pirate! Passed close by, westerly. Say 'bout two p'int's south."

"Where away, now, stupid?"

"On the lee bow, sir," trumpeted the captain. "Runnin' free. We was nigh 'nough to see her guns."

"Blockhead!" came back. "Why didn't you signal sooner? You deserve a good rope's ending! Close up with the admiral!"

"Ay, ay, sir! There she goes! They're gettin' hold of her," responded Captain Avery.

For at that moment another gun from another man-of-war sounded well to leeward. It was accompanied by more rocket signals that went up to be read by all the fleet.

"Captain," sang out Guert, as he tried to read them, "green rocket bursting into red. It means 'Pirate in chase of merchantman.'"

"All right," said the captain, "it's some other feller. We're not in chase of anybody. Up-na-tan! Vine! swing out that biggest blue lantern. I'll send up a blue rocket burstin' yellor and green. Then douse the lanterns."

"What does that mean, father?" inquired Vine, raising the blue lights.

"Mean?" uproariously responded the captain. "Why! it means 'Mutiny on board ship. Send help to ...'"

queen mutiny.

The British admiral saw that rare and exceedingly annoying signal with intense indignation.

"That's it!" he stormed, "another 'cursed mutiny! That comes of crowding the king's ships with the off-scourings of the merchant service, and jail-birds, and slaves, and picaroons, and 'pressed Yankee rebels. Not one of 'em's fit to be trusted. The king'll lose ships by it! They'd better be all hung!"

Meantime, under an almost perilous press of sail for such a wind and so rough a sea, the stanch, swift *Noank* was dashing along her course. Every minute carried her oceanward, but not all her dangers were behind her.

Rapid signalling went on between the British war-ships and their now frightened convoy. The unarmed vessels were hurrying toward their protectors like so many chickens toward a clucking hen. No other incident or accident of any importance occurred to any of them. As hour after hour went by in the darkness of the night, and then in the very chilly morning that followed, an eager, angry, discomforting process of inquiry went forward from ship to ship. Upon which of them had been the mutiny? Had it succeeded? Had it been put down? Did the mutineers take the boats and get away?

"Not on this ship, sir" was the altogether uniform

NOT ON THIS SHIP, SIR, WAS THE ALTOGETHER UNIFORM response, and all the vessels known to be in company had been accounted for.

Not only was it that not one solitary mutineer could be discovered: it also appeared that no such ship as the *Kraken*, of Liverpool, had at any time joined herself to that convoy.

"Pon my soul!" exclaimed the astonished admiral, at last, "this is great! Ponsonby, my dear fellow, the chap that hailed you in the dark must have been the Yankee pirate himself. What do you think?"

"I think he got away, sir," calmly replied Captain Ponsonby, of the *Amphitrite*, forty-four. "The rebel rascal has slipped through our fingers in the most audacious manner. Showed pluck, too."

"He did!" groaned the admiral.

CHAPTER VII.

HUNTING THE NOANK.

An army in garrison will surely spend money, officers and men. So will a fleet in port. The British camps, upon and near Manhattan Island contained

thousands of soldiers, and the warships on the station, or arriving and departing, were numerous. There was sure to be, upon almost any day, enough of "shore leave" or camp leave given, and the streets of New York City were often even brilliant with uniforms. The burnt district could already show many new buildings, mostly shops and warehouses, and the streets were clear of rubbish. The merchants and shopkeepers were said to be doing very well; some of them were making fortunes out of the needs of the king's forces. In the social life of the town there had been a notable change. Rich loyalists from the interior had fled to New York for safety. All the old houses were occupied, in one way and another. Some new ones were built or building. There was a great deal of dinner giving and the like. On the whole, therefore, the ruined city was beginning a new and very peculiar era of prosperity. This was to continue, during the years of the war, to such a degree that upon the return of peace all things would be in readiness for rapid commercial development.

The harbor, with so many ships in it that were all at anchor, wore a frosty, sleepy look, one winter morning. Boats were pulling here and there, from ship to ship, or between the ships and the shore. The morning gun had long since sounded, and the reveilles at the forts and camps. All the flags and pennants were drooping upon their staffs in the still, cold air, and nowhere did any sails appear to be spreading

spreading.

Upon the after deck of one elderly looking three-master stood a man who was evidently taking a thoughtful survey of her.

"Levtenant," he said, to a British naval officer standing near him, "this 'ere craft is ready for sea."

"I've brought your sailing orders, then," said the officer. "The sooner you're off, the better."

"Jest so!" said Captain Luke Watts. "They all tell me she isn't a bad one to go. I'm goin' to give her all the chances that are in her. I ain't in any hurry for a return cargo, though. I've had one lesson."

"Pretty narrow escape, they say," said the lieutenant. "It wasn't your fault, though. You'll be taking return cargoes from New York to Liverpool, before long. This war's nearly over."

"Guess it is," said Watts, "but it'll be spring before anything more can be done with Mr. Washington."

"Cornwallis'll catch him, then," was the confident rejoinder. "The old Virginia fox can hole away among his Jersey hills for a few weeks longer. Then Cornwallis promises to dig him out."

"Oh, he'll do that, fast enough," said Watts. "I s'pose, if I ever git back, I may find him a prisoner in New York. My first business, though, is to git this

craft across the Atlantic. I'm to have a thin crew and no guns, and I've to depend on my sails altogether. There are risks."

"Can't help it," said the lieutenant, "and you mustn't lose her."

"You may tell the admiral," answered Watts, a little sharply, "that if I don't, he may have me shot."

"I'll tell him so."

"It's Liverpool or my neck!" said Watts, emphatically. "Tell him I'll take the northerly course, weather or no weather, out o' the way o' pirates, and he needn't be uneasy."

The carrying of that report to the captain of the port yet more firmly established the confidence which was reposed in the loyalty of Captain Watts. He was to be allowed to use his own judgment very freely, and he was likely to have continuous employment as a Tory commander of British ships.

There was hardly any cargo worth speaking of in the hold of the *Termagant*. She was going home in ballast. British commerce with the colonies was entirely cut off, and this of itself was a severe war blow to the mother country, equivalent to many defeats of her armies in the field. American commerce itself, however, although terribly assailed, was all the while on the increase. Up to the outbreak of the war, everything produced for

outcome of the war, everything produced for export in the colonies had to go out under British restriction, whether directly to England or otherwise. All that did not do so escaped by adventurous processes of a smuggling description, and the amount of it was limited. Now, for instance, the tobacco of Virginia and the Carolinas, when it could get out at all, could be sold in any port of Europe which it might reach. The West India Islands, also, were ready to take wheat to any amount, paying for it in sugar, molasses, rum, cash, tobacco, or fruits. The war laws of nations and the existing treaties, even if these were strictly adhered to, were not in such a shape as to hinder France or Holland or Spain from opening trade relations, hardly concealed, with the revolted colonies of Great Britain. All the politics of Europe were in a dreadfully mixed, uncertain condition, and what was called peace was very like a war in the bud that promised to become full blown before a great while.

The greatest of all hinderances to American prosperity did not belong to the war at all. It was the absence of good facilities for inland transportation. The roads were bad, and little was doing to make them better. The natural watercourses, rivers, bays, and sounds, were of great value, but they did not exist in many places where they were needed. Washington's army almost starved to death, simply because there were no railways, not even macadamized roads, by

means of which he could receive the abundant supplies which his fellow-patriots in numberless localities were eagerly ready to send him. Large amounts of produce, year after year, rotted on the ground among the up-country farms of all the states, because the cost of wagoning was too great, or the roads were impassable, or the markets did not exist.

While this was the condition of things on the land, not only in America, but in all other countries, there was a scourge of the sea that was almost as hurtful to commerce as was privateering itself. Piracy had been fought out of large parts of the ocean, only making an occasional appearance, but in other parts it held an only half-disputed sway. One consequence was that the mere dread of the black flag kept out commercial enterprise almost altogether from a large number of promising fields. The fact was, that every case of a vessel lost at sea and not heard from, and of these there were many, was sure to be charged over to the account of piracy, so that the actual evil was made to appear much greater than its reality.

A severe check had been given to the slave trade at first by the closing of its North American market, only a few human cargoes, if any, being delivered among the colonies during the Revolutionary War. On the other hand, the dealers in black labor were encouraged by a steadily increasing demand from the British Colonies, which had been the chief

the British and Spanish islands, and from South America.

So entirely different was the ocean world, therefore, from what it is to-day, and so easy does it become to form wrong ideas concerning old-time war and peace on sea and land.

The Yankee privateer, the *Noank*, Captain Lyme Avery commanding, had indeed left a large British fleet behind her, and all the sea was before her. Conversations between her commander and his very free-spoken subordinates, however, revealed the fact that what might be called her commission as a ship of war was exceedingly roving. Even that very next morning, as he and his mate stood forward, anxiously scanning the horizon, the latter inquired:—

"Lyme,—I say! How'd it do to tack back and try to cut out one o' them supply ships?"

"Too risky, altogether," replied the captain. "South! South! I say. We mustn't hang 'round here. There are more ships runnin' between Cuby and Liverpool than there ever was before."

"Fact!" said Sam. "The British can't git their tobacker from the colonies any more. They git a first-rate article from the Spaniards, though, and they have to pay tall prices for it."

"That's it " said Avery "I want to run one o' those

fine-leaf cargoes into New London. Good as gold and silver to trade with. I'd a leetle ruther have sugar, though, full cargo, ship and all, with plenty o' molasses."

Others of the schooner's company chimed in, agreeing generally with the captain, and it looked more and more as if the immediate errand of the *Noank* might be considered settled. She herself was going ahead very well, and was in fine condition.

Away forward, at the heel of the bowsprit, with no sailor duty pressing him just now, loafed Guert Ten Eyck. He had borrowed a telescope from Vine Avery, and he had been using it until he grew tired of searching the horizon in vain, and he had shut it up. He was feeling just a little homesick, perhaps, after the over-excitement of the previous days. He was thinking of his mother rather than of stunning successes as a young privateersman.

"Wouldn't I like to see her this morning!" he was thinking. "I'd like to tell her and the rest how we beat that British fleet—"

"Ugh!" exclaimed a voice at his elbow. "Boy no lookout! Go to sleep! Wake up! Up-na-tan take glass!"

Guert's dulness vanished, and he at once straightened up. for the contemptuous tone of the

old Manhattan stung him a little. He had not been stationed there by any order, as a responsible watchman, but the old redskin was unable to understand how any fellow on a warpath, whether in the woods or upon the water, could at any moment be otherwise than looking out for his enemies. His own keen eyes were continually busy without any mental effort or any official instructions. He now took the telescope and began to use it methodically. Around the circle of the sea it slowly turned, until it suddenly became fixed in a north-westerly direction.

"Sail O!" he sang out. "Where cap'n?"

"Here I am!" came up the forward hatchway. "Where away? What do you make her out?"

"Nor-nor-west!" called back the Indian. "Square tops'l. No see 'em good, yet. Man-o'-war come."

"Jest as like as not," said Captain Avery. "Shouldn't wonder if they'd sent a cruiser after us. Hurrah, boys! A stern chase is a long chase, but that isn't the first thing on hand. Sam! I was down at the barometer. There's a blow comin'! Worst kind! All hands to shorten sail! Lower those topsails!"

It was a somewhat unexpected order for a crew to receive if an enemy's cruiser were indeed so close upon their heels, and there was hardly a cloud in the steel-blue winter sky. It was obeyed,

however, the men passing from one to another the discovery of Up-na-tan while they tugged at their ropes and canvas.

Guert sprang away aloft, for this was a part of his seamanship, in which the captain was compelling him to take pretty severe lessons.

"You'll have to be on a square-rigged ship, one of these days," he had told him. "I want you to know 'bout a schooner before you get away from her. But you'll find there's an awful difference 'twixt the handlin' o' the *Noank* and a full-rigged three-master. You'll need heaps and heaps o' sea schoolin'."

Guert was very well aware of that, from more tongues than one, and Sam Prentice was also beginning to put him through a mathematical course of the study of navigation. This, in fact, had begun during the long months of inactivity at New London, and he had been much helped in it by his Quaker friend, Rachel Tarns. He was to be of some use, one of these days, she had told him; and a fellow who did not know how to navigate could never become a sea-captain. An ignorant chap, a mere sailor, must serve before the mast all his life.

In came the clouds of canvas, all but a reefed mainsail and foresail and a jib.

"She's safe, now, I think," said the captain. "I

guess I'll go down and take another look at that glass. It kind o' startled me, it was goin' down so. Sam, how's the stranger?"

"Heading for us, I'd say," called back the mate. "She's a three-master, too. She's carryin' all sail, just now. If there's a heavy blow a comin', she may throw away some of her sticks."

"She may do worse'n that," said the captain, "if she cracks on too much canvas. We won't, though."

Down below he hastened, and now Up-na-tan was pointing at something white and hazy well up in the eastern sky. Every old salt on board was quickly watching what appeared to be, at first, a change of color from blue to gray. Some of them were shaking their heads gravely.

"It's the wrong time o' year," said one, "for that sort o' thing. I know 'em. They're jest crushers. Tell ye what. If it's that kind o' norther, it'll drop down awful sudden when it gits here. Lyme Avery hasn't been a mite too kerful. He knows what he's about."

"There's odds in storms," replied a grizzled whaler near him. "I've seen a Hull trader knocked all to ruins in ten minutes by one o' them fellers. Every stick was blown out of her, and she foundered before sundown."

"Look out sharp for all the gun fastenings!"

shouted the captain, as he again came hurriedly on deck. "Up-na-tan, you and Coco guy that pivot-gun, hardest kind. This boat's likely to be doin' some pitchin' and rollin' pretty soon. There'll be an awful sea. Where's that Englishman?"

"Wait a bit," said Up-na-tan. "Ole chief give lobster one shot."

"All right," said the captain. "She's in good range now. Have your extra gearings ready to clap on. This schooner has weathered all sorts o' gales, but it won't do to let her git caught nappin'."

There had been more than a little surprise on board King George's fine frigate *Clyde*, of thirty-six guns. There had been a group of seaman-like officers upon her quarter-deck at about the time she was discovered by Up-na-tan. Marine glasses were at work in the hands of more than one of those gentlemen, and the express reason for it appeared in their conversation.

The *Clyde* was a cruiser somewhat noted for her speed. She had been of the convoy of the fleet through which the *Noank* had so cunningly worked her way, and had been at once detailed to chase the saucy privateer. This was decidedly pleasanter than guarding slow merchantmen, and the frigate's commander had congratulated himself heartily.

"If we don't strike her, we may pick up something

else," he had remarked, adding: "I think I can make out the course she's most likely to take. Two to one, she's bound for the Havana, to harry our West India trade. We'll keep a sharp lookout."

So he did, and he had been rewarded even sooner than he had expected.

"Right under our noses," he had said, when the discovery of the schooner was announced. "We can outsail her."

"Captain!" interrupted his next in command, excitedly. "If she isn't taking in sail! What can that mean?"

"She may take us for something else," said the captain. "It's a fine breeze. She couldn't think of fighting us."

"Not a bit of it," said the officer; but his commander was an old, experienced sea-captain, and the queer conduct of his intended prize set him to thinking.

He walked up and down the deck during about half a minute, and then he began to look up curiously at the sky.

"That's it!" he shouted, his whole manner changing suddenly. "The Yankees are right! All hands! Shorten sail!"

He poured rapid orders through his trumpet, while his lieutenants and other officers sprang away to their duties, leaving him almost alone upon the quarter-deck.

"It's plain enough what it means," he said aloud. "There's trouble coming; we must in with every rag. This ship's too light, anyhow, for a hurricane. The men don't know it, but they may be working for their lives. All right! Things are coming in fast enough. I'll get that schooner, too, wind or no wind."

As yet, there was only a fresh breeze to take note of, so far as a landsman could have discerned. There was no actual excitement among the sailors of the *Clyde*, merely because of a change in the color of the sky. Some of them, however, had sailed as many seas as had their captain or the whalers of the *Noank*, and they were freely expressing to their comrades their approval of his prudence. All were working, therefore, with an uncommon degree of energy. Their ways and their performances would have been, if he could have seen them, a very instructive lesson to Guert Ten Eyck. He would have learned much concerning the differences between a square-rigged three-master and a schooner like the *Noank*.

During this somewhat brief and exceedingly busy time, the two vessels had steadily approached each other. The first officer of the *Clyde* had attended to

his taking in and reefing, and he now stood once more before his captain.

"The prize is within long range, sir."

"All right, Mr. Watson. Give her a gun. We must take her or sink her."

"Best sink her, sir. It's not safe to send off a boat. Most likely she's heavily armed, sir."

"No," said the captain, "no boat. We're short-handed, anyhow. We'll not sink her if we can help it. One thing I'm after is to overhaul her crew."

"You are right, sir," laughed the lieutenant. "A shot may bring her to."

There was more than one element, therefore, in the supposable value of the *Noank*, considered as the prize of the British frigate, *Clyde*.

Out ran one of the latter's port guns, shotted. It was well aimed, too, whether or not it was intended mainly as a sharp command to surrender. Its heavy shot went whizzing between the schooner's raking masts, doing no actual damage, but serving as a serious warning.

"A little lower!" exclaimed Captain Avery. "That was closer than I expected. Up-na-tan! Let 'em have it!"

He had but just given the order to go about, and the *Noank* was almost as good as standing still, while the red man sighted his gun. His marksmanship was a shade better, too, than that of the British gunner.

Such a response, or any at all with a gun, had been utterly unexpected by all on board the *Clyde*.

"Hit us?" gasped the captain. "We are struck? Was there ever such impudence! See what that is!"

"The port o' th' capt'n's cab'n!" shouted a sailor. "It's mashed, sir! And 'ere comes th' wind, sir!"

There had been a crash of wood and glass at the closed port-hole, and from that the Indian's iron messenger had gone on through the cabin door. All to bits flew a great swinging lantern in the saloon, and a wide gap was made in the woodwork of the state-room opposite. This had been closely packed with dinner-table delicacies, including many cases of wine. Sad work was therefore made of the costly juice of the grape, whether purchased or captured. A small flood of it, as red as blood, but not as horrible, came streaming out to tell of the bottle-breaking.

"Orrid waste, sir!" groaned the captain's steward, as he gazed upon that crimson rivulet. "E could ha' dined the fleet on 'alf o' that. I'll not forgive they Yonkees!"

"Give 'em a broadside!" roared the angry lieutenant on deck.

"No!" as loudly commanded the cool and prudent captain, adding to his friend: "Not just now, my boy. Call all hands to quarters. It'll be hold hard, in a few minutes. Ease her! Ease her! Starboard your helm! Steady all! Here it comes!"

He was a prime good seaman, that captain of the *Clyde*, and he was at that moment looking aloft to see his maintopsail blown to leeward.

"I'm glad it went!" he exclaimed. "Good luck! since they couldn't get it in. That'll relieve the strain on the topmast. It wouldn't ha' stood it."

Other sails threatened to follow, however, and the frigate was beginning to reel and pitch unpleasantly, although no very heavy sea had yet risen. The sky overhead was all one whiteness, but low down, northeasterly, it was blackening. The wind that came was bitterly cold and cutting, as well as resistlessly strong. On board the *Noank* all had been made ready for its arrival, and the schooner showed at once the excellence of her modelling. She leaned over, under her closely reefed mainsail, with a mere apron of a jib, and sped away southerly at a rate which her square-rigged pursuer was not at all likely to rival.

The captain of the *Clyde* watched her, as he clung tightly to his lashings at the foot of his mizzenmast, using his telescope as best he could, and making remarks as calmly as if he had been contemplating a horse-race.

"I'll say one thing for the Yankees," he said. "We can take lessons from them in light ship building. That's a good one. I wish I had the sailors that are handling her. They turn out some o' the best seamen afloat. Worth twenty apiece of some that were sent to me."

He was himself a fine specimen of the race of vikings who have made England the queen of the seas. Nowhere have they ever been more highly appreciated than among their cousins of the New World, and their many achievements are a part of our own ancestral inheritance.

For the immediate present, at least, the *Noank* was safe, so far as the British navy might be concerned.

"Guert!" said Up-na-tan, when their watch below brought them together. "Look ole brack man! Coco no like cole wind. Like 'em warm. Up-na-tan no care! Ugh! Want *Noank* run south. No freeze hard."

Poor Coco had indeed been shivering pitifully when he came down from the deck. Not all the

experiences he had had during many northern winters had prepared his Ashantee constitution to enjoy a norther.

In fact, moreover, there was not an old whale catcher on board who did not now and then congratulate himself that the schooner was steering toward the tropics, and would soon leave behind her that fierce, destructive river of dry, penetrating polar air.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTRABAND GOODS.

It was greatly to the advantage of the swift *Noank* that her larger and even swifter enemy was having a battle of its own. The burly commander of the *Clyde* was compelled to surrender, for the time, to the imperious demands of the polar gale. If it would have been at all safe to have thrown open any of his ports, nothing worth while could have been done with his guns. All that was left for him to do, therefore, was to follow on as best he could in the wake of his American prize. This could be done fairly well, for a while, although he was not gaining upon her. Then, however, another of her natural

allies intertered, for darkness came over the sea, and his best hope for catching the *Noank* went out like an extinguished lantern.

Meantime, the captain had to listen, with undisguised vexation, to his steward's dolorous account of the damage done to the delicacies in the storeroom.

Far away, northerly, that very evening, a patriotic company of Americans had gathered in a large and pretty well-lighted room. Adjoining this were several other rooms, large and small, which were occupied in very much the same manner. The house was the old Ledyard mansion at New London, and all these women and girls had gathered there, with one accord, for work, and not for fun. The brave owner of the homestead, Colonel William Ledyard, was absent upon an errand to Boston, and there were hardly any grown-up men in the assembly. There were boys, indeed, brimning with patriotism, and these were evidently feeling more than ordinarily warlike as they helped their grandmothers, and mothers, and sisters, and aunts at the peculiar industry which had brought them together.

It was neither a sewing society, nor a quilting bee, nor an apple paring. There could not, however, have been more activity or cheerfulness, even at a corn husking, and yet the cause of all this enthusiasm and energy was serious indeed. All the

busy fingers in these rooms were putting up ball cartridges with the powder and lead captured by Lyme Avery in the *Windsor*.

"What a pity it is that we cannot send them to Washington," said one of the workers. "He will need them all pretty soon."

"I hope we'll never need them here," responded another, "but I suppose the forts must be provided. The British may come. They have good reasons for hating New London."

"It hath many bad people in it," came sarcastically from beyond the table in the middle of the room. "I fear there is very little love here for our good king. We think too little of all that he is trying to do for us."

"Rachel Tarns," exclaimed Mrs. Ten Eyck, near her, "there's more news from New York just in. Your good king is stirring up the Six Nations again. There will be more trouble on that frontier."

"Not right away, I think," replied the Quakeress. "I have much faith that the peaceful red men will remain in their wigwams during such weather as this is. Should they not do so, I fear lest some of them might be hurt by the frontiersmen, even if they are not frost-bitten."

"That's what I'm afraid of," said one of the larger

boys. "Old Put ought to be there. Washington used to be an Indian fighter. Killed lots of 'em. I guess there won't any of 'em trouble us folks in Connecticut."

"Thee is only a boy," laughed Rachel. "Thy Old Put could tell thee of troubles with the red men not so very far away from this place. Thy own house is upon land that once belonged to them. What would thee do if they should come to take it away from thee?"

"I'd fight!" said the youngster. "My father's with Washington and my brother's with Putnam. Mother and I are ready to shoot if any of 'em come near our house."

"Rachel," said Mrs. Ten Eyck, "how is thy conscience this evening? How is it that a Quaker can make cartridges?"

"I will tell thee," said Rachel. "I have it upon my mind that the more cartridges we make, if they are used well, also, the sooner will this wicked war be brought to an end. Thou knowest that the testimony of the Friends is given for peace. Therefore do I rely much upon that good friend, George Washington. He gave a strengthening testimony at Trenton and Princeton."

Everybody had become accustomed to the dry and often bitter sayings of the old Quakeress, and

now a white-haired woman across the room suddenly exclaimed:—

"Hear that wind! O dear! I wasn't thinking of redskins. So many of our boys are at sea. Mine are with Lyme Avery. What wouldn't I give to know just how they're doing!"

"Why, they are sailing south," replied Mrs. Avery. "If this storm reaches 'em, it'll send 'em along. Lyme is used to rough weather."

Brave was she, and very brave were they all, and the "cartridge bee," as they called it, was a good illustration of the stubborn spirit of freedom which made it impossible to conquer the colonies.

"The forts'll be safer," they said, as they packed up their dangerous work and prepared to scatter to their homes through the icy storm. "We must come and roll cartridges two evenings every week. Some of the boys are putting in all their time to moulding bullets."

All of those boys were growing, too, and some who were only fit to melt lead and run bullets at fourteen or fifteen would be in the ranks before the end of the war. They would be Continental soldiers, for instance, at such fights as that at Yorktown. Any country becomes safer while its boys are eager to grow up for its defence, and are all the while taking lessons that will prepare them for efficiency.

The next morning dawned quietly upon both land and sea. The norther had blown itself out, and it had brought no great amount of snow with it anywhere. It had been severe while it lasted, and then it had departed, like any other unwelcome guest.

The streets of New London were cold and snowy, but they were not by any means dreary or deserted that morning.

One more ocean prize had been brought in, and the report of it had gone out in all directions. The sleighing was good over the country roads, and the number of teams hitched along the sides of the lower streets testified to the general hunger for news as well as for trade. The sociability of all these arriving sleighing parties was tremendous, and they seemed to be all of one mind concerning the events of the day. That is, the one-mindedness here was exactly like, and yet exactly opposed, to the one-mindedness which ruled upon Manhattan Island, not so far away. Whigs here, Tories there, were equally earnest, determined, and hopeful.

In New York as in New London, it was currently reported that a number of the more active business men were actually making fortunes by the war. Not a great many rebel vessels had been brought into New York harbor as prizes, but all that did come in, and that were condemned and sold, offered opportunities for speculation. The best of the town

trade came from the army and navy, but there were still a few small dribblets coming in from the interior. It was worthy of note, perhaps, that furs, for instance, should sometimes reach New York from the north, from regions beyond Albany. These were smuggled down the Hudson River, nobody knew how. It had been suggested, of course, by sharp people, that American commanders might be willing to shut their eyes while a fur trader went in, provided they were to have a talk with him on his return.

In like manner, it was said, the British generals had no objections whatever to the arrival of fellows who were certified to them as "well-known Tories," who could give them abundant information concerning the ragged, starving, worthless condition of the rebel forces in and above the Hudson highlands.

No doubt, too, it was encouraging to the military and other servants of the king to hear, from honest and loyal fur traders, how the rebels of the Mohawk Valley were dispirited by the defeats of Washington's army, and how they were preparing to turn against the Continental Congress. Best of all, perhaps, was the assurance thus brought that all the Six Nations and the Hurons of the woods were ready to take the war-path in the spring as the allies of England.

If there were sailors ashore on leave that morning,

from many of the other ships in the harbor, there were none from the *Termagant*, for she was under orders to sail. Captain Luke Watts himself had a call of ceremony to make, at an early hour, relating to those very orders, for he was to give in his last report of the condition of his ship and crew. The "port captain," to whom his report was to be made, was the commander of a lordly seventy-four. In the absence of any admiral he was the "commodore" of all the naval forces in and about the harbor.

Captain Watts was kept on deck in waiting for a few minutes only, and when he was summoned to the cabin he found the commodore by no means alone. The mere skipper of a transport was not asked to take a seat in such a presence, and Luke stood, hat in hand, respectfully, while his presented papers were read and approved.

"Now, Watts," said the commodore, "what course do you take, homeward bound?"

"As far no'th as I can get, sir," replied Luke, "for good reasons."

"Give your reasons."

"Well, sir, from what I heard at New London, the rebel pirates are aimin' at our West Injy trade. They'll hang 'round the reg'lar course, too, the southern track. I jest mean to steer out o' their way."

"Good!" said the commodore. "What else did you hear among the Yankees?"

"Well, sir," replied the Tory sailor, "they said, and they seemed to know, that our cruisers off the Havana are mostly heavy craft that can't chase 'em through the channels and over the shoals and 'mong the lagoons. What we need, sir, is a lot o' light draft vessels there, and well armed, too."

"Make a note of all this, lieutenant," exclaimed the commodore. "This man Watts has brought in good advice before this. Whatever he brings is said to be of practical value. Go on, man! What next?"

"Well, sir," said Watts, "before I left Liverpool the last time, I heard a p'int. I must look sharp after I get over and want to run in. I must say it, sir, the Irish and English coast is only half guarded. We haven't half enough ships on duty there. Next we know, we'll hear of Yankee pirates in St. George's Channel."

"Note it! note it!" exclaimed the commodore, loudly. "It's just so! What with so many of our best cruisers ordered to America and the Antilles and the Mediterranean, and to the China seas, our own home coasts are left to be defended by old hulks and mere revenue cutters. The Yankees can run away from the heavy tubs, and they can smash all the smuggler catchers. We shall hear bad news,

next. Watts, take your own course. Get in how you can. You're a man we can rely on. Go, now, sir."

"My ship'll get in, sir," said Luke, almost too sturdily. "I wish I was as sure 'bout some others. I'm afraid they're going to crack our traders 'mong the islands."

"That'll do! Go!" he was told, and he went out, leaving behind him a very capable naval officer in a decidedly uncomfortable state of mind.

"Gentlemen," he said to his officers, "all that he says is only too true. I am sorry it is, but I am intending to embody it in my report to the Admiralty. The unpleasant thing for us is, however, that we can't spare anything or send anything, from this fleet and station, to prevent the mischief that's threatened among the Antilles."

They all agreed with him. All of them considered, also, that the man Luke Watts had given valuable information and suggestions. He had done so, doubtless, but he had not thereby done anything to hinder the future operations of any Yankee privateer.

He was rowed back to the *Termagant*, and when he arrived somebody was waiting for him on her deck.

"Feller named Allen," he was told by a sailor at the rail. "He's a kind o' fur pedler. I'd say with a

the rule. He's a kind o' all pecker, I'd say, with a permit from one o' the generals, I don't know who."

"All right," said Watts. "Fetch him below, packs and all. I'll see if his papers are reg'lar. We don't make any loose work on this ship."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the sailor.

Sharp as was his examination of them a moment later, he seemed to be entirely satisfied with the documents presented to him by the man named Allen. He had obtained the customary authority, as a loyal merchant of the port of New York, to ship by the *Termagant* to his agent in London, a properly scheduled assortment of valuable furs. All had been officially inspected and approved.

"Come down below," said Captain Watts. "All your packages are down. I'll give these things another overhauling in my cabin."

"Certainly, Captain Watts," replied Mr. Allen. "Whatever you wish."

He was even willing to help carry down the furs, and one of the smaller parcels of them was in his hand when they reached the cabin. He still held it after the door was shut and bolted, leaving him and the captain alone together. Then his entire manner changed somewhat suddenly, and he threw his parcel down upon the table.

"Captain Luke Watts," he said, "that's it. You'd best take out the papers, now, and stow 'em away somewhere. You ain't sure there won't be another look taken at the furs 'fore you git away. I wouldn't risk it. They're getting suspicious, all 'round."

Open came the parcel, as he spoke, and in the very middle of it lay a bundle of such materials as would ordinarily have been sent through a post-office.

"It's about all the cargo I'll have, of any consequence," remarked Luke, staring down at the unexpected mail.

"General Schuyler told me to say," replied Allen, "that all these are of great importance. Some are from him to his friends in England. You'll know how to have 'em delivered. Some are to go to Holland and some to Paris. That last is all the way from the Congress at Philadelphia. It got to me by way of Morristown and one of our Jersey Tories, you know. That's old Ben Franklin's own handwriting."

"I'll see that they go straight through," said Luke, quietly. "I'll put 'em safe away, now, first thing."

"You'll swing at a yard-arm inside o' one day, if you're ketched with 'em," said Allen. "I've been up among the Six Nations, all the way through to Niagara, for my brother's concern on Pearl Street. I went to buy furs for them, you see, and did first-

rate. I fetched along packs o' news, too, for the British commanders. It was risky business, working my way through Putnam's lines, though. I came pretty nigh to being shot or hung by the rebels, you know."

"Ye-es, I know," responded Luke. "They came jest about as nigh as that to hangin' me, they did. The bloodthirsty pirates! Get ashore, now, Allen. I'll land your furs for ye. I hope your concern'll make a good thing out of 'em."

"Finest furs you ever saw," laughed Allen. "Look out for spies and searchers. Here's good success to good King George—Washington, and may the glorious flag of England float victoriously—till we pull it down! Luke Watts, I'm the poisonest kind of Tory, I am!"

"Jest like me," said Watts. "T've done all I can to put down this 'ere wicked rebellion."

"T've heard so," said Allen. "We got the news all the way from Connecticut. You delivered a whole ship's cargo of heavy guns and muskets and ammunition to the loyal-hearted Tories of New London. I was born there once, myself. I know just how faithfully they love their king and his blessed Parliament. Good-by, Luke! A successful voyage to you. Keep out o' the way of pirates."

"I must, this time," said Watts. "If I don't, I'll never
... .."

get another ship to carry furs and things in."

Up on deck they went, and the last words uttered by Allen did not have to be whispered.

"Take good care of your neck, Captain," he called out, from his boat. "If you're caught, this time, you'll never see New York again, or Marblehead, either."

"I guess he's about right," said Mate Brackett, gazing after the boat. "I'd say you seem to be a man that the rebels have set a mark on."

"Never you mind," said Watts. "We won't be ketched by 'em, that's all. The commodore says we may sail our own course. We'll git there."

"All right, sir," said Brackett. "We've a queer lot o' chaps with us this trip, but we'll work 'em."

What he meant by that was that all the prime seamen were needed by the war-ships, and that almost anything on two feet had been deemed good enough for an old transport ship going home in ballast.

"We'll have to travel under light canvas, I take it," remarked Brackett, as he looked at his crew. "It'd be all night and part o' next day for them to shorten sail in a hurry."

The boat which carried Mr. Allen, the loyal fur

trader, reached the shore. On getting out of it, he walked until he came to a dwelling a short distance easterly from what the fire had left of old Pearl Street. He entered without knocking and passed through the house to the kitchen in the rear, where a comely, middle-aged woman stood before an open fireplace, watching a pot which was hanging on the crane.

"Sally Allen," he said, in a somewhat low and guarded tone, "the captain took the furs. It's all right."

"It is if they don't find him out," she said, gloomily. "I think you are running awful risks, Tom. The sooner you are back again in the Mohawk Valley, the better for you."

"I shall get there," he told her; "that is, if I'm not shot before I pass the Dunderberg. I mustn't stay here, though. I must be in a canoe at Spuyten Duyvil Creek before morning."

"They make short work of spies, Tom," she said. "Think of what they did to Nathan Hale. I used to know him, years ago, in New London."

"Sally," he said, "I want you to mark just one thing. He isn't forgotten! One o' these days there'll be some first-rate British officer captured, a good deal as Hale was, with papers on him, playing spy. Whenever that happens, our side won't show any

mercy. The spy'll have to swing!"

"That's all wrong!" she exclaimed. "I hate to think of it. All revenge is wicked. It's awful to think of killing one man because somebody somewhere else killed another."

"Now, Sally, that isn't it exactly," replied Tom. "What we mean is that all the spy hanging isn't to be done on one side o' this war. What's right for them is right for us."

"No!" she said. "It isn't so! It's like so many red savages to talk in that way. We don't take scalps, just because they do, nor kill women and children. I'm a true American woman, and I believe in righting, but I don't want any stain left on our side."

"There won't be any," said Tom. "I'm going ahead, if they do hang me. I'm running Nathan Hale's risk, all the while."

"God protect you!" she said. "Do you feel sure you can creep through?"

"I've done it before," he replied. "What I'm thinking of, the worst thing for me, is the new line of pickets along the river bank. I shall be fired at, pretty sure, before I can paddle on into the Hudson Narrows. There'll be some risk from our own pickets above Anthony's Nose. I guess they'll all miss me. I've one package, though; that's all

weighed, ready to drop into the water if I'm exhausted. I'd make out to sink it, if I was dying. Now, give me some supper."

"Oh, Tom!" she said, "God keep us!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE PICAROON.

"Guert," said Vine Avery, as they stood together, with their backs against the main boom of the *Noank*, "what do you think of this?"

"Think?" said Guert. "Well! It's the first time I ever saw summer in winter."

"They're having good sleighing in New London," said Vine. "Skating, too."

"Guess so," said Guert. "I wish my mother were here, and Rachel Tarns with her. They'd enjoy this."

"My mother's made two West India trips," replied Vine. "She knows all about it. Likes it, too."

"It's the laziest kind of cruising, though," said Guert. "We've dodged away from some sails, and we've run after some, but we haven't taken

we've run after some, but we haven't taken anything."

"Our chances'll come, boys," put in Captain Avery himself, as he came strolling along the deck. "Not just 'bout here, maybe. Yonder on the easterly Bahamas. Not many British traders are likely to be met hereaway."

"What are we here for, then, father?" asked Vine. "What's your notions?"

"We had to," said the captain. "The Frenchman we spoke, told me the Florida Channel's alive with British cruisers. We sighted two of 'em, you know, and had to run for it."

"Where next?" asked Vine.

"We'll take a course toward Porto Rico," said his father; "then up the coast of Cuba. We'll try the Bahama Channel, and the Santaren, and the Nicholas. I want to send home some prizes, pretty soon, on British account."

Day after day, the *Noank* had been hunting, hunting, farther and farther into the southern sea, through good weather and bad. All the while Guert Ten Eyck had been at school. Up-na-tan had laboriously tried to teach him whatever he himself knew about guns, large and small. The other sailors had done their duty by him, concerning ropes and sails and points of seamanship. Captain Avery had

driven him hard at his books on navigation. Therefore, if the cruising had been more or less lazy business for others, it had contained a good deal of hard work for the young sea apprentice. He was in a fair way to be made a good sailor of, and to be ready in due season to handle a ship.

"What you want most," Captain Avery had said, "is a long v'y'ge on a square-rigged vessel, under a hard captain. I'll find a chance for you one o' these days. You can't learn everything on board a schooner."

That idea was growing steadily in Guert's mind, and he now and then found himself dreaming of all sorts of perilous cruises in great American three-masters. By these splendid ships of his imagination, all of which were as yet unlaunched from any shipyard, the best keels of England were to be met and beaten. He was to command one of them, and was to become a captain first, and then a commodore. It was all an entirely natural young sailor's ambition, but it was looking far away into the future of his country. All it was good for now was the help it gave him in his pretty severe schooling.

Just at this present hour, leaning against the boom and gazing at the low coast line of the islands, he was calling to mind the many yarns he had heard concerning them. He had read about them, a little. He knew how they had been discovered by the

He knew how they had been discovered by the Spaniards, and then taken from them, part of them, by the English and the French. He knew how the Carib natives had been slaughtered, and he had heard, from Coco in particular, of the horrible manner in which the tobacco and sugar plantations had been provided with African slaves.

Vine, too, was thinking, but of a very different matter.

"Guert," he said, "away out yonder, easterly, there's the queerest patch in all the Atlantic. It's where all the loose seaweed and driftwood and wreckage float together. There are currents that whirl in there and make a centre of it. More and more seaweed and other plants grow on that stuff year after year, and it's all a kind of swamp on the surface, with deep water under it. They call it the Sargasso Sea. We were swept into the edges of it, once, and it took a fresh breeze to pull us out. I don't just know if a craft like this could plow her way across it."

"I guess she could," said Guert, "but I don't want to try. What I want to see is Cuba and Porto Rico."

Away beyond them, hardly visible in the distance, was a tree-covered point of land. Captain Avery was studying it through his telescope, and they heard him mutter to himself:—

"I don't know whether or not that is Watlino's

Island. If it is, we've made a better run on this tack than I thought we had. One good, long reach beyond that and we'll begin to be in the track of the traders."

"Whoo-oo!" suddenly rang out the war-cry of Up-na-tan, from somewhere up the mainmast.

"Where away?" shouted the captain. "What do you see?"

"No see!" came down from the redskin. "Hark! Hear gun! Hark ahead! See point! More gun!"

His ears had been better than theirs, but, after a moment of intense listening, the entire ship's company of the *Noank* felt sure that they heard the dull boom of far-away cannon.

Every sail was already set to take so fair and fresh a wind, and the swift schooner was eating up the distance rapidly.

"All hands make ready for action!" shouted the captain. "Risk or no risk, I'm goin' to see what it is."

His orders went out fast, but they went to the ears of men who had sprung away without them. All the guns had been manned instantly.

Coco and Guert and half a dozen more were at the pivot-gun, but Up-na-tan did not come down at

once. The captain's order kept him aloft as the best lookout and listener he had. Louder, now, at intervals, came the ominous sound of the distant guns.

"No big gun yet," called down the keen-eared Indian. "No big war-ship. *Noank* run right along."

"The chief is worth his weight in gold!" exclaimed the captain. "That's jest what I wanted to know, before roundin' that there p'int. I don't care to run under the guns of a British cruiser."

Ships which are running toward each other under full sail cut every mile in two in the middle. For instance, they need to run only two miles instead of four to get together. There was a dense forest growth on the point of Watling's Island, if that were indeed the land to windward, for the breeze was westerly. Everything beyond was hidden from view until the *Noank* passed the outer reef and tacked seaward, running almost wing and wing.

"Whoo-oop!" came fiercely down from the red man's perch. "Panish flag. Three-master. Trader. Not many gun. Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! Kidd! Kidd! Black flag schooner! Pirate! Not so big as *Noank*. Small gun! Take her quick! Kill 'em all! Whoo-oop!"

"Hurrah!" arose in a general roar from the crew of the *Noank*, more than one voice adding, unceasingly, the desire that was felt to smash the

vociferously, the desire that was left to smash the picaroon.

"Ready, all, now!" sang out Captain Avery. "The American flag is against the black flag, the world over. We'll fight it, every time!"

Fierce shouts of eagerness replied to him, and the men were stripping themselves for a hard fight. The very most of clothing that was actually needed under that hot sun, by men who were to handle cannon, was a shirt and trousers, and many of the brawny backs were even bare. Muskets, pikes, pistols, cutlasses, were bringing up from below. Ammunition, plenty of it, was serving out to all the guns, and now, as the point of land was left to starboard, all eyes could see what kind of work had been cut out for the privateer.

The Spaniard, as her flag declared her, was a three-master of, probably, not more than six hundred tons. She was crowding all sail, but she was evidently heavily laden.

"She has too much cargo for good runnin'," growled Sam Prentice. "That buccaneer has the heels of her."

"What's worse'n that," said the captain, "she has nothin' but popguns to fight him with. He won't sink her, though. What he wants is to run along side and board her."

"Then it'll be good-by to every livin' soul that's in her," said the mate. "We'll jest put a stopper on all that!"

"Up-na-tan," shouted the captain, "come down to your gun! We shall be in fair range in three minutes. Then give it to 'em as fast as you can load and fire."

"Ugh!" was all the response they heard, and the Manhattan warrior came down so swiftly that he was at his gun almost before they knew it.

There was a pitiful scene, just then, on board the unlucky Spaniard. She had many passengers as well as much cargo. Women and children were crouching in terror upon her deck, or hiding hopelessly away in her cabins. Fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, were gazing in awful despair at the horrible black flag of murder and ruin, which was so evidently nearing them, minute after minute.

"The *Santa Teresa* is doomed!" groaned the Spanish captain, and then he raised his voice to shout courageously: "Men! we will fight to the last! We'd better go to the bottom, than to let those devils get on board!"

"We'd better die fighting, than stand still to have our throats cut, or to walk the plank!" came back to him from among the men.

Even the women begged for weapons. There

were boys and girls who were fiercely handling firearms, and swords, and pikes. Numerous as might be the buccaneers, they were likely to win a costly victory upon the deck of the *Santa Teresa*.

"There goes our mizzenmast," called out her mate to the captain. "We've no chance left, now!"

"We never had any, Roderigo," replied the captain. "O God! Here they come!"

"Ho! Captain Velasquez!" came from the man at the wheel. "A sail to larboard! A schooner!"

"A Yankee flag!" said Mate Roderigo. "Captain! She's heading this way!"

"Alas!" mourned the captain. "What can a Yankee sugar-boat do for us?"

A mournful wail went up from his women passengers as they heard him, but a tall gentleman near him touched his elbow.

"Captain!" he said, "look again. That American does not seem to fear the black flag. See! She is coming on full sail. What can it mean?"

"Perhaps she does not yet know what they are, Señor Alvarez," sadly responded the captain. "She will be as hopelessly lost as we are."

So thought the buccaneer captain himself, at that

moment, for he and his hideous crew were already rejoicing over two triumphs to come instead of one, and a second feast of bloodshed after taking the Spaniard.

The black flag commander was a short, thin, tiger-faced man. He was gaudily dressed, as were also some who seemed to be his lieutenants. As for his crew, they were of all sorts. They were the offscourings of several nations, including Englishmen, French, Dutch, and Africans. They were at this moment yelling savagely, as they loaded and fired their guns. Not one of these was larger than a short six-pounder, although there was an absurd number of them, considering the size of the vessel. She was schooner-rigged, but she was much more lightly constructed than the *Noank*. Her breadth of beam was somewhat greater, and she might be speedy. Precisely such craft were sometimes built for the slave trade. They were expected to carry only human cargoes, as a rule, and to make swift runs from African slave barracoons to American markets. Delays in such voyages implied heavy losses of black captives who would surely die in the hold.

"We will take the Yankee schooner first," was the decision of the pirate captain. "We must cripple the Spaniard, so she cannot get away. Two prizes are better than one. We need that schooner yonder, for our own trade."

Loud laughs and jeers replied to him from many scores of throats, for the buccaneer *Leon* was positively over-thronged with sea-wolves.

"Steady with the helm there!" rang out on board the *Noank*, as she arose like a duck upon the crest of a long sea.

"Ugh!" said Up-na-tan, as the sheet of flame sprang from the brazen lips of his long eighteen. "Whoop!"

"Struck her!" exclaimed Captain Avery. "That was a good shot!"

"Between wind and water!" shouted Sam Prentice, studying the pirate through his glass. "It took her as she heeled, and it knocked a hole in her you could roll a barrel through."

Whether or not any bodily harm had been done to any pirate, a chorus of astonished yells and imprecations went up from her crowded deck. All the ears there could hear and understand the crash of timbers under them, which had followed close upon the good shot of Up-na-tan.

"Praise God!" gasped the captain of the *Santa Teresa*. "Oh! Señor Alvarez! I never thought of that. It is one of the new American colonial cruisers. They carry heavy guns. Their men are as brave as lions. All the saints be merciful and help them to

shoot straight!"

"Amen!" groaned the señor. "Laura! My dear wife! The Americans are armed! We have some hope!"

Down upon their knees, as if with one accord, dropped all the despairing women and not a few of the men, the children grouping frantically around their mothers. Loud and earnest were the hurried supplications and bitter was the wailing.

Up-na-tan had not the least idea that he or his gunnery were being prayed for, but he sent his next shot as truly as the first. He aimed at her hull, as near amidships as might be. It was no fault of his that a slight roll of the *Noank* lifted his line of fire so that his flying iron struck the mainmast of the *Leon* instead of her ribs. The tall spar was shattered and went over the lee rail with all its top hamper, carrying with it several of the pirate crew who were aloft.

That stunning success of the old warrior was greeted with a storm of wild cheering from the crews of the *Noank* and the *Santa Teresa*, while more than one woman's voice declared: "Praise God and all the saints! Our prayers are heard!"

The remark of Captain Velasquez was more seamanlike than religious.

"Santo Domingo!" he exclaimed. "That cripples them! The villains can come no nearer. They are at the mercy of that American. God bless her! Why does she not use her broadside guns?"

She was not quite ready yet. It was better to ply her long eighteen and keep well away from any harm to her hull or rigging by the short-range pieces of the *Leon*.

"Give it to 'em!" said Captain Avery to Up-natan. "Make every shot tell. Now for it, men! Ready with the port broadside! A minute more! Don't miss, for your lives!"

The swift rush onward of the schooner brought her near enough, even while he was giving his orders, and her six-pounders were worked by very good marine marksmen. The pirates were helpless, and the broadside of the *Noank* ploughed among them with deadly effect. A second quickly followed, and still she was drawing nearer.

"No surrender!" shouted the pirate captain. "We'll put the Spaniard between us and the American. We must board her! That'll stop their firing. Give it to her!"

There was something like good seamanship in his proposition if he could have carried it out, but Sam Prentice was at the helm of the *Noank*, and he instantly detected the intended manoeuvre.

"Sam!" shouted Captain Avery, as his schooner began to change her course. "Port your helm! Keep her well away! Carry her out o' range! Don't let 'em knock a splinter out of us!"

"All right, Lyme," responded Sam. "But let's rake 'em. They're losin' steerage way with all that wreckage draggin'. The redskin has hulled 'em ag'in. Let's cross their bows."

"Go ahead! I'm agreed!" called back the captain. "Not too near, though."

His careful keeping away was to have an important consequence that he did not think of. All was confusion on board the *Leon*, after those broadsides came. Her crew were frantically striving to cut loose the towing wreckage and bring their craft once more to the wind, while, as fast as Up-na-tan and his fellow-gunners could load and fire, the destruction was increasing.

"What's that?" screeched the pirate captain, in reply to one of his crew. "We are sinking, are we? Boats! To the boats! They shall never take us alive. Boats, and board the Spaniard!"

Capture meant only death without mercy, as all of them knew, and some of the cooler miscreants had already begun to get ready the boats. Of these there were four, and the largest of them had been hanging at the davits, ready for lowering.

"Sam," said Captain Avery, soberly, "not one of those fellows must git away. Mercy to them is cruelty to everybody else. If I spare a pirate, I'll feel as if I was murderin' the next man or woman he puts a knife into."

"That's about the way I feel," said Sam, "but I ain't an executioner."

The Spaniards themselves had been doing something with the guns of the *Santa Teresa*, such as they were, old-fashioned, clumsily mounted, short-range, light pieces. Only a few of her crew and none of her passengers had been killed or wounded. There had been no report of them made in the general excitement and despondency.

It was almost too soon for any enthusiastic rejoicing, for hardly any one felt sure of deliverance. It was almost as if the wonderful Yankee privateer had fallen from the skies. She and her operations were calling forth tremendous admiration, however, and there was plenty of genuine piety in the fervent thanksgivings that were uttered.

"Stop firing!" commanded Captain Avery, less than a quarter of an hour later. "That black flag feller is careenin'! She's fillin'! I declare, she must ha' been a mere shell. The *Noank's* timbers'd ha' stood a heavier poundin' than that."

"It was pretty heavy pounding, Lyme," replied Sam Prentice. "Our timbers are good, but we don't care to be struck at short range. Not by heavy shot, anyhow. You see, that redskin jest plugged her every time. Some of his hits must ha' gone clean through."

"Used her up, anyhow," said the captain.

"Guert," said Up-na-tan to his pupil in the science of gunnery, "good! Boy aim twice. No miss. Boy make good gunner some day."

It was just so. The Manhattan had indulgently promised Guert to do some actual battle practice, and had made him as proud as a peacock. It was true that he had fired under close supervision and direction, but it had been a valuable teaching, and Guert almost believed that he could have done it all alone—with the right kind of men to handle the pivot-gun for him.

"Boy good eye," said Up-na-tan. "Hold hand steady. Hit mark. Ugh!"

Over, over, over, rapidly leaned the shattered hull of the *Leon*, the water pouring into her through the gaps in her starboard side. Down from her had dropped boat after boat, to be crowded with her surviving wolves, no effort being made by them to save any of their wounded companions. She had now drifted into pretty close neighborhood with the *Santa Teresa*, and a wild shout went up as the boats pulled away.

"Board the Spaniard!" cried her captain.

It was the last resource of utter desperation, and they might even now have succeeded in gaining possession of the *Santa Teresa* if she had been unassisted.

"Stand by your guns, men!" shouted Captain Velasquez. "Let them have it as they come!"

"Steady about," said Captain Avery to the steersman of the *Noank*, "we must take care o' those boats. Oh! how I wish we were nearer! Give it to 'em!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" came back from his gunners, "but the Spaniard's in the way. As soon as we clear her —"

"Down with the mainsail! Haul on that jib! Port! Here we come!"

It was not round shot this time. The long sixes had been glutted with grape-shot, and so had the pivot-gun. The Spanish cannon, hastily fired by excited men, had done some execution, but not one of the buccaneer boats had been disabled. The foremost of them was within ten fathoms of the *Santa Teresa*, and the swarm of murderers would have been over her bulwarks in another minute, when past her port quarter swept the Yankee privateer.

Bang, bang, bang, as fast as they were brought to bear, spoke out her three guns of that broadside, and Up-na-tan's eighteen-pounder. Then she seemed to come about like a top, somewhat increasing her distance. Three more successive reports, and then where were the picaroons? Muskets and pistols were hurling lead among them from the deck of the Spanish trader. A shot from one of her guns had knocked out the stem of the largest boat. All that, however, had been of small account compared to the effect of that tempest of grapeshot. The boat crews withered away before it, and two of the boats themselves were upset in the panic that followed, while the fourth was evidently sinking. Black heads dotted the water, and a shriek

from one of them brought a sharp, quick exclamation from Coco.

"Shark! Shark!" he yelled. "See back fin! Twenty of 'em! See 'em! Shark take 'em all!"

"Father," exclaimed Vine Avery, "that's awful! Can't we save some of them?"

"Too late!" said the captain. "Not a man, I'm afraid. Jest look how they're goin' down! It's a reg'lar school o' sharks. They're bitin' fast. We'll go about, though, and we'll pick up any that are left."

The Spaniards continued firing while their American friends sped on and came back on the other tack. Every boat had now been upset or shattered and the sharks were having their own way with the picaroons.

"Here comes one of 'em, Captain Avery," said Guert. "I'll try and save him!"

"Throw him a rope," said the captain; and Guert quickly had the help of Vine and another sailor.

"Quick!" said Guert. "Don't let the sharks get him. I'd give anything to save a man from them!"

"He's caught the rope," replied Vine. "Haul him in! We've got him."

Close behind him, or rather under him, as he came dripping over the rail, was a huge pair of snapping jaws that barely missed him. He fell, at first, and then his rescuers themselves were astonished. He did not say a word to them, but dropped at once upon his knees, and began to pour out thanks to the Virgin Mary, like a good Catholic.





A NARROW ESCAPE.

"As he came over the rail, a huge pair of jaws barely missed him."

A NARROW ESCAPE.

**"As he came over the rail, a huge pair of jaws
barely missed him.**

"Let him," said Sam Prentice. "Some o' these

cutthroats are awful pious."

"Yes," said Guert, "but he is praying in Dutch, and he mixes it up with English. I can't tell what he is."

"There she goes!" shouted a dozen voices at that moment, and all turned to look.

It was only a last lurch and a plunge, and all that was left of the pirate *Leon* sank forever out of sight. The heads of her crew had also disappeared from the surface of the water, and the career of one of the terrors of the sea was ended.

CHAPTER X.

THE BLACK TRANSPORT.

"You don't mean to say it's all over!" exclaimed Guert, staring at the place from which the pirate schooner had vanished. "Seems to me it doesn't take long to fight a battle at sea."

"Yes, it does," said one of the older sailors, "if there's chasin' and manoeuvrin' and long range firin'. I've been in some that took all day and the next day, too. But we were too heavy guns for that feller."

"It's awful!" remarked Vine Avery, very thoughtfully. "I was trying to make out if we could have saved any more of 'em."

"No," said the captain, "I don't see how we could, considerin' where we were and the time it took us to come about. They grappled each other in the water, too."

"The fact is, boys," said Sam Prentice, "the savin' o' those fellers wouldn't ha' been of any use, anyhow. Spanish law isn't as slow and careful as ours is. It wouldn't ha' called for any trial by a court, you know. The nearest army or navy commander of any consequence would ha' taken hold of 'em. They'd all ha' been shot within a day after he seized 'em."

"Leastwise," said Vine, "twasn't any fault of ours. I'm glad Guert made out to haul in one of 'em"

Guert had turned somewhat quickly away, while they were speaking, for his rescued man had been allowed to come and speak with him.

"Hullo!" said the captain. "They are talkin' Dutch. That's it! Guert's a New Yorker. He learned it at home."

"What sort is he, Guert?" asked the mate.

"He isn't any pirate, at all," eagerly responded Guert. "He's a Hollander that was on a ship they took. One of 'em knew him and saved him, and they 'pressed him in. He had to make believe he was one of 'em, but he never was."

"Pretty good story," said Captain Avery. "Maybe it's true. There's enough of 'em killed. We'll take care of him."

"I wish you would," said Guert. "Seems to me the right man got away."

"Not all of 'em," said the man himself in English that had very little foreign accent. "There were three more a good deal like me. Some o' the black men weren't reg'lar pirates. All the rest of 'em, though, belonged to the sharks. It was one o' the worst crews that ever floated. My name's Groot. I'm from Amsterdam, but I was brought up mostly in

Liverpool. Sailed on British craft and French, too.
I'm a true man, Captain Avery!"

The captain was willing to believe it, if he could, and he questioned him closely, all the crew of the *Noank* agreeing among themselves that Groot was their prize, anyhow, and ought not to be turned over to any Spanish authority.

All the while, the rescued *Santa Teresa* was drifting nearer, her bulwarks lined with eager people of all sorts, who were gazing gratefully at what seemed to them the very beautiful American schooner. She had arrived just in time to save them, and they had never before seen a ship that they were so pleased with. Loud hails were exchanged, and then followed, from the Spanish ship, a perfect storm of thanks.

"Guert," said Captain Avery, "I'm goin' aboard of her. You may come along. You may find some more Dutchmen. I can talk Spanish and French. I want to know just what shape they're in."

A boat was already lowered, and in a few minutes they were on the deck of the *Santa Teresa*.

"Women and children!" was Guert's first thought and exclamation. "To think of all of them being murdered! I don't feel half so sorry as I did about the pirates. I wish mother could see just what we've been saving from 'em. I guess it's perfectly right to shoot straight, sometimes. Glad I didn't miss once!"

All his shudders of regret and of horror over the work of the sharks passed away from him as those passengers crowded around him. There were four more *Noank* sailors, but the Spanish crew had captured them. The two captains were talking business, therefore Guert was taken in hand by the

women and young people. One short, fat senora, who came at him first, had long, white hair tumbling down over her shoulders. She hugged him and kissed him, and cried and laughed, and she pointed—saying a great deal in Spanish—at a woman who was throwing her arms around a pretty pair of children. It was easy for Guert to understand that the old woman was thanking God and the Americans for the lives of her daughter and her grandchildren.

Other women did not altogether follow her example, for Guert showed a little bashfulness, there were so many of them; but he shook hands quite freely with the boys and girls. The Spanish youngsters showed him their weapons, too, trying to tell him how ready they had been to fight the buccaneers.

"It isn't a long run from this to Porto Rico," he heard Captain Avery say. "We'll see you safe in. We didn't lose a man."

"We lost five," replied the Spanish commander. "The sharks would have had all of us, instead of all of them, but for you. God bless you! We will patch up and spread all the canvas we can."

At that moment a friendly hand was laid upon Guert's arm, drawing him away from his women friends. Señor Alvarez held him hard for a breath or two, as if he were trying to speak and had lost his voice.

"My boy," he then exclaimed, "you came in time! This is my wife, Señora Laura Alvarez. These are my boy and girl. This is my wife's mother, Señora Paez. They told me that you fired that blessed long gun, yourself."

"Up-na-tan, the Indian chief, and I fired it," said Guert. "I'm a beginner."

"I understand," said the Spaniard. "You are a young cadet studying navigation. You must come home with me and study a Porto Rico plantation house. You must be my guest. We will treat you like a king."

"I shall be ever so glad, if Captain Avery'll let me," answered Guert. "He says we're likely to be in port quite a while. I'll ask him."

Captain Avery was near enough to hear, and he replied for himself. "It's all right, Guert," he said. "You may go. I want you to, even if we sail and come back while you're ashore. You see, my boy, you know a little Spanish now. Here's a chance for you to get ahead so you can begin to speak and read it. Every American sea-captain ought to know Spanish."

"Yes, sir, I'd like it first-rate," said Guert; "but I wouldn't like to have the *Noank* sail without me on board."

"We'll see 'bout that," replied the captain. "You'll obey orders, anyhow."

"I guess I'll have to," almost grumbled Guert, as he was compelled to get away from his friends and hasten back in the boat to the schooner; "but I didn't come to loaf on shore. I'd rather be a gunner."

There was a great deal of talk and excitement upon both vessels, but things were rapidly getting back into order. The sails were spread, and both were quickly in motion. The wind was fair, and night was coming on. As for the *Noank*, in particular, all that she had done for either pirates or Spaniards could not diminish the necessity she was under for keeping up a sharp lookout for anything sailing under the British flag. That banner might be

fluttering nearer at any hour, and it might be upon a "sugar-boat," or it might be streaming out from the dangerous rigging of a cruiser.

Once the schooner was under way, Guert found himself more at liberty than usual, for all kinds of his sea schooling were given a vacation. His head was even more full than ordinary, however, and he had an especial reason for getting away with Sam Prentice during their next watch on deck. He had several times heard the mate talk about pirates. He had also heard something about them from Up-natan and Coco and the crew. Until now, however, all that he had heard at any time had been listened to as if it were unreal. He had never read a novel, and so he did not know that all of it had seemed to him a kind of pretty, interesting story of fiction, and not anything more. It was very different, now that he had seen a black flag and sent a heavy shot into the hull under it, and had watched while that hull went down.

"About the buccaneers, eh?" said Sam, as they leaned over the quarter-rail and looked out into the darkness. "Well! I s'pose there are books about 'em. You can learn a good deal from books, but I don't know any that'll tell you all there is 'bout those islands. There's too many of 'em, hundreds, mebbe, with outlyin' reefs and ledges. Then there are any number o' bays and inlets and lagoons. That's why it's so hard to follow up and ketch light draft pirate vessels. They can hide in a thousand out o' the way places until they git ready to run out and make a strike. One o' their biggest helps is the caves on some o' the islands. Safest kind o' places for men to hide plunder in, too. Some of 'em open right down at the water line, and some of 'em have deep water for quite a way in from the mouth. You can row a boat right on in at high tide, or even at low water, I've heard tell. Big cruisers ain't of any use 'mong the shoals and ledges and bays. Somewhere the

the shoals and ledges and lagoons. Somehow the governments have been too busy 'bout other matters to build and arm the right pattern o' gunboats. That there picaroon that we sunk to-day was as large a craft as I ever heard o' their usin'. Offener, they go out in canoes and rowboats and sailboats, and make surprises in light winds or calms, or in the night. All the shore people are afraid to tell on 'em, and they're good friends with the Caribs and the slaves. Of course, they've got to be all rooted out, some day, but it's goin' to be a tough job, I tell ye."

Many more things he had to tell, as Guert questioned him. Before he got through, it almost seemed as if all the nations of the world had once been pirates, of one kind or another, each nation thinking it right to capture ships of other nations on sight, if opportunity made it safe to do so.

"I tell you what," said Guert, at last, "I want to read books! I never had a chance at 'em. Rachel Tarns lent me a few, long ago, when we were at home in New York, before the British came. The war drove us out, you know, and we can't guess when we're to get back. I want to read."

"Now!" exclaimed the mate, "I've thought of one thing. You'll be at the Velasquez plantation. Mebbe for some time. They'll have heaps o' books. It'll help you learn Spanish if you'll try and read anything you find there. Learn all you can, wherever you happen to be."

"I just will!" said Guert.

"Now," said Prentice, "I'm goin' below. Some time to-morrer, if the wind holds good, we'll be in Porto Rico. Then you'll see something new."

Guert also had to go below and turn in, but it was not easy to sleep with his head so full, even after so

very fatiguing a day. He was lying awake, therefore, long afterward, when he was startled by sounds on deck.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed. "Something's happened! What if they should have sighted a British man-o'-war? If there's going to be any more fighting, I want to be at my gun!"

He was getting to be a genuine sailor, therefore, and the cannon he was stationed with had become a sort of pet and much as if it were his own property.

Not much careful dressing was called for after he sprung out of his bunk, and then he was up on deck without waiting for orders.

Not a great deal of noise had been made, after all, and most of the weary crew were still keeping their watch below, as soundly asleep as ever. Two pairs of ears, however, had been as keen as Guert's, and here were Coco and Up-na-tan, already at the pivot-gun, prepared for anything that might turn up. The moon was shining brightly and the wind was fair. The sparkling, foaming sea looked beautiful, and all was peace except upon the deck of the privateer. Away to leeward Guert could dimly see a sail that he believed to be the *Santa Teresa*, and at that moment a red ball rocket went up from her deck and burst, to inform her American friends that she was doing well.

"She's all right, then," Guert heard Captain Avery say to the man at the wheel. "I wish I knew what this feller is to wind'ard. Up-na-tan, be ready, there, with that gun. It looks to me like a brig o' some sort. It might happen to be one o' these 'ere British ten-gun brigs. I don't know, yet, whether or not one o' them 'd prove too much for us, if we got in the first broadside."

"Well, Captain," said the steersman, "we can't very well get out of her way, jest now. She has managed to come up to wind'ard of us, and she can hold on, best we can do. It's our bad luck!"

"Maybe it's her's," said the captain, grimly. "I won't call up the men for a bit. If there's a hard fight a-comin', a rest won't hurt 'em. It may be a Spanish coast-guard or a Frenchman. Everything down this way isn't British. Up-na-tan, take this night-glass and see what you can make of her."

The Manhattan came at once for the telescope, but a sudden change had come over the manners of Coco. It began with a curious kind of sniffing, sniffing, like a pointer dog in the neighborhood of game. Then he left his precious gun and glided to the rail, shaking his head and chattering harsh words in a tongue which nobody who heard could recognize.

Guert went over to join him, and his first glance at the face of the old African astonished him. It was absolutely convulsed with fury. The black man's hands were clenched, his teeth were grinding, and his eyes seemed to flash fire.

"What's the matter?" asked Guert. "Can you see anything out there?"

An angry screech, and then a guttural, wrathful war-cry, sprung from the lips of Coco.

At that moment Up-na-tan had been looking at the strange sail through the telescope.

"Brig," he had said. "All sail set. Big as the *Santa Teresa*. No cruiser. No Englishman ever set a foresail like that."

His implied compliment to the neatness of British seamanship was cut short by the fall of Coco, and

scamanship was cut short by the yell of Coco, and he instantly lowered his glass.

"Whoo-oop!" he responded. "Peak out! What Coco find?"

"Slaver!" screeched the African. "Coco smell him! Where Up-na-tan lose he nose?"

"Slaver?" exclaimed Captain Avery. "Bless my soul! We've nothing to do with men-stealers. I don't want any such prize as that, even if it's an Englishman. I wouldn't take a slave cargo into port."

"Nor I, either," said the steersman. "We're not in that trade."

Nearer and nearer, now, the strange craft was drawing, from the opposite tack. The men below had heard the yell of Coco and the Manhattan's warwhoop, and were tumbling up on deck in search of information. Their comments were various as they heard the remarkable announcement.

"Not a doubt of it, Lyme," said Sam Prentice to the captain, after a whiff of the wind from the stranger. "They're slave thieves. I always heard tell that a slave-ship could smell worse'n anything else. I say we ought not to try to do anything with her. Let her go!"

"Of course we will," said the captain; "but we'll speak her. Here she comes."

In a few minutes more the two ships were within hailing distance.

"What brig's that?" asked Avery.

"Slaver *Yara*, Captain Liscomb. Congo River to Cuba," came back with all cheerfulness. "What schooner's that?"

"American privateer, *Noank*, Captain Avery. We don't want you. How many on board?"

"We've only lost about a third of 'em on the passage," came jauntily back from the *Yara*. "We shall land over two hundred good ones. First-rate luck! Last trip we lost more'n half by getting stuck in a calm. How's your luck? Are you taking anything worth while?"

It was precisely as if a prosperous merchant, engaged in what he considered an honorable, legitimate business, were exchanging trade politeness with another merchant in a somewhat similar line.

"We're not long out," replied Captain Avery. "We've done fairly well, though. We sunk a West India picaroon to-day."

"Did you? That's a good thing to do. Glad you did," said the slaver, heartily. "Those chaps annoy even us African traders. They stopped me twice last year, and took away dozens of my best pieces, men and women. The rascals said they were collecting their import duties. Sink 'em all!"

He was so near, by this time, that the bright moonlight gave them a pretty good view of him. He did not seem to be by any means a bad-looking fellow, and it was only too evident that he was either an American or Englishman of good education. He asked for the latest news politely, and then he declared concerning the existing difficulties between King George Third and his American colonies:—

"You chaps have more interest in that affair than I have. If you're not all shot or hung, you'll make fortunes out of it, if it goes on long enough. Privateering sometimes pays better than slaving. All you need be afraid of, except the king's cruisers, is

you need to understand, except the King's charter, is too sudden an end of the war. That would ruin all your business at once. The war hasn't hurt us, to speak of. Our market is as good as ever it was; we can sell all we can bring over."

The *Noank* was sweeping on and there could be no more exchange of news or opinions with Captain Liscomb.

He was evidently a man without the prejudices of other men. He could see only the money side of the war for American independence, and he took it for granted that a privateersman would look at it in precisely that way. At least one of the crew of the *Noank* was not in agreement with him, for Coco was as furious as ever.

"Ole Coco stuck in slaver hold, once," he snarled tigerishly. "No water. Iron on hand, on foot. Hot like oven. Most of 'em die. Some go bline. Some get kill. Not many left. Sell Coco in Cuba. Whip him. Burn him. Make him work hard. Ole brack man got away, though. Big fire 'bout that time. Planter lose he house. Kidd men better'n slaver men. All the same, anyhow."

"Isn't that awful!" was all that Guert could think or say.

"Boy fool!" growled Coco. "Captain Avery all wrong. He let 'em go. Better take 'em."

"What could he do with all those slaves if he took 'em?" asked Guert.

"What he do with 'em?" replied Coco, with some surprise. "Drown slaver, not brack fellers. Sell 'em all. Make pile o' money."

"He wouldn't do that," said Guert.

"Then go ashore in Cuba," persisted the old

Ashantee. "Buy sugar plantation. Have he slaves all for nothing. That's what Coco think. He do it, quick. All African chief have plenty slave. Make 'em work, kill 'em, do what he please."

The fierce anger of the grim old African, therefore, had been aroused by a memory of his own sufferings and not by any sentimental notions concerning human rights. He saw no evil whatever in the mere owning of slaves. Very much like him in that respect, to tell the truth, were most of his Yankee friends. Slave-holding had not yet been abolished in the northern American colonies any more than in the southern. The great movement for the abolition of all property in human beings came a long time afterward. Nevertheless, even then, a strong odium was beginning to attach to the business of catching black men for the market, and the cause of this feeling was mainly the cruel and wasteful manner in which the business was carried on. The gathering of slaves in Africa for export purposes was understood to be exceedingly murderous, and too many of the captives died on shipboard from barbarous ill-treatment.

Away had swung the badly smelling *Yara* upon her intended course. Her polite captain had bowed as she did so, his last farewell expressing his wish that his privateer acquaintances might have good luck and make money. If he were indeed an Englishman, he had no narrow, national feeling concerning business matters.

"Sam Prentice!" exclaimed Captain Avery. "I was glad to be rid of 'em. They're only another kind of pirate, anyhow. I believe that feller'd send up the black flag any day, if it was safe,—and if he could make money by it."

"Lyme," replied his mate, "don't you know that slave catchers do fly the skull and bones every now

and then, in the far seas? They're none too good to scuttle a ship and make her crew walk the plank."

"I've heard so," said the captain, "but we hadn't any duty to do by 'em, jest now. What we want to do is to sight a British flag on a craft that doesn't carry too many guns for us. Port your helm, there!"

CHAPTER XI.

A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD.

"So! You report that you were chased by some enemy? I've read it—I've read the commodore's letter. What were you chased by, sir?"

"I can't be sure what they were, sir. I took them for privateers. The first of 'em gave me a shot my fourth day out. Another followed me three days later. Peppered at me for an hour at long range. Both times I escaped 'em in the night."

"I'm glad you did! I think the commodore is right about you, sir. Take your own course, always. Be ready to take the *Termagant* across again as soon as she's loaded."

"Repairs, sir," said Captain Watts, for the dignified officer before whom he stood was the port admiral in command of the British port of Liverpool. "Foremast sprung, sir. She wants a new maintopmast. She'll need all her spars, or I'm mistaken. If I'm to be in her she'll use her canvas, sir. I've no fancy for falling again into the clutches of the rebels."

"They might hang you this time, eh?" said the

admiral, pleasantly, as if that were a bit of a joke. "They might, indeed. Send in your requisitions; you shall have your repairs. I'll order them at once. Now, sir, is there anything else?"

"Yes, sir," said Watts; "I wish to report what I heard concerning rebel privateers and new provincial cruisers. That is, it may all be already reported."

"Heave ahead!" interrupted the admiral. "Tell what you've heard. Your news is as likely to be correct as any other. Go on, sir."

"It's the old story o' the rats and the cheese, sir," said Luke. "The bigger the cheese, the more the rats. Our trade's the fat they mean to cut into, sir. I heard o' rebel privateers fittin' out all along the New England coast. They told me o' some in North Carolina, out o' the Neuse River. Some from Virginny, up the Potomac and the James. Some down in South Carolina and Georgia; but I can't say but what as bad as any are comin' out o' the Chesapeake and the Delaware. What we're goin' to need is more light cruisers off the Irish coast, sir, and in the channels."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the great official. "The Yankee pirates'll never show themselves on this coast. Go now; we can pick 'em up as fast as they come."

Captain Luke Watts had kept his word to the British authorities. He had piloted the *Termagant* safely into her harbor. He was, therefore, above and beyond any possible suspicions as to his loyalty. There was nothing to prevent him from delivering, not only his packages of valuable furs, but also any other parcels which he had brought with him from America.

"All right!" he said to himself, as he swung out of the port admiral's office. "They'll know better one o'

these days. I'm glad to be told, though, that they mean to remain off their guard till they're waked up. I wish they'd send a few more o' their best ships somewhere else. Captain Lyme Avery and a lot more like him are coming this way pretty soon."

He was only halfway correct in that assertion, for Captain Avery and the *Noank* were not just then in shape to sail for England. After their noteworthy adventures with pirates and slavers, there had been many hours of plain sailing, in company with the rescued *Santa Teresa*. The second morning was well advanced when the two vessels found themselves only a mile or so outside of the ample harbor of Porto Rico. They had also tacked within speaking distance of each other.

"Señor Avery," sang out Captain Velasquez, "I have the honor to make a friendly suggestion."

"I'm ready, thank you, señor," said Captain Avery. "What is it?"

"Let the *Santa Teresa* go ahead and look in. I'll send a boat back with a Carib pilot. There might be a British cruiser in port."

"That's the very thing I was thinkin' of," said the captain of the *Noank*. "A thousand thanks, señor. We'll heave to."

Very little more needed to be said. There were other sails in sight, of various sorts and sizes, but not one of them carried the red-cross flag of England.

As for the *Noank*, all her ports were closed, there was a tarpaulin over her pivot-gun, and she was a peaceable appearing merchant schooner. Even the bunting at her masthead was a fraud, for it declared of her that she came from France, and

was not to be molested without proper authority.

"It's a kind of lie!" muttered Guert Ten Eyck. "They say all is fair in war, but I don't want to run up anything but an American flag. I don't half like to go ashore, either."

Nobody else on board, perhaps, was in sympathy with that part of his prejudices, but then his "going ashore" might mean a longer stay than that of any other sailor. The more he thought of it, the less he liked it.

"Father," said Vine Avery, after hearing the Spanish captain, "let Guert and me take a boat now, and pull in behind 'em. If we see any danger, we can streak it back at once."

"Good!" said the captain. "Take the small cutter and Coco and the Indian. They speak Spanish."

Off went Vine, and in a few minutes more a small and sharp-nosed boat manned by four rowers was dancing along into the harbor mouth.

"Splendid!" exclaimed Guert, staring this way and that way, landward, as he pulled. "This all beats anything I ever heard of it. Hullo!"

"Lobster!" growled Coco.

"One, two, three, four sugar-boat," came from Up-na-tan. "*Noank* get some of 'em. Big frigate no good."

That may have been his opinion, but she looked as if she would be of some account in a naval combat, that splendid British frigate, so taut and trim, lying there at her anchor. The sails now furled along her yards could be opened quickly enough, and there would then be no other ship of her size, of any other nation on earth, that she need fear to

meet

"Forty guns," said Up-na-tan. "Knock hole in *Noank*. Wait, now. See what ole Spaniard do."

"It looks kind o' rugged for us," thought Guert. "We can't run into port at all. If we did we'd never get out again."

The captain of the *Santa Teresa* was keeping his promise. His ship was taking in sail, and a well-manned boat was lowering from her side.

"Here they come," said Guert. "We'll know more when they get here."

"No," said Up-na-tan. "Ole chief see frigate himself. Know what do. All Cap'n Avery want is Carib pilot. Tell him where go. Up-na-tan know Cuba lagoons, not Porto Rico. So Coco."

On came the Spanish boat, and as it drew nearer they could recognize Captain Velasquez himself in the stern-sheets, ready to answer their hail.

"Señor," he said to Vine Avery, "there is one more British cruiser, farther in. Pedro, here, will go back with you and pilot your schooner to a safe mooring, up the coast. Only friends will come to see you there. You may watch for a green flag on the shore, or a green light after dark."

"Thank you, señor," said Vine. "All right. Let him come aboard."

Lightly as a panther, with wonderful quickness of motion, a short, slight, dark-faced fellow sprang over into the cutter.

"Me Pedro," he said. "Fight for Americano. Save he troat from picaroon."

The Carib, therefore, could make himself

understood in English, and he was eager to express his personal gratitude for his rescue from pirates and sharks.

"Now, señor," said Captain Velasquez, "we will run in and make our report. After that is done, you may rely upon all that our authorities can do for you. You will find that Spaniards can be grateful. Señora Alvarez and Señora Paez wish me to say that their young friend must soon be at their house."

Guert expressed his thanks and willingness a little lamely, and the uppermost thought in his mind was:

"There! I hardly know what I said. I'll pick up every Spanish word I can get hold of, while I'm among 'em."

"Pull back hard!" said Up-na-tan. "Vine lose no time. Ole chief see men jump around on frigate. See go to capstan. Come out soon."

He had a red man's eye for signs, and nothing escaped him. None of his companions, not even Coco, had noticed the fact that a number of British sailors were going aloft, or that there were men gathering at the frigate's capstan as if they had designs upon the anchor.

A very different kind of man, as sharp in some respects as the Manhattan himself, had all that while been taking observations through a good telescope. He was in a somewhat weather-beaten uniform of a British first lieutenant, and he stood on the quarter-deck of the *Tigress*, reporting to his captain:—

"Small boat, sir, from outside the harbor. Yankee-built cutter. Two American sailors, I take 'em to be. One nigger. One mulatto, I'd say. Now they are meeting a boat from the Spanish trader that's coming in. Of course, sir, there's a rebel craft

o' some sort somewhere outside, waiting to know if it's safe to come in."

"All right, Mackenzie," replied the captain of the *Tigress*. "We must catch her. Up anchor!"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Mackenzie, "but no canvas out till that Yankee scout-boat gets away. They needn't suspect we're after em."

"Trust your head, my boy," replied his bluff commander. "You're a sea-fox, my dear fellow, but you won't steal a march on any Yankee, right away. They're as cunning as Mohawks. Speak that Spaniard, if she comes within hail."

That was precisely what the captain of the *Santa Teresa* had decided not to do, if he could help it. The moment he was again on board of his own ship, he took the helm himself, and he made as wide a sheer easterly as he could. Owing to the channel and the position of the *Tigress*, however, the best he could do was to escape miscellaneous conversation. He could not quite avoid coming within speaking-trumpet range. The hoarse hail of the British lieutenant reached him clearly enough.

"Ship ahoy! What ship's that?"

"*Santa Teresa*. Barcelona to Porto Rico. Passengers and cargo. What ship's that?"

"His Britannic Majesty's *Tigress*, Captain Frobisher," replied Mackenzie. "You've seen rough weather, eh? One o' your sticks gone?"

"Knocked out," returned Velasquez. "We were mauled by a buccaneer. We got away from him."

"Where did you leave the American?" was the lieutenant's next question, made as confidently as if he had actually seen the *Noank*. "What is she,

anyhow?"

The Spanish captain was silent for a moment in utter astonishment. How could the Englishman have known anything about it? His very surprise, however, defeated his prudence, and he answered:

"Heavy schooner, bound in. She won't try it, now you are here."

"All right," came cheerily back; "I saw you send her a pilot. I'll report you."

"Caramba!" shouted Velasquez, in sudden anger. "Report! I hope your American rebels will beat you on land and sea! They have my good will, with all my heart!"

"That's so, I declare!" exclaimed the British officer, lowering his glass. "I might have known it. It's the old grudge between England and Spain. No wonder the Yankees get away from us as they do. All the American colonies are in league together against all Europe. We'll hunt down that Yankee schooner, though, in spite of 'em. Humph! To be snubbed in this way by the skipper of a Barcelona trader! I'll report him! What's the world coming to!"

The *Santa Teresa*, under very light canvas, was now making her slow way to her wharf, to which her arrival signals had already summoned a growing throng of expectant people. Among these, of course, were the mercantile men who were interested in the ship and her cargo, and many more were the friends and relatives of her crew and passengers. Besides these, there were naval, military, and custom-house officials, and persons who were eager for the latest news from Europe.

As the *Santa Teresa* floated nearer, hats and handkerchiefs began to wave on board and on the

shore. The first words that were sent landward, however, were in the tremendously excited treble of old Señora Paez.

"Praise God!" she called out. "Praise to Our Lady! We were rescued from the pirates! We were saved from death by an American privateer! God bless the Americans and give them their freedom!"

Little she knew and less she cared that her enthusiastic utterances were heard by loyal subjects of the king of England. Hardly a cable's length away was anchored a stout corvette of twenty-eight guns, whose officers and men, up to that moment, had been observing the new arrival quite listlessly.

Instantly, now, there began a stir on board of her, and a boat prepared to put off to the *Santa Teresa* upon an errand of inquiry. Before it could be lowered, however, the corvette herself was hailed by a boat from the *Tigress*.

"Up anchor, is it? Yankee trader outside?" was half angrily thrown back at that boat's message. "Ay, ay! we're coming. You may tell Captain Frobisher it isn't any trader. It's one of those Connecticut pirates. We've learned that right here. —All hands away! Up anchor, lieutenant! That old woman has told us what we're going to do."

Swiftly indeed the questions and answers were exchanging between the crowded wharf and the thrilling news-bringers on the *Santa Teresa*. Loud and repeated were the cheers for *los Americanos* and their plucky little cruiser. The British consul at Porto Rico was one of the listeners, and he muttered discontentedly:—

"The rebels will get all the help and information they need. Not an English merchant keel in port or due here would be safe if it weren't for the *Tigress*

and the *Hermione*. Think of it! Six cargoes ready to go out, and they'll all have to run the Yankee gantlet. There may be more than one privateer, you know."

Straight to the wharf steered the *Santa Teresa*. No sooner was her gang-plank out than her passengers poured over it to be welcomed after the exuberant Spanish fashion.

The *Tigress*, away out at the harbor mouth, was already under way, and the *Hermione* would soon follow her. There was a change in the state of feeling on board the frigate, however, after the return of the boat from the corvette.

"A privateer, they say?" said Captain Frobisher. "That's bad. She beat off a pirate for the Spaniard? What do you make of that, Mackenzie?"

"It's easy to read, sir," replied his foxy second in command. "It's as plain as print. The Americans are wiser than we are. They know enough to carry heavy guns. Not many of 'em, I take it, but altogether too much metal for any of these murderous picaroons."

"I'm glad they were, my boy," said the captain, heartily. "I hope they sent the devils to the bottom. I'm afraid we're to have trouble with those fellows, my boy. They can't face our cruisers, to be sure, but they may play havoc with our merchant marine. The admiralty must take severe measures with some of them."

"We'll try and do that ourselves with this one out yonder," said the lieutenant, but his duties called him away, and he did not explain precisely what was in his angry mind concerning the *Noank*.

That very saucy little man-of-war was not trying to look any further into the guarded harbor of Porto

Rico. Vine Avery and his crew had returned with their report of danger. They also reported whatever they had learned of the British merchant craft, and Captain Avery had, therefore, several things to think of.

"Now, Pedro," he said to the Carib pilot, "what next?"

"Run into lagoon to-night," said Pedro. "*Noank* get through inlet at low water. British ship stick on bar. Schooner come out again when captain say ready. Safe!"

"I understand that," said the captain, thoughtfully. "Our draft will let us in. Almost any British man-o'-war would draw too much."

"No!" replied the Carib; "captain wrong. High water on bar, deep enough for small corvette. All right. British no find channel, Deep water inside reef."

"That's it, is it?" said the captain. "Then the sooner we are through that channel, the better. All sail on, Sam. Let her go!"

The crew had already crowded around Guert Ten Eyck and his friends to hear what they had to tell. There did not seem to be anything like disappointment among them. They had expected to hear of British cruisers here away. They had known, all along, that only by sharp and daring work could they hope to find or capture their intended prizes.

"What do you think, Sam?" asked the captain, as soon as the *Noank* was once more flying along. "Doesn't this begin to look a little squally?"

"Well, no," said the mate, soberly. "It looks like we'd best lie low for a while, that's all. What I'm

thinkin' of is this. What if this Carib's lagoon and the channel into it are known to the British, or if they should be discovered while we're cooped up in there? They'd be sure to come in after us in boats. Most likely they'd come at night. We must make calculations on that."

"That's what we can do," growled the captain. "A boat attack'd stand for hard fightin'. I ain't so sure the chances would be against us. I'll tell you what, Sam Prentice, all that's left of a gang o' boats won't be enough to board and carry the *Noank*."

"Not if we're watchin'," said Sam.

"We won't stay in any longer'n we can help," said the captain. "I'm hopin' we are to get the right kind of information from the Spaniards."

"Not from their authorities," grimly responded the mate. "They won't do anything to make trouble between them and the British. Porto Rico is buildin' up a prime Liverpool trade just now."

"Sam!" exclaimed his friend, "you don't know human natur'! After a Porto Rico planter has been paid for his sugar, he doesn't care a copper what harbor it goes to. Besides, I'll bet on the *Santa Teresa* people. I took 'em for the right kind all 'round."

"I'm glad they're safe, anyhow," said Prentice. "That puts me in mind of another thing, Lyme. I kind o' like it that we're not to run into Porto Rico first thing. The Spanish lawyers might put in a claim on Groot and get him shot or hung. I've talked with him. He isn't a bad sort of Dutchman."

"We'll take care of him," said the captain. "Only man we saved. Prime good seaman. He'll be one more first-rate fighter, too, when we need him."

So the *Noank* sped on, and the two British men-of-war came sailing out of the harbor to chase her.

CHAPTER XII.

A PRIZE FOR THE NOANK.

"It doesn't take long to see all there is on one of these plantations," said Guert Ten Eyck to himself. "It's the laziest kind of place, though. I haven't seen a man in a hurry since I came here."

He was standing in a wide veranda which ran along the entire front, at least, of a long, two-story, fairly well-built house. There were well-kept gardens, with noble trees and shrubbery, and all the veranda was shadowy with climbing vines. It was the old Paez plantation house, and was also the present home of Señor Alvarez and his family.

"It's all very fine," Guert had remarked of it. "They're as rich as mud, but I wouldn't live here for anything. What if the *Noank* should manage to get away without me on board of her?"

That was a black idea which seemed almost to make him shudder. He had remained here as a favored guest for over a fortnight. During these days of his Spanish plantation experiences, the *Noank* had been idly rocking at her anchor in the sheltered cove to which her Carib pilot had steered her.

The two British war-ships had been cruising to and fro in a fruitless search for her, and their commanders were more than a little chagrined at their ill success, for they were firmly convinced that she could not be far away.

Guert had visited the shore, and his friends, in turn, had visited him, to be also liberally entertained at the plantation. Nothing but the great need for secrecy had prevented more extended inland hospitalities to the brave *Americanos* who had destroyed the picaroon. The highest authorities on the island were quite ready to acknowledge so important a public service, and no Spaniard, official or otherwise, was at all likely to help the British capture the *Noank*.

Guert had been promised information of any change in the prospect for cruising. He had learned, too, that this kind of lying in ambush was altogether a customary feature of all piracy or privateering among the Antilles. Captain Avery had expected it, and had considered himself fortunate in getting so good a lagoon to lurk in. The *Tigress* and the *Hermione* were enemies which it would not do to trifle with. Moreover, he had been kept well advised of the goings on in the harbor of Porto Rico, and he knew all about the English merchantmen who were discharging or taking in cargoes. One subject in particular had greatly interested the young American sailor, for there were a great many dark-skinned laborers upon the Paez and the neighboring plantations.

"If all the slaves are as well treated as they are here," Guert had thought, "they are a great deal better off than they ever were in Africa. I don't want to see any such thing in America, though. I'm sorry it's there. We don't want any more slave trade. Too many of 'em die on the way from Africa."

His ideas, of course, were very raw and incomplete. He was only a boy, and he could not see all of the mischief. He had watched the colored people in their huts, away off behind the plantation house. He had seen them at work in the fields. They

seemed to be fat, merry, and not at all discontented. As for their Spanish owners, nothing could be more easy-going and careless than their way of life. Their only apparent difficulty appeared to be in finding something to do. Guert himself found enough, for all this thing was entirely new to him. He enjoyed especially his horseback rides around the country, along forest roads, and into wonderfully lovely nooks of semi-tropical vegetation. He was all the while picking up Spanish words with great rapidity, for there was no other language to be heard, except queer African dialects among the slaves. He progressed all the better, too, because of having made a pretty good beginning before coming there. On the whole, however, his plantation days seemed a long time to look back upon, and here he stood, in the veranda, disposed to consider his situation seriously.

"What!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Could I stay here and think of the *Noank* being out there in a fight? My own mother'd be ashamed of me, if I did!"

A light hand was on his shoulder, and a soft, kindly voice said to him—

"My dear young friend! If I were your mother, I should feel as you say she would. I would have my brave son fighting for his country."

"O Señora Paez!" said Guert, whirling to look into her venerable face, "you all have been so good to me! But I cannot stay here while our war for liberty is going on."

Before she could speak again, a loud hail came up to them from the gateway at the road, and a man on horseback dashed in at a gallop.

"Señora Paez," said Guert, excitedly, "it's Vine Avers! Something's happened!"

"Guert!" shouted the rider, "we're all ready to sail! Come on! The coast is clear! Come back with me!"

"Hurrah! I'm ready," he began.

"Go, my dear boy!" interrupted the old señora. "I will call them to say good-by to you. I would not detain you if you were my son. It is your duty!"

Quickly enough, the Alvarez household gathered to say farewell to their young guest. They were all brimming with hospitality. They urged him to come again and to consider their house his home. Nevertheless he could see, plainly enough, that not one of them dreamed of detaining him, now. They understood that his post of honor was behind the guns of the *Noank*, and they would have despised him if he had not felt just as he did.

A horse was brought, and Señor Alvarez himself rode with Vine and Guert to the seashore, less than ten miles away. That distance was galloped rapidly. A boat was at the beach with a sailor from the *Noank* in it, and in a minute or so more it had three rowers. Loud and sincere were the last grateful farewells from the señor on the beach. As hearty were the good wishes sent back from the boat, but Guert's heart was thrilling as it had not thrilled during all his peaceful weeks at the Paez plantation.

There, yonder, at the mast of his beautiful schooner, floated the stars and stripes, the banner of freedom. There, waiting for him to rejoin them, were his own brave captain and the crew that seemed to him as his kindred. Away out yonder, outside of all these reefs and keys and ledges, was the great ocean.

"Hurrah, Vine!" he shouted. "Hurrah for a cruise and fights and prizes!"

"We're bound to have 'em!" said Vine.

As they pulled along, moreover, he told Guert that one of the sailors of the *Santa Teresa* had come all the way from Porto Rico in a rowboat to tell Captain Avery a lot of news that the captain had as yet kept to himself.

"It looks to me," said Vine, "as if we had some work all cut out for us."

"That's what we want," said Guert.

"I tell you what, though," said Vine, "the queerest feller on board the schooner is that Dutchman, Groot. He asks after you every now and then. Do you know, he actually ventured to go right into Porto Rico twice. I don't s'pose anybody he saw there suspected him of being a pirate."

"Well," said Guert, "he never was one, exactly. Here we are, Vine. I guess I'll have a talk with him."

The boat was at the side of the *Noank*, and a score of well-known faces were at the rail.

"On board with you!" called out Sam Prentice. "The anchor's comin' in. There's no time to be wasted."

Other orders followed, and Guert sprang away to his duties feeling a good deal more like himself than if he were watching slaves in a tobacco-field.

Very secure indeed had been that bit of a landlocked harbor on the island coast. Its entrance was a mere narrow canal, so to call it, between dangerous reefs on either side. No deep-draft British vessel could pass through that channel; even the *Noank* was compelled to take it at high water because of its bars.

"Captain Avery," asked Guert, after delivering the messages of good will from his Spanish friends, "didn't you say that the British might have come in and carried the schooner in boats?"

"Ye-es, I did," drawled the captain. "That's the reason why I anchored her jest in that spot. I kept a sharp lookout, you see, on that there p'int o' rocks yonder. Our guns were kept trained on this channel, all the time. We were all prepared then to knock their boats to flinders as they got in to about here. Not one of 'em'd ever pulled past this 'ere twist in the channel, when it opens into the lagoon."

Guert's question was answered, and he had a higher idea than ever of the remarkable fitness of Lyme Avery to conduct the business of the privateer *Noank*.

"I see it," he thought. "They'd ha' been smashed by a raking fire at short range. It would ha' been awful!"

The schooner had but little canvas spread as yet, and she picked her way carefully, slowly; but the channel was not a long one, after all.

"Out at sea!" exclaimed Guert, with a long breath of relief, at last. "Seems to me as if I'd been on shore a year. I was getting pretty sick of it."

"Lyme Avery," remarked his mate, as more sails were spreading, "it looks to me as if we were goin' to have a rough night. We'd better git well away from the coast."

"We'll do that," replied the captain, "and we'll run along in the track o' that Liverpool trader. She has pretty nigh a day the start of us."

"I understand that," thought Guert, overhearing them. "We're in for a race. We may be chased

ourselves, too. It doesn't look to me as if a storm's coming, but they read weather signs better'n I can."

"Come," said a low voice in his ear; "I want to talk with you."

The summons was spoken in Dutch, such as Guert had been accustomed to hear in old days upon Manhattan Island. Somehow or other the sound of it was very pleasant to him. He turned even eagerly to follow Groot, and was led forward almost to the heel of the bowsprit.

"Now, my boy," said the escaped pirate, "we are by ourselves. I know you like a book. I have talked with Coco and Up-na-tan. They say you know all about their having been freebooters, long ago. They call it Kidd business. Now, I never was really one of that kind, but there are ways for one buccaneer to know another, soon as he sees him, or talks with him."

"Yes," replied Guert, "they say so. It's by handgrips and signs and words. I know some of 'em now."

He and the Dutchman shook hands, and Guert said what he knew.

"That's well enough for a beginning," said Groot, "but you must know it all. It might save your life some day. It saved mine when they captured me. I'll teach you. I mean to keep company with you and those two old fellows. I owe you my life."

"Vine helped, too," said Guert. "I'm glad we hauled you aboard. The sharks were pretty close behind you just then. Oh! But wasn't it awful! I wish we'd saved more of 'em."

"You couldn't," said Groot. "They'd only ha' been turned over to the law, if you had. They were all

sharks, too, nearly all. Worst kind. Some weren't quite as bad as the rest, perhaps. Never mind them, now. Let's attend to this business."

Guert was willing enough, although Groot laughed, and said it made a kind of pirate of him.

"We'll practise now and then," he told him. "Now, some wouldn't believe it, but I met more than a score of regular picaroons, living at their ease in Porto Rico. Some of them are rich, too, and don't mean to go to sea any more. For all that, they're always ready to give information or any other help to sea-rovers like themselves."

Guert was all the while learning a great deal, and this addition to his stock of knowledge hardly surprised him.

"I see," he thought. "It's a kind of matter of course. It would be a good deal stranger if it wasn't so. Those that get away rich don't care to run any more risks. Besides, if such fellows hadn't signs and passwords already, they'd set right to work and invent some. Even regular armies have passwords and countersigns, and all the ships have signals."

He was thinking of that sort of thing when the dark came on. The wind was strengthening, and there were clouds rushing across the sky to vindicate Sam Prentice's prophecy concerning the weather.

"He was right, I guess," thought Guert. "Hullo! What's the captain up to?"

Captain Avery was standing at the mainmast, and he had just touched off a rocket that went fizzing up to its bursting place.

"I wonder who'll see it," thought Guert.

Far away in the deepening gloom to leeward, at that moment, the first lieutenant of the *Tigress*, watching upon her quarter-deck, exclaimed:—

"Captain! One more of our cruisers! She'll come within hail before long. That's it! I hope we're going to be relieved. I'm sick and tired of this West India station."

"So am I!" said the captain, heartily. "Reply to that signal. Give 'em our own number. Draw 'em this way."

His signal officer responded promptly, and more than one rocket went up from the *Tigress*. Her commander was much chagrined, however, for he received no response to give him the information he expected of the character of the newcomer.

Moreover, as far away from the *Noank* as he was, but in a directly opposite line, to windward, at the same time, the English skipper of a fine, bark-rigged merchantman, just out from Porto Rico, felt exceedingly gratified. She was a craft of which Captain Avery had no knowledge whatever up to that moment.

"Hey!" shouted the skipper. "See that? One more of our cruisers close at hand, beside the one away off to looard. I'll send up a light to let 'em know where we are."

Captain Avery had not really asked so much of him, but that was precisely what his unnecessary rocket did.

"Lyne!" exclaimed Sam Prentice, as the shining stars fell out of the flying firework from the bark. "I declare! They told us that feller wouldn't sail for three days yet, and there he is. He's goin' to be our surest take, Captain."

"All right," replied the captain. "Not to-night, though. We'll just foller him along till mornin'. Then we'll put a prize crew into him and send him to New London. We're much obliged to him for callin' on us."

"I guess we're sure of him," said Sam, "but we'd better look out for our sticks and canvas, first."

That was what every vessel in that neighborhood was compelled to do during the gale which began to blow.

"She stands it first-rate," said Guert to Up-na-tan, an hour or so later. "Tell you what, though, I feel a good deal better than I did on shore."

"Boy talk Spanish," replied the Manhattan. "Talk him all while. Learn how. Boy not know much, anyhow."

The red man had all along deemed it his duty to impress upon the mind of his young friend the idea that he was only a beginner, an ignorant kind of sea apprentice with all his troubles before him. After that there followed a watch below, another on deck, and then the morning sun began to do what he could with the flying rack of clouds and spray and mist that was driving along before the gale.

"Vine," asked Guert, "has anything more been seen of that trader!"

"Can't you see?" said Vine. "There she is. We're to wind'ard of her, now. She's answering father's signals, first-rate. We owe all that luck to Luke Watts and his private signal-book."

Nevertheless, the skipper of the bark was even then expressing much perplexity of mind as to what the *Noank* might be and where from. He did not exactly like her style. It was peculiar, he said, as the

morning went on and the gale began to subside, that the seemingly friendly schooner, answering signals so well, should keep the same course with himself, all the while drawing nearer.

"She outsails us," he remarked. "We can't get away from her. I wish the corvette or the frigate were in sight."

Both of them had vanished. They had tacked toward Porto Rico and the officers of the *Tigress*, in particular, were keeping a sharp lookout for the newly arrived British man-of-war that had burned rockets so very promisingly in the night.

"It's all right, Lieutenant," remarked Captain Frobisher. "The gale has carried her along finely. We shall find her in port when we get there."

"I wish we may!" growled the very sharp lieutenant, "but I don't like it. I didn't exactly make out the reading of that second rocket. Perhaps a lubber sent it up. We'll see."

On went the schooner and the bark without any outside observers. Down sank the tired-out gale, and the sun broke through the clouds.

"Coco!" shouted Captain Avery, at last, "haul down that lobster flag and run up the stars and stripes. Vine, give 'em that forward starboard gun. All hands to quarters! 'Bout ship! Men! she's our prize!"

A ringing sound of cheers answered him, and the report of the gun followed. It was a signal for the Englishman to heave to, and her captain dashed his hat upon the deck.

"Caught!" he groaned. "Taken by the rebels! I wish they were all sunk a hundred fathoms deep."

Loud, angry voices from all parts of his ship responded with similar sentiments relating to American pirates, but there could be no thought of resistance. The bark was hove to, and her flag came down in a hurry as if to avoid all danger of further shotted cannonading.

"Ship ahoy!" came loudly across the water. "What bark's that?"

"Bark *Spencer*, Captain McGrew. Porto Rico for Liverpool. Cargo. No passengers. Who are you?"

The answer settled his mind entirely, and in a few minutes more he had a boat's crew of American sailors on board.

"Captain McGrew," said Captain Avery, glancing around, "I'm glad you've no passengers. I'll find out, first, how many of your fellers I can leave on board with my prize crew, to handle her to New London. Some'd ruther work ship than be crammed under hatches."

The British sailors exchanged nods and glances, and their skipper responded:—

"All right! We're a prize, no doubt. We're insured, so far's that goes. 'Tisn't so bad for the owners. But you'd better tally four chaps that hid in the hold to keep from being 'pressed into the *Tigress*. They're not deserters, you know, but they'd as lief keep away from havin' to answer questions."

Four stalwart British tars at once stepped forward, and not one of them "peached" to McGrew that their names were already on the rolls of the frigate, so that they were much more than halfway deserters.

"Humph!" said Captain Avery, "I guess I can trust 'em. It saves me four hands. I'll pick out four more.

Captain McGrew, you and the rest may come on board the schooner. I'll give you a free passage to France. Treat ye well, too. Hand over your papers. Sam Prentice, this is your trip home."

"All right!" almost roared Sam. "I'll carry her safe in. She and her cargo'll bring us a pile o' shiners. Lyme, she's our first West Injy luck!"

"Hurry up, Sam!" said the captain. "Then I'll try for that feller ahead that led us from Porto Rico. She's along the track, somewhere."

CHAPTER XIII

THE BERMUDA TRADER

There is a great deal of the humdrum and monotonous in the day after day life and work upon a ship at sea. Even if the ship is a cruiser and if there is a continuous watching for and study of all the other sails that appear, that too may grow dull and tiresome.

There were many days of such unprofitable watching from the outlooks of the *Noank*, after her first unexpected good fortune. She had somehow failed to overtake that sought-for Porto Rico merchantman. The gale had favored an escape, and so had the delay occasioned by the pursuit and capture of the *Spencer*. Since then, carrying all the sail the varying winds would let him, Captain Avery had sailed persistently on, hoping for that prize or for another as good. There had been topsails reported, from time to time, between him and the horizon, and from two, at least, of those, he had cautiously sheered away, not liking their very excellent "cut." There might be tiers of dangerous guns away down below them and he did not want any more guns,—heavy ones.

"I said," he remarked, a little dolefully, "that I'd foller that sugar-boat all the way to Liverpool, and

I've only 'bout half done it. I'm goin' ahead. There's no use in tryin' back toward Cuba, now. We'll take a look at the British coast, pretty soon; France, too, and Ireland, maybe Holland. We'll see what's to be had in the channels."

Everybody on board was likely to be satisfied with that decision, especially the British prisoners from the *Spencer*. As for these, the sailor part of them were already on very good terms with their captors, not caring very much how or in what kind of craft they were to find their way back to England. They were a happy-go-lucky lot of foremastmen with strong prejudices, of course, against all Yankee rebels, but with thoroughly seamanlike ideas that they had no right to be sulky over the ordinary chances of war. They had not really lost much, and their main cause of complaint was their very narrow quarters on board the *Noank*. They had not the least idea that a change in this respect was only a little ahead of them, but a great improvement was coming.

Day had followed day, and the ocean seemed to be in a manner deserted. A feeling of disappointment seemed to be growing in the mind of Captain Avery, and he had half forgotten how very good a prize the *Spencer* had been.

"This 'ere is dreadful!" he declared. "I'm afraid we're not goin' to make a dollar. What few sails we've sighted have all been Dutch or French. I want

a look at the red-cross flag again."

"Well, yes," thought Guert, "but I guess he doesn't want to see it on a man-o'-war. I feel a good deal as he does, though. I'll get Vine to lend me a glass. I've hardly had a chance to play lookout."

Vine let him have the telescope, of course, but Up-na-tan and Coco came at once to see what he would do with it. He pulled it out to its length and began to peer across the surrounding ocean.

"Ugh!" said Up-na-tan. "Boy fool! No stay on deck. Go up mast. Maintop. Then mebbe see something. No good eye!"

"Git up aloft, Guert!" added Coco. "Never mine ole redskin. Think he go bline, pretty soon. Can't see lobster ship."

That may have referred to the fact that they had served as lookouts, that morning, until they were weary of it, and Up-na-tan had lost his temper. They grinned discontentedly as they saw their young friend go aloft. He had now become well accustomed to high perches, and was beginning to regard himself as an experienced sailor for that kind of small cruiser. He felt very much at home in the maintop, and even Captain Avery glanced up at him approvingly.

"He must learn how," he remarked, as he saw

Guert square himself in his narrow coop and adjust the telescope.

"Ugh!" suddenly exclaimed the Indian. "Boy see! Wish ole chief up there heself."

The others had not noticed so closely, and Guert was not apparently excited. He was gazing steadily in one direction, however, instead of hunting here and there, as he had done at first.

"Isn't a telescope wonderful?" he was thinking. "It brings that flag close up. I can see that her foremast is gone. That looks like another sail, away off beyond her. More than one of 'em. Maybe it's a fleet."

A lurch of the *Noank* compelled him to lower his glass and grasp a rope, while he leaned over to shout down his wonderful discoveries.

"Hurrah!" yelled Vine. "Good for Guert!"

"Hard a-lee, then!" roared Captain Avery to the man at the helm. "Ready about! Strange sail to looard! Up-na-tan, that long gun! Clear for action!"

It was all very well for him to shout rapid orders and for the crew to bring up powder and shot so eagerly, and get the schooner ready for a fight. It was also well for the captain to go aloft and take the glass himself. He could see more than Guert could. But what was the good of it all when the

could. But that was the good of it all when the wind was dying?

There was hardly air enough to keep the sails from flapping. A schooner could do better than a square-rigged vessel under such circumstances, but that wind was an aggravating trial to a ship-load of excited privateersmen.

Captain McGrew had been permitted to come on deck, and Guert, as he reached the deck from aloft, was half sure that he had heard the Englishman chuckling maliciously, then heard him mutter:—

"The Bermuda ships never sail home without a strong convoy. These chaps'll catch it."

When Captain Avery himself came down and the opinion of the *Spencer's* captain was reported to him, he said:—

"From Bermuda, eh? That's likely. We're not far out o' their course, I'd say. Who cares for convoy? I don't. This feller nighest us is crippled and left behind. If it wasn't for this calm, my boy—"

There he became silent and stood still, staring hungrily to leeward.

Perhaps his manifest vexation was enjoyed by his English prisoner, but Captain McGrew very soon put on a graver face, for the sharp-nosed *Noank* was all the while slipping along, and the ship she

was steering toward was almost as good as standing still. So must have been any heavier craft, warlike or otherwise.

An hour went by, another, and the deceptive British merchant flag still fluttered from the rigging of the *Noank*. The strange sail had made no attempt to signal her and there had been a reason for it. She had her own sharp-eyed lookouts, and these and her officers had been studying this schooner to windward of them.

"She's American built," they had said of her. "Most likely she's one of the *Solway's* prizes. The old seventy-four has picked up a dozen of them. She ought not to be coming this way though. She's running out of her course."

There was something almost suspicious about it, they thought. It might be all right, but they were at sea in war time, and there was no telling what might happen.

"She'll be within hail inside of five minutes," they said at last. "We've signalled her now, and she doesn't pay us any attention. It looks bad. Her lookouts haven't gone blind."

Not at all. Captain Avery was anything but shortsighted. His glass had recently informed him that a huge hulk of some sort, only the topsails of which had been seen at first, was steadily drifting

nearer.

"Answer no hail!" he had ordered. "We must board her without firing a gun."

Not for firing, therefore, but for show only, the pivot-gun threw off its tarpaulin disguise, and the broadside sixes ran their threatening brass noses out at the port-holes, while the British flag came down and the stars and stripes went up.

"Heave to, or I'll sink you!" was the first hail of Captain Avery. "What ship's that?"

"*Sinclair*, Bermuda, Captain Keller. Cargo and passengers. We surrender!" came quickly back. "We are half disabled now. Short-handed."

"All right," said the captain. "We won't hurt you. We'll grapple and board."

The *Sinclair* was more than twice the size of the *Noank*. She carried a few good-looking guns, too. The grappling irons were thrown; the two hulls came together; the American boarders poured over her bulwarks, pike and cutlass in hand, ready for a fight. All they saw there to meet them, however, was not more than a score of sailors, of all sorts, and a mob of passengers, aft. Some of these were weeping and clinging to each other as if they had seen a pack of wolves coming.

"I'm Captain Keller." said the nearest of the

Englishmen. "You're too many for us. We couldn't even man the guns. Five men on the sick list."

He seemed intensely mortified at his inability to show fight, and he instantly added:—

"Besides, man alive! six Bermuda planters and their families! They all expect that you're going to make 'em walk the plank."

"That's jist what we'll do!" replied Captain Avery. "We'll cut their throats first, to make 'em stop their music. I'll tell you what, though. I've a lot of English fellers that I want to get rid of. No use to me. You can have 'em, if you'll be good. Captain McGrew, fetch your men over into this 'ere 'Mudian! I don't want her."

"All right! We're coming!" called back the suddenly delighted ex-skipper of the *Spencer*. "What luck this is!"

"Now, Captain Keller," said Avery, "we'll search for cash and anything else we want. Are you leakin'?"

"No," said the Englishman, "we're tight enough. We were damaged in a gale, that's all. There's one of our convoy, off to looard,—the old *Solway*. She lost a stick, too."

"We won't hurt her," said Avery. "What did that

old woman yell for?"

"Why," said Keller, "one o' those younkens told her you meant to burn the ship and sell her to the Turks. But the best part of our cargo, for your taking, is coming up from the hold."

The two grim old salts perfectly understood each other's dry humor, and Keller's orders had been given without waiting for explanations.

"Hullo!" said Avery. "Well, yes, I'd say so! There they come! How many of 'em?"

"Forty-seven miserable Yankees," said Keller. "The *Solway* took 'em out of a Baltimore clipper and another rebel boat. She stuck 'em in on us to relieve her own hold. They were to be distributed 'mong the Channel fleet, maybe. You may have 'em all. It's a kind of fair trade, I'd say."

At that moment the two ships were ringing with cheers. The *Spencer* Englishmen, the short-handed crew of the *Sinclair*, and, most uproariously of all, the liberated American sailors, who were pouring up from the hold, let out all the voices they had. It was an extraordinary scene to take place on the deck of a vessel just captured by bloodthirsty privateers. The women and children ceased their crying, and then the men passengers came forward to find out what was the matter. Ten words of explanation were given, and then even they were

laughing merrily. The dreaded pirate schooner had only brought the much needed supply of sailors, and there was no real harm in her.

A search below for cash and other valuables of a quickly movable character was going forward with all haste, nevertheless, while the liberated tars of both nations transferred themselves and their effects to either vessel.

"Not much cash," said Captain Avery, "but I've found a couple of extra compasses and a prime chronometer that I wanted. The prisoners are the best o' this prize, and how I'm to stow 'em and quarter 'em, I don't exactly know. We must steer straight for Brest, I think."

"Captain," said Guert, coming to him a little anxiously, "off to looard! Boats!"

The captain was startled.

"Boats? From the seventy-four?" he exclaimed. "That means mischief! All hands on board the *Noank*! Call 'em up from below! Tally! Don't miss a man! Drop all you can't carry!"

The skipper of the *Sinclair* was looking contemptuously at his bewildered passengers.

"The whimperingest lot I ever sailed with," he remarked of them; and then he sang out, to be heard by all: "Captain Avery! Did you say you were

going to scuttle my ship, or set her afire?"

"Both!" responded the captain. "Jest as soon's I get good and ready. I'll show ye!"

"You bloodthirsty monster!" burst from one of the older ladies. "All of you Americans are pirates! Worse than pirates!"

"Fact, madam!" said he; "but then you don't know how good we are, too. I'm a kind of angel, myself. Look out yonder, though! See that lot o' pirate boats from the *Solway*? The captain o' that tub is a bloodthirsty monster! He eats children, ye know. He's a reg'lar Englishman!"

"You brute!" she said; and then, as the commander of the *Noank* was going over the rail, she added, more calmly; "Why! what an old fool I am! The Americans are only in a hurry to get away. Our boats are coming after 'em, and then they'll all be hung."

"That's it, madam," said Captain Keller. "They're going to get 'em, too. What I care for most is that we've hands enough now to repair damages, so we can get you all to Liverpool."

Off swung the terrible privateer, her much increased ship's company sending back a round of cheers as she did so. A light puff of air began to fill the limp sails of the *Sinclair*, and she, too, gathered

headway.

"Wind come a little more," said Up-na-tan, thoughtfully. "No fight boat. No hurt 'Muda ship. No sink her."

The captain overheard him, and he broke out into a hearty laugh.

"No, you old scalper," he said. "I'm a Connecticut man, I am. I can't bear to see anything like wastage. What's the use o' burnin' a ship you can't keep? It's a thing I couldn't do."

"No take her, anyhow," said the Indian. "Ole tub too slow. Lobster ship take her back right away. Ugh! Bad wind!"

Very bad indeed was that light breeze, and away yonder were the boats of the *Solway* coming steadily along in a well-handled line.

"They're dangerous looking, sir," said Groot, the Dutch ex-pirate, after a study of them through a glass. "Two of them carry boat guns. Strong crews. I'd not like to be boarded by them."

"We won't let 'em board," said the captain. "Thank God, we've a good deal more'n a hundred men now. I guess Keller'll warn 'em how strong we are. That may hold 'em back."

It was a schooner wind, and the *Noank* was

going along, but she was not travelling so fast as were the vigorously pulled boats. It was a lesson in sea warfare to watch them and see how perfect was their discipline and the oar-training of their crews.

"That's the reason," remarked Captain Avery, "why England rules the sea. We'll have a navy, some day, and we'll beat 'em at their own teachin's."

The rescued prisoners had been having a hard time of it in the hold of the Bermuda trader, and they were beginning to feel desperate now at what seemed a prospect of being once more captured by the enemy. They went to the guns, and they armed themselves like men who were about to fight for their very lives. There was one piece that they were not allowed to touch, however, for Up-na-tan himself was behind the pivot-gun. He and Groot, in consultation, seemed to be carefully calculating the now rapidly diminishing distance between the schooner and the British boat-line.

This reached the *Sinclair* speedily, and its delay there was only long enough for reports and explanations.

"That's her armament, is it?" the lieutenant in command had said to Keller. "Stronger than I expected, but we can take her. Forward, all! She won't think of resisting us. Give her a gun to heave

to!"

The longboat in which he stood carried a snub-nosed six-pounder, and its gunners at once blazed away. They had the range well, and their shot went skipping along only a few fathoms aft of the *Noank's* stern.

"Father," exclaimed Vine, "it won't do to let that work go on. We might be crippled."

"Give it to 'em, Up-na-tan!" shouted the captain. "Men! We won't be taken! We'll fight this fight out!"

Loud cheers answered him, but it was Groot, the pirate, who was now sighting the long eighteen, and he proved to be a capital marksman.

"Ugh! Longboat!" said Up-na-tan. "Now!"

Away sped the iron messenger, so carefully directed, but not one British sailor was hurt by it. It did but rudely graze the larboard stern timber of the *Solway's* longboat at the water line.

"Thunder!" roared the astonished lieutenant. "A hole as big as a barrel! If they haven't sunk us!"

The nearest boats on either hand pulled swiftly to the rescue, but that boat-gun would never again be fired. The other gun, in the *Solway's* pinnace, spoke out again, and, curiously enough, it had been

out angrily, and, curiously enough, it had been charged with nothing but grape-shot. All of this was what Captain Avery might have described as wastage, for it was uselessly scattered over the sea.

Loud were the yells and cheers on board the *Noank* as her crew saw their most dangerous antagonist go under water, sinking all the faster because of the heavy cannon. Of course, the sailors whose boat had so unexpectedly gone out from under them were all picked up, but not one of them had saved pike or musket. The attacking force had therefore been diminished seriously, and there had also been many minutes of delay.

"Captain," said Groot, "I'll send another pill among them, whiles they're clustered so close together."

"Not a shot!" sharply commanded Captain Avery. "I'm thinkin'! Men! It's more'n likely there are 'pressed Americans on those boats. I won't risk it. We must get away."

"Ay, ay, sir," came heartily back from many voices. "Let 'em go."

That was what saved the really beaten British tars from any more heavy shot, and the *Noank* was all the while increasing her distance. The only remaining danger to her now was the mighty *Solway*, and her sails, full set, could be seen and studied by the glasses on the schooner.

stuck by the glasses on the schooner.

"She's the first big ship I ever saw under full sail," said Guert to Groot. "I've only seen 'em in port."

"You'd be of little good on her till after you'd served awhile," said the Dutchman, in his own tongue. "It isn't even every British captain that can handle a seventy-four as she ought to be handled."

Whoever was in charge of the *Solway* now, she was sailing faster than the *Noank*, and things were looking badly. So said one of his old neighbors to Captain Lyme Avery, only to be answered by a chuckle.

"Jest calc'late," he added, quite cheerfully. "A starn chase is always a long chase. They won't be gettin' into range for their best guns till about dark. Then I'll show ye. Vine, make a barrel raft! Sharp!"

Up from the hold came quickly a dozen or so of empty barrels, and these were carpentered together with planks so as to make a skeleton deck. In the middle of this was rigged a spar like a mast, and the raft was ready.

All the sailors believed they knew what was coming. It was an old, old, trick, as old as the hills, but it might be the thing to try in this case.

On came the stately line-of-battle ship, as the shadows deepened. She was slowly gaining in spite

of the *Noank* having every inch of her canvas spread. She would soon be near enough to fly her bow chasers. If these were heavy enough, there would then be nothing left the American privateer but prompt surrender. The next half-hour was, therefore, a time of breathless anxiety.

"It's almost dark enough, now," said Captain Avery, at last, with a cloudy face. "Over with the raft, Vine; I'm goin' to try somethin' new."

Over the side it went and it floated buoyantly, with a large, lighted lantern swinging at the tip of its pretty tall mast. At the foot of that spar, however, had been securely fastened a barrel of powder, with a long line-fuse carried from it up several feet along the upright stick.

"If that light fools him at all," said the captain, "it'll gain us half an hour and five miles. If it doesn't, why, then we're gone, that's all. Now, Coco, due nor'west! Keep her head well to the wind. We shall pass that seventy-four within two miles."

It was a daring game to play, taking into account British night-glasses and heavy guns, to tack toward a line-of-battle ship in that manner.

On the *Solway*, however, there had been a feeling of absolute certainty as to overtaking the schooner. She had been in plain view, they said, up to the moment when her crew so foolishly swung

out a lantern. It was a mere glimmer, truly, but it would do to steer by. It was many minutes afterward that an idea suddenly flashed into the experienced mind of the British commander.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed. "No Yankee would have held up a light for us to chase him by. That's a decoy! Hard a-port, there! The rebels'd go off before the wind. They can't take in an old hand like me."

Precisely because the *Noank* had not gone off before the wind, her seemingly safest course, the *Solway* was not immediately following her. More minutes went by, and then there arose a storm of exclamations on board the seventy-four.

"Captain," asked an excited officer, "did she blow up?"

"No," he gruffly responded. "That's only part of the decoy."

Not all his subordinates agreed with him, however, and it was plainly his duty to carry his ship past the place of the now vanished light and of so tremendous an explosion. He did so grumblingly.

"I know 'em," he said. "It's only some trick or other. They're sharp chaps to deal with, on land or sea. They're a kind of Indian fighters, and they're up to anything. Do you know, I believe we've lost her!"

That was what he had done, or else Captain Lyme Avery had lost the seventy-four, for when the next morning dawned her lookouts could discover no sign of the *Noank's* white canvas between them and the horizon.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEUTRAL PORT.

A remarkable place, in the summer of the year 1777, was the old French harbor of Brest. A not altogether pleasant fame had gathered upon it, like drifted seaweed, from historically ancient days. It was said to have been a rendezvous for the old-time vikings of the northern seas, as it was at this day for the smugglers. All of the town that could be seen from the harbor wore a shambling, dingy, antiquated appearance. Its ill-paved, steep, and dirty streets swarmed with an exceedingly varied and not at all admirable population, although the better classes were represented.

Vessels of all sorts were there, as usual, one pleasant afternoon, going out, coming in, at anchor, or moored to the more or less tumbledown wharves and piers. The arrival or departure of one ship more

was not an affair to attract especial attention.

One important feature of the character of the ancient port was that whatever might be the existing treaties between the kings of France and Great Britain, Brest was always more or less at war with England. English sailors were welcome enough, of course, particularly if they were willing to desert, or had recently been paid off, or were supposed to be engaged in smuggling.

Among the vessels at anchor were three French war-ships, one Dutch cruiser, undergoing repairs, and a smart-looking British corvette that was lying well out from shore. All of these were under treaty bonds to keep the peace with each other and with the world in general, but Brest was also distinguished as a port into which all navies at peace with France might bring their prizes for condemnation and sale, according to existing maritime law.

A little after the noon, the loungers on the piers might have taken notice, if they would, of a large schooner that was slipping in through the strongly fortified entrance channel under little more than her foresail. She either had a French pilot on board or was steered by a man who knew the harbor, for she went at once to the right spot to drop her anchor, and a boat shortly put out from her toward the shore.

"There's a French flag on a Yankee-built schooner," remarked an officer of the British corvette. "That's because we are here. I'd like to cut her out, but it wouldn't do. Our war with France hasn't quite begun. I'm going to see, though, if we can't manage to get some men out of her."

He was a burly, bulldog-looking person, and he made other remarks not at all complimentary to Americans in general, and to one Mr. George Washington in particular.

"According to the latest advices," he asserted, "Howe and Cornwallis are crushing out the Virginia fox's ragamuffins. Burgoyne will take possession of northern New York and all the New England colonies. Then the king will have his own again, and we shall see some rebels hung."

There was, indeed, an increasingly bitter feeling among loyal Englishmen, caused by what they deemed the needless prolongation of the war. According to their way of thinking, the rebels were unreasonable and should long since have given up their useless attempt to escape from under the rightful rule of the mother country.

On the deck of the schooner, whether she were French or American, only a few men were making their appearance, and she seemed to have a great deal of deck-cargo. It was concerning that, perhaps, that conversation was going on below and

perhaps, that conversation was going on below, and here, at least, the population was even excessive.

"Their glasses'd tell 'em just what we are, Captain Avery," said one before the boat left, "if we swarmed up."

"They'll find out, anyhow," said the captain. "Our deck-load must get ashore at once, before they know too much. It's in the way, too."

From other remarks that were made, it appeared that the cargo to be disposed of had been taken from no less than four unfortunate British merchantmen, and that the schooner had been a long time in gathering it. Good reasons were also given why the ships themselves had not been seized as well as the goods.

The captain was now in the boat, and his face wore a very thoughtful expression.

"Groot," he said, "you talk French better'n I do. Keep close and watch."

"All the lingoes you ever heard of are talked in Brest," said the Dutchman. "I've been here for months at a time. You'll have a visitor from that British corvette, first thing. They won't mind sea law much, either. They never do, and the French never try to follow 'em up sharp."

"Now they've let us run in, I don't care," said the

captain. "We've had pretty narrow escapes gettin' here. It was touch and go, along the coast."

Absolute disguise or secrecy was out of the question, perhaps, but when a boat from the *Syren* shortly afterward pulled to the side of the *Noank* there was no invitation given to come on board.

"What schooner's this?" roughly demanded the officer of the boat.

"*Noank*, New London," responded Vine Avery, at the rail. "Assorted cargo. We ran right in through a fleet of your sleepyheads. Do you belong to that clumsy corvette, yonder?"

"Shut your mouth!" snapped the officer. "We'll come for you, yet."

"Hurrah for the Continental Congress!" said Vine, maliciously. "If this 'ere wasn't a neutral port we'd board that tub o' yours and take her home with us. We want some more guns and powder anyhow!"

"You're a pirate!" roared the officer. "We've a right to take you out under the French law. You've no protection."

"Keep your distance," said Vine. "We'll be ready for you when you come."

Angry faces were beginning to show behind Vine. The British officer saw steel points like pikeheads.

and he heard threatening exclamations, only half suppressed. As the representative of a man-of-war, he had an undoubted right to question the character of any merchant vessel whatever, and to make her commander exhibit his papers, if the meeting took place at sea. In harbor, however, under the guns of neutral forts, the case was different.

The Englishman had really obtained the information he came after, and he had no orders to go any further. He knew exactly the character of this schooner. Even the pike-heads could be read like good handwriting. He replied to Vine with hardly more than an angry growl and went back to report to his commander.

"Privateer, is she?" remarked that gentleman, after hearing him. "I supposed so. I'd lay the *Syren* alongside of her, if it wasn't for getting into hot water with the French and with the admiral. We'll try for some of her men, on board or on shore, and I'll have that schooner!"

The younger officer grumbled his readiness to cut out the rebel pirate that very night, but his wiser superior only laughed at him.

"There she is," he said, "with her head in the lion's mouth. We needn't shut our jaws on her till the right minute. Then it will be one good bite and we'll have her, men, cargo, and all."

The boat from the *Noank* reached a wharf, and it had not come there upon any mere pleasure trip.

"Short work, now, Groot," said the captain. "If you can't find your men right away, I'll take a look after mine."

Away they went, along the water front, until they were halted by Groot in front of an immense, dingy old warehouse.

"Opdyke Freres," he read the faded sign over the entrance of it. "They are here, yet. Brest and Amsterdam. What goods they can't handle in France, they can in Holland. They'll do the fair thing by us,—so we'll be sure to come to them again."

"That's our grip on their honesty, this time," said Captain Avery.

In two minutes more, the entire boat's crew of the *Noank* was gathered in a counting-room in the rear of the warehouse. It looked as if a hundred generations of spiders had made their webs in its corners, undisturbed.

A short, fat man turned upon a high stool at a desk to inquire, in Dutch:—

"Oh! Mynheer Groot! Not hung yet? Is it some new business?"

Part of Groot's reply was a rapid introduction of

part of Groot's reply was a rapid introduction of his friends, while he stated their errand. There could be nothing but utter mutual confidence in such a case, and the head of the house of Opdyke Brothers was exceedingly outspoken.

"We take the deck-cargo to-night," he said. "Our lighters will come as soon as it is dark. You will pay the custom-house men ten thousand francs down, so they will not know anything about it. I will be there and one of my brothers. We will take off as much more as we can to-morrow night. You will go to Amsterdam with your next cargo or prizes. The British are increasing their guard. Ha, ha! It is war with them, too, and they take some prizes. We buy of them every now and then."

Guert was listening eagerly to all that was said. He was obtaining new ideas and information as to the manner in which plunder taken at sea by all sorts of war-ships may be marketed.

"It's the war law of buccaneering," he thought. "If England and America were at peace, then our business would be piracy."

It was not easy to make it seem right, and he gave that up, trying to settle his conscience with the assertion that it was one of those things which cannot be helped.

"It ought to be helped," he thought. "Ships of war ought to do the fighting and let the unarmed ships go

ought to be the fighting and let the merchant ships go free. I don't like it! But I'm a privateersman myself, just now."

Back went the boat to the *Noank* and Mynheer Opdyke kept his word. It was a misty night, and before morning there was nothing worth noticing upon the deck, unless it might be something amidships that was covered by a tarpaulin. That, however, had been read and understood by the lookouts in the tops of the British corvette.

"The privateer carries a pivot-gun," her captain had said. "Three guns each broadside? Remarkably full crew? All right. She's a dangerous customer to leave afloat. We must make an end of her."

That next day was spent on shore by most of the *Noank's* crew. Not one of them was willing to remain in Brest, however. The best chance that the rescued prisoners, for instance, seemed to have for ever getting home was in the *Noank*.

"Besides," they said to each other, "some of us may get out in prizes, before long. We may win prize-money, too."

One day more went by, and it was near evening when Captain Avery said to Guert Ten Eyck:—

"No, my boy, you won't go ashore again. Our water-casks and the provisions are coming aboard. The Opdykes have done wonderfully well by us. I

never saw better lighter work. I can't say at what hour we may be ready to put to sea."

The British watchers saw all the lighters coming and going. Their patrol boats now and then pulled very near the schooner, but they had no right to board her. No doubt they had further plans of their own, but they were a little slow with them. The truth was, that the Opdykes deserved the praise given them by Captain Avery. Nobody would have expected such a rapid discharge of a cargo as they effected. That is, nobody without visiting the schooner that night and seeing how a hundred strong men could handle goods.

"Captain," said Mynheer Opdyke, at last, "you have no time to lose. The ship for Belfast goes out with the morning tide, and her cargo is a good one. We put on part of it ourselves, but we insured it pretty well. I think the corvette is going to pretend to change her anchorage, and she will slip alongside of you while she's moving."

"That's what I'm ready for," replied the captain, laughing. "She may anchor on this very spot as soon as she pleases after this lighter goes."

He took a small bag of money that was handed him by the merchant, and the latter went over the side.

"Ho, ho!" he chuckled, as he did so. "I make one

hundred per cent. Now I go and report to my British friends that they must take the American pirate within three days, or she will get away from them. Our house is on good terms with them."

That might be, but if it were expected that he would give up profitable business for friendship's sake, that was expecting altogether too much.

Very still lay the *Noank* during the hour that followed. Carefully muffled were the oars of a small boat that came back to her from a swiftly rowed scouting expedition. Then it seemed as if her anchor came up without a sound, and the booms swung away without creaking. No voices were heard from stern to stern, and a swarm of dark figures flitted around her deck as if they wore moccasins.

"Belfast ship gone out," Up-na-tan had reported to Captain Avery. "Lobster corvette ready to lift anchor. Four lobster boat in water, now. British think they come and take *Noank* while all crew ashore. Think schooner go sleep."

"Pretty good!" said the captain. "They'd run out to sea with us, then, and the French'd never do a thing about it. America isn't a power yet, and England is. Never mind, we're goin' to spile their luck this time."

The schooner slipped away as if the water had been oiled for her. There was wind enough and not a great deal more. Every sail she could spread was

in its place, and her breathless crew watched their canvas feverishly as she sped toward the channel at the harbor mouth.

Not a great deal of noise had been made on board the *Syren*, as she lifted her anchor to change her ground. She had a right to do so and to get a little more out of the way of other ships. She was sending up only a few sails, however, only just enough to carry her slowly along. It was as if she moved across the water cautiously, not caring for the time expended.

Her commander was justifiably certain of the success of his plans. He stood upon the quarter-deck, trumpet in hand. His gallant tars, with pikes and cutlasses ready, but no firearms, the report of which might be heard by the French on shore, were drawn up in line, waiting for the order, so soon to come, to board the *Noank*. Splendid men they were, and the sleeping Americans were to be overcome in the twinkling of an eye. Four boats were at the sides of the corvette, and into these went down the expectant boarders, for the crisis was at hand. No orders were required and the oars dipped rapidly, in perfect unison. The affair would soon be over. The commander on the corvette's deck was listening for the shout of onset and of sudden victory.

"Hullo!" suddenly exclaimed the lieutenant in the bow of the foremost boat. "Here we are! Where's

that schooner?"

"She's gone, sir!" came loudly from one of the sailors. "Gone entirely!"

All the silence was gone also, as the boats dashed on to row uselessly over the patch of water where the *Noank* had been seen at sunset. Orders and exclamations might be uttered noisily now.

The *Syren's* captain could hear, and he could understand, but for some reason he did not seem inclined to make remarks. Most likely he was thinking, for the first words from his lips were:—

"Lieutenant, recall the boats. All hands make sail! We must follow that privateer. I'm afraid he has two hours the start of us."

"I'm afraid he's away," growled the lieutenant. "I'd like to know who gave him his warning."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the captain. "He's after that Belfast liner. We must follow in her wake, or she'll go to America instead of to Ireland."

An old, experienced sea-campaigner can sometimes make shrewd calculations. Not a great while after that and just as the day was dawning, a bulky three-master, running along in a steady, businesslike manner, appeared to be almost in danger of being run into by a much smaller craft which had been following her. The command to

which had been following her. The pursuer's flag was English, and she showed no guns.

"Schooner ahoy, there!" shouted a voice on the three-master. "Sheer away, there, or you'll strike us. Port your helm! Port, I say!"

No direct answer came back, but he heard a hoarse-toned shout of:—

"All hands shorten sail! Throw that grappling! Throw the other! Haul in! Haul taut! Bring us alongside! Hurrah! We have her! Board!"

So skilfully was it done that there was no great or damaging shock when the two vessels came together. The grapplings held, the American sailors pulled mightily, and before the liner's crew who were below could tumble up to join their comrades on deck there were fifty pikemen swarming over her bulwarks.

"We surrender!" was almost the first loud exclamation of the British skipper. "You're that rebel pirate! Why didn't the *Syren* catch you!"

"We weren't there to be caught," called back Captain Avery. "The *Killarney* is ours, Captain Syme!"

"We can't help ourselves! It's the hard fortune of war!" groaned the astounded Briton. "Do your worst!"

"No harm to any of you," replied his captor. "We'll put you and your crew and passengers ashore on the first land we come to. This 'ere ship, though, is bound for New London."

It was a time for little talk and for the swiftest kind of action, while the Belfast liner was made ready for her trip across the Atlantic.

"I'm glad you find she has water and provisions enough, Vine," said his father, a little later. "You may have twenty-five of the rescued men. They are prime fellows. I'd go under easy sail most o' the time. We won't take out a pound o' the cargo here. Make quick work of gettin' away, now! We're pretty nigh ready to cast loose."

Vine and his exceedingly well-pleased two dozen or more of escaped prisoners of war took possession of the *Killarney*, and about all the risk before them was that of getting under the guns of some British cruiser.

Captain Syme and his crew and passengers, transferred to the *Noank* with their baggage, were a very disconsolate company, even when they were promised a quick trip to the Irish coast, as near Belfast as might be.

"Hard luck for us," remarked Syme. "It's that sleepy corvette that's to blame. I believed I was

getting away in good season."

"So you were," replied Captain Avery. "You couldn't ha' suited us better. I like the *Syren*, too. She's gone over to our old anchorage by this time."

He was mistaken there. The angry, disappointed British commander was putting on all sail, and his cruiser was bowling along the sea-road toward Belfast. No sail was in sight ahead of her, and he was fretted sadly by a suspicion of the truth, that the *Killarney*, with a prize crew on board, was already headed westward, while the dashing privateer he had missed was taking a northerly course, favored much by the fine topsail breeze that was blowing.

CHAPTER XV.

A COMING STORM.

There had been a morning, not many days after the *Noank* sailed away from Porto Rico, when the gunners of the seaward battery of Fort Griswold, New London, ran hastily to their cannon. They put in powder only, and quickly they were firing a salute of welcome, in response to the arrival guns of a handsome bark that was entering the harbor mouth. She was under full sail, she carried the American

She was under full sail, she carried the American flag, and with it she also floated the well-known private signal of Captain Avery and the *Noank*.

"Lyne's taken a big prize!" shouted voice after voice in the fort, while all the people within hearing of the guns understood that they were roaring good news only. Men in shops dropped their tools. Teamsters unhitched their horses from loaded sleighs, to mount and hurry into town. Fishermen pulled in their lines. Women put away their knitting or left their carding and their looms. Such a rousing announcement of stirring news from the sea could not be disregarded, and the excitement grew apace.

An hour or so later Captain Sam Prentice and some of his men were on the central wharf, shaking hands with old neighbors until their own were lame, and telling the story of the old whaling schooner among the West Indies.

"Samuel," remarked Rachel Tams, "thy story promiseth to be a long one. Thee had better hold thy tongue a moment, and turn thy gray head to see what cometh behind thee."

"Sam! Sam! I'm here!"

"There!" said the old Quakeress, dryly. "It was on my mind that his wife could stop his talking. So she squeezeth him not to death, he may then hug his daughters."

"Glory to God!" shouted good Mrs. Ten Eyck. "My son is safe! Not one of our men has been killed."

"Anneke," suggested Rachel Tams, "thee may also thank Him that they do not seem to have been led to the killing of other people."

"That isn't jest so," said Sam; "we saved a ship-load of Spaniards from some pirates, and we had to kill a good many of the pirates. We didn't really hurt anybody else."

"I trust thy God will forgive thee concerning those wicked men," said Rachel. "He slayeth the wicked in their wickedness. Thee did no wrong. I think it was a friendly and righteous thing for thee to do. I once had many that were dear to me murdered at sea by those devilish destroyers."

"No mercy for pirates!" shouted more voices than one.

"We didn't have to show any," said Sam. "I can't tell it, jest now."

"The ship thou hast taken seemeth a fine one," said Rachel. "How did thee manage to escape the war vessels of thy good king?"

"Oh! 'Bout that?" he replied. "We had the best kind of luck. There wasn't a cruiser off Nantucket.

we came along as sate as a mackerel smack. It was a kind of wonder, though, that we didn't sight a solitary's king's flag hereaway."

"That's explained," he was told by a white-headed fisherman. "The British are goin' after the Continentals down Philadelfy way, and all their cruisers are called off to Delaware Bay and the Chesapeake. Some of 'em's ferryin' troops, ye know. We can't say, yit, as to whether or not Washington has licked 'em. Anyhow, things ain't as bad as they was."

Endless news telling was to come, evidently, concerning events on shore as well as on the sea, and there could be no long lingering at the wharf. Every sailor that could be spared from the ship had somebody eagerly waiting for him, and there were many gladdened households that day.

"This is getting to be a thieves' harbor," remarked Rachel Tarns to a group of which she was the centre. "The wicked rebels against our good king are stealing much. This is the nineteenth British vessel that hath been brought in hither. I trust that all ships designing to enter this port under the American flag will arrive safely. It would be a pity if any of them should be wrecked or otherwise prevented."

She had other things as kindly to say and sincere wishes to express concerning whatever shipping

might here and there be under the flag of England. Neither did she forget to extend her benevolence to the tents in all the camps of George the Third.

Those who listened to her were plainly in sympathy with all her friendly or Quakerish aspirations, and it appeared as if she were even a favorite.

After that, indeed, as week after week went by, her hopes and wishes were remarkably fulfilled, for there were other Yankee privateers as capable and as busy as the *Noank*. Some of them were also much larger craft with heavier armaments. Prize after prize came in, and there were New London merchants whose trade promised to rival that of the ancient house of Opdyke Brothers, of the port of Brest.

Throughout all New England, throughout the greater part of New York, there was undisturbed security. The war was touching the northerly edge of Pennsylvania, and there were savage raids into some districts of that colony. Large areas of New Jersey were desolated, and so were parts of South Carolina and Georgia where the Tory element was strong. The western frontier of New York was severely harried by the Iroquois. The counties of that state nearest the city of New York were entirely ruined.

The farmers of the Mohawk Valley gathered their

summer crops safely, but toward them and toward the rebel stronghold at Albany, where the legislature was sitting, there was an avalanche of danger coming down from the north. It was well understood that even the forces under the British generals in the Middle States were not considered so effective, so well furnished, so sure of winning speedy victories, as were the chosen regiments to be led by General Burgoyne for a crushing blow at the heart of the rebellion. He was to be reënforced by the entire power of the Six Nations and the Hurons. If he should succeed, as he and his admirers believed he would, his army would obtain complete possession of New York and New England. All the other colonies would then give up in despair, and the Continental army would disband or surrender.

The British campaign and its intended consequences were thoroughly discussed by the New England people, and a considerable number of them very promptly determined to visit their friends in Albany or in Vermont.

The shore people were deeply interested, for, in addition to all other considerations, their entire sea-going fleet was at stake. No more British prizes would then be brought, for instance, to Boston or New London, and all the privateers at sea would be hopelessly forfeited to the crown. All their prizes in European ports would share the same fate. One, however was now on its homeward way in charge

however, was now on his homeward way in charge of Vine Avery, promoted from third mate to skipper. He was handling his ship very well, but he as yet knew very little about her cargo. His orders were to let the taking account of that wait until he should be safe in port.

"The main thing," he had been told by his father, "is to git there. You've a gantlet to run that's thousands o' miles long, and your chances are only jest about even."

"I'll make 'em a good deal more'n even!" Vine had replied, and he had sailed away full confidently.

Three days after the *Noank* and the *Killarney* parted company, there was a great stir in a fishing village on the Irish coast. A strange schooner was tacking into the cove in front of the village, and such a thing as that did not happen every day. All the cabins were emptied at once. Even the babies, of which there seemed to be a large number, were carried to the shore by their mothers that they might not lose this chance to see something.

The schooner furled her sails, and dropped her anchor, while her probable or improbable character was undergoing vigorous discussion all along the beach. Not a soul on board the *Noank*, among her crew, at least, could have understood the primitive Erse dialect in which the fisher people told their opinions of her and the boat-loads of men and women that were quickly put out from her toward

women that were quickly put out from her toward the shore. More and more extraordinary became the clatter after the passengers were landed and the boats pulled away for their next cargoes. Trip after trip was made, and all the while there was a vast amount of kindly pity expressed, most of it in Erse, but much in Irish-English, for Captain Syme and all his miscellaneous ship's company. Quite an erroneous opinion appeared to prevail that the American pirates had murdered all their captives entirely before landing them.

Here they were, now, however, not a hair of their heads injured, and Captain Syme even thanked Captain Avery, the privateersman, for having treated him and his so very well.

"We shall find our way to Belfast, sir," he said. "Just how we are to transport them all, I don't know, but the neighboring authorities will take care of that. I shall have them notified at once. You'd better look out for yourself."

"All right," laughed Captain Avery, "but I'm less afraid of a constable than I would be of a three-master with two tiers of guns. Not many o' them in shore, I guess."

Captain Syme had his hands full, he said, and away he went without uttering aloud the reply that was so near his lips: "Three-master? Yes, you rebel pirate! A seventy-four and you and your schooner within eight black miles!"

CHAPTER XVI.

IRISH LOYALTY.

Captain Avery's boat pulled away toward the *Noank*, and he remarked as he took hold of the tiller ropes:—

"I'm glad to be rid of all that crowd. Now there'll be more room for the rest of us. We can't afford to take prisoners."

"They'll report us, sir," said one of the sailors.

"They may say we mean to sack Liverpool, for all I care," growled the captain. "I wish we had a supply of fresh provisions, though. We had no time to take in any at Brest."

The whole boat's crew agreed with him, for they had been living on salt rations during many a long week.

The skipper of the *Killarney* and his friends of all sorts, with their personal baggage, were scattered high and low along the beach. The hospitable

commiseration they were receiving was even excessive, and there appeared to be but one opinion among the population of that edge of Ireland concerning the general wickedness of privateering. At the side of the schooner, however, as if waiting for the captain's return, was a stout yawl-boat. It had four rowers and in the stern-sheets sat a large, florid, handsome man, very well dressed.

"It's the captain of this American pirate?" he loudly inquired. "Glad to see you, sir. I'm The McGahan and my place is inshore, yonder. Have ye ony good tobacco aboard, or a drop o' claret, or an anker of old Hollands?"

"Well," said Captain Avery, staring into the broadly smiling face of the handsome Irishman, "we've no liquid, but we've loads o' prime Cuba leaf, plug, and cigars. How are you off for beef and mutton, or, it might be, a little fresh pork?"

"No pork handy, the day," responded The McGahan. "Twinty head o' bafe, though, and all the mutton ye want. It's me sorrow that I couldn't lawfully sell ye huf or horn. The customs patrol is oll along the coast, looking after smooogglers and the like, and it's loyal to the king we are. God bless him!"

"I'm glad you're law abidin'," replied the captain. "I wouldn't ask you to sell me a pound! Guert Ten

Eyck, you and the men have up that choice lot from the after cabin lockers. Mr. McGahan; come aboard and make your own selections. I'm not the kind of man to evade the customs. You'd better rob me of a lot of tobacco and whatever else there is. I couldn't help myself, you know."

"That's what I'll do," said McGahan, with a comical twist of his face. "I'd like to plooder a privateer. Hurrah for King Garge! Doon wid all rebels!—exceptin' it may be Oirish rebels, and I'm wan o' thim. Ye may sind over a party wid goons and cutlashes to rob me o' the bafe and mutton. I'm thinking there's a good catch o' fish, along shore, but the fisher folk'd niver evade the coostoms to get a little 'baccy."

His boatmen had been listening, and he had not been whispering. One of them now sang out:—

"Your Worship! Plaze tell the bloody pirates to fetch along their plug, and sthale the fish! We're oll a wake sort o' people, riddy to be ploondhered."

It was a bargain! Boats came and went, after that, and when Captain Syme himself expressed his curiosity concerning them, he was sadly informed that the American freebooters had demanded supplies.

Captain Avery did not waste any time in carrying out his part of the contract. He led an overpowering party of men, and went to the nearest port where

party of well-armed men to the elegant country-seat of The McGahan, two miles away. A cart which was driven along with him contained a number of small boxes and bales.

"Some of McGahan's neighbors," he explained to Guert, "are as ready to be robbed as he is. I'll not have to pay a dollar of cash. The balance o' this trade'll come the other way. If we dared stay, we could sell out our whole cargo."

Guert was getting hold of several new ideas. One was, that a great many Irishmen were about as devoted to the British government as were the people of America. Another was, that war expenses were large and that British taxes were heavy. A great part of the revenue collected came from duties upon imported goods, and these imposts were such as to practically offer bribes to all smugglers.

"I see," he said to the captain. "It was the duty on imported tea that set our war for independence a-going."

"No!" replied Captain Avery. "That was only one p'int in the 'count. We had enough else to fight for. I can tell you one thing, though. All the Irish people'd be up in arms, to-day, if they had any George Washington to lead them. They are treated badly; worse, in some things, than we were."

Neither going nor coming did Guert hear any

neither going nor coming did Guert hear any blessings uttered upon England. The fat oxen and the sheep were hurriedly driven to the shore. Some butchering was done at once, and some salting, but the sailors managed to convey to the schooner more live stock than there was room for. One large sheep-pen was constructed amidships, below deck, that there might be fresh mutton as long as possible. Near it were cattle-stalls, and these would soon be empty, with so large a crew of hungry eaters ready for roast beef and boiled. As for the fish they came along in abundance, and casks of sea-water were provided for their keeping. With them came fishermen and women and dozen of boys and girls, all wild with curiosity concerning the "bloody privateer."

One day more did the *Noank* linger at her pleasant anchorage. Thus, just as the sun was nearing the western horizon, Up-na-tan, at the beach in the small boat, with its regular crew, raised his hand.

"Whoo-oo!" sounded his war-cry of warning.

"Hark!" said Guert. "That's a bugle! British troops coming! Off we go!"

A gun from the *Noank* told that the lookout on board had been as alert as was the red man himself.

"Aff wid yez!" yelled a fisherwoman, running frantically toward them. "It's the Donegal Rigmint o'

hastily toward them. It's the Donegal Regiment's cavalry! They'd cut yez all down! Be aff!"

The boat was pulled swiftly away, and as it did so the head of a fine column of uniformed horsemen came trotting out to where it could be seen.

"Charge 'em! Charge 'em!" roared a rider in civilian rig at the side of their commander. "It's your duty, sir, to seize that pirate schooner! They've carried aff more'n twinty head o' fat bafe for me. You're answerable to the king if you let 'em get away!"

"All right!" replied the cavalry major, coolly. "We'll charge the schooner. You ride on board, if you will, and tell 'em we're coming."

"It's not me duty," responded the excited McGahan. "It's a poor patrol ye're kaping, whin a booccaneer can sail in and plunder the coast."

Straight to the shore the dragoons, for such they were called, rode fearlessly onward, and the *Noank* fired a salute for them while she swung out flag after flag, fore and aft.

"They'll know the stars and stripes when they see it again," laughed Captain Avery. "They're fools, though, to expose themselves in that way. We might damage 'em badly, at this range."

"She's an American privateer! Can that be a

fact?" exclaimed the British officer, in blank astonishment. "Pon my soul, I couldn't believe it till I saw it! I'm sure enough, now. Why, McGahan, you are correct. My dear old boy, you couldn't help yourself."

"Of coorse I couldn't," replied the robbed Irish gentleman. "I'm glad you can belave me, at last. What do you think o' the impidence of'em?"

"It's fine!" exclaimed the major.

That was the striking feature of it. Even in later days, it was difficult for the country people of England to realize that such American pirates as John Paul Jones, for instance, were actually attacking the British islands.

Leisurely, tauntingly, the crew of the *Noank* lifted their anchor. No hostile shot was fired at the gallant-looking horsemen, and the major confidently ventured out in a fishing boat until he was near enough to hail. He was a bright-eyed, daring fellow and his first remark was an oddity.

"Captain Avery, is it?" he said. "Fine schooner of yours, I'd say. I was thinking of making a dash. I might surround you, you know. But if you are going, I'll let you go."

"I wish you would," called back the captain of the *Noank*. "Would you like to come aboard? I'll give you a hand."

you a box of Cuba cigars.

"Thank you kindly," said the major. "I'll not trouble you to that extent. I'm Major Avery of the Donegal Dragoons. I didn't know there were any of the name in America. Sorry to find an Avery fighting against his king."

"Well," said the captain, "you're out a little, there. He is your king, not ours, and he is fighting us."

"All right!—or rather, it's all wrong" replied the brave major. "The king'll have his own again, before long. Your cruise'll be a short one, if you run around in these waters."

"Oh," said the captain, "they're safe enough. We can get away from the cavalry, and from the tubs, too."

"Tubs, eh? That's what you call 'em? You'll find that some of 'em are pretty large tubs."

"Good-by!" shouted back the captain. "I'm glad to find one more good-looking Avery. Come and visit at my house as soon as the war's over."

The sails of the *Noank* were taking the breeze. She swung away seaward, bowing to the cavalry and to the swarm of fisher folk, and these forgot their loyalty to England so far that they cheered her lustily.

"Do you know, Guert," remarked the captain, thoughtfully, "this is about the worst side of our war! It has set old neighbors against each other, and even kinfolk. Why! Old Ben Franklin himself has a son that's an out and out Tory. He is the British Tory governor of New Jersey. He and his father don't speak to each other. There's more like 'em."

"That's so, sir," said Guert. "Some first-rate fellows that I used to know in New York went off on the wrong side. Steve de Lancey was one of 'em. I used to take his boat whenever I wanted to, and they were all real good neighbors."

The recently appointed first mate of the *Noank*, taking Sam Prentice's place and responsibilities, broke up the study of civil war evils.

"Where away now, Captain?" he inquired. "Our being here'll be known wide enough."

"We won't be here, Morgan," replied the captain. "We are goin' right up St. George's Channel. We may run all the way around the islands and reach Amsterdam from the north."

"That is," said Morgan, "if we get there at all. It's just as that dragoon said: there are a good many king's cruisers hereaway. Big ones, too."

"We are safest in a crowd," replied the captain. "Our best plan is to be where they won't dream of
--- don't to ---"

our darin to go."

"No doubt about that," said Morgan. "I'm agreed we're likely to pick up something worth taking if we watch, while we're making such a run as that."

"We'll go ashore, here and there, too," laughed the captain, "and show 'em the flag."

CHAPTER XVII.

VERY SHARP SHOOTING.

"Anneke Ten Eyck," remarked Rachel Tarns, in the kitchen of the Avery house, "I am glad for thee. Thy brave son's share of the prize-money taketh thee out of thy distresses. Thou wilt have more, if he continueth to serve our good king after this fashion. Thee may be proud of him."

"Rachel!" exclaimed Mrs. Ten Eyck, "you know I'm glad to have the money and to pay my debts with it, but I wish it didn't come from plunder. I can't help pitying all the people that have lost their ships and their property."

"I also am sorry for them," said Rachel. "Doubtless, war is a sin and an evil. I pray much for

the return of peace. Thee should bear in mind, though, that both sides have sinned, and that therefore both must suffer while the war lasteth."

"Our American people are suffering terribly," said Mrs. Ten Eyck. "I wish I could send something to Washington's army. I have heard say that the colonies are becoming exhausted, while England is as rich as ever."

"She may be so," said Rachel, "but I have been at a Friends' meeting, and some of the elderly men are good accountants. They had somewhat to say concerning the matter of exhaustion."

"Oh, what did they say?" asked Mrs. Avery, at the ironing-board. "Nobody can beat a lot of old Quakers at arithmetic."

"I will tell thee," said Rachel. "This was their testimony concerning this dark and dreadful year, and concerning last year also. They computed that for every American who fell in battle or died in camp, fifteen more young men became of age, ready to take his place. The army is not dying out. For every acre of land really laid waste by the British, one hundred fresh acres of newly opened farms were put under cultivation. For every ton of American shipping captured by the British, five tons of new shipping were built in American shipyards, and ten tons of English shipping were captured or destroyed by our cruisers. Our commerce,

therefore, dieth not rapidly. Thee should not forget, too, that our girls who are coming of age are worth something for the future prosperity of the country. None of them are killed in battles, and nearly all of them get married soon. The elders testified, moreover, that while we have lost the right to send all of our productions to England, we have gained the right to trade with all the rest of the world. We wax richer and more numerous, they said, and the timid and the unbelieving boweth his head, and weepeth, and declareth that this is our exhaustion."

"Hurrah for the Quakers!" exclaimed Mrs. Avery. "They are right! But, Rachel, it is getting into September, and it is ever so long since we have had any news from the *Noank*."

"Two more prizes came," replied Rachel, "and thy son Vine came back to thee in safety."

"Yes," said his mother, "but it was only to go out with Sam Prentice in that bark, for another privateering trip to the West Indies. I don't care: I'm almost glad Vine isn't with General Schuyler's army and just about to have a battle with Burgoyne."

"It'll be a hard one," said Mrs. Ten Eyck. "They say the British have all the Six Nations with them this time."

"Anneke," said Rachel, "does thee not know the red men? I do. They will dance and shout much,

and they will take the king's presents. They will do many murders, for a time, but all the British generals can never turn Indians into soldiers. They may not be depended upon."

Poor General Burgoyne, struggling desperately among the mountains and forests and swamps, was already beginning to understand the really worthless character of his vaunted Indian allies. They were skirmishers and scouts, truly, but they were not trustworthy soldiers. At the same time, their presence in his camps did more than anything else to rally against him the full power of the New York and New England patriots. Many a man whose patriotism had been lukewarm or wavering took down his rifle from its hooks and hurried away to do his best to prevent the threatened great inroad of the Iroquois.

The ports of the Southern states as well as of the Northern were sending out both public and private armed vessels, and the infant navy of the United States was growing rapidly. It was beginning, also, to establish for itself a high character for efficiency and daring. Even when its first adventurous captains could not obtain ships that suited them, they did wonders with old hulks and half-refitted merchantmen. American shipyards were largely increasing their capacities, while American sailors were proving that seamanship and courage were of more importance than mere wood and canvas.

The autumn days that came were bright and beautiful, even along the misty coasts of the British islands. There had been, previously, a succession of severe storms and a host of craft had lingered in harbor, awaiting the arrival of this fine weather. Now it was here, the seas which bordered Britain, France, the Netherlands, and, away northward, the Danish coast, the North Sea, and the Baltic, seemed to swarm with sails. These were all too numerous for one craft more to attract especial attention.

There were war-ships of all sorts and sizes, and of several nationalities. These were all supposed by each other to be in somewhat jealous and exclusive care of the welfare and conduct of their own traders. One flag only was notably absent, as yet, and there were not many seagoing Europeans, comparatively speaking, who had even so much as seen the stars and stripes. This was the bright flag of the future, nor was anybody ready to foresee that it would thereafter become of great importance in the commerce of the world.

A schooner, apparently a merchantman, going along under easy sail, was taking a course from the northward into the British Channel. There were many two-masters in the North Sea carrying the Baltic and Scandinavian trade, and this might be one of them. A sleepy British line-of-battle ship in the distance, easterly, did not care to meddle with

her, tying as she did the Norway flag. She might be a lumber-boat, with her hold full of barrel heads and staves, and her deck cluttered with spare spars for the Hull builders.

A closer look at that same deck would have dismissed the spars from the supposition, and certainly no ordinary lumber business could have called for so numerous a crew.

One of these, a short and brawny man, was all the while busy with a telescope, uttering pretty loudly his readings of all he saw. No doubt he was a sailor familiar with these seas, and had been selected as a lookout for that reason. "That line-o'-battle ship won't pay us any attention, sir," he said. "We're getting well along past her. There isn't a speck o' danger in sight but one."

"What's that, Groot?" said Captain Avery, arising from his seat upon a coil of rope. "What do you see?"

"Revenue cutter, sir," replied Groot, "or I'm mistaken. She's brig-rigged. Almost dead ahead. She'll try to overhaul us, sir."

"I a'most hope she will," said the captain, testily. "We'll keep right on. We've sailed all the way 'round Scotland, and the best fun we've had was goin' ashore for fish and to scare the people. We haven't taken in a dollar's worth."

"Some o' the custom's cutters are likely craft," remarked a grizzled seaman near him. "They're apt to be pretty well armed. It wouldn't pay very well to tackle one of 'em. She might turn and tackle us."

"Well, Taber," said the captain, "we'll sheer away from her, of course, but I won't run away very far, unless that there liner gets too nigh us."

"She won't," said Groot. "She's taking in sail now. We're too small game for her to chase after."

"We'll let out every inch of our own canvas, then," suddenly shouted the captain. "I've an idea in my head. All hands prepare for action! My notion is that that feller's right there on the lookout for us. By this time every British captain has heard that we are cruisin' 'round. 'Bout ship! Cast loose that pivot-gun. We may have to try a shot with it in less'n half an hour. Taber, go to the wheel. Men! I think we're goin' to be waked up!"

His further orders went out fast, and every man on board seemed to feel as if a kind of relief had come. Day after day, most of the time in bad weather, they had beaten along the Irish coasts, and then the Scotch. The only important ships they had seen had been French or British cruisers, or else merchantmen which were altogether too near an armed protector. For fishing boats and mere coasters they had no appetite. It had, therefore, been only dull business for overcrowded, uncomfortable men, eager for adventures and prize-money.

The sails went out, and as they caught the breeze the *Noank* sprang gayly forward.

"That's it, sir," said Groot, lowering his glass. "She was hove to when I first sighted her. She'll cross our course next tack, and there isn't another keel anywhere near us."

"That's our luck," said the captain. "I guess we can handle any custom-house boat. I know what their armaments are, mostly. They're all good runners, but they don't count on much resistance from smugglers, and their guns are short-nosed."

If he had been on board of the brig he was speaking of at that moment, he might have changed his opinion a little. A revenue protector she was, assuredly, and she was more than a mere cutter. She was well manned, well armed. It looked, indeed, as if what might be her ordinary ship's company had been reinforced, perhaps by a detail from a man-of-war. Her commander was a regular navy lieutenant, and he was a seamanlike old fellow. The four guns each broadside that she carried were the long six-pound chasers that were then going into the new revenue service vessels, and they were good pieces for their caliber. She was a dangerous customer for the kind of antagonist she was expected to meet.

"Mr. Tracy," said a young officer on her quarter-deck to the gray lieutenant, "what do you think of her, sir?"

"My boy," replied his commander, "she's the chap we're here for. She has just the style o' foremast and tops'l that Syme told us of. That's the Yankee. I can't believe, though, that she's all he said she was. The fellow was badly scared, you know."

"We'll knock some splinters out of her, and take her in, then," laughed the young man, jauntily. "You were right, sir, in coming this way. The others missed her."

"We won't do that," said Tracy. "All hands clear away for action! We are going to take that American privateer!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" came cheerily back, and the crew sprang away in genuine British readiness for anything like a brush with an enemy.

An ugly antagonist the *Arran* was likely to be, and she was sure of good handling. She was

speedy, too, and the two vessels were all the while nearing each other. It was to be noted, nevertheless, as Captain Avery had said, that at the same time they were getting away out of reach of the overpowerful ship of the line.

"I'm going to strike first," he remarked, "and I mean to hit hard. Ready, Up-na-tan! Williams, pull down that Norway bunting, and run up the stars and stripes! We'll fight under our own flag to-day. I'll cripple that fellow or take him. If I don't, we're bound for a British prison, instead of Amsterdam."

"That's so, sir," said Groot. "She's a pretty big bird for us, I'm thinking."

"Big or little, we'll fight her! Three cheers for the flag!" sang out the captain.

The three cheers were rousers, and the *Noank* gained a point by it. Lieutenant Tracy had been using his glass just then, and he angrily roared out:

"Fletcher, my boy! If they haven't challenged us! Give 'em a broadside! Hurrah! They mean to show fight!"

Good gunners were those mariners of the *Arran*. Well sent was that broadside; and in a moment more Captain Avery was leaning over his port bulwark, and was making a somewhat serious examination.

"Hurrah!" he shouted in his turn. "So much for ice-fender timbers and planking. Two shot struck fair and didn't go through. Up-na-tan, let fly! Show 'em the difference!"

The Manhattan did not obey at once. He was sighting, sighting, sighting, for almost a minute, and

the men at the broadside guns were following his example.

"Fire!" shouted the captain, and even then there was an irritating pause.



"'Fire!' shouted the captain, and even then there was an irritating pause."

THE FIGHT WITH THE ARRAN.

**"'Fire!' shouted the captain, and even then
there was an irritating pause."**

"Ugh!" grunted the red man, at last. "Ole chief wait and see brig bowsprit. Send shot behind it."

The long eighteen spoke out, and was instantly followed by the three sixes on that side of the *Noank*. It was at the very moment when Lieutenant Tracy remarked, inquiringly:—

"What? Don't they mean to answer us? You don't say they'll surrender without firing a shot? That isn't like 'em, now—"

His next utterance was much louder.

"George!" he shouted. "There goes my bowsprit! The jolly-boat's knocked into matchwood! I declare! There's a hole in the mains'! Is anybody hurt?"

"Not a man, sir!" shouted back Fletcher, cheerfully. "We'll give it to 'em!"

The brig had been already going about, and her other broadside was as well directed as the first. It would have been bad for the *Noank* but for her heavy timbers and the lightness of Tracy's metal. She was hulled in three places, and there was a ragged split in her foresail. It did not prevent her going about, however, and her next trio of iron messengers were as well aimed as were the Englishman's.

"They hulled us, sir," reported the *Arran's* sailing-

master. "No great harm. Three men hurt by splinters. The after rigging's cut a bit. We must finish that chap, sir."

"That cursed long gun o' theirs!" growled Tracy, fiercely. "Captain Syme told me, and I hardly believed him. That's what may play the mischief with us. I wish we were at broadsides with her."

That was precisely the advantage which Captain Avery did not intend to give him, right away, and the *Arran*, losing her bowsprit, was not by any means so difficult to keep away from or to outmanoeuvre.

Slowly, carefully, Up-na-tan had again sighted his gun and measured his distance. It was tantalizing to watch him as he doggedly refused to throw away a shot.

"Ugh! Whoo-oop!" he yelled, as his lanyard touched the priming of his gun. "Now see! Ole chief take 'em aft!"

"I wish he'd do as well for one end of her as he did for the other," muttered the captain.

"He's done it, sir!" exclaimed Guert, for he had borrowed the captain's telescope.

"That Indian's a gunner!" said Groot, with emphasis. "I never saw one to beat him. I've seen pretty good marksmen, too."

The peculiar accuracy of eye born in or acquired by the old red man was a disastrous gift for the British revenue brig. Almost too far aft did the shot hit her, but in it went, and all her rudder gear was useless in a second of time. She could no longer answer her wheel, and began to lurch about at the mercy of wind and wave.

Fierce indeed were the execrations of her helpless officers and crew. All their courage and seamanship were of no use, now. Their guns might as well have been made of wood, and their jaunty brig had become as clumsy and unmanageable as a raft. Moreover, the terrible American was speeding nearer, and only a few minutes went by before there came a loud-voiced demand for her surrender to the—

"United States armed cruiser *Noank*, Captain Lyme Avery."

"His Britannic Majesty's brig *Arran*, Lieutenant Tracy. We surrender, of course. You could sink us as we are now. All the luck's yours."

"We'll come alongside," said Avery.

"I wish I had a right to board him when he comes," growled Tracy, as his flag came down. "There'd be some satisfaction in that."

A few minutes later he had changed that opinion, for an unexpected torrent of men poured over his bulwarks from the *Noank*.

"Pon my soul!" he exclaimed. "What a crew she has! They outnumber us two to one. It's no disgrace at all!"

All the British tars felt relieved in their minds after a good look at their victors. The result of the fight was not to be a discredit to them, they said, and the American sailors hailed them merrily. There had been no killing on either side, and there was no cause for bad temper. The best shots had decided the fight, and all true seamen could accept the consequences.

"Lieutenant Tracy," said Captain Avery, "we don't

want your brig. We'll take out of her all that suits us, and then you can drift around till help gets to you. Or you can patch up and work your way into some port or other."

"I can manage it," said the Englishman, ruefully. "We captured a French smuggler yesterday, and now a deal o' that luck is yours instead of ours. You rebels are holding out wonderfully."

"So is England," laughed Captain Avery. "You won't give up, and we won't. I guess you'll have to, though, one o' these days."

"Never!" said Tracy, sturdily. "All the colonies'll have to come back under the king, sooner or later."

"You wait and see," said the captain.

The loyal-hearted lieutenant, however, had expressed no more than the almost undoubting faith of the great body of his countrymen. They were simply unable to believe that the Americans could succeed.

Down into the hold of the *Arran* had dashed the men of the *Noank*. Tackle had been quickly rigged at the hatches.

One of the commands given had related to a search for powder and shot, and the entire supply of the brig was now coming up, to be transferred to the schooner. It was a timely winning, for her stock had begun to run low.

"It's a good thing for us," said her captain and crew, as they secured it.

Anything and everything in the nature of arms and ammunition, furniture, cutlery, table goods, bales of woollens, and packages of silks taken from the

French smuggler, more than a little tanned leather, lots of miscellaneous stuff not yet precisely known as to its character, made up the unexpectedly valuable plunder of the smuggler-capturing brig.

There was no time to transfer her cannon, and these were left behind, spiked. Her spare sails went, however, with a good yawl-boat and some extra light spars. Then the *Noank* cast off, and her crew gave their crestfallen British acquaintances three rounds of hearty cheers.

"Captain Avery," shouted Tracy, "you're a good fellow, but Fletcher and I hope we may meet you again, some day, with better luck to our guns."

"All right!" responded the captain. "May you command a forty-four and I another. Then the United States'll own one more prime ship that used to be the king's. Hurrah!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOWN THE BRITISH CHANNEL.

With the exception, it may be, of the Mediterranean Sea, there is no other water whereupon so much history has been manufactured as on the British Channel.

Away back beyond Cæsar's day and ever since, it has been cruised over by all sorts of vessels and fleets. Its first absolute rulers were the Norse-Saxon vikings. After them it has been Danish, Dutch, French, and English.

One of the later Dutch admirals once carried a

broom at his masthead in a boastful declaration that he had swept the Channel clean of every opposing force. Not a great while afterward, the British sea-captains fell heirs to the Hollander's broom.

The *Noank* had not lain long grappled to the disabled *Arran*. There was danger in every hour of delay. The plunder obtained, although valuable, was not excessively bulky, and was rapidly transferred and stowed away.

There was no apparent danger but that the brig would speedily receive assistance, for there were other sails already in sight. Her first disability, as to any of these, was that she was no longer able to fire a signal-gun, and all her rockets and other explosives had been taken away. Her officers and crew were left to do whatever they could with flags in the daytime, or with lanterns by night.

"We're off," thought Guert Ten Eyck, as the schooner swung away, all her sails going out as she did so. "Captain Avery says he must capture one more prize, if it's only to take off some of our men. Then we're to streak it for home! Don't I want to get there?"

The cruise of the *Noank* had indeed become a long one. There were several ship reasons why it would be good for her to go into dock and be overhauled for repairs. Her crew, also, were more than willing to see their homes and families.

"My boy," said Groot, the Dutchman, as he came to sit down by his young friend, "you go home. I have no home. I must live on the sea. The land is not my place."

"I'll be glad to get there," said Guert, "if it's my own land. Do you know if we're to run into Amsterdam?"

"Not if the captain is wise," replied Groot. "There will be too many Englishmen looking after him, as soon as they hear of this affair."

"Well, I guess they won't like it," laughed Guert. "Up-na-tan is homesick."

The red man was standing within a few feet of them, and he answered as if he had been spoken to.

"Ugh!" he said. "Ole chief want to know 'bout he island. Want see Manhattan. Mebbe all lobster get away. Up-na-tan go see ole place. Fish in Harlem River."

That was what was the matter with him. Warrior he might be, sailor, pirate, or privateersman, but at that moment he was dreaming of the happiness of pulling in flounders and blackfish from the waters around his island.

Guert, on his part, was thinking of his mother. He wondered if she still were living at the Avery farmhouse, and if his prize-money had been duly paid over to her to make her comfortable.

"Now, every man hark!" said Captain Avery to his crew, when, a little later, he had gathered them amidships. "We've a close race to run. If this wind holds, we shall be in the Straits of Dover at about daylight to-morrow morning. We are goin' to risk it and cut our way through. Three cheers for home!"

Vigorous, indeed, were the hurrahs that answered him, and on sped the schooner. Her sails that were torn by the shot of the *Arran* were being replaced by new ones, and skilful sail tailors were busy with the rents of the old. The damage to her bulwarks was of no importance and not a shot had penetrated her sides. The American sailors were in

fine spirits, but not so were Lieutenant Tracy and the crew of the *Arran*. Hardly two hours went by before his hoped-for succor came, but he wished it had been a merchantman rather than a man-of-war. The sound of the cannonading had been borne by the wind to the line-of-battle ship. She had sailed toward it, as a matter of course, and here, now, was one of the boats at the *Arran's* side. On her deck was the seventy-four's first lieutenant, so hot with wrath that he could hardly listen to poor Tracy's report, while he himself rapidly inspected the damages done by Up-na-tan's well-sent iron.

"Help yourself?" he exclaimed. "Why, they made a log of your brig! What's the world coming to? They're prime gunners, my boy. We must make out to sink that rascal. I don't know exactly what to do with your craft."

He did know, nevertheless. Temporary steering-gear was fitting on her as rapidly as might be, and the pumps were going, for the *Arran* was leaking badly at the stern.

"Tracy, my boy," said the lieutenant, "get her into any port the wind'll help you to. We're away after that saucy privateer."

So surely and so powerfully would the fugitive be followed, not to speak of any perils which might be hovering around the pathway before her. The commander of the line-of-battle ship knew something concerning at least a part of these. He listened to the report of his first officer, on his return, angrily yet coolly, and he replied:—

"All right, Hobson. Tracy isn't to be blamed, I see. As for the pirate, we'll chase her, but she's a lost dog already. The whole Channel fleet is under orders to gather at Dover Straits. She is running

right in among 'em. She'll be overhauled before eight bells to-morrow."

"Those Yankees are slippery chaps, sir," said the lieutenant, shaking his head.

The hours went swiftly by, and Captain Avery remained on deck, pacing thoughtfully to and fro. Midnight went by and still the wind held good. It was a strong, northerly breeze, upon which he could have asked for no improvement.

"Lights! Lights! Lights!" he was at last repeating, as he looked ahead. "There's a reg'lar fleet of some sort. Our lanterns are all right, I'd say, 'cordin' to the signal-book. Bad for us, though. All those are British men-o'-war, not merchantmen. Port there, Taber; I must be ready to speak this feller that's nearest. Groot, you and Guert go to the rail. Up-na-tan, you and Coco must help. They mustn't hear any English. Both of you can talk Dutch. Some of us'll chatter French and Spanish."

There were, however, on board that man-of-war, men who could understand Dutch. One of them was an officer who came to the rail to converse with Groot, after hails had been exchanged.

"*Magdalen*, of Rotterdam?" he said. "Tell those monkeys to shut up their jabber, there, so I can hear! From Copenhagen last? You spoke the line-o'-battle ship *Humber*, coming this way? Did you hear anything of that American privateer?"

Dutch and French again broke out upon the supposed *Magdalen*, and the Englishman shouted back toward his own quarter-deck:—

"Hurrah! The *Humber* reports the Yankee cruiser sunk by the revenue cutter *Arran*, Lieutenant Tracy. Hurrah for him! Hard fight! The Yankees fought to the last. Number a hundred prisoners

lough to the east. Nearly a hundred prisoners.
Heave ahead, *Magdalen*! Good news!"

Loud Dutch shouts replied to him, and on went the *Noank*, while the other vessels of the British Channel fleet received the welcome tidings as it was passed along from ship to ship. Therefore there was no longer any need that they should be on the watch for the impudent, destructive adventurer from the other side of the Atlantic. She had gone to the bottom!

"I feel kind o' queer," thought Guert. "I couldn't ha' done it myself. I had to let Groot do the lying. I'm afraid I'll never do for war. I don't mind a fight, out and out, but somehow I can't help speaking the truth, Dutch or English."

Up-na-tan, on the other hand, was in great good-humor over the very Indian-like manner in which the British were being defeated. The Dover gathering of their war-ships was to him a kind of ambush through which he and his friends were cunningly crawling by hiding their feathers and war-paint.

They were not exactly crawling, either, for Captain Avery was calling upon his schooner for all the speed she had.

"We mustn't lose an inch!" he said. "Their best racers'll be comin' on in our wake in less'n an hour, maybe. I wish this night'd last all day to-morrow."

The next morning had not arrived, indeed, when the *Humber* herself came within hail of one of her Dover assembly friends. Then, shortly, there arose a more noisy jabber in English than had been heard in Dutch and French on the *Noank*, for the genuine news had been told in place of Hans Groot's invention. The actual outcome of the fight between the *Noank* and the *Arran* did not call for any

enthusiastic cheering. Only a little later, the admiral commanding the fleet summed up the whole affair.

"Gentlemen," he said, to a number of glum-looking officers, "we have passed that American pirate right along through this fleet. I think we've a right to go ashore, somewhere, and sit down. It was cleverly done, though, 'pon my soul! Captain Coverley, select our three best chasers to follow her. She mustn't be allowed to get away again!"

Each of the three vessels named was three or four times over a match for the *Noank*, and her chances did appear to be unpleasantly small.

"There's jest one thing they won't count on our doin'," had been the decision of Captain Avery. "We must put right out into the Atlantic, aimed at nowhere. If it would only blow a gale, now!"

He was not to be gratified in that particular during the pleasant autumn day that followed. Lighter became the wind, brighter the sky, and stiller the sea.

"It's a schooner wind, Lyme," said his old friend Taber, now the second mate of the *Noank*. "It gives us our best paces. We've run past every keel that was on the same tack, thus far. It isn't really bad luck."

"I hope it isn't," the captain gloomily responded. "But this 'ere sea is a boat sea. They might come for us with a rigiment of their boats, you know. It's a good thing for us that there isn't a man-o'-war in sight, yet. I a'most feel as if there was blood on every mile we're makin'!"

He was even low spirited. It seemed to him impossible that so long a run of what seamen call good luck could be stretched out much further. The

sailors, on the other hand, were taking a different view of the matter, very much more sensibly. Every man of them may have had a superstitious belief in "luck," but they had also seen, in each successive emergency, that they had a captain with a long head, and that he knew exactly what to do with that schooner. They were in good spirits, therefore, that sunny day. Perhaps they did not know all the reasons he had for now and then shaking his head.

"There's no port for us, hereaway," he thought. "I don't know of one that it would be safe for us to look into. It's a long v'yage home. We're a good deal overcrowded. There's worse'n that to think of, though. That feller Tracy told me our folks at home are gettin' ready to give it up. He said we are beaten badly, all around. I may find a British garrison in New London, when I get there. One in Boston, too. Then my chance for a rope 'round my neck is a sure one. Things look black, and no mistake!"

He should have been at his home that day instead of at sea. All over New England, all over the other colonies, north and south, as far as the news had been carried; from town to town, from village to village, and from farm to farm, horsemen were riding, men and boys on foot were running to tell of the surrender of Burgoyne. The great British invasion and conquest of the northern half of the American rebellion had broken down. The Six Nations had scattered to their wigwams and council-fires. It would be many days yet before the tidings could reach England or cross the Channel to astonish Continental Europe and seal the alliance between the United States and France. It would be longer still before it could be known by roving cruisers out at sea. For all American keels, however, their home ports had been made secure from British assailing until the generals and admirals

of King George should have time given them to consider the Saratoga affair, and make up their astonished minds as to what it might be best for them to undertake next.

"Anneke Ten Eyck," remarked Rachel Tarns, "thee wicked rebel! Has thee no feelings for thy good king and his wise counsellors? Cannot thee understand that their souls may be much disturbed by this untoward event?"

"I wish their fleets were as badly whipped as Burgoyne's army is," replied Mrs. Ten Eyck. "Oh! it is so very long since I've heard from Guert!"

"Trust thy son with thy God!" said Rachel, reverently. "Thee may think of this, Anneke: our victory over Burgoyne hath cost much to hundreds of mothers, as loving as thou art. Their sons lie buried at Stillwater and Saratoga. No gallant ship will bring them home again."

"I know it! I know it!" sobbed Mrs. Ten Eyck. "They gave their lives for liberty. Guert may have to give his as Nathan Hale did. He told me he believed he could die as bravely, only he would rather it should be in battle."

"That he may not choose for himself," said Rachel. "It hath come, heretofore, to many of my own people, Quakers, thou callest them, to die by the fire, and by the water, and by the hempen cord, because they would not give up their freedom to worship God in their own way. I think it was well with them. Let thy son die as it shall be given him in the hour of his appointing."

Deep and solemn had grown the tones of the enthusiastic old Friend, but Mrs. Ten Eyck dropped her knitting and went to a window to look out long and wistfully toward the harbor.

"When will he come sailing in?" she thought. "Am I ever to see him again? Oh! the war is so long, and the sea is so wide, and I love him so!"

Very beautiful and very long-suffering was the patriotism of the American woman of that day. Bitter indeed was the cup that many of them had to drink. Costly as life itself were the sacrifices that they were called upon to make. Well might such a son as Guert, keeping his watch on deck at the end of that long, pleasant day, be thinking only of his mother, rather than of the dangers that surrounded the *Noank*. Groot, the pirate, came and sat down by him and asked him curious questions concerning the way people lived in America.

"I can't get back to our old farm on Manhattan Island," Guert told him, "until Washington's army marches in again. Up-na-tan and Coco came away with me when we were beaten."

Groot asked then about the New York battles and about New London.

"I always believed," he said, "that I must always live on the sea, but I've been thinking. I can never be safe afloat. I sail with a rope around my neck, although I was never a pirate of my own free will. It is growing in my mind that I had better find some kind of harbor on shore. I shall have prize-money this time. I can make a start at something. I believe I could go away back into one of your states and live a new life."

"That's it," said Guert. "You could go among the Mohawk Valley Dutchmen, if Manhattan Island is too near the sea. You'd be hidden there, safe enough. Nobody would ever come for you."

"I'll think of it," said Groot. "No man knows how

long he is going to live, anyhow."

So there was rejoicing, with mourning also, and anxiety, upon the land, and it was a time for serious thinking on the sea; but at this moment the forward lookout startled all on board by the vigorous voice with which he sang out:—

"Sail ahead! Close on the larboard bow! Big three-master! No light showing!"

"All hands away!" roared Captain Avery. "Port your helm, there! Men! If it's an armed ship, it's too late to get away. We must grapple and board her, for life and death. Get the grapplings ready! Ship ahoy!"

The response was the report of a shotted gun and an angry shout:—

"We know you! Keep away, or we'll sink you! We can do it!"

"British trader," thought Captain Avery. "He's told us all we need to know. He's a strong one, I guess, and he could maul us badly. Our only chance is to close with him." Then he shouted to his crew:—

"Pikes and cutlasses! All hands be ready to follow me! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" came wildly back, and the three guns of the schooner's broadside, with the long eighteen, answered the stranger's challenge.

They were well enough directed, and so was the reply that came from half a dozen English pieces, but these, quite naturally at so short a range, were aimed too high. Down came both of the topmasts of the *Noank*, while her hull and ship's company were unhurt. She was a crippled craft in a moment, but she still had enough of backbone to come back

she still had enough of headway to carry her alongside of her bulky antagonist before her guns could be reloaded.

"Throw the grapnels!" shouted Captain Avery. "Haul, now! All aboard! Fore and aft, and amidships! Give it to 'em!"

Down he went the next instant, flat upon the deck of the English ship, as he sprang over her bulwark. Down at his side fell the British sailor by whose cutlass he had fallen, and over both of them sprang Guert Ten Eyck with Up-na-tan and Coco reaching out to hold him back and get in before him.

"I hit him!" shouted Guert, fiercely.

"Forward! Down with 'em! The ship is ours!"

Right here, amidships, the English crew had supposed to be the strength of their assailants and they had rushed desperately to meet it. They had not heard, however, the last command of Captain Avery, and his fore and aft boarding parties went over almost unopposed.

"We are surrounded!" exclaimed the British captain, "They are four to one! Hold hands, Americans! We surrender!"

It was time for him to do so, for fully a third of his crew were already down. They had been completely surprised as well as outnumbered.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Up-na-tan, as he lowered his pike and turned suddenly toward Guert. "Boy hurt?"

"Coco catch him!" said the old black man, eagerly, as Guert sank upon the deck. "Saw lobster cut him!"

"Never mind me!" yelled Guert. "See how Captain Avery is! Look at the cut in his head!"

"Wors'n that!" came hoarsely from first mate Morgan, as he bent above the fallen captain. "Taber, take charge of all for a moment! Lyme Avery is dead! Shot through the heart! Send the prisoners below. Look out for the wounded. All hands clear ship! Both ships! Make sail at once! I'm in command of the *Noank*. Taber'll take this one."

The second mate was a Groton man, a grim old salt who had sailed in many seas. He was a good man to lean on in such an emergency, and he rattled out his orders while the men secured the prisoners. Morgan slowly stood erect as the English commander came toward him.

"You are the American captain, sir? I know what your ship is. Mine is the *Lynx*, British privateer, Captain Ellis. We were on the lookout for you, or we thought we were."

"I'm Captain Morgan, now Lyme Avery is dead," was the somewhat sadly spoken reply. "How is it that you're so short-handed?"

"We had only forty able men left, all told," said Ellis. "Thirteen more sick or wounded. All the rest away in prizes or taken out of us by the reg'lar men-o'-war. The prizes and the press-gangs turned us over to you, sir. We took a Baltimore lugger, a bark from Philadelphia, two schooners from Boston, and one from Providence. We'd done right well, so far. You must ha' made a prime run, yourself."

He was evidently a privateersman all over, and his view of the matter was that he had only met with a disaster in the regular line of his business.

Morgan's thoughts were running in another direction.

"Your armament's heavier than ours," he said, after a sharp survey. "Lyne was right, poor fellow! Our only chance was to board."

"Perhaps it was," said Ellis. "We've two nines and three sixes on a side. Our pivot-gun's gearing broke, and she's no good. Thirty-two, though. The *Lynx* is an old Indiaman. She's a little heavy, but she's a good sailer. We cut up your spars a little?"

The sailors of the *Noank* were already examining her damages. Three more of her crew had been killed and two wounded in the short, sharp fight. Six Englishmen killed and seven more hurt out of forty told how severely the odds had been against them.

During the first few moments of noise and confusion, while the other sailors were rushing hither and thither upon their very pressing duties, Up-na-tan and Coco had been kneeling by Guert.

A pike-thrust in his right thigh, a slight sword-cut on his left shoulder, a bruise upon his head, told for him that he had been in the very front of the fray.

"Both cut cure up quick," said Up-na-tan, as he bandaged the wounds. "Boy no die. Ole chief glad o' that. Take him home to ole woman."

From the Ashantee came nothing but an apparently gratified chuckle.

Their first work was to get him back upon the *Noank* and into a bunk in Captain Avery's cabin, by Morgan's especial direction. All the other wounded, on both sides, were well cared for. Then there was a short, sorrowful hour given to sea funerals, and all the dead were buried in the ocean.

Mate Taber, with more than half of the *Noank's* company, was put in charge of the *Lynx*. All of the prisoners, also, were left in her.

"Homeward bound, Taber," shouted Captain Morgan, as the ships parted from their too close companionship. "Take your own course to New London. The main thing is to get in."

"Ay, ay!" called back the old Groton sailor. "We'll get there. We'd best keep within signal distance as long as we can, but the schooner's riggin' needs repairs, and ours doesn't."

"All right," said Morgan. "Keep company!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SPENT SHOT.

The first few hours after a sea-fight are apt to have a great deal in them. There was not a moment of time wasted on board the *Noank*, for the spare spars taken from the *Arran* were just the right things to be sent up in place of the sticks which had been shattered by the fire of the *Lynx*. Not until they should be in place could the swift schooner show her paces, and they had been going up even while the ocean burials were attended to.

"This is awful news to carry home to poor Mrs. Avery," groaned Guert, as he lay in his bunk. "I don't care much for my hurts, but I wish I could be on deck. I'm almost glad I'm wounded. I know how Nathan Hale would feel about it. He'd say it was little enough for a fellow to suffer for his country and

for liberty. I'll never forget him."

Away off there on the ocean, therefore, in a schooner bunk, in the dark, the memory of America's hero was doing its beautiful work, as it has been doing ever since, a bright example set, as a star that will not go down.

Many hands make light work, and the spars were all right by the next sunrise. There was only one sail in sight when Captain Morgan came on deck from a visit below to all his wounded men.

"That's the *Lynx*," he thought. "We must get within hail of her and find out how Taber's gettin' on. I don't even know what her cargo is. The way Lyme Avery carried her's a wonder!"

So Captain Taber was thinking at that very hour, as he went from gun to gun of the old Indianan's batteries.

"All she wanted was men," he said, "and she'd ha' beaten us, easy. We must have that thirty-two pounder pivot-gun in order, first thing. I'll make a strong cruiser of her. I've a gang overhaulin' the cargo. It promises well, and there's more'n thirty thousand dollars in cash.—Oh! but ain't I sick about Lyme! Best kind o' feller! Best neighbor! Best sailor, too. He and I sailed three long v'yages together, and we never had an ill word on sea or land."

Every other man of the dead captain's crew was saying or thinking something of the sort, and it was a blue time in spite of the victory. The excitement was all over now, and even the most reckless could calculate somewhat the dangers which still remained between them and home.

Captain Ellis himself came up to the deck of the

ship which he had ceased to command, for there was no reason for confining him below. He found that more than half his crew had volunteered to do ordinary ship-duty, at regular pay, rather than be shut up under hatches. The remainder, however, were stubborn Britons, and refused to handle so much as a rope under a rebel flag.

"They can't do us any harm," Captain Taber had said of the volunteers. "I'll trust 'em. Besides, every man of 'em's Irish, and there's mighty little love o' King George that side o' the Channel."

At all events, all of these sailor sons of Erin went to their messes cheerfully that morning.

"Captain Taber," said Ellis, when they came together, "I never saw anything like it! Look, yonder! Your schooner's refitted! She's as taut and trim as ever!"

"She has half a dozen good ship carpenters on board," laughed Taber. "They could build her over again. Our shipyards are goin' to bring out some new p'int's on ship-buildin'."

"I wish they would," said Ellis. "Our shipwrights are half asleep. Do you s'pose you can repair that pivot-gun? We hadn't a smith worth his salt."

"She'll swing like new, before long," said Taber. "The man that's filing away at her could invent a better gearing than that is. He could make a watch."

Right there was one important difference, then and afterward, between American sailors and European. It was a difference which was to be illustrated on land as well, in the records of the Patent Office at Washington, and in the wonderful development of all imaginable varieties of mechanism.

"There she comes, the beauty!" was Taber's next remark, as the *Noank* neared them. "She can outsail anything of her size that I know of."

"She must keep out o' the way of heavy cruisers, though," said Ellis, a little savagely. "I'd ha' beat her, myself, if I hadn't been caught weak as I was."

A hail from Captain Morgan prevented Taber from answering, and in a minute more the two American crews were cheering each other lustily.

"What cargo do you find?" asked Morgan through his trumpet, after he had learned that all else was well.

"All sorts!" responded Taber. "Picked up from prizes. Plenty o' water, provisions, ammunition. I can't guess where they pulled in some o' the stuff. Woollen cloths, and crockery crates, and tobacco. It looks as if they'd taken some Hamburg trader for an American. You can't say what a privateer'll do, well away at sea."

Ellis heard, and there came a queer, half-anxious grin upon his deeply lined, hardened face. He did not, in fact, look like a man who would hesitate long over any small moral questions of mere flags and ownerships. He was a privateersman in preference to any other occupation, without need for the patriotic spirit which was sending into it the seafaring veterans of America.

"All right!" was the hearty reply from the *Noank*. "Now, Taber, we must keep company if we can for two or three days, at least. Our two batteries, worked together, 'd be an over match for any o' the lighter king's cruisers. We could knock one o' their ten-gun brigs all to flinders."

"I a'most hope we'll come across one," said Taber, "soon as that there thirty-two yonder'll swing on its pivot."

Two armed vessels may not make what is called a "squadron." Captain Morgan, therefore, had not suddenly risen from the rank of first mate to that of commodore, but both the old East Indiaman and the schooner were undoubtedly safer because of their ability and readiness to help each other.

Captain Taber's cruiser, when he came to examine her, was a curious affair, according to later ideas of ship-building. She had been constructed solidly, and had a large carrying capacity. Her sides "tumbled home," or slanted inward, nobody knows what for. Her stern was very high, as if a kind of fort were needed, rising to hold up her quarter-deck. In this, on either side, were her nine-pounders, and it might account for their shot flying above the *Noank's* hull. She was lower in the waist, and she piled up again, forward. Her tops were cups like those of a man-of-war, and might hold sharp-shooters in a close fight. It is the rule to laugh, at that old style of naval architecture, but when the *Lynx* had been the *Burrumpootra* she had battled well with the terrible gales and seas of the Indian Ocean, and there were legends of the way in which she had beaten off Chinese and Malay pirates. There were not only good ships but good seamen as well in the old-fashioned days, and all the world was discovered and opened by them to commerce and civilization.

Up-na-tan considered himself the surgeon of the *Noank*, and he was a good one, so far as cuts and bruises were concerned. He and Coco held consultations over Guert, and there was no danger but what he would be well attended to. He was a general favorite with the sailors, and their opinion of

him had been lifted tremendously by his conduct at the taking of the *Lynx*. They all declared that he had in him the making of a good sea-captain,—as good, it might possibly be, as Lyme Avery himself, although that was a great deal to say.

That day went by, and the next, and the next, and all in vain did either Captain Ellis or his captors scan the horizon for any speck that looked like war. There were distant sails, truly, but this pair of privateers was inclined to let well enough alone. The fourth day found them well away upon the Atlantic before a ten-knot breeze, slipping along finely, with all the wounded doing well. Guert's pike-thrust in the leg was his worst hurt. It caused him much pain at intervals, and a great deal of fever. The cutlass blow at his shoulder had been broken of its force by the handle of his pike. The wooden shaft had been cut in two as he parried with it, while drawing it back from his successful thrust at Captain Avery's antagonist. The English swordsman had been a strong one, for his blade went on down to make a gash which might be slow in healing. It would probably have been a death stroke but for the tough pikestaff.

"You'll be out on deck, my boy, in a week or two," he had been told by Captain Morgan, "and you're lucky it's no worse."

There was no use in fretting over it. He could lie there and dream of old times in New York, and of ships and fleets and armies. There was no book on board for him to read, however, unless he should wish to take up his study of navigation. There he was lying in the afternoon of the fourth day, not tossing around much, for fear of hurting his wounded leg or shoulder. He was feeling lonely, sick, impatient, discontented.

"Falls!" he suddenly exclaimed. "What's that?"

THUNDER! HE suddenly exclaimed. WHAT'S THAT?
Are we in a fight? I want to go on deck!—There! I
guess that was pretty nearly a spent shot!"

It was too bad, altogether. Right through the port-hole window of the cabin had passed a round shot from so far away, apparently, that it hardly shattered the door-post upon which it then struck. It had been well aimed, it had hit the schooner, but it had not done any harm.

"There goes Up-na-tan's gun," said Guert, the next instant. "I don't hear the broadside guns. I guess that other firing is from the *Lynx*. She was close by us, they said. This is awful!"

He could now hear the distant, dull roar of other guns, and he said:—

"That's the British! It sounds as if we were fighting a man-of-war. Can it be we are going to be captured by 'em this time?"

He might well be nervous about it, but his guesses and fears were only about halfway correct. Not many minutes earlier, the *Noank* and the *Lynx* had drawn toward each other, into long hailing distance, for a sort of council of war. Questions and answers had gone hurriedly back and forth, until Captain Morgan had shouted:—

"We'll take her, Taber. We can spare men enough for one more prize crew. She's a big one."

So she was, that tall three-master, floating the British flag, and she was evidently not a frigate of King George. Most likely, they said, she was a supply ship on her way to his armies in his rebellious colonies.

About went the two eager privateers, and there seemed to be no reason to doubt their ability to

outsail and outfight their victim. She was carrying a cargo so full and heavy that it pulled her down, and she was logging along clumsily. Both of the American vessels were flying the stars and stripes. The *Lynx* was somewhat nearer to the Englishman, and Captain Taber deemed it time to fire a shot across her bows as a signal to heave to.

The sound of that first gun was what had really awakened Guert, but he had not at once understood it. Captain Morgan was on the point of following Captain Taber's example, when the big, peaceful-seeming British ship swung around a few points, and a lot of hitherto closed ports along her side sprang open. Every one of these ports had an ugly, metallic nose in it, and from each of these jumped a sheet of fire, followed by thunder. At the same moment a band of brass music on the after deck began to play "God save the King," while a long procession of men in red uniforms streamed up from below to join a lot of others like them who were already on deck.

"Eight ports!" exclaimed Captain Morgan, staring through his glass. "She may carry more guns than that! She's a British merchant ship of the largest size, turned into a troop-ship, and armed, I'd say, with long twelves. Thunder! We haven't anything to do with her! Starboard your helm, there! I'll signal Taber to keep away."

There was no need of that at all. The first heavy broadside of the stranger had hurtled toward the *Lynx*, and several of the half-spent shot had struck her. Her commander had taken warning instantly, and was already wheeling away, so to speak, when the second British broadside went so dangerously well toward the *Noank*.

"One such dose is just as good as two," remarked

Captain Morgan. "I'm glad Taber has good sense. We don't want to be crippled jest now. We can't afford to risk a stick. We'll get away out o' range, quickest kind!"

So he did, and so did Taber. But they would by no means have done so if it had not been for a reason that was getting an explanation in the furiously angry exclamations of the British sailor in command of that pugnacious troop-ship. He had rapidly grown red in the face, and now he seemed ready to burst.

"Lost 'em! Missed 'em!" he roared, as he stamped up and down the deck. "I had 'em both trapped! I let 'em come near enough before I fired a gun. I'd ha' sunk 'em or sent 'em in. It's the fault o' that rascally thief at the navy-yard. He supplied us with that worthless, condemned contract powder. It won't pitch a shot worth tuppence. He ought to be hung! I'll report him!"

The mystery of so many cannon-shot being practically spent at a fair practice distance was completely explained. No doubt he was wrong in declaring that his ammunition was no better than so much sea-sand, but it was not the stuff to send twelve-pound balls of iron through oak or teak bulwarks, and his cunning trap to catch the two American privateers was a lamentable failure.

It was an hour of their best running before these were again within hail of each other. Then their two commanders held a brief speaking-trumpet conversation, congratulating each other upon having gotten out of so serious a scrape without injury.

"Morgan," said Taber, at last, "the far northerly course, if it suits you. I think we'd better shape it as if we were bound for Halifax, and keep well away from every sail we sight "

"That'll do," replied Morgan. "That there Nova Scotia garrison needs supplies, you know. We're jest the boats to bring 'em all they want. If we come up with another supply ship, though, and if she hasn't quite so many guns, we may persuade her to go as far as Boston with us."

"No, sir! I'd say not!" called back Taber. "I feel uneasy 'bout Boston jest now. I'd ruther not try any home port but New London, and we'd better make our run in there by night."

"All right!" said Captain Morgan. "Home it is! Heave ahead!"

Guert Ten Eyck, in his bunk, received from his friends a full account of that day's curious adventure. The port of his cabin was quickly mended, and he could once more lie quiet and wait for his own mending. On deck there was especial matter for general discussion arising from the fact that all had seen a troop-ship.

"More soldiers to conquer America," they said. "It looks bad for us. The king is sending over British and Hessians, army after army. They are all well armed, well clothed, well fed, and there are more to follow. What can our own used up, half-armed, half-starved, badly beaten Continentals do against such awful odds? The truth is, we may not find a safe port to run into."

"They can't have taken everything so soon as this," was the conclusion of Captain Morgan. "We'll feel our way in, when we get there. If all things have gone wrong we can sail away somewhere, or we can beach the ships and burn 'em, and take to the woods."

CHAPTER XX.

ANCHORED IN THE HARBOR.

There came a very black night toward the beginning of winter in the year 1777. A light wind blew in from the sea, carrying an unpleasant, chilly feeling among the people of the town of New London. They had previously been somewhat uncomfortable, for, during several days, there had been British men-of-war hovering along the coast. None of these had ventured in far enough to exchange shots with the forts, but there was a rumor, nobody knew where from, that the British had determined to seize the port and put an end to its notable services to the cause of American independence. The harbor forts were believed by their commanders to be in good fighting condition, and their garrisons at once received small reinforcements. The thing most to be feared, it was said, was the landing of a strong body of troops, for in that case the town itself would be assailed, as well as the forts.

In short, military men foresaw and predicted precisely such an attack as was so destructively made at a later date by the king's forces under Arnold.

Very dark was the night. Wakeful and watchful were the sentinels and guards at every battery. Moreover, boats were out, silently patrolling hither and thither, ready to run in and report whatever signs of danger they might discover. The sea-scouts could not be everywhere, however, nor could they see everything. Somehow or other, an exceedingly

important arrival passed by them all in the darkness.

A little before midnight a solitary musket shot rang out at the seaward bastion of Fort Griswold, and the officer of the guard, with a party of soldiers, hurried to the spot to ascertain its meaning.

"Officer of the guard," responded the sentry to the formal hail, "two American lights, seaward. Flash, flash, and cover. There they are again."

One of the soldiers was an old sailor, and he exclaimed:—

"Captain Havens, jest let me watch that there signal a minute."

"Watch!" said the captain.

Again the seaward flashes came, as if they were asking questions.

"What is it—"

"Captain Havens!" shouted the old whaling man, excitedly. "That there was Lyme Avery's private signal. The *Noank* has come home! The other light was Joe Taber's, I guess. I've whaled it with both of 'em."

"Hurrah!" burst from the captain. "Signal back, if you know how."

"Shall we fire a gun, sir?" asked an artilleryman.

"No," said the captain; "we won't stir up the town. And we won't send any information to the British cruisers, either. See Hadden work his lantern."

The sailor was swinging the lantern given him,—this way, that way, up and down, and he was speedily replied to from the sea.

"Two craft comin' in together," he explained. "I guess it's the *Noank* and a prize."

"I'll send word to Colonel Ledyard," said Captain Havens. "Hadden, you and four men come with me. I must go out and meet 'em with a boat. Lieutenant Brandagee, you may tell the colonel I will anchor the ships in the harbor mouth, so that their guns may support our batteries, if the British try to run in to-morrow."

Every gun would count in such a case, it was true, but half an hour later, on the deck of the *Noank*, he was told by Captain Morgan:—

"No, sir! Their boats would be too much for us, so far out as that. We'll run farther in and lie still till morning. After daylight our guns'll be good for something. I can tell you. Ledyard'll say I'm right."

"Take your own course," said the captain, "only be ready if they come. Now, that's settled.—Morgan! This is bad news about Lyme Avery. I don't want to be the man to tell his wife."

"No more do I," said Morgan. "Taber says he'd a'most as soon be shot. Don't I wish, though, that Lyme was alive, to hear of the surrender of Burgoyne's army. It makes me feel better'n I did. We hardly felt safe 'bout comin' in at all. For all we knew, we might be sailin' into a British port and under the king's guns."

"It hasn't quite come to that yet," said Captain Havens. "I can tell you, though, the country's wider awake than it ever was before. Have you heard about Sam Prentice and Vine Avery? They got in long ago. So did your other prizes. What did you say this one with you is?"

"It's a long story," said Morgan. "See, Taber's

It's a long story," said Morgan. "Joe Taber's captain of her. He knows more 'bout her than I do. She was a British privateer. Lyme Avery was killed when we took her. Now!—My head's in a kind of whirl. Havens, I'm thinkin' of Lyme one minute, and the next I'm thinkin' of Burgoyne and the way he was defeated. Jest you hold on with any more questions till some time to-morrow. The first thing for Taber and me is to get farther in."

There might be little time to spare, indeed, if a British line-of-battle ship and three frigates were in the offing, drawing on toward cannon range of them. Therefore the *Noank* and the *Lynx* stood slowly in, feeling their way, and as yet their presence was known only to a few boatmen and the garrison of Fort Griswold. Colonel Ledyard himself had settled one question.

"No," he said, "we will wait. The good news and the bad news will keep till morning. Let Mrs. Avery sleep—don't wake her. It'll be hard enough for her. —I thought a great deal of Lyme Avery!"

So the little that was left of the night waned away, and all New London remained in ignorance of any important arrival. As the sun arose, however, a gun rang out from Fort Griswold, and all who were awake sprang up to listen.

A minute passed, while hundreds were hastily dressing, and then another gun sounded. One full minute more, for there were those who counted, and the third gun began to make the firing understood.

"Minute-guns! The British are coming!" shouted more than one hasty listener. "Every man to the forts! Our time's come!"

Many were the conjectures and exclamations, but

the first men to reach the water front sent back word that not a British sail was in sight. More than that was sent, however, for a hasty messenger ran on to the Avery house and knocked at the door. It was opened instantly by Vine Avery himself.

"What is it?" he asked.

"The *Noank*!" was half whispered. "A large prize ship is with her. Don't say a word about it to your mother."

"Why not?" said Vine.

"Well!" replied the messenger. "It's this way. There are minute-guns at the fort and both of the flags of those ships are at half mast. There are boats pulling from 'em to the shore now. Come on!"

Vine stood still for a moment, hesitating. Then he turned and shouted back into the house:—

"Mother! The *Noank*! I'll go on down to the wharf. I'll let you know."

"Lyne! Lyne is home again!" she said. "Vine—"

She was darting forward without waiting for hood or wrap, but other ears besides Vine's had heard the messenger, and a firm hand was laid quietly upon Mrs. Avery's shoulder.

"My beloved friend," said Rachel Tarns, "hold thee still for a moment. I have a word for thee."

"What is it, Rachel?"

"Rachel Tarns," broke in the excited voice of Mrs. Ten Eyck, "did he say the *Noank* is here?"

"Yea," replied Rachel, "and I say to both of you women that she hath her flag at half mast, and that

from her deck hath some one gone home indeed. It may be that many of those who sailed away in her are not here to be welcomed. Be you both strong and very courageous, therefore, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. I will go along with you, and so will He. Be ye brave this day!"

So the strong, good, loving Quaker woman helped her friends, but hardly another word was spoken as they walked hurriedly along down the road toward the wharves.

"I do not see him!" murmured Mrs. Avery. "He would surely be coming to meet me."

"Anneke Ten Eyck," said Rachel, "be thou a glad woman! Look! Yonder comes thy son!"

"And not Lyme?" gasped Mrs. Avery.

"On crutches!" exclaimed Mrs. Ten Eyck, as she sprang forward. "I don't care! O Guert! Guert! Thank God!"

If anything else, any other word than "Mother!" was uttered during the next few moments, nobody heard it.

Mrs. Avery was trying to speak and could not, and it was Rachel Tarns who came to her assistance.

"Guert," she said, "thee brave boy! Thee is wounded? It is well. We are glad thou art here. Tell Mary Avery of her husband—at once! Is he with thee and her, or is he with his Father in Heaven?"

"Mother," whispered Guert, "I can't! You tell her. He was killed when we boarded the British privateer. I did all I could to save him. That's where I was cut down—"

Low as had been his whispering, there was no need for his mother to tell Mrs. Avery.

"Don't speak!" she said. "I'm going back to the house! He fell in battle!"

Around she turned, catching her breath in a great sob, and Rachel and Vine turned to go with her, putting their arms around her. Guert and his mother lingered as if it were needful for them to stand still and look into each other's faces. She glanced down, too, at his crutches, and he answered her silent question smilingly with:—

"That's getting well, mother."

"O Guert!"

"Ugh!" exclaimed a deep voice close behind them. "Up-na-tan say ole woman go home. Take boy. Ole chief mighty glad to bring boy back.—Whoo-oop!"

It was, after all, the triumphant warwhoop of the old red man that closed the record of the long cruise of the *Noank*.

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